Gertrudis Payás Puigarnau  
AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE / AUTHOR OF THESIS

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School of Translation and Interpretation  
FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT / FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

The Role of Translation in the Building of National Identities  
The Case of Colonial Mexico (1521-1821)

TITRE DE LA THÈSE / TITLE OF THESIS

Clara Foz  
DIRECTEUR (DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS SUPERVISOR

CO-DIRECTEUR (CO-DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS CO-SUPERVISOR

EXAMINATEURS (EXAMINATRICES) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS EXAMINERS

Annie Brisset

Rainier Grutman

Patrick Imbert

Catherine Poupney Hart

Gary W. Slater  
LE DOYEN DE LA FACULTÉ DES ÉTUDES SUPÉRIEURES ET POSTDOCTORALES /  
DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES
THE ROLE OF TRANSLATION
IN THE BUILDING OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES
THE CASE OF COLONIAL MEXICO (1521-1821)

Candidate: Gertrudis Payàs Puigarnau
Director: Clara Foz

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School of Translation and Interpretation
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa

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Notes

1- The translators’ bibliographical reference from Beristáin’s *Biblioteca Hispano-Americana* appears under the abridged form: *BHA* in footnotes.

2- As far as possible, when dates of print did not coincide with the original print or manuscript date, I have put both in the reference.

3- In general, I have left citations in the original language, proposing an English translation only when I deemed it necessary.

4- The original spelling has been maintained in the citations.
Abstract

The purpose of this doctoral research is to demonstrate that translation, as a form of representation, is present in the elaboration of a discourse on the nation in colonial Mexico, or New Spain. To this end, a catalogue of 712 translational products is explored by means of a classification based on a conceptual framework provided by nationalism studies. This approach leads to see how, individually and collectively, one group of translations weave the canvass of an "imagined community" of faithful, on which three other groups intertwine narratives of foundational myths, instill a sense of belonging to a continuum of classical civilizations, and, lastly, incorporate New Spain to the concert of modern nations. Historiography is part of this evolution, and the presence of translation and subsequent rewritings are traced in the fixing of a national history.
Résumé

Cette recherche doctorale a pour objet de démontrer que la traduction, en tant que représentation, est présente dans l’élaboration d’un discours sur la nation dans le Mexique colonial, ou Nouvelle Espagne. Dans ce but, nous avons analysé un catalogue comptant 712 produits de traduction classés selon une grille conceptuelle empruntée aux études sur le nationalisme. Cette approche permet de voir comment, tant individuellement que collectivement, un groupe de traductions tisse la trame d’une « communauté imaginée » de croyants sur laquelle trois autres groupes entrelacent des discours de mythes fondateurs, instillent le sentiment d’appartenance à un continuum de civilisations classiques et incorporent la Nouvelle Espagne au concert des nations modernes. L’historiographie fait partie de cette évolution, et la présence de la traduction et ses successives réécritures sont soulignées dans l’établissement d’une histoire nationale.
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PREAMBLE

Introduction

Historical overview of the Spanish linguistic policy in New Spain
Introduction

This is a history of emerging identities as brought about and represented in translation, which is one of many ways of representation.

It is meant as a contribution of history of translation to the understanding of the transformation of the Mexicans, and to the way they saw themselves during the time in which they were under Spanish rule; that is, in the period of the New Spain. The time in which they were displaced and killed, forced to build churches and barns, learned new rituals and punishments; and in which they learned also ways of surviving, of detouring obstacles, of using the colonizer’s religion and law to their benefit. In the process, they collectively forgot and remembered a lot, as said Ernest Renan in 1882, when defining what constitutes a nation; and in mixing (biologically and culturally) with other peoples, both European and African, and with other Mexican population, they also created new forms of life and thinking. This is the phenomenon for which we have been accustomed to use the words “mestizo” and “mestizaje”.

Translation will be the point of entry to this complex process of transforming identities. I can use translations as the point of entry because they are consistently present in the period covered by this study, both in manuscripts and prints. In fact, during the first century after the Conquest, virtually all writing activity is represented by translations and other such interlingual products.

Two aspects pretend to be original from the point of view of intellectual history: to use translation to explain how a new subjectivity was born and to say that translation is present in the maintenance and defense of this new subjectivity up to the point in which it
can pretend to become part of a national discourse, in which the singular character of the nation and its cultural and material wealth are affirmed.

From the point of view of translation studies, my research aims at demonstrating that translation is an intellectual practice that contributes to the representation of the nation (in the sense of a group sharing ethnic or cultural traits), not only because, as a rewriting, it can re-present, but because, as a mirror of the Other, it is constitutive of the self.¹

I also wish to contribute to the description of colonial Hispano-American translation by advancing quantitative data on translations as well as on their authors. The classification method I devised, drawn from concepts of nationalism studies, may also be considered an innovative contribution to translation history, as well as the larger than usual historical scope. I am also proposing a translation-studies bias to look at translations and authors that had not been approached from this angle by general history.

These presumed contributions and the methods followed will be explained in the Theoretical Outline, that is, the First Part of the research. For context purposes, an informative section follows this introduction. It traces the general evolution of language policy in New Spain and sets the stage where the rest of the research will unfold.

Translation will be treated here in different ways, since we know that its definition and functions can vary along time. Two main domains will it cover: a large and seemingly diffuse field, in which translation could be best defined as language contact and fundamental negotiation of forms and contents between the European languages and the American languages, driven by religious zeal and having as final end the incorporation of the populations to a universal, Catholic, community. This domain I have called the

¹ Following Fernando Savater’s works on ethics, in particular Ética como amor propio (1994)
Translational Canvass and it constitutes the Second Part of the research.

The Third Part covers the more strictly translational activity that is “interwoven” in the canvass and that helps in the construction of a cultural identity by conveying foundational myths, incorporating intellectual production to a continuum of Classical productions and forming a modern high culture in which a national discourse emerges. Each of these three aspects will be dealt with in detail in their respective sections.

This work is a large diachronic study in which translation spots are identified along three centuries (1521-1821) of colonial life. Although synchronicity is not possible in such a large span, I will try to show some particular links between contiguous texts and point to discursive coherences. Comparisons between originals and translations are not to be found here, since the aim is to understand what translations are doing there rather than how were they produced.

The role of polyglots as cultural brokers between peoples becomes particularly evident when new identities have to be transacted. This is the case of colonial situations, in the first attempts to gain social stability as well as when the emerging identities endeavor to endow themselves with a high, unified culture, able to compete with other identities. This realization has meant a necessary broadening of the definitions of translators and translation to include those individuals who have acted as linguistic and cultural agents even if their productions do not comply with modern definitions of translation. We could call them “transwriters”, and their products, “transwritings”. Whatever the denomination, the phenomenon, I hope, will become clear as the research progresses. And vice-versa, I have restricted the definition in the case of the diglossic Latin-Spanish authors, since their diglossia, a feature common in clerics in those times, does not make them automatically
translators. So, not all polyglots are translators, but there are more translators among the polyglots than is usually acknowledged, since I admit also what I call transwriters, grammarians and lexicographers.

Finally, in the graphs and tables, a number of items will be found undated. Unfortunately, at the conclusion of the research it was still not possible to obtain all chronological data. I hope to be able to fill in this and other biographical and bibliographical gaps in future research. In the same line, it may also be surprising that there are so few items in the nineteenth century, but it should be borne in mind that my translation register ends in 1821, and that the main source of data, Don Mariano de Beristáin y Souza, died in 1817, when only the first volume (letters A-C) of his *Biblioteca Hispano-Americana Septentrional* had been published.
Historical overview of the Spanish linguistic policy in New Spain

Unilingualism is undoubtedly the ideal situation for a national project to develop: one people, one territory, one language. As a patchwork of ethnic groups and languages, Mesoamerica, or Middle America, an anthropological denomination for the territory that covers today’s Mexico, the Southern part of the United States and the Central American Isthm, was, at the Spaniard’s arrival, far from this ideal. There is not full agreement as to the number of languages spoken in the Middle American region before Columbus, mainly for lack of accurate data on the first decades of the Conquest, when population loss and forced relocations caused a significant number of languages or dialects to disappear. We have also disparities in estimates due to difficulties in establishing the divide between languages and dialects in extinct languages, and finally, because of imprecisions in the limits of the territories of reference. Bárbara Cifuentes, in her overview of multilingualism in Mexico, compares data from nineteenth-century historians and ethnographers (who estimated 182 languages) and linguists (108 languages) with more recent appraisals (147 languages or more), and suggests that some one hundred languages were lost by the end of the 16th century (Cifuentes 1998: 32-45).² According to Brice Heath there could be around 125 languages (Brice Heath 1970: 54). Another estimate, by Garza and Lastra (Garza y Lastra 2000: 141-143) suggests a larger number: 113 disappeared languages and 58 extant (there is, though, some ambiguity in this study due to a non coincidence in the territorial limits considered there as compared to Brice Heath’s). Some of the disappeared languages, according to these authors, were already endangered by the expansion of Nahuatl in the 15th

² Cifuentes 1998 notes that, with variations due to dialect definitions, there are between 52 (1990 census) and 66 languages still in use (p. 47).
century. Indeed, Nahuatl, an agglutinative language belonging to the uto-aztec stock, a family of related languages with its several dialectal families, encompassed a very large area, from the Western United States to present day Nicaragua. The most important in this group, it coexisted sometimes with other languages, to the degree that even geographical names had two designations: in Nahuatl and in the local language. There had been migrations of Nahuatl-speaking peoples since long before the arrival of the Spaniards, but, more importantly, the main political force at the end of the 15th century, the Mexica, Nahuatl-speaking people who established themselves in the central valleys after a mythical journey around 1300 a.D., was exerting control over a large territory, going as far North as present states of Zacatecas and Sinaloa and as far South as the Istm of Tehuantepec. 3 This is why Fray Jerónimo de Mendieta, the Franciscan chronicler, could assert:

> Esta lengua mexicana es la general que corre por todas las provincias de esta Nueva España, puesto que en ella hay muchas y diferentes lenguas particulares de cada provincia, y en partes de cada pueblo, porque son innumerables. Mas en todas partes hay intérpretes que entienden y hablan la mexicana, porque esta es la que por todas partes corre, como la latina por todos los reinos de Europa. Y puedo con verdad afirmar, que la mexicana no es menos galana y curiosa que la latina, y aun pienso que más artizada en composición y derivación de vocablos, y de metáforas. (Mendieta 1973:119)

The Mexica had expanded and promoted the use of Nahuatl for the benefit of the “Aztec’s own nation-building efforts” (Brice Heath 1970: 27). This is why the colonizers could associate Nahuatl (the Aztec’s Imperial language) with Latin, the European Imperial language, an association they quickly put to their advantage. Nahuatl, in its classical or upper form, was further disseminated by them, and its social prestige and political power

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3 Nahuatl geographical names still existing in Guatemala and Nicaragua belong to the former migrations.
was reinforced. It became the official language of colonization. It was used extensively in
doctrinal and administrative activities, and thus, appropriated by the Church and civil
authorities, became the language of authority, but now in the hands of the new masters. The
passage from upper Nahuatl to Spanish was facilitated by the frequent use of oral and
written translation, with the ensuing transfer of the perceived virtues of the former to the
latter, thanks to the symbolic and material nature of translation:

The missionaries appropriated the authority already encoded in the
discursive practices of the nobility. This they accomplished by translating
the literature necessary for the Christianization process using the rhetorical
moves and vocabulary of the newly alphabetized Classical Nahuatl. The
ritual language, by which the native leaders had long helped to shape the
ideology of the masses of commoners, became both the language of
instruction about the ways of the Europeans and the language by which the
ideological speech of the native leadership was domesticated to serve the
ends of colonial discourse. (Klor 1989: 147)

This translatio auctoritas was also rendered easier by the perception that Nahuatl
was in New Spain what Latin was in Europe, since, as Mendieta said: “corre como la
Latina por todos los reinos de Europa”. And this translatio auctoritas was not an empty
concept. It found effective application, for instance, in the use of Nahuatl together with
Latin as reference languages in some grammars of indigenous languages: in a 16th century
grammar, Pedro de Cárceres’s *Arte de la lengua othomi* (Cárceres 1905), for instance,
through a complex system of cross-references between Latin, Nahuatl, Castilian and Otomi,
Nahuatl and Latin are used as canon or exemplary languages; Castilian is the language in
which the grammar is written, acting as the narrator, and Otomi becomes the object of the

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4 *BHA II*, 43
We should not forget that in early 16th century, Castilian was a regionally confined language, still struggling for autonomy from Latin and, at the same time, competing with several other vernaculars, equally old and prestigious, like Galician and Catalan, as well as with Sephardic and Arabic (Cifuentes 1998: 99), which had been finally eradicated with the expulsion and forced conversion of Jews and Moors under the Catholic Kings Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492. Isabella in particular (Ferdinand was Aragonese, so actually Catalan-speaker) endeavored to impose Castilian to the rest of the country, which was unified for the first time now by her marriage to Ferdinand. At a time when grammars were only for Classical languages, that is, for languages which were mostly only written and which had to be learned through books (as opposed to the languages one learned naturally, as a speaker), humanist scholar Antonio de Nebrija published his Gramática de la lengua castellana (1492). In its introduction, he states that “language has always been the partner of empire”, a quote that has been commonly interpreted as establishing the relationship between political supremacy and unilingualism and that I will have the opportunity to comment upon further in the course of the research. In fact, the grammar that appears regularly in the packing lists of virtually all shipments arriving to Veracruz during the sixteenth and seventeenth century (Fernández del Castillo 1982), named as “Arte del Antonio”, is not this Spanish grammar but a Latin one, the Institutiones latinae, that he wrote in 1481 especially for pious women and nuns who wanted to read in Latin. It is this grammar that would serve as a model for the grammars of the indigenous languages. Similarly, Nebrija’s Latin-Castilian and Castilian-Latin dictionaries, the Lexicon ex sermone latino in hispaniensem
(1492) and the *Dictionarium ex hispaniensi in latinum sermonem* (1495), arrived also to New Spain and served as models for the Castilian-vernacular bilingual lexicons. Frances Karttunen has traced the genealogy of several major early Spanish-based bilingual dictionaries of New Spain to the first Latin-Castillian dictionary. Even a trilingual lexicon (Nahuatl-Spanish-Otomi), written in 1605 by friar Alonso Urbano, has been identified as derived from Nebrija’s Latin list of words (Karttunen 1995). We can, therefore, consider these lexicons as attesting to the will of their authors to demonstrate the capability of the Mexican vernaculars to compare themselves to the Latin canons, to be able to convey the “things of their nations”. The vernaculars, soon reduced (at it was then said) to grammars, and deployed word lists that could be matched to European word lists, were thus armed to compete among them and with Castilian for the status of a national language.

Nevertheless, however strong the will to “castellanizar” its dominions, the Spanish Monarchy’s language policy in New Spain was inconsistent and hesitant. The 1770 Royal ban on all vernacular languages and imposition of Spanish as the official language of the Spanish dominions (Cifuentes 1998: 284-89), was the corollary of over two hundred years of erratic language policy, which can be partly explained by the geographical and intellectual distance between the Spanish Monarch and its main colony, and partly characterized by the conflicts in the New Spain between civil and religious authorities, as well as between monastic and secular branches of the Church. As Brice Heath rightly says, “el programa de cristiano-castellanización en la patria reposaba sobre el ambiente exuberante y lleno de idealismo que predominaba en el reino de Isabel después de la Reconquista”, but once in the New World, this program became too difficult to implement.

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5 It is worth noting that Castilian (*lengua castellana*) has become Spanish (*hispaniensem, hispaniensis*), in recognition of the national status of the language that would represent the first modern nation-state in Europe.

6 As well as for the first Latin-European vernaculars dictionaries (Kahane 1992).
(Brice Heath 1970: 27). From the beginning, the 1512 Leyes de Burgos gave the Spanish who possessed more than 50 Indians in encomienda⁷ the responsibility of their education in Spanish. However, it became soon evident that the encomenderos would not discharge this duty appropriately. In 1524, Hernán Cortés convinced King Charles V that the responsibility for the Indians education be transferred to the monastic orders. So, after a few years from the Royal decree stating that the indigenous peoples should learn Spanish under the tutelage of the encomenderos, a shift in the policy put indigenous peoples under the tutelage of the Church and allowed indoctrination to be carried out in the local languages. The pressing need of rapid indoctrination is obvious from the 1536 royal instructions to Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza that the missionaries should endeavor to write grammars (“Artes”) of the indigenous languages. This policy change, though, was explicitly provisional; it meant recognition that the tremendous disparity in the ratio Spanish to Indian made it impossible to pursue any Christianization unless the friars would learn the languages, transcribe them phonetically, write their grammars and lexicons, and indoctrinate in them. During approximately 50 years, that is, the period of influence of the Franciscan and other Mendicant Orders, local languages were whenever possible used and learnt. During Philip II rule, a certain hierarchy of languages was tacitly established, and in case of competing languages, the more general one was promoted in civil and justice administration, teaching, indoctrination and Church services. In 1580, a chair of Nahuatl at the University of Mexico was created by virtue of a Royal decree (Cifuentes 1998: 106-108), and other language chairs were opened later.

⁷ By the institution of the Encomienda, conquerors were entrusted with a number of Indians, that could amount to entire villages. In exchange for the Indians’ work and services, the conquerors had to provide doctrinal education and protection. The frequent abuses to which it gave origin lead to various Royal laws and its eventual cancellation, which was met with violent opposition.
Nevertheless, one can imagine that the day-to-day pressures compelled the missionary friars to take their own decisions without consulting each other or their principals, and the first decades witnessed the elaboration of grammars, lexicons, catechisms, sermon books and confessional manuals in many vernaculars. Beristáin de Souza’s *Biblioteca Hispanoamericana Septentrional*, my main source, contains 83 vocabularies of 25 known languages (and some unknown to the author).\(^8\) Approximately half of this production belongs to the period 16\(^{th}\)-17\(^{th}\) century. Nahuatl alone concentrates 21 such lexicons.

Aside from the practical reasons, there were motivations of ideological nature in the first missionaries’ inclination to learn the languages and to keep the Indians ignorant of Spanish. First of all, they established personal communication channels away from the *encomenderos*; indeed, the friars were deeply suspicious of the Conquistadores and first settler’s good will, as they feared that the poor, humble Indians would be contaminated by the vices of the Spanish if they learned their language. The early policy of segregation of the indigenous population in a *República de Indios*, separate from the Spaniard’s corrupt world of the *República de Españoles*, would be the materialization of the utopia of the first Christians. The friars would then be the only mediators between these two worlds (Moreno Toscano 1996: 356).

**There seems** to be no national project at this juncture. The missionaries’ plan was to enlarge God’s Kingdom rather than to add a new possession to the Spanish Crown. For them, as rightly said Fray Maturino Gilberti\(^9\) in his Purépecha Catechism, there existed only

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\(^8\) Beristáin was writing his monumental bio-bibliography around 1815, and did not have access to or know of the existence of other manuscripts and books kept in private or remote libraries.

\(^9\) *BHA* II 357 - 358
two classes of men: “christianos y infieles” (Gilberti 1559: I). Even geographical frontiers were subordinated to the Great Frontier, that separating the Kingdom of God from the Kingdom of Darkness. Probably there lied the main misunderstanding between the first churchmen and civil authorities. For Brading, the common denominator in this new society “was rather Catholicism than a consciousness of nationality” (Brading 2000: 15).

In 1550, Charles V considered that the provisional period was over and ordered that all Indians must learn Castilian. In a letter to the King, a Fray Rodrigo de la Cruz expresses his opposition by arguing insufficient knowledge of Spanish by the Indians and proposes that Nahuatl become the official language of New Spain, because:

ya no hay pueblo que no haya muchos indios que no la sepan, y la dependan sin ningún trabajo, sino de uso y muchos se confiesen en ella. Es lengua elegantísima, tanto como cuantas hay en el mundo, y hay hecho arte y vocabulario y muchas cosas de la Sagrada escritura vueltas en ella y muchos sermonarios y hay frailes grandes lenguas. (Cifuentes 1998: 105)

In 1558, Viceroy Luis de Velasco too, writes to the then new King, Philip II, and presents him with a plan of Nahuatl linguistic standardization. By then, the population had dropped to some 6 million (from an estimated 25.2 million in 1519) (Baudot 2002: 40) and since it had been concentrated in towns and villages, standardization may have seemed a feasible plan. Philip II, according to Georges Baudot, was hesitant to decide too radically in any direction: “hispanización matizada de América y la necesaria transculturación de raíces amerindias, o la erradicación de la identidad amerindia que recomendaba una eliminacion definitiva del pasado amerindio, de sus idiomas y de sus distintivos lingüísticos y culturales” (Baudot 2002: 41). But the friars continued opposition to the forced castilianization must have fructified, and in 1570, the King recommends the general
dissemination and learning of Nahuatl, a move towards what Baudot calls a “transculturación de raíces Amerindias”. A sequence of ordinances and regulations ensues between 1579 and 1592 to further and reinforce this decision. With the creation, in 1580, of the chair of Nahuatl at the University of Mexico, orders are issued that only priests and friars with good knowledge of Nahuatl be appointed for missions, and those appointed should always bring with them a certificate of such knowledge, in case of inspection (Brice Heath 1970: 54). The rest of the languages were receding. Maya, Tarasco and Otomi would be still regionally important, but eventually only Nahuatl (or Mexicano) and Castilian (or Spanish) would be left to compete to become national languages.

New social strata were emerging in the colonial society: the loss in indigenous population (down to 1 million in 1605, according to some estimates) (Garza and Lastra 2000: 153) and the rapid mestizaje between European, Amerindian and African blood, implied also a change in balance between the languages, and favored Spanish as the common language particularly in urban centers and mining towns, where this mixing was stronger (Moreno Toscano 1996: 361). At the same time, the consolidation of a bureaucracy of civil servants who were transferred from Spain for relatively short periods and which had to communicate with the metropolis, favored also hispanization of their areas of influence.

In practice, for the Indians, it was bilingualism that could ensure social status and a vantage position from which land claims or official posts could be won. As agents and middlemen in this new society, interpreters (called nahuatlatos or lenguas), and escribanos, being close to the judiciary and the administrative, managed to carve niches in the Spanish society for them and their families. They were the main channel for communication
between Indians and non Indians throughout the Colonial period. Some members of this social stratum, educated by the friars in their convents, acculturated and more or less familiarized with the European cultural objects, will write the history of their ancestors or groups, in Spanish or in Nahuatl, and sometimes in both languages, re-elaborating the past and creating archetypical figures that still prevail.

The general Indian population, in the meantime, however, was kept under the tutelage of the Church by segregationist practices and policies, meant no doubt to protect them from exploitation by the encomenderos, but also to prevent them from mixing with the Spanish, which they would do if they learned the language, according to a 17th century source: “aprenden la lengua castellana y se hacen ladinos (que es el primer paso para tener atrevimientos, porque mientras hablan en su lengua son más humildes)”,10 as well as with the growing mestizo population, which was considered unruly and rebellious. In 1554, Viceroy Luis de Velasco wrote King Philip II: “Los mestizos van en grande aumento, y todos salen tan mal inclinados y tan osados para las maldades que a éstos y a los negros se les ha de temer ... Los mestizos andan entre los indios, y como tienen la mitad de su parte, acógenlos y encúbrenlos y dánles de comer; los indios reciben de ellos muchos malos tratamientos y ruines ejemplos”.11 In practice, the segregation established for the protection of the Indians turned counterproductive for them, since they found themselves marginalized, ignorant of Spanish and of the social codes that would enable them to function in the new society.

Against this background, general mistrust in Spain vis-à-vis all things Indian was fueled by the apparent failure to eradicate idolatries in the American colonies, and the

10 Cited in Brice Heath 1992: 75-76
emergence of rebellions, tainted by nationalistic undertones (both in Mexico and in Peru). This prepared the ground for radical shift in cultural and language policy for the colonies. In 1577, Philip II orders the seizure of Fray Bernardino de Sahagún\textsuperscript{12} magnum opus: *Historia general de las Cosas de la Nueva España*, a sort of Encyclopaedia of Indian culture, written in Spanish and Nahuatl, and in the same royal order addressed to the Viceroy Martín Enríquez, he says: “y estareís advertido de no consentir que por ninguna manera persona alguna escriba cosas que toquen a supersticiones y manera de vivir que estos indios tenían, en ninguna lengua…” (Baudot 2002: 51). Paradoxically, he also seizes and maintains in a secret place the books prepared under his own auspices by the crown scientist, Dr. Francisco Hernández, who had been sent to New Spain with the purpose of undertaking botanical and zoological research, in what is considered the first scientific expedition to America (Baudot 2002: 53). Philip III, his son, recalled the crown’s purpose to establish Spanish as the official language, but the reactions in New Spain were that it was almost impossible. There still was a gap between political and religious objectives: political ends needed Spanish while religious objectives could be only fulfilled by maintaining vernaculars; but these conflicting interests would gradually be reconciled. The influence of the Enlightenment meant, in this regard, that the monastic orders lost ground in favor of the seculars, who were less inclined to learn the languages and to live closer to the Indian population.

But the step towards effective hispanization was taken, and successive monarchs reinforced the move. In 1634, Philip IV, convinced that only Spanish as a general language would ensure the standardization needed for the consolidation of a bureaucracy,

\textsuperscript{12} *BHA* IV, 275 - 277
administration and educational systems, required the priests in missions and Indian villages to urge the Indians to learn Spanish. In view of the reluctance to obey this order, his successor, Charles II, issued in 1686 a Royal decree (Cédula Real) with pressing instructions to both priesthood and State to immediately enforce the laws promoting Spanish and report back to him on the progress achieved. The opposition was tenacious, and in 1693 he entrusted the colonial administration to monitor the program of implementation of Spanish. The continued lack of progress is made evident by the fact that in 1728, descendants of noble Indians, faced with the impossibility of social and economic promotion for lack of adequate instruction and, in particular, for lack of Spanish, were asking for the reopening of the early Indian Colleges of Santa Cruz and San Gregorio (Brice Heath 1992: 78-79).13

The secular clergy, which played a secondary role in the Christianization of New Spain, confined as it was to the urban centers and, particularly, to the provision of religious services for the Spaniards, held strong feelings against the monastics. Priests seldom learned indigenous languages and could not therefore apply for posts in Indian communities. Religious authorities were also of the opinion that the unity of the language would entail a spiritual unity of the nation. In 1769, archbishop Lorenzana wrote a comprehensive pastoral letter reviewing the linguistic policy and concluding that for the good of the naturales as well as for the good of the nation, Spanish should be extensively disseminated (Brice Heath 1992: 81-83).

So, the push towards hispanization came from several fronts: the Monarchy and the

13 These Colegios were established around 1530 with the purpose of creating an educated Indian elite. It is there that, with the assistance of Indian scholars, important grammars, lexicons and translations were produced. Indian scholars were trained in translating Latin and Spanish.
administration, the secular clergy and the Indian elite. However, there were obstacles from the social and political side. Maybe the best illustration of it is the veiled opposition of the Viceroy, Antonio María de Bucareli (1771-1779) for whom this hispanization endangered social order, since it meant socializing education. In a period of intense intellectual activity, of innovation and exchange of ideas, as I will show in the course of this research, he deliberately ignored all Royal orders towards the opening of education to Indians. In fact, the confrontation prevailed at the eve of Independence.

In his overview of Mexican Nationalism, David Brading (1973) defines this period (from the Conquest to the 1770’s) as the period of emergence of a national feeling, that he calls "patriotismo criollo", a sort of proto-nationalism, led by the elite of Spaniards born in Mexico who felt frustrated by their lack of access to political and administrative posts and humiliated by the permanent disdain from the Spanish born in the peninsula, but who felt no binding with the Indian population. Indeed, Brading uses as testimonies the works of prominent members of this elite, Spanish-speaking, Indian-despising, criolla society. He draws no correlation between the emergence of a national identity and the use of languages. We are thus led to think that only with the imposition of Spanish by the Crown these feelings emerged, or that nationalism in Mexico is of Spanish language, that only when multilingualism was abolished could a national feeling reveal itself, or that a national identity was only a minority feeling. I hope to be able to challenge this assumption in the course of this research.
FIRST PART

THEORETICAL OUTLINE
1.1. Translation studies

This work is very generally framed within translation studies. It is there where it was conceived and where it belongs. And, within translation studies, it is more narrowly framed by translation history. However, because I am tracing historical functions of translation and this is, therefore, a diachronical study, and because Spanish colonial translation is a relatively new field, I am using colonial history as a complementary frame; in particular, I have found coincidences of objects and methods with scholars linked to the history of representations. I have also looked for common ground in nationalism studies, since I am trying to establish the relationship between translation and national identity. These theoretical frames will be outlined in the following sections.

1.1.1. Descriptive translation studies, the cultural turn

This work is the product of readings and discussions of some authors who, during the last ten to fifteen years, have stretched the limits of the translation field, particularly those who introduced the idea that translation could be studied and described as a cultural phenomenon, irrespectively of the languages involved and the quality of the product (Gideon Toury, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere), those who exposed the relevance of translation in the many aspects of cultural life (Jean Delisle), the complicities of translation with power as well as its instrumentality to subvert power (Maria Tymoczko, Sherry Simon), the ability of translation to convey social discourses (Annie Brisset), the historicity of all translations, which means that translation can be studied both at macro historical and micro-historical levels (Paul Saint-Pierre, Anthony Pym, Clara Foz), the interlinkages
between translations and non-translations, those who have intimated a larger definition of translation (Gideon Toury), and those who have given visibility to translators (Anthony Pym, and Lawrence Venuti).

The idea that one could analyze translations as products of a culture was introduced and explained by Gideon Toury in his now classical work *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (1995), although he was already preparing the ground for it since the 1980’s. In so doing, he established the theoretical basis for a large array of future studies, particularly in history and criticism. He presents a theoretical framework under which translated texts can be descriptively studied, irrespectively of the fidelity to their originals. Drawing from the polysystem theory of I. Even-Zohar, he questioned the traditional location of translation as the bridge between two cultures by arguing that translations are facts of the target culture, that they are governed by norms, which are collective constrictions internalized by the translator, and that they belong to the polysystem of the receiving culture. By including into the field of translation the production of pseudo-translations, he stretched the definition of translation up to a point in which it encompasses almost anything that the target culture considers as a translation. Further stretches to the identification of translation, now in the sense of ideological responsibilities, have come from “the cultural turn” in translation studies, as introduced by Mary Snell-Hornby and developed by comparatists Susan Bassnett and the late André Lefevere (1990), who stressed the lack of innocence of any translation, and the double historicity of the translation process: “translation as an activity is always doubly contextualized” (1990: 11); that is, texts written originally in one context, having particular functions, are called to

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exert functions, which may or not be different from the original ones, in other contexts. These functions of translation can be more or less consciously given by the translator himself, but they mostly (cor)respond to what can be said and thought at his/her time (couldn't we say, that even very individualistic post-colonial or gendered translations could be published because of a social acquiescence towards post-colonial and gender issues?) Therefore, translations and their functions can be studied socially and historically, just as any text and the functions given to it. This feature makes possible to study translation from a sociocritical stand, as has been done by Annie Brisset.

The notion that translation can have as a function that of bringing about new identities is crucial in this thesis. The aspect of translation in the creation of national literary and aesthetic values was admirably explained by Antoine Berman (1984) in his work of the role of translation in German culture, particularly with regard to the notion of Bildung, and we are all acquainted with the role of translation in the constitution of modern Hebrew. A few examples can also be found in studies on Catalan translations and their role in advancing nationalistic ideas. These cases illustrate deliberate uses of translation in particular historical moments in which it is felt that a language could benefit from a foreign input. There are, however, other cases in which the identity is less a deliberate product of translation than an unintended effect of translation, although if its mechanisms can be elicited and generalized, it could be also deliberately used. This phenomenon, often referred to but rarely properly analyzed, is explained by Lawrence Venuti in his 1995 article Translation and the Formation of Cultural Identities. In it, he examines the fact that translation not only “constructs a domestic representation for a foreign text and culture”, but “simultaneously constructs a domestic subject, a position of intelligibility that is also an
ideological position” (Venuti 1995: 10), with several interesting examples of English translations of Classical Greek, English translations of modern Japanese literature and Bible translation. His main thrust is the formation of stereotypes in the receiving culture and his conclusion places the responsibility into the hands of the translator, thereby making him/her a true ethical subject.

Translation historical studies developed simultaneously to these innovative approaches, although they seem to have originally spun out of a need for recognition of the place and contribution of translation and translators to history in general. They seem not to echo the changes brought about by the cultural turn, but rather appear as a response to the invisibility of the translator topos, his/her ancillary condition, which encumbered the efforts to consolidate the discipline. The following section is devoted to a discussion of translation history development and its relationship with historiography.

1.1.2. Translation history and historiography

Let me start by making a brief allusion to last years’ Canadian Translation Studies Association (CATS) annual conference (May 2004), the theme of which was “Translation and the future of History” (“La traduction et l’histoire à venir” in French). Two prominent pioneers of the field were participating: Jean Delisle and Julio César Santoyo, both representing the approach of a “histoire totale”, concerned about covering as soon as possible as much field as possible and worried about the need to fill in the existing information gaps. Complementing this approach, a number of other participants, some of them, like myself, newcomers, were suggesting the need for “microhistory”, “localism”, case studies as well as the need for discussing methodologies, i.e.: what kind of history and
with what means and methods. In general, we were acknowledging the fact that there is a methodological indefiniteness in translation history, probably due to a status of the subdiscipline which is perceived as unclear.

The fact is that in translation history we seem to do many different things, with different approaches, in a very eclectic way. There are compilations, anthologies, biographies, short monographs, etc., etc., and nobody seems to care much about method. However, without any prescriptive intention, at least for the sake of the observation it seems to me pertinent to ask ourselves if the history of translations and translators does or should follow the methods and questions of general historiography (an idea that seems not to have occurred to the translation historians), or whether it does or should establish itself as a subdiscipline of translation studies, with questions and methods tied to the theoretical premises established roughly since the advent of descriptive translation studies (something that seems to be occurring, although not terribly consciously).

It is Anthony Pym who makes the link and endeavors to identify the place where Translation History could belong. He does so in *Method in Translation History* (1998), where he rightly starts by trying to locate the discipline within the field of Translation Studies, as charted by Holmes in 1972. He observes that Holmes did not envisage any particular heading or slot for Translation History. Pym devotes the following chapters to define several types of history-making, and explains the several specific difficulties historians of translation may encounter: how to deal with lists, catalogues, corpora, how to define translation, how to make sense of regularities, discern regimes, etc…, with the help of several examples. In his conclusion, Pym discusses the several options he thinks are possible to sponsor Translation History, only to discard them and to propose that a larger
field of Intercultural Studies, not yet defined, but clearly of a multidisciplinary profile, is the place where Translation History belongs. In any case, little attention is paid in translation history to questions of method, and nobody seems to have shown any intention to devise a general way to perform it.

But, in my opinion, the question of adscription is far from being irrelevant since it presupposes epistemologically different approaches: either we take translation history as belonging to translation studies, and we stress the translatory aspect, as could be the strict relationship between source text and target text, in a more "endogamic" move that can result in a reinforcement of our own translation field as an independent turf, or we take translation history as belonging to History (or one of its already established fields, i.e., intellectual history, cultural history, social history, history of "mentalities", of representations...), and we make use of their tools for analysis, and incorporate to their trends and debate their issues, in a more "exogamic" move, that can result instead in diluting and mainstreaming translation issues.

If we take Pym's idea to consider translation history into a new discipline, namely intercultural studies, arguing that translation is basically concerned with intercultural exchanges and that translators are intercultural subjects,\textsuperscript{15} we should start by asking ourselves if we need such a new field, and if we are convinced that interculturality has more explanatory power or is more encompassing than translation studies or History, we will have to devote some time to the definition of terms, identification of the objects, scoping, methods and questions that will distinguish our work from the one that we could undertake under the already known Translation Studies and History paradigms.

\textsuperscript{15} Never does Pym seem to think of the possibility of locating translation history anywhere close to History. Indeed, there is not a single item in his bibliography concerning history-making in general.
This is what Pym tried to do two years later, when he put his Intercultures to test in a second volume: *Negotiating the Frontier*, in 2000. It is a collection of essays on intercultural activity in different periods and places. Here, historical data are used as raw material to explain how cultures have negotiated through translation. No criticism is exerted on those data nor is any particular historical approach considered more relevant than any other to treat them. History is given there a secondary, instrumental role, the backdrop against which intercultures play. Pym puts the stress in the intercultural more than in the historical, and gives particular importance to the frontier societies, groups, entities or individuals who, by translating, bring about changes. And these frontier people constitute the intercultures. Since intercultures are universal and a-temporal, would this mean that our history of colonial translation (undeniably of an intercultural nature) could be studied with the same methods as present-day European Community translation (an interculture if there is one)?

And this is where History, and in particular intellectual history or history of ideas and representations, is missing. Pym’s insistence on seeing translators as the main characters and to give translations an essential role in cultures makes him disregard the nuances brought to colonial history by some critical studies. To respond to some of the assertions Pym makes in the chapters devoted to Spanish colonial translation, there are grounds to believe that Antonio de Nebrija’s grammar was not a textbook for linguistic colonialism; languages in America were seen by the missionaries in the context of their prejudices against local religion and not as an obstacle to imperialism; clearly, the imposition of Spanish was not a move to get rid of translators and interpreters and to suppress translation altogether. Bound up to the defense of translation and translators, Pym is also blind to
effect of the massive demographic shift in ratios of Spanish and *mestizo* to Indians during the period up to 1600, nor to the more natural acquisition of Spanish by mixed races, and by those populations forced to emigrate.

What I mean to say here is that if we try to look at colonial translation history only through the looking glass of today’s translation studies paradigms, and we want it to become the clue to what happened there, we may fall prey to simplistic arguments. Because, first of all, translation was one among many ways to represent colonial power, second, and more importantly, it was a multifaceted activity, used also in many and contradictory ways. Hence, from the methodological point of view, it is imperative to admit the fact that many aspects of interest to translation historians have been touched upon by other disciplines, mostly well established disciplines, like plain history or literary history. They have been mostly blind to translation, true, and maybe we could give ourselves the role of correcting this bias, but if we want our history to be of any relevance outside our own field, it has to acknowledge other disciplines’ inputs.

Another problem with Pym’s intercultures is that they are understood as the spaces between cultures, as if cultures would be easy to define and delimit, given objects, rather than moving and changing contructions. For instance, the demythologizing of some pre-Hispanic customs done by anthropologist Alfredo López Austin (1996) has demonstrated that very early in the colonial life some Spanish folk traits were assimilated by the local Mexican populations, and today they are commonly considered as the purest of Mexican traditions. The very notion of interculture presupposes a certain essentialism of the cultures between which it locates itself. And even if, for practical purposes, we would talk about cultures as national products, we can only be sure of their existence in those two or two and
a half centuries (18th-20th) in which nationalism has been the predominant ideology of the State. What would all the mixing and migrations of the pre-state Middle-Ages be? Isn’t mixing and migration, true intercultures, rather the rule than the exception in world history?

I agree with Pym in that intercultures are composed of people who bring about changes, who act as intermediaries, and these people are linked to some professions rather than others. In colonial Mexico we can talk undoubtedly about a class of “literate” (“letrados”, to borrow the term consecrated by Ángel Rama (2004)), that is, people from both sides who master the written word and, in the translators case, more than one language, as drivers of certain changes. Indeed, this is what I have found in my research: a number of Churchmen and laymen (sorry, only two women), at the beginning Spanish and Indian, and later mixed raced, who were acquainted with the written word, and who were also close to centers of power and decisions (Indians who were bilingual got closer to power than those that were not. Interpreters, as auxiliaries in the administration of justice, were well placed to acquire power and influence). But we can also identify this class because its traces are visible. It is obvious that these people were not what we would call today marginal, similar to the frontier characters that Pym likes to depict. Whether we are thinking of the exiled Jesuits praising the Mexican antiquities, or the descendants of the Indian caciques turned interpreters for the administration of justice, they did have connections and a social status that made them absolutely visible, for good or bad, and their networks were large and well knit.

Moreover, one must acknowledge the fact that, aside from this class of intellectuals, there was a popular culture which became very early truly mixed. It is historian Solange Alberro (1999, 2002) who analyzes the cross-culturation of the two societies in early
colonial times, and stresses, for instance, the role of Indian servants in the upbringing of Spanish children. Most importantly, she identifies the religious factor as the matrix of the new identity, a notion that will be illustrated later in these pages.

Now, Pym’s solution to locate translation history in intercultural studies, in addition to overstress the translation role, dissolves the historical aspect into the intercultural one, and leaves scope and methods too vaguely defined. And the defining restrictions he places upon the concept of interculturality (Pym 2000: 4-5) while making it workable in certain instances, do not seem applicable to the case of Spain’s colonial endeavors, at least in its early phase, in which virtually everybody (professionals and non professionals on both sides, to retain Pym’s link between interculturality and professional status) was engaged in the negotiation because it was simply a matter of life and death. In other words, interculturality in our colonial case would be far from derivative. It was everywhere. Not only so, but it seems to me that it was the intercultural negotiation which defined the sides: simplistically put, there was no self-conscience of Spain before the contact, and there was no self-conscience of the Indies before the contact. It was the Indians who made the Spanish and vice-versa.

Pym’s work, however, helps us indeed to frame the questions and understand what is being done. Particularly, his tier approach: archaeology, explanation, criticism, seems to me quite pertinent to analyze the purpose and scope of the ways in which we write our history. In fact, the main thrust of translation history as it is published today, and which will necessarily continue to push in view of the information gaps we still have, is the one that puts names and dates, places and context to translators and translations. This is what Anthony Pym calls “archaeology”. It still has a vindictive flavor, but its products have
become richer and sounder, and have taken distance from what could be termed “insider’s history”. 16 Part of my research will follow this descriptive, quantitative approach, which has developed from within translation studies themselves. And I will also try to explain how some things were brought about by translation and will definitely try to derive lessons for the present in my conclusion, so I hope to cover the three facets (archaeology, explanation, criticism) of Pym’s translation history method.

The problem evolves, I think, around what Clara Foz suggested in the same conference17: the uneasiness felt by translation historians when confronted with the enormity and grandiosity of the History field, with its protracted tradition, its great moments, its names, currents, trends, schools… Should we, or do we, belong to that, and should consequently be tied to its methods? Or should we simply skip the whole thing, build our own methods, stop calling ourselves historians (as was suggested on that occasion) and find a different denomination, which could save us from the dangers of criticism for amateurism, or for making “militant history”?

It is true that some of the aspects that I intend to explore have already been analyzed by historians and anthropologists who belong to the post-structural movement and I think that much can be drawn from their methods and findings. This explains why, when dealing with the group of translations I have classified as the Translational Canvass, I have extensively drawn from post-structuralist specialists in middle American history and

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16 Compare, for instance, Translators Through History, which was an introductory overview of the fields in which translators have born their influence (as lexicographers, diplomats, disseminators of religions,….) and the two collective collections of biographies: Portraits de traductrices and Portraits de traducteurs, which give us close-ups of some mostly unknown translators of influential works, revealing their thinking on translation and pointing at ways in which their translation strategies have had ideological consequences. I am also thinking, for the Spanish context, on the collection El Tabaco que fumaba Flínio, by Ana Catelli and Margarita Gargatagli.

17 «Translation, History and the Translation Scholar», in Translation and the History to come, in press, UOP
anthropology, most prominently Serge Gruzinski and Jorge Klor de Alva, Solange Alberro and, particularly, from anthropologist-translator Louise Burkhart. The common feature in these scholars is that while they all acknowledge the presence of a power differential between colonizers and colonized, they search precisely at the intersections to see the ways in which negotiations were made, and the moments and circumstances in which power was transferred, the creation of new identities out of the friction between the two cultures.

When dealing with other types of translation, namely the hybrid texts that help building a myth of the past, as well as the translation of classical authors and the ones that illustrate the desire to become a modern nation, I have also based my reflections upon Serge Gruzinski and Carmen Bernand.

In closing this section, I must admit that I have not yet been blessed with the answer or the inspiration with regards to this matter of where should Translation History belong, but the scope of this chapter does not allow for any further musings. I confess a clear preference for using history methods for history of translation here; it is clear to me that as long as it is the socio/historical functions of translation that we are trying to understand, our goals converge towards the goals of history making, and especially the goals of cultural history and history of representations. But I am also in favour of grounding the history of translation within translation studies, so that in its objects and scope it remains tied to our own modus operandi, and, in that particular matter, I align myself to the trend inaugurated by the Descriptive Translation Studies movement; this means that translation issues here will be examined in the historical context rather than by what has traditionally been done, that is to say, looking for the relationship translations entertain or should entertain with their originals. I would hope that my purpose and methodology reflects the desire that history of translation starts looking at ways of being relevant not only to ourselves but also to other disciplines, just as Art History or Urban History do.
1.2. Language and nation

In Western tradition, the relationship between language and nation seems to be deeply set: “Medieval ecclesiastics and scholars, with their biblically based belief in the common descent of mankind and their theory of an original community of language, found it natural to see post-Babel differentiation of languages as the first step in the formation of races or peoples” (Bartlett 1996: 128). The link is established as causal, which is: languages determine nations, and not vice versa.

Also, the quote Robert Collison chose for the first chapter of his *History of Foreign Language Dictionaries*: (Collison 1982) “Le premier livre d’une nation est le Dictionnaire de sa langue” symbolically illustrates the deep integration between language and nation. On the one hand, nations identify themselves, among other aspects, by the language they speak, but we could also interpret the statement as meaning that the wealth of words of a nation’s language may well be the measure for the wealth of the nation itself.

So, the language we speak is one of the ways by which we identify ourselves as nations (beyond gender, family, social class or religion). Such is the identification with our language that any of us, whatever our educational background, will feel that we have a full command of it. We all have views, so to speak, about how should things be said, and, as far as language is concerned, we may assert our opinions with more self-assurance than when talking about matters which we are objectively more familiar with. What we say in our nation as compared to what other nations say can be the subject of endless conversations, from brainy academic discussions to just small talk. It is a theme that suggests an immediate sense of belonging. In my ethnic group, the Catalans, there is pride in saying that a given word (take, for instance, “esparracat” (ragged), which phonetically suggests the
act of tornig, ragging) has no exact equivalent in Spanish, the official national language
(which would be the much softer-sounding “harapiento”). I myself, when translating from
Catalan into Spanish, have felt an intimate resistance to the transfer. The resistance is
fundamentally irrational, such as when we stubbornly deny equal status to some culinary
delicacies present in both nations. But let’s not be mistaken: this symbolic linkage between
Catalan language and nation is far from being trivial, judging by the portion of the budget
that our local government allocates to the promotion of Catalan among both Catalans and
immigrants, as well as to linguistic standardization efforts (creation of term banks and
dictionaries) aimed to ensure that whatever linguistic innovations that may come from
elsewhere are rapidly echoed by local linguistic products. So rapidly, in fact, that we may
even believe that they were not prompted by the foreign language but spontaneously
generated at home, which gives a boost to our national pride. Language and nation
entertain, therefore, links that belong to the subjective, emotional spheres, and also to the
collective, political spheres. Translation, in the largest linguistic sense, as both a frontier
that sets the limits and a bridge that overcomes them, as well as a way of appropriation of
other culture’s accomplishments, plays a role in this relationship. Also, in its proper,
material, sense, translation contributes to this relationship by serving as a means of
consolidation of a cultural identity, a function particularly visible in cases or at times
(Catalonia or Québec during the last decades) where it is felt that the particular identity is in
need of special protection (from threats that may be real or perceived, and expressed
politically or otherwise). Sociocriticism analysis carried by Annie Brisset on the
translations of Shakespearean drama into Quebec French in the period of the referendum
for autonomy has shown how translation shifts consistently contribute to nourish national
feelings (Brisset 1996). Another response to this need to nourish national identity feelings
through language is the development of the language industries (translation, interpretation, terminology) in Catalonia and Quebec, which is being fostered at the highest level of policy-making.

We also find translation playing an important role when new national identities are being created. Two cases distant in time come to mind: the rise of modern European nation-states during the Renaissance and, more recently, the creation of the State of Israel and the re-creation of Hebrew. The first European grammars and bilingual lexicons belong to the Renaissance; they establish a distance with respect to Latin, they outline the divide between linguistic communities as well as the material possibilities to bridge this divide. Significantly, their development runs parallel to that of cartography. From then on, it was possible to trace the frontiers of languages along the lines of the map. The first bilingual Latin-Romance lexicons, and at least the first Spanish grammar, were conceived to separate Latin from its dialects; indirectly they were also fixing the vernaculars and acknowledging equal status with them. They became then apt to be recognized as national languages.\textsuperscript{18}

Translation into these languages and, in particular, Bible Renaissance translations, which can be considered as statements of dissidence against Rome and Latin in the same breadth, will accompany the constitution of French, German and English as national languages.\textsuperscript{19}

But the role to which I will draw the attention to is that of creating new identities, particularly in the case of colonized nations. Exaggerated as they may seem, statements that have become cliché, such as “Like all new worlds, Canada came into existence by means of

\textsuperscript{18} It was not always a deliberate or clear move: Antonio de Nebrija, the author of the first Spanish grammar, arguing in favor of the Spanish language as a weapon of colonization (“compañera del imperio”), in fact wrote the grammar with the purpose of cleansing Latin from barbarisms incorporated through decades of mingling with the vernaculars (Kahane 1992).

\textsuperscript{19} See, in particular, chapter 2: “Translators and the Development of National Languages”, and chapter 6: “Translators and the Spread of Religion”, in Delisle and Woodsworth’s (eds.) Translators through History.
translation procedures”, 20 or “América es un continente traducido” suggest the instrumentality of translation (both figuratively and strictly speaking) in the formation of colonial entities, and this is the aspect to which I will devote my reflections.

Historians and nationalism specialists have not considered language interaction, not to say translation, as an aspect worthy of important consideration in the studies about the contacts between colonialist powers and their colonies. In particular, positive, essentialist history has been blind to translation, generally discarding it as a filter obstructing the way that leads to the truth. But even in historiographical approaches closer to literary studies, there seems to be little attention paid to the use of translation in power relationships. There are, however, noteworthy exceptions.

Some post-structuralist and post-colonial studies have observed that the symbolic and material aspects of translation, inasmuch as it is a particular way of representation, make it a significant tool for representing the colonial contact, the colonizer-colonized relationship and the negotiation of cultural differences. The general theoretical basis for this has been discussed by Tejaswini Niranjana (1992), whose work can be said to belong to the framework set by E. Said’s Orientalism (1994) as well as to the field opened by ethnographers and anthropologists such as Talal Asad (1973), James Clifford (1986) and Johannes Fabian (1983) who have questioned the transparency of cultural representations (or translations) and transferred anthropological issues to the field of alterity relationships.

In the Hispanic context, Vicente L. Rafael (1993) has studied the particular case of colonial Philippines. Rafael uses the example of missionary translation to reveal the

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misunderstandings characterizing the communication between the Spanish friars and the Tagalog-speaking populations, suggesting, in the last analysis, the failure of the indoctrination efforts.

Post-structuralist anthropologist Jorge Klor de Alva has given us interesting insights, particularly in his works on Classical Nahuatl and colonial discourse (Klor 1989; 1992), where he observes the designation of Classical Nahuatl by the Spaniards as the national language, by which they appropriated its authority, nobility and prestige and transferred it to Spanish by means of translation.

In summing up, we can say at this juncture - that is, with reference to the particular relationship between nation and translation - , that the textual base of a new social, cultural, political entity born out of a colonial endeavor can be traced in the contractual gestures of translation, and that the self-image of the nation is fed by a large number of representations, one of which being translation.

Now, some consideration should be given to the conceptual framework that underpins the understanding of what we know as nation and its derivatives and qualifications, and suggest possible crossroads with the phenomenon of translation. To start with, some terminological precision is called for here, since throughout this work I will refer to national identity, nationalism and national discourse, terms which can sometimes be used as quasi-synonymous. It is also important to be able to approach them from the viewpoint of translation, an approach that as far as I know, has no precedent, at least in the disciplines to which these terms belong.

The discussions devoted to the problem of defining a phenomenon such as nationalism exceed the scope of this doctoral research. At the risk of simplification,
therefore, I will not dwell on the point of definitions and will rather attempt to locate my translational approach with regard to the theoretical currents of nationalism thinking that have gained general consensus in the last decades, more precisely since E. Renan’s seminal essay: Qu’est-ce que c’est qu’une nation?.\textsuperscript{21}

1.2.1. Nationalism

According to Anthony D. Smith (1997: 73), nationalism is “an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential “nation”’. It is, Smith says more succinctly, a political ideology revolving around a cultural doctrine. At a more general level, though, he says, “nationalism must be seen as a form of historicist culture and civic education, one that overlays or replaces the older modes of religious culture and familial education. More than a style and doctrine of politics, nationalism is a form of culture – an ideology, a language, mythology, symbolism and consciousness […] and the nation is a type of identity whose meaning and priority is presupposed by this form of culture” (Smith 1997: 92). Nationalism presents itself as territorial, religious, ethnic or linguistic, or as a combination of these elements, in differing emphasis. Dating the birth of nationalism is, largely, a matter of definition. The broader the definition, the earliest the date. With regard to its origins, two main approaches have developed during the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. There is the theoretical current, known as modernism, which sustains that, as an ideology and movement, nationalism is European and relatively recent, having its origins in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, according to Ernest Gellner (Gellner 1964). Following Elie Kedourie’s

categorical declaration: “Nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century” (Kedourie 1960: i), Gellner argues that nations are largely a modern construction, or rather, invention, as summed up in his similarly radical statement: “Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness. It invents nations where they do not exist” (Gellner 1964: 168). In general, nationalism is thought of as a European creation; only Benedict Anderson suggests American nationalisms could predate European (Anderson 1991: 191). Modernists highlight the construction aspect of the phenomenon, implied by the notions of “imagined communities” (Anderson 1991), “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm 1983), or “fictive ethnicity” (Balibar 1994). Although they recognize the importance of socio-cultural aspects such as identity and history in the formation of nations, they give them a lesser role than, for instance, the development of institutional structures or the incorporation of popular classes or women into the political life of the state.

A second theoretical approach is the one known as ethno-symbolism, sustained chiefly by Anthony D. Smith, for whom although nations are modern, their concern is primarily identity and history; therefore, their time is more protracted than the modernists claim to be (Hutchinson 1994: 40).

Hutchinson too, like Smith, in reviewing the current state of scholarship in the subject, stresses that nations are a “species of ethnic group”, and that they are “regulated by myths of common descent, a sense of shared history and a distinctive culture”, and argues that modernists “have failed to explore [...] the relationship of nationalism to other belief systems and the complex symbolic mediations and appropriations by which nationalists are able to canalize the past for their purposes” (Hutchinson 2001: 75-77).
In both currents, though, the linguistic aspect of nationalism is highlighted. In its 1977 *Nations and States, An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*, Hugh Seton-Watson stresses the importance of language in the determination of national movements. Language-based national consciousness is a common feature in nation building, but in different manifestations: not all languages aspire to political autonomy for their nations, as it is the case in multilingual states, and others, like Arabic or Spanish, constitute the basis of larger, supranational, allegiances. Language preservation or decline are not a clear function of nationalist tendencies: in Spanish America, except for the case of Paraguay, where guarani is still considered an official language, all states determined at one point or another in their history that Spanish would be the official language, and dozens of local languages were and still are disappearing. In contrast, the white South-African government encouraged the development of local languages “with the undoubted aim”, according to Seton-Watson, “of dividing the Africans in order to better rule them” (Seton-Watson 1977 : 472). In a sense, one could interpret the imposition of Nahuatl over other indigenous languages by the colonial authorities in a similar way. The presence of grammarians and philologists in the constitution of this language-based national or cultural identity has been explained by Seton-Watson, particularly in relation to Central and Eastern European states, and later stressed by Anderson as a force shaping the “imagined community” constituting the nation (Anderson 1991). Indeed, grammars, dictionaries and histories of the languages create a representation of the nation who speaks them. Other representations are brought about historiography, art and museology, among the most documented ones, and translation, among the less documented ones.

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22 We should not assume, though, that linguistic nationalism is equivalent to “one language = one nation”. In modern times, Canada and Switzerland, for instance, take pride in their multilingual status. It seems that language, in this sense, has to be taken less literally (Gellner 1964: 174).
Nationalism, as an ideology promoted by the State, makes use of these representations of the nation in order to establish an ideal community proud of its origins, potential and accomplishments. Translation, which traditionally purports to replace something said otherwise, elsewhere, in another language, is one of such representations. What is translated and when depends upon a consensus on what the nation needs to import.

Some texts or authors are translated because they are deemed necessary for the building of a national literature, or national culture in general. Most Western languages have regularly performed translations of Greco-Latin authors, or of literature classics. Within this context, this appropriation of other cultures accomplishments through translation amounts to a statement of equivalence with them. Translation, as a statement of relationship among equals, contributes to parallelisms with the original culture assets that are deemed essential for the nation.

Some texts carry information that is indeed necessary for the self-identification of the nation. Let’s take, for example, the Mexican colonial texts written in Nahuatl during the 16th century, which contain most information we have on the pre-Hispanic past. Nowadays, very few people are knowledgeable about that particular register of this language and, in general, their contents seem to be encrypted. This puts an enormous responsibility upon the translators who have transmitted them to us. However, it is not recognized that the knowledge we have about the pre-Hispanic past is largely dependent on a few translations.

When a representation is successful enough, it becomes a stereotype. In his *Invented Traditions*, Hobsbawm has shown the mechanisms by which nationalism creates such stereotypes (Hobsbawm 1983), and Anderson contributes a selection of other representations: museums, census, maps (Anderson 1991) in the formation of the
"imagined community" that is fostered by nationalism. If we turn to Mexico, the representation brought about the afore-mentioned translations in the 20th century helped to consolidate the Aztec past as the emblem of the nation (Payás 2004), a source of pride both internally and vis à vis other nations (Gamio 1960).

I concur with Natividad Gutiérrez (1999) in that the two approaches to nationalism need not be opposed. They can be taken as complementary in that they highlight different aspects of the complex and multifarious phenomenon, which is the constitution and continuity or dissolution of a nation.

1.2.2. National identity and discourse

The term “national identity”, on the other hand, refers to the collective feeling of belonging to which nationalism appeals and which it entertains. The emotional nature of this sentiment defies and goes beyond articulation in rational terms. To take an illustrious example, Freud expressed that he felt bonded to Jews and Jewishness by “many obscure and emotional forces, which were the more powerful the less they could be expressed in words, as well as by a clear consciousness of inner identity, a deep realization of sharing the same psychic structure”. It is the “non rational core of the nation […] triggered through nationalist poetry […], through music, […], through use of familiar metaphors…”23 Again, along the lines of discussion of the term “nationalism”, we have a dual theoretical approach: firstly, the modernist current, sustaining that a national consciousness is not older than the advent of “print-capitalism”. Anderson establishes the link between, on the one hand, the upsurge of vernaculars, their “assembly” or clustering as print-languages, and, on

23 Cited in Walker Connor 1996: 72-74
the other, their territorialization ultimately creating the “embryo of a nationally imagined community” of speakers of a national language (Anderson 1991: 44). In other words, that there is no national identity before nationalism, *i.e.*, it is not a natural thing to “belong to a nation”, but that it is a construction derived from nationalism (Gellner 1964). Secondly, the ethno-symbolic current, which tracks this identity to an ethnic past (Smith 1984). For ethno-symbolists, ethnic legitimating is crucial for the survival of the nation. One important aspect of this approach, which has a bearing upon translation, is myth formation. Smith proposes in particular that the myths of descent, while being unique to each culture, possess myth components that are common to all nationalist movements: a myth of temporal origins, a myth of location and migration, a myth of ancestry, a myth of heroic age, a myth of decline and a myth of regeneration (Smith 1984). The formal presentation of these myths requires discursive transformations sometimes akin to translation (transwritings) and sometimes translation proper: in my catalogue, hybrid texts, partly interlinguistic translations, partly intersemiotic translations, partly extrapolations, written by *mestizo* chroniclers during the first hundred years after the Conquest belong to this myth-making tradition.

For Smith, the question central to identity: “who am I?” is intrinsically tied to the question the answer to which will establish my social and territorial location: “where do I come from?” And this is also true for the national identity. The quest of origins seems to be also universal and timeless, and it adopts different modes of ethnic myth-making, broadly classified in two categories: genealogical and ideological (or biological and cultural-ideological), not always necessarily separate but overlapping. The myths of common descent, temporal origins, location and migration, heroic age, decline and regeneration,
identified by Smith as some of the ethnic myths that support a national identity, are intensely tapped by nationalist movements (Smith 1984).

Let’s take the case of the Aztec mythical arrival to the valley of Anahuac (present Mexico valley) at the beginning of the twelfth century. It is known (Bernardino de Sahagún, the sixteenth century missionary ethnographer is the first to have signaled it) that in order to legitimate its dominance over the Toltec populations inhabiting the valley, the Aztec king Izcóatl (1427-1440) ordered the destruction of the Toltec books, which narrated their history, and the subsequent writing of the new history. But the new history could not be created totally anew. As Enrique Florescano says:

los aztecas echaron mano del prestigioso pasado tolteca [...] que exaltaron hasta volverlo una edad de oro [...] se apropiaron del aura cultural que le atribuía a Tula la creación del calendario, la astronomía, la agricultura, las ciencias y las artes. De este modo se hicieron de una genealogía de padres fundadores que los ligaba con los orígenes mismos del cosmos y los hacía partícipes de las hazañas más notables de los seres humanos. (Florescano 1999: 146-47)

The radical reelaboration of history declared that the Aztecs were predestined to rule the land and that they were the true heirs of the prestigious Toltecs: it is the myth of the splendor of the Aztec past, which has nourished national pride and has been invoked whenever it could serve nationalist purposes. In the 1940s, a period of intense nationalism, when the eminent Nahuatl specialist Ángel María Garibay translated texts related to the pre-Hispanic past, he too, by his choice of words in the translation, stressed the importance of the Toltec civilization (Payás 2004). Confirming that slash and burn procedures in

24 BHA IV, 275 - 276
history reinvention are widespread, in early colonial times, Diego de Landa, the Dominican friar who was in charge of the indoctrination of the Maya peoples of Yucatán, led a public ceremony in which many books of the Indians where their histories were told were ritually burned. A new history had to be written, by which the nation could explain itself how it had all begun, where they came from and what their destiny was: translation was there again to assist in the selection of what would be of help in the new narrative: in his *Indios reales, indios imaginarios*, Guy Rozat examines how the translation and dramatic representation of the fall of Jerusalem furnished an *a posteriori* explanation for the fall of Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital city, at the hands of the Spanish (Rozat 2002).

Although, given its collective nature, we could think of myth-making as a natural, anonymous endeavor, in fact the consolidation and dissemination of myths is the task of a class of intellectuals (priests, literati, grammarians and philologists, historians and wise men of different sorts). It is them who have access to the sources, and who are the interpreters and chief transmitters of myths, which can be then disseminated through several means, most prominently by collective rituals such as religious, political or school ceremonies. The sum of these collective rituals, and the textual devices sustaining them, that are geared to obtain a social consensus on identity, could be understood as subject to what Marc Angenot defined as “social discourse”: “les systèmes génériques, les répertoires topiques, les règles de dissémination d’énoncés qui, dans une société donnée, organisent le dicible –le narrable et l’opinable– et assurent la division du travail discursif » (Angenot 1988: I).

The notion of national discourse I am using in this work could therefore be defined

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25 *BHA* III, 86 - 88
as the set of discursive strategies, choice of topics and means of dissemination that convey the notion of a national identity. To study the national discourse means to trace the ideologemes of national identity, common heritage, unity of destiny, within the “énorme masse des discours qui parlent, qui font parler le socius et viennent à l’oreille de l’homme en société” (Angenot 1988: II). Nationalism as an ideology resorts to a national discourse in order to reinforce these ideologemes. We can call it then nationalist propaganda, which is disseminated and redistributed by the intellectuals and the institutions of the State, chiefly through the educational system.

Along these lines, I am considering translated texts with their paratexts (prologues, commentaries, glosses) and production conditions (selection of authors, texts and languages to be translated), as constituting a discursive practice operating within the social discourse that may carry and disseminate elements of these ideologemes of national identity, common heritage, etc…

What is the place of translation as a discursive practice within the national discourse? It is worth emphasizing here the heterogeneity and interconnectedness of the discourses on the idea of nation. A nation is not only represented by the historiographic or political discourses, but is also represented in cinema, visual arts, urbanism and architecture, among other means, together with autonomous textual production (literary and not literary) and translations. All these discourses on the nation may be formally dissimilar (visual, textual, oral…), but there are connections between them. Echoing Bakhtine,

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26 According to Marc Angenot, an ideologeme is a presupposition of discourse, a shared postulate, a common ground, or an ideological maxim "underlying an utterance whose subject/matter covers a particular field of relevance (be it "moral value", "the Jew", "the mission of France", or "the maternal instinct"). Edmond Cros has extended the meaning of the ideologeme to include networks of value systems that are reproduced and disseminated by the social discourse, such as "the heritage". Jameson defines them as historically determined conceptual or semic complexes which can project themselves also as "philosophical concepts, or in the form of a protonarrative, a private or collective narrative fantasy" (Jameson 1981: 115).
Angenot talks about a general interaction among discourses, a marked interdiscursivity:


This translation discourse entertains therefore also intertextual relations with other discourses, namely with autonomous texts, just as there are connections between visual and textual discourses. Serge Gruzinski’s works on the occidentalization of the colonial society through its visual productions, in linking textual and visual discourse show the usefulness of such intertextual analysis. An example from my research could be the portrait of Aztec God Tezcatlipoca, with the legend “Tezcatlipoca, otro Jupiter” (Fig. 2), in the Códice Tovar.

![Fig. 2. Tezcatlipoca.](image)
The *Tovar Codex* is an illustrated manuscript written by mestizo Jesuit Juan de Tovar\textsuperscript{27} at the end of the 1580s. A later chronicle, the 1615 monumental *Monarquía Indiana*, by the Franciscan Juan de Torquemada\textsuperscript{28} shows intertextual relationships with the Tovar manuscript. Tovar translates Tezcatlipoca into Jupiter, and Torquemada elaborates, in a whole chapter: “Cap. XX. Que trata de el Dios Tezcatlipoca, y de los atributos que le aplicaban, y como fue este el que los antiguos Gentiles llamaron Jupiter” (Torquemada 1615/1975, I: 38-41)

1.3. Methodological questions

The specificities of this research demanding methodological attention are the following:

1. The research covers all translations (published and manuscripts, actual and presumed, extant and disappeared), in all languages (over 25) and all fields.

2. The research covers a long span (1521-1821), circumscribed by two historical facts: the Conquest and the Independence.

3. The purpose is to elicit historical functions of translations, in particular with reference to identity creation.

Therefore, the methodological approach should help dealing with a large number of translations, managing and classifying translations and translators lists, they should also help in the selection of representative items to be analyzed and, finally, they should assist in the analysis.

\textsuperscript{27} *BHA* V, 52 - 53
\textsuperscript{28} *BHA* V, 37 - 38
Two methodological models will be followed:

1. Anthony Pym’s archaeological approach for the quantitative analysis.
2. History of representations and descriptive translation studies approach for the qualitative analysis.

As I explained in the chapter on language and nation, I am trying to force myself to see beyond our field, with the result, as it should become clear in the course of the following pages, that as we go back into Colonial times and as soon as we risk some interdisciplinarity our traditional categories for delimiting, identifying and classifying translation (source culture, receiving culture, text, author, reader) show their inadequacy: the parameters that were good to tell us what we, translators, are, and the kind of work we do, do not strictly apply, as I will show in the following pages. I have therefore found myself more than once away from familiar grounds, exposed to wind and weather.

I think, nonetheless, that this exercise is most useful. Tracing the occurrence of translation through history and trying to elucidate the functions that it has been called to perform, instead of looking at translation per se, I am trying to avoid an essentialist tendency to view translation as a unique, different phenomenon, for which we have to invent new tools of understanding. Translation is a form of representation and, as such, it produces meanings, but it is not the only form of representation and we can truly take advantage of other disciplines approaches to investigate into these meanings.

In my work, translation is considered as an intellectual practice capable of producing and reproducing collective representations, such as an idea of nation. As far as method is concerned, this means that although I will examine some translations in detail, it is the general picture that concerns the research. For this purpose, I have collected all types
of translation, both literary and non-literary, from and to indigenous, foreign and classical languages. The collection overlaps adjacent fields: grammar and dictionary-making, which coexist with translations during the missionary period (approximately the years of the "spiritual conquest": 1520s to 1570s). I am also collecting borderline cases, such as versions or transformations of Spanish or Latin doctrinal works written in indigenous languages by Spanish friars, that can be presumed to be translations; and lost translations, such as the first translation, which, according to several authors, was also the first printed item in America: Juan de Estrada's Spanish translation of 7th century spiritual classic, St. John Climacus' *Scala Paradisi*, printed in 1532 for the use of the Franciscans living in the convent of Mexico City.

A few words regarding the problem of obtaining data for translation history in Latin America: in general, we are talking about a new field, the objects of which have not been catalogued, and which are not always consistently identified in library catalogues, particularly for the Colonial period. We still depend therefore upon secondary sources belonging to other disciplines: in philology and anthropology we can find, e.g., data on codices with annotated translations and, in general, on the situation of indigenous languages vs. Spanish; in history of literature we can also find references to literary translation, although the stress is always put in the original works and not in the translations themselves, which deserve the usual cursory treatment. With regard to non-literary translation, data are even more difficult to trace, and the sources that can be consulted for information are the histories of science and education and, of course, the hemerographic collections. Whatever the case, the dissemination of data makes the task of searching and selecting time-consuming. In spite of the wealth of scholarly work in Colonial studies, we

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29 *BHA* II, 250
cannot but recognize that as far as translation history is concerned, we are in the process of creating information by patiently gleaning in other disciplines’ materials.

The history of Greco-Latin Classical texts seems to be the only aspect having been continuously explored.\textsuperscript{30} The department of Classical Studies (Letras Clásicas) at the UNAM, as well as its Instituto de Estudios Bibliográficos, have for long studied the use of Latin as well as the re-edition, translation and reception of Classical works in Mexico. In the periodization presented by the late Ignacio Osorio Romero (1989), the best known specialist in this field, the first Mexican translation of a Classic, published in 1581, was Persio’s \textit{Satires}, the author of which was Bartolomé Melgarejo (a scholar from the University of Alcalá, who was appointed to occupy the first chair in canonical studies at the newly funded university of Mexico in 1553).\textsuperscript{31}

Luckily, there exists a strong bibliographical and biographical tradition in Latin America since the 18\textsuperscript{th} century (both religious and civil). This tradition is rooted in the patriotic desire to attest to the intellectual capability of the Hispanic overseas empire, at least in the Mexican two largest bibliographies: the \textit{Bibliotheca mexicana}, by Eguiara y Eguren (1755), and Beristáin’s \textit{Biblioteca Hispano Americana septentrional} (1821/1947),\textsuperscript{32} my main source. Incidentally, in both cases, this patriotism is conservative, that is, not expressed as a will of political independence. Indeed, Beristáin’s, bibliography was written as an argument against the movement for independence, which tenants claimed that Spain had held its colonies in intellectual neglect.

\textsuperscript{30} Ignacio Osorio Romero, “La traducción de los autores grecolatinos en México”, in \textit{Lenguaje y tradición}, Herón Pérez Martínez (ed.) El Colegio de Michoacán, 1989. See also the bibliography listed in this article.
\textsuperscript{31} Beristáin, tomo III, p. 230. Osorio Romero notes that in the introduction to the translation, Melgarejo says that, as far as possible, he had «moralized» the text and adjusted it to the Holy Scriptures (\textit{op.cit.}, p. 440).
\textsuperscript{32} These dates correspond to the first and last edition. The one I have consulted is the only complete edition, namely, the one published in Mexico by Editorial Navarro - Ediciones Fuente Cultural, in 1947.
Now, the New Spain translation catalogue extracted from the *Biblioteca Hispano-Americana Septentrional*, this bio-bibliography originally written in 1821 by José Mariano Beristáin de Souza, a prominent Mexican Catholic priest, is composed of 405 names of translators and transwriters, lexicographers and grammarians and over 700 titles. The extraction was done manually,\(^{33}\) by reading the some 4,700 entries in search of New Spain translators and translations,\(^{34}\) and transferring the data into a record in which name, dates, titles of the translations, some biographical data, and the location of the entry in the bio-bibliography, were registered. A control of the data was done by verification of each entry in a modern Mexican biographical dictionary,\(^{35}\) and the location of each entry in this control dictionary was also incorporated into the register.

<table>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Category:</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>beg. 17(^{th}) c.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Origin:</strong></td>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Title:</strong></td>
<td>Vocabulário manual de las lenguas castellana y mexicana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Printed:</strong></td>
<td>Mexico, 1611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other data:</strong></td>
<td>this vocabulary seems to have been very popular. It was reprinted 14 times (last: 1887). A facs. edition was published in 1982 (UNAM) with a preliminary study by Ascensión H. de León-Portilla.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language:</strong></td>
<td>Spanish-Nahuatl /Nahuatl-Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In view of Beristáin’s intention, we speculated at that time (2001-2002) that the bibliography was as complete as it could possibly be at the time and with the available resources. In fact, the author himself says in the introduction that he purports to have

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\(^{33}\) Under my direction, by Rosario Rueda, BA student at the Instituto Angloamericano de Puebla, Mexico.

\(^{34}\) I am taking Mexico in its present geographical boundaries. The origin of the translators is immaterial for our purposes, as well as the place where the translations were published.

registered everything, and not only a selection of the best authors. He should not have missed the opportunity to include even translators and translations in the list. There were, however, omissions, some more obvious than others: the most obvious, and natural one, is the absence of pictographic or mixed (pictographic and alphabetical) texts, which at the time were little known and considered pre-historical (although most of them had been produced in post-Conquest times). These texts should be considered to belong to the translation field, since they were brought about by means of interlinguistic or intersemiotic transfer, and they contain transcriptions in Nahuatl or translations into Castilian.

There is also a very large production of bureaucratic documents, of which a part could be said to be translations. I refer to the hundreds of texts related to civil and judicial administration that still exist in the Mexican archives. I have decided nevertheless to concentrate on authorial texts that were registered by Beristáin in his patriotic bibliographical apparatus. I have also thought it reasonable to include anonymous works only if I have been able to see them; Beristáin enlists a number of anonymous (by him or as products of later additions), but there are possibly repetitions and their status is difficult to determine unless one can examine each of them. I will analyze some individual anonymous that I have been able to examine, and they are included in my primary sources bibliography.

36 “¿Qué, sólo deben ponerse en una Biblioteca las obras de Newton, de Leibnitz, de Milton o de Shakespeare? Mi Biblioteca no es selecta, sino histórica y universal, y todo debe ponerse en ella...” (Beristáin 1947 : 32)
38 They have been explored, among others, by Serge Gruziński (1988), as sources for understanding the gradual incorporation of western concepts into the indigenous societies. Because of the focus upon the contact between the two civilizations and its repercussions, his reading has been inspirational for my research. 39 Anthropologists have been increasingly directing their attention to these documents, in particular since the 1976 publication of Beyond the Codices, a study of Nahua testaments and similar documents by James Lockhart and other scholars.
Finally, going back to Beristáin, further library and other research corrected the somewhat hastily assumption of exhaustiveness: there were more translations and translators (I found 35 more translators and a number of anonymous translations in the Fondo José Toribio Medina of Chile’s National Library)\(^ {40}\) that Beristáin did not know of or omitted, and that I included in the register. It has been also drawn to my attention\(^ {41}\) that D. Miguel Hidalgo (1753-1811), Father of the Mexican Independence movement, who had translated Voltaire, Molière and others (his “tertulia” was known as “la pequeña Francia”) is conspicuously absent. For all these reasons, the initial register could only be considered as a preliminary catalogue; its size and coverage, however, made it a very valuable tool.

Turning back to its original structure, the following categories were devised:

\begin{itemize}
  \item translators proper (translations duly identified, sometimes with information on the originals)
  \item transwriters (authors of versions, paraphrases, hybrid texts, intersemiotic translations)
  \item lexicographers (authors of bilingual lexicons, regardless of size)
  \item grammarians (authors of grammars of languages other than Spanish: indigenous and Classical languages)
  \item combinations thereof (translator-lexicographer; grammarian-lexicographer, …)
\end{itemize}

This organization allowed me to see the corpus from a biographical point of view: who did what, who the person was and what combinations of translation work did he performed. Once transferred to a computer database,\(^ {42}\) it became easy to attempt some groupings and statistical exercises. The potential of such a work is quite impressive, when,

\(^{40}\) José Toribio Medina (1852-1930), eminent Chilean bibliographer. He donated his large collection of to Chile’s National Library. According to his biographers, the Fund bearing his name contains one of the largest collections of Latin-American colonial material (see page 65).

\(^{41}\) By Luis Hachim, from the Universidad de Santiago de Chile, a specialist in Beristáin.

\(^{42}\) Microsoft Access 2002 was used here
for instance, we can draw smaller corpora\footnote{For a discussion on the difference between catalogues and corpora, see Pym 1998, p. 42.} as the basis for further research, such as this one showing Franciscans having written lexicons in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century.

**Table 1.** Sixteenth-century Franciscan lexicographers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Century</th>
<th>Adscription</th>
<th>Source 1</th>
<th>Source 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayora, Juan</td>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>BER: I, 195 – 196</td>
<td>POR: I, 185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castro, Andrés</td>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>BER: II, 89</td>
<td>POR: I, 405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Espinareda, Pedro</td>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>BER: II, 238</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olmos, Andrés de</td>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>BER: IV, 45</td>
<td>POR: I, 1514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palacios, Pedro</td>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>BER: IV, 82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahagún, Bernardino de</td>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>BER: IV 275 – 277</td>
<td>POR: II, 1829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toral, Francisco</td>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>BER: V, 34</td>
<td>POR: II, 2046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villalpando, Luis</td>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>BER: V, 154</td>
<td>POR: II, 2271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But the kind of analysis I could derive from the database as it originally was could not take me to my purpose of monitoring the long-span presence of translations, with selected close-ups into examples from the register. In fact, the closest parallel to the kind of work I intend would be remote sensing. As with satellite imaging, I wanted a general picture in which I could spot different clusters and movements of translation along the three centuries of colonial rule.

When I started to work on the catalogue I was so thrilled by the discovery that, in a way, I was mechanically following Beristán’s vindication: he was challenging those who
doubted the existence of an intellectual life in the colony, and I was asking: “who said there were no translators in New Spain?”, so I directed the first extraction with this mindset. This essentialist way of appraising the field, counting individuals, listing the titles of their translations, and noting a few biographical features first, was quite a blind digging, which proved good enough to grasp a general idea of the magnitude of the field but didn’t help much to understand the articulation of translation to other aspects of the New Spain cultural system. It did not lend itself to establishing relationships with other texts and locating translations within the general discursive formation. It gave lots of data but little information, thus leading rather to antiquarianism, collector’s history. It became obvious that, however illustrative and fruitful, the register had to be reshaped.

It became clear to me that the structure of the register had to be tested against the
purpose of the research: a structure that would reflect an approach to the functions of the works rather than the personalities of the translators, where translation could be seen as a historically meaningful discourse, related to other discursive formations. For this purpose, first should come translations; translators as individuals, with their lives and personal stories, should come after. Again, the importance of the translator as an individual, so dear to Pym, should be relativized here. If we are looking at functions, persons may be secondary. So, the database was reshuffled by shifting the position of the fields. Instead of biographical, it would be bibliographical, and the result was a list of about 712 titles of translations, which could give the reader a rather immediate idea of their contents, an important breakthrough from my point of view, since this could lead to a classification of some sort.

Now, how could the data base be classified so as to expose the hypothetic relationship with a national identity?

1.3.1. Classification approaches

Different ways of classifying could stress either the conceptual or the temporal aspects, or a combination of both. I explored the following options:

As a conceptual classification, I could resort to the “classical” genres in translation studies (scientific, religious, general, literary, to which I could add some subdivisions). These categories have traditionally served to establish different ways of translating. They could give an immediate sense of the kinds of works that were predominant at different times, but could I prove that national discourse building had anything to do with them? Could any meaning be derived from the intersection between times and concepts? I
discarded also contemporary classifications devised primarily for evaluation or pedagogical purposes, namely the functionalist's typologies: informative, expressive, and operative translation (Reiss and Vermeer 1984/1991). Although I am searching into functions of translations, the perspective is larger (i.e., translation as a collective endeavour and its ideological functions) than the one provided by functionalist approaches to translation (translation as an individual gesture and its contextual functions).

As a classification stressing the temporal aspect, I could attempt a periodization derived from the date field in the original database. In fact, two translation periods could be clearly distinguished: a period of activity related to the indigenous languages and to the conversion endeavor, from the 1520s until 1770 (year of the Royal decree banning all indigenous languages), and a second period from that year on, when we see more translations from European languages, and the subjects are also more diverse (science, enlightened thought, literature). Coincidences are attractive, the first period corresponding approximately to the Habsburg dynasty, concerned above all with battling reformed ideas, while the second period is related to the Bourbon's monarchy and the emergence of Enlightenment.

David Brading's periodization (Brading 1973) in his seminal study on Mexican nationalism, is roughly coincidental with this periodization, and has the advantage of taking us directly into the field of nationalism: a period of "patriotismo criollo" (1520-1769), characterized by a revival of the Aztec past (neo-aztecsim), stirring of anti-Spanish sentiments, and the cult to the Virgin of Guadalupe; and a second period, of "indígenismo histórico" (1760-1855), in which these traits become fixed in a nationalistic rhetoric.

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44 For a quick reference to functionalist theories, see Baker 1998, pp. 29-33.
James Lockhart (1991), also from the historical point of view, proposes three stages for the hispanization of Indian Nahuatl-speaking society based upon the language contact: 1519-1540/50 (virtually no change in Nahuatl), 1540/50-ca1640 (massive borrowing of Spanish nouns only), ca1640-1800 (broader Spanish influence). In that he traces the acculturation of Nahuatl-speaking populations in language, he has some bearing on translation as well as on identity. But Lockhart’s research is unidirectional, showing one side of the acculturation. There was, however, acculturation on both sides: I am not trying here to understand only how Indians were progressively hispanized (although hispanization is part of the functions of colonial translation), but also how Spaniards were indianized, and how other languages, both dead and alive, were brought into the picture.

Temporal classifications are teleological per se: they reflect evolutions towards a moment which is considered an end of something. In Brading, the end was contemporary nationalism, the official ideology that prevailed in 20th century Mexico. In Lockhart (1991), the stages show progressive acculturation of Indian society. But my purpose is not to determine any evolution from a particular date towards either a state of national consciousness or the emergence of métissage through translation. Incidentally, nothing happened in translation in 1821, final date of my list, just as nothing had happened either in translation in 1521, first date on my list. They just happen to be the date of the fall of Tenochtitlan, Mexico’s capital, to the Spanish, and the date in which Independence was proclaimed, but I could have chosen the previous year or the next one. So far they seem to me immaterial for translation. I have kept the first date for the sake of coherence with my main source (although there are also hesitations in Beristán’s Biblioteca: in volume I the dates included in the title are 1521-1850, and in volumes II to V, 1521-1825). Since neither
1850 nor 1825 are meaningful with regards to intellectual history, and Beristáin did not explain them, I have preferred to take as the final date the year of Independence. I intend however, to be flexible on that end, since some authors, such as Beristáin himself, were born before Independence and some of their works were published past that date.

After careful analysis, therefore, I discarded both translation genres and temporal-historical frameworks, and looked elsewhere.

The next thoughts put me on a new track: if translation had anything to do with the emergence and upholding of a national identity, if I could say that translation production belonged to that aspect of social discourse that reinforces belonging to a national entity, it had to be because it shared some conceptual base with national identity. In other words, if I could understand how the national discourse is constructed, what its ingredients are, maybe I would be able to see the relationship with translation.

1.3.2. Nationalism studies as the general framework

There is agreement in modern scholarship on nationalism that nations are complex phenomena, sometimes older than it was traditionally supposed, and that they derive their strength from a continuous revitalization of myths of ethnic descent, and from drawing upon other nations (past and present) cultural accomplishments in order to build a high culture for themselves. It is in this sense that nationalism has been characterized by the nationalism theoretician Tom Nairn (1977) as Janus-faced: looking at the past, deepening its origins in the roots of tradition and looking at the present and the future for the building of a modern culture, able to compete with other nations. It is particularly true for non-western nationalism, *i.e.*, in nations formerly under colonial rule, considered to be
culturally not equipped to become fully-fledged nations, unless they imitate other cultures (Chaterjee, 1986).

These two aspects of national identity: belief in a common, prestigious past, and a drive towards innovation, can be directly related to translation, in so far as it is particularly suited to perform the kind of arrangements needed for myth-making (Smith, 1984) and “invention of traditions” (Hobsbawm, 1994), and because it is the means by which a culture appropriates foreign model products, thereby helping to create and consolidate a modern “high culture” (Gellner, 1994). A number of Mexican Colonial translations fall in these conceptual categories, namely the historical works by Indian and mestizo scholars who helped reconstruct the past, the translation of Greco-Latin classics and the translation of European contemporary intellectual works (science, literature, philosophical, political and religious essay). The register shows that from one third to a half of the translations registered can be safely related to these categories, once duly defined.

But the largest part of the register consists of a hotchpotch of materials dealing with indigenous languages and catechization. As a common denominator, they were produced by missionaries, they appear very early in the period, they thrive particularly during the first hundred years, and they decline afterwards, without, however, disappearing. Another characteristic is that a large proportion of doctrinal translations come in combination with lexicons and grammars, so they are physically related, for the simple historical reason that sometimes it was the same friar who, in the same breath, prepared the grammar, the lexicon and appended a Doctrina Christiana to the whole. For a while I took this part of the register to belong to what in historical linguistics is known as “missionary linguistics”, an object of
some recent independent attention.\textsuperscript{45} However, missionary linguistics has devoted its attention to the description of the languages by the missionaries; its focus is mainly philological and, therefore, it is grammars and lexicons that constitute its main documentary field, without including translations per se. Instead, in my register, grammars, lexicons and translations have a common ground, and belong to a same logic. Aside from the quantitative importance of the field (461 out of 712 items in the database could be said to belong to it), and the characteristics just mentioned, other observations prompted me to differentiate it from the rest: first, the large amount of languages covered (25 if we include Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Spanish), a characteristic of the first missionary years, which disappeared gradually with the loss of influence of the monastic orders, the rise of the secular branch of the Church and the subsequent imposition of Spanish as the general language. Second, a number of these works (in particular the earlier ones) are the fruit of collaboration between the natives and the friars, as acknowledged by the friars themselves.\textsuperscript{46}

Now, if we leave history and turn to translation studies, these works also share various interesting features, namely, 1) that translations into the indigenous languages were mostly prompted by the source culture, 2) that it is normally difficult to know the original text and author, 3) that they are frequently collaborative translations, that is, assisted by indigenous intermediaries, and 4) that the intended readers are probably not the potential readers of the target culture but the agents of the source culture themselves.

These historical characteristics and translational features, which will be discussed

\textsuperscript{45} There have been several annual international conferences organized by the Oslo Project on Missionary Linguistics (OsProMil), a research group at the University of Oslo.

\textsuperscript{46} Schools for training noble Indian boys were soon established, notably the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco (1536) by the Franciscan friars and the names of some of these Indian scholars appear in the friars chronicles.
and illustrated with examples in due time, seem to me to justify a separate treatment for this large corpus of linguistic and doctrinal material linked to catechization.

In summing up, it seems that Greco-Latin translations can be linked to a discourse on civilization, and that translations of science, arts and humanities can be also linked to a discourse on a Modern High Culture, and that intersemiotic translations, hybrid texts that tell the Mexicans who their ancestors were, can be related to the foundation myths. What would the role of the last group of translations, namely the linguistic and doctrinal materials be in the construction of a national identity and how to define it?

The notion of “imagined community” introduced by Benedict Anderson (1991) refers to the different means by which a group of people come to imagine themselves as a community and stresses the importance of print capitalism as part of the basis for this collective formation: a common language, common readings, common religion, census, maps and museums: all elements, as I discussed in the previous chapter, of a national discourse. In Mexican colonial history, translation intervenes at least in some of these constructions: it is chiefly present in the fate of the different indigenous languages and in the subsequent imposition of a national language. Translation is also the means by which a new religion is imposed upon the colonized peoples. These two aspects, language and religion are tightly interwoven and constitute the canvass of an imagined community in which other discourses will be embroidered. This canvass of an imagined community is by no means a terse, homogenous fabric; the concept of community itself will prove problematic. But something is clear to me: this canvass is of a translational nature because it is the product of the earliest transactions between two or more cultures, with their respective languages. It will be woven from the first contacts, and it will remain there,
sustaining other productions. Its dynamics and construction will be discussed in Part 2.

So, after the general functions of the translations have been hypothesized on the basis of prima facie evidence provided by the titles, presumed contents of the books and historical context in which the translations were produced, I can propose the following categories for my catalogue:

- The Translational Canvass, which contains 1) transwritings that transformed the structure of the indigenous languages so that they could receive the outpour of European cultural materials (grammars and lexicons) and 2) translations of doctrinal material (bilingual confession manuals, catechisms and sermons). This Translational Canvass served as the groundwork for an «imagined community», and contains 461 titles.

- The Classical Continuity, which contains the translations from the prestigious Greco-Latin tradition that placed the colony in the continuum of European civilization. This category contains 64 titles.

- The Foundation Myths, which contains transwritings that helped reformulate past narratives (pre-Hispanic history, genealogies, calendars...) directed to establish a mythical common origin, linked both to the venerable domestic traditions and to the origins of Christianity. This category contains 27 titles.

- The Modern High Culture, containing translations that incorporated new narratives useful to build a high culture (European literature, essay, medicine and other sciences...), and to place New Spain among the modern civilized nations. I have located 150 in this category.

Now, this classification, in being more conceptual than time- or country-specific,
would seem to aspire to certain universality. Is this legitimate? Can it be sustained that all translations everywhere could be classified according to this model because they always fulfill these roles? Would it be possible to argue that there are no translations outside it? I propose to leave the question open. Nevertheless, supposing that national discourse is an embodiment, an avatar, of social discourse, which is an overarching phenomenon, there would be no translations outside; the only possibility being that some translations would show less or more their relationship with the national discourse than others, or that some translations could resist the determination of the discourse. But of course these circumstances would not leave them out since they would still belong to the discourse by virtue of their resistance. Translations, as any other discourses, are not indifferent to the collective feeling of identity, which goes beyond ideological and political allegiances. A translation may have contributed to change in its time, or it may have contributed to the *statu quo*. Whatever the case, translations are there to contribute to the ideologemes sustaining the enunciation “we, the Mexicans”. So, a certain degree of universality can be claimed; but only a certain degree. It cannot claim temporal or spatial universality. This specific classification model serves my purpose because its tenets allow explaining the birth and conservation of identity feelings that materialized in the creation of a nation-state in 1821.

It becomes evident on a second reading that these four categories I propose do not share the same traits. Being conceived as a canvass, the first category entertains a causal link with the others; it also represents a great deal more activity than the others. After all, it is the ground where culture was transacted. Others could be said to be more of a passive representation of a national discourse: the translations linked to the classical western
tradition, the ones linked to the Modern High Culture. The translations that conveyed founding myths, hybrid texts composed by acculturated mestizo, are more of a *sui generis* class.

Some final considerations as to the analysis of the works themselves: I have been fortunate to be able to explore one of the largest colonial libraries in the world, the one known as the Fondo José Toribio Medina at the Chile National Library, in Santiago. José Toribio Medina (1852-1930) a prolific Chilean bibliographer, was the author of many Latin-American national bibliographies, particularly on the history of print and of the Inquisition. His colonial library is composed of some twenty-two thousand titles, of which approximately eight thousand belong to Mexico. It is there that I have been able to consult most of the works that constitute my primary sources bibliography.

**Fig. 4. Translation activity by categories along time**
Of the 712 titles in the register, I have examined 90. I have not always followed the rule of the best known writers, but of the text that could best illustrate the functions of translation. A certain degree of opportunism has to be acknowledged: the Fondo Medina did not have every work I had wished to examine, but the works available were many more than I could possibly consult.
SECOND PART

UNIVERSAL IDENTITY: THE CATHOLIC DISCOURSE
2.1. The Translational Canvass

In this category, that I have chosen to call Translational Canvass, I have compiled the following products, regardless of size and importance, and regardless of whether their existence can be actually verified: grammars of indigenous languages, bilingual or trilingual lexicons, catechisms, sermons, doctrines, prayer books, Saints’ lives, confession manuals and manuals for liturgy written for the indoctrination of Indians or the mestizo population speaking indigenous languages. And here there is an important distinction to be made between the religious materials intended for the indoctrination of the non-Christian population and the ones produced for the catechesis and promotion of piety among the Spanish and criollo classes as well as for conventual and scholarly use. The materials belonging to this latter have a different genesis and functions, and will be studied under the Modern High Culture category. Lastly, I am only recording first appearance of texts, and not subsequent reeditions, an important caveat that has to be borne in mind since this is not a study on reception.

There is a total of 461 titles in the database which I consider belonging to the Translational Canvass, plus eight, two of them anonymous, that were unknown to Beristáin, but that I have found and consulted in the Fondo Medina. As shown in the following graph, this production is unevenly distributed, with a peak during the period of intensive catechization.

I have disaggregated the 461 texts into the four main types: grammars, lexicons, translations and the combinations among them. The continued presence of grammars and lexicons and combined texts along the whole period is a noticeable trait, as if they were the
weft and warp of the canvass. Stemming from this fabric, an upsurge of translations thrusts during the segment beginning virtually at the Conquest, loses ground rapidly one century later, and then slowly continues its decline until its virtual disappearance past the second half of the 18th century.

The chronological distribution of these four types of texts can be seen in the following graph. Again, there are a number of undated texts, probably attributable to the period 16th to 17th century, and an empty slot in the 19th century, only partly due to the fact that the register stops in 1821. While, on the one hand, it is certainly true that the production of texts in indigenous languages (mostly translations) was curtailed by the 1770 royal ban on these languages, it didn’t totally disappear and, in particular, some dictionaries were reedited past that date. On the other hand, as I observed before, the production of religious materials in translation was no longer meant for conversion but for the promotion of piety among a population which was mostly of mixed race. These translations are either from Latin or modern European languages into Spanish, and I located them in the Modern High Culture category.
Most of these products are bilingual (lexicons, confessional manuals, catechisms and doctrines), written in two columns side by side; some are unilingual (such as doctrines written only in the indigenous language), and some are multilingual texts, that is, drafted in more than two languages, such as some grammars, in which the descriptions are written in Spanish, but Latin is the main referent both for the structure of the text (titles of sections) and for the specific examples illustrating the points of grammar, that is, for comparison with the indigenous language being described in them. There are also some trilingual dictionaries (e.g., Alonso Urbano’s\textsuperscript{47} Arte breve de la lengua otomi y Vocabulario trilingüe español-mexicano-otomi, 1605).

Indigenous languages description and Christian doctrine are the two domains covered by these transwritings, the religious impulse being in the vast majority of the cases what drives the grammatical interest. In turn, without this language groundwork, the religious goals cannot be met, so these two domains are not separated but intrinsically linked together. Again, I am using the term transwritings because most of the documents I have ascribed to the field of translation do not fit into the “traditional” definition of translation, \textit{(i.e.,} texts pretending to be the full equivalent in one language of other texts written in another language\textit{). Then I also include grammars of indigenous languages, which have not traditionally been considered as part of the translation field, lexicons, as side products of translation, as well as a variety of transfers, versions, mixed compositions, etc..., the originals of which are not always known and could be difficult to identify.

To start with, there is a lack of definition of the translational status in the documents themselves (not to say in Beristáin’s Biblioteca). Sometimes translation is not

\textsuperscript{47} BHA V, 65
acknowledged in any way: no mention of a source text (catechisms as well as other doctrinal works must have been translated from authorized sources, but here we do not always find a reference to their originals), so it becomes very difficult to determine to what extent were they transferred into the indigenous languages. What parts were translated and what parts were actually added by the translator? Can reasons for these changes be explained? These difficulties are not exclusive of colonial translation. They are common to all European medieval translation practices. Clara Foz analyses translational lack of definition in the European Middle Ages: translations were largely rearrangements of previous materials, and the distinction between original and translation cannot be easily determined. Moreover, whatever the translator’s national language, as far as the written tradition he belonged to the Latin context (Foz 1998: 145-146), since vernaculars had not yet acquired the status of national languages.

Here, in the Translational Canvass, we are faced with colonial translation, which, as part of colonial discourse, constitutes a set of interlingual practices that, according to Klor de Alva, “permitted ideas to pass from one discourse (or bounded register of signs, codes and meanings) to another in order to authorize and make possible the ends of colonial control and the strategies of resistance and accommodation to it” (Klor de Alva 1992: 16). The circumstances outlined by Klor in this definition, however, make colonial translation a specific cultural and historical practice, the characteristics of which can be seen in the following aspects:

1. **It is instigated by the source culture:** contrary to the common assumption that translations are prompted by the receiving culture, in other words, that it is the target culture that decides what texts and authors will be imported, most colonial
translations were made at the instigation of the culture of origin; they were forced into the target language and the target culture.

2. The readers are the source culture agents, located in the target culture and acting upon it: not only were the indigenous languages not the instigators of these translations but also they became the unwilling recipients of this enormous task of cultural downloading. Since most speakers of the indigenous languages could not read and even were not allowed to have books, the recipients of the translations were Spanish friars or indigenous intermediaries who, in turn, would read and interpret the texts for the general population.

3. Target culture subjects were recruited as intermediaries: early grammars, lexicons and translations were undoubtedly done with the assistance of native intermediaries, the presence of which is sometimes acknowledged.
What is the genesis and progression of this production? Where does it start and are there any discernible stages in this progression? Let's attempt an intuitive approach: what we can see is that there was a driving force, namely Christianization. A main obstacle to it was the diversity of languages, and the fact that they were predominantly oral. The overwhelming ratio of Indians to Spanish forced a search for efficiency; this is why there was first a selection of the receiving languages, which was done following geopolitical directions: namely, the largest languages in their more prestigious registers. This does not mean that there was a clear language policy, or that this selection was in any way masterminded; it was rather the result of a pragmatic recognition by the friars who found themselves often overwhelmed by the task. It could be too that an effort to transcribe a particular language would turn useless because of the rapid disappearance or migration of its speakers.\footnote{Jesuit Father Adam Gilg's letter of 1692 illustrates the vulnerability of languages spoken by nomadic populations. He was sent to the territory of the Seri Indians, in the actual state of Sonora (northwest Mexico) and trove to settle them in pueblos. As he painfully recounts, people would die of unknown diseases or they would abandon the settlement as soon as conditions became difficult for them to bear (rains destroying the first crops, or attacks by other still nomadic tribes). According to Father Gilg's estimates, the Seri population was of 3.000 individuals. A. Gilg is known to have written a dictionary of three languages of the state of Sonora: Eudeve, Pima, and Seri. Of the three, Eudeve is extinct and Pima and Seri are seriously endangered.} We cannot forget that, according to some calculations (Cifuentes 1998: 45), some one hundred languages or dialects were wiped out during the first century after the conquest, that is, between the 1520s and the end of that century, due, among other circumstances, to massive depopulation. But, following our imaginary plot, a number of important languages were “selected” and alphabetically transcribed. Then, an appraisal of their assets was performed by listing their lexical capacity in bilingual and sometimes trilingual lexicons. The construction of their corresponding grammars was also performed, by comparing their perceived language constituents to the constituents of the Latin

\footnote{Garza and Lastra (1991: 143) give a total of 114 from the 17th century to the present day.}
grammar.\(^50\) Once the carrying capacity of the indigenous languages was assured, translation could perform its main task of “pouring” the contents of the dominating culture into these new reservoirs.

In summing up: after undertaking the transcription of selected languages, the grammarian missionaries proceeded to what was called at the time “subjecting” (sujetar) or “reducing” (reducir) the language to a grammar or “art” (arte), and to elaborate a vocabulary of the language. They prepared therefore the description and listing of grammatical and lexical capabilities of these languages by comparing them with Spanish or Latin (and sometimes too with Nahuatl, as the lingua franca). To speak of “subjecting” and “reducing” seems now to be charged with pejorative connotations, as in subjecting or reducing an enemy.\(^51\) In their context, however, these words meant simply that languages that were used loosely (and in this sense it is quite proper to talk about subjecting them) would be fixed by giving them rules and an organization. Castilian, as Nebrija says to justify the need for a Spanish grammar, “anduvo suelta y fuera de regla” while Latin and Greek “todavia quedan en una uniformidad […] por haber estado debaxo de arte”, meaning literally that they were put under grammar.\(^52\) Then their lexical capabilities would be compared. These are the two concepts I want to stress here: fixing and comparing, both at the basis of translation. Translation helps fixing both the receiving language and, indirectly too, the emitting language, and, at the same time, it performs a linguistic and cultural

\(^50\) Although the first Spanish grammar was published in 1492, it seems clear that it was not the one that served as a model in America, but the Latin grammar, by the same author, published in 1481, and reprinted in 1484 as a bilingual Latin-Spanish grammar. Cf. Actas del Congreso Internacional de Historiografía Lingüística. Nebrija V Centenario, vol. II., Murcia, 1994.

\(^51\) In his interesting study on colonial discourse in the Philippines, in my opinion, Vicente L. Rafael (1993) makes a biased use of the dictionary in discussing Spanish terms like “dominar”, “sujetar”, “arte”, “traducir”, when speaking about the link between conversion and translation (see in particular Chapter 1: The Politics of Translation). According to him, these terms are charged with connotations of colonial domination.

\(^52\) Prologue to the Spanish Grammar, dedicated to Queen Isabella. Electronic version: http://www.antoniodeñebrija.org/prologo.html
comparison. Fixing and comparing will also be illustrated in this Translational Canvass in their associated types of texts: grammars and lexicons.

This fixing and comparing their capabilities will enable, on the one hand, the production of texts in the indigenous languages for the governing of the colonial territories by the civil authorities (administrative and legal texts), and, on the other hand, the translations of doctrinal materials: catechism, confession manual, passages of the Scriptures and Saint’s lives.

The colonial nature of the whole endeavor carried mostly during the first decades becomes clearer if we pause for a moment to consider that the downloading of cultural contents was only possible because the source culture agents were located in the target culture, creating the conditions of its reception, by installing and maintaining the coercive/incitative apparatus for the reception and by co-opting local intermediaries from the target culture.

Soon too, young Indians brought up by the friars, will master this new narrative method and put it to their benefit (Gruzinski 1988), particularly during the years in which the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco was active.

Now, never in these textual materials, which were meant to produce a radical change in the subjectivities of the Indians, will we find a mention of Spain as an entity to which they will now belong to. The purpose of this fixing, comparing, and downloading, the writing of Catechisms, Doctrines, and Confessional manuals, the translations of Scriptures and Saint’s lives was not to obtain allegiance to a Spanish emperor but to a universal ruler, a ruler who could express Himself through his agents, the friars, not in the language of the Conqueror (the friars’ rival in the rule over the Indians) but in the very
languages the Indians spoke. Translation was used by the friars to expand the frontier of Christianity, not necessarily the Spanish frontiers, although it was clearly understood that it was His Catholic Majesty who had been entrusted with this divine design.

The Translational Canvass, as I will attempt to show, is the one where the new identity is negotiated and woven. It is not produced in Spanish and it does not have Spanish as its main axis. It fluctuates among languages; it creates superpositions, transfers and syncretisms. It draws an unstable, frontier, hybrid identity. The emerging cultural, and later, national identity is less clear and less a product of an elite group’s will, such as the one manifesting itself as a political force at the end of the eighteen century with the movement for independence, than the result of a widespread loss in all fronts: demographic, material and spiritual, and the emergence of new generations of mixed populations in which a synthesis of cultural traits was unequally achieved. Tracking these changes in translation will bring me to point out the places in which the impositions, resistances and negotiations occurred: events like short yarn slubs forming in the weft, such as Alonso de Molina’s\textsuperscript{53} slip when in his 1555 great dictionary he places the Nahuatl word \textit{tameme} in the Spanish column (meaning that one generation after the fall of Tenochtitlan the Spanish were not only adopting Indian words, which they did from the very beginning, but that they “mistook” them as being their own). Another case would be that of Bernardino de Sahagún’s\textsuperscript{54} syncretic Psalms, describing Saint James clad in \textit{chalchihuites} (jades), as if it were one of the hated Indian idols. Translation is present too in the crude attempts to extirpate what was conceived as evil and to implant a new paradigm to understand self, nature and gods through the appropriation of the Indians’ language of authority in doctrines

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{BHA} III, 257
\textsuperscript{54} \textit{BHA} IV, 275
and the confessional practice; and also in the fast disappearance of the nobility and the concomitant emergence of a class of “pobrecitos indios”, who had become alien to their own languages.

Meanwhile, the line tracing the language policy in colonial Mexico, with its swings and hesitations to which I have referred in the preamble, was intersected by translations casting doubts upon it. While Charles V ruled that Castilian must be the language spoken in the colony, Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún\textsuperscript{55} worked with his Indian assistants in the elaboration of the Psalms and, at the same time, other friars were translating catechisms in indigenous languages. An Indian scholar, Esteban Bravo,\textsuperscript{56} could “translate anything from Latin into Nahuatl”. Grammars describing indigenous languages were written in Spanish, but using Latin and Nahuatl as references, such as Pedro de Cárceres\textsuperscript{57} Arte de la lengua othomi. The linguistic imperial policy seemed to flow in one level, divorced from common people realities, while in other directions, at other levels, society engaged in linguistic practices dictated by the extra-imperial need to adjust and survive and, most obviously, the need to define itself as a new identity. The translational discourse in the Translational Canvass, universalist in scope as it was conceived as millenarist, acts as a counterpoint to the Crown’s more down to earth linguistic policy. And even then, we cannot forget, as Serge Gruzinski points out, that “ce ne sont pas des “cultures” qui se rencontraient, mais des fragments d’Europe, d’Amérique et d’Afrique. Des fragments et des éclats qui au contact les uns des autres ne restaient pas longtemps intacts” (1999: 81). Indian and European, not to say Blacks, who were captured from different African regions, were far from stable, monolithic entities, and rivalries within their own groups were the rule rather than the exception.

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{BHA} IV, 275 - 277
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{BHA} I, 288
\textsuperscript{57} \textit{BHA} II, 43
This is why I can say that this Translational Canvass constitutes maybe the table upon which New Spain’s culture was transacted and where we can trace the beginnings of a new identity (the one that later became known as *mestizo*). It is in this canvass where the textual production, both translational and non translational will be intertwined. I am therefore speaking of linguistic translation proper, as a tangible element of the construction of this new identity, but I am also speaking about cultural translation, which could have implied acts of transaction, imposition and resistance. I am looking at this canvass as a negotiating table, in which translations bring about a “displacement” and “relocation” between negotiators. I refer here directly, not at all metaphorically, to the texts such as lexicons and grammars, that meant for the cultures involved a departure from their “centers”, a deep shaking of structures, as well as to the translations of doctrinal materials, which meant the imposition of a whole new worldview upon the American cultures: a worldview carrying a mixed ballast not only of peninsular cultures and histories, but of the European past, its cultural, political and religious histories.

While it is important to understand these productions from the Spanish imperial point of view, the purpose with which they were made, the intentionalities and contents they were infused with, the prejudices that helped some sort of understanding as well as the ones that hindered understanding, we should, however, also see this evolution from the other side, however badly equipped we may be to place ourselves in that side: a number of natives who survived through the disasters of the first years of the Conquest, learned very quickly how to write and read not only their own languages but Spanish and Latin, and became participants in the process of transcription and description of their own languages. They also participated in the translation of doctrinal materials, either as collaborators of the
friars\textsuperscript{58} or as authors proper. In fact, none of the steps of the evolution I will sketch in the following pages could ever have been taken without some degree of exchange, of transaction, of tension between the two sides, represented by the two groups of “exiles” (friars and Indians). This is not to say, of course, that this exchange was in any way symmetrical, or that the Indians had the slightest chance to overcome the terms of it. The Spanish conquered, and the Indians were conquered with immense suffering and injustice. What I am trying to say is that within the conditions created by the Conquest and colonization, the indigenous peoples were also able, by different means, to insert, modify, adapt, and adjust some of the elements of their own civilization. And coming closer to the Spanish, and learning their ways and language, and making themselves indispensable for them, being their interpreters and translators, was one of these means. The period in which this happened is mostly circumscribed to the first decades after the Conquest, roughly speaking, between 1524, the date of the arrival of the Franciscan friars, and the 1576-1579 great epidemics, where probably some two million people died. But other dates are also illustrative of the decay of this dialogue: already in 1555, the first Council of the Mexican Church Province forbids the ordainment of Indians, 	extit{mestizos} and blacks, and in 1560, the Council of Trent, in which the Counter-Reformation strategies were established, inaugurates a period of suspicion and censorship that will curtail the freedom enjoyed by monastic orders in New Spain.

However, the social circumstances and the geographical constraints made it difficult for whatever central policy to be effectively disseminated, and thus the Translational Canvass stretches beyond the sixteenth century and thus extends the dialogue longer than we would expect.

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\textsuperscript{58} For a discussion on collaborative translation and hybrid translation, see S. Simon (1999)
In saying that this Translational Canvass is the table upon which was negotiated a new identity I am following a path I found suggested first by the Mexican Inquisition specialist Solange Alberro, who said that religion could be the matrix for the national identity in Mexico (Alberro, 1999). She has studied the way in which Spanish were progressively transformed by the colonial system and, in adopting ways of their colonized subjects, departed from their own ways and became also acculturated. It is Klor de Alva also who suggests that the search for mutual intelligibility in the spiritual level was key to the emergence of the new identity (Klor 1997). Louise Burkhart has extensively studied what she calls the “Nahua-Christian moral dialogue” (Burkhart 1989) and has translated many examples of this dialogue herself.

Within the translation studies field, Lawrence Venuti wrote in 1995 that “As translation constructs a domestic representation for a foreign text and culture, it simultaneously constructs a domestic subject” (Venuti 1995: 10). Although his examples are contemporary, analogies can be drawn with the colonial situation. When he argues that Japanese modern literature as translated into English creates a new representation of Japanness, which in turn impacts on Japan’s self-image, we can also see how translating Christian doctrine into the indigenous languages created a new representation of these languages and their cultures for their peoples.59

Significantly too, and this is an aspect that has not been considered so far in the literature, the Spanish language owes much of its consolidation and fixing to the repeated effort of comparison with indigenous languages of which translation is the best illustration.

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59 A. López Austin (1996) has ably dissected some aspects of the supposedly genuine indigenous lore to conclude that they were the product of early infiltrations of Spanish customs into the Indian society.
2.1.1. Fixing native languages: grammars

For the period 1521-1821 I have found 76 stand-alone grammars, 22 grammars with vocabularies appended, 8 grammars with translated texts (mostly doctrinal) appended, and 10 grammars with both vocabularies and (mostly) doctrinal translations appended, which gives a total of 116 items. Of the total, 110 were elicited in Beristáin, and 6 more were found in the Fondo Medina.

Fig. 7. Grammars

They represent 24 languages: Concho (1), Chiapaneca (2), Chichimeca(1), Chinanteco (2), Guasave (1), Huasteco (4), Mame (1), Matlazina (pirinda) (4), Maya (8), Mije (1), Mixteco (2), Nahuatl (37), Opata (tequima) (1), Otomi (14), Sinaloa (2),
Tarahumara (4), Tarasco (7), Tepehuana (5), Timiquana (1), Totonaco (3), Utlateco (1), Xiximije (1), Zacateca (1) and Zapoteca (6), plus "Dos libros de los diferentes idiomas que se usan en la provincia de Sonora", which I have not been able to identify. Other grammars of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, which were also produced during the colonial time, have not been considered here. They will be studied under either the Classical Continuity or Modern High Culture categories, essentially because they are not missionary oriented.

The distribution and concentration of these grammars along the Colonial period can be seen in the following chart (Figure 8), in which we can observe two concentrations: the first during the peak of missionary work by the Mendicant orders (sixteenth- to seventeenth-century) where most of the languages are represented, and then, a second impulse to some selected languages, notably Nahuatl, during the latter part of the period. A non negligible number of grammars could not be dated. We could assume that they belong to the first period, since they are mostly manuscripts that never made it to print.

The alphabetical transcription and description of the indigenous languages was virtually equivalent to a re-creation. Sieved through the filters of European religious and linguistic paradigms, and assessed according to their measuring stick, it has been always questioned whether the resulting written languages were an accurate representation of their oral counterparts.

To be able to make a critical assessment of this allegation, one has to keep in mind the overarching importance of grammar in the intellectual sphere of the middle ages and the belief that God spoke one only truth, which could be expressed in all languages through a
single ideal grammar.\textsuperscript{60} In Christendom, Latin was this model and this is the reason why we find it in all indigenous grammars. It would thus be an anachronism to pretend that the

\textsuperscript{60} V. E. Hanzeli (1969) traced the genesis of these ideas in his \textit{Missionary Linguistics in New France}. See in particular, chapter III: “The grammatical training of the Jesuit Missionaries”, pp. 32-44.
missionaries were equipped to confront the Indian Other on his own terms. Moreover, the same religious beliefs and doxological constraints that made the missionaries blind to certain aspects of the cultures they were discovering meant that the Indian could be approached, if not as an equal (after all, they were infidels), certainly as a commensurate Other. This paradox can be explained as follows: the Spanish missionaries went to great lengths to find an explanation of the existence of these territories and populations. Indians were creatures of God since God was the Creator of all things on Earth, but then how was it that they had been hidden from Christianity? Where did they come from? A large array of explanations were to be elaborated along the whole Colonial period, suffice to say that the most common interpretation was that these vast domains were conquered from the beginnings of time by Satan and his armies of fallen angels. These populations had been induced into error by them. They were not sinners like the Jews, who had killed Jesus, or infidels like the Moors, who had conquered the Holy Land. They were poor peoples, deceived by the demons, and they had to be convinced of that, and brought back to the right road. This was the logic in which the Indians, their admirable civilization contradicted by their idolatry practices, were understood: ultimately they were the vivid proof of God’s existence since they were also the illustration of the works of Satan.

These theological constructions can be thus analyzed as prejudices having a double effect, and the following reflection is inspired by an analysis of Friar Bernardino de Sahagún’s intellectual framework proposed by John Keber (1988) in a short and illuminating article based on Hans Georg Gadamer’s thinking on prejudices. The missionaries prejudice (or pre-judgement) that Indians could have not escaped God’s

61 BHA IV, 275 - 277
project for Man on Earth, that they were, by opposition, a proof of God’s existence, gave a measure of intelligibility to their presence and justified at the same time the Spanish intervention to convert them. The final goal of a truly Catholic, that is, universal, Ecclesia, the dream of the first Franciscans who thought that God had reserved these immense territories for them, so that they could fulfill the Apocalypses’s prophecies, could be achieved here.\textsuperscript{62} It was therefore a double-side prejudice: one that cancelled the possibility of understanding the Indian fully in its own terms, and one that allowed for a misunderstanding of the Indian in a way that allowed for a degree of intelligibility. If this degree of intelligibility was at any moment mutual, I am unable to say. However, several studies seem to point at this possibility,\textsuperscript{63} and I hope the next sections will shed some light into the matter.

The case of New Spain’s grammars of indigenous languages lends itself also to be analyzed within Gadamer’s conception of prejudices: prejudices opening up horizons, ways of understanding and prejudices cancelling them. One of such prejudices is the medieval conviction that all languages can be traced back to one single, pre-Babelian so to say, grammar; that God spoke one only truth in that \textit{Ur-sprache}, and that this truth remains encoded in every language.\textsuperscript{64} Therefore, the study of grammar was at the basis of all knowledge.\textsuperscript{65} Only a few languages could aspire to the honor of being models or ideals for

\textsuperscript{62} Cf. Jacques Lafaye 1985, esp. pp. 75-84.
\textsuperscript{63} See Klor 1997 for the mutual intelligibility question, Burkhardt 1992 for the appropriation of missionary contents by the scribes. See also Rafael 1993 and Seed 1995 for Indian reception of colonial discourses.
\textsuperscript{64} See Steiner 1975, in particular Chapter II: \textit{Language and Gnosis}.
\textsuperscript{65} In order to fully understand the significance of these vernacular grammars (and in this sense, Spanish was also a vernacular), and the consequences of this innovation, one has to keep in mind that only dead languages, because they were not spoken but only written, needed to be learnt through grammars. A change in paradigm was needed to conceive even of such a thing as a grammar of a language which was in full use (both written and spoken). This fact was already observed at the time by Queen Isabel herself, when she learned about Nebrija’s work. To make a grammar of an indigenous language (which was only spoken), then, was indeed a bold decision.
this universal grammar. Latin was that language in Medieval Europe and was, therefore, exported to the Spanish American colonies.

Indeed, most of the New Spain grammars follow the model set up by Spanish humanist Antonio de Nebrija in his Latin grammar, the *Institutiones in Latinam grammaticam* (1481) or in the Spanish version he made of it: *Introducciones Latinas* (1486),\(^66\) which once and for all would set the distinction between Latin and its former dialect, the vulgar Romance, or Castilian, and, indirectly, between Castilian and the other romance languages used in the peninsula, namely Catalan and Galician. Literally hundreds of copies of the “Arte del Antonio”, as it was commonly known, crossed the Atlantic and landed in the port of Veracruz. Fernández del Castillo transcribed the booklist registered as freight in a sixteenth-century shipment from Spain: this 1584 ship contained 356 “Artes del Antonio” packed in 40 boxes (Fernández del Castillo 1982: 263-281). The grammars largely outnumbered the other titles registered in the booklist; in fact, their circulation was wider than that of certain religious books, among them the Bible.\(^67\) The late Ignacio Osorio Romero, Mexican latinist, observes that, although there are no data available for book imports for the first 50 years of the colony, the shipments of Nebrija’s grammars were constant: “el 21 de julio de 1576 llegaron seis ejemplares; el 22 de diciembre del mismo año, otros veintiocho”, and then, “todos los años, por ejemplo, 1619, 1634, 1655, 1660, 1661 y 1689, las tiendas de la ciudad las tenían en venta y estaban pendientes de la flota

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\(^{66}\) This was a bilingual Latin-Castilian edition, as the title reads, for the use of nuns and pious women who did not know enough Latin to be able to read and understand religious books. His now famous Spanish grammar, published in 1492, had in fact a mild reception, and was not reedited until 1744. For a general panorama of the impact of these grammars in Latin America, see Escavay, R, *et al.* (eds.) *Actas del Congreso Internacional de Historiografía Lingüística. Nebrija, V Centenario*, vol II, Murcia, 1994.

\(^{67}\) Next in numbers in the same shipment came Vatable’s Bible: 200 copies. Benito Boyer, the book merchant who owned the Bibles, was planning to get a good prize for them in New Spain. Unfortunately for him, in their way to Veracruz, the Inquisition included Vatable’s Bible in the Index and the business was lost. The correspondence regarding this matter can be consulted in Fernández del Castillo 1982, pp. 260-317.
que surtía tan solicitado texto” (Osorio Romero 1980: 29). Nevertheless, the demand was higher than the offer, and in 1709, Gertrudis de Vera, a printer in Mexico, was asking for authorization to print Nebrija’s grammar:

por la inopia que hay de Artes de gramática, cuya falta ha llegado a ser total, respecto a que en esta presente flota no se ha hecho remisión de ellas, como se prueba con el informe de los padres maestros de la gramática de la sagrada Compañía de Jesús, que con la solemnidad necesaria presento y con las cartas del reino de Castilla, de que hago demostración, en que se refiere no hacerse en la presente flota remisión de libros por las causas que en ellas se expresan. (Osorio Romero 1980: 22)

What was the relative importance of other European grammars in New Spain? It seems that it was significant: aside from Nebrija’s grammatical works, by far the most widespread, Osorio Romero mentions the Latin grammars by Lorenzo della Valle (1407-1457), Ian van Pauteren (1460-1520) and Manuel Álvarez (1526-1583) as well as works intended for teaching Latin by Erasmus (1469-1536) and Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540). He observed that “almost all sixteenth and seventeenth-century philologists were known and studied in New Spain” (Osorio Romero 1980: 48). European rhetoric and poetic manuals were also imported all along the Colonial period. None of these grammars and manuals was ever translated into any indigenous languages, but Nebrija’s grammar structure can be traced in many indigenous languages grammars, both in Middle and in South America, and in Japan and the Philippines as well.

For without grammars, nothing else could be achieved. Grammar held the key to the house of wisdom, as the plate from the sixteenth-century classic Margarita Philosophica (see Figure 9) illustrates. Nebrija’s grammar was used not only for the new schools where Latin and Spanish was taught, but served, as I said before, as a model for the New Spain
grammars, which follow its Latin-based structure and exemplifications, as stated in the prologue to *Arte de la lengua mixteca*, by the Dominican friar Antonio de los Reyes⁶⁸:

"Con toda la imperfeccion de esta lengua mixteca y defectos que en ella se pueden notar como de lengua barbara, se puede reduzir lo mas de ella a reglas y poner en orden de arte que es lo que aqui se pretende. Ansi dezimos que se hallan en ella todas las ocho partes de la oracion como en el latin y en las de mas lenguas perfectas, las quales son...." (Reyes, A. 1593/198?: 4)

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⁶⁸ *BHA IV*, 206
In 1875, French eminent middle-americanist Rémi Siméon strongly criticized this analogy in his prologue to the modern edition of Andrés de Olmos. Arte para aprender la lengua mexicana: "cette assimilation des formes simples et parfois rudimentaires du Nahuatl aux formes plus complexes et plus savantes du latin est, selon nous, une faute capitale, commune, du reste, au plus grand nombre des travaux qui ont paru jusqu'ici sur les langues anciennes du nouveau continent" (Olmos 1547/1875: VIII). Recent scholarship however tends to stress the deviations vis a vis the Latin structures and concludes that the grammar’s authors may rather have been paying lip service to the Introductiones latinae, which was the canon for the grammars. Accusations of ethnocentrism have been frequently made against this fact. It has been argued that in following the Latin model, the languages were forced into a foreign mould and that their physiognomy might have been totally altered. This has been a quite common criticism, opposed by some linguistic historians who are suggesting that, in opposition to the colonialist attitudes of the conquerors, who saw the New World through the looking glass of the Old one, the grammarian friars’ description of the indigenous languages is quite adapted to their peculiarities (López García 1995), and that one cannot say that the friars would be imposing the Latin grid out of obscurantism and ignorance when in fact they had acquired a thorough knowledge of the languages in question before writing their grammars. They had, according to some scholars, a pre-theoretical knowledge of these languages and, therefore, the analogy did not go beyond the more general levels (Hernández Sacristán 1994: 129). It can be argued that some of the New Spain grammarians were quite aware of the challenge and seemed to have preempted

69 BHA IV, 45
70 Just as Nebrija’s Spanish grammar was criticized by his contemporaries for being a too literal a copy of his own Latin grammar, the Introductiones latinae (1481).
these criticisms. In this regard, let’s read grammarian Antonio del Rincón\(^{71}\) in the preface to his 1595 *Arte mexicana*:

“No es posible guardarse en todo un mismo metodo y arte, en enseñar todas las lenguas, siendo ellas (como lo son) tan distantes y diferentes entre sí […] Mas con todo eso no se puede negar sino que el camino mas llano y breue para aprovechar en cualquiera de las lenguas es el que an hallado la latina y la griega […] en aquello que me e podido aprovuechar de la grammatica latina siempre me yre arrimando a ella pero en las demas cosas, en questa lengua se diferencia de la latina, a sido forçoso reducirlas a nueuas reglas” (Rincón 1595/1885: 11)

He was not alone in formulating this caveat. Andrés de Olmos,\(^{72}\) the first Nahuatl grammarian, acknowledges also his debt to the Latin grammar but,

"porque en esta lengua no quadrara el orden que el lleva por faltar muchas cosas de las quales en el arte de gramatica se haze gran caudal como son declinaciones, supinos, y las especies de los verbos para denotar la diversidad de ellos, […] no sere reprehensible si en todo no siguiere la orden del arte de Antonio" (Olmos 1547/1875: 13)

There was therefore a clear consciousness that the Latin model had its limits. While it is true that the grammars are organized very much in the same order we find in Nebrija (grammar: nouns, pronouns, verbs…syntax…) this analogy disappears easily as we get to the details. In general, the descriptions reveal a lot more differences than similarities. I do not mean that the Latin mould was of little consequence in the fate of the languages. But the main disruption did not take place here,\(^{73}\) but in the actual writing of these languages, in the passage from orality to writing, in the phonetic transcription of the spoken languages, in

\(^{71}\) *BHA* IV, 230

\(^{72}\) *BHA* IV, 45

\(^{73}\) The first European vernacular’s grammars were also written in Latin (Percival 1994: 69), a fact that doesn’t seem to have raised any criticism.
the translation from paintings to written words, a translation that had repercussions far more significant, as suggested by Serge Gruzinski:

Les “peintures” sont des images autant que des textes et les mots ne sauraient d’une image offrir l’exact équivalent. Il semble, en d’autres termes, que l’exploitation écrite de l’information pictographique impliqua obligatoirement une perte de substance, perte d’autant plus inquiétante qu’elle était irrémédiable et non verbalisable. Elle débordait le domaine des catégories intellectuelles ou esthétiques pour relever de celui des fondements implicites de toute représentation du reel. (Gruzinski 1988: 77)

Once alphabetized, their fate was sealed: substantives and prepositions, pronouns and syntactic rules would manifest themselves replacing the previous codes. While Olmos and Rincón were aware of the distortions in the representation of the indigenous languages that the use of the Latin model could entail, the alphabetization and phonetic transcription of these languages seems not to have been explicitly problematized at that time.

Nevertheless, prefaces and other paratexts can be misleading, and correspondences between these discourses and the actual method followed in the grammars themselves are not easy to establish. We should rather ask ourselves how were these texts constructed and try to catch a glimpse into the presumed relationship or lack of it between Latin and the indigenous languages. Let’s take as an example Antonio de Ágreda’s Arte breve para aprender con alguna facilidad la dificultosa lengua otomi. This is a manuscript dated 1769, which apparently was never printed, although it sought the sponsorship of a Count of Aranda. Its subtitle reads: Contiene algunas reglas, la doctrina, ministracion de

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74 BHA IV, 45
75 BHA IV, 230
76 Not included in BHA.
sacramentos, un bocabulario y otras cosas curiosas. Consequently, we expect a short grammar followed by some doctrinal texts, a vocabulary and miscellaneous matters. It begins indeed with a grammar written in Spanish but referring to the Latin grammatical categories ("pronombre iste, ista, istud...", p. 17) to explain the corresponding Otomi features; then comes the doctrine, in two columns: Spanish and Otomi, containing the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, Credo, Salve, the Ten Commandments, the Sacraments, Articles of Faith, Works of Mercy, Capital Sins, Enemies of the Soul, Powers of the Soul, Bodily Senses, act of Contrition, administration of Baptism, Eucharist and Marriage, with the questioning to which man and woman were submitted as a requisite prior to being married, a confession manual and, lastly, a vocabulary of about 600 words. This is the kind of material where we find grammar, lexicography and translation in combination. These combined volumes, of which I have found ten, were intended for the friars themselves. They helped them communicate with the Indians and indoctrinate them at the same time. In their schools, they could teach them how to read and write their own language, and learn the prayers by heart. But more importantly, a text like this would be used extensively in the religious acts where Latin was not used. We shall not forget that, since confession was the main weapon against idolatry, it was imperative to be able to confess in the different languages. The administration of the sacrament of confession was not haphazard but subject to a strict order. A very precise questioning, following the order of the Ten Commandments and focusing on the Indian customs and practices, was necessary in order to extirpate evil from the Indian’s souls. For instance, in this appended confession manual, the priest will ask the Indian under the First Commandment: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Dt 5:7), whether he or she believes in the owl (called not only by the Spanish name: "búho", but also by the Nahuatl name: tecolote). It was also very important to
question the people who were asking to be married. Questions would be put therefore to establish whether they had the legal age (14 years for the boy)\textsuperscript{77} or if the bride had had relationships with any men of the boy’s family.

So, for the learning and teaching of the indigenous languages in their new, alphabetic, form, grammars were produced based on a double standard: Latin as the supreme paradigm, the noble language; and Spanish, as the means of transfer, the vehicle, as this excerpt of Antonio del Rincón’s\textsuperscript{78} 1595 Arte mexicana illustrates:


Spanish, which will first displace Latin to become a model itself, and then, in a second movement, will impose itself as the national language. Just as we have seen in the previous example, in Horacio Carochi’s\textsuperscript{79} Arte de la lengua mexicana (1645) , the description of the language is made in Spanish, but in the examples, Nahuatl is placed next to Latin: “Tloc [=] iuxta, apud”.

The widespread use of Nahuatl since the days before the Conquest, its intellectual prestige and political importance as the language of the Aztec Empire caused it to be equated to Latin by the missionaries. Fray Jerónimo de Mendieta\textsuperscript{80} (1525-1604), the Franciscan chronicler, was the first to acknowledge this fact:

\textsuperscript{77} Legal age was not a fixed standard. It could be lowered if marriages needed to be promoted, such as after periods of pests. This manuscript could be evidence of such a maneuver, since the digit 4 in number 14 seems to have been superimposed over a smudge.

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{BHA} IV, 230

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{BHA} II, 50 - 51

\textsuperscript{80} \textit{BHA} III, 235
Esta lengua mexicana es la general que corre por todas las provincias de esta Nueva España, puesto que hay muchas y diferentes lenguas particulares de cada provincial, y en partes de cada pueblo, porque son innumerables. Mas en todas partes hay interpretes que entienden y hablan la mexicana, porque ésta es la que por todas partes corre, como la Latina por todos los reinos de Europa. (Mendieta 1870: III, 552).

This is the reason why in grammars of less predominant languages, Nahuatl appears to have been used as a tertium comparationis, a third standard together with Latin, and placed next to Spanish. Pedro de Cárceres' Arte de la lengua othomi (?1500/1905) is a unique case of such a three-way comparatism: the Otomi language is described in Spanish but with references to Latin and Nahuatl, such as in this example, concerning possessive or undetermined pronouns, “que los mexicanos usan que dicen teaxca, tettalqui, &c., que quiere decir cosa o hazienda de alguno… Estos [the Otomi Indians] no lo tienen pero en su lugar dizan matzaxoonimmeti, matzachonimeti…” (p. 53). In Cárceres’ grammar this feature is particularly evident; nevertheless, other grammars of minor languages, as well as bilingual texts of doctrine, show frequent interferences of Nahuatl, most visibly in the vocabulary, but possibly too in deeper structures.

In fact, it can be said that Spanish reinforced the nahuatlization of the territory. Nahuatl was indeed the more widespread language before the Conquest, having been imposed upon other groups, but it was the colonial policies of forced displacement of populations, renaming of towns and alliances with the central highlands local authorities, among other factors, which determined the dissemination of classical Nahuatl. Klor de Alva has described how classical Nahuatl, the Mexicano used by the Indian elites, was used by the colonial powers as a channel through which their objectives could be better accepted and assimilated by the population (Klor 1989).

81 BHA II, 43
Of course the religious spirit permeates through all intellectual endeavors in this period; in other words, nothing is thinkable or sayable outside the sphere of God. But, going back to the discussion on prejudices above, part of the translatritional material of the canvass shows some degree of detachment from the indoctrination purposes which unquestionably motivate them. In many grammars we find a spirit of intellectual inquiry which has been equated to an ethnolinguistic interest _avant la lettre_. Consideration is given, for instance, to the facts that in Mixteca, men’s and women’s language are different: "hermano, los hombres dizien: _ñani_, las mujeres, _cuhua_.", and that in Zapoteco there is not one only way of counting, but different ways for blankets, for long things, for pans, for corn ears, for slashes, piles, markets, Castile bread, tortillas, cocoa bundles, etc..., in which “the verbs of removing and putting, bringing and carrying are different according to the things that are removed and put and brought and carried, and according to the places whereto they are removed, or put, or brought or carried, and according to the places wherefrom they are removed, put, brought or carried". In Carochi’s 1645 _Arte de la lengua mexicana_, examples of turns of phrases are taken from ancient Nahuatl texts just as from Christian texts. In Juan de Córdova’s 1578 _Arte del idioma zapoteco_, the calendars and omens of the Indians are explained without any moral judgments nor derogatory comments, as well as the ways the Indians had to marry and get divorced. Gaspar de los Reyes, who acknowledges his debt to Juan de Córdova, wrote a _Gramática de las lenguas zapoteca-serrana y zapoteca del valle_ (1700) in which he explains how verbs in Zapoteco can combine different aspects:

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82 Fr. Antonio de los Reyes’ _Arte de la lengua mixteca_, 1593, p. 87
83 Juan de Córdova’s _Arte del idioma zapoteco_, 1578, pp. 197-198
84 Pedro de Cárceres’ _Arte de la lengua othomi_, 16th c., p. 14 (page 103 of Nicolás León’s 1905 edition, my translation)
85 BHA II, 50 - 51
86 BHA II, 146 - 147
Tienen términos propios y modos tan irregulares que ni en la latinidad ni en lo castellano tenemos tales voces: Pregúntanle a un Indio que hace su amo? Y responde con un solo término, diziendo no solo que está en la selda y loque está haciendo, sino tambien el modo con que está si sentado, si en pie, si acostado (p. 24)

Juan de Córdova is particularly interesting in that he explains how certain grammatical traits of this language could be interpreted as suggesting heresy. With regard to the use of the pronoun “we” he says:

ni se ha de entender con tal rigor que cuando digo Señor perdonad nuestras culpas se trate tambien de las culpas de El […] Los Caxones dizen en el persignum crucis: Becilaci reho xana Dios he? Que quiere decir libranos señor; luego en el nos, le comprendieran haziéndole pecador; no, no son tan metaphísicos los Indios; ni son tan brutos que no sepan que Dios es impecable.

In other words, they might be Indians but they know that God has no fault. Oscillations between the like and the different, examples of analogy and of divergence are frequent in the grammars texts. I would venture to say, however, that bridges of mutual intelligibility are more common than not. Latin was the model, but the displacement of the grammarians with respect to Latin and Spanish was evident. Comparisons with the mother language were only possible to a certain extent. Beyond, a large horizon of difference deployed and was acknowledged, but it does not seem to have posed an insurmountable obstacle.

Without making value judgments with regards to their allegiance to the colonial goals and motivations, we can nevertheless observe in a significant number of grammars the same spirit of curiosity and intellectual inquiry that was cultivated in the two main Spanish universities of the time: Salamanca and Alcalá. Nebrija himself was quite an
unorthodox scholar. Grammars such as Cárceres’s are probably the best examples of this spirit.

Other grammars, however, show more openly the kind of discourse that would be expected from colonial agents. Francisco Ávila’s 1717 Arte de la lengua mexicana y breves pláticas de los mysterios de Nuestra Santa Fee Catholica is a telling example of the adherence of some grammarians to the colonial purposes. In a long prologue dedicated to the “pious reader”, this Franciscan friar justifies his mingling with non-linguistic matters: "También quise, ya que al escribir este Arte es para los que se han de dar a la administración, notar algunas cosas, que sirvan de avisos, en orden al conocimiento, natural inclinación y obrar de los Indios". A description of the Indians’ character follows:

Todo esto [the chores they perform] lo hacen como forzados, y porque son de animo servil y no se averguencen de exercitarse en officios viles, aunque sean bien nacidos. Comen sin asco y viven sin verguença. No sienten agravio ni agradecen beneficio […] Para hacer una delacion y falsa acusacion hazen junta de principales, nombran testigos y los instruyen en lo que han de jurar, juntan dinero, y gallinas; vistense de la ropa mas rota para parecer antes los Jueves, lloran, se lamentan, y assi hazen creibles sus imposturas, porque se compadesce de ellos el Juez (unnumbered page).

Since they are so vile and hypocritical, here are some indications as to how they should be treated:

Hableles con imperio, nieguenles assiento, haganlos hablar en voz baja […] con la manta amarrada sobre el ombro y no suelta. No les consienta tomar polvos, ni chupar en su presencia; y sobre todo cuyde y vele que sepan la Doctrina Christiana, que se confiesen bien; y para que lo hagan mude la aspereza conque sin confessarlos les habla, en blandura, no los riña… […]

87 BHA II, 43
88 BHA I, 185
Son abiles, discurren muy delgado en materia de su negocio. Saben poner la ocasion de la culpa para dar un tapavoca. Con una poca de fruta, o una gallina engañan al mas avil; y assi no es bueno recibir sus agasajos porque traen consigo embuelto un veneno para el alma, y cuerpo; y meten en empeños, que no es facil salir con bien de ellos. Procuran que el Cura y las Justicias anden encontrados para vivir mas sueltos (unnumbered page).

Pending analysis of more such texts, two general modes seem to emerge here; on the one hand, the grammars such as Cárceres\textsuperscript{89} grammar, which exudes the optimism of the first decades,\textsuperscript{90} when everything seemed possible to these friars, who considered themselves as the new apostles, infused with the Pentecostal gift of tongues: every word of any language has its equivalent in Latin and, therefore, has its equivalent in other languages: the preface by the Mexico University holder of the chair of Otomi language to Luis Neve y Molina’s\textsuperscript{91} grammar says that his grammar "acredita, y manifiesta claramente no haver Idioma alguno incapaz de ceñirse a los numeros, y reglas del Arte" (Neve y Molina 1767: unnumbered page). These languages and these peoples could therefore not escape God’s designs. However erroneous their beliefs, they were still commensurable since they were within God’s reach. The friars’ \textit{pre-judgements} regarding the origins of these peoples and regarding the fate of humanity were not an obstacle to entertain a dialogue with them. After all, if we remember, as Horacio Carochi\textsuperscript{92} had said in the prologue to his grammar, men could only be either Christians or infidels. This simplicity of classification minimized differences: Christians were the Pope and the Spanish king and his vassals. Unfaithful were the Moors and Indians. Everything was to be gained in the contact. Translation could and should be performed.

\textsuperscript{89} \textit{BHA} II, 43
\textsuperscript{90} Solange Alberro, following Mendieta, locates the end of that “golden age” in 1564, the year in which Viceroy Luis de Velasco died (Alberro 1999: 77)
\textsuperscript{91} \textit{BHA} IV, 24
\textsuperscript{92} \textit{BHA} II, 50 - 51
At the opposed pole we have Ávila’s grammar, a product of a different time, the years of depopulation and mixing of races, the shift in population ratios. Pessimism has gradually grown among the religious class: news are commonplace that Indians go back to their idolatries clandestinely, or cynically, as soon as they are out of sight of the missionary; no more masses of adults to be baptized; competition among the monastic orders and between them and the secular branch of the Church has poisoned the atmosphere. Indians will no more be taught Latin and will not be ordained. These Indians, the ones so callously depicted by Ávila, have nothing in common with the noble Aztecs, the sons of caciques that were taught at Tlatelolco. Occasionally, these Indians would be dressed up as Aztecs and hung off the triumphal archs that were built in different ceremonies.93

Fixing the language by comparison to Spanish, Latin, or Nahuatl, meant a confirmation of the existence of the language and its importance. Grammars of Nahuatl will be produced during the whole period, and they will adjust themselves to the evolution of the language.94 In 1713 the Augustinian friar Manuel Pérez95 publishes another Arte del idioma mexicano. According to common practice, the text is preceded by a number of letters of approval by distinguished scholars or church officials. One of them is Fr. Joseph de Padilla, who was head of the Augustinian’s convent of Xanenetla. He states that he knows the author “que es mi amigo y mi semejante: nostlazomahuiz teopixcapotzin, se dice con elegancia en mexicano”, an expression of respect and admiration towards Nahuatl as well as a very personal commentary contrasting with the common rhetoric found in

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93 Alberro 1999: 83-96
94 In the preface of an early 19th c. anonymous Nahuatl catechism the author says he is writing in a language “de este siglo, y no en el siglo de la conquista, que por sublime les seria desconocido”. Clara y sucinta exposición del pequeño catecismo..., Oratorio de S. Felipe Neri: Puebla, 1891
95 BHA IV, 136
approvals. In some way, these two men (who were not Indians but probably mestizo) would identify themselves too in the Mexican language. Was this the kind of fusion of horizons Gadamer talks about? Could it have meant the beginning of something different, a reformulation of categories? Whatever the case, this chance aborted. But for a fleeting moment it seemed that the prejudices could be overcome.

2.1.2. Comparing: vocabularies and the like

At the outset, I must emphasize that all lexicographic productions of New Spain were either bilingual or trilingual. The vast majority served the purpose of comparing Spanish with indigenous languages. A few products relate Classical languages with Spanish, and have not been included in this category; instead, they will be found under the Modern High Culture or Classical Continuity categories.

In addressing the question of the magnitude of the vocabularies category, I have found some partial quantifications, studies on the genealogy of the main colonial dictionaries, and a number of articles assessing the importance of these dictionaries in the historical context. I have not come across any study venturing the number of such lexicographic products, just as there seems to be no overall quantification of grammars. One has to acknowledge the methodological and practical difficulties of these compilations: the existence of some texts is only known by reference; when we have the author’s name,

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96 They are all entitled “vocabularios”, regardless of size and ambition. Some are no more than short bilingual wordlists, and others come closer to a modern definition of dictionaries. The ones I have been able to consult are alphabetical, except for Pedro de Arenas’ 1611 thematic conversation guide: Vocabulario manual de las lenguas castellana y mexicana.
97 Carmen Val-Julían 1998 limits her study to the 16th century.
there is at least some assurance of identification, but among these lexicons there are a number of anonymous works, which makes the identification and register very problematic. Furthermore, whether anonymous or not, if known and traceable, they are scattered in libraries of different countries, and while often there are specific catalogues for such materials, nobody seems to have attempted to merge them in order to arrive at a final compilation. Now, why would this be a shortcoming? In pointing out this lack of a complete panorama I do not mean to give an excessive importance to quantifications; but to signal that by studying these materials in a piecemeal manner, there has been a tendency to view them as separate, both from each other and, as a group, from the lexicographical production elsewhere, and this trend has, in my view, made scholarship blind to or insufficiently aware of important facts, one of which is the concentration of materials and languages, and another one the simultaneity of this production with regards to European lexicography. If we could arrive at a complete and carefully designed database we could probably correct some historical assumptions as well as propose new avenues for study.

Although arriving at a final assessment of the vocabularies is not my purpose here, I prepared, just as in the case of grammars, a compilation containing the ones mentioned in Beristáin plus the ones that are not mentioned there, but that I have been able to consult, or that I have found mentioned in reliable sources. Among them, there are again some anonymous works, and some works that are available in modern editions. This compilation gives a total of 79 lexicons of the following languages: Concho (1), Cora (1), Chichimeca (1), Eudeve (1), Huasteca (3), Mame (1), Matlazinga (3), Maya (10), Mije (1), Mixteca (2), Nahuatl (21), Otomi (7), Pima (1), Seri (1), Tarahumara (3), Tarasco (5), Tepehuana (4),
Fig. 10. Lexicons and languages

* Apparently these three languages: Eudeve, Pima and Seri, are contained in one volume (Adam Gilg’s vocabulary); there is also a Nahuatl-Otomi vocabulary (Pedro Palacios’ vocabulary) and a trilingual Spanish-Nahuatl-Otomi (Urbano’s). In this table they are individualized as independent lexicons, i.e., separate languages.

Tequima (1), Totonaca (3), Tzeltal (1), Xiximije (1), Zacateca (1) and Zapoteca (3). In the entries corresponding to three vocabularies Beristain does not specify the languages concerned. Reference is made only to “vocabularios en diversas lenguas de indios”, or similar.

In Figure 11 I have plotted the number of vocabularies against time. As we can see,

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100 See linguistic map in page XXX
101 Vicente Aguila (Beristain 1947, I: 81), Pedro Calvo (Beristain 1947, II: 22-23), and Domingo Lara (Beristain 1947, III: 91)
they are scattered quite evenly along the whole period, and they disappear with the eighteenth century. Just as we have observed in the case of grammars, Nahuatl, Maya and Otomi were (and still are) the more widespread languages and, therefore, they were the object of lexicographic attention for a longer period. More vocabularies of these latter languages have survived, and we know also that some were reedited. This table does not show re-editions but only first editions. Another important observation to be made is that only a handful of these dictionaries were actually printed and survived to this date. Most

**Fig. 11. Concentration of lexicons**
vocabularies seem to have been compiled by the friars for use in their catechetical activities. They might have circulated in the convent, and hand copies might have been made of it, but they were not meant for print. This is one of the reasons why only a few have survived, and, of some languages, only one. Religious orders chronicles do not fail to mention the names of the friars who wrote vocabularies or grammars, but if the actual text is not found, we cannot go further.

This production of vocabularies is far from homogeneous: some of them are fully fledged dictionaries, like Juan de Córdova’s\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Vocabulario de la lengua zapoteca} and Alonso de Molina’s\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Vocabulario de la lengua mexicana}, both published in mid sixteenth-century; others are more or less sizeable bilingual lists of words, appended sometimes to grammars or inserted between a grammar and a doctrinal text in the same volume, like 1769’s Antonio de Agreda \textit{Arte breve para aprender con alguna facilidad la dificultosa lengua otomi [...] ministracion de sacramentos, un vocabulario y otras cosas curiosas}. As was mentioned before the vocabulary is a list of some 600 words. Neve y Molina’s\textsuperscript{104} 1767 \textit{Reglas de orthographia, diccionario y arte del idioma otomi}... contains also a brief wordlist as well as a bilingual Otomi-Nahuatl list of geographical names. One would tend to see the larger, standing alone, dictionaries as the most important ones. However, the mere presence of this variety of shorter vocabularies can give us important indications as to their functions and uses. After all, they seem to have been the antecedors of the largest ones. Franciscan chronicler Jerónimo de Mendieta explains: “Y tenían siempre papel y tinta en las manos, y en oyendo el vocablo al indio, escribiánlo, y al propósito que lo dijo. Y a la tarde juntábanse los religiosos y comunicaban los unos a los

\textsuperscript{102} \textit{BHA} II, 146 - 147
\textsuperscript{103} \textit{BHA} III, 257 - V, 396
\textsuperscript{104} \textit{BHA} IV, 24
otros sus escriptos, y lo mejor que podían conformaban a aquellos vocablos el romance que les parecía más convenir” (Mendieta 1596/1973, I: 134). It seems thus natural that this was a common method of compilation, and that these lists, hand copied once and again, would be extensively used in the apostolic task. Later, once the study centers were established and some time could be devoted to a more thorough exploration of the languages, the larger vocabularies could be prepared.

To put these vocabularies in their proper general context requires a brief aside: let’s recall that at the time of the Conquest, Castilian, like other Romance languages, had taken a big enough distance from Latin for both to become quite strange to each other, at least for the layman. This coming of age of the vernacular is exemplified in the flourishing of bilingual Latin-vernacular dictionaries in Europe. The symbolic nature of these lists by which the “daughter language” would dare compare itself to the “mother language”, and, in turn, the mother language would condescend to be compared to the language aspiring for legitimacy, would result in bilingual texts that can be considered as representations of a sought after inter pares relationship, as well as declarations of independence: in becoming equal to the prestigious language, the young one was affirming its sovereignty and, in the same breadth, asserting its potential to become, in turn, a model for new aspirant languages: Antonio de Nebrija’s Spanish/Latin dictionary was published in Spain shortly after Columbus arrived to America,105 and copies of it crossed regularly the Atlantic thereafter.106

Specialists agree that Nebrija’s lexicographical works were the prototype for the

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105 Nebrija’s Lexicon hoc est dictionarium ex sermone latino in hispanensem interprete (Latin-Spanish) was first published in 1492, and around 1493-95 his Dictionarium ex hispanensi in latinum sermonem (Spanish-Latin), both in Salamanca.

106 Seven such dictionaries came in the same shipment already mentioned (Fernández del Castillo 1982: 263-281).
main known Mexican dictionaries written during the sixteenth century. Their genealogy has been explored by Frances Karttunen (1995: 75-88) and her findings are conclusive. On the other hand, it is a fact in lexicographical history that Nebrija’s Latin-Castilian dictionary served as the model for other Latin-vernacular European dictionaries, as well as for the first bilingual dictionaries between vernaculars. The impact of Nebrija’s work, according to Kahane (in Kachru 1995: 39), encompasses the whole of Western linguistic history.

On the basis of both Karttunen’s and Kahane’s findings, we can conclude that Nebrija’s influence spans East and West in an almost synchronic axis. A list of the main dates and products until the 17th century, as established separately by Karttunen for Mesoamerican languages and by Kahane for European languages, may help illustrating two things: the most obvious one is, as I was saying, Nebrija’s influence East and West. A less obvious fact is, though, the coevalness between the New Spain and the European dictionaries (in Table 2, dictionaries based on that of Nebrija appear in bold; for context purposes, I have included in italics other important contemporary dictionaries)107:

Similarly to my observations with respect to grammars, this contemporaneity of New Spain and European lexicographical production allows for a better integrated, non-Eurocentric picture of the rich Renaissance-rooted lexicography. We can therefore posit that, at least from the macrostructural, historical point of view, New Spain dictionaries belong to the same period and were produced in the same ideological context than the European ones. However, there are aspects that undoubtedly distinguish these two productions. And these aspects have to do with the particular circumstances in

Table 2. Nebrija’s influence in European and American lexicography*

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which colonial dictionaries were produced, the functions they were entrusted with and the use they were put to. While, in Europe, dictionaries were considered as symbols of emancipation from Latin and the rise of the vernaculars, in America they have been primarily associated with imperial power, language imposition and forced conversion. Spanish was affirming its potential against Latin in Europe and simultaneously putting it to test with the New World languages. This dual movement of Spanish is at the origin of its growth and spread.

Let us take a closer look at them:

Out of a total of 70 lexicographers, only 8 were not churchmen. The rest belonged
either to the monastic orders or to the secular branch of the Church. While the number of those who only wrote lexicons is modest (8, against 38 grammarians),\textsuperscript{108} the number of lexicographers who at the same time translated, or seem to have translated, and who also wrote grammars is striking (62), following the general trend of combined activities that we discussed in the methodology chapter. This means that for each lone lexicographer, there were eight or nine engaged in at least another linguistic activity involving a second language, as shown in Figure 12. Confirming the analysis I have proposed of grammars in the previous section, this simultaneity between religious and linguistic aims is one of the distinctive traits of our textual production during the first decades following the Conquest.

\textbf{Fig. 12. Lexicographers and parallel activities}

From the point of view of the Christianization efforts, the evangelical passage

\textsuperscript{108} See Figure 3.
explaining the gift of tongues given to Jesus’ Apostles after His death served as an inspiration for the friars setting out to convert the Indian populations. Friar Jerónimo de Mendieta, an early chronicler, explains in his *Historia eclesiástica india*na (1596) the mortifications of the Franciscans who were unable to teach the doctrine to the Indians for lack of a common language, and how, by the Lord’s inspiration, they made themselves “like children” and, playing with the Indian children, they compiled lists of words that were later to become the first dictionaries with which they could translate the catechisms and doctrinal texts.109

Thus, with a few exceptions, these vocabularies were compiled by the users themselves, with the help of natives, within the context of the dissemination of the Christian faith. Although it is unquestionable that the vocabularies were written with the collaboration of Indians, especially the first ones, they were, just as the grammars, not intended for the Indians but for the Spaniards. In his justification for the Nahuatl-Spanish version of his dictionary, the Franciscan Alonso de Molina110 indicates that this version will be useful for those who want to study Nahuatl “por arte y muy de veras”, and those who want to know the meanings of words either spoken or written111: so, even the Nahuatl-to-Spanish version was not conceived to help Indians in general to communicate with Spanish. It could be, as López Austin pointedly notes in his seminal work on the pre-Hispanic lexicon of the human body, that Molina’s first dictionary (1555), as well as other missionary dictionaries, were not meant for dialogue (López Austin 1996: 50). This would be the reason why at the beginning they are mostly (or firstly) unidirectional: Spanish-

110 BHA III, 257 V, 396
indigenous language. It was the Spanish who wished to be understood first. They would

care later about understanding the Indians. A less ideological and more technical reason,
led by pragmatic considerations, is proposed by René Acuña in his introduction to a
modern edition of a Mayan vocabulary (2001: 19): since the model was Nebrija’s Spanish-
Latin dictionary, the method the missionaries followed consisted in removing the Latin
wordlist and simply noting the equivalents from the Spanish wordlist in the indigenous
language.\footnote{Karttunen (1995: 77) identifies in six New Spain vocabularies a single “elicitation list” stemming from the Nebrija’s dictionary.}

Whatever the reasons for this preference, bilingual dictionaries are always
comparisons, and even if the Spanish column came first, it would build a bridge upon
which the communication would not always flow only in the Spanish to Nahuatl direction,
as I will show in the examples explored here forth. In her book on the gradual acculturation
of Spaniards during the Colonial period in Mexico, historian Solange Alberro expands on
the importance of the notion of comparison for understanding the attitudes towards the
Other in the colonial encounter (Alberro 2002: 18-26). Comparison was the way to
approach things different from the ones already known, and she cites the many witnesses
who wrote that New Spain cities and markets were similar, or better, than those of Spain or
Italy. This mental attitude of acknowledging similarities with previous experiences or
knowledge, she says, “could explain why certain surreptitious and unconscious exchanges
and certain involuntary deviations could have happened among the Spaniards” (2002: 26,
my translation). The other side of comparison is rivalry (2002: 22-23), that is, the dynamics
by which one of the two sides eventually overcomes the other in the comparison. If we take
as an example the Renaissance Latin-vernacular dictionaries, this dynamics is made
obvious by the fact that in comparing themselves to Latin, the vernaculars were showing their superiority, something that, in my analysis of the dictionaries, I translate with the terms “engaging” and “enduring”. In the context of European Rennaissance lexicography, the “engaging” languages were the ones which were considered inferior. It was them that prompted the comparison in their search for an equal relationship with Latin. In this comparison, Latin was the “enduring” language. In early New Spain bilingual dictionaries, instead, of the two languages compared, the “engaging” one was not the language that was considered inferior, but Castilian, the colonizer’s language, presenting itself as the model language, and the “enduring” languages were those of the colonized.

We could say that eventually Castilian, in fact, was engaging in both fronts: in the comparison with Latin and in the comparison with the indigenous languages. However, even then, Castilian could not escape the dynamics of comparison-rivalry. In admitting the possibility of comparison, Spanish was implicitly recognizing the likelihood of *inter pares* relationship, something that for a short while seemed possible in New Spain, at the time when Franciscan friars were harnessing the new intellectual elite composed by the sons of the caciques, when the Spanish monarchs ruled that doctrine should be taught in the indigenous languages or even when Nahuatl was pronounced the official language of New Spain. This was a moment in history which can be compared (and analogy comes again as a tool to understand new things) with those extraordinary years of Toledo, as a place where ideological and religious rivalries were momentarily held in abeyance.

Unfortunately, other factors aborted this possibility in New Spain, the indigenous languages hopelessly lost ground while Spanish was increasingly reinforced. I will expand on that matter later.
In view of the variety of vocabularies, I thought it could be useful to attempt some taxonomy. In fact, several typologies seem possible here: directionality is one of them. Some vocabularies are unidirectional Spanish-indigenous language. In some cases, the other direction was added later, such as in the case of the best known Nahuatl dictionary: Alonso de Molina’s\textsuperscript{113}. We also find very early vocabularies in the direction indigenous language-Spanish (Fray Domingo de Ara,\textsuperscript{114} Antonio de Ciudad Real\textsuperscript{115}), which could indicate that maybe Lopez Austin’s assertion above was too hasty.

We can also distinguish between stand-alone vocabularies and appended vocabularies, and discover that the former are more general in scope than the latter, which are more religious in nature, although they were all produced for indoctrination purposes (with the notable exception of Pedro de Arenas\textsuperscript{116} Vocabulario manual de la lengua castellana y mexicana).

There are vocabularies that simply give equivalents, and there are more explanatory vocabularies, which include also examples of word usage, going as far as reproducing sample dialogues.

However useful these taxonomies can be, for the purpose of understanding the functions of these vocabularies and answer the questions pertinent to our research, I suggest classifying the dictionaries in two groups:

1. Translation dictionaries; namely, the scholarly works which ambitioned to assess the lexical wealth of the language. They are mostly stand-alone works, of large size, following more or less closely the Latin-Spanish model established by Nebrija.

\textsuperscript{113} BHA III, 257 V, 396  
\textsuperscript{114} Not included in BHA  
\textsuperscript{115} BHA II, 117  
\textsuperscript{116} BHA I, 134 V, 306
2. Conversational dictionaries; namely, the ones produced seemingly mainly for oral communication purposes. Generally they are more modest in size, sometimes limited to short lists appended to a grammar or a doctrine.

Dictionaries, we all know, are tremendously entertaining to read. They are never dull lists of words and can be studied and analyzed as narratives. The more ambitious ones attempt at covering the wealth of physical and abstract concepts of a language-culture; they are vehicles, therefore, of their potentialities. They always pretend some degree of encyclopedic scope. Bilingual dictionaries, moreover, not only exhibit these traits, but they do it in comparison with the other culture and language. They are a way in which the “enduring” language may appraise its potential, and a way of legitimizing itself in front of
the “engaging” language. The potentialities of the two languages are confronting each other, recognizing each other as in a mirror, dialoguing.

I have also found that dictionaries are easier to read than grammars, which are the other powerful means of legitimizing languages. After all, bilingual dictionaries are condensed translations, and evaluating translations and reading in between their lines is what we, as translators, have been trained to do. These vocabularies are usually introduced by prefaces, prologues, dedications and other paratexts illuminating the purposes with which they were prepared and the circumstances of their production.

2.1.2.1. Translational dictionaries

Some extracts from the preface of Antonio de Molina\textsuperscript{117} Vocabulario de la lengua castellana y mexicana will illustrate this notion of translational dictionaries.\textsuperscript{118} In it, Molina starts recalling the topos of Babel and God’s punishment against the arrogance of man to conclude that indeed, the punishment was very rigorous:

\begin{quote}
y esta fue la confusion y division de las lenguas, para que donde antes era la lengua una, fuese tanta la variedad y diversidad de los lenguajes, que los unos no se entendiesen con los otros. Pues si a un pecado que Dios con tanto rigor quiso castigar, se dio por pena y castigo la confusion de las lenguas, señal es, que este no es pequeño mal (1555/1970, Prologo, unnumbered page).
\end{quote}

But, after all, a seemingly pragmatic man, Molina thinks that not knowing the language may result in not being able to profit materially and spiritually from the Indians:

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{BHA III, 257 V, 396
\footnote{Alonso de Molina’s first dictionary was Castilian-Mexican, published in 1555. The Mexican-Castilian was published in 1571, together with the Castilian-Mexican. The edition I am consulting is the one prepared by M. León-Portilla (Porrúa, Mexico, 1970), which is preceded by a comprehensive introduction by the same author.}
\end{footnotesize}
puesto caso que la piedad Christiana nos incline a aprovechar a estos naturales assi en lo temporal como en lo spiritual, la falta de lengua nos estorba. (1555/1970, Prologo, unnumbered page)

He also ponders that the dictionary may help dispense with the not always reliable interpreters, on whose good or bad intentions reason and justice depends (sic), and recalls that Habsburg Charles V, the then King of Spain, could not communicate with his Spanish subjects at the beginning of his reign,\textsuperscript{119} and that:

por el contrario, fue muy grande el contentamiento y alegria que se tuvo quando entendio y hablo nuestra lengua sin medio de interpretes. Porque muchas veces, aunque el agua sea limpia y clara, los arcaduzes por donde pasa la hace turbia. (1555/1970, Prologo, unnumbered page)

Consequently, the vocabulary fulfills many needs. The prologue claims a combination of spiritual and earthly motivations: the reversal of the divine punishment in Babel, facilitating the material and spiritual dealings with the Indians (to which the Spanish are inclined by Christian piety), dispensing of intermediaries who can contaminate the clean and clear communication between Spanish and Indians, especially, as he says, in judicial matters.

Molina\textsuperscript{120} expands then on the difficulties he has encountered: the fact that he was not born in that language but that he learned it, the difficulty of becoming acquainted with its wealth of words and elegant metaphors, and the fact that Castilian lacks words for things of the Indians, and vice versa. He specifies the varieties of Nahuatl he is relying upon, namely the elegant, classical Nahuatl of Texcoco, a city some miles East of Mexico Tenochtitlan, and acknowledges the fact that there exists a diversity of forms throughout the territory.

\textsuperscript{119} The fact that he was a foreigner made Charles V Spanish reign (1517-1556) very unpopular at the beginning. He was only 17, couldn’t speak Spanish and had appointed Flemish ministers.

\textsuperscript{120} BHA III, 257 V, 396
Molina places list of notes or “avisos” at the beginning of each of the two vocabularies to help the reader in using them. These notes, which are reflections of grammatical and semantic nature, as well as practical indications on how the entries are to be read (v.g.: “Aviso quinto: todos los vocablos que oviere diferentes para significar una misma cosa, que en el latin llamamos sinonimos, se distinguiran con un punto”,\textsuperscript{121} illustrate the limits and possibilities of the comparison, and allow us a glimpse into the author’s approach.

In Molina’s\textsuperscript{122} Spanish-NahuaTL vocabulary sometimes Spanish yields to NahuaTL because the author explicitly wants to stress the particularities of NahuaTL: “en este vocabulario se ponen algunos romances, que en nuestro castellano no quadran, ni se usan mucho: y esto se haze por dar a entender mejor la propiedad de la lengua de los Yndios”.\textsuperscript{123} Thus, to be able to account for certain morphological characteristics of NahuaTL he must create new words in Spanish, such as the form “abaxador” (the one who lowers, \textit{lowerer}), mentioned as an example in the above mentioned first “aviso”. Other cases of Spanish neologisms created in response to the NahuaTL lexical wealth are to be found in the body of the vocabulary, for instance, “lebruno” (thing having to do with hares), or “comprehendedor” (the one who understands).

In the NahuaTL-Spanish dictionary, these characteristics are also noted and explained, quite irrespectively of whether they might ever be used in Spanish: from the root word \textit{pal}, comes \textit{tlapaloani} = the one who leeks something; \textit{tlapalololli} = leeked thing; \textit{tlapaloliztli} = the place where the leeking has taken place. In reading this, one cannot

\textsuperscript{121} Molina (1555/1970), \textit{Prologo}, unnumbered page.
\textsuperscript{122} \textit{BHA} III, 257 V, 396
\textsuperscript{123} Molina (1555/1970), \textit{Prologo}, “Aviso primero”, unnumbered page.
but imagine that in the world which is narrated to us there were things, events, experiences which could only be rejoined by an abstract science such as grammar. Translation was possible not because there could be an equivalent in the other language but because the grammatical bridge, placed above the differences, allowed for such an interchange. *Grammatica* (that is, the Latin grammar) thus can be seen not as the straight jacket in which all languages are forced but the site where commensurability can take place. And not only a commensurability as could be expressed by the colonizer since the grammar is a device imposed by the colonizer, but also under the terms of the colonized. That is, the colonized interferes with the colonizer by appropriating the colonizer’s grammar. Let me introduce here an important nuance which has to do with the author’s biography: Alonso de Molina\(^\text{124}\) was a little Spanish boy of no more than six when the Franciscan friars of Mexico noticed him. He was bilingual Spanish-Nahuatl because he mingled with the Indian boys in the neighborhood. The friars thought they could put Alonso’s skills to a better use and asked his mother to give him to the convent so that he could assist the older friars in the conversion efforts. He lived ever since in the Franciscan convent of Mexico. Among his writings are a Mexican grammar and this dictionary, and a confession manual. He did not however work alone. As most other missionaries, he was assisted by an Indian scholar (“perito”). His colleague was Hernando (o Fernando) de Ribas,\(^\text{125}\) an Indian boy educated in the Colegio Imperial de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, and able in the three languages: his own (Nahuatl), Spanish and Latin. Ribas, according to Frances Karttunen (1995), would be the author of a manuscript vocabulary deposited in the Newberry Library.

The fact that he introduces an entry in the Spanish column to give the Nahuatl

\(^{124}\) *BHA* III, 257 V, 396

\(^{125}\) *BHA* IV, 214
equivalent of “a pedazos sacar el niño del vientre de su madre” (removing an unborn child in pieces from the mothers womb) (Spanish-Nahuatl, p. 11), an idea alien to the Spanish idiom but which is lexicalized in Nahuatl, demonstrates (if there is any need of further demonstration by now) that it is the Nahuatl that engages the conversation when dictating the lexemes that the vocabulary should contain. Such a reversal of the situation between engaging and enduring languages is not exceptional but rather frequent in Molina’s\textsuperscript{126} dictionary.

In general, it would seem that Molina purposefully stresses the richness and variety of Nahuatl over Spanish. For instance, in the entry “araña” he gives several precise equivalents in Nahuatl, which are simply rendered in Spanish as: “araña grande no ponzoñosa”, “araña negra y ponzoñosa”, “araña otra ponzoñosa”, “araña otra mala” (Spanish-Nahuatl, p. 13). Similarly, he includes four entries for “víbora”: “víbora generalmente”, “víbora muy ponzoñosa y grande”, “víbora larga y blanca”, “víbora otra pestilencial y de gran ponzoña”, “víbora negra”, “víboras otras”, which are not equivalents but explanations of the more specific Nahuatl words (Spanish-Nahuatl, p. 20). One must, however, recall that although he was born in Spain, Molina\textsuperscript{127} was brought to America at an early age with his parents and he never traveled back. Therefore, he probably knew more of the different varieties of Nahuatl than of Spanish, particularly about things of the land.\textsuperscript{128}

I must signal that the word tameme (Nahuatl for porter, or cargador, in Spanish) appears in the Spanish column of the Spanish-Nahuatl section. Similarly, the Nahuatl word mecapalli found its way into the Spanish column in the Nahuatl-Spanish section as the

\textsuperscript{126} BHA III, 257 V, 396
\textsuperscript{127} BHA III, 257 V, 396
\textsuperscript{128} The seventeen entries for games are reminiscent of his childhood among Indian children (Molina 1555/1977, Spanish-Nahuatl, p. 73).
naturalized form “mecapal”.\textsuperscript{129} “Aguacate” appears in “Azeite de aguacate” as a Spanish word. Another Nahuatl word, \textit{tlamatini} (wise person, or sage) takes up the Spanish diminutive form of “\textit{tlamatinito}” (small sage) in the Nahuatl column of the Nahuatl-Spanish section. These cases, which could be the only ones, cannot be considered exemplary, but they are nevertheless an indication of the early incorporation of Nahuatl words into the Spanish lexis. Lastly, Antillianisms brought by the first conquerors are also included in the Spanish column. This is the case of the words “aji”, “canoa”, “naguey”, “maiz”, “tuna”, and “naguas”.

Illustrating that Molina\textsuperscript{130} was very well acquainted with the Nahua culture and language are the entries belonging to aspects of pre-Hispanic rites and customs.\textsuperscript{131} In the Spanish-Nahuatl section he includes, for instance, “comedor de hombres” (man-eater, p. 27), “traspasar el cuchillo el corazón de la virgen” (the knife to pierce the virgin’s heart, p. 114), “chupar canutos de sahumero”, a ritual performed by medicine men over sick people, or “agua con que lavavan los pedernales, que eran como cuchillos con que sacrificaban y matavan los hombres ante los idolos, la qual tenian en lugar de agua bendita, y en mucha veneracion” (Spanish-Nahuatl, p. 6). The interest of these inclusions resides not only in the fact that Spanish is forced to explain indigenous materials and situations, as a counterpoint to the cases in which Nahuatl is forced to explain Spanish materials and situations. It also helps understanding the way in which Nahuatl discourse of authority was used to convey Christian contents: the entry “atar” (to tie), for example, contains a full explanation: “Atar plumas ricas, juntandolas para ponerlas en algún plumaje, o en alguna

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{129}] The “mecapal” case is mentioned by Ascensión H. de León-Portilla (1995-96: 486).
\item[\textsuperscript{130}] \textit{BHA} III, 257 V, 396
\item[\textsuperscript{131}] I do not agree with M. León-Portilla’s opinion in his \textit{Estudio Preliminar} to the 1977 edition of Molina’s \textit{Vocabulario} (p. LIV) that Nahuatl words about rites and ancient customs are hardly present. I hope the examples I give here will suffice to demonstrate it.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
imagen que se hace de pluma nic.tziniychtotia. vel. nitla, tzinichotia. Et per metaphoram, se toma o significa, el fundamento, o el fundar la platica o sermon sobre alguna auctoridad de escriptura, etc.” (Spanish-Nahuatl , p. 16). The elegance of Nahuatl metaphors, praised by Molina and other authors, provided not only models for the figurative speech that doctrinal texts needed, but ensured a continuity between the sacred pre-Hispanic past and the new religious and civil statu quo.

So far I have discussed the cases in which I see Nahuatl as the engaging language in the vocabulary. We should not, however, forget that the overall purpose of these vocabularies was to extirpate idolatries and whatever was not useful for the missionary purposes in the local cultures, and replace it with the new paradigm of Christianity. However attractive the previous discussion may seem, in the sense that it could suggest important nuances, resistances or reversals, Spanish was the empire and New Spain its richest possession, both in material wealth and in souls to be converted. This leads me to discuss the fields in which it is Spanish that engages the conversation: the field composed of the host of new things that the Spanish brought with them, and the field of the new religious and world vision that they imposed upon the Indians.

In general, Molina’s\textsuperscript{132} vocabulary shows that the new concepts were introduced into Nahuatl through loan words, either pure (semana for week, tocino, for pork, and tijeras, for scissors), or naturalized (hicox, for figs, “higos” in Spanish).

However, the agglutinative nature of Nahuatl allows for an efficient use of calques as a means of rendering the new meanings (iu dicayotl: Jewish thing or cuentaxtli: prayer beads, tepuztlacuilolli: printed matter, etc). In all, Hernández de León-Portilla (1995-96:

\textsuperscript{132} BHA III, 257 V, 396
485) has counted 660 neologisms through calques, plus 62 loan words and 122 occurrences of what she calls “hybrid” loanwords, whereby the Spanish word is inserted in the Nahuatl word-syntagm (*tla-silla-tlalili*, to saddle). To this category we could ascribe the incorporation of the Spanish diminutive suffix: “ito” to Nahuatl words, such as the above mentioned case of *tlamatinito*, or the Nahuatl equivalent for “maravedi” (type of currency) as *tepuz-tlacuani-onito* (literally, a small piece of iron which buys things).

Molina\(^{133}\) stresses the particular traits of semantic variability in certain Nahuatl words: to the Spanish entry “ancho” (wide) two semantic fields correspond: the field of flat objects, such as roads, mats, planks; and the field of openings, such as windows, holes, cannons, or containers such as clothing or houses, thus showing that in Nahuatl different adjectives will be used according to the form and function of the qualified object.

But nowhere the magnitude of the gap between the two languages is better represented than in the explanation regarding the use of numerals. Appended to this dictionary there is a “Cuenta numeral en lengua castellana y mexicana, segun la lengua mexicana”. Two main differences distinguish our way of counting from theirs: firstly, the count base in Nahuatl is 20-400-8000, instead of our 10-100-1000; and secondly, numerals are not generic, but variable according to the things to be counted. Molina\(^{134}\) specifies the following types: 1) “para contar cosas animadas, maderos, mantas, chili, papel, esteras, tablas, tortitas, sogas o cordeles, hilo, pieles, canoas, barcas o navios, cielos, cuchillos, candelas o cosas semejantes”; 2) “para contar gallinas, huevos, cacao, tunas, tamales, panes de Castilla, cerezas, vasijas, asentaderos, frutas, frijoles, calabazas, nabos, xicamas, melones, libros o cosas redondas y rollizas”; 3) “para contar platicas, sermones, pares de

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\(^{133}\) *BHA III, 257 V, 396*

\(^{134}\) *BHA III, 257 V, 396*
zapatos o caces, papel, platos, escudillas, troxes o cielos, cuando esta una cosa sobre otra doblada, o cuando una cosa es diversa o diferente de otra”; 4) “para contar papel, esteras, tortillas, mantas, pellejos, contando de veinte en veinte”; 5) “para contar mazorcas de maíz o piñas de cacao, y unas flores que se llaman yeluxuchitl, y pilares de piedra, platanos, y cierto pan de semillas, como bollos que llaman tzoualli. Y otros de maíz largos como cañutos, que se llaman tlaxcalmimilli” (pp. 118-121).

Aside from the host of new objects and materials to be translated into the indigenous languages, there was a wealth of concepts and ideas that needed to be conveyed: the administrative and judicial lexical corpus had to be transferred as well as the religious lexical corpus. Words for civil authorities, social classes and professions were transacted, and, at the same time, indigenous rites and customs were dissected and conceptualized by the missionaries. The colonizer’s bagage of centuries of philosophy and theology was also “poured over” the indigenous knowledge. Terms such as “cisma”, “gloria vana”, “gloria verdadera”, “amor propio” and “libre arbitrio” had to have also a place in Molina’s vocabulary, which was used for teaching and preaching.

One of the chief uses of indigenous languages dictionaries was to help in the sacrament of confession. It was important for the missionary to be able to ask the right questions, the ones that would help him to identify and eradicate idolatry from the souls of the Indians. And only by knowing the precise rites and their exact vocabulary could this purpose be achieved. Lexemes for sins, such as “cohechar al juez”, “matar sacrificando hombres a los ydolos”, “mirar las partes vergonçosas”, “mentir a sabiendas”, “mentira grande” and “mentira pequeña”, constitute an important part of the vocabulary, as well as
the lexemes related to penance ("cargo de conciencia", "culpa", "pecado", "arrepentirse") and punishment ("penitencia", "absolver").

This complex and foreignizing dictionary provided the model for other indigenous languages dictionaries at the time, but aside from the 1555 and 1571 editions, it was not reprinted until the nineteenth-century. It is nowadays still in full use by the specialists and has been the basis for later French-Nahuatl (Rémi Siméon) and English-Nahuatl (Frances Karttunen) dictionaries.

2.1.2.2. Conversational dictionaries

Quite a different example of dictionary is the Calepino maya de Motul, a Maya-Spanish dictionary, manuscript, apparently unfinished, attributed to another Franciscan friar: Antonio de Ciudad Real.\textsuperscript{135} This dictionary was composed more as a phrasebook than a list of words. It fulfills also some grammatical purposes. There is a general entry in which the word is explained and, when it is the case, there are sub-entries in which the word appears as used in a complete sentence:\textsuperscript{136}

i) 

"**Cochom, cuchom.** Partículas para futuro perfecto de indicativo, pero puestas al cabo de una oración, denotan cierta imperfección que significa "pero", "si no", "mas no", "por sí o por no", o "quizá".

**Benel in cah ichil in col, cochom** a mi milpa voy, pero no sé, mas no sé si llegaré allá, etc. De aquí:

**Bix cochom va bin cimic ech ichil a kebane?** ¿qué será de ti, si murieras en tu pecado?"

... (Ciudad Real 2001: 116)

\textsuperscript{135} BHA II, 117

\textsuperscript{136} For ease of reference, I have numbered the examples.
We can see that the first example is a phrase that only an Indian would say: “I am going to my corn field (and the word for corn field is the Nahuatl word *milpa*, which by then had entered the lexis of Spanish and other local languages), but I do not know if I will get there”. The second example is a phrase that only a missionary or priest could say; it is an admonishment from the Father to the Indian either in confession or in a similar circumstance: “What will it happen to you if you die in a state of sin?”, meaning that he should confess and make penance before dying. Sometimes the examples do not show any semantic connection, and their dialogical form is only figurative. But in other cases the examples are presented as simulating a real dialogue between the Father and the Indian. The following case corresponds to the entry that means “to take or take away, to bring, to take away from life or to kill as in illness”. In the first example given, the missionary asks what illness caused the Indian’s father death; in the second example, the question suggests that not only that person was dying but that there were many dying at the same time. In the third example the Indian tells the cause of these deaths: hunger:

ii) “Chha.ah.ab tomar, llevar o traer. Item, llevar desta vida, o matar propio de las enfermedades.

   *Bal chhai a yum?* ¿qué mató a tu padre? ¿qué enfermedad le llevó?

   *Bal chhaiex?* ¿qué os mata? ¿qué es la causa de morirnos?

   *Vijh chhaiicon* el hambre nos mata” (p. 207)

In this same dialogical form we find this small piece of “gossiping” between the missionary and the Indian, which serves as an example of the use of the word *ppizaan be*: order, habit or custom:

iii) “Líc *va v matel batab tu pach beel?* ¿ha mudado por ventura el cacique el orden de bivir que tenfa?”
Ma, yuma; tu ppizan v beel yan no, Padre, assí se está, con su orden de vida o de bivir que tenía.

V ppizaani a beelex, v ppizaani v paz a cabex; ma chaan than teex en vuestro orden y modo de bivir os estás; no aprovechan razones con vosotros”.

(p. 509)

In many examples admonishments or advice is given (by the friar or maybe another authority):

iv) “Chhab tan kin tanenex sed continentes y abstinentes; hazed penitencia” (p. 207).

v) “Chhaex a ba a kambex v beel halach aparejaos, aprestaos para recibir al governador” (p. 207).

vi) “Ma a chhaicex in kinam ta talelx ti confessar vicnal no os espantéis de mi cuando os viniéredes a confessar” (p. 209).

Other examples constitute precise questions to be put to the Indians while confessing their sins:

vii) “A uohel va v cunal can, ceh, chhupla? Etc. ¿sabes el encanto o hechicería para coger las culebras o venados, o para que acuda alguna mujer a hazar la voluntad de algún varón?” (p.128).


Or the precise answers elicited from the Indians:

ix) “Ma bahun in yalte confessar nunca he provado la confession; nunca me he confessado” (p. 286).

x) “Mai to na cimic in yum ca oci cristianoil vay tac luumil loe ¡oh, si no se hubiere muerto mi padre quando entró la cristianidad en esta tierra, porque se tornara cristiano!” (p. 386).
The dictionary reveals also a wealth of information on habits and customs, for example on:

The payment of tributes by Indians:

xi) **“Ppix lim cib** cierta derrama o contribución de pelotillas de cera que dan los indios, cada uno la suya de valor de veinte cacaos, para candelas para la yglesia, etc.

xii) **Ppix lim cib teex v boolil casulla v patan ah kayob** contribuid cera assí para pagar la casulla, para pagar el tributo de los cantores” (p. 510).

The way women distributed among themselves the cotton to be spun:

xiii) **“Max** partir una india entre muchas su algodón en copo, dando a cada una como media braça, para que lo hilien y, acabado aquello, hila ella con las demás el algodón de otra, hasta que passe la rueda” (p. 403)

The Maya tradition of a universal flood:

xiv) **“Huy ye cijl** diluvio general, en que dezían los indios que no avía faltado sino una punta de maguey (que es el cáñamo de esta tierra) para llegar el agua al cielo” (p. 266)

As for other relevant information on this dictionary, René Acuña, who prepared its modern edition and a previous facsimilar edition, states that there are different handwritings in the manuscript, and he believes that the calligraphs might have not been Spanish but Mayan and unacquainted with the Maya grammar (2001: 23). Unfortunately, Acuña’s study does not shed any light on how the dictionary was used, and by whom.¹³⁷ The fact that the *Calepino Maya de Motul* was never finished prevents us from making further conjectures, but the traits I have underlined here seem to suggest primarily a pastoral use by men already conversant with the language. No Spanish newcomer could use a dictionary such as

¹³⁷ In general, introductory studies of these dictionaries are mostly of lexicographical nature.
this, because of its directionality, and we do not know whether Father Antonio de Ciudad
Real\(^{138}\) planned a Spanish-Maya version of it.

It is an ethnocentric dictionary, in which the Mayan phrases seem to have been
dictated by the Friar, and the values and customs represented are undoubtedly Christian. In
its phraseological, dialogical form, however, we can trace the nature of the exchanges, the
prejudices that dictated them. Spanish engages and Maya endures, and when the examples
are taken from native discourse, the contents is invariably what the Friar wanted to hear (as
in examples ix) and, especially, x).

The terminology difficulties posed by the main religious concepts will be the object
of a more detailed analysis in section 2.1.3. In the meantime, let us look at what Serge
Gruzinski says about different lexicographic approaches:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{comment donner à comprendre et à voir des êtres, des figures divines, des} \\
\text{au-delà sans aucun équivalent dans les langues indigènes ou dans les} \\
\text{représentations locales. Sinon par des approximations qui en trahissaient la} \\
\text{substance et la forme? Tout portait à confusion et à malentendu […] fallait-il} \\
\text{employer une terminologie occidentale parfaitement hermétique aux Indiens} \\
\text{ou lancer des ponts, en dégageant des équivalents, sources d’infinis} \\
\text{malentendus? L’apprentissage des prières en latin illustre parfaitement les} \\
\text{écueils de la première voie. Les travaux linguistiques du franciscain Alonso} \\
\text{de Molina, ceux de la seconde. (Gruzinski 1988: 241)}
\end{align*}
\]

We can sense in the choice of terms in the different vocabularies this tension
between religious prejudice and apostolic efficency: a tension that will coexist until the
eventual imposition/adoption of Spanish as the national language.

\(^{138}\) BHA II, 117
Fig. 14. Pedro de Arenas, Vocabulario manual de las lenguas castellana y mexicana.

Pedro de Arenas*139 Vocabulario Manual de las lenguas Castellana y Mexicana, en que se contienen las palabras, preguntas y respuestas mas comunes y ordinarias que se suelen ofrecer en el trato y comunicación entre españoles e indios (see Figure 14). Printed for the first time in 1611, this vocabulary is an amazing case of a best-selling dictionary. It was reprinted twelve times in Mexico, the last one in 1887,140 and there exists also a 1862 French edition, entitled Guide de la conversation en trois langues, français, espagnol et mexicain, contenant un petit abrégé de la grammaire mexicaine, un vocabulaire des mots les plus usuels et des dialogues familiers, revu et traduit en français par M. Charles Romey.

139 BHA I, 134 V, 306
140 Other prints: 1668, 1683, 1683b, 1690, 1700?, 1728, 1728b, 1793, 1831, 1885, 1887. (Arenas 1982).
This bi-directional dictionary is, as the title suggests, a conversation manual, with questions and answers, divided in sections corresponding to the situations that presented themselves in which a Spanish and an Indian would engage in conversation.

The author, of whose life, origin and occupation, unbelievable at it may seem, nothing is known, says in the preface that he has been dealing with the “Naturales de este Reyno” for some time, both on the roads and in their villages, and that he has tried to avail himself of the “vocabulario grande [as Alonso de Molina’s\textsuperscript{141} dictionary was known at the time] que anda impresso”. But not finding it adapted to what a layman, who is not a scholar (“romancista”), might need in order to simply speak and understand the Indians, he decided to make a list in Spanish of the words, names, questions and answers that were more usual in these conversations. He gave the list to a Indian interpreter who translated them into Mexican. The vocabulary is preceded by an index of the sections and has, as a second part, a shorter Nahuatl-Spanish version. Ascensión Hernández de León-Portilla, in her introductory study, suggests that Pedro de Arenas\textsuperscript{142} might have been a merchant, probably based upon the frequent references to travel in the vocabulary. Another factor would support her opinion: the abundance of situations in which the enunciator engages in “small talk”, the kind of benevolence-seeking prelude to the sale (asking about the other person’s health, consoling him for a loss, weather-talk, etc. …). But I would dare say that there are as much references to situations in which the enunciator is placed as a middleman between Spanish masters and Indian servants or as a master himself, although apparently not of a high position.

\textsuperscript{141} BHA III, 257 V, 396
\textsuperscript{142} BHA I, 134 V, 306
If Molina’s\textsuperscript{143} dictionary is the scholarly dictionary, in which all the wealth of Nahuatl is revealed, and Antonio de Ciudad Real\textsuperscript{144} is an illustration of the missionary dictionary, in which it is the voice of the Friar that imposes itself, Arena’s dictionary is unique (because of its originality and its diffusion) in giving us a glimpse of what the common exchanges might have been out of the church, schools, and administrative or judicial settings. It was meant for the Spanish, of course, but the kind of colonizer depicted in these conversations is far from the portrait we have been accustomed to: a feeling of closeness, of a certain intimacy even, transpires in these faked dialogues.

What are the subjects touched upon in the dictionary?. It will be useful to copy here the first sections enlisted in the Spanish-Nahuatl index:

- Palabras de salutacion (pag. 1)
- Lo que se suele dezir, y preguntar a los enfermos (pag. 2)
- Lo que se suele dezir consolando a una persona (pag. 3)
- Preguntas que se suelen hacer buscando alguna persona en su casa (pag. 4)
- Quando se va a casa de un Indio en busca suya (pag. 5)
- Palabras que se suelen dezir preguntando por alguna cosa perdida (pag. 7)
- Preguntas que se suelen hacer del estado y temporales de algun lugar (pag. 8)
- Palabras que comunmente se suelen dezir preguntando por alguna persona ausente (pag. 10)
- Palabras que se suelen dezir, preguntado a una persona por diversas cosas, y a el en particular por las suyas y si quiere servir (pag. 10)

Saluting, visiting a sick person, consoling somebody, looking for somebody at his home, going to an Indian’s home to see him, asking for a lost object, asking about the wheather, asking about an absent person, or engaging in small talk with somebody to

\textsuperscript{143} \textit{BHA III}, 257 V, 396
\textsuperscript{144} \textit{BHA II}, 117
eventually ask him whether he would like to work. These and many other similar subjects
make up the Spanish-Nahuatl vocabulary.

The Nahuatl-Spanish vocabulary is not exactly the reverse of the Spanish-Nahuatl
one. But the subject matters are similar: talking to a servant who does not work diligently,
common sentences in funerals and burials, questions about knowing somebody and where
this person is, words related to friendship, and words related to enmity:

- Palabras que comunmente se suelen dezir a un moço, quando acude de mala gana a
  lo que le dizan o mandan (pag. 102)
- Lo que comunmente se suele preguntar, y dezir en razon de diffuntos, y de enterros
  (pag. 106)
- Lo que comunmente se suele preguntar, y dezir en razon de conocer una persona y
  saber donde está (pag. 108)
- Palabras que se suelen dezir en razon de amistad (pag. 111)
- Palabras que se suelen dezir acerca de enemistad (pag. 113)

A few sections are the same in the two versions, but I cannot find any particular
reason for the differences in section subjects in the two versions.

Words, questions and answers are listed in the order they would appear in a normal
conversation, separated in more or less aleatory phrasal units, in the following manner:

**Palabras de ofrecimiento**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mira</th>
<th>Xiquitta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>si has menester</td>
<td>ahço</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>algo</td>
<td>monequi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ya sabes</td>
<td>ye tiomáti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la voluntad</td>
<td>in notlanéquiliz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>que te tengo</td>
<td>in motechcopia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no seas corto</td>
<td>macámo ximomamati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>para conmigo</td>
<td>in nohuicpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siempre</td>
<td>ca mochipa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me hallaras</td>
<td>notechpatiquittaz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In reading a monologue like this, one cannot but wonder in what particular circumstances would it be pronounced and by whom. The enunciator seems to be a Spanish person, but the words do not seem to belong to what a Spanish would say to an Indian (I am at your disposal. If you need me, I will assist you with all my possessions...)

Other dialogues are, however, clear in their intent, such as this one in which the Spanish is trying to convince an Indian father to bring his boy so that he can learn a trade:

Quieres entregarme
a tu hijo
yo le enseñare
officio
de esto, o esto
por que tiempo
me lo quieres dar
es poco que no deprendera
tan presto
yo lo llevaré
y estese conmigo
agunos dias
y despues
si quisieres
haremos
escritura
por el tiempo
que tu quisieres
y yo le dare	
tanto, a tanto
cada mes
cada año
y lo trataré
como si fuera
mi propio hijo ... (p. 74-75)

One can read between the lines the Indian father’s replies: “I only want to leave him to you for a short time”, “how much will you pay?”, “will you treat him well?”...

In the Nahuatl-Spanish section there is this particularly moving monologue in which the Spanish bades good-bye to an Indian, who could be a servant, but who could also be an acquaintance, a neighbour, a customer. The additional, gratuitous piece of information that appears in bold (“So and so wants me to go; I don’t know what for; he must know”) suggests the straightforwardness, casual nature of the exchange:

Ya me voy
nuestro Señor quede contigo
otra vez volveré
a verte
quando pudiere
no te he de ver mas
me quiero llegar
a mi casa
a mi tierra
a ver
a mis parientes
que me aguardan allá
ha mucho tiempo
que no los veo
esta malo
mi padre
mi madre
mi hijo
mi hija &c.
voy a cierto negocio
que me importa mucho
me llama fulano &c.
no se para que me llama el lo sabe
voy con pena
hasta llegar allá.
In concluding this part, I deem it necessary to return to the first paragraph and expand on the implications of the fact that they are bilingual or trilingual vocabularies instead of being monolingual, like most first dictionaries are.

Benedict Anderson (1991: 67-82) stresses the importance of lexicography in nation building, but the kind of dictionary he has in mind is the monolingual dictionary, the encyclopaedic wordbook of each language, in the sense of the quote “the first book of a nation is its dictionary” that I introduced before. Moreover, Anderson’s lexicographic references belong to the 19th century, and we are talking about a production of vocabularies stretching from mid-sixteenth to end of eighteenth century, and disappearing precisely then.

It seems to me that the bilingual dictionary illustrates the contact, the power relationships at play. Its mirror-effect whereby each column sees-seeks the reflection of itself in the other, creates as side events:

- An ideal fixation of the equivalences (for ever more this will be equivalent to that),
- A cross-legitimation of the lexical assets and languages (since they are equivalent, they can acknowledge each other’s right to exist)
- A consolidation of identities in both languages.

So, the weight Anderson (following Seton-Watson 1977) gives to the monolingual dictionary, I am transferring here to the bilingual dictionary. The Latin-European vernacular dictionaries in Europe were promoted by the vernaculars (not by Latin, of course) and fostered feelings of linguistic-national identity. The Spanish-American vernacular dictionaries were instead promoted by the “imperial” language (Spanish) and fostered a certain functional bilingualism among the colonisers and their agents which served the colonial ends.
2.1.3. The intelligibility question

If my previous discussions on grammars and lexicons are convincing enough, it should not be difficult to envisage the material possibilities of translation. Once the languages were fixed and their lexical potential assessed and compared, some real exchanges could take place, and, in fact, some of the vocabularies already show patterns of dialogue, as I have shown in the last two examples.

In showing this evolution as a temporal progression towards translation proper, I would not like to mislead the reader, though. While it is certainly correct to assume that translation was not possible unless the languages were first codified and their vocabulary was assessed (which could only be done by comparison), oral communication, which was the immediate need, was performed by whatever means possible and with disregard of grammar and syntax. The efforts were concentrated on the lexis, and phonetically transcribed lists of key words would be drawn before thinking of a grammatical organization (Mendieta 1973: I, XVI). Obviously, these key words could not take communication very far. The passage from lists of words to lists of phrases and sample dialogues, as we have seen in some dictionaries, should improve communication with the Indians, not only in day-to-day matters, but, most importantly for the friars, in religious indoctrination.

Although by the Laws of Burgos (1512) the encomenderos were entrusted with the indoctrination of the Indians, it was soon manifest that their interests were not compatible with this role. In 1523 the institution of the Encomienda is abolished, and in 1524, in his fourth Carta de Relación Hernán Cortés suggests that the education of the Indians be entrusted to the missionary friars. Twelve years later, Charles V issues a law by which
Indians come under the tutelage of the Crown who, in turn, transfers them to the religious orders. The year 1536 is also the year in which the Franciscan Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, the institution devoted to the education of the Nahua indigenous elites, is inaugurated. In its short life (some twenty years) it will be the spawning ground for the Indian scholars, young men who became soon able to write and read not only their own language and Spanish but also Latin. Originally conceived as a seminary where they could be trained to become the future priests of the Indies and the Church’s translators and interpreters, it was also the place where for a short while an intercultural exchange seemed possible. Similar dialogues were entertained, at a smaller scale, in other regions and languages (Gruzinski 1988: 84-86), resulting in an impressive translation activity, from Latin and Spanish into the indigenous languages, and viceversa. Aside from grammars and lexicons, which we have examined so far, a significant number of doctrinal texts were transferred, but also science, literature and Classical thought.

Indoctrination was performed at two levels: publicly, by having the Indians participate in collective rituals, such as processions and other religious celebrations, in which the priest would address them by pronouncing sermons and reading passages of the Scriptures and Saint’s lives; and personally, by engaging into a face-to-face dialogue with each of them, to make sure that the doctrinal principles were understood and that non-Christian beliefs were eradicated. The texts upon which these activities were based, which are part and parcel of the Catholic Church doctrinal work, will be the subject of this section. I will explore the possibilities of commensurability between the two cultures and then I will focus upon a particular genre which contains the most developed bilingual lists.
of phrases and sample dialogues: the questioning guides for confessors, called *Manuales de confession* or *Confessionarios*.

In general, the texts used for indoctrination are derived from originals in Spanish or Latin and the degree of derivation is not always known, as was already explained in the methodological section. The relationship between source text and translated text can be direct or more or less indirect, and in general, source texts are not identified. Here the translator is the colonial agent, the target reader is also him, the intended recipient is the Indian, in whom the reading, as filtered by the missionary, should impact, promoting the eradication of old beliefs and its replacement by the new religion.

Translatability and reception of Christian contents depended upon the degree of intelligibility between the two cultures in contact. It relied, therefore, on finding common denominators. In this section I will start by analyzing this intelligibility in its largest sense, and then, I will narrow the focus to deal with the particular aspects of translation in which negotiating this commensurability may manifest itself. The examples cited are from Nahuatl texts, since they are the ones mostly studied and access to which has been easier.

At the very basis of it, an evident common denominator must have been, if not verbalized or intellectualized, for sure felt and experienced: the overall presence of the sacred, both in the Spanish and in the American universe of social and individual life. The Spanish did not fail to notice the esteem in which the Indians held their gods and the importance they attributed to the observance of rituals and ceremonies. They also found similarities between the Indian gods and pagan Old World deities. Many chapters in the
second volume of Juan de Torquemada’s Monarquía Indiana illustrate this systematic intercultural comparison:

Cap. XX. Del Dios Tezcatlipoca, y de los atributos que le davan, y como fue este el que los Gentiles llamaron Júpiter,

Cap. XXI. Del Dios Huitziloputchli, llamado de los Gentiles, Marte, muy estimado de los Mexicanos, y de sus embustes,

Cap. XXIII. Del Dios Tlalocatecuhtli, que es Neptuno Cap XXV. De las penitencias y ayunos que alguna vez hacia el Sumo Sacerdote,

Cap. XXXIII. De la pena con que los Sacerdotes castigavan a los inobedientes, que es muy semejante a la que en este estado de Gracia vía la Iglesia, que se llama escomunión” (Torquemada 1615/1975, I: Index).

From the more obvious comparison between pagan deities to the more forced analogies between practices and rites, reflecting similar spiritual needs and imaginaries, the intelligibility from the Christian point of view seemed possible. Fray Juan de Torquemada (whose work is a synthesis and rewriting of several earlier chronicles) sees no impediment in placing the whole Indian corpus of social practices in parallel to those of other peoples. Fully convinced, as man of the Renaissance, of the universality of thought, he refers to Aristotle not only to locate the New World genteels among the categories of barbarian nations (Torquemada 1615/1975, II: 587-594), but also to explain the similarities between the way women deliver their children in Genoa and in the island of Santo Domingo (Torquemada 1615/1975. II: 446).

Although we have much less testimonies to understand the colonized’ view, we can also infer that most Indians interpreted the arrival of the Spanish as something that could only be connected to the sacred. One will recall Motecuzoma’s prophetal dreams that told

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145 BHA V, 37 - 38
146 BHA V, 37 - 38
him of the arrival of the bearded men from the East and also how the Indians soon realized that those foreigners, whom they called teules, that is, gods, and the dreadful animals they rode, were mortal. More telling, and probably, authentic, though, are the accounts of Christian images and crosses being put by the Indians next to their own images, as well as the account by a Franciscan friar who was indoctrinating the Lacandon peoples (present Chiapas) in 1695, who says that he had seen some statuettes wrapped in a piece of liturgical cloth that may have belonged to a Fray Domingo de Vico who was killed by those Indians one century before (de Vos 1990: 155). Serge Gruziniski, after analyzing a variety of syncretic operations similar to this, concludes that in many cases Christianity was “totalement soumis à l’idolâtrie” (Gruziniski 1988: 236).

So, from both sides, the experience of the sacred was somewhat acknowledged. But for the dualist Christian tradition, based upon the Good / Evil dichotomy, the sacred as experienced by the Indians belonged to Evil, and had thus to be eradicated. For the monist Indian tradition, in which gods could be good and evil, the sacred brought by the Spanish could eventually, as in the Lacandon account, reinforce their own sacred. And that difference was indeed insurmountable. For a genuine, “free” conversion to take place, some degree of negotiation had to be allowed. Ironically, as we will see later, the arguments used by the Spanish in the negotiation were not very different from the ones the Indians were proposing when wrapping their idols with the missionary’s altar cloth.

Because, in general, the problem the missionaries faced was how to uproot the previous beliefs and simultaneously replace them by the new beliefs, but then, how to retain from the previous beliefs the ones that could be useful either for their intrinsic values or because they were opportunistically similar to the new ones. While the commitment of
the Franciscan Fray Bernardino de Sahagún\textsuperscript{147} to the extirpation was relentless, his admiration for Aztec culture was nonetheless notorious. In devotion to their gods, in knowledge and mastery of arts, the Indians were to be commended, but it was the Devil, ("la sinagoga de Satanás", as he says), who had benefited from all these rich fruits during centuries. If they had been such good servants of their gods, they would surely also be good Christians:

Es cierto, cosa de grande admiración, que haya nuestro señor Dios tantos siglos ocultad o una sierva de tantas gentes idólatras, cuyos frutos ubérrimos solo el Demonio los ha cogido, y en el fuego infernal los tiene atesorados; ni puedo creer que la iglesia de Dios no sea próspera donde la sinagoga de Satanás tanta prosperidad ha tenido ... Del saber o sabiduría desta gente hay fama que fue mucha [...] perfectos filósofos y astrólogos y muy diestros en todas las artes mecánicas... En lo que toca a la religion y cultural de sus dioses, no creo ha habido en el mundo idólatras tan reverenciadores de sus dioses, ni tan a su costa, como éstos desta Nueva España. (Sahagún 1986: 34).

This kind of argumentation must have been topical in doctrinal discussions, since Martínez de Araujo,\textsuperscript{148} a secular priest in Michoacán at the end of the seventeenth century, that is, over a hundred years after Sahagún,\textsuperscript{149} tells the story of a priest who asked an Indian why were the Indians not as good Christians as they had been good idolaters. However, by then the Indians were not as naïve as they are depicted in early Franciscan chronicles, and replied: "Sean los ministros de la Ley de Dios tan solicitos y zelosos de la honra de su Dios

\textsuperscript{147} BHA IV, 275 – 277. Franciscan Friar Bernardino de Sahagún arrived in 1529 in New Spain and devoted most of his life to the compilation of what has become the first encyclopaedia of the Nahua culture, his bilingual \textit{Historia General de las cosas de Nueva España}, known also as the \textit{Códice Florentino}, which remained unprinted and lost until the twentieth century. He is the author of the \textit{Colloquios}, an account of the presumed first conference between Franciscans and Aztec priests, in Nahuatl and Spanish, which remained also as a manuscript.

\textsuperscript{148} Not included in \textit{BHA}

\textsuperscript{149} BHA IV, 275 - 277
como lo fueron los Ministros Idolatras, y entonces seremos Buenos Christianos como fuymos Buenos idolatras’’ (Martínez 1690: 84v)

Probably for the first generations of indoctrinated Indians, the question posed itself too in terms of negotiation: how to incorporate new beliefs which were inescapably imposed upon them without having to totally abandon the old ones. Testimonies of the way they faced this dilemma would be hard to find, but even through the missionary filter, we may recognize the bewilderment of the Indians who were told to abandon their gods:

Aueisnos dicho que no conocemos a aquel por quien tenemos ser y vida y que es Señor del cielo y de la tierra. Ansi mismo dezis que los que adoramos no son dioses. Esta manera de hablar hácesenos muy nueva y esnos muy escandalosa: espantámonos del tal dezir como este, porque los padres antepasados que nos engendraron y regieron no nos dixeran tal cosa, mas antes ellos nos dexaron esta costumbre que tenemos de adorar nuestros dioses, y ellos los creyeron y adoraron todo el tiempo que bivuieron sobre esta tierra…. [...] Cosa de gran desatino y liuiandad sería destruir nosotros las antiquissimas leyes y costumbres que dexaron los primeros pobladores desta tierra. (Sahagún 1986: 88-89)

If their gods had been good to them, it would be foolish to renounce them and abandon the ancient laws and customs handed over by their forefathers. This is the reaction registered by Sahagún\textsuperscript{150} in an text that allegedly registered the conversations between Christian and Aztec priests in a “summit conference” held at the initiative of Cortés.\textsuperscript{151} The result is well known: they were indeed forced to destroy their gods and abandon their

\textsuperscript{150} BHA IV, 275 - 277
\textsuperscript{151} Jorge Klor de Alva has analyzed the presumed historicity of these Colloquios and concluded that the text is a re-elaboration of accounts of more or less formal discussions held at different moments and with different actors (Klor 1982)
rituals and beliefs. The process however shows that not everything was abandoned. The efforts of intelligibility from the missionaries' side prompted all sorts of analogies:

C’est le rite, en l’occurrence (...) qui commande le déploiement de la grille en fourrissant des repères de lecture, en introduisant une terminologie, en proposant d’audacieux rapprochements qui assimilent les fêtes indigènes au Carême ou à la Pâque. Le sumo pontifice indigène béni et consacre la statue du dieu Huitzilopochtli tandis que l’ancienne statue est mise en pièces et que ses restes deviennent de précieuses reliques que tous se disputent. Ailleurs, la consommation du corps de dieu est conçue comme une forme de communion. Les anciens Péruviens se livraient à des pénitences quand ils avaient péché… (Gruzinski 1998: 82).

And it was these analogies that became the channel through which some aspects of the ancient culture would eventually survive. Indeed, according to L. Burkhart, a new type of religiosity would result from this cross-referencing, a Nahua-Christian religiosity:

Within a decade of the 1524 arrival of the first official Franciscan evangelizers, the parameters of Nahua-Christian devotional practices had been laid via the incorporation of song and dance, musical instruments, processions and dramatic performances into the new cultus. The Nahuatl texts were based on Christian teachings, crucifixes and saint’s images were the principal cult objects. Most of the music played upon them were of European style. New rules of sexual property excluded women from the dances and dramas (though not from the processions). Human and animal sacrifices were, of course, forbidden; self mortification took the form of self-flagellation rather than bloodletting. Yet even in these new and modified forms of devotion we can see the continuity with the pre-Columbian ceremonial cycle: collective, public performances conducted by social groups within a calendarically-determined ceremonial period, during which temporary manifestations of a divine presence were effected through the ritualized investment and divestment of personas, images, and spaces with
sacred regalia. (Burkhart 1998: 364)

The recently translated manuscript of the *Anales de Juan Bautista*, a sort of log book in which the presumably Indian * alguacil* Juan Bautista\(^{152}\) registered in Nahuatl the main civic and religious events covering the period 1564 to 1569, specify each and every kind of chant and performance represented at these events. In this example the Christian wedding is celebrated with Christian and Indian chants (the chant of the Chichimecas: *chichimecayotl* and the chant of sprinkling water: *atequilizcuicatl*), Indian rituals (painting of the drum), representations of the old warriors, called “old eagles”: *quahuehuetque*, and dancing of Otomi warriors:

Domingo a 4 de junio de 1564, entonces se hizo procesión con el Sacramento Sador en el atrio de Santo Domingo. En ese entonces se casó el gobernador don Luis de Santa María, con la que se casó se llama doña Magdalena Chichimecaçihuatl hija del difunto don Diego; por ellos se predicó y los bendijeron dos veces, arriba y abajo. Al traer a la señora le tocaron música de ciento en el templo y en el camino, al llegar le venían tocando música de viento. Y al llegar al palacio, al pie de las escaleras se colocaron la gente de la iglesia [teopantlaca], los cantores, allí le cantaron. Y una vez que entró, luego empezaron a danzar, primero se interpretó el *chichimecayotl*, y luego empezó el *atequilizcuicatl* y el señor [tlatohuani] en persona danzó. Y en ese entonces se pintó su tambor [ihuehueh], se doró. Habían venido los señores [tlatoque] y principales [pipiltin] de los pueblos. Y en los jacales de las afueras del palacio, así estaban colocados los militares antiguos [quahuehuetque] y en su casa, dos noches danzaron los otomíes. (Bautista/Reyes 2001: 197)

A certain trafficking of words, representations and symbols sustained, therefore, this presumed commensurability. Within the Christian Renaissance paradigms and humanist

\(^{152}\) *BHA* I, 230 - 231
traditions the existence of barbarian peoples who had attained a degree of civilization and policy, as well as a religious spirit represented in ways similar to the Christians’, however wrong to their eyes, was acknowledged. The Indians, in turn, recognized in the Christian rites and ceremonies some traits that were similar to theirs. In Figure 15, the ancient rite of the “palo volador”, we can see Indians disguised with angel’s wings performing a clearly idolatric ceremony, before the very eyes of the good Franciscans.

![Fig. 15. Palo volador](image)

But, for the true conversion to take place, a general or abstract commensurability was not enough. There had to be found some common ground, both conceptually (similar practices with similar connotations) and grammatically, in the primordial sense of grammar as a universal (ergo, Catholic) code for all wisdom, and in the secondary sense of finding or constructing signifiers the signified of which could be considered equivalent to
Spanish. Bridging differences implied finding equivalences for crucial terms such as “good” and “evil” as basic principles, “sin”, “hell” and “heaven”, and for the dozens of words that were essential in doctrine.

The spiritual stakes were high on both sides. The priest was co-responsible of the penitent’s salvation. An incomplete confession because of the priest’s lack of linguistic knowledge, a baptism formula not reproduced exactly in the approved wording meant damnation for him as well as for the newly convert. As for the Indians, in their universe of the sacred the Christian God could be accommodated, but how could they still be faithful to their own gods, if the Christian God demanded exclusive devotion? We must not forget that the missionaries were also colonial agents. Therefore, the stakes were also high in material, very earthly aspects: survival in the case of the colonized (accommodation to the colonial situation was only possible by meeting the Church’s terms), and making the colonial endeavour prosper in the case of the colonizers: more Christians meant more working hands.

Translation was one of the sites of this negotiation, which has been defined by Louise Burkhart as a Nahuatl-Christian “moral dialogue”: the exchanges between missionaries and Nahuas directed at “introducing in Nahua ideology Christian moral precepts” (Burkhart 1989: 10). James Lockhart, based on the mutual misunderstanding that characterised this dialogue, has chosen the term “double mistaken identity” (Lockhart 1992). Both notions: moral dialogue and double mistaken identity are appropriate to explain our Translational Canvass materials.

Although the issue for the missionaries seems to develop as a two-step process: uprooting and replacing, it was a unified process, in which the eradication and
indoctrination were simultaneous and interlinked: at the pulpit, the friar would teach the Indians the new precepts while insisting on the need to abandon the old gods and beliefs, and at the confessional, the Indian was asked to recall all his sins while being admonished on how to become a good Christian.

However, some tools were used chiefly by the friars to introduce the Christian precepts in the Indian minds, and others helped them mostly in the eradication of ancient beliefs. Translated Doctrines and catechisms were especially used in *catechesis*,\(^{153}\) sermons, Saint’s lives and passages of the Scriptures were read and preached at the pulpit. They all constitute a body of texts guiding the priest in this indoctrination mission. Confession manuals helped him in the precise extirpation of the roots of Evil. Both types of texts, themselves transwritings, sometimes derived from Latin devotional literature, were adapted to the situation and translated into the indigenous languages. They are either bilingual, with the indigenous language on the right column, and the Spanish on the left, or monolingual texts, in the indigenous language, sometimes with the index in Spanish for ease of reference. In either case, the texts were not meant to be read by the Indians but as auxiliary instruments for the missionary, although some of them could be circulated and did circulate until the order issued at the second and third Church Councils (1565 and 1588) prohibiting Indians to possess books.

I have registered seventy-three catechisms and doctrines in the *Biblioteca*

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\(^{153}\) The Greek word *catechesis* means instruction through questions and answers. Catechisms were basic texts, which were learned by heart at schools and churches. If the child was baptized at birth, he would learn them later to be prepared to receive the sacrament of Eucharist. If it was an adult, he would have to learn them first in order to be admitted into the Church by the sacrament of Baptism. This learning is done by memorizing a set of answers to questions posed by the priest or catechizer, starting by the standard: “What are you, my son?” “I am a Christian”.

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Hispanoamericana,\textsuperscript{154} fifty-nine books of sermons in various indigenous languages, as well as six books of Saints lives, ten compilations of passages from the Scriptures and sixty-six diverse doctrinal works, such as devotional manual and works belonging to the colloquia genre: Juan de Gaona’s\textsuperscript{155} Colloquios de Paz y tranquilidad Christiana en lengua mexicana (1582), Maturino Gilberti’s\textsuperscript{156} Dialogo de doctrina Christiana (1559). Among these diverse doctrinal works we also find translations of pious books, such as Saint John’s Chrisostomos homilies, translated into Nahuatl by the same Juan de Gaona, Thomas a Kempis’ Contemptus Mundi, and Diego de Estella’s Tratado de la Vanidad del Mundo, both translated into Nahuatl by Fray Juan Bautista\textsuperscript{157} around 1600.

In the case of catechisms and doctrines, Church Councils approved official texts in Latin, and they were then translated into vernaculars. National churches could also approve the drafting of catechisms and doctrines in the vernaculars. This relative freedom of print was curtailed after the council of Trent\textsuperscript{158}, which established the rules and principles for the battle against the Reformation, set up a fierce control of the trade of books and their holding, as well as the censorship of all printed matter, be it texts or images.\textsuperscript{159} All texts had to be submitted to the approval of several authorities, and the approvals duly printed in the first pages of the books. Even with the approvals, once printed, a book could later become suspect. An order would be issued to recall all copies to be censored.\textsuperscript{160} The establishment of the Inquisition (1571) reinforced the control over all printed matter, and in this context a consultation was organized in 1572 among the friars most competent in

\textsuperscript{154} In the Fondo Medina I have been able to consult 15, of which 7 were unknown to Beristáin.
\textsuperscript{155} \textit{BHA II} 339 - 340
\textsuperscript{156} \textit{BHA II} 357 - 358
\textsuperscript{157} \textit{BHA I}, 230 - 231
\textsuperscript{158} After years of negotiations between the Pope and the European monarchs, the XIX Ecumenical Council, known as the Council of Trent, that had to address the division caused in Christiandom by the upsurge of Protestantism, opened in 1545.
\textsuperscript{159} For the full text of the Edicto de la Inquisición sobre libros, see Fernández del Castillo (1982), p. 459–463.
\textsuperscript{160} \textit{Ibid.}
indigenous languages in order to determine whether the Indians should be allowed to have translations of sacred books (Fernández del Castillo 1982: 81-85).\footnote{Franciscans, influenced by Erasmist ideas, were in favour, whereas Dominicans, more purist and orthodox, were against.}

It is not easy to establish the difference between New Spain cartillas, doctrinas and catecismos since they all designate the basic doctrinal texts in Christian faith and their composition is sometimes similar.\footnote{They were drafted in different versions according to the capacity of the reader: short versions (cartilla breve, catecismo breve or menor, doctrina breve) were for children and adults “gente ruda y simple, como indios y negros, mulatos y Españoles si hubiere”, and long versions (cartilla mayor, catecismo grande or mayor, doctrina mayor) for those who had already some knowledge of the Christian precepts (Gonzalbo 1988/1999: 17)} Generally speaking, though, catechisms would explain the doctrine in the form of questions and answers and contain the most common prayers: Paternoster, Credo, Ave Maria, etc., cartillas were simpler versions of catechisms, while doctrinas would rather be expositions of doctrinal principles taking the form of sermons or speeches. In the doctrinas, the subject matters would follow in general a same order: an introduction, articles of faith, commandments, sacraments, capital sins, acts of mercy, bodily senses, powers of the soul, theogal, cardinal and moral virtues. (Zumárraga\footnote{BHA V, 199 - 201} 1543). Others, like the anonymous doctrine of the Dominican Order (1548), a bilingual Nahuatl/Spanish text, with Latin references, would begin with the confession prayer and proceed with various explanations on the articles of faith under the form of sermons. These sermons have some generic traits, since they were a genre in doctrinal literature,\footnote{I will mention sermons again in the Modern High Culture category, since sermonaries are also part of the promotion of a nationalist piety.} but they seem to have been mostly devised for the particular situation of the Indians. As an illustration, in the first article on the divinity, that is, on the nature of God, we can read in the Spanish column:

Aquellos malvados demonios os andavan engañando tantos tiempos ha: y ellos os hazian creer y os dezian que ellos eran verdaderos dioses assimismo
os induzian e induzian a vuestros padres y aguelos a que les hizieredes y a que les edificaredeis casas y edificios y sus templos y cues que les haziades. 
Y tambien os persuadian a que les obedeciesedes con aquella reverencia y acatamiento y obediencia ... gran rey y señor dios y con que a el solo aviades de reverenciar y obedecer. Y aquesto hazian los malditos demonios vellacos para que vosotros ofendiesedes gravissimamente a Dios para que por ellos fuesedes muy atormentados y terriblemente castigados con ellos alla en los infiermos. Y porque os tenian odio y malquerencia aquellos malditos y abominables demonios holgavanse mucho de vuestros tormentos y de vuestras fatigas y miserias. Y por esto os induzian que os cortassedes las lenguas y que os cortassedes y sangrassedes las orejas y vuestros [...] braços, y vuestros muslos y piernas que os cortais, vos sacrificavades vuestros cuerpos, por lo cual erades muy atormentados y afligidos. A otros persuadian a que ofreciessen y a que matassen sus hijos o sus esclavos o sus captivos tomados en guerra y comian sus carnes, y davanlas a otros que las comiessen, y todo esto os persuadia e induzia el demonio para que aqui en esta vida ofendiessen mucho a Dios nuestro señor y que despues en la otra vida fuesedes por ello muy atormentados. Todo aquesto mandavan los malditos demonios y a ello os persuadian lo qual haziades contra la voluntad de nuestro gran rey y señor y contra los sus mandamientos. Después os declarare quéles sean estos sus mandamientos.

Por tanto conviene que sepays que todos aquellos a quienes serviales y a quien adoravades, todos eran demonios malditos engañadores y falsos, que os andavan engañando. Y por esto aquellos que llamavades Uchilobos, y Tezcatlipoca, y Quetçalcoatl, y Titlacauan, y Mitalntuctli, y Tlaloc, y Xiuhtcuctli, con todos los otros a los quales adoravades, y a los quales ofreciades sacrificios, agora los haveis de aborrar y para siempre los aveis de olvidar pues os tenian odio y os engañavan y escarnecian de vosotros, y ...agora... aveys de quendar y hazer pedaços sus figuras y aveys de derrocar o desvararar las casas y templos de los demonios, y aveys de quemar todas sus casas y haziendas, y todos sus sacrificios todo lo aveys de destryyr poque
todas eran obras hechas del demonio, porque todo lo aborrece el nuestro dios y assi mismo aborrece a los que eso o cosas semejantes hazen en esta vida. Y a todos los .... ha de echar alla al infierno para que alla para siempre jamas ardan con los demonios a quien sirvieron y a quien ellos adoraron si en esta vida no hazen penitencia entre tanto que en ella biven. (Anonymous 1548: fol. Tr-rt)

This fragment was written one generation after the Conquest, so it addresses the people whose “padres y aguelos” worshipped these “demonios”, just in case they should be tempted to continue to serve and adore them. All their gods are referred to as demons who are liars and deceitful, who demand sacrifices and self-punishment, who hate people and mock them by making them believe that they are true gods and lead them to damnation. Indians must stop serving and adoring them, must destroy their temples, images and objects, lest they will burn in hell with the demons themselves.

Although the text is considered as Spanish, or Christian, the contents are already biased towards the Nahuatl audience by its perlocutory function: to provoke fear and induce a change in conduct, by recalling the times of human sacrifices and depicting the horrors of eventual hell. Now, the Nahuatl version, in the right column, was undoubtedly written by a native, since he straightens up the name of god Uitzilopochtli in the Nahuatl column (misspelled Uichilobos in the Spanish one ). Then, the names for the Christian concepts of demon, God, hell, and possibly the notion of offending God, which is the notion of sin, had to be accomodated. In a way, thus, it is a Christian-Nahuatl text, both decentered with respect to each source culture.

This decentering is always present in doctrinal texts; they were largely fruit of collaborative translation and therefore, both in the choice of words as well in the stylistics,
they reveal the tensions of negotiation: for example, many doctrinal texts, especially
sermons and songs adopt the Nahua metaphorical, reverential speech.

In fact, it is difficult to determine to what extent the syncretic character of these
texts was known and tolerated by the missionaries. It is presumed that, in the atmosphere of
urgency and optimism that reigned during the first decades, the incorporation of indigenous
elements into the Christian devotion was interpreted as a sign of assimilation and positive
appropriation of the new religion. Flemish Friar Pedro de Gante\textsuperscript{165} (1480?-1572), one of the
first Franciscans, who arrived in 1522-23, says:

\begin{quote}
por la gracia de Dios, empecélos a conocer y entender sus condiciones y
quilates, y cómo me habfa de haber con ellos, y que toda su adoración de
ellos a sus dioses era cantar y bailar delante de ellos, porque cuando habían
de sacrificar algunos por alguna cosa, así como para alcanzar victoria de sus
enemigos o por temporales necesidades, antes que los matasen, habían de
cantar delante del ídolo; y como yo vi esto y que todos sus cantares son
dedicados a sus dioses, compuse metros muy solemnes sobre la ley de Dios y
su fe, y cómo Dios se hizo hombre por salvar al linaje humano,… y también
les di libreas para pintar en sus mantas y para bailar con ellas, porque ansí se
usaba entre ellos conforme a los bailes y a los cantares que ellos cantaban.
\cite{Alberro1999:43}
\end{quote}

It was evident to the missionaries that in order to be able to eradicate without
alienating the population, concessions had to be made to some aspects of the old religiosity,
and these concessions were symbolic, like the authorization to dance in a church context,
but also inscribed in the canvass of texts. Translation could help materializing the new
products, in which old forms would wrap new contents, something that could not satisfy
completely neither side but which had to be accepted as the best possible alternative to

\textsuperscript{165} \emph{BHA II}, 338 - 339
complete failure. The missionaries may also have considered that, after all, adding was better than substracting sacredness. Somehow, they must have learned the Lacandon lesson. A delicate balance of calculated misunderstandings was therefore woven in the canvass in the form of mixed, hybrid or syncretic texts. The best known examples of such texts, composed in Nahuatl but with Christian contents, belong to Bernardino de Sahagún.\textsuperscript{166} The text I will examine here, in fact the only one that was printed during his lifetime, is the \textit{Psalmodia Christiana}. Written originally in 1558-60, this bold experiment of the possibilities of translation circulated as a manuscript and was finally published in 1583. Fray Bernardino had noted, just as Pedro de Gante, that the Indians were particularly fond of music and dances, and that all rituals to their gods were accompanied by chants and performances. He set up therefore, with the help of four of his Indian students and collaborators, to write songs, or psalms, in Nahuatl, dedicated to the Saints and the Virgin Mary, to be sung at Church. In fact, he says in the prologue that he “dictated” the songs to the Indian scribes, whose names are not mentioned there but who might have been the same who appear in other works: Antonio Valeriano,\textsuperscript{167} Martín Jacobita, Alonso Vegerano y Pedro de San Buenaventura (Burkhart 1992).

Now, Louise Burkhart, who has studied and translated some of these songs, sustains that the Indian “amanuenses”, or scribes, far from taking dictation, took up control of the situation and incorporated Nahua style, choice of words, symbols and metaphors into the texts, and, in so doing, they “had considerable control over how the Nahua populace understood and responded to the friars teachings” (Burkhart 1992: 340). Whether they had such a degree of effective control or not is difficult to ascertain, but indeed, that is what

\textsuperscript{166} BHA IV, 275 - 277
\textsuperscript{167} BHA V, 83 - 85
they meant. And Sahagún\textsuperscript{168} could not have been blind to these manipulations. His knowledge of Nahuatl language and culture was excellent. One cannot but think that he may have even encouraged them. After all, the missionaries took advantage of the reverential style of Nahua speech in their own preaching. Appended to a \textit{Sermonario}, published in 1624, there is a list of “phrases y modos de hablar elegantes y metaphoricos de los Yndios Mexicanos” (Mijangos 1624). Friars Juan Bautista\textsuperscript{169} and Andrés de Olmos\textsuperscript{170} also translated the Nahua repertoire of “elders speeches” (\textit{huehuetlatoll}), which helped establishing a continuity with the ancient moral practices. The authority embodied in these speeches, both in their contents and in the rhetoric forms used in them could be transferred through translation into the new texts (Klor 1989). It would have been just natural that, in turn, the scribes would reinsert these features into the doctrinal texts, when given the opportunity to do it. However, according to Burkhart (1992), who is a careful translator, fully aware of the difficulties of finding the Nahua voice in a Christian text written under the surveillance of the friar, and aware also that it was common in Christian texts to yield to indigenous forms in order to naturalize the text and made it more acceptable to the Indians. In this case the scribes went far in their creation. There seems to be in these psalms a confiscation of Saint James for the Nahua cause, a cause in which Nahuas are not equated with Evil but with Christianity, in Louise Burkhart’s translation:

\begin{quote}
\textit{First psalm}

\textit{May it issue forth, may it resound forth, may it reach far and wide, the fame, the honor of God’s precious one, Saint James the Apostle!}

\textit{May they be recognized, may they be heard, may they be marveled at, the deeds, the valor of the great warrior, our Captain!}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{168} \textit{BHA IV, 275 - 277}
\textsuperscript{169} \textit{BHA I, 230 - 231}
\textsuperscript{170} \textit{BHA IV, 45}
May it be seen, may it be placed before people, how they shimmer, the vestments of the white horse! It is covered with precious vestments, it is very wondrous!

May his precious Sword be praised! It goes glimmering greatly! With it he goes trashing things, he goes smashing our enemies!

Truly, fear is cast down upon the Moors, the Turks, the confused ones! As they flee from his presence, saddles are cast down!

Greatly it goes shining, it goes jingling, his skin of gold, his skin of metal!

It goes covered with bracelets, it goes covered with jades!

Second Psalm

He, our great speaker, Jesus, he called him. He chose Saint James as his soldier!

It was when he was about to begin the war, by which war was made on the great were-owl and all his fellows were-owls. Then he called him – the great warrior Saint James, and his younger brother Saint John!

He, Saint James, he became our great speaker Jesus’s Captain. And he also made him a magistrate!

Twelve are the war commanders who Jesus chose, but his magistrates are only three!

Saint Peter, Saint James and Saint John – Jesus made them magistrates. Likewise, it was the three of them, it was in their presence that he revealed his realm, there at Tabor.

Likewise, it was in their presence that he prayed to his father, God, and he sweated with blood, there at the garden, Gethsemane.” (Burkhart 1992: 343-344)

In this translation (in which I have underlined some Nahuatl traits), Luise Burkhart shows how Santiago, that is, Saint James, also known as Matamoros, because he lead the fight to expell the Moors from the Spanish Peninsula, and who was also chosen to lead the Conquest in America, becomes “a numen of the Nahua sacred world”. He, qualified here as
a “precious stone”, “great warrior” is one of the twelve commanders of our (not the, not their, but our) great speaker (tlatoani: the one who speaks, a ruler), a warrior recognizable by his apparel and regalia, just as if he was a Nahua god, covered with jades and shining skin, who comes to make war to the tlacatecolo, or were-owls. In a language that is more metonymical than metaphorical, the symbolism evoked belongs not to Christian transcendentalism, which “was meaningless to the Nahuas and was lost in translation” (1992: 345) but to Nahua models, which instrumentalized the Christian metaphores for divinity and afterlife and infused them with their own cosmovision. The choice of the episode of mount Tabor must have been intelligible for the Nahuas: it is the Transfiguration of the Lord. Here the supernatural revealed itself with particular pregnance: the vision, the massive burst of light and the stupor of the apostoles who offer to build tabernacles right there for Him, Moses and Elijah, as if dream-talking (Matthew 16:24). Burkhart notes the fact that the apostoles are depicted here as warriors and no mention is made of them as fishermen, a role incompatible with that of a soldier. Saint James, who, according to the legend, went to Spain to convert idolaters (“to make war on the were-owls there in Spain”, says Third Psalm, 1992: 344) was sent now to New Spain with the same mission, and “people of New Spain are equated with the people of Spain as subjects of the saint’s work, and the non-Christian deities of ancient Spain are equated with those of Mexico – “our enemies the were-owls”” (1992: 350).

These transwritings by which both sides tried to push their own interests as far as possible into each other’s territory, were probably very common. The displacement that we can see here thanks to the clear intromission of the scribes into what should have been a Christian canonical text cannot be considered an illusion nor a punctual phenomenon. It
was already present in the first grammars and lexicons, where we could see that the cultural and linguistic frontiers became diffuse by the effort of comparison and decentering. It was less evident because of the invisibility of the scribes, but as soon as they were given the chance to write independently, they invested themselves in it.

In fact, these four scribes were highly praised individuals (by contemporary standards of credit given to Indians), who became themselves professors at the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco. Others, like Fernando de Ribas,\textsuperscript{171} not only helped Alonso de Molina\textsuperscript{172} in the completion of his Vocabulario, but participated in the writing of the *Dialogos de la paz y tranquilidad del alma*, by Juan de Gaona.\textsuperscript{173} Fray Juan Bautista\textsuperscript{174} was also helped by Indian scholars in his translation of *Contemptus Mundi*. In the *Biblioteca Hispanoamericana* there are 24 authors whose Indian origin is highlighted. They were mostly of noble origin, young men who were taken by the friars to be educated in their schools: Diego Adriano,\textsuperscript{175} “Indio noble, de los primeros educados por los franciscanos, excelente en lengua latina, que poseyó con la castellana como su idioma patrio … tradujo muchos tratados del latín al nahuatl”, Antonio Gaspar,\textsuperscript{176} “intérprete regio de los tribunales”, Gabriel Ayala,\textsuperscript{177} “escribano de su república”, Esteban Bravo,\textsuperscript{178} “traducía cualquier cosa del romance y del latín a la lengua mexicana y de ésta a aquellas lenguas con tanta abundancia de vocablos que causaba admiración” (Beristáin I: 288). Pablo Nazareo,\textsuperscript{179} in 1566, begging for material help from King Philip II, argued in his letter, written by the

\textsuperscript{171} *BHA* IV, 214
\textsuperscript{172} *BHA* III, 257 V, 396
\textsuperscript{173} *BHA* II, 339 - 340
\textsuperscript{174} *BHA* I, 230 - 231
\textsuperscript{175} *BHA* I: 73
\textsuperscript{176} *BHA* I: 147
\textsuperscript{177} *BHA* I: 193
\textsuperscript{178} *BHA* I, 288
\textsuperscript{179} Not included in *BHA*
way in Latin, that his family had collaborated with Hernán Cortés during the Conquest, that many Indians like himself had helped with the indoctrination of the population, and, finally, that he had translated everything that is read in all the world’s churches (sic):

Para actuar mejor y más eficazmente entre los indios traduje del latin a nuestro idioma, laborando sin dormir noche y día, todo lo que durante el transcurso del año se lee en las iglesias del orbe de la tierra, o sea, evangelios, dominicas, santorales, cuaresmales, feriales y epístolas sagradas, y no sólo estos, sino muchos libros análogos e innumerables sermonarios, que cuidé de traducir con gran diligencia, trabajos que por juicio y aprobación de varones doctos en Sagrada Teología y peritos en nuestra lengua, andan por doquiera en manos de predicadores regulares y seculares, los cuales, disfrutando de nuestra obra y gustando del fruto de nuestro sudor, son de gran utilidad a todos los habitantes de las Indias. (Méndez Plancarte 1946: 165).

Pablo Nazareo is one of the many Indian scholars who served as cultural brokers between colonizers and colonized, and, who, not only became familiar with Christian doctrinal texts and helped in their dissemination, but were put in contact with parts of European culture which came also in the friars’ luggage. They helped thus in the introduction to New Spain of Greco-Latin literature, science, medicine, and arts, that is, helped in the building of a high culture which must have created a widespread sentiment of self-importance that we will find, years later, generalized and consolidated as a national identity feeling.

But, in the meantime, the spirit of Trent was dissipating the climate of openness. Fear of heresy hampered movements that could be considered suspect of heterodoxy. Bishop Juan de Zumárraga sends the cacique of Yanhuitlán to be burned at the stake for idolatry in 1545, and in 1547 forbids dances and representations (mitotes) at church. The
diversity of languages becomes a threat, and in 1550, the Emperor issues an order that all Indians must learn Castilian. The first Church Council, held in 1555, closes the door to priesthood to Indians, *mestizo* and blacks, and Archbishop Montúfar forbids the holding of theater representations in Churches. Restrictions to the participation of the Indian elite in colonial life as well as to the dissemination of texts having to do with the Indian past are enacted, as the atmosphere of suspicion becomes generalized. Some fifty years after Friar Pedro de Gante’s exultant words, the lay scholar Francisco Cervantes de Salazar\(^{180}\) (1514?-1575) , whom we will find again in these pages, will pronounce:

[los Indios] son tan inclinados a su antigua idolatría que si no hay quien entiende muy bien su lengua, entre las sacras oraciones que cantan, mesclan cantares de su gentilidad, y para cubrir mejor su dañada obra, comienzan y acaban con palabras de Dios, interponiendo las demás gentílicas, abaxando la voz para no ser entendidos y levantándola en los principios y fines, cuando dicen “Dios”. Cierto, sería mejor desnudarlos del todo de las reliquias y rastros de su gentilidad, porque ha contescido, según dicen religiosos de mucho crédito, estar haciendo el baile alrededor de una cruz, y tener debajo della soterrados los ídolos, y parescer que sus cantares los enderezaban a la cruz, dirigiéndolos con el corazón a los ídolos. (cited in Alberro 1999: 42).

Everything having to do with the Indian past was to be for ever abolished: “sepultarles en perpetuo olvido”, proclaimed Antonio de los Reyes in the prologue to his 1593 *Arte de la lengua Mixteca* (Reyes 188?: I). Even Bernardino de Sahagún,\(^{181}\) who had allowed the intromission of Indian elements into Christian devotion as a means of indoctrination, became later in his life suspicious also. In fact, he denounced the cult to the Virgin of Guadalupe as being a disguised cult to Tonanzin, the mother goddess (Noguez

\(^{180}\) *BHA* II, 97 - 100

\(^{181}\) *BHA* IV, 275 - 277
1993: 94-96). Paradoxically, in this matter, although he was obviously right, his criticism did not take hold; quite on the contrary, as we know, the cult to Guadalupe proliferated and prospered to become the symbol of the new nation.

Previously acclaimed similarities became “diabolic parodies” (Moreno Toscano 1976: 337): the devil imitating God in everything in order to deceive the faithful and divert them from the true path. Consequently, if it was the devil that inspired the similarities, it was indeed dangerous to let the indigenous words carry the signifiers of Christian terminology. Conflicts and hesitations with regards to the proper use of words ensued.

The approaches followed in the translation of words usual in doctrinal activities are an illustration of the difficulties encountered by the missionaries:

If the word was completely new in the indigenous language, or if there was danger of serious misunderstanding, the Spanish word was used, either as a loan word or as a naturalized borrowing: this is the case of the word Christian (cristiano, christianome in plural), angel (angel, angelosme ), saint (sancto, sanctome), and Spiritu Sancto, Santo Sacramento, etc… There were however hesitations and differing approaches: in the case of the word God, I have found in the same catechism the Nahuatl equivalent: teotl, or totecui totep (lit.: our lord god) alternating with the Spanish “Dios”, totecui Dios (Anonymous 1819). Dominicans insisted on differentiating between the two kinds of gods, and kept Dios as a loan word in their translations (Galarza 1992). The Indians, in turn, seemed to have preferred using the word Dios in their songs as a ruse to fool the friars, as we read in Cervantes de Salazar’s passage just cited.

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182 Cf. Monarquía Indiana, vol. II, and, in particular, Chapter XXXIII, about ways in which the devil fools poor humans into adoring him, and how idolatric practices mock Christian ones.
Evil and its personification, Satan, posed also considerable translation problems in all Mesoamerican indigenous languages, because of the monist character of their religiosity, in which gods could be both good and bad, bring fortune or misfortune. Of all the Mesoamerican pantheon gods, Tezcatlipoca, “the Smoking Mirror”, who showed parallelisms with the devil (sorcerer, master of disguises), was chosen as Satan, and its devilish features were stressed (Burkhart 1989: 92). But still, it was a god, and making devils out of gods was not an easy operation. To facilitate the task of identification, demons were called with a generic tlaltateco, which was a sort of were-owl, associated with the night and the underworld, also a sorcerer, who could mysteriously appear and disappear, and bring all sorts of misfortunes. The tlaltateco had the advantage of not being a god in Nahua culture, so the misunderstanding could be avoided (Burkhart 1989: 41).

If there were practices considered equivalent in the local tradition and carrying no idolatric meanings, they were borrowed and recycled. Neyolmelahualitzli, meaning “straightening of one’s heart”, a purification rite that restored internal order, would be used as the equivalent of confession. For the sacrament of Baptism, a neologism was used: quaatequitzli, meaning literally, to throw water upon one’s head. These parallelisms were naturally often flimsy and the dialogue that could be built upon them was plagued of misunderstandings. Quaatequitzli was problematic because of the precise nature of the sacramental ritual: would a person be baptized if water was poured over another part of the body, and not the head? but also because of the formula: “Ego te baptizo in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti, amen”, which could not be translated literally into Nahuatl because of the ambiguity of the preposition “in” in that language. This translation problem, to which he adds the argument that because Indians are usually drunk, they cannot administer the
sacrament of Baptism, an eminent eighteenth-century Augustin scholar, to dictaminate that “el bautismo en lengua mexicana es muy dudoso” (Pérez 1713: 9) and that, when in doubt, one should not hesitate to administer it again.

The translation of “hell” is another case in point: in Nahua beliefs there were a variety of places where the dead could go (López Austin 1994: 183-84) and no place for eternal damnation, since one’s destiny was unrelated to the manner of life one had lead. The friars found as closest equivalent mictlan (lit.: among the dead) the place of destination of those having died a natural death (that is, not warriors, not pregnant women, not people having drowned or having died of illnesses related to water). It was the underworld, a permanently dark place, but these facts were not connoted negatively among the Nahuas. The appropriation of the word mictlan, which was unrelated to fault in Nahuatl, had to be accompanied by an effort of resignification in order to add a new meaning. Burkhart stresses the horrendous descriptions of tortures that are often found in sermons and doctrines (Burkhart 1989: 50-55)

If there was no punishment for the way a person had lived, there was naturally nor reward either, and therefore finding an equivalence for heaven was also problematic: the word Tlalocan (place of Tlaloc, the rain’s god, a place of wellbeing and plenty, where people having died of drowning, hydropsy, paralysis, thunder strike, would go) was re-signified also to mean strictly the Christian paradise. However, we must note that there was not a single approach used, and both in the case of hell as in the case of heaven, we find

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183 Baptism can be administered by lay people, a church rule that preempts those cases in which a non-baptized person may be in danger of death and no priest may be available. In New Spain, this was of particular significance at a time when there were few missionaries and crowds to be baptized. The urgency of baptism to ensure salvation made it the most important sacrament and attention was paid to make sure that the formulae and rituals were properly performed.

184 BHA IV, 136
also Spanish borrowings: “Infierno” and “Parayso terrenal”.

The translation of the word “sin” and its derivatives is of particular significance. Since this concept had no exact equivalent in Nahua thinking (nor in other indigenous languages), the first missionaries attributed the equivalence to the Nahuatl word *tlatlacoalli*, which meant twisted or crooked thing, or something that has gone wrong, or has failed to function.185 Again, an effort of resignification was called for, and the practice of confession, to which I will devote the next section, must have helped in it.

Not only was it absolutely essential that sin and sinning were fully assimilated, with its subtle preconditions of attrition and contrition, so complex to translate that the Spanish word was appended to the Nahua closest equivalent: "neyoltequipacholitzli itoca contricion", "neyoltequipacholitzli itoca atricion" (Anonymous 1819: 53v-66r), but that the differences between types and gravity of sins were understood. Efforts of translation are particularly visible in dictionaries, such as in an anonymous mid-eighteenth century Castilian-Zapotec vocabulary, which, under the verb “pecar”, shows the variety of ways of sinning that had to be taken into account: “generalmente”, “desvergonzadamente”, “de pura malicia”, “por yerro o engaño”, “por negligencia”, “sólo interiormente”, “con las palabras”, “con los ojos”, “con los oídos”, “con las manos”, “con los pies”, “con todas las partes del cuerpo”, “contra natura”, “con mujer, forzándola o engañándola con persuasiones o promesas”, “sin persuadir sino que ella quiera libremente”, “con mujer forzándola con violencia física”, “contra el prójimo, como es hurto, muerte, lujuria y falso testimonio” (Anonymous 1893).

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185 Personal communication with Prof. John Sullivan, from the Universidad de Zacatecas.
2.1.4. The shift of subjectivity

In general, confession manuals are an important part of the doctrinal literature in Catholic liturgy, both for new and for old Christians. Here I will talk about the bilingual confession manuals as tools for the modelisation of the new colonial subjectivity, but I must also mention that there were other confession manuals printed in New Spain which are not bilingual and were concerned with the confession either of the Spanish population or of the general population. Although I will not dwell upon it further, I cannot omit here a reference to a curious 1552 document entitled “Avisos y reglas para los confessores que oyeren confessiones de los españoles que son o han sido en cargo a los Indios de las Indias del mar océano” written by the controversial Dominican Bishop of Chiapas, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas. In this manual he is using confession as a tool to redress the situation of the many Indians unjustly subjected to the Spanish. He appeals to Canonic Law and to Natural and Divine Law to compel the Spanish encomenderos, that is, the ones who held the privilege of having numbers of Indians to their full service, an institution close to slavery, to free their Indians. Preempting criticism for his radical views, he annexes a chapter of “Adiziones” with scholarly arguments of justification.

New Spain’s confession manuals are bilingual texts, written in two columns: the left one in Spanish, and the right one in the indigenous language. They were meant as instruments to help the priests in the orderly questioning of the penitents. They are, therefore, sample dialogues in which the priest asks the penitent about his or her sins in the
indigenous language, and the penitent answers. The answers are not there, however. In this sense, the confessional manuals resemble the vocabularies we have analysed: they help leading the conversation, but they are of limited use for listening. These texts were produced by friars and priests and were meant only for them. However, the answers are sometimes implicit in the questions:

The questions usually follow the order of the Ten Commandments and they are drafted so as to elicit as much detail as possible from the sinner, such as in this fragment from a Nahuatl-Spanish confession manual, related to the First Commandment (“Thou shalt not strange gods before me”), in which the confessor elicits the many ways in which the penitent may have committed the sin of idolatry:

[Confessor] Por ventura creyste en sueños o creyste que te había de venir algun mal, quando te temblaron las pestañas o cuanto rechina el fuego?
[Confessor] Creyste o tuviste por mal agüero quando oyste llorar al buho o cantar la lechuza, o hazer ruido con las uñas, o quando encontraste con aquella savandixilla que se llama pinahuiztli?
[Confessor] Por ventura tuviste por mal agüero quando la culebra paso delante de ti, o quando en el camino tropeçaste, o quando la mosca hace ruido, o quando oyste cruzir los maderos de casa. (Bautista 1599: 42v-43r)

Sinful practices against the Sixth Commandment (“Thou shall not commit adultery”) were particularly sought. It was important to determine not only the exact nature of the sexual relationship but the degree of consanguinity between the persons involved, since endogamy was quite common:

186 With some exceptions: a small Confesionario breve, activo y pasivo, en lengua mexicana, by Marcos de Saavedra (1746), is composed in two sections: the first one containing the answers, and the second one the questions. Agustín de Quintana’s Confesionario en lengua mixe (1733) contains questions with some answers in consecutive order.
[Confesor] "Estas mujeres con quienes pecaste, son casadas, viudas, solteras o doncellas?, cuántas veces pecaste con cada una?, esfloraste a esa doncella? alguna de esas mujeres con quienes pecaste es tu pariente o es pariente de tu esposa, o es tu comadre?, esas mujeres eran parientes unas de otras? qué parentesco había?

Pecaste con tu cuñada? cuando pecaste con tu cuñada, fue acto consumado?
Has tenido tocamientos con alguna mujer? tú solo palpaste el cuerpo de esa mujer o ella sola palpó el tuyo, o juntamente palpaste el suyo y ella el tuyo?

(Vellón 18??/1887: 105-106)

It was essential to obtain from the penitent the conscience of fault, which was not an easy task. The method consisted in forcing the Indian penitent to see himself as an entity having two parts, flesh and soul, which were divorced from each other. Flesh was unruly, and had to be permanently checked by the soul. The first part (flesh) tended towards sin, and the second part (soul), once properly trained, would bring control over the flesh. This method implied the utilization of carefully drafted sets of questions, which often entered into gruesome detail. Confessing masturbation is an illustrative example of it. Here the confessor forces the penitent to say that he took pleasure in his sinful thoughts, and that he knew that in taking this pleasure he was sinning. The object of the desires is then inquired, and the eventuality of it not being a woman is also considered. The ways and frequency of masturbation are then scrutinized, and information about previous confessions of the same sin is elicited:

[Confesor] Cuando solo pensaste el pecado, te deleitaste en lo que pensabas?
[Confesor] Tuvistes por pecado alegrarte del mal pensamiento.
[Confesor] Y entonces tuvistes movimientos carnales?
[Confessor] Te provocastes polución?
[Confessor] Tuvistes polucion entonces?
[Penitent] La tuve.
[Confessor] Y entonces desseastes pecar con mujer?
[Penitent] Algunas veces lo he deseado, algunas veces no lo he desead.
[Confessor] Quando lo desseastes, què mujer desseastes, casada o soltera?
[Confessor] Quantas vezes te has provocado la polución, y la has tenido a tus solas? [Penitent] Muchas vezes, innumerables; porque algumas vezes he jugado mis partes, y tenido polución todos los días; algumas vezes, cada dos días, al día, y algunas vezes como tres vezes en un día.
[Confessor] Quantos meses (o años) has cometido esse pecado frequentemente, como dices?
[Confessor] Que tanto ha que no cometes este pecado?
[Penitent] Tres días ha que lo dexé de hacer.
[Confessor] Quantas vezes has confessado esse mesmo pecado?
[Penitent] Cinco o seis vezes...

(Quintana187 188?: 238-239)

Other confession manuals, especially of general nature, caution however against being too detailed in the questioning, in particular with regard to the Sixth Commandment, and call for discretion since it was common opinion that Indians learned sins in the confessional (Venegas 1766: 101-02).

I have registered nine bilingual manuals for the administration of the Sacraments in general and twenty-four bilingual confession manuals188:

187 BHA IV, 178
188 J. F. Schwaller (1994) mentions the existence of only six confession manuals (and nine editions) for the whole Colonial period.
Table 3. Confession manuals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<td>Alva Ixtlixóchitl, Bartolomé</td>
<td>1634</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Barreda, Nicolás</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Bravo de Lagunas, Juan Bautista</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Cárdenas, Carlos</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Contreras, Pedro</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Córdova, Juan de</td>
<td>157?</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Cortés y Zedeño, Gerónimo</td>
<td>1765</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Feria, Pedro</td>
<td>15??</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Figueroa, Jerónimo</td>
<td>16??</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Gilberti, Maturino</td>
<td>15??</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Haedo, Francisco</td>
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<td>Lorra, Francisco</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>González, Diego Pablo</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Cortezaro (Cortecero), Diego</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Martínez de Araujo</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Molina, Alonso</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Molina, Alonso</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Nájera, Diego</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Olmos, Andrés</td>
<td>Tratado de los pecados capitales en Mexicano</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Olmos, Andrés</td>
<td>Tratado de los Santos Sacramentos en mexicano</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Ortega, José</td>
<td>Confesionario manual en lengua Cora</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Páez, Bernabé</td>
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<td>Palacios, Pedro</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Pareja, Francisco</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Pinelo, Bernardino</td>
<td>Manual mexicano para la administración recta de los Sacramentos</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Saavedra, Marcos</td>
<td>Confesionario breve activo y passivo, en lengua mexicana con el qual los que comienzan (sabiéndolo bien de memoria)</td>
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<td>Santoyo, Antonio</td>
<td>Catecismo y confesionario</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Quintana, Agustín</td>
<td>Confesionario de la lengua mije</td>
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<td>Vázquez Gastelu, Antonio</td>
<td>Arte de la lengua mexicana, Confesionario y Catecismo</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Velázquez, Carlos Cefedonio</td>
<td>Breve práctica y régimen del confesionario de indios en mexicano y castellano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Vellón, Antonio</td>
<td>Confesionario de zapoteco del Valle</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In 1661, the bishop of Quito, Alonso de la Peña Montenegro, wrote an *Itinerario para párrocos de Indios*, which would be subsequently reprinted many times. It was, as the title suggests, a guideline for the secular clergy that was replacing the missionary friars in their apostolic activities among the Indians, with insistence on the cases of New Spain and Peru. This *Itinerario* contains a large section devoted to the sacrament of Confession, and served as the basis of bilingual confession manuals in New Spain.\(^{189}\)

According to Peña, although the role of the confessor “non est interrogare poenitentem, sed audire confitentem”, when confessing Indians a detailed inquiry was called for as they were very reluctant to confess and ignorant of what was to be confessed (Peña 1661, lib. IV, trat. IV, sec. XIII). The sacrament of Confession as administered in New Spain was the only Sacrament that required a full dialogue and collaboration between

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\(^{189}\) Martínez de Araujo (1690) draws extensively from him.
the priest and the faithful. All other Sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony) could be administered to a more or less passive subject, but confession was essentially a dialogue in which the priest used a ritualized questioning that evolved in the following way:

1. Contrition or examination of conscience, in which the penitent is made to recall his or her sins in the minute details: when, how, with whom, how many times? The confessor directs the examination of conscience with his questions. The order found in most manuals is the order of the Ten Commandments, and there we can see the areas in which confession laid its stress: sins of idolatry and sins of the flesh.

2. In Fray Juan Bautista’s\textsuperscript{190} 1599 \textit{Confessionario}, however, we find an interesting complement in the confessional inquiry. After the questions regarding the Ten Commandments (a “top-down” approach, so to say), the author proposes a questioning adapted to the particular conditions of the penitent. The confessor’s questions are directed to extract the sins proper to different trades and conditions of the penitents: “Preguntas para los gobernadores, caciques, principales, tequitatos, y mayordomos” (Bautista 1599: 60r), “Preguntas para los alguaciles de cohuatequil” (61v), “Preguntas para los medicos” (62v), “Preguntas para las parteras” (63r), “Preguntas para los mercaderes” with subsections for “cacahuateras” (cocoa merchants), “cereros” (candle makers), “los que venden algodón” (cotton merchants), “tintoreros” (dyers), “carniceros” (butchers), “pintores” (painters), “padres y madres” (fathers and mothers), “mercaderes de sartas” (bead merchants) (62v-66v).

\textsuperscript{190} \textit{BHA} I, 230 - 231
3. Confession or revelation of these sins. The precondition is that there would be
sorrow for the sins committed. This mechanism is meant to infuse a sense of shame
and guilt on the sinner, who is then required to abhor from his sinful practices.
While we know what the questions were, we do not have many clues as to what the
answers may have been. The ones included in the manuals are limited to “yes,
Father”, “no, Father”, “once”, or “many times”, as I will illustrate later with
examples. We know too, from the missionaries accounts, that they were sometimes
drawn to despair by the answers they received, possibly because of the gulf of
incomprehension that was conceptualized as diabolical by them. We will see this in
later examples.

4. Satisfaction or absolution: once the penitent has stated his willingness not to commit
these sins again, the priest can proceed to absolve him, on the condition that he pays
a penance, or penitence: prayers, fasting, retributions, etc.

Because its purpose is to extract the truth about the person’s sins so that God can
forgive them through the intermission of the priest, and because failure to confess properly
may imply eternal damnation if the person dies, it was of paramount important for the
confessors that all sins were properly recalled and confessed. This is why the confessors
received specific preparation for administering this Sacrament, and confession manuals
were of such significance in doctrinal literature.

Now, for a confession to be efficient, it was imperative that the confessor should
know about the rites, practices and idolatries of his penitents in order to fully scrutinize
them and understand their answers. This prior information of the sins more common in the
population would come from personal experience, but also from information gathered
elsewhere. In this sense, books about ancient Indian history and practices, religious or otherwise, were an important source of information which fed these manuals.

This is the first rationale given in 1569 by Bernardino de Sahagún\(^{191}\) in the prologue to his *Historia General de las cosas de Nueva España*, a monumental account, in Nahuatl and Spanish, of the history and customs of pre-Hispanic Nahua peoples:

"El médico no puede acertadamente aplicar las medicinas al enfermo sin que primero conozca de qué humor o de qué causa procede la enfermedad, de manera que el buen médico conviene sea docto en el conocimiento de las medicinas y en el de las enfermedades, para aplicar convenientemente a cada enfermedad la medicina contraria. Los predicadores y confesores, médicos son de las ánimas; para curar las enfermedades espirituales conviene tengan esperitia de las medicinas y de las enfermedades espirituales, el predicador de los vicios de la república, para enderezar contra ellos su doctrina, y el confesor, para saber preguntar lo que conviene y entender lo que dixesen tocante a su oficio, conviene mucho que sepan lo necesario para ejercitar sus oficios. Ni conviene se descuiden los ministros desta conversion con decir que entre esta gente no hay más pecados de borrachera, hurto y carnalidad, porque otros muchos pecados hay entre ellos muy más graves, y que tienen gran necesidad de remedio: los pecados de la idolatría y ritos idolátricos, y supersticiones idolátricas y agüeros y abusiones y ceremonias idolátricas no son aún perdidas del todo. Para predicar contra estas cosas, y aun para saber si las hay, menester es de saber cómo las usaban en tiempo de su idolatría, que por falta de no saber esto en nuestra presencia hacen muchas cosas idolátricas sin que lo entendamos. [...] y los confesores ni se las preguntan ni piensan que hay tal cosa, ni saben lenguaje para se lo preguntar, ni aun lo entenderán aunque se lo digan" (Sahagún 1569/1986)

\(^{191}\) *BHA IV, 275 - 277*
Other early writings by the missionaries were allegedly prepared with the same design: knowing as much as possible about the spiritual and earthly life of the Indians in order to improve the efficiency of confession (Torquemada 1615, Benavente “Motolinía” 1524, Olmos 1539, Acosta 1590). It is important to stress precisely that, as Sahagún\textsuperscript{192} says, if the priest did not know what to ask and understood fully what was being answered, little success could be expected from confession. In writing, these early historians and ethnographers were also preserving and, therefore, legitimizing in a way, part of these alien traditions, sometimes defying instructions of their religious or civil authorities who saw all sorts of perils in the compilation and publication of what were called “cosas de Indios”.\textsuperscript{193}

In the context of indoctrination of New Spain’s infidels, aside from its role of converting the individual, confession played moreover a very important role in monitoring the religious loyalty of the newly baptized. By the sacrament of Baptism their past sins had been forgiven, but it was imperative that they would not slide back to their “antiguas idolatrías” (something that they seemed to be prone to), since then they would not be saved, and, consequently, all the efforts to convert them would have been in vain. Confession was thus strongly promoted, apparently with great success. Franciscan chronicler Juan de Torquemada,\textsuperscript{194} drawing from earlier writer Jerónimo de Mendieta, recalls in his 1615 \textit{Monarquía Indiana} that:

\begin{quote}
    en aquellos tiempos, de que agora tratamos, como avia muchos Indios, y pocos Ministros, era cosa de admiracion y grima la priesa que avia y el fervor con que venian a buscar los confesores. Acaecia por los Caminos, montes y despoblados, seguir a los religiosos mil y dos mil indios e indias,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{192} \textit{BHA IV}, 275 - 277
\textsuperscript{193} The confiscation and dispersal of Sahagún’s \textit{Historia Natural}, following Philip II orders, is a case in point.
\textsuperscript{194} \textit{BHA V}, 37 - 38
solo por confesarse... y acaecía estarse un mes, o dos, esperando confesor o lugar para confesarse. (1615/1975, III: 176).

Confession was indeed such an urgent task for the friars, who were appalled at the sight of so many souls threatened, that at the beginning, not yet knowing the languages, they would administer the Sacrament by asking the Indians to bring their sins painted.\textsuperscript{195} Torquemada\textsuperscript{196} recalls here the testimony of Fray Toribio de Benavente, “Motolinía”,\textsuperscript{197} who, facing such a crowd waiting to be confessed:

dígeles que no avía de confesar sino aquellos solos que trajesen sus pecados escritos por figuras (que esto es cosa que ellos bien saben hacer, y entender, ca esta era su escritura) [...] No lo dije a sordos, porque en diciéndoselo, comenzaron tantos a traer sus pecados escritos que aunque lo tomaba por remedio de descansar un poco, menos me pude después valer; pero confesávalos mejor, y mas de priesa, porque por aquellos caracteres, se acordavan mayor, y mas facilmente de sus pecados; los cuales iban señalando con un puntero, y yo examinando, y mui poco mas de lo escrito, o figurado, era menester preguntarles. (1615/1975, III: 177)

It is not easy to understand this purported eagerness to be confessed. The testimonies may have been exaggerated, but we must recall that they correspond indeed to the feeling of optimism that reigned among the missionaries who worked in the central areas\textsuperscript{198} of New Spain during the first decades.\textsuperscript{199} Now, even exaggerations contain some

\textsuperscript{195} Interpreters were also used in early confessions, when the priest did not know the language yet. Peña gives precise instructions as to the manner in which confession through interpreters should proceed, and even how should interpreters be chosen: men should be preferred to women, because one knows how women can be talkative (sic) (Lib. VI, Trat. IV, Sec. X).

\textsuperscript{196} \textit{BHA} V, 37 - 38

\textsuperscript{197} \textit{BHA} III, 289 - 291

\textsuperscript{198} This geographical distinction is called for, since Indians in other parts of the territory were adamant to conversion and put the missionaries zeal to hard trials (see De Vos 1990, and Adam Gilg’s letter, in Montane 1996)

\textsuperscript{199} It was in fact the recurrence of such optimistic accounts that inspired the concept of “spiritual conquest” in Ricard’s classical work (1966).
elements of truth. It is also possible that meanings alien to the missionary task were given by the Indians to the act of confession. One could think, for instance, in an interest of seeking protection from the friars, of getting material rewards, and even simple curiosity.

It may be also that penance was in some way intelligible for them, although in reading Peña’s Itinerario we would tend to think it impossible since it seems that sorrow for their sins was a sentiment alien to Indians and Africans: “¿Qué hará el Confesor para absolver sin escrupulo a los Indios y Negros bozales, que se van a confesar sin dolor de sus pecados?” It is the priest’s duty to "excitarlos a tener el dolor necesario" (Peña 1661, III-III-I: 293). Moreover, obtaining an accurate account of the frequency of their sins was problematic, to say the least: a section is devoted to “cómo se ha de haber el Confesor con los Indios en quinto a averiguar el numero de los pecados [...] por rudos e ignorantes y no saber arithmetica, no pueden contar, y responden lo que se les antoja" (Sec.VII: 297). Sins under Christian Law were not infrequently legitimate actions or beneficial traditions for the Indians, as is the case with the loss of virginity in unmarried girls, which was despised among certain Indian populations. (Sec. IV: 314). The lack of intelligibility was such that there are accounts of Indians inventing sins to please the priest. Peña tells the story of an Indian accusing himself of “haber comido mucho y bebido mucho hasta satisfacerse” (Sec.V: 317). It comes not to a surprise then to read pessimistic reflections by missionaries formerly as enthusiastic of the spiritual conquest as Bernardino de Sahagún, who says:

“Cerca de los otros sacramentos, como fue el de la confesión, y comunión ha havido tanta dificultad, en ponerlos en el camino derecho dellas, que aún

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200 “Negro bozal” designated the black slave brought directly from Africa (and not from other colonies).
201 BHA IV, 275 - 277
Agora ay muy pocos que vayan vía recta a recibir estos sacramentos, lo cual nos da gran fatiga, y mucho conocimiento de lo poco que han aprovechado en el cristianismo.\textsuperscript{202}

Anthropologist Jorge Klor de Alva (1992) has explored the possibilities and limits of such intelligibility among the Nahua peoples (Nahua-speaking central highlands population), and the following analysis relies heavily on him.

Two concepts and their subsequent translations are at stake here: the concepts of \textit{sin} and \textit{penance}, for which there was, as I said, no strict equivalent in pre-Conquest times. In particular, sin and sorrow for the sin were probably unintelligible, as well as, obviously, the difference between attrition and contrition (opportunist sorrow and true sorrow, to put it simply), gaps that had to be filled both conceptually and linguistically. We can sense the desperation of secular priest Juan Martinez de Araujo, who published a bilingual Spanish-Tarasco confession manual, when he explained the difficulties he encountered in trying to make his parishioners to understand the concept of “sinful desires”:

> En el sexto precepto no me atrevo ya a escribir un quaderno que tenia apuntado; porque ellos, y ellas tienen unos estos y unas explicaciones en este precepto que causan horror al Confesor, no tanto de la culpa como de la explicacion, que en otro genero de culpas y confession no se hallara. Usa este verbo \textit{tzitini}, como el mexicano, o \textit{niquelevi}: es dessear, y diciendo lo desseo, juzga que ya esta obligado a el, y no sabe que este mesmo desseo no sabe explicarlo por mal pensamiento, que jamas o rara vez iyra un confessor de indios que confiesse malos pensamientos, y estos quieren ellos excluirlos con el deseo, de suerte que explicando a ella su deseo, si no concede, le carga la culpa, en tanto horror que es una hergia. (Martínez 1690: 74r).

\textsuperscript{202} Cited in Arthur J. O. Anderson’s introductory study of Sahagún’s \textit{Adiciones, apéndice a la postilla y ejercicio cotidiano} (1993: VX)
He is particularly perceptive in pointing at the conceptual gap revealed by the differences of meaning of the verb: to desire. Aware that it is there, at the translation hinge, that conversion will be decided, he says elsewhere:

Conque es incapaz [el indio]? como no lo es para encaminar sus maldades, sabiendo que todo lo que propone es falso: es mucho dolor, y lastima y perdicion y lagrimas: que en ellos es ceguedad, y el cura las derrama sin remedio: por su mucha terquedad, que son terribles en cabecear. Sepa el confesor que Unaritspeni, ehcantspeni, tziperantspeni, y ehcanguhpeni, significa levantar falso testimonio. Uandandepentsani, uandantzepentsani, disfamar. Xaramaritspeni, chambuchambumeni, andar en quentos. Xaratatspeni, descubrir pecados ajenos. Uanapamunstani, y mayopamunstani, desdecirse de palabra. Teruvatanstani, vehpovatanstani, y carovatanstani, satisfacer de obra y pedir perdon. Si el Confessor no sabe estos verbos y otros muchos dificiles, [...] cómo confessara? (Martínez 1690: 76r)

However, missionaries and other chroniclers were surprised to find among the Indians a comprehensive apparatus of rules and moral codes with their corresponding provisions and punishments for violations. As it should have become visible by now, the objects of such rules and codes were not the same as the Christians had, neither were the religious ends implied in these rules and codes. For Christians, the salvation of the soul was the driving force, and it required that the two parts of self, body and soul, split apart, and that soul keep a permanent watch over the body, as the place of all sins; for Indians, the self was composed of “numerous elements, some of which were shared with other beings, things or cosmic entities” (Klor 1997: 182). These elements had to be balanced through appropriate observances, which were oriented towards averting the host of disasters that haunt human life (hail or drought, hunger, sterility...). Ceremonies, sacrifices and prayers
were meant to “pay back” the gods for their favors. The problematic nature of desires, which, in Christian belief, were considered as the origin of all sins, could not be accommodated in the Indians spiritual context:

In contrast to the ideals that dominated the ethical beliefs of the missionaries, who as austere mendicants recognized desires as problematic and sought to eradicate all but those that led to greater devotion, the Nahuas were unwilling to condemn desire itself, which after all could originate from forces beyond their control. Instead, they were preoccupied with the need to equilibrate the desires. The moral individual, then, was the one who attended to the personal and ritual acts that balanced the forces within him or her in order to restrain any one inclination from overcoming the others. Rather than obliterating earthly desires for an other-worldly end, the Nahuas sought to survive successfully in this life by prolonging them through careful management.” (Klor 1992: 183)

This contrasting spiritual aims “resulted in dissimilar understandings of the meaning of contrition (guilt and responsibility), confession (recognition of one’s fault), satisfaction (penitential acts of atonement […] and reconciliation (public exoneration)” (Klor 1992: 192).

There are similarities between Klor’s analysis of the Nahua spirituality and the findings of García-Ruiz (1992) with regards to the Maya cultures:

“Las sociedades mayas [...] articulan sus categorías morales a partir de la noción de tiox (sagrado) y no conciben la moral en términos de la oposición material-espiritual, sino que acuerdan una gran importancia a la dialéctica orden-caos, mancha-purificación, cumplimiento-descuido, etc. Esto permite comprender por qué los franciscanos, al elaborar sus Vocabularios, están guiados [...] por su visión ético-moral y no por la especificidad de las lógicas de la sociedad cakchiquel. Un caso
particularmente interesante es el relacionado con la noción de falta.

Los misioneros, guiados por la visión maniquea de bien y de mal, buscan el mal donde consideran [...] que se encuentra. En el pecado “contra la carne” que investigan minuciosamente en las preguntas que hacen en el momento de la confesión, es por esta razón que van a dar prioridad a *mac o mak*, término con que eran designadas en cakchiquel las faltas relacionadas con el comportamiento sexual, se trata en realidad de un concepto al que está íntimamente asociado la noción de descuido, es decir, de algo que se ha hecho porque no se ha cuidado suficientemente de uno mismo. En la mentalidad indígena se trata, por lo tanto, de algo cuya gravedad no implica peligro de muerte, como puede ser las faltas relacionadas con *tiox*. (García-Ruiz 1992: 99)

So, both for the Nahuas and for the Mayas, understanding and internalizing sin, which was an absolute prerequisite to be able to function in the society that was being imposed by the Spanish, meant a complete subversion of their system of beliefs.

Therefore, a dialogue between Indian and Spanish such as the one implied in the confession manual presupposed a coincidence of purposes which was much more complicated, not to say improbable, than in the everyday dialogues of Pedro de Arenas²⁰³ conversation manual.

In fact, the confession inquiry methods resembled the questioning prescribed by the *Inquisición*, and we could even say that, in a way, it replaced it. Although the Inquisition was established in 1536, the Indians were generally not subjected to it since, as “cristianos nuevos”, they were exempted on account that they were considered not yet acquainted with the Church doctrines. However, the compulsory confession (at least once a year) served partly the same purpose, and its practice was also similar, except for the extreme methods

²⁰³ *BHA I, 134 V, 306*
for extracting confessions, although in this matter one is left wondering:

[Confessor] Has visto quando la gente ha hecho algun sacrificio diabolico: o sabes si alguna persona lo ha hecho?
[Penitent] Lo he visto, Padre.
[Confessor] Quando lo vistes? En donde hizo la gente el Sacrificio? Qué hizo la gente entonces? Quantas personas hizieron este sacrificio? Quantas veces lo has visto? Tú solo lo vistes o tambien lo vieron otras personas?
Como se llama la persona, que hizo el sacrificio?
[Confessor] Todo esso que me has dicho, es verdad?
[Penitent] Si, Padre, todo es verdad.
[Confessor] Hijo todo lo que me has dicho aqui ahora es necesario que se lo avises al señor Obispo o al señor Provisor; pero porque el sr Obispo y el sr Provisor viven lexos, puedes decirlo a mi en mi casa o en la porteria, o en la sacristía, o en cualquier parte que quisieres, para que yo pueda ajustarlo y componerlo. Si no quieres decirlo a mi, puedes decirlo al padre cura o al padre vicario. Y hasta que lo digas a mi o al padre cura o vicario no puedo yo absolverte.
[Confessor] Bien puedes decírmelo ocultamente: no tengas miedo, que nadie lo oyra, nadie lo sabra, y tu ningun trabajo tendras. Y si no quieres avisarlo, si no quieres decirlo, harás muy grande pecado, y ofenderás mucho a Dios; y ningun Padre podrá absolverte hasta que lo digas, como digo.
[Commentary] Hecha la denuncia en forma se remite al señor Obispo. Y porque no aya dificultad en hacer diligencia tan importante, y necesaria, como es hacer la denuncia, pondré aquí algunas advertencias, para alivio de los Ministros nuevos.
Adviertese que quando el penitente dice que sabe que otra persona es idolatra, hechizera, bruxa etc.. no se ha de absolver hasta que denuncia extra sacramentum... (Quintana 213-214)

Once the file arrived at the Bishop’s hands, he could denounce the presumed idolatry to the civil authorities, who could then proceed judicially. The role of confession
in protecting the new colonial order becomes thus evident in these transwritings, which, in modern terms, would possibly be considered "classified". This relationship between religious and civil branches has a parallel in the association between the Santo Oficio de la Inquisición and the civil tribunals. In the decisions of the Santo Oficio we read that the offender was released ("relajado") to the secular arm ("brazo secular"), meaning in fact that the Church delivered him to the executioners.

There were, however, very few cases of executions of idolatrers.\footnote{Although these few cases were widely known and caused shock among the population (Medina 1952)} In spite of the violence we can sense in this example, I have not found other texts that can substantiate that it was exerted regularly. What is more important for me here is to stress that confession was not only an inquiry on the indigenous imaginary, but that it forced the penitent to see his own practices through the grid imposed by the confessor. When pointed out by the priest, pronounced in the priest's mouth and with words which belonged to the indigenous languages but no longer seemed to belong to it, words that had been literally confiscated by the foreigners in their translation, the practices they were compelled to confess may in the end have also acquired a certain foreignness to them. From then on, a new subjectivity could take place. Not exactly a mestizo subjectivity, a word which suggests a bland syncretism, but a subjectivity which was the product of a violent ejection of contents and replacement by new matter, which was sometimes disguised as their old matter, and so strange that they could not give it a name or adjust to them.

Obviously, we do not know how this process was felt by the Indians. They did not leave any records and we are left to scrutinize the missionaries’ texts to see if, by omission or by allusion, we can catch a glimpse of the way in which the confession process was
internalized by the newly converts. The “other side of the Conquest” was given a voice in the translations of ancient Nahuatl texts by Ángel María Garibay and Miguel León-Portilla, which depict the bloody battles and ensuing calamities that the indigenous peoples suffered. We have also some accounts of the reactions of the Indians to the friars’ attempts to evangelize them. Doctrinal texts written by the Indian scholars have also survived, in which they introduce stylistic figures and imagery belonging to their own tradition, as I have shown in my discussion of Sahagún’s Psalmodia. And, of course, in their searching questions, the confession manuals themselves indirectly reveal the way in which doctrinal matters were considered by the Indians. But so far no indigenous account has been found that could throw some light into how the sacraments and other Christian rituals and practices were received and accommodated into their daily lives.

It was these lines from present day Zapotec writer Víctor de la Cruz that called my attention and put me on a different track:

“quien trajo la segunda lengua
vino a matarnos con nuestra palabra”

It was this “came to kill us with our word” that made a profound impression on me. My own experience as a Catholic-educated Catalan speaker surfaced. I thought that maybe I could venture some parallelisms, however tentative, between my experience and the response of the Indians subjected to the confession ritual. This will require a personal excursus which I will rather leave in bracketed form:

\[\text{Nobody had Catalan the way we did. Nobody, except for the occasional}\]

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205 See M. Leon-Portilla’s *La visión de los vencidos*, Mexico: FCE, 1973
206 See Jan de Vos (1990)
207 *BHA IV*, 275 - 277
eccentric, would learn a marginal language such as ours. Catalan thus belonged to me and to my sisters and brother, parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, neighbours and schoolmates. In Catalan my grandmother would sing us old songs and tell us naïve jokes, which we would ask her to repeat time and again, and made us laugh always as if it was the first time we heard them. Catalan was not heard on TV or radio. Neither would there be newspapers nor journals. It was, however, used in Church, since the decision of Council Vatican II regarding the use of vernaculars, a fact that had an important impact on our community and helped strengthening the relationship between Catalan nationalism and the progressive branch of the Catholic Church.

Castilians were different from us and they never spoke Catalan, even if they lived among us. One knew that in public offices: Post Offices, Municipality, Police, the officers were appointed by Madrid and were never Catalan. We would therefore address them in Castilian. Our nanny was from Burgos, and she never spoke Catalan even if most of her life she had spent in Catalonia. An uncle married a rich woman from Barcelona (we lived in the province) who spoke Castilian at home because in her family Catalan was despised as peasant language. That uncle began speaking Castilian too, and he mocked us and our peasant accent.

I left Spain in my youth, to study abroad, and I never returned to live there. When I return now, I hear Dutch, Moroccans and Bulgarians speaking Catalan. I even heard a young Chinese boy speaking Catalan the other day on the bus. They have even followed language courses and know more Catalan than I do (during Franco’s time, the language was forbidden and therefore was never taught). I cannot but considering it an affront. They have appropriated what was mine; they didn’t ask for permission. These foreigners who now speak my language make me feel a stranger. My own language sounds now strange; I do not recognize it in their lips, it seems disfigured. And if they employ idiomatic expressions, the impression is even stronger.
There is no refuge for me now that they know my language. I cannot recognize the version they return to me in conversations; and yet, I understand it. This understanding entertains the fiction that that language continues to be mine. But I am different since they know it. Their using it has changed the most intimate perception I had of it. It has ceased to be a refuge, a harbour, and I have to look elsewhere for safety. Indeed, since I am no longer acquainted with the local habits, when I have had to ask for information to a passer-by, I have rather stopped an immigrant. I know that I have too become somewhat of a stranger.

I want to connect this estrangement with regards to the own language, which is derived from the appropriation by foreigners, to the fact of the confessional inquisition. The questioning in the confession process aims at the destruction of the old sinner self and the construction of a new redeemed self. In New Spain, Indians were made to hear in their own language, disfigured but still intelligible, from the priests’ lips, that the most significant things for them: sacrifices to their Gods, rituals to avert bad weather, etc., the ones that made them who they were, were profoundly wrong and that they had to uproot them. The way in which the priest secured this aim was by having the Indian penitents minutely recounting the gestures and circumstances of these practices, along with the frequency of their performance and the company in which they were performed. Shame and guilt were induced by the atmosphere of secrecy that surrounded the confession: the intimacy with the priest, the humiliation imposed, and by the deeply disturbing fact that the priest was asking what he already knew; the questioning was not a way of knowing something that he didn’t know, but of confirming a suspicion. Like in a torture session, making the victim say and repeat what the tormentor already knows (or pretends to know) sinks the victim into guilt and shame and eventually demolishes her self.

In addition, I am convinced that the most disturbing element in the process was, for
the Indian penitent, the fact that the questioning was done in his or her language, the one that had been for him a harbour and a refuge, the one that served to communicate with his people, his family, the one he used to serve his gods, the one for telling jokes and singing songs. And however successful he or she may have been in contouring the priests questioning, and in fooling or misleading him, nothing could change the fact that now the language had no secret for the newcomers, as is illustrated by the author’s comment to this excerpt, in which the all possible ways of asking and answering about adultery are given in detail:

**Spanish**

"Has pecado con mujer?"

**Mixe**

Tò ixmòpocpaait toixtòhc? Vel to ixmotuïñpocpa toixtòhc? Vel to ixmotuïñ toixtòhc, vel to ixmotzotzyoi toixtòhc, vel to ixmòotait toixtòhc, vel to ixmònaipait toixtòhc, vel to ixpait toixtòhc, vel to ixmòpoctatuïñ toixtòhc, vel to mpocpatuïñ moot toixtòhc

De todos estos modos dichos, usan cuando se confiesan, así hombres, como mugeres; y así es necesario saberlos todos” (Quintana 1733/188?: 235) (the stress is mine).

In a way, then, language had betrayed them, just as they came to believe that their gods had betrayed them when the Christians came. Therefore, it could have been then, through the systematic practice of confession as a habit-modifier practice, when the shift of subjectivities might have happened.

Because, when the sinner had finally confessed to the satisfaction of the priest, the priest would forgive him in the name of God and he would call him "my son". The Indian would then stand up and walk away as a new Christian, and a new man.
THIRD PART

FROM CATHOLIC TO MEXICAN
3.1. Interwoven translations

Naturally, this shift of subjectivity was not only brought about by the confession process. We do not know how many times in his lifetime an Indian would go to confession, and how thoroughly the questionnaires were applied. Moreover, we do not know what answers were given. The real impact of the confessional practice has to be measured in conjunction with other practices, religious and non-religious, mostly not literate, and also with other readings and other translations.

The Indian who was kneeling at the confessional was already christened. This meant that his name had been replaced by another name. In many cases, he was given a Saint’s name and the family name of the priest or the conqueror. He came from an altepetl (a city-state) or a calpulli (neighborhood) the name of which had also been changed, generally by adding a Saint’s name in front of the original name. So the main questions of the identity: “who am I?” and “where do I come from?” were answered in a way different from the way they would have been answered before.

He was also kneeling at the confessional for reasons we cannot easily explain. There was certainly some degree of coercion, but we know too that Indians often found in the Church refuge from abuses by Spanish encomenderos and civil authorities. Indians could resist in subtle ways to what was being imposed upon them.

It would therefore be simplistic to think of fixed behaviors and responses. Lockhart’s “double mistaken identity” seems an appropriate term to refer to the misunderstandings brought about by these early types of communication by which both sides understood each other with their own schemes of pre-judgement (yet, it would have
been suicidal to pretend that it could be done otherwise). One could even think of a mutual strategic misinterpretation, which would ensure the minimum conditions for communication between the two sides. But then, what two sides? Spanish political strategies forced into alliances groups which had previously been enemies, and vice versa; pitted against each other populations that had been friends or mutually indifferent. Spanish themselves did not present a solid façade: neither ethnically nor socially, or ideologically. From the very beginning intense rivalries broke between missionaries and encomenderos, both wanting to rule over the Indians. Cortés himself had used his new Indian friends to combat his fellow countryman, Pánfilo de Narváez, a representative of the Crown who was sent to put an end to Cortés’ personal ambitions. Later, the Indians were utilized in the clashes between monastic and secular orders, and among the monastic orders themselves. They witnessed the execution of the two Dávila brothers, who supported the rebellion led by Martín Cortés, Hernán Cortés’ son. They protested when the Jesuits were expelled overnight. Obviously, the image the Spanish gave was, thus, far from coherent.209

But, then, also, who were the Indians? Were Indians the same in 1521 than in 1560? Can we pool together Mexicas and Chichimecas, Lacandones and Zapotecas? Can we talk about an “original” Indian, not mixed, not acculturated? And, if so, for how long? Is there a moment beyond which we can no longer talk about an Indian? (After all, for Beristáin, the only Indians he mentions in the Biblioteca Hispanoamericana are descendants of caciques up to three generations, maybe). There is a heterogeneity that defies a simple explanation of the transformations that eventually led to what is now known as mestizaje.

209 Even for us, today, it is difficult to recognize in Erasmist Bishop Fray de Zumárraga the same person who sent the cacique of Texcoco to the stake, and humanist Sahagún as the interpreter in the tribunal dictaminating his death, together with Alonso de Molina, author of grammars, vocabularies, translator of Saint’s lives and other doctrinal works.
There was, indeed, a moment in which racial demographic ratios shifted significantly. Indian population decreased at a genocide pace. The phrase "ya se van acabando los indios; recien acabada de llegar la fee, estava el patio del Iglesia lleno, y apretado de gente, quando se juntaban, y a vezes no cabian" is one of the grammar examples given by Horacio Carochi\(^{210}\) in his *Arte de la lengua mexicana* (1645: 84v-85r). The percentages of newly arrived Spanish and of mixed races increased. There were important shifts in social status: the descendants of the conquerors were often reduced to poverty, while the mixed races sought occupations from which they could climb to better positions in the colonial society. Miners and other workers, middlemen, such as interpreters, *escribanos* and *alguaciles*, themselves mixed and dealing with people who were also mixed, increasingly used Spanish, the common language, in their exchanges. The Indians, decimated and impoverished, had lost the tutelage of the Mendicant orders and were pushed to the margins of society, both socially and geographically. They were consistently referred to as "pobrecitos indios", "ruda, ignorante y necessitada gente" (Paredes 1758) by comparison to the "gran nacion" (Pérez 1723) that they were. Doctrines were now written "segun la capacidad de los indios" (Mijangos 1624), who are "de corto alcance ... a los que cualquier cosa los hace dudar, reparar y aun tropezar" (Paredes 1758). They lived in a sort of apartheid, isolated and, in the opinion of many, generally inebriated: "gente tan rustica, apartada de los espanoles y lo mas del año ebria" (Pérez 1713).

It can be considered that the first shared collective feeling among the indigenous population is the acknowledgement that the language has changed, and that with it the memory of the past has become unreliable and shaky. The whole structure was now in

\(^{210}\) *BHA II*, 50 - 51
ruins. In the manuscript known as the *Anales de Tlatelolco*, dated around 1524, an anonymous Indian left an *icnocucatl* (song of sorrow). His are these moving words: “golpeábamos los muros de adobe, y era nuestra herencia una red de agujeros” (Garibay 1987, I: 477); such was the magnitude of the disaster. On top of the material loss, the loss of the certitudes embodied in the language must have been demolishing. Their languages could not shelter them from the disaster, since they had been confiscated. In the 1800’s the missionaries would administer the doctrine to the poor Indians not only “in diluted doses”, as one would do with a child, but in an abridged form and cheap paper, because they could not afford neither the time nor the money, and in a language “adapted to the times”, since they would not understand the “sublime” language of their ancestors:

Los pobrecitos Indios por razón de cristianos exigen de los Sacerdotes que los dirijan, el pasto espiritual de la divina palabra, no en alimento sólido sino desleído en leche por expresiones las mas sencillas y comparaciones obias y perceptibles: por pobres y muy ocupados conviene se reduzca su instrucción a un librito que les facilite su lectura economizando tiempo y dinero: por Indios deberán recibirla en su idioma, si ya no queremos que sean bárbaros para los Ministros, y los Ministros bárbaros para ellos...; en un idioma, digo, cual se habla en el siglo presente, y no en el del siglo de la conquista, que por sublime les sería desconocido. (Anonymous 1819).

El “siglo de la Conquista”, the old gods and ancient idolatries are indeed past for the Churchmen, as Franciscan friar Juan de Torquemada^{211} declares in his *Monarquia Indiana*:

“Y así, ya no hay cosa destas enhiesta, sino sola la cruz de Jesu-Christo, y su Santa Fe asi por todos los lugares como en los coraçones de los Indios” (Torquemada 1615/1975 III: 52).

\footnote{BHA V, 37 - 38}
In the minds of the missionaries the territory had been unified in a number of ways: the many languages were subjected to a single writing system, grammar and code of comparison. It had also been unified under one religion. At last, the New World was rescued from the clutches of Satan and brought back to God. Fray Maturino Gilberti\(^{212}\) had declared it in the prologue of his catechism, a quotation that I think is useful to recall: “hay de dos maneras de hombres: cristianos e infieles” (1559: I). This was the universal classification. No other identity seemed relevant. The missionary’s spirit was not nationalistic but universalistic. In fact, the friars deliberately ignored the laws stipulating that Spanish was to be taught because they considered themselves not as servants of the Monarch but as God’s servants, and God would be better (and more quickly) served in the indigenous languages (Robins \textit{et al.} 1991: 149). These numerous populations had been directed by the missionaries from darkness to light, from the state of barbarism to civilization. Only secondarily they had become vassals of the Spanish Monarch. And, clearly, this imagined community of Christians was promoted by the transwritings we have analyzed so far: \textit{grammars} that confirmed the belonging of these languages to a higher design, \textit{lexicons} that could test the capacity of these languages to carry the Christian message, \textit{doctrinal works} to demonstrate that, allowing for the necessary adaptations, the equivalence was possible, and \textit{confession manuals} that ensured that whatever was noxious and non equivalent would be dismantled. All these instruments served to de-legitimating the old self and legitimating a new identity. This was the Christian community as imagined by the friars: a community of converts in which the Spanish conquerors had little presence but which was eventually useful for Spanish colonial purposes. An identity that had demonstrated its potential in the syncretic operations of translation, in the incorporation of

\(^{212}\) \textit{BHA} II 357 - 358
indigenous symbols and practices into the religious and civil rituals and texts, as we have illustrated with Sahagún’s 213 *Psalmody.*

Several factors materialized this potential in only one language, Spanish: the demographic dynamics, the displacement of the Mendicant orders and their replacement, first, by the Jesuits, and then by the secular priesthood, and the stricter enactment of language related laws and royal orders. The combination of these factors, among others, eventually contributed to push aside the Christian-civilization ideal of community, and the Indian population that went with it. Nevertheless, the groundwork had been done, and the canvass was prepared for another ideal community to emerge, one that would express itself as a new society, “el primer modelo ideal de una posible sociedad criolla” (Lafaye 1985: 79), a New Spain totally different from the Old Spain, just as the New World would be different, free from the deficiencies of the Old World. The main nationalist symbols that united the different races present in the New Spain society were syncretic religious creations: the Virgin of Guadalupe, probably the best example of a syncretic cult, since the Virgin was made to appear at a place consecrated to the *Tonantzin,* a feminine pre-Hispanic deity,214 and the emblem of the eagle with the serpent standing over the *nopal* tree, in which the pre-Hispanic and Christian symbolisms are articulated to represent Mexico, not only Tenochtitlan, the capital city, but the whole territory, that is, the New Spain (Alberro 1999).

Although the process I am trying to summarize here was long, some changes happened very quickly, particularly in urban settings. It is quite surprising to find how fast the society of the second half of the sixteenth century was ready to accept a representation

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213 *BHA IV,* 275 – 276
214 Juan Diego, the Indian to whom the Virgin appeared, was beatified by the late Pontiff John-Paul II.
of the Indian culture as past, bury the Indian culture and replace it for something new. Already in 1554, Cervantes de Salazar,215 a Spanish humanist who was teaching Rhetorics at the newly created Real y Pontificia Universidad de México, wrote in Latin a set of three Dialogos to be used at class by his students. In these dialogues, young men, criollo characters, that is, Spanish born in New Spain, receive visitors who have just disembarked from Spain. They show them around the city of Mexico, its university and surroundings, while reflecting about the history and customs of the Indians.216 The significance of the Dialogos is, on the one hand, that Mexico is described in Latin, and thus could be seen as an object of classical interest, and, on the other hand, that when referring to the things of the Indians, all verbs are in past tense:

Los reyes cuidaban sobre todo de que nadie estuviese ocioso … Los palacios de los reyes y principales eran sumamente magníficos … No conocían las bestias de carga … Tenían cuantas mujeres podían mantener…Usaban alimentos muy cálidos, condimentados con una especie de pimienta que llaman ají. De las raíces del maguey sacaban un vino que embriaga más que el nuestro; y trastornados con esa bebida, intentaban toda suerte de crímenes ….Se comunicaban con los ausentes, no por medio de letras, sino de figuras de animales pintados en ciertos papeles, a imitación de los egipcios. (Cervantes de Salazar 1554/ 1939: 148. The stress is mine)

Thus, barely 30 years after the fall of Tenochtitlan, young men, students at the newly created University, ride their horses along the streets of that city, chatting about the houses, markets, sewage system, squares and public buildings. Everything is modern and

215 BHA II, 97 – 100; Born in Spain probably in 1514, he is considered the father of Mexican humanism. He translated Juan Luis Vives’ Dialogos from Latin into Spanish. Some think he is the author of the famous anonymous “picaresque” novel El Lazarillo de Tormes.
216 The Dialogos warrants a thorough study, which is beyond the scope of this work. In particular, I would call the attention to the fact that it was a sort of exercise book for students of Latin in the newly established Mexican university. There, sons of Spanish colonizers, who would probably never go to Europe, would learn Latin by reading these representations of their own city.
clean, the buildings are stately, the infrastructure is well kept, they visit the University yards, the markets and convents, “todo México es ciudad” says Alfaro, a proud New Spaniard (Cervantes de Salazar 1554/ 1939: 83). The Indians, their culture and customs already belong to the past in this New World which is included within the universe of Classical objects.

The next chapters will show how, sometimes simultaneously and sometimes consecutively to the weaving of the translational canvass, the new identity was manifesting itself in other transwritings: the ones that helped recalling, selecting and rebuilding a memory of the past, the ones that contributed a Classical representation of the nation, and, lastly, the ones that inserted the nation in the general concert of modern nations.

3.1.1. Translation and the foundation myths

The Spanish colonial government favored and, in fact, established, a policy of congregation of the Indian population, for political, economic and religious purposes. Moreover, the administration of the populations that had survived the sequence of epidemics that decimated the territory along the sixteenth century would be facilitated if people were concentrated in urban centers. There, deprived from their territorial base, orphaned, having been compelled to leave their protecting deities behind, these survivors mixed with peoples coming from elsewhere: Europe, Africa and nearby territories. Serge Gruzinski, who gives us the best explorations of this phenomenon, I believe, speaks of “zones étranges” to characterize the highly turbulent, unstable situation derived from the
Conquest that preceded the formation of the colonial society (Gruzinski 1999: 68-72). The new society, says Gruzinski, is less the result of political calculations than of a move towards social cohesion, in which individuals had to elaborate “nuevas formas de comportamiento y de convivencia que resultaron ser la combinación, adición o yuxtaposición, más o menos exitosas, de elementos sacados de los universos que estaban en contacto. Los elementos descontextualizados que se insertaron en estos collages o patchworks adquirieron nuevos significados y nuevos valores” (Bernand and Gruzinski 1994: 167-168). Some of these elements that, by being decontextualized, acquired new values and meanings, were the recollections of the past that could help in the social identification of the emerging mixed population.

Social cohesion in the circumstances just explained depended, among other factors, on myths, traditions, rituals and cults that could entertain a sentiment of belonging, a difficult task in view of the diverse origins and differing, often incompatible, interests and realities. A memory of the past, appropriately reconfigured and reconstructed, would play an essential role in bridging the gaps and mending the ruptures. It held the key to continuity and, therefore, to authenticity, originality and generally speaking, to ethnic legitimacy of the society or group (Smith 1984, 1997). This was clearly understood by Juan Cano, the husband of doña Isabel de Moctezuma, the last Aztec ruler’s daughter, who hired historian Franciscans to have the genealogy of his wife rebuilt so that she could apply for royal privileges (Duverger 1983: 35, 50-53).

This section will try to explain how a few middlemen, mostly interpreters acting as intercultural agents, performed a reconstruction of the past and put it in circulation. They

217 In an earlier work, Gruzinski (in Bernand 1994: 151) he defines these societies with the scientific term “fractal”, that is, heterogeneous, irregular and fragmented phenomena that cannot be reduced to entire, simple forms.
were ensuring some protection for the old Indian elites, to which they belonged; but, in so
doing, they were also disseminating a new discourse to legitimize the society that was
emerging. It is to these chaotic, grey, "fractal zones" (see note 217) that the transwritings
serving to build the foundation myths belong.

Although the conservation of past memories is a collective enterprise, manifesting
itself in many ways (school, civic and religious ceremonies, etc.), the leading social actors
who usually take upon themselves to uphold this memory of the past belong to the class of
intellectuals: they are historians, teachers, politicians, churchmen, and interpreters, people
acting at the juncture between the spheres of power and the general population. It is them
who play the main role in the selection and compilation, reconfiguration, idealization and
organization of the ethnic memory (Gutiérrez 2001: 46). And, given that this memory has
been preserved in different language systems, inevitably the agency of translators and
interpreters becomes essential. They can become the key actors in the process of selection,
compilation, reconfiguration, idealization and organization of the ethnic memory.

Some nationalism theoreticians and Middle-Americanists have highlighted the
"constructed" or "invented" character of the narratives on the nation, as disseminated by
these groups of intellectuals acting in fact as agents, but they seem to have not paid any
attention to translations and translators in their role of modeling the past and casting these
identity-bearing narratives. As for historians, for reasons having probably to do with
positivist attitudes towards historiographical sources, as well as with the ancillary status of
translation, official Mexican history and anthropology have approached and disseminated
the translated texts that narrate the pre-Hispanic past as if they were originals (Payás 2004),
taking the sources as transparent accounts of what had actually happened in those times
(Gruzinski 1988: 8-9)
The transwritings related to the founding of ethnic myths are just a handful of extant documents, some of them incomplete, and they were produced in a very short period. In Figure 16 we can see that they constitute the smallest corpus, appearing and fading out in a matter of one hundred years. They are nonetheless a most consequential group of texts, in that they sustain the knowledge we have of the pre-Hispanic past. Moreover, they triggered a literally endless and still ongoing sequence of interpretations and rewritings. The interest for Middle American history is nourished from these translations, and so is Mexican nationalism.

![Fig. 16. The Foundation myths](image)

From the point of view of their composition, they are texts derived from other discourses (pictorial and oral) and related to them by more or less loose translation ties (translations proper and transwritings). These original discourses, or hypotexts, to use Gérard Genette’s taxonomy (1982), that held the memories of the pre-Conquest past or of the times of the Conquest, were of a collective nature, and, as such, were anonymous. The
translations’ authors were, on the contrary, well identified. Clearly, the significance here of these translations and transwritings, which, following Gérard Genette’s taxonomy, can be considered hypertexts, is related to the fact that they help creating or reconfiguring the mythical elements that according to Anthony D. Smith typically sustain national identity and discourse (Smith 1984): a myth of temporal origin, or “when we were begotten”, a myth of location and migration, or “where we came from and how we got there”, a myth of ancestry, or “who begot us and how we developed”, a myth of an heroic age, or how we were freed and became glorious”, a myth of decline, or “how we fell into a state of decay”, and a myth of regeneration, or how to restore the Golden Age (Smith 1984: 95-105). When put to the service of historiography, translations and rewritings are particularly able to perform the inclusions and exclusions, shifts of stress, nuances and highlighting that are required to create and disseminate such mythical elements.

Historians, not to say philologists, are mostly interested in deriving factual knowledge from the texts. Not much attention has been paid, therefore, to these characteristics of translations, as well as to the lives of translators and interpreters and the circumstances in which they appear and disappear in history.218 Thus, the emphasis is placed in the rescue of this “secondary” individuals, rather in showing the changes that they might have helped bringing about. Similarly, when referring to the early chroniclers, whether they are Spanish missionaries, mestizo, or Indians, it is their present significance as historians or ethnographers which is stressed. For instance, when praising the works of

218 A biographical attempt, such as Ascensión Hernández’ study of Fernando de Ribas, the Indian scholar who helped Alonso de Molina in his Vocabulario (and who, according to Frances Karttunen, could be the author of an anonymous vocabulary found at the Newberry Library), is drafted more like a Saint’s life, showing no contrasts nor contradictions (Hernández 1995-96).
Chimalpán or Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, traditional historiography puts forward their role as historians, and fails to show that before (or rather than) being historians, they were interpreters.

They held a privileged, albeit uncomfortable, position of being in the middle of the field, bridging differences, carrying cultural materials back and forth, drawing always dividing lines, marking the territories of the “us” and “them”. They were “negotiating the frontier”, in Anthony Pym’s words (Pym 2000), as individuals who possess the information

\[ \text{Fig. 17. Códice de Osuna} \]

\[ ^{219} \text{BHA II, 108 - 109} \]
that only insiders have, but the freedom of action that only outsiders can enjoy. As such, they belong to the gray zones, the interstices of the cultural contact surfaces and they are normally regarded with suspicion. The agency of these middlemen, interpreters and guides in colonial history was not problematized until post-structuralist and post-colonial studies, driven by a new awareness of linguistic aspects of colonization, took an interest in them.

Two such groups of translators-interpreters are distinguishable in 16\textsuperscript{th}-17\textsuperscript{th} century New Spain. By collecting and writing about the past, for reasons undoubtedly far from deliberate nation-building, they contributed to the creation or recombination of myths that were later disseminated and eventually helped consolidating an idea of common descent, authenticity and merit. I am referring to the missionaries who wrote various chronicles of "things of Indies" (particularly friars born in Mexico or brought there at an early age and, therefore, well acquainted with the local culture) on the basis of pictorial documents and oral narratives, and to some Indians who, using alphabetized Nahuatl or Spanish, recalled aspects of the history of their ethnic group, community or family. Although the avowed or hidden purposes for writing these materials differ between the two groups, and so their styles and writing quality, they point to the same discursive genre: historiography, a genre of particular significance in those critical times in which it must have been difficult to make sense out of so much pain and destruction. History, even driven by personal or group interest, could hold the key to why things had gone the way they did, it could give a meaning to the present and confirm that there was continuity between the certainties of the past and the present situation, even when the ruptures and crisis of continuity seemed so evident. Translating and rewriting history for the friars had the purpose of attesting to the

\textsuperscript{220} BHA I, 125
providentiality of the missionary intervention; for the Indians and mestizo, translation and rewriting history was a way of holding to what seemed to be slipping quickly and inescapably away, and trying, within a framework that was already Christianized, to explain the present situation and adjust to it. The use of alphabet and Spanish, that is, the tools of the conquerors, gives to this endeavour a particular character: Indians were appropriating the language of the conquerors to tell their own stories (as if they were countering the Spanish appropriation of their languages that I have discussed in previous pages). For our purposes, these translated historical chronicles have functioned as conveyors of the memory of a mythical past.

Historians and anthropologists have tried to understand the way these chronicles were compiled and the sources they derive from. They have concluded that most of these texts are related and that a genealogy of them can be determined. The common sources for this family of chronicles are oral narratives and pictorial documents, already of historical nature, since this was the way the pre-Hispanic peoples recorded their past.

The oral and pictorial registers that served as hypotexts for the translations and subsequent rewritings are of the following kinds:

- **Cuicatl**: songs
- **Nahuatilli**: laws
- **Ilhuitlapohualamoxtli**: cadasters, plans or maps, processes or calendars
- **Tlacamecayotl**: genealogies
- **Tlacatlacuilolli**: lists of important figures
- **Tonalamatl**: inventories, ritual books, divinatory texts
- **Tlatollli**: stories, discourses. They could be old or elders’ stories (huehuetlatollli), or present, contemporary stories (quinaxcan tlatollli) (del Hoyo 1957: 350)
It is a fact that, in their missionary zeal, the early friars destroyed many of these records, particularly when they suspected that they contained "idolatries". At the same time, however, it was obvious that they needed to know what these idolatric practices were in order to identify them whenever they survived, sometimes entangled with Christian practices. This was the explicit motivation of Bernardino de Sahagún's\textsuperscript{221} Historia General de las Cosas de la Nueva España: "To preach about these matters, and even to know if they exist, it is needful to know how they practiced them in the times of their idolatry, for, through [our] lack of understanding it ... And the confessors neither ask about them, not think that such thing exists, nor understand the language to inquire about it" (Sahagún, Historia General, cited in Klor 1988: 41). In his Historia de las Indias de la Nueva España, written probably some 20 years after Sahagún's words, Dominican Fray Diego Durán\textsuperscript{222} complained about the lack of information on the pre-Hispanic cults due to the blind destruction, and concluded that for this reason the friars were unable to discern obvious idolatric practices: "y así erraron mucho los que con buen celo (pero no con mucha prudencia) quemaron y destruyeron al principio todas las pinturas de antigüallas que tenían, pues nos dejaron tan sin luz, que delante de nuestros ojos ydolatran y no los entendemos" (cited in Alberro 1999: 45). There was a sort of conflict of pre-judgements: the Christian pre-judgement demanded the destruction, but it could not be properly served unless knowledge of these objects was ensured. And the Renaissance open-mindedness of some of these scholars used this argument to engage in a more thorough than expected survey of the indigenous past.

Moreover, destroying and registering was not a contradictory way of dealing with

\textsuperscript{221} BHA IV, 275 - 277
\textsuperscript{222} BHA II, 210
the past since in the process, the aspects of the indigenous culture that the friars were most interested in keeping were translated and de-paganized: the morality and piety of the indigenous peoples and their disciplined life, the ways they had for educating their children, and, above all, their languages in so far as they could convey the Christian truths.

The first such chronicles were those of Franciscan friars Andrés de Olmos (? – 1571), now lost,\(^{223}\) Toribio de Benavente “Motolinía”\(^{224}\) and Bernardino de Sahagún.\(^{225}\) They were also the first to use indigenous documents to draft their own chronicles. E. Hill Boone (1998) states that at least for three generations after the Conquest the tradition of registering through pictorial documents prevailed and has traced the different uses to which they were put: father Olmos, the presumed first chronicler, collected paintings and relations from the rulers of several cities, and in late sixteenth century Viceroy Enriquez, who was curious to know about the antiquities of the Indians, was able to secure a number of pictorials from the elders and sages of Mexico, Texcoco and Tula, the cities considered as intellectual centers (Hill Boone 1998: 158). Gruzinski (1988, 1993) has also studied the way in which pictorials were still used many years after the Conquest, and one finds traces of these materials in legal records, in particular those registering land and similar claims.

Another reason for the compilation of such chronicles by the friars was the explicit request by the civil authorities who needed information on the geography, demography and economic possibilities of the land in order to fix tributes (three types of tribute were common during the Colonial period: monetary, labor and in kind). One of the best known of these is the *Codex Mendoza*, named after the first viceroy Antonio de Mendoza (1535-

\(^{223}\) BHA IV, 45; Olmos wrote not only grammars and vocabularies of Nahuatl and Totonaca, but also translated from Latin and probably from Hebrew (Beristain IV: 45; García Icazbalceta 1866: 148-153)

\(^{224}\) BHA III, 289 - 291

\(^{225}\) BHA IV, 275 - 277
Mendoza was commissioned by King Charles V to gather information that could serve to ascertain the possibilities of extracting material benefit from New Spain. This pictorial document was prepared in the scriptorium of Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco by Indian artists, who probably copied earlier tribute records, and a Spanish translation was added next to each glyph or scene. (see Figure 18.). The codex contains an annals history of the Mexica rulers and their deeds, a tribute list and a section narrating the everyday life in Nahua society.

![Códice Mendoza](image)

Fig. 18. Códice Mendoza

The compilation of these missionary chronicles, just as in the case of the early transcriptions analyzed so far, were thus the result of collaboration with indigenous scholars.
who were able to read the sources, and with elders who knew or could recall the ancient stories. We know the names of some of these scholars but not much more. Beristáin includes a number of them in the Biblioteca, namely those who were themselves authors: Diego Osorio\textsuperscript{226} (who translated “salmos y antifonas”), Pedro de Gante\textsuperscript{227} (“tradujo muchos opúsculos”), Celedonio Velázquez,\textsuperscript{228} Juan Berardo\textsuperscript{229} (“varias versiones del latín y castellano al mexicano”), Diego Adriano,\textsuperscript{230} Esteban Bravo\textsuperscript{231} (“traducía cualquier cosa del romance y del latín a la lengua mexicana, y de esta a aquellas con tanta abundancia de vocablos que causaba admiración”), and other polyglot scholars who helped the friars in their writings: Ribas,\textsuperscript{232} Contreras,\textsuperscript{233} Valeriano,\textsuperscript{234} Fuente.\textsuperscript{235} The collaboration would be needed at different stages: in the oral interpretation of the pictorials, in the transcription of oral explanations into alphabetical Nahuatl or Spanish, under the form of glosses written next to the pictographs. Elders and other knowledgeable Indians would also provide orally information as asked by the missionaries. This first generation of Indian scholars who were trained in Tlatelolco, under the Franciscan rules, did not leave any historical writings. They helped the friars and, as their scribes, they clearly managed to introduce their own stylistic and rhetorical devices, but they do not seem to have acted as independent writers.

These young men, mostly of noble descent, trained as bilingual or trilingual specialists, became acquainted with the European culture, classical literature and thought and, at the same time, they were informants of the missionaries: “il est remarquable que ces

\textsuperscript{226} BHA IV, 68
\textsuperscript{227} BHA II, 338 - 339
\textsuperscript{228} BHA V, 115
\textsuperscript{229} BHA I, 250 - 251
\textsuperscript{230} BHA I, 73
\textsuperscript{231} BHA I, 288
\textsuperscript{232} BHA IV, 214
\textsuperscript{233} BHA II, 139
\textsuperscript{234} BHA V, 83 - 85
\textsuperscript{235} BHA II, 309 - 310
Indiens qui avaient reçu une formation occidentale particulièrement sophistiquée aient été ceux aussi qui continuaient à détenir les savoirs antiques” (Gruziniski 1988: 85). They were prepared to relay the friars in churches and schools, but their possibilities of securing these jobs, and the power and influence that would have come with them, were frustrated as their protectors, the Mendicants, begin losing their influence in colonial society. The emerging regular clergy was much less close to the indigenous population and tended to regard the Indians with despise. The experiment of Tlatelolco lasted barely twenty years. The Indian convent-trained nobility and their children found themselves cut from their base but were not accepted as part of the Spanish colonial society. They were nepantla, that is, in between. It was only natural that they’d become middlemen in the exchanges between the two societies: “En dicha ciudad [Xochimilco] se proveen para el buen gobierno de ella, en cada un año, un gobernador, demás de los tres caciques que hay, señores naturales y tres alcaldes y siete regidores y dos alguaciles mayores y seis escribanos y un alcaide de cárcel y un naguatlato de lengua española, los cuales siempre se elijen del linaje de los nobles hidalgos y caballeros” (Zavala 1987: 568, the stress is mine). Becoming a nahuatlato, or interpreter, an official post in the administration of justice, meant occupying a strategic position: from there one could exert some of the power their noble families used to have while being close to the sites of Spanish power. Fernando Alvarado Teozómoc (Nahuatl interpreter) was Motecuzoma’s grandson, Fernando de Alva Ixtlixóchitl (Nahuatl interpreter) was of mixed race, a mestizo, Constantino Bravo (Tarascan and possibly

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236 We shouldn’t forget that, instigated by the friars, these boys spied on their own people, denounced idolatric practices and went as far as attacking and killing one Indian priest (Torquemada 1615/1975, T. III, cap. XIX)
237 The reference to nepantla, meaning, literally, in between, in the middle, comes from Diego Durán’s chronicle. An Indian, scolded by the friar because was failing in his Christian duties, replied to him that it was not his fault: “Todavía estamos nepantla”. Many authors have discussed this quotation, among them Bernand and Gruzininski (1993), pp. 297-298.
238 BHA I, 127
Nahuatl interpreter) was an illegitimate son of a noblewoman, who fought for his nobility rights, Gaspar Antonio Chi (Maya interpreter), belonged also to a noble family. Elsewhere in the territory, nahuatlatos, proficient in languages other than Nahuatl also proliferated. Some of them were of noble descent, like the ones just mentioned, but other ways lead to Rome too: the well known Antonio Valeriano, a highly proficient Tlatelolco scholar eventually held a high office in the Indian colonial administration, and a fellow named Tsureque is mentioned in the municipal archives of Pátzcuaro (Michoacán) as an Indian who, having been accused and tried argued so convincingly at court that he was eventually appointed interpreter.  

The names of the interpreters pop up regularly in bureaucratic registers and official documents and not all must have been noble or Indian. The father and grandfather of the Alva brothers seem to have been both Spanish nahuatlatos, one of them a relative of one of Columbus captains (Bernand and Gruzinski 1993: 134). They married noble Indian women. Becoming an interpreter could have been also a way of ascending the social ladder.

The role of the nahuatlato in the judiciary was paramount. They were sworn, and rules were drafted to regulate their profession:

Ley primera: que los intérpretes de los Indios tengan las partes y calidades necessarias, y se les pague el salario de gastos de justicia, estrados o penas de cámara. Ley II: que haya numero de interpretes en las audiencias, y juren, conforme a esta ley. Ley III: que los interpretes no recivan dádivas ni presentes. Ley IV: que los interpretes acudan a los acuerdos, audiencias y visitas de carcel....Ley X: que se señale el salario a los interpretes por cada

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240 This idea was first suggested to me by Eréndira Nansen, in personal conversation.
un día que salieren del lugar, y no puedan llevar otra cosa.\textsuperscript{241}

The distinction between translator and interpreter seems to have been neither clear nor necessary. Generally, an interpreter or \textit{nahuatlato} would perform orally and it was the scribe who would take dictation and write the final report of the proceedings. Then both interpreter and scribe would sign it as proof of conformity. Interpreters would also translate documents on sight. Interpreters affirmed their distance from the common Indians and used their language proficiency to exact as much as they could from the relative power position in which the Spanish had put them. In fact, accusations of misconduct and corruption are not uncommon,\textsuperscript{242} and partly the reason adduced to impose Spanish (Brice Heath 1970: 82-84).

Some of these who were sworn in, that is, officially appointed, \textit{nahuatlotos}, acted also as transwriters, and their works have survived. Theirs are historical accounts in indigenous languages or Spanish, and their sources are the same we have discussed before: pictorials, oral history, preceding chronicles. While we know that the friars were asked by their superiors (or so they said) to write about the “antiguallas”, the writing in the case of mestizo or Indian have less explicit motivations. Among the reasons that moved these individuals to write, the need to legitimate their descent and heritage, particularly to sustain civil claims for land rights and material remunerations, seems to have been predominant. In such claims, the judiciary would order an investigation, or “averiguación” on the claimed rights. The claimants would have to present evidence of occupation of lands. This is the

\textsuperscript{241} Vasco de Puga (1563), Cedulario Indio, Tomo I, Libro II, título 29, 1563
\textsuperscript{242} A Bartolomé Ximénez, interpreter, was accused by the Indians of corruption and misconduct: “Mandá--dicen los indios--, cuando va a las cobranzas, que lo salgamos a recibir a los ranchos con trompetas y presentes y regalos y cien pesos...”. See Díaz Polanco, Héctor, http://www.prodigyweb.net.mx/diazp/articulos15.htm. In Zavala (1987, 2: 409) here is mention of an interpreter having an Indian servant in the context of a judicial claim brought by an Indian community. Such accusations must not have been uncommon.
reason why many maps and similar descriptions with accompanying histories and genealogies were drafted and have survived (Gruzinski 1988). This kind of testimonies could follow the style of Western histories, to become more ambitious historical accounts, in which they typically praised their origins, deployed genealogies and placed themselves as the heirs of a splendorous, although lost, past.

It was also important to establish connections between the indigenous past and the Christian history that could help legitimating the past by inserting it within the Christian context: calendaric comparisons and parallel chronologies were drafted in many cases (Alva, Chimalpain). In so doing, these men who did not belong to the Spanish society and who no longer were, strictly speaking, Indians, were casting the discourse of ethnic descent, the mexicayotl, or Mexicanidad, which would be one of the main pillars of the sentiment of national identity.

On the side of the mestizo or Indian translators-interpreters who wrote historical accounts derived from hypotexts, Beristáin mentions twenty such authors: Fernando Alva Ixtlixóchitl,243 Fernando Alvarado Tezozómoc,244 Alonso Axayaca245 and his daughter Barbola Axayacatzin,246 Gabriel Ayala,247 Cristóbal del Castillo,248 Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpain,249 Constantino Huitzimengari, Francisco Loayza,250 Diego Muñoz Camargo, Tadeo Niza,251 Fernando Pimentel,252 Pablo y Toribio Pimentel,253 Antonio

243 BHA I, 125
244 BHA I, 127
245 BHA I, 191
246 BHA I, 191
247 BHA I, 193
248 BHA II, 77
249 BHA II, 108 - 109
250 BHA III, 134
251 BHA IV, 27
252 BHA IV, 142
253 BHA IV, 142 - 143
Pimentel, Juan Bautista Pomar, Pedro Ponce, Antonio Tovar Moctezuma, Pedro Xuárez, Juan Ventura Zapata Mendoza. In all, nineteen men and one woman. Among them, interestingly, three family groups are distinguishable: Fernando de Alva is one of four interpreters in his family; the Axayacas were father and daughter, and the Pimenteles, who are also father and sons.

![Fig. 19. Alvarado Tezozómoc.](image)

I have chosen to analyze in more depth the case of two such *nahuatlato*, who contributed in a significant degree to the creation of two important myths that have

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254 *BHA* IV, 150 - 151
255 *BHA* IV, 153
256 *BHA* V, 25
257 *BHA* V, 181
258 *BHA* V, 187
nourished this national discourse: Fernando Alvarado Tezozómoc,\textsuperscript{259} a key element in the myth of Tenochtitlan as the Rome of America, and Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl,\textsuperscript{260} in the myth of Texcoco as the Athens of America. These cities represent the two poles of the Nahua culture: Tenochtitlan (the City of Mexico) as the center of the Aztec Empire, embodied the strength of the military power, the place that was assigned by their blood-thirsty god, Huitzilopochtli, to become the homeland of the Mexica, the ethnic warlike group that migrated from the mythic Northern city of Aztlan to found a city in the middle of the lake of Texcoco. And Culhuacan (the city of Texcoco), capital of the arts, heir to the prestigious Toltec past, the city of the poets and civilization, home of Nezahualcóyotl, the great tlamatini, the sage-king, the materialization of the fabulous Tula of Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent, the man-god that taught man how to read the stars and to plough the land.

3.1.1.1. The Tenochca, or Mexica, tradition

The Aztec written tradition has opportunistically considered Tenochtitlan and Texcoco as sister cities. In fact, the Mexicas, or Tenochcas, who were subjects of the people of Texcoco, or Culhuas, at a point in their migration, asked for the authorization to marry Culhua women in a deliberate move to appropriate the Toltec heritage (Duverger 1983: 207); the assimilation was successful and some sort of alliance between both cities seems to have prevailed.

In the translated historiographies of the two cities the two myths were fixed and disseminated: the myth of the Aztec origins and migration, and the myth of the golden age of Culhuacan (Texcoco), at the time of Nezahualcoyotl. They constitute part of Mexico’s

\textsuperscript{259} BHA I, 127
\textsuperscript{260} BHA I, 125
official history. They were invoked in eighteenth century neo-aztecism which Phelan associates to the birth of Mexican nationalism (Phelan 1960), became part of the symbolism of the independence movement in 1810 (Gutiérrez 2001 :49), were the object of the first thorough study by Ángel María Garibay in mid-twentieth century, and were finally fixed and given the monumental magnitude we can admire in the National Anthropological Museum of Mexico City during the second half of the same century in the works of nationalist Mesoamericanist Miguel León-Portilla.

The genesis of both official histories is the same: hypotexts either as pictorials (mostly lost) or oral Nahuatl narratives. In the case of the Aztec myth, 261 the transmission continues with a presumed transcription 262 into alphabetized Nahuatl by an anonymous Indian scribe, which is lost, and its translation into Spanish, which has survived. This extant text, which includes a number of illustrations made by a not very proficient European or local acculturated artist, is known as the Códice Ramírez (after the name of the 19th century owner), written in the 1560s. The translation was made by the mestizo Jesuit Juan de Tovar, 263 born of a Spanish father and a noble Texocan mother, and the text as published by Chavero in 1878 bears the title: Relación del origen de los indios que habitan esta Nueva España según sus historias. It is also known as the Códice Tovar. The hypotexts derived there from are the following:

- **Juan de Tovar's Historia de la Benida de los Yndios a poblar a Mexico (1585-87).** He draws upon his earlier translation.

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261 The hypothesis of a single source for the Aztec tradition, a Crónica X, suggested by R. H. Barlow in 1945 (Duverger 1983: 31) was taken up with some hesitations by Garibay in 1954 (Garibay 1983: 292) and seems to have been abandoned since.

262 The presumption is based in the fact that the Spanish text is placed in a column at the left, and the column at the right is empty, as if leaving room for the original text, which would have been copied later. This argumentation seems not to have been challenged so far.

263 BHA V, 52 - 53
Dominican Diego Durán *Historia de las indias de Nueva España e islas de la Tierra Firme* (1570s). He had seen Tovar’s manuscript.

Mestizo chronicler Fernando de Alvarado Tezozómoc’s\(^{264}\) *Crónica Mexicana* (C. 1598) (in Spanish) and its Nahuatl derivation *Crónica Mexicayotl* (C. 1609). As a member of a noble family, he had first hand access to informants and pictorials. There is agreement in that he also takes from Tovar or from the Nahuatl original.

Jesuit José de Acosta’s *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590), which for a long time was believed to be an original text. Its derivative status was established much later by historian Manuel Orozco y Berra (Alvarado Tezozómoc 1878). Parts of the text are also translations from his own earlier Works in Latin: *De Natura Novi orbis* and *De procuranda salute Indorum*. He takes extensively from Durán. And, finally,

Franciscan Juan de Torquemada’s\(^{265}\) *Monarquía Indiana* (1615), the largest compilation of earlier chronicles, written on the occasion of the celebration of the one hundred anniversary of the arrival of the Franciscans in the New World.

Of this series of translations, I will look particularly at the ones by Alvarado Tezozómoc, the *nahuatlato*, a pure blood Indian, of noble descent, who introduces himself at the beginning of the Nahuatl Cronica Mexicayotl with these words:

> “Y hoy en el año de 1609, yo mismo, Don Hernando de Alvarado Tezozómoc, que soy nieto de la persona que fuera el gran rey Moteuczoma el menor, quien gobernara y rigiera la gran poblacion de México Tenochtitlan, y que proviene de su apreciada hija, de la persona de la princesa, mi amadisima madre, Doña Francisca de Moteuczoma, cuyo conyuge fuera la persona de Don Diego y de Alvarado Huanitzin, padre mío preciadisimo, noble; son ellos quienes me engendraron y en toda verdad soy hijo suyo yo quien aqui me nombro” (Tezozómoc 1609/ 1942: 7)

\(^{264}\) BHA I, 127

\(^{265}\) BHA V, 37 - 38
In spite of the similarity of the titles, the two *Crónicas* he wrote are different. In fact, Tezozómoc\(^{266}\) wrote for two audiences: the Spanish and the Indian, and the reasons for this double standard have not been explored. In both, however, it is the pride of a noble Aztec that impregnates the style of the narration, and they are considered as the best and most complete account of the Nahua pre-Hispanic past by an Indian. In the Spanish *Crónica*, he narrates the birth of the nation pushed by its tutelary god, Huitzilopochtli, to migrate to a promised land, which will be signaled to them by the presence of an eagle devouring a snake over a nopal tree. The mortifications endured in this migration are explained, as well as the eventual foundation of Mexico-Tenochtitlan. Tezozómoc narrates the sequence of their successive rulers, conquests and deeds. Mexicas are described as courageous, proud and warlike peoples, bound to dominate other groups, and Mexico-

\(^{266}\) *BHA* I, 127
Tenochtitlan is described as the center of the old empire. The *Cronica* ends with the rumors of the arrival of strange men from the West, and Motecuzoma’s fear that it is Quetzalcoatl that has come back to recall his throne.

Tezozómoc may be a noble Indian, but over all, he is a Christian writing for other Christians, and as such he makes sure that his repugnance of old customs is clear. In referring to the erection of the first Mexica temple upon their establishment in the lake, the sacrificed hearts’ vase is described: “los mexicanos .... comenzaron a hacer casa y adoración de Huitzilopochtli, y hecho el templo, pusieron luego al pie... una gran xícara, como batea grande, a manera de una fuente de plata grande, con que se demanda limosna ahora en nuestra religion cristiana” (1598/1878: 227, the stress is mine).

In the Nahuatl *Cronica Mexicayotl*, Tezozómoc compiles and transcribes different types of probably oral narrations and documents: codex, legends, poems, annals, to describe the origins of the Mexica people, the foundation of their metropolis and the consecration of the first ruler. He concludes with an extended genealogy of the regal house of Tenochtitlan in which he includes himself. It is not clear who the reader of this Nahuatl text might have been. León-Portilla (in Garza 1996: 160) states that it was a reference book for those noble nahuas who needed to produce accurate information on their lineage in order to claim rights from the colonial administration, a good reason enough. His dual approach, that is, the decision to write two chronicles in different languages, seems interesting to me. A man placed in between the two cultures uses his high position, both among the Indians and among the Spaniards, as Motecuzoma’s grand-child, and as a nahuatlato, to reconstruct a knowledge of the past in a way that it can ensure the survival of the past and of his own lineage. In the process, archetypical forms of the past were

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267 *BHA* I, 127
created which were new and belonged also to a new discourse on ethnicity. The pride with which he depicts the **huey altepetl Mexico Tenochtitlan**, the great city of Mexico Tenochtitlan resounds in these words:

La gran poblacion ciudad de Mexico Tenochtitlan, su lugar de fama, su lugar de exemplo, el lugar del asiento del tenochti, dentro del agua, el lugar donde el aguila se yergue, el lugar donde grita el águila, el lugar donde se extiende el águila, el lugar donde come el águila, el lugar donde es desgarrada la serpiente, el lugar donde nada el pez, el agua azul, el agua amarilla, el lugar de entronque, el lugar del agua abrasada, alla en el ... de plumas, dentro de los tules, dentro de los carrizos, el lugar del brazalete, de plumas preciosas, que esta en el tular, en el carrizal, el lugar de reunion, de espera de las diversas gentes de los cuatro lados , a donde vinieron a llegar, vinieron a asentarse los trece teochichimecas, quienes se vinieron a asentar miseramente cuando vinieron a llegar. Hela aqui, aqui comienza, aqui se vera, aqui esta asentada por escrito la bonísima, veracísima relación de su renombre, el relato, la historia del origen, la base, de cómo está empezando, de como está principiando la mencionada gran poblacion, la ciudad de México Tenochtitlan, dentro del agua, entre los tules, entre los carrizos, y se dice, se nombra el tule del fuerte viento, el carrizo del fuerte viento, madre, padre, cabeza que se esta haciendo de todos cada uno de los poblados de todos lados de la reciente Nueva España. Asi lo vinieron a decir, asi lo vinieron a asentar en su relato, y nos lo vinieron a dibujar en sus "pergaminos" los viejos y las viejas que eran nuestras abuelas, nuestros abuelos, nuestros bisabuelos, nuestros tatarabuelos, nuestras bisabuelas, nuestros antepasados..... Y esta relacion Tenochtitlan guardo .... y por Tlatelolco nunca allá nos será quitado, porque ciertamente no acaece ser depósito (no es legado suyo) ... Muy muchos somos nosotros los que somos nobles...." (1609/1942: 4-6)

In the Spanish translation the oral traits of the hypotext are present in the psalmodic
style, the accumulation of epythets. The myth of ancestry is stressed in the reference to the elders who have handed the tradition over to the present. The archetypical elements are also there: the nopal (tenochtli), the thorns of which are used for ritual bloodletting, the marshes (water and canes), signaling the poor and difficult begginings of the future empire and, prominently, the eagle and the serpent, the symbols of the Mexica. Looking at the present, Tenochtitlan was described by him as the head of all the peoples who live in the “reciente Nueva España”.

3.1.1.2. The Texcoco, or Acolhua, tradition

Fernando de Alva Ixtlixóchitl\textsuperscript{268} (1578? – 1650) is the translator who built the foundations of the Texcoco myth. The hypotexts upon which he based himself, also a combination of pictorials and narratives, were transwritten by Alva into Nahuatl, and then translated into Spanish.\textsuperscript{269} In the introduction to his \textit{Relación Sumaria de la Historia General de esta Nueva España}, he explained how he proceeded and states his intention of telling the true story (a veiled criticism of the missionaries’ versions?):

Por cuya causa, he conseguido mi deseo con mucho trabajo, peregrinación y suma diligencia en juntar las pinturas de las historias y anales, y los cantos con que las conservaban y, sobre todo, para poderlas entender, juntando y convocando a muchos principales de esta Nueva España, los que tenían fama de conocer y saber las historias referidas. Y de todos ellos, en solo dos hallé entera relación y conocimiento de las pinturas y caracteres, y que daban verdadero sentido a los cantos, que por ir compuestos en sentido alegórico, y adornados de metáforas y similitudes, son dificilísimos de entender. Con

\textsuperscript{268} \textit{BHA} I, 125
\textsuperscript{269} This sequence of retranslation is questioned by some authors, in particular E. del Hoyo (1957), who believes that Alva transwrote directly into Spanish.
cuya ayuda pueda después con facilidad conocer todas las pinturas e
historias, y traducir los cantos con su verdadero sentido, con que he
satisfecho mi deseo, siguiendo siempre la verdad. Por cuya causa no me he
querido aprovechar de las historias que tratan esta materia, por la diversidad
y confusión que tienen entre sí los autores que tratan de ellas, por las falsas
relaciones y contrarias interpretaciones que les dieron (cited in Garibay 1987
II: 309-10)

Fernando de Alva’s case is particularly interesting in that he is not an Indian but
what was called a castizo, that is, born of mestiza mother and Spanish father. Strictly, he
should have taken his father’s family name, but, for unknown reasons, although there is
room for interesting speculations there, he chose two noble family names: “de Alva”,
probably from the noble house of Alva, in Spain, and “Ixtlilxóchitl”, from his grand-
mother, direct descendant of the great ruler Nezahualcoyotl. In Fernando de Alva
Ixtlilxóchitl,270 who was one of the young men educated by the Franciscan friars at
Tlatelolco, became an interpreter at the Juzgado de Indios, and held other offices in the
Indian administration, we have not only a biological but also a cultural and ideological
mestizaje, a will to belong to both worlds.

As documentary support to his claims for restoration of his nobility rights, he wrote
a number of historical works, focused in particular in the Texcoco area, to which he
belonged. The reasons he states are however of a historical nature: “Desde mi adolescencia
tuve siempre gran deseo de saber las cosas acaecidas en este Nuevo Mundo, que no fueron
menos que las de los romanos, griegos, medos y otras republicas gentílicas que tuvieron
fama en el Universo, aunque con la mudanza de los tiempos y caída de los señoríos y
estados de mis pasados, quedaron sepultadas sus historias” (del Hoyo 1957: 341)

270 BHA I, 125
His is, therefore, the translation-reconstruction of the heroic age of the Acolhua peoples, that became the official history of Texcoco, the intellectually prestigious center, the Athens of the New World, and his is the myth of the great poet-king Nezahualcóyotl, the sage ruler who abhorred human sacrifices, and who prophetically believed in an only god, the king David of the New World, who, according to don Fernando: “considerando lo poco que le había aprovechado el sacrificio hecho a sus dioses de gente humana, poniendo los ojos en el cielo dijo: “verdaderamente, los dioses que yo adoro, que son los ídolos de piedra que no hablan ni sienten, no pudieron hacer ni formar la hermosura del cielo, el sol la luna y las estrellas que lo hermosean y dan luz a la tierra: ríos, aguas y fuentes, árboles y plantas, las gentes que lo poseen y todo lo criado: algún Dios muy poderoso, oculto (el “Deus absconditus” de Isaías) y no conocido, es el criador de todo el universo” (cited in del Hoyo 1957: 358). Alva’s reconstruction of the past is completely westernized. The deeds of the Toltecs and Chichimecas are narrated according to European forms: feats and battles, heroes and traitors, nobles and vassals. Del Hoyo traced Alva’s European sources and concluded, in particular, that he used king Alfonso X Cronica General de España in his writings, based on stylistic parallelisms, such as the chronological correlations: “Pero luego, en el año siguiente, que fue el de Ce Calli (uno casa), y a la nuestra en el de 984, bajo el pontificado de Joannes XIV, en el año primero del gobierno de Otón IV y en el quinto de Alfonso V de España y al mismo tiempo que llovío trigo y peces, comenzó a castigar Dios Nuestro Señor a esta gente ciega y perversa, idólatra, enviándole grandísimos aguaceros, ...” (del Hoyo 1957: 355). In the calendaric and historical parallelisms the two traditions are pooled together and assimilated to each other. Elsewhere, in his Historia Chichimeca, the tyrant Tezozómoc (not to be mistaken with the already mentioned Alvarado Tezozomoc) orders the killing of all babies in the kingdom of Texcoco, thus
becoming a New World Herodes, and stories of royal vengeances recall the traditional castillian *Romances*. In this combination and superposition of scholarly traditions, as the past becomes de-paganized, and the Indians are depicted as blind and evil people, a reconfiguration of the pre-Hispanic past is performed, one in which some selected pre-Hispanic rulers would become models for the new society. I will dwell upon this matter in the Modern High Culture section.

Alva Ixtlilxóchitl\textsuperscript{271} belongs also to what we could call a dynasty of translators and interpreters. His father, Juan Navas Pérez de Peraleda, and grand-father, Juan Grande, both Spanish, were also interpreters (Gruzinski 1993: 134, 145), probably judicial interpreters. In 1640, Fernando’s younger brother Bartolomé, who was a university graduate ("bachiller") and parish priest, translated into Nahuatl plays by Calderón, Lope de Vega and Mira de Amezcua, famous contemporary Spanish playwrights. Bartolomé was close to Horacio Caroqui,\textsuperscript{272} the Jesuit grammarian, to whom he dedicates one of these translations. He was also a man of both secular and religious worlds: he translates popular plays, and is the author of a bilingual confession manual.

By tracing the ascent of don Fernando to his earliest known ancestor, in the lineage of the Texcoco rulers, the circumstances in which this biological and symbolic *mestizaje* came about, Bernand and Gruzinski (1993) lead us through almost two centuries of the life of the Alva family, like in a historical novel, displaying their thorough knowledge of the times, characters and sources, and acquainting us with the field in which Gruzinski in particular has excelled: the clashes, mixing and superpositions of images. Gruzinski and Bernand relate events from both sides of the Atlantic, and propose bold biographical convergences. In concluding, they stress the role that translators and interpreters played,

\textsuperscript{271} *BHA* I, 125
\textsuperscript{272} *BHA* II, 50 - 51
both for every day communication and for the translation of the “réalités du Nouveau Monde” (1993: 187). Three generations of intermediaries in the Alva family make exactly the point.

It is in this long span of seemingly just coincidental facts that we can see the relation between translation and the creation and transmission of a national discourse: it was through the translation from the hypotexts to the successive transwritings that the founding myths of the grandeur of the Aztec past and the heroic age of Texoco were consolidated and conveyed along the sixteenth century, in parallel with the contemporary grammars and the lexicons, and the doctrines, Christian dramatic plays and hybrid Saint’s songs.

The reconfiguration of the past, with the shift of values, the displacement of meanings, was only possible from “outside” the culture. The links that tied these noble Indians to their base were severed. They were placed in the margins of their own culture and they had become strangers to their own people. Whatever power the Spanish might have left them was mostly symbolic. They were themselves poor, and they often sent claims to the king asking for their ancestral rights to be respected. In claiming these rights, they presented their histories and genealogies in a way that could be intelligible to the Spaniards. In translating them, the reconfigurations were possible. But then, new values were added, that eventually became new definitions of ethnicity.

I cannot prevent myself from venturing some comparisons with the present situation of the Mexicans living in the U.S.A.: whether they come from the Mixteca of Puebla, Oaxaca, or from Michoacán, they tipically have acquired a new dress code: the pointed

\[273\text{Let’s think for a moment about Doña Marina’s solitude. She disappears from the annals of history just three or four years after meeting Cortés. She must have been just nineteen.}\]
boots replacing the sandals, Mohican haircuts, fringed shirts, “norteño” hat, leather belts with tex-mex motives embroidered. Something that evokes Mexico but which would not be recognizable as such in Mexico.

The Mexican population in the United States is reconfiguring some of the Mexican myths and rituals, which are also departing from the ones still present in Mexico. The battle of the 5th of May, for instance, which celebrates the Mexican victory over the French troops in 1862, has become a national day for the Mexicans in the USA, deploying paraphernalia of commercial and other objects unknown in Mexico. These mestizo immigrants, who had very little interest in celebrating local history when in Mexico, certainly because history had ignored them for centuries, became highly sensitive to it when away from home. History has a meaning for these people when they are cut from their base. One would think that they are more Mexican in the USA than in Mexico. It would seem so, but in fact, they are becoming something else, since they are indeed strangers in both countries now, at least temporarily. They are definitely looking for a new ethnic definition, and this is probably one of the reasons why for them, the mythical Aztlan, wherefrom the Aztecs started their migration to the South, is in fact located North of the Mexican border, somewhere in Arizona or California… this is also why Miguel León Portilla, Mexico’s official historian, has modernized the anthropological category of Mesoamerica, which for him covers the chicano “colonization” of the Southern United States, as well as the Mexican and Central American territories, and has his own translations into Spanish of the Nahuatl poetry of the Aztec kings retranslated into English for the benefit of the chicanos who no longer speak Spanish.274

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3.1.2. Translation and the Classical Continuity

The illustrious Mexican cleric Don Juan José de Egüíar y Eguren, born in 1696, taught Rhetoric, Theology and the Holy Scriptures at the University of Mexico, from where he had graduated. He also held several dignities at the Inquisition, archbishopric, Mexico’s Cathedral and Seminar.

One day, when reading an epistolary volume by a Spanish contemporary cleric, Don Manuel Martí, Egüíar came across one of the letters in which the author advised a nephew, who wanted to pursue an academic career, to go to Rome, where he would find the best teachers and a suitable scholarly atmosphere. It seems that the nephew had hinted that he might go to Mexico and the uncle promptly set up to dissuade him from such a foolish idea:

¿A dónde volverás los ojos en medio de tan horrenda soledad como la que en punto a letras reina entre los indios? ¿encontrarás, por ventura, no diré maestros que te instruyan, pero ni siquiera estudiantes? ¿te será dado tratar con alguien, no ya que sepa alguna cosa, sino que se muestre deseoso de saberla...? ¿qué libros consultarás? ¿qué bibliotecas tendrás la posibilidad de frecuentar? Buscar allá cosas tales, tanto valdría como querer trasquilar a un asno u ordeñar a un macho cabrío. (Egüíar 1755/1996: 56-47).

It was probably a common opinion in Spain that among the Indians nothing that could deserve the name of culture would possibly grow. And, worst of all, any men born in America would become inconstant, lascivious and liar: “Influye el cielo de la América inconstancia, lascivia y mentira: vicios de los indios, y la constelación los hará propios de los españoles que allá se criaren y nacieren”.275 This was enough provocation for Egüíar to decide to prepare and publish a Mexican bio-bibliography by which the world would know

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the immense contribution made by the American scholars since the Conquest. With such
determination, he sent for a printing press to Spain in 1744, had it installed sometime
before 1753, and began to compile information in convent and private libraries, sending
letters to men of Church and Academia asking them to contribute to this “causa pública y
de tanta gloria a Dios”. He received answers not only from Mexican correspondents but
also from Guatemala and La Habana. He dedicated the last twenty years of his life to the
endeavour, and went up to letter J in the listing. The first and only volume of his
Bibliotheca Mexicana\textsuperscript{276} was printed in 1755, with a dedication to king Ferdinand VI. It
contained letters A, B and C. The rest was left as a manuscript, and it was this manuscript,
together with the notes he had left scribbled, that served Beristáin de Souza as a departing
point of his Biblioteca Hispano-Americana Septentrional, seventy years later.

The volume Eguiara eventually published is preceded by a long prologue, in which
he explains the reasons that moved him to write such a work, and exhaustively argues for
the great New Spain culture as represented by its most excellent scholars. Drawing from
fray Juan de Torquemada’s\textsuperscript{277} Monarquía Indiana, for instance, he recalls the deeds of
Texcoco king Nezahualcoyotl:

\begin{quote}
Era tanta su sabiduría de dicho monarca que por obra suya se formó, a
manera de Academia y bajo la presidencia de su hijo Xochiquetzalzin, un
nucleo de poetas y músicos, que entre los texcocanos son muy numerosos,
así como de astrólogos, historiadores y cultivadores de otras artes, para que
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{276} The full title of the Bibliotheca mexicana is a detailed explanation of its contents: sive eruditorum
historiam virorum, qui in America Boreali nati vel alibi geniti, in ipsam domicilio aut studis asciti, quavis
lingua scripto alicuius traditerunt, eorum praesertim qui pro fide catholica et pietate ampliandae fovendaque,
egregie factis et quibusvis scriptis floreare editis aut ineditis (that is, history of the scholars who, be they born
in Northern America or elsewhere, belong to it by virtue of their residence, or studies, or writings in whatever
language; in particular, those who have excelled by their famous deeds or any other kind of works, printed or
manuscript, directed to enhance and promote the Catholic faith and piety)

\textsuperscript{277} BHA V, 37 - 38
confiriendo entre sí y discutiendo sus problemas, saliesen cada día más prácticos y sabios. Así lo trae Torquemada en el tomo I, lib 2, capítulo 41, p. 147. el mismo autor, al final de cap. 45 del mismo libro, página 156, dice que el citado monarca sobresalió en el cultivo de la poesía y alaba cierto cántico, obra de su numen y destinado a la formación de las costumbres, que comienza.... (Eguiara 1755/1996: 87-88)

Here is, again, over a hundred and fifty years later, the story of the great king Nezahualcóyotl, the poet, the sage, as derived step by step from the stories compiled by the Franciscan bishop Torquemada. Now, a significant difference exists between Torquemada’s account and Eguiara’s citation: while Torquemada’s three thick volumes were written in Spanish, Eguiara’s *Bibliotheca Mexicana* is entirely in Latin. The names of the authors in the *Bibliotheca*’s entries, as well as the work’s titles were translated into Latin by Eguiara, and the contents of the entries.

Was there a better way to confirm the importance of the works by the friars, the Indian scholars, mestizo writers and other secular authors, other than latinizing their identities and their works? Latin, as the language of universal culture, would cleanse the image of the New World’s literate production. Latin would ensure that every European country would know that the works written in America were as numerous and as important as theirs.

Latin, the symbol of the kind of past they didn’t have, the kind of culture they didn’t cultivate, the white people they were not. Latin, from the first days of the colony, with the

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278 *BHA* V, 37 - 38
279 The above citation comes from the bilingual edition of the *Anteloquia* (prologues), published for the first time in 1944.
280 I also wonder if using Latin was not a sort of overkill. After all, Latin was being displaced by Spanish as the language of erudition in Spain. Was he thinking in having readers out of Spain? These questions will remain unanswered for the time being.
first translation, in 1581, by Bartolomé Melgarejo,281 of Persio’s Satyres, to the twentieth century, when Alfonso Reyes made the fantastic declaration “Quiero el latín para las izquierdas”282 and minister of Education José Vasconcelos proclaimed that translating the classical authors was a “deber patriótico”,283 and Ángel María Garibay said that Greek drama “es fundamental para nuestra cultura”.284

Latin had arrived with the Franciscan friars who, in founding the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, stated as one of the motivations of such establishment was, “que estos indios, sabiendo latinidad y entendiendo los misterios de la Sagrada Escritura, se arraigasen en la fe mas de veras y confirmasen en ella a los otros que no sabían tanto, y ayudasen a los Religiosos que no entendían bien la lengua, interpretando al pueblo en ella lo que dijesen”.285 Consequently, a Latin grammar for the use of the Indians from this Colegio was prepared by friar Maturino Gilberti, the French missionary who wrote the first American Latin grammar, in which he exemplifies grammatical problems with “formulae ex Erasmo Roterodamo allisque doctissimis”.286

The project of Latin for the Indians was, thus, an “avant-garde” project. Latin would give them access to the clergy, and they would, ideally, be associated with modern European thinking. It is this Latin they learned that gives some of them a place in Beristáin’s Biblioteca: Diego Adriano, from Tlatelolco, was one of the first Indians educated there, he was “excelente en lengua latina que poseyó con la castellana como su

281 BHA III, 230
284 Garibay, Ángel María, trad., Las siete tragedias de Esquilo, México: Ed. Porrúa, 1962, p. XXII.
286 A modern edition has been just prepared by El Colegio de Michoacán in Mexico. My citation comes from http://www.colmich.edu.mx/publicaciones/fichas/completas/letra2.asp?IDLocal=354

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idioma patrio...tradujo muchos tratados del latín al nahuatl"²⁸⁷, Francisco Contreras (who
died in 1610) was also a noble Indian from Cuernavaca; "estudió letras humanas y ayudó al
padre Fr. Juan Bautista²⁸⁸ en las diferentes versiones que hizo y publicó, traduciendo al
idioma mexicano los libros de Kempis". Esteban Bravo,²⁸⁹ from Tezcoco, "indio noble, que
traducía cualquiera cosa del romance y del latín a la lengua mexicana, y de esta a aquellas
lenguas con tanta abundancia de vocablos que causaba admiración". Juan Berardo, from
Huejotzingo (died in 1594), also a noble Indian, "ayudó a los primeros españoles en la
acertada interpretación del idioma mexicano y en las diferentes traducciones que hicieron
de libros latinos y castellanos a la lengua de los indios", and allegedly wrote a volume of
Epistolae Latinae varie, and did "varias versiones del latin y castellano al mexicano".
Pedro Gante, from Tlatelolco (died in 1605), was also one of the first pupils. He taught
Spanish and Latin in Tlatelolco, and translated to Nahuatl "muchos opúsculos de los que
publicó el P. Fray Juan Bautista, especialmente vidas de santos". As Briesemeister rightly
notes (2002: 524), a long period of diglossic and even triglossic situation was created by
the Conquest, in which Latin, Castilian and indigenous languages were simultaneously
spoken and written, creating mutual interferences.

Many Tlatelolco students were, thus, involved in the translation of doctrinal works
from Latin into Spanish and Nahuatl, and it could well be, as Beristáin notes in the case of
Gante, that the actual translations were done by them, but the publications were made under
the friars name. Aside from the possible prejudice against them, we cannot forget that the
experiment of high learning at Tlatelolco was viewed with suspicion by the civil and
secular authorities, who would have preferred that the access of Indians to schools and

²⁸⁷ BHA I: 73
²⁸⁸ BHA I, 230 - 231
²⁸⁹ BHA I, 288
studies be limited. The Colegio depended on the viceroyal funds (which eventually were withdrawn) and a low-profile attitude with respect to the visibility of the Indian scholars was suitable.

The works that comprise this section share common features with all the other categories of the register. One can see in the Classical Continuity transwritings the character of veneration of the past, if we chose to see Greece and Rome as past civilizations that were used as models for the descriptions we find in the Foundation Myths category of translations. If we chose to see Greece and Rome as the quintessence of modernity, that which can place any tribal culture among the educated contemporary societies, then I should have included them in the Modern High Culture category. On the other hand, as Latin was the language of the Church, it played also an important role in the conversion efforts, as well as in serving as a model for the westernization of the indigenous languages, we could also place Classical Continuity translations in the Translational Canvass category. Instead, I have chosen to individualize this Classical Continuity class and ascribe a particular group of works. It allows me to explore how these transwritings helped creating a discourse of prestige and nobility, eventually helping to insert New Spain into the mainstream of Classical Civilizations.

Whatever the point of view we adopt, of course, we should never lose sight that these Greece and Rome were also ideal contructions, and that if I speak of Classical models, I do not mean any essential or pure, uninterested ideals, but just models that were instrumental to convey other things: the power investing Latin legitimated the Church, forced conversion and class divisions; the power investing Greek legitimated no less charged aesthetic values.
That they were themselves representations belonging to their times and doxological constraints is attested by the fact, as the late Ignacio Osorio Romero reminded us, that both Latin and Greek had been conveniently purged by Counter-Reformist ideas. Didn’t Melgarejo said in his 1581 translation of Persius that he had translated into Castilian “todo lo que pude moralizado y a la sagrada escritura para nuevo vivir cristiano aplicado”? (Osorio 1989: 440); Antonio Valeriano, also, the 16th century Tlatelolco Indian scholar, wrote a Catón cristiano in Náhuatl. The reading program at the Jesuits grammar and rhetoric classes enlists the authors and editions that did not require previous censorship for their printing (teachers would compile their own manuals): “Fabulas, Caton, Luys viues, Selectas de Ciceron, Bucolicas de Virgilio, Georgicas del mismo, [...] Marcial purgado…” (Briesemeister 2002: 352).

This said, the fantastic phenomenon of Classics was that they could (and can) be used to represent virtually anything, provided it was noble and Christian. One of the Larrañaiga brothers, Bruno Francisco,290 wrote in 1788 a Prospecto de una Eneida Apostólica, o Epopeya que celebra la predicación del V. Apóstol de occidente P. Fray Antonio Margil de Jesús, intitulada Margileida, escrita en puros versos de Publio Virgilio Marón traducidos en verso castellano, which did not go further than the prospect, to celebrate the life of seventeenth century Franciscan friar Margil, who is known to have traveled barefoot all over Mexico and Central America in his missionary activities.

The consensus around the venerable antiquity and the universal, atemporal truths that classical works embody and transmit made the Classical world, as interpreted by the European medieval scholars and sieved through Latin, a large pool of models for understanding and explaining the present.

290 BHA III, 96 - 97
Probably the most notable and significant of all events having to do with the classical languages in America was the incorporation of the Indian languages into the embrace of Latin through their systematic alphabetization, grammaticalization and lexicalization. The consequences of this event cannot be sufficiently stressed. One can sense the relief of father Rincón and others who triumphantly declared that the Indian languages were reductible, meaning that they fell within the parameters of human understanding. Latin could be confirmed as the universal grammar. The doors were open and the “translatio studii et imperii”, that is, the transfer of cultural materials and of political power, was possible.

Everything could then fall into the course of Universal History: Flavius Josephus’s account of the fall of Jerusalem, preceded by presages and miracles, provided the mould in which the fall of Tenochtitlan could be understood, and so did the different accounts of the Roman tradition. It was Aristotle who was recalled to define the type of barbarians to which these populations would belong, as was seen before.

Latin, the universal language, the *lingua franca* not only for religion, but for science and thought, was taught all along the Colonial period. Imports of Latin works from Spain were common, but the production of works in Latin by New Spaniards is also considerable, and largely exceeds the number of works that are represented in the Classical Continuity category. Out of the 68 titles that comprise this class of works, 24 are grammars, which

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291 *BHA* IV, 230
292 Guy Rozat, highly skeptical about the early chronicles, dissects the discourses of the Conquest of Mexico and identifies the connections with Greco-Roman similar accounts in his interesting book *Indios imaginarios, indios reales* (2002).
293 Eguíar y Feguren, cites Julián Garcés, Bishop of Tlaxcala, who, at the height of the missionary period wrote to Pope Paulus III: “Agora es tanta la felicidad de sus ingenios (hablo de los niños) que escriben en latín y en romance mejor que nuestros españoles, y los que se dan entre ellos al estudio de la lengua latina y castellana no salen menos aprovechados” (1755/1996: 197).
reflects the strong presence of Latin in New Spain, particularly promoted after the Council of Trent by the Society of Jesus in their schools, as part of the *Ratio Studiorum*. Compilations of classical authors were prepared by the teachers themselves, and text books dealing with the different parts of grammar, syntax and rhetoric were printed and disseminated in the New Spain. The height of this production takes place during the 18th century, with the Mexican-born Jesuits Santiago Zamora, 294 who published three texts on grammar, prosody and syntax, and Mateo Galindo, 295 with two grammars in which, the titles say, he follows Nebrija’s model. Manuel Arellano Garcia, 296 a secular priest and university professor, wrote, according to Beristáin, a *Breve y mas clara sintaxis latina*, which is now lost. Pedro Reynoso, 297 a Mercedarian Friar, is a very prolific 18th century grammarian, with five texts on different aspects of the Latin grammar. Seculars Domingo Ugarte 298 and Juan Picazo, 299 at the beginning of the 19th century, were still writing grammar textbooks for seminaries and colleges. And we must not forget that all this local production was complemented by the imports of books printed in Spain or elsewhere.

But Latin was not only a language for liturgy or for routine school exercises. If the first one hundred years after the Conquest are dominated by the indigenous languages as languages of contact with Spanish, it is the presence of Latin in contact with Spanish that dominates the second post-Conquest century, the Baroque century. Two aspects of the use of Latin draw my attention here: the translations-moralizations of the Classic mythology and the panegyrical activity.

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294 *BHA* V, 186 - 187  
295 *BHA* II, 327 - 328  
296 *BHA* I, 164  
297 *BHA* IV, 200 - 202 V, 426  
298 *BHA* V, 60  
299 *BHA* IV, 138
Recalling my previous explanations, the Greco-Latin Classics furnished a reservoir of motives, subjects and images. But if they were to serve as Christian models, these materials were hardly usable in their original forms: tales of incest, abuse, debauch, cruelty and vengeance were the raw material of the most venerated myths. As Francisco Xavier Clavijero\textsuperscript{300} declares, in comparison with Greeks, Aztecs were “men[o] superstiziosa, men[o] ridicola, e meno indecente” (Clavijero 1780: 302). Explaining them as metaphors and analogies was a way to dodge the difficulty, as an anonymous woman poet, a Peruvian criolla, explains in her \textit{Discurso en loor de la poesia} that precedes Diego Mexia’s translation of Ovid’s \textit{Epistles}:

\begin{quote}
\textit{si dizes que te ofende, i trae confuso
ver en la Iglesia llenos los Poetas
de Dioses, qu’el Gentil en aras puso.}

\textit{Las causas son mui varias, i secretas,}
\textit{i todas aprovadas por Catolicas},
\textit{i assi en las condenar no t’entremetas.}

\textit{Las unas son palabras Metaforicas,}
\textit{i aunque muger indota me contemplo,}
\textit{se que tambien ai otras Alegoricas.}
\textit{[...]} \textit{Pues como? En templo santo, en santo dia}
\textit{i entre gente Cristiana d’almas puras,}
\textit{i donde està la Sacra Eucaristia:}

\textit{Se permiten retratos i figuras}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{300} \textit{BHA II, 119 - 122}
de los Dioses profanos, i de aquellos,
que estan ardiendo en carceles escuras?

Permitensen poner, i es bien ponellos,
como trofeos de la Iglesia: i ella
con esto muestra, que se sirve d’ellos.

Assi esta dama ilustre, cuanto bella
de la Poesia, cuando se compone
en honra de su Dios, que pudo hazella:

con su divino espiritu dispone
de los Dioses antiguos, de tal suerte
qu’a Cristo sirven, i a sus pies los ponen” (Mexía 1608: 24)

Ovid was one of the favourite authors in New Spain. Adding to his popularity as a
writer of love themes, the fact that he had been exiled was viewed sympathetically by New
Spaniards: “veinte años que navegó mares i camino tierras, por diferentes climas, alturas i
temperamentos, barbarizando entre barbaros, de suerte que me admiro como la lengua
materna no se me a olvidado, pues muchas veces me acontece lo que a Ovidio estando
desterrado entre los rusticos del Ponto, que queriendo hablar Romano, le sale Sarmatico”.
These words belong to the first American translator of Ovid, Diego Mexia, in the
introduction “del autor a sus amigos” to his translation of the Epistles, revealingly entitled
Del Parnaso Antartico (1608). Mexia was an Andalusian who traveled to Peru and then to
New Spain. Heavily damaged after a storm, his ship, which was loaded with of quicksilver
probably destined to the Mexican gold mines, had to moor to be repaired. Mexia preferred
to continue his journey by land. During the three months of journey, crossing land ravaged
by the feared cocoliztli (epidemic) and in the middle of the rainy season, he translated Ovid’s letters after an original bought from a student on the way. He sent the manuscript to Seville, his home town, to be published. It was printed in 1608, with the accompaniment of laudatory sonnets and other poems by friends and admirers in the introduction and conclusion.

Ovid’s Heroids are letters of some of the most famous women of the Classical world to their lovers: Elena of Troy to Paris, Penelope to Ulysses, among others. They are an exploration into human emotion and a celebration of earthly love. Instead, in his translation, Mexia’s explicit intention is to moralize Ovid: “que cuando estas Epistolas no merecieren el nombre de Ovidianas, por su umilde traduzion, se les deve el de Cristianas, por la onestidad, i moral doctrina con que las é traducido” (1608: 3).

Mexia includes an explanation preceding each letter, and concludes with a Christian morality, often related to the situation in the Indies:

El ingrato Jason con la presencia de la fugaz Medea nunca mas se acordo de su mujer Isifile, lo qual es bien que sirva de exemplo i d’escarmiento, para que aya mucho recato en elegir marido, i mas si es forastero, que por no avello en estas Indias ay tantos casamientos tan infelices (6th Epistle, p. 79)

Hay que advertir especialmente en estos tiempos [...] y en las Indias [...] el recato grande que han de tener los casados de recibir en sus casas huespedes, ni traer a ellas ombres, especialmente mancebos, pues desto an sucedido muchos desastres i infamias, cuyos exemplos no son menester buscarlos en las edades passadas i en regions estranjeras sino ver las que en nuestras ciudades an acaecido.. pues agora las mujeres sean Ellenas, agora sean Penelopes, siempre son ocasion de desastres. (Epistle from Elena to Paris, p.172)
También se puede conocer por esta historia la temeridad de los se fían del mar, i cuan propinicus andan de la muerte; lo qual vemos en tantas flotas perdidas, tantos navios hundidos, i tan innumerabe gente ahogada ... Dixolo mui bien Terencio, con no aver en su tiempo los prolixos i temerarios viages deste nuestro. (Epistle from Ero to Leandro, p. 209)

He doesn’t fail to bring home the subject of the false gods:

...de la qual historia sera gran razon que ponderemos con la puntualidad que aquella gente ciega cumplia los votos hechos a sus falsos dioses, i con cuanta mas razon i reverencia los Cristianos lo devemos cumplir, al que es solo i verdadero Dios, Rei de los Reyes i universal Señor de los Señores. (Epistle from Cidipe to Aconcio, p. 226)

When purging the text from obscenities, he indicates in the glosses where he has removed the text:

“Imagino tal vez, que reclinada
en tus braços estoi, i algunas pienso,
que mi braço te sirve de almohada.
Tal vez * mas para que tan por estenso
quiero contar, lo que contado ofende,
a mi sensualidad, pagando el censo  *aquí dexé de traduzir tres disticos
(Epistle from Sapho to Faon, p. 235)

Poetry in translation was a means by which the Classical world was conveniently purged, de-paganized and re-elaborated by the New Spaniards, in much the same way that historiography in translation had purged, de-paganized and re-elaborated the pre-Hispanic past. Here we can see at work the ideological potential of translation, in that it hides the source of the rewriting while enhancing the canonical or doxologically acceptable characteristics of that source.

At the same time, translation creates a new identity, born out of the friction between old materials and the will to make them say something different. This was, in a way, what
American Baroque was about. The dissemination of Classical models, images and motives in conjunction with local imagery and symbolism was present and widespread: ephemeral architectural pieces such as triumphal arches were built on special occasions: the Saint’s day, arrival of a new Viceroy, or bishop; then displayed an abundance of symbolic motives and allusions to both the Classic and pre-Hispanic worlds. Paintings and print images exhibited also the combination of Indian and Classical themes.

In the translation field, though, what is more striking is the absolute fascination held by the seventeenth and eighteenth century New Spain’s colonial elite for the Latin word, as demonstrated by the flood of panegyrical writings characterized, in particular, by the authors’ mastery in playing with words. To start with, at the Jesuits’ schools, Latin rhetoric and poetic competitions, theater plays and academic orationes were part of the program. Moreover, Latin compositions were prepared on demand, for special occasions or special persons. Characteristic of this production is its display of artificiality, the taste for the “strange” verse: riddles, palindromes, labyrinths (poems that can be read forward or backward or in any other directions, see Fig. 21), retrograde poems, hieroglyphs, inscriptions, epigrams and emblems, centonia and bilingual poems. These last two forms are of particular interest here.

The centonium is a recycled poem. It is composed of verses from another poem or poems. It is intertextuality not only declared and made explicit: it is the basis for the new creation. The verses are literally taken from other poems, particularly form Classical Greco-Latin poems, and are combined to form a new poem. The original location of the verses is noted at the end of each of them, so the merit of the work resides in the mastery of the combinations.
Fig. 21. Laberinto. Artificiosum vocabularium poeticum.
Bruno Francisco Larrañaga\textsuperscript{301} (? – 1816), a noted Latinist clergyman, decided to elaborate a centonium in praise of an early Franciscan missionary, Fray Antonio de Margil, whose travels, poorness and miraculous life earned him the title of “apóstol de occidente” (a reference to Jesuit St. Francis Xavier, the “apóstol de oriente”). In prevision of the difficulties in having the work printed, Larrañaga prepared a booklet which explained his purpose, laid a few pages of the poem itself with the Spanish translation and published it in order to collect subscriptions allowing him to prepare and publish the final work. This is the title he chose for his centonium: Eneida Apostolica, o Epopeya que celebra la predicacion del V. Apostol del Occidente, P. Fr. Antonio Margil de Jesus: intitulada Margileida, escrita con pueros versos de P. Virgilio Maron y traducido a verso castellano (1788).

Here is how he describes his work: "se ha reducido mi trabajo a deshacer un texido, y con los mismos hilos, y trama, hacer otro diferente, de diferentes colores y diferentes labores" (1788: 6). Undoing the weft and making a new one with the same threads, but noting exactly the place they occupied before:

\begin{quote}
Dicitur ante aras, media inter Numina Divium AE.4.204
Insignem pietatem Virum (mirabile visu!) AE. 1. 14; AE. 12. 252
\end{quote}

Larrañaga explains the transfer of verses from the Aeneid to his Margileida as a metaphor for a true religious conversion: pagan heroes become models of virtue, the words of gentiles miraculously transformed into Christian messages, himself impersonating Virgil, whose genius is now put to fight idolatry through a Christianized Aeneas, who dictates our destiny: that of becoming Romans. Here are his words, at the introduction of his Prospecto de una Eneida Apostolica:

\textsuperscript{301} BHA III, 96 - 97
He deseado, y deseo, ser otro Homero para mi esforzadísimo Aquiles, para mi prudentísimo Ulises; otro Virgilio para mi Venerable piadosísimo Eneas, u otro Ciceron para esta dignísima Causa. A ninguno de éstos me permite igualar la escasez y rudeza de mis talentos. Pero mi venerable asunto ha obrado uno de sus acostumbrados prodigios: no solo sacando de la dura roca de mi discurso sus elogios, sino (lo que es mas) formándolos de las cláusulas de un Gentil, infinitamente ageno de nuestra Sagrada Religión, y diez y seis siglos distante del nacimiento de su Paternidad muy Venerable, o haciéndome a mí en el modo posible otro Virgilio, que celebre la invencible Apostólica piedad, con que el incendio horroroso de la Idolatría, Barbaridad y Gentilismo, engañosamente introducido en este Reyno: de enmedio de la desastrada Troya de los pecados, y errores del Siglo, sacó en sus ombros robustos a su amado Padre Dios: en las manos a sus adorados Penates el Santo Nombre de Jesus crucificado, y su Santísima Fe a seguro salvamento, y hasta colocarlos en templos edificados por él: y después de alcanzar Victoria de muy reñidas batallas con heroica fortaleza, estableció, y dexó su bendita prole, que nos da la felicidad de ser Romanos. (1788: 5).

The pride of this criollo New Spaniard, a contemporary of Eguiara y Eguren, is striking: “Yo soy” – he says – “quien ha obligado a Virgilio, y lo ha enseñado, que diga divinidades, y mejore el empleo de su eloquencia, hasta soltarlo de entre mis manos convertido, catequizado, animado de un espíritu más penetrante, y escribiendo por fin una Margileida, o Eneida Apostólica, hablando verdades...” (1788: 7). This assertiveness is also a characteristic of a new atmosphere in the colonial society. New Spaniards could use Latin and Virgil as they pleased. Virgil, as Ovid in the previous example, talked to the Americans. The emotions and the labors they sung were not different from the ones felt and suffered there. The universality of the Classics gave the Americans a place in the continuum of civilization. Virgil would be translated into a Christian, and father Margil could be translated into a Mediterranean hero.
I have found another illustration of this free use of Latin in another type of poetic creation, also close to translation: the bilingual poem. Because of its proximity to Latin, Spanish lends itself to such creations, which consist of combinations of the two languages in a same poem. From Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, the great poet, is the following villancico, dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in 1679:

**Divina Maria / rubicunda Aurora**

*matutina Lux, / purissima Rosa,*

*Luna, quae diversas / illustrando zonas,*

*peregrina luces, / eclipses ignoras*

*Angelica Scala, /Arca prodigiosa,*

*pacifica Oliva, / Palma victoriosa.*

*Alta mente culta, / castissima Flora,*

*pensiles foecundas / candida Pomona.*

**Tu quae coronando / conscientias devotas,**

*domas arrogantes, / debiles confortas.*

*Dominando excelsa, / imperando sola,*

*felices exaltas / mentes quae te adorant*

**Tu sustentas, pia / gentes quae te implorant,**

*dispensando gratias, / ostentando glorias.*

*Triumphando de culpa, / tremenda Belona,*

*perfidas cervices / dura mente domas.*

*Thalamos empyreos / ornas deliciosa*

*amando innocentes, / discordes conformas*

*Triste te invocamos: / concede, gloriosa*

*gratias quae te illustrant, / dotes quae te adornant*
Estribillo:
¡Vive, triumpha, tranquilla, quando te adorant
Seraphines cantando perpetuas glorias!

Although the Classical horizon is dominated by Latin, Greek was also studied and cultivated in New Spain. If we restrict ourselves to the mere number of translations from this language, we would tend to disregard it. Hellenism was however more than symbolically present, be it from the original sources or from Latin, and those who cultivated it were also interested in many other subjects and languages: Jesuit Agustín Castro302 (1728-1790), who taught and promoted Greek both in Mexico and in exile, translated Seneca’s Trojans, Virgil’s Tytirus, Fedro’s Fables, and poetry from Juvenal, Horace, Anacreon and Sapho, but he also translated into Spanish non-Classical works, such as Bacon’s De dignitate et augmento scientiarum and poetry by Milton, Pope and Young.

The fact that among the Greek works we have the translations of Homer’s Iliad and Batrachiomachia into Latin by the Jesuit Francisco Javier Alegre303 (1729-1788), and that he also translated books on physics and mathematical instruments from French, and possibly Boileau, argues in favor of a fully developed classical and simultaneously modern erudition. This cultivation of Classical languages was the doing of mostly Jesuits, who imposed themselves in the Church’s life from their arrival to New Spain in 1572 as the militant arm of the Counterreformation, and who displaced the Franciscans in the leadership of the Mexican Church Councils (Jesuit Father Pedro de Ortízosa304 was the theological consultant for the 1584 Third Mexican Council: he chose the material to be

302 BHA II, 85 - 88
303 BHA I, 114 - 116
304 BHA III, 43
discussed, directed the sessions and translated the work into Latin from the secretary's notes in Castilian). After being expelled in 1767, these New Spain Jesuits, four hundred and ninety individuals who had to embark overnight, leaving behind their libraries and writings, resumed their intellectual work and publish their works in exile. One of the most outstanding products of this period is represented by the Latin poem De Deo, deoque homine heroica, whose author is the Jesuit Diego Abad\(^{305}\) (1727-1779), translator of Virgil. Abad, who was, like most of the other Jesuits, born and educated in Mexico, that is, a criollo, recreated from Europe the excellence of his homeland. His nostalgic feelings are part of the 6432 hexameter poem: the memories of childhood, the colors, the crisp air:

\[
\text{[ebria]. Sed memini degisse ubi nubila nunquam} \\
\text{obdunctut tenebris hiberno tempore caelum:} \\
\text{nix ubi siquando cecidit; videre cadentem} \\
\text{attonitis similes pueri, iuentesque! Ubi vixdum} \\
\text{in terram incubuit subito tepefacta liquescit:} \\
\text{ nec riget in glaciam, neque sursum tollere cristas} \\
\text{audet, et in magnos concreta assurgere montes. (XV, 12-18).}\(^{306}\)
\]

Mexico, the chosen land, upon which the Virgin of Guadalupe turned her eyes, the object of his longing:

\[\text{“Ut memini! Ut videor, te nunc quoque, Virgo, videre! (XLII, 630)}\(^{307}\)\]

Written in Ferrara, the Italian exile, this long poem, composed in Virgilian

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305 BHA I, 61 - 64
306 “Pero bien me acuerdo haber morado en otra tierra, donde los nublados no anochecen el cielo de los días invernales, donde la nieve, si acaso ha caído, fue asombroso regocijo de los muchachos y los niños, y de la noche a la mañana se evaporó con tibieza; no congeló sus fríos ni osó encaramar a la cima de los altos montes la cresta de su rígida soberbia”. (Fernández Valenzuela, 1974, Poema Heroico, p. 307). For these excerpts I have not found an English version and I prefer not to attempt a version myself.
307 “¿Cómo no te me caes de la memoria, que parece que todavía tengo en ti puestos los ojos!” (Fernández Valenzuela, 1974, Poema Heroico, p. 715)
hexameters, is a song praising God and His creation, and announcing the birth of a new man. In it, Abad\textsuperscript{308} speaks as a prophet:

\begin{quote}
Servati, et memores hoc nos ab cardine rerum
venturos deinceps, nostrosque putabimus annos,
et novus hinc oritur, saeclorum, et vertitur ordo. (XXIII, 133-135)\textsuperscript{309}
\end{quote}

Then, paraphrasing Virgil's \textit{Aeneid} and \textit{Bucolica} verses, that read: "deterior conec paulatim ac decolor aetas/ ...successit" (Aen. VII, 326-327), and "Ignotoqie etiam surget gens aurea mundo./ Desinet, ac toto surget gens aurea mundo" (Buc. IV, 9), he declares:

\begin{quote}
Aurea nunc ibit; subsidet decolor aetas.
Ignotoque etiam surget gens aurea mundo. (XXIII, 135-137)\textsuperscript{310}
\end{quote}

"An unknown world will give birth to a golden race..." With these words, from Italy, and in Latin, paraphrasing Virgil's verses, the pride of the nation was sung. Abad's \textit{De Deo} was first published (partly and anonymously) in Spain, in 1769, under the symptomatic title of \textit{Musa Americana}. A second version was printed in Italy in 1773, and the full text in 1780. It met with an enormous success (Maneiro and Fabri 1989: 180).

Figure 22 shows the evolution of the translation activity I have described in this section. The continued presence of GrecoLatin translation, starting in the first years, becomes visible in this curve, which shows its highest moment in the "baroque century", the Jesuit century, and falls sharply after the expulsion. I must recall that, since the register stops at 1821, the data corresponding to the nineteenth century are not to be taken into account.

\textsuperscript{308} \textit{BHA} I, 61 - 64
\textsuperscript{309} "Nosotros, con puntual memoria, sobre este día moveremos los goznes de la historia, y de aquí contaremos en lo por venir los años, como que de aquí nace la generación nueva de los siglos" (Fernández Valenzuela, 1974, \textit{Poema Heroico}, p. 451). For these two excerpts I have not found an English version and I prefer not to attempt a version myself.
\textsuperscript{310} "Pasará la edad dorada, vendrán en su lugar pálidos siglos, y de un desconocido mundo surgirá una raza de oro" (Spanish version by Fernández Valenzuela, 1974, \textit{Poema Heroico}, p. 451).
3.1.3. Translation and the Modern High Culture

In the Translational Canvass, I have dealt with the transwritings that constitute the basis for an imagined community of Christian faithful. The *pre-judgement* of universalism contributes to establishing a negotiated base of mutual intelligibility. Upon this basis, myths of common descent and chosen people are elaborated through intersemiotic translations and subsequent transwritings, as I have shown in the section on translation and the founding myths. As far as continuity with the great Classical civilizations is concerned, it is constructed through the reelaboration of the Greco-Latin mythology and the intense and creative use of Latin.

These aspects have in general dealt with the “past side” of the Janus-faced phenomenon of nations I briefly defined in my pages on language and nation; that is, when translations offer representations of the nation that are anchored in the past. I will now turn to the modern side of the phenomenon, that is, where translations convey a “forward-looking representation” of the nation. By this, I mean those that contribute to represent a
culture as autonomous, and its people as educated, prosperous, and capable of competing and dialoguing with other peoples, importing and assimilating the innovations that were considered beneficial and censoring the ones that are deemed prejudicial.

It is not easy to draw the line, though, between these backward and forward-looking representations. Let’s take for instance the case of Sahagún’s\textsuperscript{311} Historia General. Some parts could fall perfectly under the High Modern Culture class, since the mindset with

\textsuperscript{311} BHA IV, 275 - 277
which they were prepared was forward-looking for today’s standards of criticism. I have preferred, though, to guide myself by the author’s declared intentions, and not to ascribe a will of modernity when, in fact, he chose to define his text as an aid to mission. In other words, I have left Sahagún’s work under the Translational Canvass class because he said that the reason why he wrote the Historia General was that the missionary brothers could not confess properly unless they knew what was going on in the Indian’s world and minds, and the words that went with it.\footnote{Before its discovery in the Vatican libraries, the general opinion was that Sahagún’s work was in fact a dictionary.}\footnote{BHA V, 37 - 38} Instead, Torquemada’s\footnote{Torquemada 1615/1975. “Prologo general y primero de toda la Monarquia Indiana”, unnumbered page.} Monarquia Indiana will come into the Modern High Culture category because Torquemada’s intention was to compile in one comprehensive work the histories that were known at the time and, however biased towards religion (which was an insurmountable \textit{pre-judgement}), his intention was historiographical, not missionary: “Es la Historia un beneficio inmortal, que se comunica a muchos. Qué depósito hay más cierto, y más enriquecido, que la Historia? Allí tenemos presentes las cosas pasadas, y testimonio, y argumento, de las por venir: ella nos da noticia y declara, y muestra lo que en diversos lugares, y tiempos acontece: los Montes no la estrechan, ni los Ríos, ni los Años, ni los Meses, porque ni esta sujeta a la diferencia de los Tiempos, ni del Lugar. Es la Historia un Enemigo grande, y declarado contra la injuria de los Tiempos, de los quales claramente triunfa”\footnote{Torquemada 1615/1975. “Prologo general y primero de toda la Monarquia Indiana”, unnumbered page.}

The production I am talking about in this section is, in general, not simultaneous to the one I have analyzed under the Translational Canvass category, but growing exactly as the Translational Canvass category fades and eventually disappears. Its emergence and evolution sharply contrasts with that of the Translational Canvass category, as can be seen
in Figure 5. Moreover, it is important to stress that, while during the first decades all writing activity was directed to conversion and, therefore, missionary translation virtually occupied the entire literary spectrum, the Modern High Culture translations were only a fraction of the general text production. Indeed, they are literally submerged in a sea of other texts, a very different situation from the one in the first part of the Colonial period, when translations were virtually the only texts and therefore assumed a leading role. Many translators I will mention here are themselves known as authors of original work, and translation was part of their literary activities to a greater extent than translators from other categories. Just as the translators of Greco-Latin works, they belonged less to the intercultural colonial frontier and acted more as agents of a receiving culture which called for these translations. The frontier in which they were acting was not the one that had divided Indians from Spanish, but proud criollos from arrogant peninsulares. And our translators were proud criollos belonging to a social sphere of “letrados”, both producers and consumers of cultural goods: writers, men of Church, teachers, administrators, and
other intellectual professionals that constituted the bulk of the urban bureaucracy moving in Audiencias, Seminars, schools and university (Rama 2004: 57). They translated to bring home modern science, essay and devotion, while they also produced science, essay and devotion.

This category represents the second largest corpus of translations, one hundred and fifty, encompassing a variety of subjects: religion, science, history, essay and other lay matters. This production is basically concentrated in the second part of the Colonial period. There are, however, a few important items of early occurrence: one of them is the beautifully illustrated document known as the Códice De la Cruz-Badiano, a 1552 Latin translation of a Nahuatl text by Martín de la Cruz, an Indian scholar of the Colegio de la Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco. The translator was another Indian scholar, Juan Badiano. The manuscript is entitled: Libellus de medicinalibus indorum herbis (Fig. 23), and contains the description and paintings of medicinal plants used by the Indian population. It is considered to be the first scientific work of America as well as the last medieval herbarium (Trabulse 2003: 43). Amazingly, the text is complete, perfectly readable, the illustrations have kept their colors, and a careful facsimilar edition was prepared in Mexico some years ago. Many aspects make this translation a particularly valuable item: the early date, the matter, the fact that both author and translator are identified, that they are both Indian: Martin de la Cruz identifies himself in the first page as a doctor in the Colegio, specifying that he has not studied medicine and that he knows everything by experience. The Latin translator proudly introduces himself by name, origin and hometown: “Joannes Badianus natione Indus patria Xuchimilcanus”, and signs as the “interpres” at the end of the manuscript. The fact that the Códice was written in Nahuatl, an oral language, which had been transcribed barely twenty
or thirty years before, and translated into Latin, a language living mostly in its written form, makes it an exceptional illustration of what Ángel María Garibay, the famous Nahuatl specialist, already in the 1950s was timidly suggesting as a “interculturación”.315

One wish we could have at least a few pages of what is known to have been a translation of Dioscorides Pedanius De materia medica316 into Maya by a certain Father Bernardino Valladolid (1617-1652). This missionary Franciscan friar, who was born in Spain, went to Yucatán in 1634. In his short life, Valladolid managed to learn the language well enough to have written doctrinal works in Maya and to translate the classical Greek pharmacopoeia (from Latin, since it was in Latin that De materia had survived), to which he added drawings of local plants with their names in Latin, Spanish and Maya, including their properties. Whether he already found the book in the convent or if he brought it with him from Spain is something we don’t know. One 14 of October of 1652 he fell down a flight of stairs and died at the age of 35, says Beristáin, who provides the only information we have about this man. The sudden death of Bernardino must have been a shock for his people, since the date and cause of the accident were carefully registered.

A young friar from Toledo who, as soon as he arrives into this foreign land, takes to import for that new language one of the best medicine works circulating in Europe: he must not have had the slightest doubt about the significance and future of Maya. And he had no doubt that whatever was written in Latin could be said in Maya. Moreover, he complemented the Dioscorides with plants that were unknown in the original

315 Garibay uses this term for the first time, I think, in 1954, when referring to mestizo chroniclers: “podría acaso usarse el término, feo por cierto, de interculturación” (1987: 291). Then, in the translation of the Libellus, dated 1963, he says that the value of the book resides in that it is “signo de la interculturación de dos pueblos, tan grande el uno como el otro” (1991: 8)

316 Dioscorides Pedanius (ca. 40) was a Greek physician who practiced in Rome. His work was still consulted and reproduced in the Renaissance. The first known Spanish translation was made in 1555.
Mediterranean. He was therefore enriching the information database. Once again, as we have seen with the grammarians, the pre-judgements that stretch the vision seem to overpower those that limit the vision.

The impact of these two works was small, if any. The Libellus Medicinalibus was prepared for King Philip II, apparently in the hope that it would move the Monarch into being more generous with the Colegio, which had been severely affected by lack of funds, and suffered great loss of personnel in the recent cocolitzli epidemics of 1545. The text was carefully kept in Spain, and nothing else was known about it until it was discovered in the Vatican in 1929. The fate of the Maya De materia medica is more uncertain, since we only know it by reference. They were probably just brief sparks of scientific creation with very little impact outside the limited context in which they were produced.

Other cases were more fortunate: in 1570, Philip II sent Doctor Francisco Hernández\(^\text{317}\) to New Spain with the mandate to collect information on flora, fauna and minerals of the land in what was the first scientific expedition to the New World. The result of seven years of travels and study, a voluminous manuscript beautifully illustrated was sent to Spain in 1577, where it was kept under the strictest secrecy as the king had grown suspicious of everything related to the descriptions and histories of America and decided not to have it published: “...estos libros de la descripción de todas las Indias, me ha parecido que por ser de la calidad que son, y por el inconveniente que se podría seguir si anduviesen por muchas manos...sería bueno que todos se recogiesen en el Consejo y se pusiesen en algún cajón cerrado” (Baudot 2002: 54). In 1576, he had already issued an order declaring: “que ningún religioso trate ni conozca judiciariamente de los negocios de

\(^{317}\) BHA III, 18 - 28
los indios tocantes a sus ídolos y supersticiones, antes lo remita todo a nuestro padre provincial” (Baudot 2002: 53) and Sahagún’s\textsuperscript{318} works were confiscated in 1577. This radical change of atmosphere hit also doctor Hernández’s work, which could not be published during his lifetime. Some sections of it were published in Rome during the same century, although not respecting the original format which followed the Nahuatl nomenclature of specimens. He had written his work in Latin, with a Spanish and Nahuatl translation, which were not included in this Italian edition. From a copy of this short edition, a Dominican Father who worked at a New Spain’s hospital, Francisco Ximénez,\textsuperscript{319} made a translation and published it in 1615 under the title Cuatro libros de la Naturaleza, supplementing the information with observations of his own experience (Trabulse 2003: 47). This Spanish version was very successful in the Americas, and was reprinted twice during the nineteenth century. It was this first version also that crossed the Atlantic in the 1650s to be retranslated into Latin by a Jan de Laet, Dutch officer with the Dutch Company of the Western Indies (which illustrates the lack of communication between Protestant and Catholic scientists). It is believed that Hernández’s original work perished in 1671 in the fire that consumed El Escorial’s royal library. The work, therefore, influenced the New World naturalists and geographers of the eighteenth century, like José Mariano Mozoñ\textsuperscript{320} and Whilhelm von Humboldt, through Friar Ximénez translation.\textsuperscript{321}

Going back to medicine, we do have quite a few transwritings from medical

\textsuperscript{318} BHA IV, 275 - 277
\textsuperscript{319} BHA V, 175 - 178
\textsuperscript{320} BHA III, 294

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classics: in 1712 Jesuit Juan de Esteyneffer\textsuperscript{322} was publishing a *Florilegio medicinal de
todas las enfermedades sacado de varios, y Cláscos Authores, para bien de los Pobres, y
de los que tienen falta de Medicos, en particular para las Provincias Remotas, en donde
administran los RR. PP. Misioneros de la Compañía de Jesús.* In 1790, the physician Juan
Bermúdez\textsuperscript{323} published his translation from the French original by M. Daubenton of a
*Disertación sobre las indigestiones,* while noted mathematician and physician Ignacio
Bartolache,\textsuperscript{324} founder of the first American medical journal, the *Mercurio Volante,*
translated Luigi Cornaro *Discorsi sulla vita sobra,* a popular manual of life-extending
recipes, from a French translation, and published it in the *Mercurio Volante.* He is also the
author of a curious *Noticia plausible para sanos y enfermos* in Spanish, and in Nahuatl:
*Netemachtillizli,* in which he advertised a brand of ferruginous pills he had produced. Both
were published in 1774. Scottish physician John Brown’s *Elementa medicinae* (1780) was a
point of reference both in Europe and in the New World. During the first years of the
nineteenth century scholars Florencio Pérez y Comoto,\textsuperscript{325} José María Amable\textsuperscript{326} and José
Mariano Moziño translated and published aspects of it. Vaccine, which was introduced also
in the eighteenth century, was the object of one translation: Louis Moreau de la Sarthe’s
*Tratado histórico-práctico de la vacuna* by the astounding Spanish doctor Francisco Javier
Balmis,\textsuperscript{327} who was carrying research with traditional indigenous medicine in New Spain
and had to face the skepticism of Spanish scientists. King Charles IV was convinced to
finance a worldwide antivariollic vaccination campaign, and Dr. Balmis personally directed
the *Real Expedición Filantrópica de la Vacuna,* sailing in 1803 from Spain with 22 orphan

\textsuperscript{322} BHA IV, 376
\textsuperscript{323} BHA I, 257
\textsuperscript{324} BHA I, 225
\textsuperscript{325} BHA II, 133 - 134
\textsuperscript{326} BHA I, 137
\textsuperscript{327} BHA I, 210
children who were successively inoculated during the trip and served as living vaccines to thousands of people in America, the Philippines and China (Trabulse 2003).

Science and medicine were part of the construction of an imagined community, just as Benedict Anderson’s census, maps, and museums. Geography and natural sciences were also crucial. It is during the seventeenth and eighteenth century that information on the actual dimensions and shapes of the territory, distances among cities, exact locations, mineral richness and natural resources becomes more accurate. Calculating the geographical coordinates of the main American cities was one of the most crucial problems occupying the minds of mathematicians and cosmographers, since exact calculations would facilitate travels and trade. Eclipses and celestial phenomena, when predictable, generated great expectations among scientists and preparations were made by mail between colleagues posted in different cities, at home and abroad (Trabulse 1985). The controversy about the origin and meaning of comets could be followed in the bitter exchanges between Mexican-born and educated Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, for whom comets were exclusively scientific phenomena, and the Austrian Jesuit Father Eusebius Chini (Kino), who believed in their supernatural origin and meaning. The next generation will witness Francisco Javier Alegre\textsuperscript{328} (1729-1788), whom we have met as translator of Homer and will meet again as translator of Boileau, participating from his exile in the consolidation of a local scientific community with his translations of the works of Nicolas Bion (1652-1733), a French specialist in mathematical instruments, and Jacob William Storm, or Stormius, (1688-1742), Dutch physicist and mathematician. Apart from the few works that were translated, there was a wide circulation of scientific works imported from Europe, and the

\textsuperscript{328} BHA I, 114 - 115
Inquisition was often called to examine the books and submit them to censorship. Registers include during the eighteenth century repeated confiscations of Newton’s *Opuscula mathematica* “por proposiciones heréticas”.329

Travels were also originating translations and transwritings, such as the lexicon on the Nutka language appended to José Mariano Moznio Noticias de Nutka (1793), and the translation from Portuguese by the Augustinian Francisco Muñoz330 (1600?) of the travel accounts of the Bishop of Goa (undated manuscript). Finally, Jesuit Agustin Castro,331 who, let’s recall, was a translator of Virgil, translated also into Spanish Francis Bacon’s (1561-1626) *De dignitate et augmento scientiarum*, one of Bacon’s works that shook the old scientific paradigms and set the principles of experimental science.

As one of the main economic activities, mining generated attention from engineers and scientists. Theoretical works were published in Spain, but many reports and practical compendia were produced locally. José Antonio de Alzate y Ramírez332 (1738-1799), a cleric noted for his scientific interests and as the founder of the first New Spain literary journal, the *Diario Literario de México*, published miscellaneous works on natural sciences, physics and astronomy. Among his writings we find mention of a translation on the uses of mercury from a French Mons. Jussieu, which remained probably as a manuscript. There are other translations on military sciences and miscellaneous administrative and law subject matters, from French or Latin.

The kind of translations we find in the second half of the Colonial period reflect,

330 *BHA* III, 302 - 303
331 *BHA* II, 85 - 88
332 *BHA* I, 134 - 135
indeed, a different kind of society with respect to the first hundred to hundred and fifty years. By and large, the indigenous languages are disappearing from the translational horizon; translations from European languages become more frequent and replace Latin as the major source language. Everything is now translated into Spanish. Jesuits and secular priests, as well as laymen, occupy the place of the Mendicants as translators, as is shown in Figure 25. The geographical and statistical information, disseminated by the newly created periodicals and the school system at a period of prosperity such as the one experienced in the second half of the eighteenth century, disseminated an idea of the dimensions and economic potential of the nation. Something any New Spaniard could be proud of, and which contrasted with the information that had been circulating on America in European scholarly spheres. It is the period of affirmation of the national consciousness, partly triggered by the rivalry between criollos and peninsulares, and partly as a refutation of the idea that America was a backward continent, and that people there were unable to progress because of their constitutive shortcomings.

However “ilustrados” they were, religion continued to be the axis of the colonial society. In this field we find translations and transwritings not geared to the indoctrination of Indians (after all, there were no longer adult Indians to be converted) but to promote general devotion among all social classes. Eighty-three out of 150 titles correspond to religious works. The classical mystics are present: Boecio (480-525), Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471) and Johannes Gerson (1363-1429), but also contemporary Saint Francis of Sales (1567-1622), and Jean Croiset (1656-1738). The religious translation represented here corresponds, thus, to classic post-tridentine works. It is significant for the history of colonial translation that to this category belongs the first translation printed in America,
which was also the first printed book: a translation from Latin into Spanish of a 6th century spiritual devotional, Saint John Climacus’ *Scala Spiritual*, translated by a Father Juan de Estrada (or Juan de la Magdalena) and printed around 1532 for the use of the novices at Saint Francis convent in Mexico. Saints’ and Blessed one’s lives, including the life of the first American Saint (Saint Rose of Lima), and other prayer books for personal devotion constitute the largest part of religious literature in translation from Latin.

As a curiosity, two works by Methodist author James Hervey: *Meditations among the tombs*, and *Reflections in a flower garden* made it to New Spain thanks to the

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333 *BHA* II, 250
334 This book is lost, but its existence as well as the date and provenance have been well documented.
translations (from French) of Manuel María Gorriño\textsuperscript{335} (1810 and 1811) who, probably because he was a public character, signed with the pseudonym Leñogurri.

Lay thinking and literature are another aspect touched upon in translation, with forty-three items. In literature, we will find mentions of translations from Milton, Pope and others, as well as a distinctive liking for Pedro Metastasio’s odes, with two different translations by José Iturriaga and Francisco Sánchez Tagle,\textsuperscript{336} at the beginning of the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} century, respectively. We have the quite extraordinary case of the translations into Nahuatl made by Bartolomé de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl,\textsuperscript{337} younger brother of Fernando (who was introduced in the Foundation Myths section), in 1640, of three plays by Pedro Calderón de la Barca (“El gran teatro del mundo”), Lope de Vega Carpio (“La madre de la mejor”), and Antonio Mira de Amezcua (“El animal profeta y dichoso parricida”).

With respect to the indigenous languages description and history of the past, they are now approached with a more scientific than religious angle, in accordance with the illustrated atmosphere of the period. The few linguistic works and general descriptions I have collected here correspond, therefore, to a new, more distant and secularized approach towards the indigenous languages, although not less militant from other points of view. Indigenous languages and history seem to find their place now in the general movement of the Lumière. In the period that goes from the Monarquía Indiana (1610/1975), to Francisco Javier Clavijero’s\textsuperscript{338} linguistic and historical works, written from exile one hundred and fifty years later, a new attitude has emerged with regards to the past, a past made to the measure of the criolla society, written not for the Indian descendants neither

\textsuperscript{335} BHA II, 379
\textsuperscript{336} BHA V, 9 - 10
\textsuperscript{337} BHA I, 125
\textsuperscript{338} BHA II, 119 - 122
for the missionaries nor for the conquerors, but for the educated New Spaniards, the “ciudad letrada” defined by Ángel Rama.

After this quick but necessarily dense review of the translation contribution to the formation of a cultivated *criolla* society, I would like to turn to the historiographic discourse, which will consolidate as the basis of a national discourse during the “periodo ilustrado”, that is, since the 1760s until the independence wars.

There was no more translation proper of Mexican historiographic materials after Torquemada’s 339 *Monarquía Indiana*. But this work, which was the main general history to circulate freely after the prohibition to write about things of Indies by Philip II 340 was, to use again Bradin’s phrase (2000: 22), a “permanent arsenal” of information on the past that was extensively used by later historians. The *Monarquía Indiana* (see Figure 20 and 28) had a pivotal role in the conservation chain of ancient histories. It synthesizes earlier missionary and mestizo chronicles: most sixteenth century chronicles, both of the Tenochca and the Acolhua tradition, as fixed by Tezozómoc 341 and Ixtlixóchitl, 342 converge in the convoluted drafting of the *Monarquía Indiana*, where the respective cities: Mexico-Tenochtitlan and Texcoco cease to be rivals to become equivalent in historical significance: the Rome and Athens of the New World. Torquemada’s work, for a long time denigrated as repetition of earlier chronicles bonded together with abstruse rhetoric, opens the way to a different genre: it is no longer a matter of fixing memories of the past, for the benefit of the author or of the group he represents, but to organize them in a way that creates new

339 *BHA* V, 37 - 38
340 Cédula Real, 22 de abril de 1577, addressed to Viceroy Enrique Martínez: “…y estaréis advertido de no consentir que por ninguna manera persona alguna escriba cosas que toquen a supersticiones y manera de vivir que estos indios tenían, en ninguna lengua…” (cited in Baudot 2002: 54).
341 *BHA* I, 127
342 *BHA* I, 125
historiographic knowledge. Among the later scholars who used Torquemada as a source of
their own historiographic reeloarations, two of them are considered at the origins,
respectively, of cultural nationalism and historical nationalism: clergyman and ex-Jesuit
Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora (1645-1700) and Jesuit Francisco Xavier Clavijero\footnote{BHA II, 119 - 122} (1731-
1787).

3.1.3.1. Cultural nationalism: Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora

Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora (close friend of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz), is
one of the most brilliant minds of the seventeenth century criollo intellectual life. He was
an eminent mathematician and astronomer, poet and essayist, although many of his writings
could never be printed. He was a polyglot and, although, just as many historians (then and
now), he may not be considered as a translator in the strictest sense, he used codices and
Nahuatl texts in his own transwritings, was a user of translations, and his work reveals a
continuous dialogue with the previous century chronicles (Lorente 1996: 217), which had
strong translational components. An original and independent mind, complex and polemic,
he was expelled from the Society of Jesus while novice and then followed an ecclesiastic
career, never succeeding to be forgiven and accepted back into the Jesuitical Order.

The two expressions of Don Carlos’ patriotism were the Mexican past and the
contemporary intellectual culture. He was a passionate admirer and defender of the patria,
and the titles of his works are in this regard telling: Primavera Indiana, Glorias de
Querétaro, Triunfo Parténico, Paraíso Occidental, Piedad heroica, Trofeo de la justicia,
Fénix del Occidente… In history of science he has a well earned place with his writings, in
particular, for his work entitled *Libra astronomica y philosophica*, on the demythologization of comets against the opinion of some scholars, prominently among them the Austrian Jesuit Eusebius Chini (known in Spanish as Padre Kino), an active missionary and explorer in the territory of California, who believed in the supernatural origin and meaning of celestial phenomena. The controversy had a strong nationalist component on Sigüenza’s side, as expressed in these sarcastic words:

“piensan en algunas partes de Europa, y con especialidad en las septentrionales, por más remotas, que no solo los indios, habitadores originarios de estos países, sino que los que de padres españoles casualmente nacimos en ellos, o andamos en dos pies por divina dispensación, o que aun valiéndose de microscopios ingleses apenas se descubre en nosotros lo racional” (Sigüenza 1680/1984: XXI)

It is, however, another aspect of Don Carlos’s intellectual activities that should interest us. It happens that in 1680 he was entrusted with the design of a triumphal arch that had to be built on the occasion of the arrival of the new Viceroy, Conde de Paredes, Marqués de La Laguna. These kinds of civic ceremonies were important occasions in which the population would gather and celebrate with all sorts of festive activities, games, parades, dances and religious rituals. In the annals of Juan Bautista\(^{344}\) mentions of such “fiestas” are so recurrent that it would seem that a good part of the New Spain life was spent on them. The mastery the Indians showed in building floral arches, which was part of their tradition and in which Mexicans still excel, was encouraged and put to the service of larger architectural ephemeral pieces, such as the one Don Carlos was asked to design. However short-lived, its dimensions and features were impressive:

\(^{344}\) *BHA* 1, 230 - 231
“Elevóse por noventa pies geométricos su eminencia, y se extendió por cincuenta su latitud, y por doce su macizo, de fachada a fachada, constando de tres cuerpos, sin las acroterias y remates que se movieron sobre diez y seis pedestales y otras tantas columnas de jaspe, revestidos los tercios de hojas de parra con bases y capiteles de bronce…” (Sigüenza 1684/1984:185)

New Spaniards knew how to entertain their illustrious guests: “en prosecución de la grandeza magnífica con que sabe la imperial, nobilísima ciudad de México, cabeza de la Occi-Septentrional América, desempeñarse en semejantes funciones…” (Sigüenza 1684/1984: 185). With these words, Sigüenza y Góngora introduces the detailed description of the Triumphal Arch in his diglossic (Castilian-Latin) *Theatro de virtudes políticas que constituyen a un príncipe: advertidas en los Monarcas antiguos del Mexicano Imperio, con cuyas efigies se hermoseó el Arco Triunfal, que la muy Noble, muy Leal, Imperial Ciudad de México erigió para el digno recibimiento en ella del Excelentísimo Señor Virrey Conde de Paredes, Marques de la Laguna, &c. Ideólo entonces, y ahora lo describe D. Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, Catedrático propietario de Matemáticas en su Real Universidad.

As the title says, Sigüenza decided to commemorate the arrival of the Viceroy by displaying in the triumphal arch the twelve political virtues of a prince, personified by as many ancient Mexican rulers (“monarcas antiguos”), headed by the dreaded Huitzilopochtli, god of war, here converted into the “caudillo y conductor de los mexicanos en el viaje que por su disposición emprendieron en demanda de las provincias de Anahuac que habitaron los toltecas, sus progenitores antiguos, y son las que ahora se forma la Nueva España” (Sigüenza 1684/1984:196).

All the Mexican rulers were portrayed with colored feathers, which were highly
valued by them, a trait “they agreed with” Oriental antiquity, as is testified by all the possible authorities invoked, from Classical Rome to the early naturalists and Christian Church Fathers:

“como el traje más individuo de su aprecio ... Propiedad que estos indios convinieron con los orientales, de quienes lo afirma Plutarco, De Fort. Alex. “Visten túnicas de plumas de las aves cazadas” y que, según Prudencio en Harmatig, fue gala usual de los antiguos tiempos... “...también al que teje vestidos de plumas con telas nuevas de aves multicolores”. Véase, acerca de los indios americanos, a Aldrovad., lib II, Ornitholog, pág. 656, y en lo general de las vestiduras de plumas al padre Juan Luis de la Cerda, cap. 51, Advers., n. 14; y aunque es verdad en sentir de San Isidro, Pelusiot., lib. 3, Epist. 251, que lo que más hermosea a los individuos no son tanto los brillos del resplandor y de los adornos, cuanto la posesión amable de las virtudes” (Sigüenza 1684/1984:187).

Sigüenza’s descriptions are punctuated with Latin citations (which were translated into Spanish in the modern edition I am consulting) of auctoritas, establishing arcane parallelisms between model and reality. The Mexica migration from the North to the valley of Anhauac, leaded by Huitzilopochtli, is represented with a Scriptural model: “se representó en el traje propio de los antiguos chichimecas al valeroso Huitzilopochtli que, mostrando a diferentes personas lo que en las nubes se veía, los exhortaba al viaje, proponiéndoles el fin y premio con las palabras del Génesis, cap. 43, Ingentem magnam” (Sigüenza 1684/1984:197). Subsequently, the fire of the torch in the god’s hand unleashes a cascade of references from a host of major and minor Classical authors.

Each of the Mexica rulers represents a virtue: Acamapich, the first ruler, represents hope, and is depicted clearing of canes the muddy waters of the Texcoco lake, which is likened to the earth in Genesis, I: “informe y vacía”, before God’s creation; Huitzihuitl
represents clemency; authority is personified in Chimalpopocatzin, who uses his shield to protect Mexico, represented as an Indian woman surrounded by her children, from the tempest of arrows and lighting thrown by Tyranny, a feminine figure characterized following Petronius’ description of Discordia, in Satyr.: “la cabellera en desorden, la discordia levantó su cabeza infernal a los cielos; tenia sangre coagulada en la boca y los ojos rasgados lloraban, tenia los dientes rojos por la ira, su lengua manaba veneno, su cabeza rodeada de serpientes....” (Sigüenza 1684/1984:209); Itzcohuatl is prudence, the best of virtues according to Sophocles in Electra: “No le puede acontecer nada mayor ni más útil al hombre que la prudencia...”, Motecuzoma Ilhuicamina is piety, for no other Mexican ruler was so devoted to his gods. Sigüenza cites Torquemada,\textsuperscript{345} saying that he was “otro Numa Pompilio” (Sigüenza 1684/1984:214), and it was his devotion that earned him the victory over his Huexotzinca enemies, an event taken from Torquemada as well as from Nahualt manuscripts and paintings Sigüenza said he possessed.

Motecuzoma Xocoyotzin, the one Cortés defeated and had killed, is gentleness, and is equated with emperors Titus, Theodosius and Trajan in this virtue; Cuitlahuatzin, who succeeded him, is audacity. He was painted as imitating the Great Alexandre in the act of cutting the Gordian knot. Cuauhtemoc, the last Aztec ruler, is constance. Torquemada is again recalled to praise the spirit with which this emperor faced his destiny, and citations from Seneca, Saint Ambrose, Saint Prosper and Tacit stress the significance of constance in the face of adversity. Why shouldn’t Cuauhtemoc’s serenity be applauded if he was no less than other heroes of the Classical Antiquity?:

\[\text{¿Qué elogios no ha conseguido la acción y dicho del rey Mitridates, cuando vencido y prisionero de Euno, capitán de los romanos, sin que se le alterase}\]

\textsuperscript{345} BHA V, 37 - 38
Nothing but national pride could have inspired these words: “No tienen ya los mexicanos por qué envidiar a Catón, pues tienen en su último emperador quien hiciese lo que de él dice Séneca, Epist. 104: “A pesar de que tantas veces cambió la república; sin embargo, nadie vio cambiado a Catón; siempre se mantuvo él mismo en cualquier estado: en la pretura, en la repulsa, en la acusación, en la provincia, en el discurso, en el ejército, y finalmente en la muerte” (Sigüenza 1684/1984:229).

One cannot read this exuberant display of Sigüenza’s art of citation without putting into question the practices of citation of our own time (and, of course, ones’ own) and wondering if ours will be deemed as extravagant in three centuries from now. Nevertheless, in reading him, I cannot but subscribe Jacques Lafaye’s characterization as “el gran alquimista de las transmutaciones mitológicas e históricas de las cuales nació la espiritualidad original de una minoría colonial inflamada del arraigo telúrico” (Lafaye 1985: 122).

In Sigüenza’s works, the Indian is dead, and the Aztec empire is a theater set-up. Torquemada346 and Fernández de Salazar wrote about the Indians in the past tense, and now, their rulers were painted in wooden panels, surrounded by Latin inscriptions and made to represent European virtues. On the one hand, it seemed indeed bold to portrait

346 BHA V, 37 - 38
these defeated Indians as models of a prince’s virtues; but, on the other, they were disarmed and neutralized. The process of mythification of the indigenous past by the criolla elite had begun (Lafaye 1985: 120).

Don Carlos died at 55. In spite of repeated attempts to be readmitted into the Jesuit Order, the superiors remained adamant. He nevertheless bestowed his library, which included the collection of manuscripts and codices that had belonged to Fernando de Alva Ixtlixochitl, to the Jesuits, where it served future historians until the Jesuit expulsion and dispersal of their possessions.

A telling example of Don Carlos rich and complex character is to be found in his posthumous instructions: he had diagnosed himself his fatal ailment, and he gave precise instructions on how his body should be dissected by whatever surgeons and doctors, for the advancement of medical science: “Pido por el amor de Dios que, así que fallezca, sea abierto por cirujanos y medicos los que quisieren y se reconozca el riñón derecho y su uretra, la vejiga y disposición de su substancia y el cuello de ella donde se hallará una piedra grandísima que es la que me ha de quitar la vida” (Sigüenza 1684/1984: XXIX). His instructions were followed, and a kidney stone the size of a peach peat was found at the exact location he had signaled.

3.1.3.2. Historical nationalism: Francisco Xavier Clavijero

If we go back to the general graph (Figure 4) where the four categories are plotted against time, we can see the final abrupt fall of missionary translation activity and the relative fall in other activities occurring in the eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century. They

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347 BHA I, 125
are due to the fatal combination of two royal decisions I have already mentioned: the ban on indigenous languages in 1770 and the expulsion of Jesuits in 1767. All religious translation devoted to indigenous indoctrination ceased, as we can see in the virtual extinction of the Translational Canvass column. Translation of classical works also declined, as it was mainly represented by Jesuits.

When the unexpected order of the expulsion arrived, in a matter of days, if not hours, over six hundred Jesuits were arrested in New Spain and, heavily guarded, were sent to the port of Veracruz, where from they had to sail to exile. They left their belongings behind, their books and writings; their schools were closed. The intellectual and spiritual void left by their expulsion was enormous. Their schools were deserted, Indian missions orphaned, a climate of resentment grew against Spain and its powers. This was the result of the expulsion. Protests sprung everywhere, and were violently suffocated, fuelling the already strong feeling of injustice that prevailed in the criolla society.

Francisco Xavier Clavijero (Veracruz 1731- Bolonia 1787) was a contemporary of the ban and a victim of the expulsion. He was one of the over five hundred Mexican-born Jesuits who were exiled to Italy. Others were also eminent authors and translators, like Diego Abad and Francisco Javier Alegre, whom we have met in previous sections. He would not be the only one who wrote about Mexico’s history from exile. Exile companions were Pedro José Márquez and Andrés Cavo.

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348 Both royal orders were to be applied in all Spanish territories. It is thus likely that the effects may have been felt in a similar way in other Spanish American colonies.
349 BHA II, 119 - 122
350 BHA I, 61 - 64
351 BHA I, 114 - 116
352 Cavo, driven by his “amor de la patria” published in exile Anales de la ciudad de México desde la conquista española hasta el año de 1766, in Spanish and in Italian, and Márquez published in Italian several
Clavijero\textsuperscript{353} was fluent in Classical and several European languages, and had sufficient knowledge of Nahuatl. Before the expulsion, he taught rhetoric at the great Jesuit Colegio de San Pedro y San Pablo, introducing rationalist ideas in the academic curricula through the teachings of Bacon and Descartes. Like Sigüenza y Góngora, he believed in the worth of experimental method over abstract reasoning and speculation. Less devoted than the latter, though, to baroque rhetoric, “levantó osadamente la bandera del sobrio y limiado neoclasicismo francés” (Méndez Plancarte 1970: 159) which he upheld in his commented translations from Saint François de Sales on the subject of preaching and confession. This was the approach he used in his works on the Mexican language and history.

He wrote in exile his magnum opus, the \textit{Historia Antigua de México}, but for reasons not clear (he said that he yielded to his Italian friends), he translated it into Italian and had it printed in 1780 in Cesena, as \textit{Storia Antica del Messico}. The work met with great success and was soon translated into English and German before being eventually translated into Spanish in 1826.\textsuperscript{354} The manuscript of the original Spanish version was not found until much later, and it was published in Mexico in 1945.

Clavijero’s \textit{Storia Antica} has a historical part and an argumentative section composed of \textit{Dissertazioni}, in which he makes his defense against the philosophers: Raynal, de Paw, Buffon, and others. In the first chapter, or book, he enlists and reviews all preceding historians, from the sixteenth century onwards, including Indian and \textit{mestizo}, he defines the Mexican territory, explains the political divisions as “reinos”, the “republica de Tlaxcala”, the “provincias mediterráneas” with their extension, latitudes, main geographical books on archaeology and aesthetics, among them, \textit{Due Antichi Monumenti di Architettura Messicana} (1804) (Méndez Plancarte 1941, 1970)
\textsuperscript{353} \textit{BHA} II, 119 - 122
\textsuperscript{354} This is the Spanish edition I have consulted.

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features, minerals, animals and plants. The scientific knowledge acquired by the scientists I have introduced earlier in this chapter is compiled and elaborated to represent the nation. In Clavijero we no longer find citations of the Sacred Scriptures (except in the obliged references to the origins) and the Church Fathers, as authorities, but modern science combined with Classical Antiquity.

Indeed, the Mexican Empire, or Mexico (and no longer New Spain) is represented as a self-contained nation, on a par with any other nation: “Tenían los mejicanos como todas las naciones cultas noticias claras aunque alteradas con fábulas de la creación del mundo, del diluvio universal, de la confusión de las lenguas y de la dispersión de las

Fig. 26. An Aztec temple in the *Storia Antica del Messico*. 
gentes, y todos estos sucesos se hallan representados en sus pinturas” (Clavijero 1826: 225). As any other general national history would have, a full book is devoted to “Gobierno político, militar y económico de los mejicanos, esto es el rey, los señores, los electores, los embajadores, las dignidades, los magistrados, y los jueces, leyes, juicios y penas, milicia, agricultura, caza pesca y comercio, juegos, trage, alimentos, y muebles, idioma, poesía, música y baile, medicina, historia y pintura. y otras artes” (Book VII).

The Mexican Empire is described as “ilustrado”, and the other peoples as barbarian and primitive. Other parts of the Storia are devoted to its historical events, wars, lineages,

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355 This and the following Spanish citations are taken from the 1826 Spanish translation by José Joaquín de Mora. The ones in Italian are taken from the original Cesena edition of 1780.
and religion: gods, temples, priests, sacrifices and oblations, fasts, austerity, chronology and calendars, feasts and rites. Temples are depicted as neoclassical, and even the modest, utilitarian, domestic steam bath, temazcal, becomes an "ipocausto messicano."

Comparatism with other American nations is also a tool in his history:

Además de las pinturas se servían de hilos de diversos colores, y diferentemente anudados, llamados quipu por los peruanos, y por los mejicanos nepohualtzitzin. Este extraño modo de representar las cosas, tan usado en el Perú, no parece que haya sido adoptado en los países del Anahuac si no en los siglos más remotos, pues no se encuentran vestigios de aquellos monumentos. (Clavijero 1826: 371)

As I said before, the Scriptures still hold the clue to the origin of the American peoples, since the Bible is the “common book of humanity” (Villoro 1998:133). But Clavijero356 does not think, as does Sigüenza, that they come from the tribes of Israel nor finds he reasons to believe that Indians come from any of the current populations inhabiting the Old World. The notion that they might come from Egypt, founded in the existence of the pyramids, is ridiculed by Clavijero, saying that the view of mountains is enough to inspire the building of similar structures (Clavijero 1826: 205). Based in the Sacred Scriptures, Americans descend from the different nations or families dispersed after the confusion of tongues in Babel, and the animals found here are descendants from those saved by Noah: "El sumo respeto que se debe a los libros Santos me obliga a creer que los cuadrúpedos y reptiles del nuevo mundo descienden de aquellos individuos que se salvaron del diluvio universal en el arca de Noe." (Clavijero 1826: 219). Men and animals passed from the old to the new continent, in ships, or on foot, over land or ice banks. However, the

356 BHA II, 119 - 122
opinion that the bones found in different places in New Spain were, according to a British scholar, of elephants, is dismissed. Based on the Scriptures, they are bones of a giant human race (Clavijero 1826: 198).

On the subject of the ancient laws, he defends the Mexicans, who, however cruel, did not torture their prisoners to exact confessions, and cites Montesquieu’s *L’esprit des lois* to say that torture is a barbaric practice that will bring shame on Enlightened Europe (Clavijero 1826: 253). Following Alva Ixtlilxóchitl and Torquemada, he praises Nezahualcóyotl work as a legislator:

*Para perfeccionar la civilización de sus pueblos y corregir los desordenes introducidos en su reino en tiempo de los tiranos promulgo ochenta leyes que después fueron compiladas por su noble descendiente D. Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl*

However grave, he was also clement and generous:

*Era tanto lo que anualmente se expendía en su familia y casa, y en el alivio de los pobres que sería increíble, y yo no osaría escribirlo si no constara por las pinturas originales vistas, y examinadas por los primeros misioneros que se emplearon en la conversión de aquellos pueblos, y si no lo confirmara el testimonio de un descendiente de aquel monarca, convertido a la fe cristiana y llamado, después del bautismo, D. Antonio Pimentel (Torquemada asegura haber tenido en sus manos aquellas pinturas). (Clavijero 1826: 175)*

**The image of the poet-king comes again, directly from Alva Ixtlilxóchitl:**

*Era diestro en la poesía nacional, y compuso muchas piezas poéticas que fueron universalmente aplaudidas. En el s. XVI eran celebres aun entre los españoles los sesenta himnos que compuso en loor del criador del cielo. Dos*
de aquellas odas o canciones, traducidas al castellano por su descendiente D. Fernando de Alva Ixtlixochitl se han conservado hasta nuestros tiempos. (Clavijero 1826: 175)

Tecoco, home of Classical Nahuatl; the Athens of Anáhuac. King Nezahualcóyotl, its Solon:

Su esclarecido ingenio, y el amor que tenía a sus súbditos contribuyeron en gran manera a ilustrar aquella corte, la cual se considero después como la patria de las artes y el centro de la civilización. Tezcuco era la ciudad donde se hablaba con mayor pureza, y perfección la lengua mexicana, donde se hallaban los mejores artífices, y donde más abundaban los poetas, los oradores, y los historiadores. De allí tomaron muchas leyes los mejicanos, y otros pueblos, de modo que puede decirse que Tezcuco fue la Atenas, y Nezahualcóyotl el Solon de Anahuac. (Clavijero 1826: 177)

It was Nezahualcóyotl scientific curiosity that convinced him that there was an only God. Clavijero\(^\text{359}\) presents him as a dissident of the idolatric Mexicas, a prophet of Christianity and a scientist who uses his knowledge to the service of religion:

Pero en nada se deleitaba tanto Nezahualcoyotl, como en el estudio de la naturaleza. Adquirió muchos conocimientos astronómicos... aplicose también al conocimiento de las plantas y de los animales, y por no poder tener en su corte los que eran propios de otros climas, mando pintar en su palacio, al vivo, los que nacían en la tierra de Anahuac. De estas pinturas habla el Dr. Hernández, que las vio, y hizo uso de ellas, y por cierto que son mas útiles y más dignas de la mansión de un rey que las que representan la perversa Mitología de los Griegos. Investigaba atentamente la causa de los fenómenos naturales, y esta continua observación le hizo conocer la vanidad de la idolatría. Decía privadamente a sus hijos que cuando adorasesen con señales exteriores los ídolos, para conformarse a los usos del pueblo,

\(^{359}\) BHA II, 119 - 122
detestasen en su interior aquel culto despreciable, dirigido a seres inanimados: que el no reconocía otra divinidad si no el creador del cielo, y que no prohibía en sus reinos la idolatría, como deseaba, por que no lo acusasen de contradecir la doctrina de sus mayores. (Clavijero 1826: 176)

Clavijero, thus, rewrites the history of Nezahualcoyotl, which is now sustained by a modern citation and reference apparatus (Torquemada, Pimentel, Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, Francisco Hernández) instead of the Classical universe of reference deployed by Sigüenza, or the Scriptural one by Torquemada and the earlier chroniclers, and thus fixes the myth of the good King forever.

There is another aspect that distinguishes Clavijero from earlier historians: if the early missionary chroniclers wrote, as they said, to know about the idolatries and the past of the Indians they were indoctrinating, and to divulge this information among other missionaries; if the mestizo and Indian chroniclers wrote to defend their nobility, privileges and territorial rights of their families or groups; if Torquemada\(^{360}\) wrote so that the Franciscan history and approach to Indian things would not be lost and thus made the first large synthesis of previous scholarship; if Sigüenza y Góngora erected scenarios where Mexican gods became statues of illustrious models of behaviour, and put his translational baroque pyrotechnics to the service of a cultural patriotism, Clavijero’s\(^{361}\) Storia Antica was triggered by anger.

Drawing upon Sigüenza’s materials he had read while at the Colegio de San Pedro y San Pablo, upon Torquemada’s Monarquía Indiana (and reelaborating on Torquemada’s sources), upon Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl,\(^{362}\) Dr. Francisco Hernández, J.de Acosta and

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\(^{360}\) BHA V, 37 - 38

\(^{361}\) BHA II, 119 - 122

\(^{362}\) BHA I, 125
others, and upon the original codices he said he consulted and interpreted in several Italian libraries, in the Vatican and elsewhere, Clavijero wrote to refute Cornelius de Paw’s and others’ derogatory opinions on America, its inhabitants, fauna, flora and natural resources. Although he didn’t recognize it explicitly, he was also taking revenge from the Spanish monarchy, that had exiled them, and against those in the peninsula who believed that New Spain, and Spanish America in general, was an intellectually barren land, like the Deán Martí, whose letters had prompted Eguiara y Eguren to write his *Biblioteca Mexicana* during those same years. In the preface Clavijero says he writes to serve his homeland and nation and to “rimetter nel suo splendore la verita offuscata da una turba incredibile di moderni scrittori dell’America” (Clavijero 1780: 1). Clavijero appears as the epitome of historical nationalism.\footnote{363 Clavijero’s targets were Cornelius de Paw’s *Recherches philosophiques sur les Americains*, William Robertson’s *The History of America* (1799), and G. T. Raynal’s *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (1770).}

In *Dissertazione IV*, Clavijero\footnote{364 Although much less known and studied, this nationalism is also visible in Clavijero’s linguistic works. As the author of a non-missionary Mexican grammar and vocabulary in which Nahuatl is described as a fully evolved language, he defies the opinion of bishop Lorenzana, who promoted the eradication of indigenous languages and imposition of Spanish as the culturally superior language. Bárbara Cifuentes, in her 1998 review of multilingualism in New Spain, emphasized the singularity of Clavijero’s contribution to Nahuatl lexicography. He made diacronical observations by comparing Classical and 18th century Nahuatl as well as between Nahuatl and Classical European languages.} addresses two very important accusations by de Paw, Buffon and Robertson: one is that American peoples had no alphabet and, therefore, they were backward. Those peoples lacked words for metaphysical concepts, so translation was impossible. On the first charge, Clavijero says that de Paw doesn’t want to give credit to the Indians’ writing because it would mean that they were equal to Egyptians, something that he is not ready to admit. On the second charge, that is, that “de las lenguas americanas no hay ni una que tenga más de tres conceptos metaphisicos. No se puede traducir ningún

\footnote{365 *BHA* II, 119 - 122}
libro a la lengua de los algonquinos, guaranis o paraguayos, ni a la de los de Mexico ni Peru por no tener suficiente número de terminos propios”, he observes that no language, not even Latin, had those “conceptos metafisicos” since they were originally forged in Greek. However, he says, Nahuatl, which has been recognized not only by Spanish but by French and Flemish missionaries as a fully comprehensive language, did have a wealth of abstract terms, and gives a list of them: “mente: teixtlamatia/ sabiduria: tlamatiliztli/ razón: ixtlamachiliztli/ cognicion: tlaiximatiliztli....” (Clavijero 1826: 240).

On the second charge, that nothing could be affirmed about their past since the missionaries had destroyed the pictorials and other historical traces for fear of idolatry, and that, if not the missionaries, then the same Indians had hid or destroyed them for fear of being accused by the friars,\(^{366}\) Clavijero\(^{367}\) uses a circular argument: this allegation is not true since how else could the Spanish and mestizo chronicles have been written if not thanks to the many surviving documents. He defends the authenticity of the early manuscripts and the way they were used by his antecessors: Sigüenza y Góngora, Torquemada,\(^{368}\) Ixtlixóchitl,\(^{369}\) Sahagún,\(^{370}\) Chimalpán, and,\(^{371}\) Tezozómoc,\(^{372}\) Tadeo de Niza,\(^{373}\) Gabriel de Ayala,\(^{374}\) who all, he says, used these painted texts. In addition, he observes that the Indians kept them because they served as supporting evidence in case of land disputes (Clavijero 1826: 223).

\(^{366}\) A first big fire of documents had been done by the Tlaxcalans when they entered with Cortés in Texcoco (Pomar 1582), more were burnt after the inquisitorial process against Carlos Ometochtzin, the cacique of Texcoco, for fear of Juan de Zumárraga, the inquisitor. I cannot but recall that, some eight or ten years ago, in Cholula, following the imprisonment of a private collector of archaeological pieces, the local newspaper mentioned that people who possessed such pieces were destroying them for fear of being discovered.

\(^{367}\) BHA II, 119 - 122
\(^{368}\) BHA V, 37 - 38
\(^{369}\) BHA I, 125
\(^{370}\) BHA IV, 275 - 277
\(^{371}\) BHA II, 108 - 109
\(^{372}\) BHA I, 127
\(^{373}\) BHA IV, 27
\(^{374}\) BHA I, 193
At this point in the research, I realized that the character of the controversy and the arguments invoked hold an extraordinary similitude with a more recent controversy: the one that confronted some twenty years ago Miguel León-Portilla, the famous Mexican Middle-Americanist, to Amos Segala, John Bierhorst and López Austin, on the matter of the use and translation of sources for pre-Hispanic history (Payás 2003). Briefly put, nationalist historiography represented by M. León-Portilla has been criticized on grounds that, using sources in a biased manner, it has distorted certain facts for the sake of a representation of the past that has served nationalist ideology.

Without pretending to go further in the comparison, the arguments given by M. León-Portilla are similar to the ones Clavijero\textsuperscript{375} gave when attacked by foreigners who believed that the sources did not warrant such interpretations. The crucial point is that, indeed, the hypotexts are the key to the past. If they are invalidated the whole structure can crumble, and History would have to be retold.

Let us have a look at the structure that nationalist historiography built until Clavijero.

\textbf{In} Figure 28 I have tried to locate the main chroniclers and their intertextual relations. It is a self-made plan, composed by collecting and noting the information given by chroniclers themselves or by modern specialists.\textsuperscript{376} I have drawn a large pool of hypotexts (codices, early Nahua) manuscripts and oral narratives) which were allegedly the sources for later chronicles. Let's start by looking at where Clavijero is, at the bottom of the tree. Clavijero says he looked at some manuscripts and codices that belonged to Sigüenza y

\textsuperscript{375} \textit{BHA} II, 119 - 122

\textsuperscript{376} To the best of my knowledge, the intertextual relations are accurate but incomplete. There are more chronicles to be taken into account. I am restricting myself to the ones I have mentioned in the course of the research.
Góngora, namely the ones the latter had obtained from Alva Ixtlixóchitl\(^{377}\) relative, plus the ones Clavijero saw in Italy (arrow to pool of hypotexts). He also draws extensively from Torquemada\(^{378}\) and Acosta. Torquemada, in turn, takes from the previous Franciscan chronicles, and both Tenochca, or Mexica (Alvarado Tezozómo\(^{379}\)c) and Acolhua, or Texcoco (Alva Ixtlixóchitl) traditions, as well as from the pool of hypotexts. Acosta draws from Durán, who draws from Tovar,\(^{380}\) who presumably translated into Spanish an unknown Nahuatl transcription of a pictorial, as I already explained in the Foundation Myths section. It is in this mesh of intertextual relations based upon intersemiotic translations that the reelaboration of history takes place.

Not only the first generation of chroniclers but the ones that followed never failed to say they are basing their writings on papers and codices, and on the knowledge of elder Indians. Of course, they give no proof of it, but they needed to be believed. In 1608, one of them, Fernando de Alva Ixtlixóchitl,\(^{381}\) went as far as having the Indian authorities (Cabildo) of Otumba to certify the accuracy of the translation at the sight of the ancient documents he said were his originals, which makes me think that it must not have been uncommon to question the authenticity of such documentary evidence.\(^{382}\) We might be, therefore, in presence of a phenomenon of authority conferred by translations, real or pretended, to

\(^{377}\) *BHA* I, 125  
\(^{378}\) *BHA* V, 37 - 38  
\(^{379}\) *BHA* I, 127  
\(^{380}\) *BHA* V, 52 - 53  
\(^{381}\) Don Fernando's insistence on having this certification was due to the fact that the history of his ancestors was intended to support his claims to privileges of nobility. He was, indeed, appointed governor of Texcoco in 1612 (Aranda 1978: 12). The texts submitted were five Relaciones de los Tultecas, eleven relaciones de la Historia de los señores Chichimecas and the Ordenanzas de Nezahualcoyotl. These books were apparently written in Nahuatl and translated into Spanish (by the local alguacil, Francisco Rodríguez).  
\(^{382}\) History writing was never disinterested. Juan Cano and his wife, Isabel, legitimate daughter of Moctezuma, hired the services of Franciscan friars to write Isabel’s genealogy in order to ask King Charles V for the restoration of her father’s properties (Duverger 1983: 35, 50-53). Even in this case, where the writers are Churchmen and, therefore, supposedly more trustworthy, they did not fail to attest, in the title, that they derived the information from paintings and from accounts of the elders.
historiography.

The questions, then, that face historiography converge with those of translation. They concern the truthfulness of allegations of having drawn information from those documents, the actual existence and readability of such documents, the capability of the historian or of the interpreter to read them and their relative intellectual honesty, as well as the degree of source, informants and interpreters’ sharing that was going on.

Maybe this a good point to put an end to the work: having seen how translation was at the source of the historiographic discourse, now we see it dissolved in it, sharing its problems and questions.

I hope this discussion will have sawn doubts as well as certitudes about the role of translation in the construction of the discourse that eventually let to independence and later forms of nationalism in Mexico.
CONCLUSION
As I have shown, the significance and functions of translations vary along the colonial period. Their dynamics is also different. I have explained how they played a leading role when what was at stake was cultural survival, and the way they were present in the emergence of a new subjectivity. In those years their presence is so strong that one can safely say that they are everything there is on the learned scene. I am referring to the Translational Canvass materials woven during the first decades. The social reality in which they are produced is moving, fractal and unstable, but bonded together by religion. An imagined community of faithful, a Catholic community, as dreamed by the Mendicants, is the motor of this translation-negotiation, and their universalist pre-judgement works in favor of this movement.

The passage from Catholic to Mexican identity is punctuated by translations and transwritings also of variable significance and functions: irrespectively of the purposes with which they are actually written some help establishing the myths of foundation, while others contribute to a representation of Classical nobility and worth, and others help creating a representation of a modern, dynamic nation. Their relative weight as compared to other forms of writing diminishes with time, as an independent national culture grows.

In the Modern High Culture category, I have identified many names of men who, spurred by the disdain from those who believed that nothing worth of being considered culture could grow in America, contribute to building a national discourse and culture. Among them, with his five volume Biblioteca Hispanoamericana Septentrional, a bibliographical apparatus today only seen as a curiosity, is D. Mariano Beristáin de Souza, a quasi contemporary of Clavijero. Beristáin, following Eguiara y Eguren, tries to demonstrate the wealth of the literate production of New Spain. I have taken advantage of
this nationalist discourse to discover and track the practice of translation during the colonial period.

This review of translation along three centuries shows some one hundred translators and transwriters: Spanish, Indian, criollos and mestizos. Their agendas are not coincidental, of course, and their products are not homogenous either: translations without originals, translations with many originals, rewritings of all sorts and borderline cases. I have shown that some of them are deeply embedded in the colonial discourse, while others reveal more independence. In others, still, it is the Indian who confiscates the language of the colonizer to serve his own ends.

The word “role” in the title of this research seems now, at this distance, a very poor representation for the heterogeneity of materials, characters and responses I have tried here to understand and explain.

If we can talk about a single role of translation here, it should be that of accompanying historical events and phenomena. Its responsibilities may be larger sometimes, and sometimes smaller; its guilt too; sometimes translation may play a brilliant role in breaking new ground. Whatever its historical responsibilities, it is there, with its potential for hiding or revealing meanings, changing subjectivities and promoting biases. It has become part of the social discourse and it has accompanied the construction of a national identity.

Therefore, if translation has something to do with national identity, and we have seen that it does, can this relationship be considered universal, in particular in view of the present blurring of frontiers and the emergence of new, extraterritorial, multilingual or other identities? Can we, in the context of globalization (I had managed to avoid the phrase
so far), still say that translation helps defining national frontiers, or can we talk about a redefinition of the roles of translation in this new context?

Maybe part of the answer to this question can be found in today's attempts at defining new territories: Mexico's official specialist in pre-Hispanic and early Colonial history, Miguel León-Portilla, recently co-edited a one-thousand pages sort of Mesoamerican Bible, first in English, and then in Spanish. The titles of both versions are almost naively reminiscent of the Book: In the Language of the Kings, and Antigua y Nueva Palabra. It is a collection of pieces written originally in Nahuatl, Maya, and other indigenous languages, from the fifteenth to the twenty-first century, which is offered to us in translation.

The book is dedicated to the Chicano reader, presented in it as the new mestizo, in a "new geography of Mesoamerica". This "new" Mesoamerica is in fact the same that was defined by anthropologists for the pre-Hispanic times, extending from the South of the United States, covering Mexico and including most of Central America. What is definitely new is the modernization of the term, which now proposes a cultural counterpart of NAFTA, with Mexico as its center. To the empire of trade and hard currency, León-Portilla opposes a "Mesoamerican ethos", a spiritual empire of soft philosophy and Sunday literature. The war-like Aztec culture, which for decades was the symbol of national pride against the imperialist North, is now replaced by a larger, more diffuse, less militant and more "New-Age" culture, in which indigenous languages and cultures become undifferentiated by translation, yielding either to English or to Spanish. Also, the representations brought about by translations make Mayas and Toltecs better symbols of the sort of culture that is disseminated by ethnic tourism.
For this book, Miguel-León Portilla had his Spanish translations from Nahuatl re-translated into English, deliberately ignoring the many fine English translators of this indigenous language that have emerged in recent years, and which clearly escape the translation-historiographic paradigm set up by nationalist Mexican historiography.

There we have, again, as accompanying history, translation.

The historical responsibilities of translation make me conclude that, literally appealing as it may be, I cannot agree with Pym’s romantic portrait of the translator as the frontier man or woman. I admit that I too enjoy being in middle grounds, in the no-man’s land of cultural anti-essentialism. I indulge also in the idea of a translator-Christophoros carrying worlds across the river. And maybe I have been personally inspired by such images. Nevertheless, I must conclude that the translator, especially seen from the historical point of view, acts as an (intercultural, if we want) agent. Anthony Pym’s intercultures, to which the translators would belong, are transits with the potential to bring about new identities, but only briefly intercultural identities, while Tezozómoc, Alva Ixtlixóchitl, Sigüenza, Clavijero, and León-Portilla are agents of some culture and language. Only this location gives them, and us, rights and responsibilities. Only as agents knowing what we work for are we subjects of ethics.

I cannot finish without saying that two colonial women characters are left out of this study, and both have to do with translation and national identity: Malinche and Guadalupe. It was not done on purpose. Every time there was a chance to include them in the study (and there were many such chances), I held back. My excuse is that they have received so much scholarly and non-scholarly attention that it is difficult to approach them from new points of view. It was not possible to include them without casting large shades over the
rest of the characters I wanted to describe. Now that this is finished, I realize that maybe it is not so bad that such powerful representations could be eschewed.

Fig. 29. Malinche y Cortés en la azotea.
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APPENDIX: TRANSLATORS’ REGISTER
The Translational Canvass:

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