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Rios Castano, V.

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Original citation & hyperlink:

Rios Castano, V 2014, 'From the ‘Memoriales con escolios’ to the Florentine Codex”: Sahagún and his Nahua Assistants’ Co-authorship of the Spanish Translation”' Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 214-228.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13260219.2014.939128>

DOI 10.1080/13260219.2014.939128

ISSN 1326-0219

ESSN 2151-9668

Publisher: Taylor and Francis

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research on 27/08/2014, available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/13260219.2014.939128>

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From the ‘Memoriales con escolios’ to the *Florentine Codex*: Sahagún and his Nahua assistants’ co-authorship of the Spanish translation

Victoria Ríos Castaño

Victoria University of Wellington

It is generally assumed that Fray Bernardino de Sahagún translated the Nahuatl text of the *Florentine Codex* (ca. 1577-1579) into Spanish. The surviving ‘Memoriales con escolios’ (Tlatelolco, ca. 1565), a three-column page draft comprising the Nahuatl-language source text, its translation into Spanish and explanatory notes for the clarification of relevant Nahuatl terminology, serves as a point of reference to argue that Sahagún’s group of Nahua assistants were co-authors of the column containing the Spanish translation that was eventually transferred to the *Florentine Codex*. In order to support this argument, this study portrays the learning experiences to which his Nahua assistants were exposed at the Imperial College of Tlatelolco, and which they applied to the creation of the ‘Memoriales con escolios’, and examines a passage from the manuscript that casts light on Sahagún and his assistants’ working methods and on the translation techniques that they employed.

Keywords: College of Tlatelolco, *Florentine Codex*, ‘Memoriales con escolios’, Nahua assistants, Sahagún, Spanish translation

A cursory glance at the surviving manuscripts of *Historia universal de las cosas de Nueva España*, known as the *Códices matritenses*, and at its final copy, the *Florentine Codex*, suffices to open up a Pandora's Box of concerns about their polyphonic nature and authorship.¹ Traceable throughout the manuscripts is the handwriting of several Nahuatl copyists, who drafted passages, rewrote some of them and composed new ones, together with that of Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, who scribbled scattered marginal annotations and section titles. Sahagún explains the complicated production process through which these manuscripts came into existence in his second prologue to *Historia universal*, increasing the speculation about its authorship by asserting that 'esta obra a sido examjnada, y apurada por muchos, y en muchos años'.² Having devised a summary of all the topics he wished to cover, Sahagún gathered a group of high-born Nahuatl elders, to whom he refers as 'principales', in two locations in central Mexico—Tepeapulco (ca. 1558-1561) and Tlatelolco (ca. 1561-1565)—and asked them questions relating to his summary. Sahagún also counted on a group of Nahuatl 'colegiales', former students whom he had trained in Latin grammar and rhetoric at the Franciscan Imperial College of Santa Cruz in Santiago of Tlatelolco. In their role as Sahagún's assistants, the 'colegiales' acted as cultural mediators, clarifying queries and providing information and explanations of cultural and linguistic nuances that escaped him. In addition, these assistants jotted down all the information that Sahagún requested in Nahuatl; they compared, selected, and edited answers, adding data and turning an amalgam of material into coherent texts that read fluently in their mother-tongue.

In his introductory study to the 1956 edition of the Spanish version of *Historia universal*, Ángel María Garibay Kintana foregrounded the Nahuatl role in the text's production, stating that the *Códices matritenses* are 'indudable testimonio de lo que dijeron y redactaron los indios, es obra de éstos más que de Sahagún'.³ The Nahuatl merge into a united front that includes the group of 'colegiales' or acculturated assistants and the Nahuatl elders

who supplied oral and pictorial sources. In 1958, Miguel León Portilla initiated a book series entitled *Fuentes indígenas de la cultura Náhuatl: Textos de los informantes de Sahagún*, which continued to emphasize that these early drafts should be attributed to the Nahua elders and assistants rather than to Sahagún.⁴ Donald Robertson cast doubt on Garibay Kintana and León Portilla's stance, reassuring that '[t]he role of the informants was in essence a passive role; the role of Sahagún was the active and dominant role, the role of editor and controlling mind of the whole enterprise'.⁵ After all, it is Sahagún who designed the content outline, asked questions, supervised what his assistants wrote, and modelled the amalgam of heterogeneous writings into sections, chapters and books, producing a harmonious categorization of knowledge that mirrors classical and medieval hierarchically-ordered encyclopaedias.⁶ Leaving aside the Nahua elders' input, Robertson nevertheless recognizes the potential contribution of Sahagún's assistants to the different drafts of *Historia universal*. While in Tepeapulco they were still young adults, once in Mexico City 'they were old enough to have had some influence on the formation of the manuscript [...]. They were no longer so young so as to be without acceptable ideas and forceful suggestions'.⁷

The agency of the Nahua assistants in the writing of the Nahuatl-source text of *Historia universal* has come to the fore and found support in a number of examples of how they may have brought a European mindset to bear on their ancestors' answers. J. Jorge Klor de Alva, having compared the descriptions of the god Huitzilopochtli in the *Primeros memoriales* of Tepeapulco (ca. 1559-1561) and the *Manuscrito de Tlatelolco* (ca. 1561-1565), has observed a substantial ideological shift that he attributes to the assistants. In the former text, Huitzilopochtli is represented as a two-dimensional deity who nurtures and destroys; in the latter, he is stripped of his virtues and transformed into a Christianized one-dimensional evil sorcerer.⁸ In their studies of Book X of *Historia universal*, on fauna, flora and mineralogy, Luisa Pranzetti and Ilaria Palmeri Capesciotti have also unveiled possible

additions on the assistants' part. Both scholars have identified the depiction of monogamous snakes, chaste quails and the prodigious eagle's sight as amply-disseminated sixteenth-century European topoi contained in Pliny's *Historia naturalis* and Bartholomaeus Anglicus's *De proprietatibus rerum*.⁹ Likewise, Pablo Escalante Gonzalbo has noted analogies with the portrayals of the jaguar and the eagle in passages of Johann Von Cube's *Hortus sanitatis*, and in that of the coyote as a grateful animal in Pliny's work.¹⁰

The exploration of the Nahua assistants' involvement in the creation of Book XII, on the conquest of Mexico, brings to light the assistants' working methods and their engagement not only during the composition of the Nahuatl text but also during its translation into Spanish. In his close examination of this book's manuscript—following the format of the *Florentine Codex*; a two-column page work with the Spanish translation on the left and the original on the right—James Lockhart has perceived the presence of two scribes who copied previous drafts; one of them the Nahuatl text, and the other, the Spanish text. As for the author or authors of the originals, Lockhart expresses uncertainty about the closeness and nature of Sahagún's supervision, which leads him to propose that the assistants composed the Nahuatl text and to treat the authorship of the translation into Spanish cautiously.¹¹ An analysis of this target text, which is riddled with spelling mistakes, due to the scribe's technique of pronouncing aloud while he was writing, and with grammatical errors and unidiomatic expressions that reveal the scribe's weakness in the Spanish language, would suggest that Sahagún did not revise the final manuscript.¹² The evidence of his absence leaves Lockhart unsure as to whether it was Sahagún or his assistants who authored the translation. Nevertheless, the paraphrasing, the use of words such as 'indios' versus 'españoles', and biased items of information inserted within the text—for example, the promotion of Cortés, whom the Franciscans revered as God's instrument to evangelize the New World—prompts Lockhart to conclude that Sahagún must have been the author. 'Although I would not know

how to go about proving it', Lockhart admits, 'I doubt that Sahagún's aides did much direct translation of the Nahuatl [...]. I have little reason to doubt that the Spanish text faithfully represents Sahagún's intentions and views, and even for the most part his phrasing'.¹³ Lockhart's argument, and above all his final statement 'even for the most part his phrasing', open the door for interpretation, indicating, perhaps, that Sahagún was the main translator and that his assistants aided him.

The authorship of the Spanish translation, which has been commonly regarded as Sahagún's work, has come under scrutiny in recent years and appears to be leaning, like the authorship of the Nahuatl text, towards the Nahua assistants. Thus, in his study of Book XII Kevin Terraciano has questioned whether Sahagún is the sole translator of the Nahuatl text, arguing that 'Sahagún translated or participated in the translation of the Nahuatl into Spanish'.¹⁴ Bearing in mind the difficulty that the claim of authorship raises, Terraciano deals with examples in which the Spanish text paraphrases, summarizes, omits, and distorts information from the Nahuatl-source text. He holds the view that '[s]omeone, perhaps Sahagún himself, seems to have softened the tenor of the Nahuatl text in the Spanish translation', hinting that Sahagún's authorship, or solitary authorship, should not be assumed.¹⁵ In this vein, in her analysis of Sahagún's prologues to *Historia universal* Mariana C. Zinni goes even further to boldly assert that 'estos estudiantes', in reference to the assistants or 'colegiales', 'escribieron la sección náhuatl del texto, [y] la tradujeron al español (mientras fray Bernardino revisaba la misma)'.¹⁶ The extent to which this statement is valid—or any other challenging Sahagún's authorship of a text written in his native language, and which, conversely, is the language that his assistants learnt—proves difficult to ascertain after the study of not only Book XII but also of the remaining Spanish translation of the *Florentine Codex*. After all, the truth is that, in general terms, on reading the Spanish text it is Sahagún's Eurocentric and Christian worldview that permeates throughout, domesticating the source

text by inserting sixteenth-century Spanish culture-specific items, biased interpretations and digressions.

The intention of this article is to gauge the degree to which Sahagún's Nahua assistants can be credited with the co-authorship of the Spanish translation. Given that they were linguistically and culturally equipped to perform a profound analysis of the Nahuatl text by resolving vocabulary and grammar issues that were raised during the translation process, their role in textual interpretation and translation activities are taken for granted. The article tries to demonstrate this premise by examining a passage from the early surviving manuscript of *Historia universal*, the 'Memoriales con escolios', composed in Tlatelolco around 1565. This text, which has three columns per page, comprising the Nahuatl text, the Spanish translation and explanatory notes of Nahuatl terms, enables a better understanding of the translation process, and unfolds how the Nahua assistants clarified linguistic subtleties in Nahuatl, a task that, to a certain extent, makes them co-authors of the resulting fluent translation into Spanish. In order to demonstrate this, the article is divided into two interrelated sections. The first one is briefly concerned with the role that Sahagún played as a tutor at the College of Tlatelolco and the learning experiences that his students internalized, which were vital for their later linguistic commissions. The second analyses a passage from the 'Memoriales con escolios' so as to shed light upon the manner in which Sahagún and his assistants transferred the linguistic activities exercised at Tlatelolco to the working scheme that was in place during the translation process of the Nahuatl text into Spanish.

Sahagún and his students of Tlatelolco

Officially opened in 1536, the Franciscan Imperial College of Santa Cruz for Nahua boys in Santiago of Tlatelolco was one of the earliest Franciscan centres of study in the New World. The friars worked as tutors in the delivery of a European grammar school programme and continued with their own religious studies, which they combined with the creation of

linguistic and doctrinal texts that facilitated the learning of Nahuatl, the language in which they were struggling to spread the Catholic faith.¹⁷ Amongst others, Fray Juan Fochoer, a former doctor of Law in Paris, taught rhetoric, logic, and philosophy, and wrote a Nahuatl grammar, and Fray Andrés de Olmos, a graduate of Canon Law at the University of Valladolid, taught Latin, translated sermons and religious treatises, pioneered the writing of accounts of indigenous cultures, and published the Nahuatl grammar *Arte de la lengua mexicana* (1547). As for Sahagún, junior in age and education, he speaks himself of his first pedagogical role at the College as a tutor of Latin—‘[y]o fuy, el que los primeros quatro años, trabaje con ellos, y los puse en la inteligencia de todas las materias, de la latinidad’—, although, with the passing of the years, he would also impart moral and natural philosophy, subject matters covered in Books VI and VII of *Historia universal*.¹⁸

The library collection of the College hoarded an exhaustive inventory of some of the works that Sahagún and his brethren employed to educate their Nahua pupils. For the study of grammar, Sahagún availed of Nebrija’s *Introductiones latinae*, and for rhetoric, of a copious list of collections of excerpts and works by Quintilian, Cicero, Virgil, Seneca, Sallust, and Aesop.¹⁹ For example, in *De institutione oratoria* Quintilian called for the experimentation, discovery and mastery of the language and style of works like Aesop’s fables and of heroic verses, as found in Virgil’s *The Aeneid*, by means of paraphrase and emulation. Taking heed of Quintilian’s advice, the tutors ensured that students at Tlatelolco received instruction in textual analysis, which meant that they wrote grammatical commentaries, drew up glosses, and undertook exercises in abbreviation, amplification, translation, and appropriation or free rewriting.²⁰ These learning activities can be inferred from the fact that Sahagún took pride in his students’ proficiency to ‘hacer versus heruicus’ in Latin, and because a selected number of Aesop’s fables were translated into Nahuatl by one or more men associated with the College.²¹

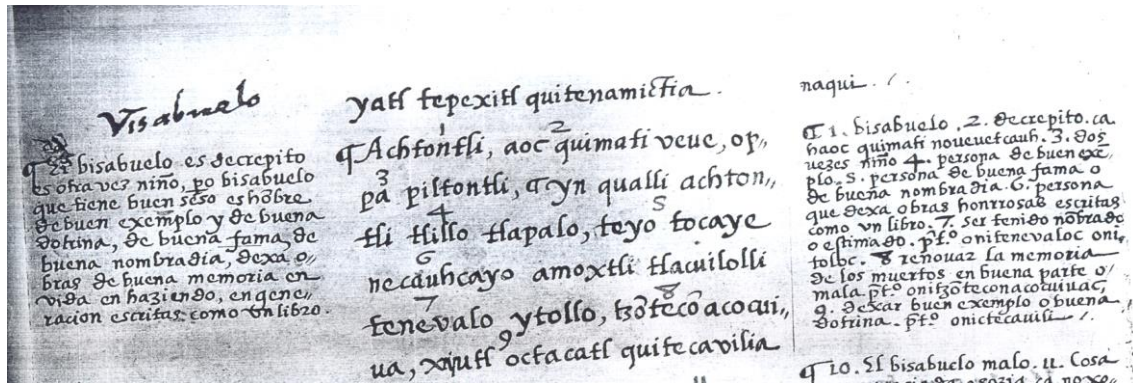
Trained as skilled linguists and rhetoricians, outstanding students became teachers, scribes and translators who rendered their services as interpreters of liturgical activities and collaborated very closely with the friars in the production of religious and linguistic works in Nahuatl for confessors and preachers. Worthy of mention are Martín Jacobita; tutor and rector of the College; Antonio Valeriano, who aided Fray Juan Bautista in the writing of *Sermonario* and Fray Alonso de Molina in researching and drafting meanings and etymologies for *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana*; and Hernando de Ribas, who also contributed to Molina's work and translated Fray Juan de Gaona's *Colloquios de la paz, y tranquilidad del alma, en lengua mexicana*.²² Like his brethren, Sahagún benefited from the assistance of a regular cohort of 'colegiales', whose substantial input in the composition of the works that had been attributed to him he highlights when stating that 'si sermones y postillas y doctrinas se han hecho en la lengua indiana, que puedan parecer y sean limpios de toda heregia son los que con ellos se han compuesto', because, as native speakers of Nahuatl and trained in Latin, classical rhetoric and grammar at Tlatelolco, 'nos dan a entender las propiedades de los vocablos y las propiedades de su manera de hablar; y las incongruidades que hablamos en los sermones o escribimos en las doctrinas ellos nos las enmiendan'.²³ Indispensable in the understanding of the subtleties of the Nahuatl language, Sahagún insists that 'cualquiera cosa que se ha de convertir en su lengua, si no va con ellos examinada, no puede ir sin defecto', a statement which certifies that the assistants played an indispensable role in translation tasks; that is, in the search of equivalents, the clarification of grammar issues, and the proofreading of texts translated from Spanish and Latin into Nahuatl.²⁴ His indebtedness is such that he eulogizes them as experts in Latin, by calling them 'latinos' and 'gramaticos', and as 'trilingues' or 'espertos en tres lenguas, latina, española y indiana'.²⁵ What is more, Sahagún even names some of them and their places of origin in the second prologue to *Historia universal*: 'el principal y mas sabio, fue antonjio valeriano, vezino de

azcaputzalco: otro poco menos, que este fue Alonso vegerano, vezino de quauhtitlan: otro fue martin Jacobita, [...] otro pedro de san buenaventura, vezino de quauhtitlan. [...] Diego de grado, vezino del Tlatilulco [...], Bonifacio maximiliano, vezino del tlatilulco [...]. Matheo seuerino, vezino de suchimjlco'.²⁶ All of them were to work hand in hand with Sahagún at some point once the highest Prelate of the Franciscan Order, Fray Francisco de Toral, commissioned him in 1558 to write 'en lengua mexicana, lo que me pareciese, ser vtil: para la doctrina, cultura, y manutencia, de la cristiandad, destos naturales'.²⁷ Surviving texts resulting from this appointment include *Historia universal*, Sahagún's version of the discussions held by Franciscans and Nahuá wisemen or 'tlamatinime' *Colloquios y doctrina christiana* (ca. 1564), the collection of sermons and prayers *Adiciones, apéndice a la postilla y exercicio quotidiano* (1579), the collection of chants and sermons *Psalmodia christiana y sermonario de los sanctos del año* (1583), and a series of manuscripts and sermons held in the Newberry Library and the Biblioteca Nacional in Mexico.

Glossing and translation in the 'Memoriales con escolios'

Initially, Sahagún envisaged *Historia universal* as an encyclopaedic work for preachers and confessors who would consult a Nahuatl source text in the centre of the page, its translation into Spanish on the left and relevant explanatory or lexicographic notes relating to the Nahuatl text on the right.²⁸ Nevertheless, the ambitious project failed due to lack of funding to cover production costs and salaries, and so the intended layout is only reflected in the surviving manuscripts of the 'Memoriales con escolios', which comprise the first five chapters of what eventually became Book VII of *Historia universal*—on the sun, the moon, the stars, and the clouds—and chapters I, II and part of III of Book X—on the portrayal of people according to the Christian categorization of virtuous versus sinful features.²⁹ Below is the example on the virtuous great-grandfather, which, relocated to *Historia universal*, is found in chapter I of Book X of the *Florentine Codex*. The Spanish column starts under

Sahagún's handwritten title 'visabuelo' and the three columns are written by the same Nahuascribe. The explanations and the Spanish text occupy less space than the Nahuatl text, which has been written more carefully and in bigger lettering, so it seems, to facilitate reading.³⁰



The transcription of the Spanish text with its Nahuatl-source text and relevant explanatory notes follows as:

El bisabuelo es decrepito es otra vez niño, p[er]o bisabuelo que tiene buen seso es hōbre de buen exemplo y de buena doctrina, de buena fama, de buena nombradia, dexa obras de buena memoria en vida[,] en haziend[a], en generacion[,] escritas como un libro.

(1) Achtontli, (2) aoc quimati veue, (3) oppa piltontli, yn qualli achtontli, (4) tlillo tlapalo, (5) teyo tocaye, (6) necauhcayo amoxtli tlacuilolli. ([1] The Great-Grandfather: [2] [He is] decrepit, [3] in his second childhood. The good great-grandfather [4] [is] of exemplary life, [5] of fame, of renown. [6] His good works remain written in books).

1. bisabuelo. 2. decrepito. ca. haoc quimati noueuetcauh [case. my old man no longer knows it]. 3. dos uezes niño [.] 4. persona de buen exēplo. 5. persona de buena fama o de buena nombradia. 6. persona que dexa obras honrrosas escritas como un libro.

This three-column page evinces that far from creating a *vocabulario* with isolated Nahuatl entries and their Spanish meaning, Sahagún sought to codify the language in its context of use.³¹ His lexicographic intention can be seen in the right-hand column entries; annotations that furnish information on nouns, adjectives and verbs within the central text that Sahagún wanted to clarify, and which are numbered in order to allow readers to make an immediate association between the word in its context and the lexicographic entry. The contents of the central and the right-hand columns are reminiscent of those in the exhaustive monolingual

Latin dictionary *Cornucopiae* (1502) by the Italian humanist Ambrosio Calepino.³² Entries consisted of grammar notes, definitions, synonyms, and quotes from classical literature that ‘authorized’ or certified their use. In his first prologue to *Historia universal*, Sahagún cites the *Calepin* in order to argue that, as much as he felt it was necessary to compile a similar Nahuatl dictionary, unlike Calepino, he did not have recourse to Nahua poets and orators’ written samples, which would have authorized the meaning and use of words in the same manner as the classical *auctoritates* had done for Latin. Sahagún, nevertheless, strove to supply a bank of texts with linguistic authority, a ‘red barredera para sacar a luz todos los vocablos desta lengua con sus propias y methaphoricas significaciones’.³³ This ambitious corpus offered ‘todas las maneras de hablar, y todos los vocablos, que esta lengua vsa: tambien autorizados, y ciertos: como lo que escriujo Vergilio, y Ciceron, y los demas authores, de la lengua latina’, the core texts or ‘fundamentos’, as Sahagún calls them, that could secure the elaboration of a Nahuatl Calepin in the future.³⁴ In his time, nonetheless, Sahagún made available to friars a no less remarkable work, thanks to which those looking for authorized or appropriate excerpts in Nahuatl to, for example, interact with old men, whether in a casual meeting or in a religious context, such as in a sermon or during the administering of the sacrament of penance, had at their disposal descriptions like that of the virtuous great-grandfather. In the ‘Memoriales con escolios’ the central column in Nahuatl, catching the friars’ eyes with its larger, firmer and clearer handwriting, is flanked by the fluent translation into Spanish and explanatory notes that informed them how they could use relevant terms. A general examination of those explanatory notes shows that, in order to record the correct grammatical and semantic application of the language for non-native speakers, Sahagún asked his assistants to write the first person possessive form of nouns, which differed from their nominative form; the preterit form of verbs, the construction of which presented several options; and the words ‘persona’ and ‘cosa’ preceding adjectives and

nouns and functioning as qualifiers that dispelled doubts on how best to put those words into practice.³⁵

As regards the explanatory notes, within the passage concerning the virtuous great-grandfather these range from equivalents like number 1 ('achtontli' for great-grandfather), and figurative or sense-for-sense interpretation like number 2 ('aoc quimate ueue' as decrepit, and literally meaning 'old man no longer knows it'), to definitions by explanation like number 6 ('necauhcayo amoxtli tlacuilolli' as 'persona que dexa obras honrosas escritas como un libro', although 'amoxtli tlacuilolli' can be understood literally as 'work, writing'), and morphological annotations like number 2 ('ca. haoc quimati noueuetcauh', literally meaning 'case, my old man who loses control of himself').³⁶ In this final instance a difference is established between the nominative case and the possessive form. While in the Nahuatl text of the central column 'ueue', as in '(2) aoc quimati ueue', represents the nominative case ('an old man' or 'the old man'), the annotation 'noueuetcauh' of the right-hand column expresses the possessive in the first person singular ('my old man'). The abbreviation 'ca.', standing for grammatical case or declension—since Sahagún and his contemporaries conceived the modification of Nahuatl words as Latin cases—displays the complex formation of the possessive form to a non-native speaker of Nahuatl. In this case, the word 'ueue' demands the prefix 'no', an intercalary 't' and the suffix 'cauh'. As native speakers, Sahagún's assistants left notice of how to modify 'ueue' (old) and, for example, address a penitent or a member of a religious congregation, without incurring any mistake, with the word 'noueuetcauh' ('my old man'). In fact, the correct use of vocatives according to the socio-cultural aspects with which the Nahuas endowed kinship was a concern for friars like Sahagún, Olmos and Fray Alonso de Molina, all of whom undertook lexicographic projects.³⁷ Illustrative of this is another passage of the 'Memoriales con escolios' that contains the description of the virtuous father. The Spanish column, which starts under

Sahagún's handwritten rubric of 'padre', registers the distinct vocatives that, depending on the gender and the status of the speaker, were uttered in order to address a father reverentially:

El hijo del señor dize a su padre nopiltzintzin. Nopiltzintzine. La hija dize le. Noconetzin. Notecu. Totecu. Notecuiyo.

El hijo del principal, mercader, o oficial dize a su padre, Niccauhtzin. Niccauhtzine. La hija dizele. Noconetzin.

El hijo del Labrador dize a su p[adre]. Notatzin. Notecutzin. Notecutze. Tecutze, tachitze, tachietze. La hija dize le. Notecutzin, tecutzin, tachitzin.³⁸

Further analysis of the excerpt describing the virtuous great-grandfather allows speculation on the order of composition of each column as well as on the working scheme implemented by Sahagún and his assistants. It seems as if the Nahuatl text of the central column, in larger handwriting, was the first to be added to the blank page. In another surviving manuscript dating from 1563-1565, known as the 'Memoriales en tres columnas', most of the pages only have the Nahuatl column filled in, which tells us that in the elaboration of his three-column page format Sahagún decided the initial incorporation of the Nahuatl text, from which the annotations and the translation into Spanish derive.³⁹ The composition of this Nahuatl text, as Sahagún reports in his second prologue to *Historia universal*, resulted from the assistants' juxtaposition of the material collected from the Nahuas who had answered Sahagún's series of questionnaires in Tepeapulco and Tlatelolco. During this scrutiny process that involved the correction, deletion and expansion of data, Sahagún eulogizes Martín Jacobita, at the time rector of the College, as his most industrious assistant.⁴⁰ With respect to the composition of the explanatory notes, this appears to have occurred in a second stage, given that, in the case of the virtuous great-grandfather description, the Nahuatl and the explanatory notes columns are finished, whereas the

translation of the Nahuatl paragraph into Spanish, as can be observed in the above illustration, is left incomplete.⁴¹

The creation of the three-column page can be considered as a re-enactment of two comprehension and writing activities which, as recommended by Quintilian, Sahagún must have asked his students to put into practice during his Latin classes: the analysis of the source text by discussing grammatical features, equivalents and definitions, and, once accurately understood, the translation of the source text into their native language and, perhaps, into Spanish. Moreover, the three-column page mirrors the translation process, in which an unspecified number of assistants, together and at times maybe without Sahagún, analysed the nouns, adjectives and verbs to be included within the explanations column; exchanged views on how, for instance, the possessive form of a certain word was formed, and discussed different equivalents so as to concur on the best possible translation of a unit into Spanish. The paragraph on the virtuous great-grandfather reveals that the translation units correspond with the entries in the explanatory notes column; for example '(2) aoc quimati veue', literally meaning 'old man no longer knows it', is translated sense-for-sense as 'decrepito', which also appears in the Spanish translation.

As regards the writing of the translation column of the 'Memoriales con escolios', it is to be noted that sometimes Sahagún scribbles down titles and keywords in Spanish, and he does so at the same level as the corresponding beginning of the Nahuatl text in the central column. His interventions can be interpreted as evidence of his reading of the Nahuatl text in order to supervise it, prepare for the translation and point out to his assistants where the translation ought to be added.⁴² The possibilities for coming up with the Spanish version are diverse and might have depended on factors such as the complexity of the text and even Sahagún's availability. For the case in hand, that of the paragraph on the virtuous great-grandfather, one option is that Sahagún and at least one of his assistants worked through the

explanatory notes and the translation into Spanish together. Sahagún must have debated with him on how best to translate a term or a phrase, which, as a non-native speaker, he found confusing or he thought required explanation. Another possibility is that, after writing the Nahuatl column for the first time or copying it from a previous text, the assistant analysed it and wrote the explanatory notes in a draft, including the translation of terms. Whenever these posed complications, the assistant consulted Sahagún, who, as a native speaker of Spanish, dictated the final version that the assistant copied in another more polished draft.

A comparison of the translation of terms within the explanatory notes column and the more or less matching translation within the Spanish one throws light upon Sahagún and his assistant's working method. The translations of scholia numbers 1 ('achtontli' as 'bisabuelo'), 2 ('aoc quimati veue' as 'decrepito') and 5 ('teyo tocaye' as 'persona de buena fama o de buena nombradia') remain the same in the Spanish translation column. Sahagún either agreed with the suggestions offered by his assistant or made the decisions after consulting him. When choosing the Spanish equivalent for 'achtontli' they would have spoken about family linearity; and when trying to understand the meaning of 'aoc quimati veue' (literally, 'old man no longer knows it') and 'teyo tocaye' ('of fame, of renown'), which imply a more abstract interpretation, Sahagún possibly asked his assistant for the clarification by analysing the terms grammatically and by translating the words literally. As a result, Sahagún rephrased 'aoc quimate veue' by giving it an appropriate sense-for-sense meaning; that of 'decrepito'. Interestingly, the translation decisions of the scholia numbers 3 ('oppa piltontli' as 'dos vezes niño'), 4 ('tlillo tlapalo' as 'persona de buen exēmplo') and 6 ('necauhcayo amoxtli tlacuilolli' as 'persona que dexa obras honrosas escritas como un libro') differ from those written in the Spanish column—'otra vez niño', 'hōbre de buen exemplo y de buena dotrina' and 'dexa obras de buena memoria en vida[,] en haziend[a], en generacion[,] escritas como un libro', respectively. As in the case of 'aoc quimate veue',

Sahagún and his assistant applied word-for-word versus sense-for-sense translation techniques; in Sahagún's words 'propias y metaphoricas significaciones'.⁴³ Thus, for the translation of the scholia number 3 ('oppa piltontli' as 'dos vezes niño'), Sahagún and his assistant probably expected the reader to have a basic knowledge of Nahuatl, and knew that 'oppa' would be immediately recognized as 'two' or 'twice'; hence the explanatory or literal translation 'twice a child'. In the Spanish column Sahagún opts for the sense-for-sense 'es otra vez niño', so as to ensure that the final translation his fellow missionaries would read did not sound awkward or abrupt.

As a matter of fact, it is very likely that Sahagún felt under pressure to produce clear and useful explanatory notes and a high-quality translation for his peers. They would observe how the terms within the Nahuatl text and the explanatory columns were related, and how his translation into Spanish read not only in isolation but also as intrinsically linked to the source text and the explanatory notes. Sahagún's intention of providing friars, the majority of whom were native speakers of Spanish, with a fluent version is similarly borne out by the fact that the translation of terms in scholia numbers 4 and 6 is more specific and detailed in the column with the Spanish text.⁴⁴ 'Tlillo tlapalo' is understood as 'hombre', not 'persona', and not only 'de buen exemplo', but also 'de buena dotrina', whereas 'necauhcaya amoxtli tlacuilolli' is further explained as a man who leaves a legacy of, rather than only 'obras honrosas escritas como un libro', 'obras de buena memoria en vida[,] en hazienda, en generacion[,] escritas como un libro'. The Spanish translation, in both the scholia and the final translation, retains this interpretation of 'amoxtli, tlacuilolli' as 'obras [...] escritas como un libro', but it seems as if in the Spanish translation Sahagún wanted to convey a more elaborate explanation of what kind of a book 'amoxtli' was. Although he shared knowledge of 'amoxtli' with his contemporary friars, he wished to pin down its meaning and stress its

value by uttering different explanatory options to ‘honrrosas’ that crossed his mind, and which were taken down by an assistant.

The Spanish translation of the ‘Memoriales con escolios’ in the *Florentine Codex*

In pursuit of further financial support to complete the three-column page work to which he aspired, Sahagún submitted the first clean copy of *Historia universal* in Nahuatl, finished around 1569, to the scrutiny of three or four fellow friars so that they reported on the worth of the project to the provincial Chapter meeting of the Franciscan Order. Sahagún’s enterprise, nevertheless, came to a halt and his manuscripts were shelved for five years.⁴⁵ During this period, the president of the Council of the Indies, Juan de Ovando, and his former secretary, the royal cosmographer-chronicler Juan López de Velasco, demanded the dispatch of descriptions of New World territories and inhabitants with a view to create a chronicle-atlas, an overarching account or ‘Descripción de las Indias’ that would increase Philip II’s acquaintance with his vassals and possessions on the other side of the Atlantic.⁴⁶ In 1575, following Ovando’s strong expression of interest in his work, Sahagún regained support within his order and the Commissary General Fray Rodrigo de Sequera requested that the twelve books of *Historia universal* ‘se Romançasen: y ansi en Romançe como en lengua mexicana se escribiesen de buena letra’.⁴⁷ Excluding the incorporation of the explanatory notes, this new commission developed in around two to four years, during which time the Spanish left-hand column of the ‘Memoriales con escolios’ was transferred to occupy the same column within the *Florentine Codex*. Thus, Sahagún’s new target audience, for which the translation was finally completed, were Spanish officials who would first cast their eyes upon the text written in their mother tongue.

Mindful of the different purpose that this entire translation of the twelve books into Spanish was to serve, Sahagún pondered on the extent to which he was to remain faithful to the original Nahuatl-source text. During the composition of the three-page column work, he

had taken into consideration the manner in which friars would benefit from an encyclopaedic and lexicographic text that encompassed knowledge of the Nahuas' culture and codified their language. Contrary to this, for the new two-page column work Sahagún realized that the linguistic dimension was superfluous to the needs of Spanish officials, interested in obtaining knowledge on, for example, indigenous governance for the improvement of administrative control in off-sea territories. A succinct comparison between the section on relatives according to the virtuous versus sinful dichotomy within the 'Memoriales con escolios' and the first chapters of Book X of the *Florentine Codex* underpins this statement. To serve as an example, the passages within the Spanish column that record vocatives in order to address parents were only relevant to friars using the Nahuatl language and have no place in the *Florentine Codex*. The descriptions of relatives, nevertheless, are almost identical, as exemplified by the Spanish text on the virtuous great-grandfather that appears in chapter one of Book X. Like the Spanish text of the 'Memoriales con escolios' the passage reads: 'El bisabuelo es decrepito. Es otra vez niño; pero bisabuelo que tiene buen seso es hombre de buen exemplo y de buena doctrina, de buena fama, de buena nombradía. Dexa obras de buena memoria en vida, en hacienda, en generación, escritas como un libro'.⁴⁸ As previously observed, sense-for-sense equivalents with which the Nahua assistants must have come up or helped Sahagún to think of have been retained.⁴⁹ It is interesting to note that, although Sahagún opts not to remove the translation of these passages, replete with synonyms and repetitive information, he is aware that such passages might frustrate and displease his new audience. 'No se debe ofender el lector prudente en que se ponen solamente vocablos y no sentencias', Sahagún dictated to his scribe in this sense, 'porque principalmente se pretende en este tratado aplicar el lenguaje castellano al lenguaje indígena para que se sepan hablar los vocablos propios desta materia, de *viciis et virtutibus*'.⁵⁰ Sahagún is giving notice to his readers, as he does mostly in his prologues to *Historia universal*, that the original aim of the

section was to provide friars with material on reproachable and laudable behaviour for proselytizing activities, such as for the composition of sermons, in this case by offering some chapters that resemble the contents of a Christian treatise of vices and virtues.

In the previous quote Sahagún openly acknowledges the intersection of the two intended audiences of *Historia universal*; friars who needed to master the language to evangelize the Nahuas, and Spanish officials working at the Council of the Indies who demanded information on the New World. These translation purposes determined the different techniques adopted towards the writing of the Spanish translation. During the much more detailed and time-consuming composition process of the ‘Memoriales con escolios’, the Spanish translation was inextricably connected to the other two columns, and thus the necessity to demonstrate the textual links might have resulted in a more faithful and thoroughly-thought Spanish text. Parts of the ‘Memoriales con escolios’ are undeniably the outcome of a process of linguistic documentation and consultation of Sahagún’s assistants, and for this reason, they should be credited with a certain degree of co-authorship of these sections; that is, of the explanatory notes column and the Spanish column of the surviving ‘Memoriales con escolios’, which was eventually transferred to the *Florentine Codex*. When in 1575 Sahagún was granted new financial support to complete a clear copy of the Nahuatl text and its translation, the brief shifts the focus onto how to convey meanings for readers who will neither consult the Nahuatl text nor compare literal and figurative translation of words. With this new commission in mind, and under pressure to meet a deadline, Sahagún perhaps translated those texts that had so far remained untranslated by wandering away from the Nahuatl source more frequently than during the writing of the translation of the ‘Memoriales con escolios’, and by accommodating meanings to his audience in Spain. This explains that, overall, the Spanish translation of the *Florentine Codex* emerges as a domesticated text, palatable to sixteenth-century Spanish readers, as reflected in the insertion

of comparisons with Spain's culture-specific items, the deletion of data, and the appearance of Eurocentric additional notes and digressions. Although the column containing the lexicographic and grammatical explanatory notes disappeared, its former presence is indicative of the preliminary discussion and analysis of the source text as the method implemented in order to write the translation. In addition to this, some of the assistants who worked with Sahagún in Tlatelolco continued to work with him in Mexico City, and their role as linguistic aides must have proved vital throughout the translation process. The continuation of their involvement in the rest of the Spanish translation of the twelve books is a reasonable hypothesis, and yet, it seems extremely difficult, if not impossible, to unreservedly indicate the passages to which they fully contributed and, therefore, to credit them with the co-authorship, or authorship, of the entire Spanish text of the *Florentine Codex*.

¹ The *Códices matritenses*, divided and held in the Madrid libraries of the Real Palacio and the Real Academia de la Historia, consist of the *Primeros memoriales* (Tepeapulco, ca. 1559-1561) and the *Manuscrito de Tlatelolco* (1561-1565), including the 'Segundos memoriales' (ca. 1561-1562), the "Memoriales en tres columnas" (ca. 1563-1565), and the "Memoriales con escolios" (ca. 1565) (Howard F. Cline and Luis Nicolau d'Olwer, 'Sahagún and his

Works', in Howard F. Cline (ed), *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, XIII: *Guide to Ethnohistorical Sources (Part Two)*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1973, pp. 186-207, pp. 190-91). Francisco del Paso y Troncoso edited a partial facsimile reproduction (Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas de Nueva España. Edición parcial en facsímile de los Códices Matritenses en lengua mexicana que se custodian en las Bibliotecas del Palacio Real y de la Real Academia de la Historia*, VI-VIII, Madrid, Hauser y Menet, 1905-07). Some of these documents can be accessed online at the Biblioteca Digital Mexicana. For the consultation of the *Primeros memoriales* two available editions are the *Primeros memoriales. Facsimile Edition*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1993, and the *Primeros memoriales. Paleography of the Nahuatl text and English Translation*, Henry. B. Nicholson and Thelma D. Sullivan (eds), Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1997. For the facsimile reproduction of the *Florentine Codex*, see *Historia universal de las cosas de Nueva España: Códice Laurenziano Mediceo Palatino*, 3 vols, Firenzi, Giunti Barbera, 1996. This two-column page manuscript in Nahuatl and Spanish arrived in Spain around 1578-1579 and, by 1588, entered the Laurentian Library of Florence, for which it receives the title of the *Florentine Codex* (Miguel León Portilla, *Bernardino de Sahagún: Pionero de la antropología*, México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1999, pp. 176-79). For a translation of the Nahuatl column into English, see Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble's edition, *The Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain*, 13 vols, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1950-82. For the Spanish column, see Josefina García Quintana and Alfredo López Austin's edition, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, 2 vols, Madrid, Alianza, 1988. In this article Sahagún's work is entitled *Historia universal de las cosas de Nueva España*, as annotated by one of his scribes (Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas*, VII, p. 401), and referred to hereafter as *Historia universal*.

² Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, I, p. 56. This article reproduces the Nahua amanuensis'

spelling. Sahagún describes the whole process in *Florentine Codex*, I, pp. 53-56. For a comprehensive history of the evolution of the work, see Cline and Nicolau d'Olwer, 'Sahagún and his Works' and Jesús Bustamante García, *Fray Bernardino de Sahagún: una revisión crítica de los manuscritos y de su proceso de composición*, México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1990.

³ Ángel María Garibay Kintana, 'Proemio a *Historia general*', in *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España, escrita por Bernardino Sahagún y fundada en la documentación en lengua mexicana recogida por los mismos naturales*, vol. 1. ed. A. M. Garibay Kintana, México, Porrúa, i-lxii, 1956, p. xi.

⁴ This book series published translations into Spanish of some of the manuscripts within the *Códices matritenses*. León Portilla's edition is *Ritos, sacerdotes y atavíos de los dioses (Fuentes indígenas de la cultura náhuatl: Textos de los informantes de Sahagún, I)*, México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1958. Three subsequent editions are *Veinte himnos sacros de los nahuas (Fuentes indígenas de la cultura náhuatl: Textos de los informantes de Sahagún, II)*, Ángel María Garibay Kintana (ed), México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1958; *Vida económica de Tenochtitlan: Pochtecáyotl, arte de traficar (Fuentes indígenas de la cultura náhuatl: Textos de los informantes de Sahagún, III)*, Ángel María Garibay Kintana (ed), México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1961; and *Augurios y abusiones (Fuentes indígenas de la cultura náhuatl: Textos de los informantes de Sahagún, IV)*, Alfredo López Austin (ed), México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1969. To be noted is that the term 'informantes' might lead at times to confusion as it is also used to name only the Nahuatl elders. Several scholars argue that, in the manner of a modern ethnographer, Sahagún interviewed them in order to gather information. See, for instance, Cline and d'Olwer, 'Sahagún and his works', p. 188; León Portilla, *Bernardino de Sahagún*, p. 13, and Jorge Klor de Alva, 'Sahagún and the Birth of Modern

Ethnography: Representing, Confessing, and Inscribing the Native Other’, in Jorge Klor de Alva, Henry B. Nicholson and Eloise Quiñones Keber (eds), *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún: Pioneer Ethnographer of Sixteenth-century Aztec Mexico*, Albany and New York, The University of Albany and State University of New York, 1988, pp. 31-52, p. 42.

⁵ Donald Robertson, ‘The Sixteenth-Century Mexican Encyclopaedia of Fray Bernardino de Sahagún’, *Cahiers d’histoire mondiale*, 9, 1966, pp. 617-27, p. 625.

⁶ For a similar argument, see Jesús Bustamante García, ‘Retórica, traducción y responsabilidad histórica: Claves humanísticas en la obra de Bernardino de Sahagún’ in Berta Ares et al (eds), *Humanismo y visión del otro en la España moderna: Cuatro estudios*, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992, pp. 246-375, and Walden Browne, *Sahagún and the Transition to Modernity*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2000. One of Sahagún’s textual archetypes was the Franciscan Bartholomaeus Anglicus’s *De proprietatibus rerum* (ca. 1240-1260), an encyclopaedia extensively drawn on by the members of his order in their composition of sermons (Donald Robertson, *Mexican Manuscript Paintings of the Early Colonial Period: The Metropolitan Schools*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1959, p. 170, and ‘The Sixteenth-Century Mexican Encyclopaedia’).

⁷ Robertson, *Mexican Manuscript Painting*, pp. 48-49.

⁸ Klor de Alva, ‘Sahagún and the Birth of Modern Ethnography’, pp. 49-50.

⁹ Luisa Pranzetti, ‘La fauna en las crónicas del Nuevo Mundo a la luz de la culturamedieval’ in Alessandro Lupo and Alfredo López Austin (eds), *La cultura plural: Reflexiones sobre diálogo y silencios en Mesoamérica (Homenaje a Igalo Signorini)*, México and Roma, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and Università Degli Studi di Roma ‘La Sapienza’, 1998, pp. 69-8, pp. 77-80; Ilaria Palmeri Capesciotti, ‘La fauna del libro XI del *Códice florentino* de Fray Bernardino de Sahagún: dos sistemas taxonómicos frente a frente’, *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl*, 32, 2001, pp. 189-221, pp. 211-14.

¹⁰ Pablo Escalante Gonzalbo, ‘Los animales del *Códice Florentino* en el espejo de la tradición occidental’, *Arqueología Mexicana*, 36:VI, 1999, pp. 52-59.

¹¹ Although acknowledging Sahagún as the driving force and main author of *Historia universal*, James Lockhart maintains that the *Florentine Codex*, and Book XII specifically, offer a site for ‘an indigenous role, for indigenous ideas, frameworks and imperatives’ (Lockhart, ‘Introduction’, *We People Here: Nahuatl Accounts of the Conquest of Mexico*, Eugene, Oregon, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004 [1st ed. 1993], pp. 1-46, p. 28). Lockhart admits to the difficulties entailed when trying to determine with clarity the respective parts played by Nahuatl elders and assistants. A clear example of the formers’ role, nevertheless, can be found in Book XII, when the respondents, hailing from Tlatelolco, represent themselves as brave war heroes in opposition to the inhabitants of Tenochtitlan (Lockhart, *We People Here*, p. 30).

¹² Lockhart, *We People Here*, pp. 26, 35-36.

¹³ Lockhart, *We People Here*, p. 37.

¹⁴ Kevin Terraciano, ‘Three Texts in One: Book XII of the *Florentine Codex*’, *Ethnohistory*, 57: I, 2010, pp. 51-72, p. 51.

¹⁵ Terraciano, ‘Three Texts in One’, p. 62. Terraciano cites the end of chapter 39 of the Spanish version as the ‘most obvious evidence of Sahagún’s intervention’, pp. 62-63. A paragraph extols Cortés and the Spaniards’ mercy towards the Nahuas who would otherwise have been massacred.

¹⁶ Mariana C. Zinni, ‘Umbrales hermenéuticos: los “prólogos” y “advertencias” de fray Bernardino de Sahagún’, *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl*, 43, 2012, pp. 161-83, p. 163.

¹⁷ For further reference on the institution, its tutors, students, and programme of studies, see José María Kobayashi, *La educación como conquista: Empresa franciscana en México*, México, El Colegio de México, 1974.

¹⁸ Sahagún, *Historia general*, II, p. 635, Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, 2 vols, Atlas, Madrid, II, p. 187.

¹⁹ See library catalogue in Michael Mathes, *Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco: La primera biblioteca académica de las Américas*, México, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1982.

²⁰ Quintilian, *De institutione oratoria*, H.E. Butler (ed and tr), London, Heinemann, I, pp. 149, 157.

²¹ Sahagún, *Historia general*, II, p. 635. For the translation of Aesop's fables, see Gerdt Kutscher, Gordon Brotherston and Günter Vollmer (eds), *Aesop in Mexico. Die Fabeln des Aesop in Aztekischer Sprache / A 16th Century Aztec Version of Aesop's Fables*, Berlin, Gebr. Mann, 1987.

²² Ignacio Osorio Romero, *La enseñanza del latín a los indios*, México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1990, pp. xxxiv-xxxvi.

²³ Sahagún, *Historia general*, II, p. 635.

²⁴ Sahagún, *Historia general*, II, p. 635. For Lockhart, Sahagún is, contrary to other friars, gracious enough to openly acknowledge his assistants as 'responsible for the fine points of the phrasing and syntax' (Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, p. 256). After her analysis of a large corpus of early colonial doctrinal works in Nahuatl, including collections of sermons and psalms, admonitions, and confession manuals that incorporated Nahua rhetoric, Louis M. Burkhart similarly believes that all of these are collaborative products of the friars and the Nahua assistants who, as 'interpreters and scribes, [...] were largely accountable for the wording' (Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico*, Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1989, p. 25). For further reference on examples of this collaboration within Sahagún's *Psalmody Christiana*, see Arthur J. O. Anderson's introduction, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1993.

²⁵ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, I, pp. 54-55.

²⁶ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, I, p. 55. All of them became influential men within the colony. Vegerano and Valeriano were tutors at Tlatelolco during a certain period of their lives; Valeriano later occupied the position of governor of Mexico City, and Pedro de San Buenaventura is known to have composed, together with Jacobita and Vegerano, the *Annals of Cuauhtitlan*, on the history of Culhuacan and Mexico. For further reference, see Ángel María Garibay Kintana, *Historia de la literatura náhuatl*, 2 vols, México, Porrúa, 1954, II, pp. 224-227, and Kobayashi, *La educación como conquista*, pp. 357- 87. As for two of his scribes in Mexico City, it is known that Severino served as a municipal notary of Xochimilco and that Maximiliano worked as a teacher at Tlatelolco (Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, I, p. 55; Kobayashi, *La educación como conquista*, p. 362, and James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1992, p. 472). Additional assistants have been put forward, such as Agustín de la Fuente, Andrés Leonardo and Pablo Nazareo. De la Fuente and Leonardo collaborated in other works supervised by Sahagún, and Nazareo occupied the post of rector and preceptor of the College of Tlatelolco for many years (Kobayashi, *La educación como conquista*, p. 371; Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, p. 402).

²⁷ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, I, p. 53.

²⁸ Sahagún leaves notice of this objective on the top margin of the first surviving page of the ‘Memoriales con escolios’, where he writes ‘[d]e la manera que esta este quaderno a de ir toda la obra’ (Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas*, VI, p. 177). He also alludes to this three-column format in his first prologue to *Historia universal*: ‘la primera, de lengua española: la segunda, de la lengua Mexicana: la tercera, la declaration, de los vocablos mexicanos’ (Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, I, p. 51).

²⁹ Sahagún echoes the Franciscan’s lack of favour that prevented him from completing this project in the second prologue to Book II, see Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, I, pp. 55-56. Cline

and d'Olwer have also reported on the hostility against works on indigenous matters that was held by the Franciscan provincial Fray Alonso de Escalona, see 'Sahagún and his Works', p. 193. Regarding the 'Memoriales en escolios', for a reprographic reproduction, see Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas*, volumes VI and VII. The surviving manuscript does not represent a final document but is composed of drafts; for instance, there are two working sheets on the sun, a first draft and a much more polished version of it.

³⁰ This passage, extracted from Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas*, VI, p. 206, has been reproduced thanks to the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut PK, Berlin. The translation of the Nahuatl text in the central column is Anderson and Dibble's in Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, XI, p. 5. I am indebted to Dr Elke Ruhnau's helpful comments on the Nahuatl sentences and phrases that are mentioned hereafter.

³¹ For further reference, see Bustamante García, 'Retórica, traducción y responsabilidad histórica', pp. 336-46.

³² The dissemination of the dictionary was such that by the end of the century the 'Calepin', as it was popularly-known, turned into a European polyglot vocabulary, see Bustamante García, 'Retórica, traducción y responsabilidad histórica', p. 341.

³³ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex* I, p. 47. This dichotomy between denotative and connotative or metaphorical meaning is suggested in classical works with which Sahagún was familiar, such as Aristotle's treatise on rhetoric and Cicero's on the orator.

³⁴ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, I, p. 50.

³⁵ For further reference, see Pilar Máynez Vidal, 'Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, precursor de los trabajos lexicográficos del Nuevo Mundo', *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl*, 29, 1999, pp. 189-197, pp. 192-93.

³⁶ The 'amoxtli', currently known as pre-Hispanic codices, codified oral and pictorial representations of Nahua tradition; 'tlacuillo' was the act of painting or 'writing' them

(Serge Gruzinski, *The Conquest of Mexico: The Incorporation of Indian Societies into the Western World, 16th–18th Centuries*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 8-9).

³⁷ Olmos devotes chapter VIII, ‘De las maneras de hablar que tenían los viejos en sus pláticas antiguas’, of his *Arte de la lengua mexicana* (1547) to register fixed phrases, sayings and vocatives that could be incorporated into sermons (Olmos, *Arte de la lengua mexicana*, Ascensión Hernández de León Portilla and Miguel León Portilla (eds), México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2002). As for the vocatives that appear in the Nahuatl column of Book VI of the *Florentine Codex*, these can be traced in doctrinal works such as *Psalmodia Christiana* and *Apéndice a la postilla*. Both works have been edited and translated, into English and Spanish, respectively, by Arthur J. O. Anderson. For *Apéndice a la postilla*, see *Adiciones, apéndice a la postilla y ejercicio cotidiano*, México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1993. For a comparison between Sahagún and Molina’s lexicographic projects, see Máñez Vidal, ‘El proyecto lexicográfico de dos frailes españoles en México’, *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl*, 37, 2006, pp. 85-94.

³⁸ Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas*, VI, p. 199. In the next folio of the ‘Memoriales con escolios’ the same Nahua assistant writes the Spanish column on the sinful mother or ‘madre mala’ and, again at the end of the description, annotates different vocatives in order to address her, see Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas*, VI, p. 200. This reverential treatment amongst family members of the Nahua society has been studied by Elena Díaz Rubio, ‘Acerca de la terminología de parentesco en el náhuatl clásico: Tlacamecayotl’, *Revista Española de Antropología Americana*, 14, 1986, pp. 63-80.

³⁹ For the ‘Memoriales en tres columnas’, see Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas*, VII and VIII.

⁴⁰ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, I, p. 54.

⁴¹ The Nahuatl text and the explanatory notes continue in Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas*, VI, p. 206.

⁴² Sahagún's handwriting of titles and keywords summarizing the contents of the Nahuatl text also appears in the 'Memoriales en tres columnas'. The only text with his own handwriting is the paragraph on 'mal sobrino'; see Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas*, VI, p. 205.

⁴³ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, I, p. 47.

⁴⁴ Another example that illustrates Sahagún's concerns with fluency is the translation of 'yn qualli achtontli' (literally 'good great-grandfather'), which is rendered as 'p[er]o bisabuelo que tiene buen seso'. To the interpretation of 'aoc quimati veue' as 'decrepito' follows the description of the great-grandfather who is 'qualli' or good. Sahagún makes the comparison clear by introducing the adversative 'pero' and by specifying that, by opposition, the 'good' great-grandfather is an old man who keeps his mental capacities or 'tiene buen seso'.

⁴⁵ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, I, pp. 55-56.

⁴⁶ María del Carmen González Muñoz, 'Estudio preliminar' in Marcos Jiménez de la Espada and María del Carmen González Muñoz (eds), *Juan López de Velasco, Geografía y descripción universal de las Indias*, Madrid, Atlas. 1971, pp. v-xlviii, p. viii.

⁴⁷ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, I, p. 47. The nature of this request, in Nahuatl and Spanish for a Spanish-speaking audience, is nevertheless intriguing and might respond to Philip II's passion for collecting exotic art and cultural artefacts.

⁴⁸ Sahagún, *Historia general*, II, p. 586.

⁴⁹ Upon a new reading, the scribe of the Tolosa Manuscript, a surviving copy of the Spanish version that was written soon after the *Florentine Codex* reached Spain, polished the text by avoiding the repetition of the adjective 'good' in the 'Memoriales con escolios'. He replaced 'buena nombradía' with 'mejor nombradía', and 'buena memoria' with 'felíz [sic] memoria'.

See whole paragraph in the Carlos María Bustamante's edition, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, 3 vols, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, III, p. 5.

⁵⁰ Sahagún, *Historia general*, II, p. 585.