

**Books and codices. Transculturation, language
dissemination and education in the works of friar
Pedro de Gante**

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I, Estefanía Yunes Vincke confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

The present study analyses the work of Flemish Franciscan missionary fray Pedro de Gante (1480-1572) against the background of the early stages of the evangelization in New Spain, modern-day Mexico. By means of his works the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* [ca.1527], the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* [1547] and the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* [1569] Gante played a fundamental role in the processes of transculturation playing out between European missionaries and the Nahuatl populations of the Valley of Mexico.

The role of Gante as a transcendental figure of cultural contact has been often neglected; previous studies on the subject have only focused on general aspects of Gante's biography. A thorough, comparative study of Gante's works that ingrains them in the wider context of the early years of the evangelization (1524-1572) has never been done before. The present work aims to fill this void. The important role Gante and his works played in the process of transculturation is demonstrated through an interdisciplinary contextual framework that employs agency theory, New Philology, Colonial semiosis and annales theory.

This study shows that Gante's works represent the initial stages of a translation process in which Christian doctrine was converted into Nahuatl. This process was by no means straightforward and involved the translation of an entire set of cultural and cosmological referents from one system of beliefs to another. Gante's works are at the forefront of this development and this research demonstrates clearly how Gante developed, drawing on his unique cultural and social background, novel evangelical strategies which involved the active participation of both missionaries and the Nahuas themselves. The significance of this, cannot be overlooked, with the translation Gante started an open-dialogue with the Nahuas. Showing that the evangelization of Mexico was not a simple process of imposition, but a complex process in which the different elements of society had a voice and accommodated and negated the influence of the other while constructing new cultural categories.

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Introduction

‘A book of colours is your heart, father Pedro; we sing to Jesus Christ your songs, you bring them to Saint Francis, the one who came to live in Earth.’ These warm, delicate and beautiful words were part of the *Pipilcuícatl*, or *Little children’s song*, one of the most famous Nahuatl songs from the manuscript *Cantares Mexicanos*, held in the Biblioteca Nacional de México. The song is attributed to Nahuas¹ and dates to the beginnings of the evangelization period in the Valley of Mexico [León-Portilla 1985:111]. This song, which is dedicated to friar Pedro de Gante (1480-1572), their teacher, symbolizes the close and personal relationship between the Nahuas of Mexico City and Gante and the extent to which the Flemish Franciscan was appreciated and respected. This token of appreciation shines light on a particular and important episode of the evangelization process in the Valley of Mexico, the influential work and teachings of Gante.

Gante performed a complex role as a cultural mediator during the Christianization of the Nahua population in the Valley of Mexico during the first phase of evangelical work. This period, dubbed by Ricard as the ‘primitive phase,’ runs from 1524 to 1572, a time period that roughly corresponds to Gante’s work in Central Mexico [Ricard 1966]. Gante arrived in Mexico in the first missionary wave and as one of the earliest missionaries working in New Spain he played a fundamental role in the initial evangelization process. His early involvement with the Nahuas of Texcoco and later on with the Nahuas of Mexico City (the Mexicas and the Tlatelolcas) helped to cement and wider distribute Gante’s ideas regarding the best pedagogic strategies to disseminate the Christian message. In so doing, Gante played an important role in the forging of a new Colonial society and was to serve as a model and inspiration for later missionary work.

¹ The term Nahua –that is native speakers of Nahuatl, the main language of the Mexica and other communities from Central Mexico such as the Xochimilca, Tlatelolca, Texcocoan, Chalca, Tlaxcalteca, Huexotzincas and Cholultecans— will be employed more often than Mexica as Gante came into contact with many diverse Nahuatl speaking people from Central Mexico during his missionary work and not only the Mexica residents of Tenochtitlan [Wood 1991:262, Pardo 1996:30].

Although most commonly known as Aztecs –a name that makes reference to their place of origin Aztlan (the place of the white heron) – they referred to themselves as Mexica or Tenochca; for this reason the term used throughout this work will be Mexica instead of Aztec. The Mexica were the dominant ethnic group amongst a wider network of Nahuatl speaking peoples residing in Central Mexico from the 15th to the 16th century.

Gante was a multi-faceted man, who excelled not only in teaching Christian doctrine, the basics of literacy, Latin, engraving, sculpture, architecture, and European singing to the Nahua children of the *pipiltin* (a word that in Nahuatl means noblemen) but also was involved in the establishment of hospitals, churches and schools. Gante was a resourceful missionary; his use of diverse pedagogical techniques, theatrical plays, songs and poems to improve Christian learning is a fundamental part of the early Christianization process. Gante's methods were so successful that they still can be traced today in Mexico in religious pageantry and the use of certain bead-prayers. Gante's work is particularly remarkable and important because it does not just represent a process of imposition of Christian teachings and values on a passive indigenous population, on the contrary, it represents a complex mixture of cultural contact and assimilation in which both Europeans and Nahuas influenced, interacted with and shaped each other.

As one of the first agents of transculturation in Colonial New Spain, Gante started a multi-vectorial communication with the Nahuas, a communication that most likely modified not only Nahua ideology but also Gante's own view of the world. This communicative process is reflected in the three works attributed to Gante: the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* [1527-1529], the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* [1547, 1553] and the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* [1569]. These works are a landmark of missionary translation of Nahuatl, incorporating the multiple facets of the evangelization process not only with regards to the transposing of one system of religious beliefs to another, but also dealing with the intricacies of communication between two different systems of thought and the understanding of individual and communal identity. Gante's pedagogical texts helped to transform Nahua cultural categories and at the same time established the cultural foundations of what was to become modern-day Mexico.

Most studies have failed to focus on two critical aspects of the evangelization of Mexico, both resulting from the intercultural interactions of European missionaries and Nahuas; firstly, the unintentional dissemination and preservation of the Nahuatl language by the missionaries and secondly the dramatic change in modes of expression which accompanied the transition from the Mexica picto/logographic script to alphabetical writing [Gruzinski 2005]. This lack of attention is all the more striking taking into consideration that this change was one of the most important side effects of the Christianization of Mexico. Previous research in particular has failed to grasp the active part the indigenous population played in the translation of their language for missionary purposes [Burkhart 1989:7]. The present work

aims to follow the discussion started by scholars such as Burkhart, Christensen, Mignolo, Boone and Karttunen that target this lack of attention. Gante and his works are magnificent examples not only for understanding the complex process of transmission of the principal tenets of Christian belief and the building of a new Colonial society, but also to understand the importance of their role in the transmission, preservation and dissemination of languages, in particular Nahuatl. Moreover, Gante's works reflect the different stages in which the old writing system of the Nahua was replaced by the alphabetic script and by the European material carrier of information: the book.

The *Catecismo en pictogramas* [ca.1527-1529], a catechism in images that mixes glyphs of Nahua origin with Christian imagery, can be seen as a first step in the transition of modes of expression. In the *Catecismo en pictogramas* Gante translated the basic prayers of the Christian repertoire employing not only the language but also the picto/logographic script of the Nahuas in a complex mixture that combines elements of both Nahua and Christian imagery. Moreover, instead of using the format of a codex as a material carrier of information, the book and European paper are introduced. The *Catecismo* is thus the embodiment of a liminal, borderline social place of dialogue named in Nahuatl *Nepantla* (between two roads)² in which selected Nahua cultural elements and Christian religion came together and intermingled in unprecedented ways. [For a discussion of the term *Nepantla* see chapter 1.]

Gante's second book, the *Doctrina Christiana en lengua Mexicana* [1547, 1553]—a three-section catechetical and devotional instructive text—, presents a very elegant and intricate translation of Christian theology into a transliterated form of Nahuatl. This was an important landmark in the transculturation process as it shows the second stage of the replacement of traditional writing system of the Nahuas to the Latin alphabetic script. The missionaries crucially, transliterated Nahuatl sounds into letters and by doing this created a Nahuatl alphabetic script that could be mastered by both Spanish and Nahuas. The transliteration of Nahuatl into alphabetic script helped, incidentally, to preserve the language for posterity. The process also deeply transformed the linguistic conventions of the missionaries. By being faced with a language so dissimilar to any of the romance languages derived from Latin, they

² The first years of the conversion effort created a liminal space in which missionaries by employing the language and cultural categories of the Nahuas established a dialogue based in the similarities and analogies between the two religions; however the similarities were often misunderstood or misinterpreted by both groups. [For an exhaustive analysis of the terms *Nepantla* and Middle Ground in the present work see chapter 1.]

needed to re-evaluate their own knowledge of what language was. In many ways, this encounter sowed the seeds of our modern understanding of language.

The third work by Gante, a reading primer (*cartilla* in Spanish) entitled *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* [1569], consists of the key prayers written in three languages: Castilian or *Romance*, Latin and transliterated Nahuatl. Reading primers such as the *Cartilla* were inherent to the catechetical enterprise, and with their help Nahua students learned to read in alphabetic script and were in contact with other languages. Through reading primers, the replacement of the traditional Nahua picto-logographic system with the alphabetic script was consolidated [Acker 1995:413].

Taken as a whole, Gante's writings represent a linguistic, cultural and religious liminal place, often ignored in the context of the conquest and colonization of New Spain, and reflect a multi-vectorial dialogue between missionaries and Nahuas. By means of a detailed linguistic and semantic analysis of the translation of Christian texts into Nahuatl Gante's works can shed light on these often neglected but fundamentally important aspects of the evangelization of Mexico.

Aim and goals

The aim of the present thesis is to analyse the figure of Gante in the context of early Spanish socio-political control in Mexico (1523-1570). The thesis focuses in particular on Gante's active role as a figure of transculturation. Through his works, the *Catecismo en pictogramas*, the *Doctrina Christiana en lengua Mexicana* and the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer*, Gante played a fundamental, if insufficiently understood, role in the transmission and dissemination of culture, language and other processes of transculturation in the early years of New Spain. The missionary activity in New Spain provides a vital platform to study processes of transculturation and cultural contact. The missionaries, of all Europeans, first mastered the Mesoamerican languages and translated their Christian teachings into Nahuatl and other autochthonous languages. In so doing, the missionaries worked very much within a local context using methods that were effective in specific localized settings. A thorough analysis, however, of the process of evangelization, which pays heed to Christian indigenous-language texts, is still in its preliminary stages as showcased by the work of Christensen, Tavárez, Montes de Oca and Burkhart. The present study aims to take on and further develop the new direction studies have taken by analysing Gante's works as a springboard to improve the understanding of the transculturation processes which made possible and shaped the

evangelization of Mexico. My dissertation argues for a deeper understanding of the importance of Gante's work and employs his writings as a springboard to address the way in which Spanish and Nahua societies converged, intermingled and were transformed. My thesis lays emphasis on the translation process of the catechisms, *cartillas* and *doctrinas*, a process which influenced and helped to cement the cultural changes that were taking place at the time. Furthermore it aims to establish how the works of Gante affected the nature of the interactions between the Franciscan missionaries and the Nahua population.

By employing an interdisciplinary conceptual framework, ascribing to the trends of the New Philology, annales theory, agency and Colonial semiosis this study aims to address these often neglected aspects and approaches Gante as a cultural mediator. Agency, as employed in the field of archaeology, is a central tenet of this research and I will be looking in particular at the agency of Gante and that of his fellow Franciscan missionaries and how their particular choices and actions influenced and shaped the direction and success of the evangelization process. The impact of their agency will be followed and measured, with reference to *annales* theory, during the short, medium and long term. However, not only the agency of the missionaries but also that of the Nahuas takes centre stage and my study will be looking at Nahua influences on the works of Gante and the extent to which this signals the active role or agency of the indigenous population in the creation of a 'Nahuatized' Christianity. This study will also look at how and by what means Gante influenced and transformed existing (both Christian and Nahua) linguistic and pedagogical structures.

Recent Colonial studies focusing on the Christianization process during the post-conquest period [León-Portilla, Todorov, Klor de Alva, Lockhart, Burkhart and Mignolo] have applied a critical approach which takes into account the dialogue between the Spanish and Mesoamerican³ elements of society and the complex and varied processes that were involved

³ The Nahuas shared Central Mexico with many other ethnic groups such as the Matlatzinca, Mazahua, Otomí and Ocuilteca peoples. All these groups were encompassed in the wider cultural area known as Mesoamerica, a cultural area that extended from Central Mexico to Costa Rica. Mesoamerican peoples, although not politically unified or having a common identity or language, shared common cultural traits such as stratified societies, construction of stepped pyramids, religion and calendar systems [Wood 1991:262, Pardo 1996:30, Kirchoff 1943:92-107].

López-Austin suggests that the cultural unity of Mesoamerica continued during colonial times particularly in aspects of communal and family relationships, agricultural beliefs, and the treatment of the human body amongst others [López-Austin 2004:602]. Henceforth in this context I will use the term Mesoamericans or Colonial Mesoamericans to denominate the indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica under Colonial rule.

in the evangelization of Mexico. My study will build upon the new directions Colonial studies have taken, leaving behind the idea that the Nahua population was simply a passive recipient of missionary work. European missionaries operated largely in an indigenous context and their pedagogic techniques, *doctrinas* and catechisms were influenced by the culture in which they found themselves. Missionaries thus, adjusted their methods and techniques to the situation at hand in order to deliver their message successfully. Gante can be seen as the example per excellence of this process.

Previous studies of Gante have focused mainly on his biography. A critical study of the historical figure of Gante in the context of missionary work, cultural contact and language dissemination in the early years of New Spain has never been attempted before. A study such as this is fundamental in order to better understand the role of missionaries in the evangelization process and the way in which they and in particular Gante, operated as agents of transculturation. Gante's being one of the first missionaries in New Spain needed to forge new patterns both of thought and behaviour in order to get his message understood and accepted. By doing this, Gante crossed conceptual and cultural divides initiating the new society that was to become the modern nation state of Mexico.

Structure

The present work is composed of three main parts. The first part of the thesis presents the conceptual framework, sources and methodology of the thesis. It consists of two chapters; the first explores the historical sources employed in this study and offers an overview of previous studies on Gante, while the second presents an overview of the methodology and conceptual framework employed in the analysis of Gante's works. The conceptual framework employed to analyse Gante's body of works represents an interdisciplinary approach that comprises annales theory, agency theory, New Philology and Colonial semiosis.

To understand the work of Gante in its historical context it is necessary to present a brief analysis of his life and times. This contextual overview will be covered in the second part of the thesis which consists of chapter 3, 4, 5 and 6. In chapter 3, the early years of Gante's life will be explored. Gante travelled from Flanders to Mexico as early as 1523 to become one of the first mendicant⁴ missionaries working in New Spain. He had an enigmatic background – a

⁴ The mendicant orders appeared during the 13th century in Europe, the name mendicant refers to the poverty vows made by its members, who lived by begging. Perhaps, the most famous are the Franciscans, Dominicans and Augustinians. They preached both in Christian cities and in missions.

blood relation of the monarch Charles I of Spain (V of Germany) and a courtier in his native Flanders when young. Gante's family origins and his life as a courtier of Charles V will be examined in chapter 3 next to the intellectual currents of the moment which might have influenced Gante and helped structure his later activities as a missionary. Gante lived in a tumultuous time. The late medieval structures of power, religion and economy were swiftly changing, creating a burgeoning intellectual environment. Intellectual trends such as northern humanism (or Biblical humanism) were converging with *millenarian* ideas developed by Joachim de Fiore. Alongside this, the movement of *Devotio Moderna* in the Low Countries helped to cement the ideas of a Christian purity, a Church closer to its origins. The *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis paved the way for an interiorized devotion by following closely the example of Jesus and the saints. Gante, as a courtier of Charles V in Flanders, probably was in close contact with these ideas and his missionary work was almost certainly influenced by them. His close kinship with Charles probably provided him with opportunities not available to other missionaries; indeed his blood-relation with Charles might have secured for him the privilege of becoming one of the first missionaries to work in Mexico.

Gante's subsequent life as a missionary will be explored in chapter 4. The focus of this chapter will very much be on the personal agency of Gante and the way in which he was able by means of his teachings to work with the Nahua students of the *doctrina*⁵ in San José de los Naturales to initiate the process of transculturation. Gante's work, agenda, influence and legacy will be utilized to foster a better understanding of the short, medium and long term processes which comprised and shaped the evangelization of Mexico. Gante's work and approach will also be analyzed in the context of the wider development of the Franciscan mission in New Spain and the general lineaments that he as a Franciscan needed to follow.

In chapter 5, the works of Gante will be placed within the larger setting of Christian pedagogical texts. A contextual overview emphasizing catechisms in images, *doctrinas* and *cartillas* is presented. These texts provide insights into missionaries' understanding of religion and their content also reflects missionaries' perceptions of Nahua intellectual

To accomplish preaching, they had a very complex organization. They had a head, a general master who followed papal commands and was in charge of the various provinces or territorial areas in which the order was distributed. Many convents were dependent upon the Provincial generals and each convent was ruled by a guardian or prior. Each three years a chapter or synod was assembled to elect the friar to rule over the province [Rubial García 2002-b:6].

⁵ *Doctrina* was a common name in the 16th century for chapels where children were instructed on Christian doctrine such as the chapel of San José de los Naturales established by Gante.

capabilities and as such the methods deemed suitable by the friars to introduce Christianity to a Nahua audience [Borges 1960:27, Pineda 1992, Burkhart 1989].

In Chapter 6 an overview of the translation efforts of the missionaries in New Spain is presented. Translating Christian doctrine and theology into Nahuatl was a complex process in which the missionaries were transposing an entire system of thought employing a dissimilar language, with alien cultural categories.

The third part of the thesis is divided into three chapters. Each one of the chapters is dedicated to a work by Gante. In chapter 7 an analysis will be made of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*. The chapter centers on the physical description of the *Catecismo*, in particular of the *Pater Noster* prayer in order to identify the process of translation and selection of the glyphs. Chapter 8, centers on the *Doctrina Christiana* which represents the pinnacle of Gante's work. The chapter centers on the 1553 edition of the *Doctrina*, and focuses in particular on the translation process of the Articles of Faith. Chapter 9 is dedicated to the *Cartilla*, the trilingual primer printed in 1569. The chapter centres on the analysis of two prayers: the *Pater Noster* and the *Ave Maria*.

Although this structure seems to separate the biographical study of Gante's life from the analysis of his works, it gives a clearer overview of the different subjects that intermingle in Gante's work and provides the necessary contextual background for the analysis of his pedagogic texts.

Some last remarks

The words employed (by his Nahua students) to describe Gante's heart: a book of colors, illustrate magnificently the multiple facets of this Flemish missionary, a unique figure in the evangelization of the Nahua world, who while transmitting the word of Jesus, helped to create a new society. In this study I hope to show that Gante was a fundamental figure in the formative years of the Viceroyalty⁶ of New Spain and a vital agent in the transculturation processes that affected both Nahuas and Europeans. I aim to show in this research how

⁶ The Viceroyalty of New Spain during the 16th century covered the whole of the archdiocese of Mexico and the dioceses of Tlaxcala-Puebla, Michoacan, New Galicia and Antequera [Ricard 1966:1-2]. The head of New Spain was a viceroy, who served as the representative of the king. His power was limited, however, by an *audiencia* (high court) which acted on local matters and was responsible to the *Consejo de Indias* (Council of the Indies) in Seville and the King of Spain. Cities had *cabildos* (municipal councils) formed by elected officials from Spanish nobles. *Alcaldes mayores* and *corregidores* (Spanish officials) had jurisdiction over the indigenous countryside [Restall *et al* 2005:8].

remarkable and important Gante's work was as it does not solely represent a process of imposition of Christian teachings and values on a passive Nahua audience. Instead it represents a complex mixture of cultural contact and assimilation in which both Europeans and Nahuas influenced, interacted with, shaped and rewrote each other. Gante's work and activities made possible and helped direct the wider evangelization of Mexico and established the foundation of a new society that eventually was to become the modern nation state of Mexico. As such he is an absolutely vital but surprisingly neglected starting point for any thorough and extensive understanding of the evangelization and the cultural and religious processes of interaction between European missionaries and the Nahuas. This study seeks to readdress this imbalance and demonstrate not only the importance of Gante's work in terms of the successful evangelization of Mexico but also the impact of his endeavours in bringing together in varied and intricate ways the beliefs, cultural expressions and worldviews of two disparate groups.

Part One

Chapter 1: Conceptual framework and methods

The study of Gante's life and the complexity of his works requires an interdisciplinary framework that makes use of conceptual elements drawn from history, archaeology and translation studies. In the present chapter I will present the four models employed as conceptual background: New Philology, annales, agency theory and Colonial semiosis. These four models are helpful to analyse not only Gante's work but the work of missionaries such as him in a more theorized, contextual way, addressing their vital importance in the early years of Spanish socio-political control in order to subsequently assess their role and influence in the creation of the modern Mexican state. Although coming from different fields, notions from these models can be applied to understand the work and life of Gante in a theorized manner.

This interdisciplinary conceptual background was also enriched by the notions of entextualization and intersemiotic translation which are of the utmost importance in understanding the process of translating material so dissimilar in nature as the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*, the *Doctrina Christiana* and the *Cartilla*. It is precisely the different nature of these works that makes an interdisciplinary conceptual background so necessary. The notion of entextualization can be applied similarly to the three works. On the other hand, the concept of intersemiotic translation can help to understand the process of translation from a written source to a non-written source such as the *Catecismo*. In addition to these notions, an explanation of the concepts of transculturation and Nepantla are also made. These fundamental concepts are pivotal to understand the work of Gante and its multivectorial influence which not only affected the Nahuas but also the missionaries themselves during the early years of the viceroyalty.

The last section of the chapter explores the methodology that was employed to analyse each one of Gante's works. The diverse nature of Gante's works requires different approaches. While the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* will be analysed with the help of the Galarza method for iconographic analysis, a three-layered analysis that focuses on the different aspects involved in the creation of a translation of doctrinal texts, i.e. historical context, structure, content, and engravings will be used to approach both the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla*.

The present work differs from previous researches because an interdisciplinary study, analysing critically the historical figure of Gante in the context of cultural contact and language dissemination in the early years of Spanish control has never been attempted. By

employing the aforementioned conceptual framework and methodology I pose new questions to a material largely understudied in the hope of aiding the understanding of missionary work, cultural contact and language preservation in the early years of the evangelization.

1.1 Conceptual background

My analysis of Gante's works needs to be imbedded within the larger framework of Colonial studies. The field of Colonial studies has seen a developmental trajectory. Studies from the 16th-century to the early 20th-century showed a clear preference for European Colonial sources, dismissing Colonial Mesoamerican sources as a product of colonization in which the indigenous population played a passive role. These studies tended to be uni-dimensional as a result and often praised the conquistadors' actions and considered the destruction of Mesoamerican culture and in particular their religion as of great importance (examples of this could be the work of Ricard [1966] and Chauvet [1951]). This traditional form of historiography has since been superseded. Colonial studies in recent decades have broadened out from studying only Spanish sources. Scholars such as León-Portilla, Carrasco, López-Austin, Todorov, Klor de Alva, Lockhart, Burkhart, Wood, Lara, Christensen, Távarez, Escalante, Navarrete and Mignolo have applied a more critical perspective taking Colonial Mesoamerican sources into account and in this way helping to de-marginalize the Mesoamerican population, giving them a voice and representing their point of view. These scholars have developed a new model and methodology which not only adds neglected information, but also reveals the existing dialogue between Spanish and indigenous layers of society and the complex and varied process that was the evangelization of Mexico.

The aforementioned Colonial scholars can be roughly divided in two main groups: the New Philology and the French school. Although it is necessary to mention that the Mexican school has developed independently and along similar investigative lines as the New Philology and the French school. The Mexican school is particularly rich in innovative studies. Its leading proponents are León-Portilla, López-Austin, Carrasco, and Navarrete.

The difference between the French school and the New Philology lies in their use of indigenous sources in understanding the historical process indigenous identity underwent. In the particular case of the Valley of Mexico, the New Philology argues that the Nahuas did not lose their identity after the conquest, instead they developed and reached high cultural standards and influenced the newly formed society. On the other hand, the French school

supports the displacement model which highlights that Nahuas under Spanish rule started an almost immediate process of loss of identity and culture.

This study builds upon the new directions Colonial studies have taken. I employ notions both from New Philology and Colonial semiosis although their methodologies seem to work in opposite directions concerning the displacement theory. The present work agrees with the New Philology's position: the autochthonous population was not simply a passive recipient of missionary work; European missionaries operated largely in an indigenous context and their teachings were influenced by the Mesoamerican population. Missionaries adjusted their methods and techniques to the situation at hand in order to successfully deliver their message. On the other hand, I will employ Colonial semiosis as a conceptual framework to analyse Gante's *Catecismo en Pictogramas*. It is the perfect hermeneutical tool to understand catechisms in images as it emphasises the study of contexts lacking alphabetical writing.

1.1.1 New Philology

According to Matthew Restall [2003:114] the New Philology school can be divided into three phases, a division that points to the change of focus in research. Studies from phase one and three are particularly important for the present work. In phase one (1976-1992) Lockhart introduced the concept of New Philology exploring neglected sources written in Nahuatl and other Mesoamerican languages. Lockhart's *The Nahuas after the conquest* [1992] was a turning point in research, giving a clearer overview of the multidimensionality of the Nahua population and their response to European Colonial structures. In particular Lockhart's concept of 'double-mistaken-identity' will be important for the present work. The term refers to a process by which 'each side of the cultural exchange presumes that a given form or concept is functioning in the way familiar within its own tradition and is unaware of or unimpressed by the other side's interpretation' [Lockhart 1992:445]. This process is evident from Gante's work. Cultural categories were selected from the Nahua imaginary, reinterpreted by Gante and then used in the translation to signify something different than its original purpose. In this way, although employing the same cultural categories both groups understood the concepts in different ways according to their own cultural background.

According to Restall, New Philology during phase three (1990 to the present day) has started to cross boundaries with other disciplines to explore different areas, cultural groups and sources. This phase is pivotal for my research as the aim has expanded encompassing not only Colonial Mesoamerican but also Spanish and European sources in particular doctrinal

texts written in indigenous languages. Few studies have taken advantage of indigenous-language ecclesiastical texts. One of these studies is Louise Burkhart's *The Slippery Earth* [1989]. Her study aims to understand the process of Christianization in Central Mexico from the Nahua perspective. Burkhart analysed thirteen Christian texts written in Nahuatl dating from the 1530s to the 1570s. Burkhart emphasizes the importance of studying both indigenous and European sources in order to have a clearer understanding of the process of cultural contact. Studying both is important because the Christian cultural constructs were translated into Nahuatl by the missionaries through the employment of Nahua cultural categories. Burkhart explains how it was the bilingual missionaries who, aided by their indigenous assistants created the tools of evangelization: catechisms, sermons and *doctrinas*. Burkhart's interests lie in pointing out how the interaction between the groups and the translation of texts from one language to another not only influenced and transformed the Nahuas, but also the missionaries themselves. This process even went a step further as the missionaries, while using terms and notions of Nahua origin, helped to preserve elements of the Nahua system of thought that would have not survived otherwise [Burkhart 1989:39]. Burkhart uses as examples the difficult translation of certain moral terms such as sin, good, evil, right and wrong and she reaches the conclusion that the indigenous mind frame was preserved and indeed was the substance behind the exterior forms of Christian appearances, an idea that seems to resonate in the analysis of Gante's translations. In this way Nahua culture continued albeit transformed and rearranged with a Christian façade [Christensen 2010:2-4].

Mark Christensen *Nahua and Maya Catholicisms: Ecclesiastical texts and local religion in Colonial central Mexico and Yucatan* [2010] can also be seen as an example of the third phase as he analysed *doctrinas* from both the Nahua and Maya area in his comparative study. His work is superb for understanding not only the process of production of doctrinal writings but also to understand how several 'Christianities' were developed in Central Mexico and the Maya area. In this way the accommodations made for the introduction of Christianity by both missionaries and indigenous believers can be seen as a localized effort resulting in a successful introduction of Christianity but with indigenous undertones.

Jaime Lara's *Christian texts for Aztecs: Art and Liturgy in Colonial Mexico* [2008] presents a great overview of the use and modifications of the sacraments employed in the ritual paraphernalia made by the mendicant missionaries for their use with the Colonial Mesoamericans in New Spain. Lara argues that the success of the missionaries in New Spain

was due to a dialectical process in which the missionaries discovered the similarities between the two religions and built a bridge of understanding based on them. Lara explains how the so called ‘Nahua Christianity’ was indeed a product of Nahua thought, since they were the ones that interpreted, negated, or assimilated the religious ideas of the newcomers. Lara considers that Nahua religion was in many ways recycled instead of simply destroyed. To explain this ‘nahuatization’ of religion, Lara presents examples of the modification of several liturgical elements in the Passion and the Eucharist. The work of Lara is important for the presents work as he highlights the process of interaction and influence that occurred during Christianization, between the Nahuas and missionaries, and is of singular importance as he does not assume the imposition of religion by the Europeans but also brings attention to the fact that Nahuas were very involved in the establishment of the new religion.

My study follows the new trends of New Philology as started by Burkhart, Lara, Távarez and Christensen as it focuses on Gante’s translations of Christian lore in Nahuatl. I also support the idea that Nahuas were an important part of the process as proposed by Burkhart, Christensen and Lara. The interaction between Gante and his Nahua students was pivotal for him to translate his texts and disseminate Christianity. In addition to this, the work of Lockhart and in particular his concept of double-mistaken-identity is crucial to understand the context in which the works of Gante were written and allows a more complex understanding of the dialogue and misunderstandings Gante and his Nahua collaborators had while developing translation strategies.

1.1.2 Colonial Semiosis

The French school has, according to Restall [1991] modernized in many ways the displacement model proposed in the work of Ricard, in which Mesoamerican culture was supplanted by an European one. Gruzinski’s *The conquest of Mexico* [1993] explains the process by which Mesoamerican religion and material culture, in particular the visual representation system, was slowly transformed after the conquest. Traditional glyphs from the Colonial period started to change and adopt European influences. His work not only centres on the Nahuas, but also researches sources from diverse Mesoamerican groups such as Otomí, Mixtec, Zapotec and Tarascan. Gruzinski exposes the way Franciscan missionaries contributed to the destruction of Nahua identity, not only by destroying their material culture but also by negating their worldview, replacing it with a Christian mind-frame. Nevertheless the Nahuas played an important role in this process as they soon adapted techniques and ideas

from Europe. This promptness has been pinpointed by Gruzinski as curiosity towards a very hostile world, and mentions how as early as 1545 Nahua nobles were proud of having learnt everything they wanted to know from the Spanish [Gruzinski 1993:20]. This curiosity eventually helped them to reconstruct relations to their new environment and rebuild their identity in novel terms. An interesting point made relevant by Gruzinski is the transition in respect to carriers of information and writing systems, a point that has been neglected in the majority of studies. The missionaries introduced the alphabetic script, as they considered the Nahuas and other Mesoamerican groups illiterate; moreover they employed a new format to transmit information, the book. The present work will address this void, as Gante's books can be seen as a clear example of this switch of indigenous carriers of knowledge and writing systems to European ones.

Although not French in origin, Mignolo can be seen as part of the French school for his use of the displacement model. In his book *The darker side of the Renaissance* [1995], Mignolo explores sources often neglected by literary Colonial studies including pictorial manuscripts and especially maps, which can be analysed as discourse instead of text. With this objective in mind he has established the term Colonial semiosis, denoting a newly emerging field that studies the production, transmission and clash of different signs in Colonial situations which lack alphabetical writing. Mignolo criticizes the traditional occidental hermeneutics which give preference to the written word and neglects societies without alphabetical written systems. His goal is to create a pluritopic hermeneutics. Pluritopic hermeneutics has been described as the art of interpretation by means of crossing spaces and/or traditions which employ different models of understanding [Tlostanova and Mignolo 2009:16]. For the present work in particular, the focus of colonial semiosis on the semiotic interactions of the indigenous glyphs found in codices is important [Barrio 2008:3]. I approach the *Catecismo* from both a Christian and Nahua perspective. In particular as the Mexica picto-logographic system has been largely dismissed as not being a writing system, however, this comes from a European understanding of what a writing system is. The Mexicas had indeed a writing system, if writing system is understood as a standardized method of transfer of information by means of signs or symbols. Unlike the alphabetic script in which these signs are characters, in the case of the Nahua writing system they were logograms. [For a more detailed explanation of the writing system of the Mexica see chapter 5.] The Nahua perspective is important, as Gante was trying to emulate Nahua glyphs to represent the prayers. In this way, Gante put himself in the place of the Nahuas, appropriating and

modifying a whole set of cultural references and applying them to a new Christian concept. More importantly the glyphs retained to a certain extent their Nahua semiotics complicating the delivery of the message. Because of this, Colonial semiosis is an essential conceptual background to understand Gante's *Catecismo en Pictogramas*.

1.1.3 Annales theory

Annales theory [see Braudel 1949, and for its use in archaeology e.g. Bintliff 2004] is a useful tool to implement a multi-scale approach to the processes of language dissemination and transculturation in Mexico. Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the Age of Philip II* is a fundamental work for understanding the multi-scale processes of history, and although a different geographical setting is analysed, the comparative model presented by Braudel is a helpful tool to understand factors within deeper levels of society, tracing the interaction of groups in one society, and identifying influences due to transculturation. However scholars such as Bintliff [1991] and Febvre [1942] have noted certain shortcomings in Braudel's work. Braudel's research fails to articulate the bigger and more general processes with the particular ones. This means that Braudel pays more attention to medium and long term developments, often ignoring small duration events or individuals. Braudel also sees the long and medium terms in relation to external factors such as demographic or economic trends instead of individuals at work [Bintliff 1991:8]. Another critique that can be made of Braudel's work derives from the previous train of thought, failing to connect swiftly the three waves of time. However, scholars [see Febvre 1942, Bintliff 1991] observing the shortcomings of Braudel's model have adapted it. One of the most important modifications, and of particular importance for the present work, is the introduction of the concept of *Mentalités*, which are collective belief systems or worldviews, these worldviews can be changed also by individuals themselves. According to Febvre [1942] the individuals can only change *Mentalités* according to the constructs of their own era. Nevertheless, this individual change can be important if it affects the medium and long terms [Bintliff 1991:13]. In this work, short-term developments will be analysed at the level of Gante. The focus will be on his interaction with the Nahua population, his resultant evangelical works and how these influenced the contextual sphere in which he operated. I will analyse how and by what means Gante influenced and transformed linguistic and pedagogical structures. Middle-term developments will be studied by an analysis of the aggregated work of European missionaries in post-conquest Mexico. Did the missionaries apply similar methods, did they operate in concert or did they interact with the Nahua

population in similar ways, are all questions that will be addressed. The focus of the research will be on the way in which missionaries transformed language and education and how they contributed to the dissemination of Nahuatl and Latin. It will not only focus on the missionaries but importantly also on the indigenous population, not a passive recipient of missionary work but able to accept certain influences and reject others. Long-term developments will be analysed by focusing on the repercussions that the work of Gante had in the creation of a cultural identity. Thus the role of missionary work in the larger diachronic processes of transculturation within Mexico will be assessed.

1.1.4 Agency Theory

Agency theory will be applied in a similar manner to the way it is employed in archaeology. Agency theory in archaeology emphasises the importance of human actors making contextualized choices both consciously and unconsciously and how the choices of an individual can affect historical developments. Agency theory allows the role of individual and communities in the creation of archaeological and historical discourse. The importance of agency in transforming historical contexts is undeniable. In this study I employ agency theory to understand the choices hidden behind the evidence we have of missionary work. It will aim to develop an understanding of why certain options were preferred and others rejected [Dobres and Robb 2000]. According to Dobres and Robb agency refers not only to the action of one individual but also to the actions of a group. These repetitive actions made by individuals or groups become practises, a concept of particular importance for this work. As suggested by Bourdieu, the way in which practises are carried out is related to tradition, learning and unconscious knowledge. Structural changes lead to variation in practise and the way this variation manifests itself is dependent upon the choices and reactions of individuals [Bourdieu 1977]. The concepts of practise, tradition, change and innovation are directly related to agency and are pivotal to explain the production of catechisms and *doctrinas* in a wider context of societal change through transculturation. As Pauketat [2001] mentions, traditions are in no way passive, but are being modified by external spheres (e.g. geographical or political). Traditions can also be negotiated between persons or groups in a multi-scale way. Pauketat's idea will be used to explore the Christianization of New Spain. Christian religion was adopted, adapted, negotiated and assimilated by the Nahuas in every particular aspect. It was an element that was present in the missionaries' minds when they decided to impose Christian devotion. In this way tradition can be malleable, and can be re-actualized. Following this trend we can see that Gante created a mixed system employing

Christian-European culture and traditions whilst at the same time adopting and adapting Nahua cultural traditions. This use of traditions was only possible because he was a cultural negotiator who brought with him cultural change. For example, Gante and his students chose the glyphs in the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* to represent the different concepts of the prayers, establishing a dialectical relationship with his sense of his own tradition and of the Nahua tradition [Pauketat 2001:9]. Gante and his missionary work can be seen in the above context, adapting new structural conditions and devising localized and individual responses.

Similarly to annales theory, agency theory will be applied on different scales. We will not only forge an understanding of the actions and methods of Gante, but also of the missionaries as a group. It will focus on the interaction of Gante with his Nahua students and his resultant texts. Agency theory will aim to form an understanding of why certain options were preferred and others rejected, why the missionaries decided to start the evangelization in Nahuatl instead of in Castilian, why did the missionaries modify Christian sacraments to facilitate the indigenous population in their understanding of Christian religion. It will be important to understand the structural frameworks that guided Gante and especially how northern humanistic thought influenced his actions. It will be interesting to see if there existed differences of approach between Flemish and Spanish missionaries (Gante, being of Flemish origin but operating for the Spanish crown). This will help to understand how and by which means Gante influenced and transformed language and pedagogical structures. As yet the precise role and influence of Gante in the early days of the evangelization remains only vaguely understood. In this novel study, the figure of the Flemish missionary will be theorized diachronically. While embedding him into the wider development of Christianization it will be possible to observe the many repercussions his work had within the Church's strategies of Christianization amongst the Nahua population.

1.1.5 Communication amongst cultures: entextualization and intersemiotic translation.

In analysing the work of Gante it is of singular importance to use hermeneutic tools adequate to study the complex material, material that does not only involve transliterated Nahuatl but also pictorial writing.

The concept of entextualization as introduced by Massimo Leone in his article regarding the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* by Gante will be employed similarly in the present work. Entextualization refers to sections of a discourse that are extracted from particular contexts,

in this way they become portable. The portable sections of discourse or ‘texts’ are inserted into new concepts and thus re-contextualized [Keane 2007:14 cited in Leone 2008:61]. This concept is particularly applicable to the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* in which Nahua glyphs were taken out of their original context; their meanings were slightly modified, and then were reinserted in the new context to transmit the Christian message. Entextualization can also be applied to the translation analysis of the *Doctrina Christiana* and the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer*, as many Nahua cultural categories were borrowed, modified in their original semiotic connotations to be later reintroduced by Gante in the pedagogic Christian texts.

The idea of intersemiotic translation is of particular importance for this work. Intersemiotic translation was first introduced by Roman Jakobson in 1959, who divided translation into three general categories:

1. Intralingual translation or rewording is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language.
2. Interlingual translation or translation proper is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.
3. Intersemiotic translation or transmutation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems [Jakobson 1959:w/p].

In the work of Gante we can see at least two kinds of translation: interlingual translation, employed in both the *Cartilla* and the *Doctrina* and intersemiotic translation employed in particular in the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*. Intersemiotic translation involves the transmutation of oral and visual verbal codes into non-verbal sign systems such as the complex writing system of the Mexica. In this case in particular, more than highlighting the importance of words during translation, the importance is given to the semantics behind the message. The original text is then deconstructed in its parts (denotation/connotation, expression/content, dialogues/descriptions, intertextual/intratextual references) and then reconstructed during the translation trying to recreate the cohesion of the base text. By doing this, the translated text is not identical to the original; other layers of information have been added in order to improve translatability [Osimo 2014, Aguiar and Queiroz 2013:283, Ríos Castaño 2007:125].

1.1.6 Transculturation, Syncretism and Hybridity

This study is based around the analysis of the interaction of two very dissimilar cultural groups: European missionaries and the Nahua population of the valley of Mexico. The term utilised in this work to describe and analyse the interaction between these two cultural entities

is transculturation. Transculturation is a term derived from the concept of 'acculturation' which is an older interpretative concept often employed within the context of Colonial studies. The term acculturation appeared in literature for the first time in 1883 referring in particular to the psychological changes induced by cross-cultural imitation [Herskovitz 1983:2]. The term acculturation nowadays is commonly understood as the exchange of cultural features between different groups when they meet in continuous direct contact. This interactive process leads to changes in the original cultural settings (characteristics) of one or both groups but at the same they are able to preserve their own distinct identities [Berry 1980:9-10]. Acculturation covers precisely the changes that result from the contact between individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds [Sam 2006:13]. The contact between groups occurs under different circumstances: trade, invasion, or most importantly for the present work missionary activity. Certain variables such as the nature, purpose, duration, and permanence of contact contribute to create acculturation [Berry 1980:11]. Acculturation can be voluntary or forced and involves different aspects: destruction, integration, incorporative assimilation, fusion, survival, domination, resistance, modification, and adaptation [Naylor 1996:54].

Acculturation acknowledges two fundamental issues of cultural contact directionality and dimensionality. Directionality can be divided into two: unidirectionality and bidirectionality. Unidirectionality notes that one culture (the dominant one) affects the other, while bidirectionality highlights that the cultures affects each other. Dimensionality can also be divided into three: unidimensionality, bidimensionality and multidimensionality.

Unidimensionality argues that in order to gain new cultural traits (as the result of interaction with another cultural group) existing characteristics must be shed. Bidimensionality means that it is possible to identify with a new cultural discourse without losing aspects of one's original cultural disposition [Sam 2006:17, Berry 2006]. Multidimensionality means that the two cultures are on the same level and indicates the ability of groups to maintain their own culture while adopting traits from another group. Multidimensionality is the result of a complex set of elements such as cultural awareness, ethnic loyalty, ethnic interaction and inter-ethnic distance [Padilla 1980:5, 48]

The concept of acculturation has, however, been criticised in recent scholarship [Taylor 1991, Ortiz 1995]. The term transculturation has come into vogue as an alternative. The term transculturation was first coined in 1940 by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz for

anthropological research to describe the transformative processes which occur when two cultures meet [Duno-Gottberg 2011]. Ortiz defined transculturation as

A set of ongoing transmutations; it is full of creativity and never ceases; it is irreversible. It is always a process in which we give something in exchange for what we receive: the two parts of the equation end up being modified. From this process springs out a new reality, which is not a patchwork of features, but a new phenomenon, original and independent [Ortiz 1995:3 first published in 1940].

The term transculturation is important in particular to the context of Spanish America as it notes that the simplistic idea of acculturation –in which a culture influences the other while the other loses its cultural elements in this process— is not applicable in the context of the various societies in the region. Especially as acculturation tends to emphasize short term-encounters over long historical periods and ignores the different levels of interaction between dominant-dominated societies. It also focuses on identifying the original cultural traits of interacting cultures rather than approaching and understanding newly created and original traits [Silliman 2005:56].

Transculturation emphasizes the degrees of cultural interaction during long historical periods. It is better suited to describe the interactive process and cultural exchanges between different cultures, because it does not simply focus, in contrast to acculturation, on the acquisition of new elements but also pays attention to the processes of partial disculturation and neoculturation. Partial disculturation refers to a partial loss or uprooting of cultural characteristics as experienced during processes of cultural interaction. Neoculturation signifies the creation, as a result of the interaction between different groups, of new cultural phenomena [Taylor 1991:98]. Partial disculturation and neoculturation as aspects of transculturation aid the understanding of the multivectorial complexity of transculturation. The term transculturation thus leaves room for dominant cultures (in terms of socio-economic and geo-political characteristics) to be influenced by the dominated [Taylor 1991:98].

Cultural contact is, thus, not a unidirectional process. On the contrary it is multivectorial and involves not only the adoption of new cultural elements but also the loss of certain characteristics and the creation of new ones [Gayol 2005, Velazco 2003:25]. The multivectorial nature of transculturation means that in the process of cultural interaction influences go both ways and can lead to the creation of new cultural elements and ideas. In addition to this, cultural elements from the dominated group are appropriated, modified and reintroduced by the dominant cultural group (the missionaries in our case) to the dominated

culture. In this way, transculturation offers a better overview of the multidimensionality and directionality of cultural interaction than acculturation does. Transculturation also recognizes the contribution of individuals in the interactive process between societies and the potential multiple directions from which influences could emerge [Deagan 1998]. By harnessing the concept of transculturation these phenomena can be clearly defined and accessed in terms of the wider evangelization of Mexico and the particular involvement of Gante.

Transculturation is, thus, a very important concept for the study of Gante and his works. It is essential because transculturation allows for the identification of a process of multivectorial interaction in which missionaries introduced the Christian imaginary to an indigenous populace utilising elements of the Nahua belief system. The result of this interaction was the creation of new cultural categories and the adaptation of old ones. The interaction process between missionaries and Nahua *pipiltin* was not a simplistic imposition process or one-way communication but instead a complex dialogue in which missionaries imposed their Christian episteme upon a Nahua audience by using and adapting elements of the latter's belief system. The new cultural categories thus formed were subsequently disseminated to Nahua audiences through evangelical tools.

Two related theoretical concepts, sometimes employed to analyse the cultural mixing resulting from the cultural interactions of cross-cultural encounters (transculturation) also warrant brief comment. These are syncretism and hybridity.

1.1.6.1 Syncretism

Syncretism on its most basic level is often understood as a mixing of religions. The term has been defined as 'The combination of elements from two or more different religious traditions within a specified [cultural] frame' [Stewart 1999:58]. Syncretism in particular focuses on religious interaction [Liebmann 2013: 28]. Historically it has carried negative associations, because it is often associated with deviations from original religious practice and beliefs [Droogers 1989:7-9, Durston 2007:16]. Durston notes that from an evangelical point of view 'syncretism is accommodation or inculturation run amok—religious traditions are merged to the point where essential features of the Christian message are lost' [Durston 2007:16]. Syncretism, therefore, has become in recent years a controversial term. Many anthropologists have strong reservations about the use of the term which has been characterized as pejorative and scorns the mixture of cultural elements [Stewart 1999: 40-41]. Syncretism, moreover, is

generally understood to have been the result of interaction between equals which makes the concept not readily applicable to the contextual setting of this work, colonial Mexico.

The negative connotations attached to syncretism are clear from failed attempts by theologians to reunite the various Protestant groupings and the Catholic Church during the 16th century. The mixing of religious ideas and practices was deemed to lead to heretical expressions and inconsistent expressions of religion, jeopardising the purity of the faith. These issues were named by Schmid in 1846 as the ‘syncretistic controversies’ [Schmid cited in Stewart 1999:46]. During the early 20th century syncretism was viewed highly negatively by missionaries operating in the various European colonies. The term was often employed to refer to local churches who preached —instead of the European ideal— illegitimate and culturally mixed forms of Christianity. By labelling these local expressions of Christianity as syncretic, they were identified as different, wrong and to some extent unchristian. Due to these negative associations, old world anthropologists, particularly those from colonial Africa, have moved away from the use of syncretism as a useful analytical concept [Comaroff 1985:12; Stewart 1999: 45-46].

Anthropologists from and working in North and South America have, however, viewed syncretism more positively. In contrast to its use in the old world syncretism, it has been used as a concept suitable to understand the extent of integration between different cultures. Syncretism was used to describe cultural assimilation and integration and not the mixing of pure cultures and the not so pure outcomes of this interaction [Stewart 1999:47]. Pure cultures, religions and traditions, indeed, do not exist. Religion, as all cultural practices draws upon a various and multi-faceted context involving multiple traditions [Stewart 1999:55]. In order to take this into account it has been argued recently that syncretism should be defined as ‘the combination of elements from two or more different religious traditions within a specified frame’ [Stewart 1999:58]. Such a definition allows for a better understanding of religious interaction by acknowledging the involvement of various traditions and absence of pure/context-free expressions of religion.

Due to its negative associations this study has avoided to use the term syncretism. Christianity never was a pure cultural expression belonging to one particular tradition. On the contrary Christianity was continuously developing and responding to new demands made upon it. As Sigal notes during the 16th century, there was not a uniform European view of Christianity, even the mendicant orders working in the setting of New Spain, although operating with each other, had different views on theology and the conversion of indigenous

peoples [Sigal 2011:62]. As this research will demonstrate Christianity adapted to new circumstances in order to make itself more appealing to its newly encountered target audiences (i.e. the Nahuas). By adapting and adopting local traditions in a Christian framework the church facilitated the spread and acceptance of its message and theology. To describe this process (which will be considered in detail in the chapters that follow) as syncretism is counterproductive. The use of the term may give the impression that, in our case, Nahua Christianity is not actually Christian religion but something else altogether, a mix of local and foreign religious expressions and beliefs. Nahua Christians would in such an interpretation not be considered proper Christians. Such an approach is decidedly Eurocentric and appears to suggest that only European Christianity was/is real and pure. The use of syncretism can thus paint a very negative image of religious interaction in colonial contact situations by casting indigenous Christianity as second rank and somehow lesser than a posited original. Converted Nahuas did not believe in an impure version of Christianity. This can be seen as a matter of perception. The Nahuas *saw* themselves as Christians and not as belonging to a syncretized version of Christianity. We have to remember that such distinctions are modern and do not reflect the perceptions of Nahua converts. Christianity in the valley of Mexico conceptually does not differ from Christianity in Spain. Both in Mexico and Spain, we are dealing with localized versions of Christianity reflective of local traditions and histories. Scholarly focus should rest on what people believed they were, instead of what others (including modern scholars) thought they were. Syncretism, defined as the mixing of religions, can only be of limited benefit in such an endeavor. Even more neutral definitions of the term in which the multifaceted background of religions is taken into account do not recommend its use as an independent analytical framework in which missionary – Nahua religious interaction can/should be studied.

Another important concept to consider in relation to the work of the missionaries is hybridity. Conceptually, as in the case of syncretism, it can be seen as a result of transculturation. Hybridity, as utilized in postcolonial theory, denotes the creation of new transcultural categories [Liebmann 2008:83]. The term is, indeed, derived from the word hybrid which can be defined according to the Oxford English Dictionary as ‘anything derived from heterogeneous sources, or composed of different or incongruous elements.’ The term is widely used nowadays and in its most general interpretation refers to the recombination of old elements into something new [Liebmann 2013: 27].

1.1.6.2 Hybridity

Like syncretism the word hybrid has not always been viewed in positive terms. 19th-century biologists thought hybrid organisms to be weak and infertile. Such ideas fed notions of racial purity and superiority [Young 1995:6–19, Dean 2003:5]. More recently, however, genetic research disproved the notion of hybrid inferiority and as a result imbued the term with more positive connotations [Liebmann 2013: 30]. Current postcolonial applications of the term stress the mixed nature of all cultures and dismiss the existence of pure cultures devoid of any external influences [Liebmann 2013: 31]. The acknowledgment of the mixed nature of cultures differentiates this term from syncretism.

The usefulness of hybridity as an analytical term has, however, not found uniform acceptance [Dean 2003:5]. Some scholars do not see the term as bringing anything new to the (post)colonial debate. In archaeology, for example, the term has sometimes been used interchangeably with notions of acculturation, syncretism, and creolization. In order for hybridity to not just be another fashionable new term referring to an old concept it needs to bring something new to the table, a point rightly made by Liebmann [2013: 26-30].

Postcolonial hybridity differs, however, from the aforementioned concepts in its focus on unequal relations of power between colonizer and colonized and the complexity and ambivalence in the construction of hybrid cultural categories. Hybridity is also meant to mean a reworking of existing cultural traits rather than the mixing of two distinct frames of reference. The term hybridity, thus, provides a more complex appreciation of the realities of cultural interaction than syncretism. One that leaves room for unequal relations of power and the stress, strife and ambivalence between cultures often associated with situations of colonial contact [Dean 2003:6, 8]. Cultural disruption and the forceful integration of separate cultural elements are aspects of colonial interaction specifically associated with the term hybridity. Concepts such as, for example, acculturation and syncretism tend, in contrast, to look at cultural mixing in more positive terms which may not accurately reflect the complexity of the situation on the ground [Liebmann 2013: 30-31].

Liebmann argues that the term hybridity can be used as an analytical tool to help interpret mixed material culture in new ways [Liebmann 2013:32]. Following Liebmann's suggestion in the context of this research the term hybrid is used when discussing material culture specifically, for example when referring to the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*. As an analytical concept hybridity in relation to religion is, however not used in this study. This is because

Christianity as a religion cannot be labeled as hybrid. Christianity in Colonial Mexico represents of course a mixture of indigenous and European traditions and practices but at its core it was Christianity nonetheless and not something new, mixed and altogether different. For example, Gante's *Catecismo*, although a hybrid itself, cannot be seen as reflective of a hybrid religion. Despite the use of Nahuatl glyphs and concepts, it is neither a Mexica document nor characteristic of a hybrid form of Christianity that deviates somehow from a pure form of Christianity. The *Catecismo* is a Christian manuscript. It was intended and understood as such by missionaries and Nahuatl alike. The use of Nahuatl cultural categories such as, for example, Mictlan and *tlazolli* (sin) and devotional elements, such as the use of flowers, dance and music does not make Christianity in the valley of Mexico into a hybrid religion. If this were the case Christianity as a whole can be subdivided into a multitude of hybrid components, as specific practices and traditions vary in each and every country (even region) [Durstun 2007:13, Sigal 2011:62]. We cannot, therefore, define this document as being part of a hybrid form of Christianity. To do so, is decidedly Eurocentric and does not take into consideration the way in which the *Catecismo* was understood and perceived by its users. Gante does not occupy a theological middle ground. The inclusion and utilisation of Nahuatl cultural traits and categories in his work serves but one purpose only – the dissemination of Christianity, not the creation of a new hybrid form of Christianity deliberately different from its European roots. This is why Gante probably did not find it particularly problematic or heretical to incorporate Nahuatl cultural constructs in his translations of key Christian texts and concepts.

To use the concept of hybridity as an interpretative tool for the analysis of the evangelization of Mexico is thus fraught with difficulties. If we take the most general definition of the term; 'the recombination of old elements into something new' [Liebmann 2013: 27] it is apparent that to characterise Christian religion in New Spain as hybrid is something of a misnomer. Something new was not created; no different form of Christianity came into existence. The term hybrid can, however, be applied to material culture such as the *Catecismo* itself. The document is indeed something new, being made up of heterogeneous elements derived from various sources. Conceptually, however, this manuscript is not hybrid. It is a Christian document which makes use of Nahuatl elements to facilitate the acceptance and spread of its message, which was not hybrid but fully Christian in nature and spirit. This research therefore uses the term hybrid solely when referring to expressions of material culture. Hybridity as an analytical concept applicable to the study of Christianity in New Spain is, however, not used.

1.1.7 Nepantla and the Middle Ground

Two important concepts in the study of missionary and Nahua transculturation in the present work are Nepantla and Middle Ground theory. The Middle Ground has been defined by Richard White in his *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (1991) as ‘The place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the non-state world of villages [...] the area between the historical foreground of European invasion [...] and the background of Indian defeat and retreat’ [White 1991:X]. Middle Ground theory has argued that cultural accommodation takes place in culture-contact situations, especially when there is a mutual need and reliance upon one another. In such a context there exists a mutual interest in cooperation and the adaption of existing cultural forms to new circumstances [DuVal 2006:5, White 1991]. The cultural transformations that result from this interactive process can be both deliberate and accidental. Middle Ground theory in essence refers to the wish of communities to communicate across cultural divides. This wish, however, does not necessary need to be shared by both participants. The wish to accommodate may be absent in one of the participants, especially in situations of forced cultural contact and interaction [Mclaren 1996: 278-279].

Middle Ground is also a means of communication between two groups [Mclaren 1996: 278-279]. Of particular importance for the present work is the temporal dimension of the communication between two groups in the Middle Ground. Middle Ground is a dialogue characterized by ongoing change and accommodation over time; it is a continuous process of negotiations between two cultural forms [Handler and Linnekin 1984, McLaren 1996: 278-279].

The term Middle Ground is not a compromise, as White explains it, it is the way individuals during cultural contact adjust their differences through ‘creative and convenient misunderstandings’ [White 1991:X]. This is of special significance to understand the work of the missionaries. Individuals in the Middle Ground persuade others to accept their belief system by appealing to the other’s values and practices. By doing this, the individuals both misinterpret and distort the cultural categories of the other, while at the same time out of these misunderstandings new categories of meaning appear [White 1991:X]. The Middle Ground is in this sense, according to Deloria, a dialogic process of cultural production [Deloria 2006:16]. Samuel Y. Edgerton has expanded this idea in relation to the colonial setting of New Spain with the concept of ‘expedient selection’ to describe how the

missionaries employed visual arts for conversion, selecting elements from the Christian repertoire similar to Nahua cultural elements [Edgerton 2001:2]. Although he specializes in architectural and iconographical elements, Edgerton's concept of expedient selection can be applied to other facets of the missionaries' accommodation of Nahua cultural categories to introduce Christianity. Accommodations made by the missionaries were made to ease the transition to Christianity. It is important to keep in mind, as Durston points out, that certain aspects were selected from the local religion because they were considered harmless or regarded as a lesser evil. In addition to this, expedient selection was justified by missionaries with reference to a belief in the presence of the 'seeds of faith'— that is the notion that all non-Christian cultures are compatible with Christianity [Durston 2007:13].

Thus the work of Gante and other missionaries like him can be analysed in light of the Middle Ground. Although the main objective of the missionaries was to convert Nahuas to Christianity, they did so by following a long-standing Christian tradition of expedient selection and appropriating cultural elements of the other in order to convert people. Gante created liminal places of dialogue and communication and made use of expedient selection in order to transmit the Christian message. In this process, Nahuas were able within limitations to accommodate Christian beliefs to their own cosmology often on the basis of 'creative misunderstandings' [Du Val 2006:5, White 1991].

The term *Nepantla* is conceptually related to Middle Ground theory as both are reflective of cultural change and accommodation. *Nepantla* is a liminal place where cultural categories become in contact; in this way *Nepantla* can be seen as a borderland, in between two roads. *Nepantla* and the Middle Ground can be classified conceptually as terms referring to a place of liminality. The Oxford English dictionary defines liminal as a transitional or initial stage of a process and the occupation of a position on both sides of a boundary or threshold. Both *Nepantla* and the Middle Ground refer to processes of cultural interaction in which cultures try to accommodate one another. Occupation of this middle ground allowed for dialogue and cultural accommodation. The term liminality accurately describes the initial interaction between missionaries and Nahuas. Both came together during the initial phase of the evangelization in a place of liminality, *Nepantla*, in which the cultural dialogue is neither wholly European nor Nahua. Both *Nepantla* and the middle ground imply the existence of a place of dialogue in which different cultural categories are adopted and adapted and find accommodation.

Unlike the term Middle Ground, developed in relation to specific European cultural contact with indigenous groups residing in the territory of what nowadays is United States and cultural contact between groups sharing a certain degree of equal power, the term Nepantla has been applied to the specific context of the cultural contact between Nahuas and missionaries during the colonization period and makes reference to this unequal power relationship between the colonizers and colonized [Deloria 2006:16].

The Nahuatl term Nepantla was adopted for the first time by Salvador Velazco in his *Visiones de Anáhuac. Reconstrucciones historiográficas y etnicidades emergentes en el México colonial: Fernando de Alva Ixtlixóchitl, Diego Muñoz Camargo y Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc* [2003] in his analysis of three of the most important indigenous and *mestizo* writers. He used the term Nepantla to signify being in the middle or in between two cultures [Velazco 2003]. Velazco developed his idea of Nepantla based on Fr. Diego Durán narration of an altercation with a Nahua regarding indoctrination in his *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e islas de Tierra Firme* [1867]: ‘Y así riñendole el mal que había hecho me respondió Padre no te espantes pues todavía estamos en Nepantla y como entendiese lo que quería decir estar en medio torné a insistir que medio era aquel en que estaban, me dijo que como no estaban aun bien arraigados en la fe que no me espantase de manera que aun estaban neutros que ni bien acudían a la una ley ni a la otra o por mejor decir que creían en Dios y juntamente acudían a sus costumbres antiguas y ritos del demonio y esto quiso decir aquel en su abominable excusa de que aún permanecían en medio y estaban neutros’ [Durán 1967 1:237]. Nepantla, a result of transculturation, is understood by Velazco as a liminal place where a subject finds himself in-between, negotiating between two cultures [Velazco 2003:25]. Individuals in this in-between space try to find new ways to adapt to the colonial setting; their position is complex and on occasion contradictory [Velazco 2003:25].

Maffie analysing the word Nepantla in Nahua sources reaches the conclusion that the term as understood by the Nahuas involves a dialogue, reciprocity or mutual interaction between two or more individuals.⁷ This dialogue occurs in a clearly defined social space that exists betwixt

⁷ Abraham [2014] acknowledges the current debate amongst scholars concerning the interpretation of the notion Nepantla by the Nahuas [Abraham 2014:5-6]. Mignolo argues that the Nahuas only developed the concept of Nepantla after the arrival of the Spaniards to make sense of the ideological collision with missionaries and conquistadors [Mignolo 2000a, Abraham 2007:5-6]. Maffie on the other hand, disputes this position by articulating that the Nahua already had the concept of Nepantla before the arrival of the Europeans. Nepantla was the normal state of life, a permanent state of liminality within which the Nahuas used to interpret their world. Nepantla defined the reality of the Nahuas [Maffie 2007:22, Abraham 2014:5-6]. This view of Nepantla indeed seems to resonate with

and between. Maffie adds that this social space is unstable, ill-defined and ambiguous as the processes seem to be at the same time destructive and constructive [Maffie 2007:12].

Nepantla in this way conveys a sense of mutuality or reciprocity that derives from being in between or in the middle [Maffie 2007:15]. Nepantla can not be defined as something static or a stable state of being [Maffie 2007:16]. Nepantla processes are dialectical, transactional and oscillating activities that happen in the betwixt and between [Maffie 2007:16].

Although scholars seem to position only Nahuas in Nepantla [Velazco 2003] missionaries in order to secure the conversion placed themselves into this borderland social space as well [Sigal 2011:69]. As opposed to the Nahuas, missionaries were voluntarily in Nepantla. It needs to be noted, however, that I am pushing the limits of Nepantla by positioning the missionaries in it [Sigal 2011:69]. Although missionaries were in this borderland they were not changing ideologically or theologically. They were not making concessions in regards to Nahuas becoming fully Christian. But in order to accomplish the evangelical goal the missionaries needed to accommodate Nahua cultural categories in the Christian message. In this sense, Nepantla for the specific case of the missionaries was a dialectical social place employed by the missionaries to achieve a greater level of accommodation, a move towards Christianity and world view by adapting Nahua categories and ideas. Missionaries' Nepantla in this sense does not refer to theological matters but it is related to the process of expedient selection in which missionaries employed cultural categories of the other to convey Christianity.

The missionaries were establishing a dialogue in order to start the process of expedient selection, to find analogous categories to be employed in the process of evangelization. Thus missionaries and Nahuas were precisely in a borderland, in a liminal place of confluence where dialectical processes were happening. Anzaldúa sees Nepantla as a place of transformation, where different perspectives come into conflict and 'where you question the basic ideas, tenets, and identities inherited from your family, your education, and your different cultures [...] Living between cultures results in "seeing" double, first from the perspective of one culture, then from the perspective of another. Seeing from two or more perspectives simultaneously renders those cultures transparent' [Anzaldúa, 2002:548-9]. This is a very central notion of Nepantla. By being in this borderland space not only Nahuas were being challenged by the new notions brought by missionaries but the missionaries were being

other concepts of Nahua belief such as the continuous search of equilibrium by the balancing of opposite forces [López-Austin 1990].

challenged themselves. In order to translate complex Christian theological concepts missionaries needed to think precisely how to render these concepts in a foreign language, employing cultural categories alien to them. To do this, the missionaries needed to define very clearly what the concept meant, deconstructing it by its parts in order to both select and rank in order of priority which elements were primordial for them to explain to the Nahuas. Therefore by selecting certain aspects from a theological concept they were defining the theological concept in a deeper more profound way than their European counterparts who did not have the need to make the concept understandable for an audience already versed in Christian theological notions. Consequently missionaries' understanding of Christian religion was changed, becoming clearer and deeper. Moving into this liminal space of double-vision certain missionaries can be said to inhabit *Nepantla*, translating from a double-perspective, making accommodations that are bidirectional, appropriating and adapting Nahua categories in order to explain Christian ones, but in the process transforming and changing those very Christian ideas, given that they are being explained in terms that are alien and wholly outside them.

Nepantla, as used in this work, makes reference to missionaries such as Gante who consciously developed such liminal places. They did so in order to better advance the spread and acceptance of Christianity. By drawing upon Nahua cultural elements to further their message the missionaries did not, however, set out to create a new hybrid version of Christianity. Consciously aware of European religious strife the missionaries in contrast actively sought to prevent the spread of heretical beliefs. It is highly informative in this respect that the use of Nahua imagery and cultural categories did not represent, in their eyes, a danger in this regard. The missionaries thought borrowing indigenous elements to communicate ensured that the message being communicated was Christian and properly understood by its audience. By appropriating indigenous cultural categories and making them Christian, the missionaries in terms of translation also inhabited a form of *Nepantla*, which although culturally and linguistically mixed was conceptually Christian. Although this can be thought of as pushing liminality to its limits, missionaries needed in order to be effective to inhabit a world 'betwixt and between' Christianity and Nahua religion [Sigal 2011:69].

Nepantla in the context of early missionary activity in colonial Mexico, therefore, denotes a way of communicating and not the making of concessions with regards to basic theological ideas. The missionaries had no interest whatsoever in leading to unorthodoxy or idolatry. *Nepantla*, therefore, was not the place in which a hybrid form of Nahua Christianity was

created. It was the place in which Christianity was communicated by means of borrowing of cultural categories from the indigenous population of the valley of Mexico. Obviously, we would be wrong to think of this Nepantla as a place in which Nahuas correctly and faithfully understood and accepted the (whole) Christian message communicated to them. Especially in its initial phase interaction in Nepantla may have led to mistaken interpretations. The meaning of certain Nahua cultural elements may have been misunderstood by the missionaries opening up the prospect of mixed and multiple interpretations not necessarily in line with the evangelical message intended to be conveyed. Individual agency plays a crucial role in this process. We can imagine that not every Nahua became immediately a model Christian. It is likely that some may have been converts only in name, affiliating themselves in secret with Nahua cosmology. The lord of Texcoco Don Carlos is a good example of the latter. Although being baptised and deemed Christian by the missionaries, Don Carlos continued to worship indigenous gods [Greenleaf 1978:323].

In conclusion, the concept of Nepantla is employed as a liminal, borderline social space in which both missionaries and Nahuas were submerged. Nepantla was a dialectical, never static place that changed continuously and where cultural categories and understandings were challenged, modified and defined. It was an ambiguous place where culture was created and destroyed, a place of both dialogue and imposition.

1.2 Method

The first work of Gante to be studied will be the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* [1527-1529]. The *Catecismo* will be analysed as an example of the process of transculturation initiated by the missionaries, as it demonstrates the adaptation, elaboration and transformation of Nahua glyphs in such a way that they became a mixture of Nahua and European/Spanish influences. My analysis will aim to uncover and explain this mixture in the context of multivectorial influence processes and pedagogical developments. For this, I will analyse a digital copy of the catechism provided by the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid (BNM).⁸

Catechisms in images were not uncommon in the initial years of the evangelization; however the catechism attributed to Gante seems to be the earliest one. An overview of the catechisms in images will be offered in order to understand the context of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*. Then, I will study the physical elements of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* accordingly, with

⁸ With call number Vitr/026/009.

the hope of providing additional elements that could help understand the procedure by which catechisms in images were made. A selected text, the *Pater Noster* prayer will be analysed employing the Galarza method. Joaquín Galarza is one of the most important scholars in the field of indigenous pictorial manuscripts: codices. Galarza's method, based on the iconographic analysis of Panofsky, has expanded the knowledge of codices and opened new avenues of research to a long neglected field. Galarza influenced recent innovative research in this field, such as John Glass' magnificent volume the *Handbook of Middle American Indians* on Colonial Mesoamerican written sources and a list of the codex or pictorial manuscripts extant in numerous institutions around the world.⁹

Galarza specifically devised an iconographic method in particular to analyse catechisms in images which is easily applicable to the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*. The method consists of several steps. First of all is the enumeration and minute description of each one of the glyphs by its form, colour, position, orientation and style. Later on, it is necessary to divide the glyphs into groups of categories to analyse the iconographic elements and the relationship between them in order to understand the text. In this way a typology is created. The different glyphs are then analysed according to meaning, trying to identify pictorial elements and associations between them, which is an indispensable step before translating the text. Finally the direction of reading is reviewed, and European and Nahua elements are identified and studied. Galarza's observation regarding the relationship among the glyphs –in which figures can be affected by three types of variants: movement which indicates action, orientation which is a variant with a grammatical meaning (indicating if the glyphs are nouns or the object of the verb) and position (such as kneeling or standing) — was also taken into consideration to analyse the sentences that constitute the prayer [Galarza 1992:58].

After the application of the Galarza method to the *Pater Noster* prayer of the *Catecismo*, a comparative analysis with the *Catecismo Incompleto*, a short catechism bound to the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* with a similar content and style will be made. On the last page of the *Catecismo Incompleto* the signature of Gante appears. An analysis of this text will permit us to understand if both works were indeed authored by Gante and in that case if the catechisms were based upon a prototype as proposed by Ann Normann [1992]. A last comparative analysis will be made with Catechism 078 attributed to Bernardino de Sahagún and located in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF). It is essential to compare these

⁹ The work of León-Portilla, Johansson, Anawalt, and Hill Boone in this field can also similarly be highlighted.

works to understand the choices involved in the creation of the catechisms. These choices show a glimpse of the dialogue evolving between missionaries and their students, which not only changed the Nahuatl imaginary but also adapted the Christian repertoire and altered in many ways the religious culture in New Spain. Moreover a comparison is necessary in order to determine if writing conventions existed amongst the friars.

The two works written in alphabetic script by Gante: the *Doctrina Christiana* and the *Cartilla* will be analysed by means of a three-layered analysis. The first layer will focus on format, structure and content, the second layer on a translation of a specific text and the third layer on the engravings that accompany the texts.

Following this method, I will analyse an exemplar of the 1553 edition of the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* kept in the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico (AGN). During the first stage of the analysis, the physical format, structure and themes will be studied in order to understand the target audience, and the main objective behind the publication of the *Doctrina*. The aim of the first stage of analysis is to reveal Gante's ideas concerning the evangelical enterprise, the intellectual capabilities of the Nahuas, and Gante's own conception of Christian religion. The second layer is an analytical comparative study of the translation process of two Nahuatl versions of the Articles of Faith that are present in the *Doctrina*. The analysis of the translation for both the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla* is loosely based on the method suggested by Peralta and Herrera [2004] which integrates three levels. The first level is a morphosyntactic analysis of each sentence; the second level studies the discursive structure of the text and the context in which it was elaborated; while the third level contextualizes the document in relation to historical practices (this last contextual analysis will appear separately in chapter 5) [Peralta and Herrera 2004:181]. The Articles of Faith are particularly important as they contain the dogma of Christianity. The complicated terminology of the Articles presented for the missionaries a translation challenge as they needed to introduce new concepts using a vocabulary that did not share the same cosmological referents. A comparison will be made between the translations of the *Doctrina* of the Articles and the version of the translation present in the *Cartilla*. I aim to determine with this analysis if there was a developmental trajectory in translation, in particular if translations were improved based on a dialogue between missionaries and Nahuas. The third layer corresponds to the iconographical study of selected engravings that accompany the text of the *Doctrina*. The use of engravings as a pedagogical tool to illustrate and to memorize the content of the narrative was a new introduction, and started the slow process of replacement

of the Nahua imaginary for the European one. The work of Panofsky will provide a framework for decoding iconographic images by analysing them in three stages: firstly, by distinguishing their primary forms and qualities; secondly, by analysing the secondary layer of meaning of the images by joining the independent images to search for themes, stories or allegories that highlight the agency of the artist and thirdly, describing the iconographic motifs or symbolic values [Panofsky 1972, Williams 1991:306].

The last work to be analysed is the reading primer *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* [1569] located at the Huntington Library in San Marino California. The first part of the analysis will encompass the physical structure, format, and content of the primer with the objective of determining the target audience, the purpose behind publication and Gante's ideas of what he considered appropriate for his Nahua students to learn. The second part will revolve around the translation of the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria* prayers in the *Cartilla*, two of the most fundamental prayers both of which must have been translated early on. The translation will not only showcase the ingenuity of Gante but also the accommodations he likely made over time, evident after a comparative analysis with earlier versions of the prayer in the *Doctrina*. The comparative analysis will be expanded with translations by other authors of the time such as Alonso de Molina in order to determine if writing conventions amongst friars were established. The translation solutions of the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria* will allow us to determine to what extent the work was a collaboration between Gante and Nahuas. Similarly to the *Doctrina*, the third layer will focus into an iconographic analysis of the engravings following the Panofsky method.

1.3 An interdisciplinary approach

The use of an interdisciplinary approach to comprehend Gante and his works in the wider context of the formative years of New Spain is indispensable to analyse such vast and dissimilar material. With the aid of this interdisciplinary approach I hope to show that the interaction of Gante and his Nahua students was indeed one of the first of its kind and can be seen reflected in Gante's *Catecismo en Pictogramas*, the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* and the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer*. This complex material is in desperate need of being placed into the context of Colonial studies and needs theorizing. Gante's works represent the transition of modes of expression, from Nahua pictorial writing to the European alphabet and it is certainly this diversity that suggests employing a complex and interdisciplinary analysis. While the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* and the

Cartilla para enseñar a leer can be studied using a philological method, that takes into account the translation process and language evolution besides the historical context; the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* needs to be understood within a different paradigm. It requires a conceptual framework where alphabetic writing is absent and semiotic interactions will be valued. Galarza iconographic method, especially designed to study pictorial catechisms will be supplemented by Mignolo's concept of Colonial semiosis. The concepts of entextualization and intersemiotic translation are also very important to analyse the *Catecismo en pictogramas*, as these tools aid in the understanding of the translation process from text to glyph.

The missionary work of Gante needs to be seen in the context of transculturation. Transculturation provides an interpretational framework in which to analyse the multi-directionality present in situations of cultural contact. Employment of this concept is particularly important in order to better comprehend the complex process of dialogue, accommodation and negation that resulted from the interaction between missionaries and Nahuas during the evangelization of New Spain. Transculturation helps us to approach a greater understanding of how by appropriating Nahua cultural elements the missionaries, by means of expedient selection, adapted and reintroduced indigenous cultural and religious concepts. During this process they changed the original semantics of such concepts providing them with new meaning and understanding. This dialogue happened in a liminal place of social relations: Nepantla. Both missionaries and Nahuas were in Nepantla. Not because the missionaries were becoming 'Nahuatized' but because by being in close contact with the Nahuas translating and discussing Christian cultural categories in Nahuatl they were establishing an understanding of the other. In addition to this, the translation of complex religious concepts forced missionaries to define their own Christian thinking. Using the concept of Nepantla is particularly important to understand the complexity of cultural interaction that occurred in Central Mexico, unlike Middle Ground it makes allusion to the unequal power relation between the groups while also acknowledges the creation of borderline social spaces which missionaries made use of to further their evangelical goals.

By employing an interdisciplinary conceptual framework this work is set aside as it deals with its subject matter in a more complex contextualized manner helping to provide an insight into the particular agency of one Franciscan in particular and his work in the wider setting of the evangelization of New Spain. This work as part of the New Philology, takes on the new trends that highlight missionary translations in indigenous languages of Christian

belief, however it goes a step further as the complex material at hand requires a set of tools from different fields. Therefore notions of Colonial semiosis, translation studies, agency and annales theory are employed to analyse the complex and diverse material in order to take the research to a next level. In the next chapter I will present an overview of the historiography on Gante. These historical sources have been employed widely not only in the present work but also by previous scholars and indeed form the basis of research of most scholarly work on Gante. The second part of next chapter will present a panorama of the current research on Gante showing a trajectorial development that goes from centring on his biography to studying segments of his works in the context of the evangelization.

Chapter 2: Historiographical accounts on Fr. Pedro de Gante and Previous studies

2.1 Historiographical Accounts

Past and modern scholarship on Gante has relied upon first-hand sources written by his fellow Franciscan missionaries who worked closely with him during the administrative tasks of the evangelical enterprise in the Valley of Mexico and Puebla during the 16th century. These first historiographical sources on the Franciscan evangelical work were employed by their authors to support the work of the Franciscans in order to maintain their order's privileges [Rubial García 2002:20]. Caution is required while interpreting these sources, as they were employed to justify the actions of the Franciscan enterprise in New Spain and are tinted with Franciscans interpretation of their own activities.

Three major works chronicle, albeit briefly, Gante's life and work: Jerónimo de Mendieta's *Historia eclesiástica Indiana* [1596], Toribio de Benavente's¹⁰ *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España* [1541] and the *Códice franciscano*, a compilation of 16th-century Franciscan texts edited and published by García Icazbalceta in his *Nueva Colección de documentos para la historia de México* in 1889. Both Motolinía's and Mendieta's works were penned originally during the second half of the 16th-century but as a direct consequence of a crown policy from 1577 which forbade printing material describing the cultural setting of the autochthonous population, the works did not see the light of day until the 19th century [Medina 1965:35].

Motolinía, a member of the first group of Franciscans to arrive in Mexico—known as the Apostolic Twelve—, was particularly important in the evangelization effort not only as a key personality during the conversion but also in administrative tasks. During his lifetime he became guardian of numerous convents in the Valley of Mexico and adjacent territories, Huejotzingo, Atlixco and Tlaxcala just to name a few of them, but probably the most important seats were the convents¹¹ of San Francisco in Mexico City and San Antonio in

¹⁰ Toribio de Benavente was also known as Motolinía—a term meaning poor in Nahuatl—which he adopted on his arrival in Tlaxcala in 1524.

¹¹ The term convent will be employed throughout this work, even though in English it connotes an establishment for cloistered female religious. The term monastery will not be employed as it usually refers to a house for cloistered religious rather than active ones like friars. Moreover I prefer the term convent as it was widely employed in 16th-century documents from New Spain [Quiñones Keber 2013:15].

Texcoco. Between 1548 and 1551 he was in charge of the Franciscan *Provincia del Santo Evangelio* (Holy Gospel Province) which encompassed the aforementioned territories.¹² It is precisely this multi-faceted role as a missionary that permeates his *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España* [1541], an interesting and knowledgeable first-hand insight into the Christianization of Mexico. Although only a fragment from his *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España* is extant, the text praises the Franciscans working in New Spain as defenders of the faith, who according to Motolinía freed the Mesoamerican populations from the influence of the devil. Motolinía presents in his pages a perfect indigenous Christianity, a utopia very similar to the original Church. The Nahuas, according to Motolinía, adopted the religion swiftly and without resistance, obeying the commandments of the Franciscan friars, who were benevolent, paternal figures. Although Motolinía briefly deals with Gante, the importance of *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España* as a source cannot be diminished. Motolinía and Gante knew each other very well, working closely setting conversion strategies from their first meeting to later in their life while working in the Convent of San Francisco, Motolinía as its guardian and Gante in charge of the education of the Nahuas.

¹² The Holy Gospel Province, the first Franciscan Province in Mexico, was established by the Apostolic Twelve in 1524. The first convents of the Province were established in the most important indigenous settlements of Central Mexico: Mexico-Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, Tlaxcala and Huejotzingo. The Province expanded with the arrival of more Franciscans and occupied the modern states of Morelos, Puebla, Hidalgo, Guerrero, Veracruz and Tlaxcala [Morales 2012, Habig 1944:89].

In 1217, St. Francis established provinces. Provinces were administrative units of the Franciscan order consisting of several convents or religious houses within a territory. The head of a Province is called minister provincial or general. The custody of the province was elected in charge for a period of three years, after this period a new custody needed to be elected. According to Rubial García, the Franciscans opted thus for an organization of long range, following the example of the Dominicans [Rubial García 1996:15-8].



Fig. 1 Pedro de Gante, anon., [Source <http://www.motecuhzoma.de/Gante-es.html> 30/6/2011].

The second important source on Gante was written by Jerónimo de Mendieta. Mendieta penned a history of the evangelization, the *Historia eclesiástica Indiana*, based on the work of Motolinía of whom he was a disciple, and on Mendieta's own missionary activity. The *Historia eclesiástica Indiana* was commissioned by the general of the Franciscan Order,

Christopher de Cheffontaines with the purpose of chronicling the work of the Franciscans in New Spain. Comprising five books the *Historia eclesiástica Indiana* encompasses a wide variety of subjects regarding the conversion process. Narrated with a fresh and evocative style, the *Historia eclesiástica Indiana* starts with the discovery of the New World, the conquest of Mexico, and the prehispanic past of the Mexica and moves to explain the missionary efforts of the Friars Minor,¹³ their struggles while Christianizing the population, their interaction with the Nahuatl populations and the posterior scenes of conversion and miracles. During Mendieta's life-time, the Colonial Mesoamerican population had been decimated by epidemics and hard labour; the friars had seen their power taken away by secular clergy.¹⁴ Mendieta presents a more pessimistic view than Motolinía as a result of the historical setting he was living, the change in the power structures from the mendicant to the secular, the modifications of the encomienda system, and the dispositions introduced by the second archbishop of New Spain Montúfar started the slow decline of the Franciscan enterprise [Rubial García 2002:22]. In the *Historia eclesiástica Indiana*, Mendieta invoked the idea of a golden age of missionary evangelical work, in clear contrast to the historical period he was living in. Rubial García suggests that by highlighting this perfect 'Indian Church' Mendieta was questioning the new policies that intended to remove the power of the Mendicant order and replace them with secular clergy [Rubial García 2002:23]. Of interest is the detailed information of the evangelization of New Spain which presents a vast amount of glimpses into Gante's many evangelical endeavours.

The chronicles of the Franciscan provinces from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries also provide essential information on Gante. The documents covered a series of institutional and bureaucratic necessities. The main purpose of these documents is to exalt the golden age of

¹³ The Order of Friars Minor, also called Observant Franciscans, is a branch of the Franciscan order (the other branches are Conventuals and Capuchins) which played an essential part in the evangelization of New Spain [Habig 1944:89].

¹⁴ There were two branches of the Church: the secular (headed by the archbishop and bishop) which was centralized and the regular or mendicant orders (regular for the *regla* or rules that the orders adhered to) whose authority was derived from Spanish Crown under the *Patronato real*. The regulars worked independently of one another as well as of the bishops [Van Oss 1976:32].

The seculars, supported by the bishops and encomenderos, also had an important role in the evangelization. They shared areas with the mendicant orders. The most famous representative of the secular clergy was perhaps the bishop of Michoacán, Vasco de Quiroga [Rubial García 2002:7, 11]. According to Padden, in many aspects, the Church of Mexico prior to 1550 was a mendicant organization. After this date, however, the secular clergy had gained in numbers and strength, creating new problems for the mendicant orders [Padden 1956:336].

mendicant work by highlighting Franciscan's pivotal role in the establishment of the Church of New Spain [Rubial García 2002:25-7]. From this period we have the *Códice Franciscano*, a collection of Franciscan administrative documents regarding the Holy Gospel Province collected and edited by the Mexican historian García Icazbalceta in 1889. During the 19th century García Icazbalceta (1824-1894) collected a vast amount of documentation belonging to the Colonial period in Mexico and in particular from the Franciscan order. His labour of rescuing, editing and publishing texts has no parallel. García Icazbalceta compiled the documents in two very important works: the *Colección de documentos para la historia de México* [1858-1866] and the *Nueva Colección de Documentos para la Historia de México* [1889]. The last one incorporated the *Códice Franciscano*, which dates originally from the second part of the 16th century, and as we have seen is one of the most important sources on Gante. Among papers related to the order's internal affairs we can find two of Gante's letters and a brief biography of Gante. It is generally assumed that the author of this early biography of Gante was also Mendieta who was in charge of writing speeches for the Franciscans and as we have seen knew Gante personally. The biography of Gante shows remarkable highlights of his life, and it is one of the most analysed pieces of historical narrative concerning the Flemish missionary.

Gante's name appears briefly in other extant documents from his contemporaries, such as correspondence and claims of Franciscans, Dominicans and Augustinians in the Council of the Indies,¹⁵ and in inquisitorial accounts. The documentation is kept in diverse archives such as the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico and the Archivo General de Indias in Seville. As we will see in chapter 3 and 4, although not considerable they present fascinating snippets of Gante's life and work in New Spain and help to form a more neutral perspective of the life of the friar.

During the 17th century, sources on Gante's life are scant; only the work of the Franciscan Agustín de Vetancourt, former chaplain of the *doctrina* of San José de los Naturales, can be highlighted. His *Crónica de la Provincia del Santo Evangelio IV parte del Teatro mexicano* [1697] explains the relevance of Gante in the introduction of Christianity by means of theater and religious plays. It is important to keep in mind that this source was written one-hundred years later and it was based on the previous chronicles written by fellow Franciscans,

¹⁵ The Royal and Supreme Council of the Indies, known more commonly as Council of the Indies was a body of the Crown of Castile in charge of governing and administering in the king's name the Americas and Asia from 1524 to 1834.

however, it is helpful to understand the medium-term historical developments of Gante's work.



Fig. 2 Gante in Codex Osuna [1560:f. 8 v] [Source: <http://instructional1.calstatela.edu/bevans/Art454L-01-MapsDocsEtc/WebPage-Full.00048.html> 12/72014]

On the other hand, Nahuatl perspectives on the evangelization illustrate how Gante was seen by the Nahuatl. Again, we need to approach these sources critically, as most of them were written by Nahuatl students of San José and therefore their views could be biased, as they could be trying to align themselves with the Franciscan agenda. However, these sources are particularly important as they also show glimpses of Gante's educative work. From the middle of the 16th century onwards Gante is mentioned in several sources of Nahuatl origin. An example of this appears in folio eight of the Codex Osuna,¹⁶ a collection of litigations, grievances and claims made by several Nahuatl mayors and governors against the abuses of the Viceroy and members of the First Audiencia¹⁷ presented to the visitor of the Crown Jerónimo

¹⁶ Now located in the Biblioteca Nacional Madrid.

¹⁷ The Royal Audiencia of New Spain (*Real Audiencia*) was the highest tribunal in Mexico before the establishment of the Viceroyalty in New Spain. Its establishment was decreed by the Crown in

de Valderrama between 1563 and 1565. According to the Codex Osuna, the chapel of San Pablo was elevated from *doctrina* to parish between 1562 and 1565. The elevation was commemorated by the manufacture of three bells. In the Codex Gante appears next to the chapel of San José, where he resided. The four parishes present in the depiction were established by Gante, highlighting the significance of Gante's presence in the scene [Truitt 2008:27-8, León-Portilla 1985:269].

Another example is the unpublished diary of Juan Bautista, which narrates the preparations for the feast of Saint Francis on September 1567 in Tlatelolco [Reyes García 2001:291, León-Portilla 1985:312-4]. The indigenous author describes how the *Pipilcuícatl* or children's song was taught to the Nahuas by Gante to be sung in the festivity of Saint Francis. Although the song of the *Pipilcuícatl* is not preserved in the diary, the song is preserved in its entirety in the *Cantares Mexicanos*, a manuscript collection of Nahuatl Christian songs extant in the Biblioteca Nacional de México [León-Portilla 1985:312-4]. [For a complete version of the *Pipilcuícatl* see Appendix 4.]

In the *Codex Aubin*, a register of events from the Mexica peregrination from Aztlan to the year 1606, using both glyphs and Nahuatl text, appears a mention of the death of Gante. The reverence displayed in the Codex towards the friar suggests that the work was probably composed by a Nahuatl student from the *doctrina* of San José [León-Portilla 1985:268-9]. The death of the friar was also registered in the *Anales Mexicanos*, *Codex Osuna* and the seventh *Relación* by the Chalcan Chimalpahin showcasing the importance of the friar in Nahuas' minds. [For complete versions of Nahuatl sources on Gante's death see Appendix 4.]

Although an important figure, Gante seems to have had an elusive character, not much is known about his personal life. The best source on Gante, however, are his own letters written throughout his life to different addressees. Only five letters are extant, their content reflects Gante's preoccupation and interest in improving the workings of evangelization, while at the same time ameliorating the living conditions of the Nahuas. The list of addressees is not very large and ranges from his relatives Charles V and Philip II to his colleagues from the Convent of Saint Francis in Ghent and other family members from his native Flanders. The letters are indispensable in understanding the motivation and personality of Gante and were first published together in a volume by Francisco Antonio Lorenzana in his *Historia de Nueva*

December 13 1527, taking away Hernán Cortés' power. The First Audiencia (*Primera Audiencia*) was led by Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán.

España, escrito por su esclarecido conquistador Hernán Cortés in 1770. However the first letter of Gante which dates from the 27 June 1529 was first printed by Amando de Zierikzee in his *Chronica compendiosissima ab exordio mundi usque ad annum Domini millesimum quingentesimum trigesimum quartum* in Antwerp in 1534. The first letter was addressed to his relatives and colleagues residing in the region of Flanders. It was originally written in Spanish, but at Gante's request the letter was translated into both Latin and Flemish to facilitate its reading as Gante had already forgotten his mother tongue and could not write anymore in it. Gante narrates in a colloquially vivid manner his life in New Spain during the first years after the conquest and its contents must have been fascinating for the people in the Old World.

The second letter by Gante from 31 October 1532 was addressed to Charles V and printed for the first time in the *Cartas de Indias* in 1877. Unlike the first letter, the subsequent letters have a very different tone. Formality was required as these were official bureaucratic letters. In the second epistle Gante petitioned Charles V to send food and charity for his hospital and school, while explaining his work in the evangelization.

The third letter written 20 July 1548 addressed to Charles V narrates succinctly the death of Archbishop Juan de Zumárraga, the first archbishop of New Spain, a close collaborator and great friend of Gante.¹⁸ Their close bond was the main reason Gante felt it was necessary to

¹⁸ The Franciscan Zumárraga was born in Durango in the Basque region, from a middle-class family. He had a mixture of progressive and conservative ideas [Mallea-Olaeche 1992:43]. Zumárraga was commissioned by Charles V with two main tasks: the organization of the Church and the protection of the indigenous peoples [Castañeda 1949:299, Bataillon 1953:1-10, Plassmann 1949:261-3, Carreño 1949:56-71, Hanke 1949:275-282, Chauvet 1949:283-295]. Zumárraga's educative endeavours were particularly important for New Spain. He established the first library in New Spain (by bringing his book collection to Mexico City), and together with the Viceroy of New Spain, Antonio de Mendoza established the printing press in 1540, the Colegio de Santiago Tlatelolco in 1536 and the University of Mexico in 1551. The University, did not only serve as a theological seminary, but also students were instructed in Latin, rhetoric, philosophy, astronomy or astrology, medicine, surgery, anatomy, and Mesoamerican languages [Carreño 1949:62-7].

According to Castañeda, Zumárraga developed a threefold policy: (1) to revive the zeal of the clergy; (2) to curb the abuses of civil and military authorities (this included the abuses made by the First Audiencia); and (3) to firmly establish the education of boys and girls of the indigenous nobility [Castañeda 1949:299]. Because of this threefold policy Zumárraga clashed with the First Audiencia as soon as he arrived in Mexico in 1528. Zumárraga's attempt to establish a court to hear the grievances of the Mesoamericans was felt as a direct threat to the authority of the First Oidor, Nuño de Guzmán. Because of this, the First Audiencia tried to restrict the agency of Zumárraga to educative affairs only. The conflict between the First Audiencia and both Franciscans and Zumárraga escalated to physical violence, in which several missionaries were assaulted by members of the Audiencia. The conflict ended in December 1530 when the First Audiencia was removed from office [Mallea-Olaeche 1992:44-48, Castañeda 1949:298, Morales 2001:337, Kieckens 1880:40, Alejos-Grau et al 1990,

personally inform the king regarding the passing of Zumárraga. It was printed for the first time in the *Códice Franciscano* in 1889.

The fourth letter written 15 February 1552 was printed in the *Cartas de Indias*. It is again a petition to Charles. In this letter Gante discusses the problematic situation of the indigenous population in New Spain, detailing the threat of the *repartimiento* system¹⁹ to missionary work, as Gante considered that it was taking away resources from the Nahuas leaving them incapable of following Christian education.

The fifth and last letter was written 23 June 1558, addressed to Philip II and printed in the *Códice Franciscano*. In this letter Gante requested Philip II to give plenary indulgence for people buried in the Convent of San Francisco in Mexico City.

2.2 Previous studies on Gante

Gante's role as a cultural mediator during the complex process of transculturation in the formative years of New Spain has been understudied; scholarship on the missionary is scant. Studies on Gante can be divided into two major groups, an old school that can be dated from the late 1800s to 1980 and a new school from 1980 to the present.

During the first phase, studies concentrate on purely biographical description. Studies such as the ones from Torre [1973], Ramírez [1948], Chávez [1934] and Brun Martínez [1977] tend to be positivistic and often biased by their religious background. These studies often praise Gante's role in the process of Christianization and ignore completely the Nahua population, unless to describe them as passive recipients.

The works of Ezequiel Chávez *El primero de los grandes educadores de América, Fray Pedro de Gante* [1934] and *Fr. Pedro de Gante. Figuras y episodios de la historia de México* [1934] contextualize Gante in the historical and cultural context, an approach that was later on followed by researchers of the first phase. Although full of socio-cultural details, the

Rubial García 2002:46, Baudot 1964, Magner 1949:268, Castañeda 1949:300] [For an overview of first-hand sources related to the conflict between Zumárraga and the First Audiencia see Cuevas 1914].

The bishopric of New Spain was created in 1528 and in 1545 was elevated to archbishopric, after the erection of three additional dioceses, Oaxaca, Michoacan, and Chiapas.

¹⁹ The *repartimiento* was a legal system established by the Crown in order to replace the *encomienda* system. Under this system the indigenous peoples worked in exchange for a salary, and the employer was not forced to ensure his indigenous employees received Christian instruction.

narrative tends to lose itself into the wider context and puts little emphasis on Gante's work. In his 1994 book entitled *La educación en México en la época precortesiana: La evangelización de los indios*, Fray Pedro de Gante Chávez explores not only the role of Gante in the creation of ingenious pedagogical tools, but also he illustrates how the Mexica educative system influenced Gante's pedagogical work, by showing how the *calmecac* school of the Mexica operated along similar lines to the school of Gante, in particular as in both institutions noble children from young ages were fostered and educated by priests.

However this assertion was not new, in 1944 Eduardo Enrique Ríos' *The Franciscan Contribution to Mexican Culture* analysed the evangelization process started by Franciscan missionaries in the New Spain. Ríos describes how Gante and company arrived in Mexico and observed the remnants of the education of the Nahuas. Strangely enough for a writer who seems to have had a Catholic agenda he mentions that before starting the evangelization process, Gante and company needed to understand the Nahuas, which influenced missionaries' pedagogical techniques. It was a fresh perspective in which the indigenous population seemed to have a slightly more positive role. However as it was a paper read in an American Franciscan History conference, he does not present his sources, so it is difficult to know where he obtained them from.

In 1951, Fidel de Jesús Chauvet wrote a seminal book on Gante *Cartas de Fr. Pedro de Gante, O.F.M., primer educador de América (compiladas de diversas obras)*. In this book Chauvet collected for the first time all the extant letters of Gante in one volume.

In the 70s the work of the Mexican historian Ernesto de la Torre Villar [1973] on Gante stands out as it explores extensively Gante's biography and the historical and cultural setting of the time. Indeed the book, entitled *Fr. Pedro de Gante, Maestro y civilizador de América* by de la Torre Villar is one of the most well-known works on Gante. Unfortunately although his research is abundant in data, the author seems to be biased by his Christian upbringing. One of the most important parts of the book is the appendix in which de la Torre compiled the five letters written by Gante and the small biography of Gante by Mendieta, sources that have been used as a base of research in the present work.

Scholars of the first period of research, while biased by their Catholic upbringing, brought an over-generalizing perspective that unfortunately often tended to lose itself in the description of the socio-cultural setting. The majority of these studies are based on the ecclesiastical documents collected by García Icazbalceta in Mexico; nonetheless there is a lack of Flemish

documents about Gante's earlier life. Some of the statements made by the aforementioned scholars related to Gante are not based on documentary evidence of any type, more on their own assumptions and deductions.

On the other hand, Belgian authors such as Kieckens [1880], Ceuleneer [1931], and Ridder [1985] present Flemish documents as well as primary sources from the Viceroyalty. Interesting theories concerning Gante's early years in his native Flanders have been established by these authors, giving a more grounded and encompassing insight into Gante's life.

2.2.1 Recent scholarship

In recent years scholars have moved from the biographical note into an analysis of Gante's works as tools of evangelization. This is of utmost importance as there has been a general neglect of the Christianization tools written in Mesoamerican languages by the missionaries.

2.2.1.1 Recent Scholarship on The *Catecismo en Pictogramas*

On the particular matter of the *Catecismo en pictogramas* by Gante, the earliest attempt at interpretation was made in 1900 by Narciso Sentenach's *Catecismo de la Doctrina Cristiana en jeroglíficos para la enseñanza de los indios Americanos* based on the catechism of Fr. Jerónimo de Ripalda. The author noted the use of the 'Rebus' system and the borrowing of glyphs of Nahuatl origin. A later interpretation of the *Catecismo* was made by Federico Navarro in 1970 in the facsimile edition of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* extant in the Biblioteca Nacional de España entitled *Catecismo de Fr. Pedro de Gante*. Both studies were incomplete and rather superficial [Resines 2007:11].

A pivotal work for the present research is the work of Anne Normann [1985], who presents an encompassing study of catechisms in images. In her dissertation she analyses thirty-two catechisms in existence, including Gante and Sahagún's. She divides them into five stylistic groups: the Gante group, the Egerton group, the Sahagún group, the García Icazbalceta group and the Tulane Brown group. There is a last group that could not be divided by style, so she groups them by size: the medium size group included the León-Portilla Catechism, the Basich de Canessi Catechism, the Fonds Mexicains 399 and the Philips Catechism. The larger size group included the Fonds Mexicains 77 [Normann 1985:6]. Her work differs from previous avenues of research as it analyses the relationship between extant catechisms, trying to understand the elaboration process and writing conventions. Most importantly, Normann

introduces the idea of a prototype, from which she believes the other catechisms evolved. I draw from Normann's analysis, in particular her extensive review of Gante-influenced group of catechisms [Normann 1985].

Justino Cortés [1987] was the first scholar to give a fresh perspective on the investigation of Gante's work; his is the most complete study of the catechism written so far. Cortés' thorough analysis of the *Catecismo* is one of the major sources for the present study. Although a Catholic scholar himself, his analysis of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* is a rigorous study of the work and its use in the wider context of the evangelization. Justino Cortés's method of deciphering the catechism is comparative in two ways. First he compares the glyphs of the *Catecismo* with Nahuatl glyphs in other codices of the early 16th century, contrasting the interpretations of the glyphs made in previous iconographic studies with the ones present in the catechism. Indeed it was a necessary comparison as the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* was made with the help of the Nahuatl assistants of Gante and therefore essentially influenced by the Nahuatl writing system and world view. Cortés then proceeds to interpret the glyphs in the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* with the transliterated *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* written in Nahuatl by Gante. This method however proved ineffective, because deciphering the *Catecismo* in this way adjusted and changed the meaning of the glyphs in order to correspond with the Nahuatl transliterated version, thus giving some glyphs multiple readings. Nevertheless the work of Justino Cortés proved pivotal in the analysis of the *Catecismo* and created new avenues of research as he provided a symbolic analysis of the catechism and related it to the wider context of Nahuatl pictographic tradition, an element already suggested by the work of Glass [1975:283] who had already noticed that catechisms in images needed to be understood in the context of pictorial autochthonous manuscripts.

Luis Resines [2007] also studied the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* in his book *Catecismos pictográficos de Pedro de Gante, incompleto y Mucagua* in which he furthered the work of Cortés. Resines encountered multiple problems during the translation and identification of the glyphs. He found it difficult to discern which prayer in particular was being studied as there were no referents associated with the glyphs that could identify particular prayers. Resines assigned a letter and a number to each one of the glyphs, described the formal elements (similar to the Galarza method) and concluded by giving the glyphs an interpretation.

Resines criticised Cortés's work as he considered that Cortés adjusted the glyphs to a written version of the prayers, giving certain glyphs different meanings according to the context. Although Resines criticizes Justino Cortés' assumption of the multiple meanings of the glyphs, he on occasion gives several interpretations to the same sign as well. However, according to Joaquín Galarza [1990] in the Nahua tradition a glyph could symbolize different things at the same time, so the interpretation of a glyph could vary according to the context in which it appeared and also according to the reading order.

Resines moved away from Justino Cortés' position by concluding that catechisms were indeed an independent creation from the *Doctrina Christiana en lengua Mexicana*. Resines reached the conclusion that the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* was a pictorial transcription of the oral Nahuatl version of the different prayers. He also expanded Cortés's study by comparing the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* with other existent catechisms in images such as the *Incompleto* and *Mucagua*, both works also attributed to Gante. Resines noticed that although the catechisms analysed by him have elements in common, e.g. the basic structure of the text, the dividing lines in which the glyphs are distributed, and the directionality of the reading, each one of the catechisms has its own style, the contents seem to fluctuate and usually the prayers appear in different order, showing the agency of the author. The glyphs represented in the different catechisms vary as the missionaries seem to have autonomy in the election of the different glyphs employed. Certain aspects of Resines' study can be criticized because his knowledge of Nahua glyphs is scant, which sometimes leads to a misguided interpretation of them.

Acker [1995] studied the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* employing a comparative approach in which the *Pater Noster* and the Creed were contrasted with two catechisms from the early period of evangelization and Gante's *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* composed in 1569. Acker was interested in making the comparison with catechisms from other linguistic areas (Mazahua, Otomi) and different periods in order to determine if elements of other phonetic writing systems can be seen reflected in the glyphs or the presence of other graphic elements from the Nahua writing tradition not seen before in catechisms. Acker believed, following an idea of Gonzalbo, that missionaries were aware of traditional writing and the ability of Mesoamericans to memorize long texts with the support of pictographic writing, a trait they had in mind when producing the catechisms [Gonzalbo 1990:141 cited in Acker 1995:412]. Acker's study offers a broader perspective by exploring and comparing the *Catecismo en*

Pictogramas with original Nahuatl sources thus allowing interesting interpretations, especially by being aware that catechisms in images were imbedded in a larger Nahuatl semiotic context. In many ways I will follow Acker's strategy in this work. The *Pater Noster* prayer from the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* is compared with the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* and the *Doctrina Christiana en lengua Mexicana*. Moreover a comparison with other Nahuatl catechisms in images by Gante and other authors in the same period is necessary. Unlike Resines, Galarza and Acker, my analysis of the glyphs is carried out with the help of the Galarza iconographic method and will be put in a wider context of Colonial semiosis.

2.2.1.2 Recent Scholarship on the *Doctrina Christiana*

Previous studies focusing on the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* are rare. Indeed the *Doctrina Christiana* has never been translated in its totality. The already mentioned study by Justino Cortés is an example of previous work done in relation to the *Doctrina* in which segments of the work are analysed to be used as a comparison with other contemporary doctrinal texts. The focus of Cortés study was not the *Doctrina* but the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*. Interesting is the brief summary of the use of Christian *doctrinas* during the process of evangelization that Cortés includes. Studying the *Doctrina* in the wider context of devotional literature in New Spain is important to understand the general trends and choices being made by the missionaries during the evangelization.

Although again not centred on the *Doctrina*, Jennifer Ottman in her doctoral dissertation entitled *Models of Christian identity in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Nahuatl catechetical literature* [2003] incorporated a translation and analysis of selected texts of the *Doctrina* such as the section related to the cult of the saints, ingraining them in the wider panorama of catechetical literature of the evangelization.

Louise Burkhart in her work *Before Guadalupe. The Virgin Mary in early Colonial literature* [2001] regarding the introduction of the Marian cult during the evangelization period examines a series of sermons, prayers, catechisms, *doctrinas*, and hymns from 1540 to 1620. She translated sections of Gante's *Doctrina* pertaining to Marian devotion, such as the *Ave Maria*, *Salve Regina* and the Crown of Saint Mary amongst others. Her comparison of these texts with other *doctrinas* of the time, including texts from other orders, allowed for a reconstruction of the introduction of Marian devotion in a larger framework, showing that the introduction of Mary was not as syncretical as has often been assumed. Missionaries

encountered difficulties adapting the cult of Mary to Nahua cosmology as the role played by Saint Mary was not equivalent to any female deity of the Nahua.

Moving away from this trend to focus on the *Doctrina* in particular is the work of Mulhare and Sell [2002]. Mulhare and Sell studied a section of the *Doctrina Christiana* that deals with bead-prayers. This type of prayer became a determinant part of the Nahua repertoire of Christian devotion, almost at the same time as in Europe. In their article Mulhare and Sell analysed four *coronas* (crowns) or bead-prayers which appear in the 1553 edition of the *Doctrina christiana*. The crowns introduced by Gante are variations of other bead prayers employed in Europe at the time. The article centres on the reasons behind the choices made by Gante in order to prepare his *Doctrina Christiana*, an interesting discussion that will be built upon in the present thesis: the analysis of Gante's agency and how his work influenced the medium and long-term processes of the evangelization in Mexico.

2.2.1.3 Recent Scholarship on the Cartilla

Previous scholarship on the *Cartilla* is limited. The best known study is that of Valton's *Primer libro de alfabetización en América: Cartilla para enseñar a leer impresa por Pedro Ocharte en México, 1569, estudio crítico, bibliográfico e histórico* [1947] who through his analysis assigned the authorship of this work to Gante. Valton based his argumentation on the gothic types 98G, used in the primer printed by Ocharte, suggesting that the types are identical to the ones employed in Gante's *Doctrina* printed by Juan Pablos. Valton considered that by using the same type the printer wanted to facilitate the readability of the work as readers would have been already familiar with it [Valton 1947 cited in Bravo Ahuja 1977:51]. His observation cannot, however, confirm the authorship of Gante of this text, as Pedro de Ocharte employed mostly the same type as Juan Pablos, whose printing press Ocharte inherited after marrying Pablo's daughter. In this work, the *Cartilla* will be analysed in detail in order to ascertain if there is enough evidence to support Valton's theory.

Other studies mention briefly the *Cartilla*, but a consistent analysis of the primer has never been undertaken. Bravo Ahuja [1977] in her study mentions the *Cartilla* in the context of education in New Spain. On the other hand, in the work of primer specialist Victor Infantes [1998] a thorough investigation is made of all reading primers in existence during the 15th and 16th-centuries in Spain and its colonies. Between the many primers in existence at the time, Infantes presents a facsimile of the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* with a brief and general description of the primer. The most recent work which deals with the *Cartilla para enseñar a*

leer belongs to Cora Lagos' *Confrontando Imaginarios* [2002]. This work, however, is not centred on the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* but uses the primer as an example of the displacement model; that is the destruction of the cultural and religious life of the autochthonous groups of America by the European colonizers. Unlike the work of Infantes, Lagos describes in her book not only the basic structure of the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* but also touches briefly upon its content. An analysis is made of the repercussions of this type of work on the indigenous mind set and how the missionaries taught the indigenous peoples a new way of understanding themselves and the world, a view of the world in which their roots were negated and rejected. Lagos also describes the engravings of the *Cartilla*. Some of her descriptions do not, however, correspond with the engravings used by her to illustrate the argumentation.

2.3 The present work

A study of Gante relies, as outlined above, essentially on three main categories of information. Firstly, there are the writings of Gante himself, represented by his letters to relatives and the king of Spain. Secondly, we have contemporary and later sources penned by fellow missionaries and Nahuatl students who provided various details about Gante's life and activities. The third category of information on Gante is represented by recent scholarship discussing his evangelical works. This scholarship can be divided into two phases, in which the various approaches to Gante's missionary work and the evangelization of Mexico are embedded.

The earlier sources provide, as stated, only a limited amount of information on Gante and his work in the valley of Mexico. Apart from Mendieta's short biography, Gante is primarily mentioned within the larger context of the evangelization process in Mexico. These sources, therefore, provide only brief glimpses into his life and activities. Gante was, in conjunction with most modern scholarship on colonial Mexico and the evangelization process, not singled-out as the prime object of attention. The focus was on the Franciscan missionary effort as a whole not on individual missionaries and their particular contributions. Some of the early sources do, however, provide us with important insights into his particular role and his *modus operandi*. Bautista and Agustín de Vetancourt are, as we have seen, important in this respect as they highlight Gante's use of songs and plays for the advancement of Christianity. The particular approach of Gante was thus already remarked upon by some authors during the 17th century singling him out as an important individual in the

evangelization process. These early comments on Gante's role have formed the basis upon which this study is built as they highlight the importance of acknowledging the variety of approaches, often individually specific (as in the case of Gante), embedded within the wider evangelization process. This study by acknowledging the variety present within the general missionary effort, visible within early characterizations of Gante's approach, enables a more locally specific understanding of the evangelization process, an understanding that takes into consideration the agency of missionaries such as Gante, their impact and outcome.

We have seen in the above that modern scholarship has not provided an in-depth study of Gante and his works. The earliest phase of scholarship on Gante was, as stated, primarily of a biographical nature. Coming from a Christian background authors such as Ramírez, Chávez and Brun Martínez approached Gante and evangelical work in Mexico in an uncritically positive way, paying scant attention to the reciprocal interaction between missionaries and the indigenous populations. A Christian bias is also evident as exemplified by Ernesto de la Torre Villar's seminal book: *Fr. Pedro de Gante, Maestro y civilizador de América*. Other studies of this early phase tended to be, as we have seen, generalizing in nature. Although nominally focussed on Gante, Chávez's *El primero de los grandes educadores de América, Fray Pedro de Gante* discusses, for example, primarily the wider context in which Gante operated and puts less emphasis on his particular role and approach to the evangelization process.

The earliest phase of scholarship on Gante, therefore, provides an incomplete and often significantly biased treatment of Gante and missionary work in Mexico. Incomplete in the sense that these studies were primarily of a biographical nature. Biased because their Christian ethos is reflected in ignoring interaction and indigenous input. It is important to remember, however, that these studies are the products of their time and need to be read and understood within their context. Despite their shortcomings all provide important insights into Gante and the evangelical mission in Mexico. The research conducted by these scholars provided the necessary groundwork upon which the more interpretative second phase of scholarly work on Gante was based. Although conceptually and in its approach this study differs profoundly from earlier work, it is nonetheless indebted to it, as without them a work such as this would not have been possible. By adopting a more neutral stance (in its appreciation of missionary activity in Mexico) and a shift in focus from biography to the interpretation and analysis of Gante's role and influence in the evangelization of Mexico,

through the utilisation of both primary and secondary sources, this study attempts to put the study of Gante and missionary work in Mexico more generally on a different footing.

As outlined above this work has therefore much more in common with the body of research associated with the second phase of academic interest in Gante. This second scholarly phase, defined in the above as ranging from the 1980s to the present, is composed of a range of approaches which focus in particular on the works ascribed to Gante himself and their functioning as evangelical tools. The three works ascribed to Gante studied in this research project have received limited scholarly attention, as outlined above. Nevertheless, these works have advanced the wider field and in particular our appreciation of the role of Gante in the evangelization of Mexico. The present contribution relies extensively on these efforts but takes the field into a new direction by applying both a new conceptual focus and methodological focus.

We have seen that recent scholarship on the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* has focused on the identification and translation of its Nahuatl glyphs and the comparison of this document with other catechisms. Normann, for example, in her analysis of various catechisms has established, as previously mentioned, the possibility of a prototype catechism. Cortés' attempt to reconstruct the meaning of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* glyphs by means of a comparison with the alphabetic Nahuatl of the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* has established the basis for every discussion regarding both works by Gante. Scholars such as Resines and Acker advanced the field significantly, as we have seen, by establishing that catechisms had their own style, reflective of the agency of their authors and by suggesting that the missionaries deliberately created catechisms with images which appealed to Nahuatl world views.

The new scholarship on the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* has provided important new insights about the role of catechisms in the missionary effort and in particular Gante's involvement in this respect. Comparative analysis has placed the catechisms in a wider context and we have now a much better understanding of their engagement with and use of Nahuatl glyphs and associated meanings. As outlined in the above, this work is heavily influenced by the analysis of Resines, Acker and Cortes but significantly expands upon their views and takes the study of the catecismo in a new direction. Whereas previous attempts to decipher the Nahuatl glyphs of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* have primarily relied on a comparison of the glyphs with the written version of the prayer (in Nahuatl) this research puts the focus back on the glyphs

as well and follows Acker in its comparative approach and use of Nahua sources. The systematic use of the Galarza method (outlined in the above) and Colonial semiosis takes the study of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* a step further and allows this research to connect its glyphs to Nahua cultural expressions and understandings. In this manner the current study challenges previous interpretations of the glyphs whose meaning through a comparison with a written version of the prayer is insufficiently understood and not placed within its proper Nahua context. Doing so obscures our understanding of the complex early interaction between missionaries and Nahuas, the efforts of the former to reach out to the latter and the indigenous input in this process.

We have seen in the above that in contrast to the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* scholarship on the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* is much more limited. No work has looked at this document in its entirety or accessed the importance of the document as a whole. Scholars have only translated and engaged with sections of the manuscript. Indeed, the *Doctrina Christiana* has never been translated into Spanish or English. Gante's authorship of the document and role within the evangelization of Mexico has received only limited attention. As we have seen, only Mulhare and Sell deal specifically with Gante and his choices in respect to the preparation of the document. The current study represents the first attempt at analysis of the document as a whole, employing a three-layered approach which focuses on the context of the document, the format in which it is written and the analysis and translation of selected sections. By focussing on the work as a whole this study is able to provide new perspectives on Gante's evangelical work, the wider missionary effort in Mexico and most important the process of translation in which Christian doctrine was rendered in Nahuatl.

As previously outlined, the *Cartilla* has received even less attention and has only received brief comment from the various scholars who have engaged with it. Only Lagos has briefly considered the impact of this work on the Nahua missionary relationship. No complete study of its content, format and context has been made and the current study will represent the first attempt in this respect. This is the first significant attention and research the *Cartilla* has received since Valton's 1948 study and provides the first systematic analysis of its content, meaning and authorship.

In summary, this research for the first time examines in a single place all the works ascribed to Gante. Never before have all his works been analysed together and contrasted with one another. Not only does this study focus on the works of Gante, it also places the output

ascribed to him within its wider context and employs as set out in chapter 1 an innovative methodological and theoretical approach. The use of the Galarza method, cultural semiosis, agency and annales theory enables an approach that puts the Nahua contribution to the evangelization process and Gante's role within it firmly into focus. In so doing this research significantly develops the field by expanding and taking in a new direction the biographical treatments of the first phase and the selective and missionary-focussed approach (in its reliance on missionary textual sources for the interpretation of Nahua glyphs). This research challenges previous interpretations of the missionary effort in Mexico by approaching the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*, *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* and *Cartilla* from a more neutral perspective, letting go of Christianised interpretations of the evangelization process. My work in contrast to older approaches gives the Nahuas a voice and accesses in particular their contribution to and engagement with the evangelization of Mexico.

Modern scholarship on the missionary effort in Mexico has primarily centred on studies of figures such as Molina and Sahagún. Gante has been largely neglected, his works only studied in part and often referenced briefly as part of a wider effort to understand the evangelization of Mexico. Though important as these studies are, this research will demonstrate the benefits to be gained from an investigation which focuses on a single missionary, his works, role and impact. The works of Gante provide us with the opportunity to survey the initial phase of interaction between the two groups and identify the particular approach of one missionary, the creative process behind this approach, its impact and legacy. Through the eyes of one individual missionary this research will, therefore, demonstrate the importance of a multi-faceted and localized understanding of the evangelization of Mexico and how the locally specific interaction between Gante and his Nahua environment resulted in highly particular interactions which shaped the way in which Christianity was disseminated and understood.

A thorough study of Gante and his works holds great potential to significantly advance the field of Colonial studies and our understanding of the evangelization of Mexico. Gante was one of the first missionaries to arrive in New Spain and the first to learn Nahuatl. He also was one of the first to produce translations of Christian doctrine in the indigenous language and worked during this process together closely with Nahua collaborators. Gante is therefore one of the most crucial figures in the earliest phase of the evangelization of Mexico. Previous neglect on Gante's figure and his work has provided a myopic understanding of the evangelical process. By analysing his works we can paint a better overview of the

establishment of the evangelization in New Spain and the mechanisms adapted by missionaries in order to further conversion. Greater attention to this particular missionary and his works will expand our perspectives on the earliest phase of the evangelization and in particular the vital initial interaction between the Nahuas and missionaries. This interaction was indeed of the utmost importance for the missionaries in order to master the indigenous language and comprehend Nahua religious and cultural concepts which could be utilized for evangelical purposes. Gante's extant works are reflective of this early interaction and therefore highly significant.

In the next chapter the first years of Gante's life in Europe will be explored in order to understand the impact that historical events and intellectual currents in Europe had on the agency of the Flemish missionary, and how they influenced the actions of Gante and the Franciscan missionaries during the early years of the evangelization in New Spain.

Part Two

Chapter 3: Gante's Europe. Introduction to Gante and his background

Gante is probably one of the least-known figures of all the missionaries working in New Spain during the early stages of the evangelization. Personal information regarding Gante's life remains a mystery. As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, glimpses of Gante's ideas and opinions can be seen in his personal correspondence. Through these glimpses, we can form a vision of Gante's personality and role in the evangelization of New Spain. The letters help to paint a portrait of a missionary who was one of a kind, a polymath with multiple facets as an educator, an architect, a choir master, a painter, all of them directed towards his greater goal of Christianization of the Nahuas. Although inconspicuous, his ever-present figure was predominant in the Valley of Mexico, influencing and transforming the converging societies.

In order to understand the missionary efforts of Gante, it is necessary to read into his background. In this chapter the historical context of Gante's upbringing and youth will be analysed. We do know that Gante lived for at least forty-years in Europe before moving to New Spain, in a historical and intellectual setting that was transforming rapidly. It is quite likely that new intellectual currents permeated into his work. Because of this, an overview of the cultural ideas occurring at the time will present a more complete picture of the man and his missionary pedagogic efforts. Although Gante followed the guidelines of the Franciscan order regarding missionary work, we can see both differences and similarities in his treatment of evangelization. The differences could have been the product of personal preferences, but also the result of his origins and upbringing. He was the only Flemish missionary working in a context of mostly Spanish and French missionaries. Did this influence his pedagogic work? How much of his intellectual background permeated his ideas and actions regarding evangelization? What can we learn from the correspondence he wrote under the name Gante?



Fig. 3 Fr. Pedro de Gante, Anonym, 18th century, Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico City [Source: Morales 2014:37]

3.1 Pedro de Mura

In the first of Gante's letters, from 27 June 1529 and addressed both to his colleagues from the Franciscan convent in Ghent and his Flemish relatives, the friar narrates in an enthusiastic, jovial manner his first experiences in Texcoco and later on in Mexico-Tenochtitlan, while providing personal data regarding both his name and city of birth: '... y yo Fr. Pedro de Mura, nacido en la ciudad de Iguen, de la provincial de Budarda [...]' [Gante 27th June 1529 in Torre 1973:40-3]. This letter specifies that Gante was born in the town of Iguen in the Budarda province in Flanders. Unfortunately neither of these names appears with the same spelling in any other source of the time that can signal an exact location or area. Several historians [see e.g. García Icazbalceta 1972:6, Castillo Pérez 1963:17, Kieckens 1880:6, Ridder 1985:150] have suggested, however that Iguen can be identified with a small suburb of the city of Ghent, Ayghem-St-Pierre, in modern-day Belgium. Flemish historian

Kieckens opens up another possibility, suggesting another town located in the province of Ghent named Idegen. Kieckens considers that Budarda was misspelled in the translation made of Gante's letter by his colleagues in the Franciscan convent of Ghent, adding that the original letter must have had the correct spelling *provincia* Bularia. This would point to a region named Boulaere, or Burlers, where the town of Ideghen or Idegem –now a neighbourhood of the city of Geraardsbergen— is located and which seems to be the most likely place of Gante's birth. Unfortunately although the original letter from Gante was kept in the convent of Saint Francis in Ghent, it is missing, and only the Latin translation of the letter remains [Kieckens 1880:7, Morales 2014:38, Ridder 1985:149].

The same letter from 1529 reveals the Hispanicised version of his name: Pedro de Mura. Kieckens and Ridder suggest several options for his original Flemish name, Moor, van der Moere, Mure, Meur or de Muer [Kieckens 1880:9, Ridder 1985:150]. The last name Muer can be seen in a tombstone in the churchyard of Saint Michael in Ghent belonging to Laureyns de Muer, attorney from the council of Flanders and secretary from the Vierschaar Court of Saint-Bavon, who died on 13 March 1610. Could this attorney be a distant relative of the missionary? On the other hand, the last name van der Moere belonged to a noble family from Ghent, whose members were leading figures in the political context of 16th-century Flanders [Kieckens 1880:9]. Another historian, the Belgian Paul de Ceuleneer disagrees with Kieckens' suggestion, claiming that the last name Van der Moere was given to Gante by his mother, as he was the natural son of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I of Habsburg. Nevertheless, Ceuleneer does not support his statement with documentation, so it is difficult to give credit to his theory [Ceuleneer 1931:17].

Gante's date of birth also remains indeterminate. There is no evidence available that can point to an exact date. Nevertheless, the date can be deduced from the *Informe de la Provincia del Santo Evangelio* in the *Códice Franciscano* [1889], a report of Franciscan activities in the Holy Gospel Province written for Juan de Ovando, the visiting agent from the Council of the Indies ca. 1569-1570.²⁰ Amongst the activities described, are events taking place at the chapel of San José which was under Gante's tutelage. In the *Informe de la*

²⁰ Juan de Ovando was counsellor of the Inquisition and *Visitador de las Indias*, he was appointed by Philip II in 1567 and nominated to the presidency of the Council in 1571, a position he held until his death in 1575. Juan de Ovando collected all the information gathered in New Spain to be sent back to Spain to serve as the basis for future reforms. Regarding the author of the *Informe*, it is uncertain who wrote the aforementioned document, García Icazbalceta suspects it was Mendieta, as there are similarities in the writing style between the *Códice Franciscano* and the *Historia Eclesiástica Indiana* [Padden 1956:315-344, Pardo 2004:108].

Provincia del Santo Evangelio it is mentioned that the Flemish friar was around ninety years old [García Icazbalceta 1941:6]. It can be deduced from this then, that Gante was born around the years 1479 or 1480. However it is necessary to keep in mind, that this pronouncement might not be precise, as writers were not always accurate with dates or ages in most documents from this time.

One of the most controversial facets of Gante's life, and one which has created a great amount of discussion amongst scholars, concerns his family connection with the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V [see e.g. García Icazbalceta 1972, Castillo Pérez 1963, Kieckens 1880, Torre 1973, Ceuleneer 1931, Chávez Ezequiel 1934, Ridder 1985, Verlinden 1986, Maza 1972]. This is an important question as it might have been one of the reasons Gante was one of the first missionaries to travel to Mexico in 1523 and also explains how his missionary projects could have been supported financially. In addition to this, belonging to the royal family would have given him the intellectual upbringing necessary to confront the multiple problems posed by the evangelization.

Gante was related to the monarch, as can be attested from multiple letters from the latter addressed both to Charles V and his son Philip II of Spain, and from declarations by Gante's Franciscan contemporaries such as Mendieta [1596] and Valadés [1579]. Indeed, Gante states his kinship to Charles in several of his letters addressed to both Charles V and Philip II [1552, 1532 and 1558]. For example in the letter from 15 February 1552, Gante remarks: 'Justa cosa es que se me conceda la merced, atento a lo mucho que he trabajado con ellos, y que tengo intención de acabar mi vida en su doctrina; y dame atrevimiento de ser tan allegado a V.M. y ser de su tierra' [Gante 15th February 1552 in Torre 1973:46-55]. In the same missive to the monarch, Gante highlights again their kinship: 'Pues que V.M. e yo sabemos lo cercanos e propiños que somos, e tanto, que nos corre la mesma sangre [...]' [Gante 15th February 1552 in Torre 1973:46-55]. Other sources such as the *Rhetorica Christiana* by Diego de Valadés, the accomplished former secretary of Gante, address this closeness: 'From this I have been witness, as I wrote in his name [Gante] many answers and read the letters full of benevolence and care from the Emperor' [Valadés 1579 (2003):222, Maza 1972:20].

The exact nature of the kinship between Gante and Charles V, however, has not been clarified by any primary source, leading to a lengthy debate amongst scholars.²¹ Probably the

²¹ For more of this debate see: García Icazbalceta 1972, Castillo Pérez 1963, Kieckens 1880, Torre 1973, Ceuleneer 1931, Verlinden 1986, Ridder 1985, Maza 1972.

most naïve theory has been supported by scholars such as William Prescott [1843 (2005):632] who suggests that Gante was the illegitimate son of Charles V. This proposition fails as it not only lacks supporting evidence, but it is also contradicted by the *Informe de la Provincia del Santo Evangelio*, mentioned previously. The *Informe* states that Gante was around ninety years old in 1570 [García Icazbalceta 1889 (1941):6]. Taking this into account, it can be deduced that Gante was born between the years 1479 or 1480. Therefore he was at least twenty years old when Charles was born. Historian Francisco de la Maza [1972] proposes that Gante was the brother of Charles V and thus the illegitimate son of Philip the Fair, Duke of Burgundy (1478-1506). Again, this theory not only lacks supporting evidence but it is also contradicted by the *Informe de la Provincia del Santo Evangelio*, which indicates that Gante must have been of a similar age as Philip [Maza 1972:94]. The most popular theory, supported by numerous scholars such as García Icazbalceta [1972], Zulaica Garate [1991], Kieckens [1880], Ceuleneer [1933], Ridder [1985] and Torre [1973], suggests that Gante was the illegitimate son of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I (1459-1519) – Charles’ paternal grandfather— thus Gante was the half-brother of Philip the Fair and uncle of Charles. Although lacking supporting evidence, this supposition seems the most likely as Gante was of a similar age to Philip. Nevertheless, it is very difficult to ascertain its veracity as there are no supporting sources.

Quite the opposite of these theories is the one presented by Charles Verlinden who suggests that Gante was only introduced to Charles in 1522 by the king’s confessor, Juan Glapion, during the second voyage of Charles to Spain [Verlinden 1986:105]. However, Gante’s correspondence contradicts this statement. All the evidence indicates that Gante was indeed a relative of Charles V although probably not from the Habsburg side of the family but from Maximilian’s wife Marie of Burgundy. Gante made in the aforementioned letter from the 27 June 1529, a general remark regarding his family in Flanders. In the letter, Gante requested for someone to translate its contents from Spanish into Flemish or even into German in order to be sent later to his relatives, as he had already forgotten his mother tongue, which suggests that his mother tongue was Flemish [Gante 27th June 1529 in Torre 1973:40]. The evidence seems to point to a family branch living in Flanders and probably working at the court of the Duchy of Burgundy [Spell 1922:372].



Fig. 4 Portrait of Charles V Seated, 1548, Oil on canvas, 205 x 122 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich
[Source: <http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/t/tiziano/10/22/05charle.html> 12/08/2014].



Fig. 5 Maximilian I of Habsburg, 1519, Oil on lindenwood, 74 x 62cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. [Source: http://www.wga.hu/html_m/d/durer/1/09/5empero1.html 14/8/2014].

3.1.1 The court of Archduke Maximilian I

Gante grew up in a Flanders under the control of Archduke Maximilian I of Habsburg. The ruler had married Marie, the daughter of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy in 1477, in an alliance to protect Burgundy against Louis XI of France's claims to the duchy.²² This alliance, however, was short-lived. After giving birth to their heir Philip (known by the epithet the Fair) Marie died in 1478, leaving Maximilian in a complicated political situation in Flanders [Curtis 2013:43-54, Boehm 1979:155-6].²³ The ongoing conflict with France over Burgundy, forced Maximilian to search for matrimonial alliances that would secure the

²² At the time of Gante's youth the Duchy of Burgundy encompassed the duchies of Bourgogne, Artois, the Franche-Comte and the county of Flanders [Boehm 1979:155-156].

²³ Maximilian I was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1486 [Curtis 2013:43-54].

borders of the duchy. Eventually, these alliances would position the house of Habsburg in a preeminent place in the politics of Europe. Maximilian arranged with Ferdinand and Isabel of the houses of Castile-Aragon to marry Maximilian's son Philip the Fair with their daughter Juana. After the death of the Catholic Queen of Castile Isabel, her daughter Juana inherited the Crown. However by 1506 Philip the Fair had died as well, leaving Philip and Juana's eldest son Charles as the inheritor of the title of Duke of Burgundy. Almost simultaneously Juana was deemed unfit to rule Castile by Ferdinand of Aragon and Cardinal Ximénez-Cisneros (1436-1517)²⁴ and was locked in Tordesillas. Ximénez Cisneros acted as a regent in her instead [Curtis 2013:59-62, García Godoy 1995:78].

Meanwhile in Burgundy, as Maximilian was occupied with the affairs of the Holy Roman Empire, he decided in 1507 to make his daughter Marguerite regent of the duchy of Burgundy. Her regency lasted until 1515, although she took up the post again from 1519 to 1530. Marguerite was a vital, intelligent ruler who successfully maintained the peace in the territories under her control and provided advice to Maximilian and later on to Charles. Her court at Mechelen (Malinas) became a vital intellectual centre where artistic trends flourished. She became a patroness of art in the burgeoning court and alongside with his principal tutor, Adrian of Utrecht (1459-1523) –who would later on become Pope Adrian VI— and with Monsieur de Chièvres William de Croy oversaw the education of Charles V and her other nephews [Rafferty 2011:30-1, Fagel 2000:119].²⁵

²⁴ Ximénez de Cisneros possessed a high level of political importance, he was not only the Archbishop of Toledo and the Primate of Spain, he also was a close advisor of the Catholic monarchs Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon [Rafferty 2011:44-7]. Ximénez Cisneros was Provincial for the Friars Minor and Queen Isabel's confessor. In 1495 became Archbishop of Toledo, using this position in his advantage, he reformed all Franciscan convents [Delno 1989:300]. [For an overview of his political power in the court of Spain see Rafferty 2011:44-7.]

²⁵ Adrian of Utrecht played a pivotal role in Charles' court. In 1520 Charles appointed Adrian as regent in Castile, which eventually contributed to the *Comunero* revolt against Charles as he was seen as a foreigner intervening in Spanish affairs. Later on, while invested as Pope in 1522, Adrian granted Charles the right to appoint the bishoprics of Spain in perpetuity [Rafferty 2011:55-6, Ridder 1985:153, Kieckens 1880:13].



Fig. 6 Duchy of Burgundy during the reign of Charles the Bold [Source: <http://europeanhistory.boisestate.edu/latemiddleages/1300tour/23.shtml> 14/08/2014]

It is probable that Gante worked at Marguerite’s court during his youth, as he narrates in his letter from 13 June 1558 addressed to Philip II: ‘Pues dende muy mozo siempre me he ocupado en cosas tocantes al servicio de la Corona Real, antes de mi conversión, y después acá muy mucho mejor’ [Gante 13th June 1558 in Torre 1973:55]. Although it is difficult to ascertain the exact nature of Gante’s duties during this period, it is not difficult to imagine he was deeply influenced by Marguerite and her sophisticated, glittering court. Gante in many ways encompassed the ideals of the courtier of the early modern period, developing a facility at painting, singing, music and architecture as mentioned in Mendieta’s small biography of Gante [Torre 1973:66-9].

Indeed Gante's ability in the arts has no comparison with other missionaries working in New Spain during the early years of the evangelization. The only other paragon of fine arts was the Flemish Franciscan missionary Joost de Ricker, also known as Jodoco Rique de Marselaer, working in Ecuador. Ricker, born in 1498 in Malinas, was sent to the city of Quito in 1534, accompanied by the Flemish Pedro de Gosseal and Pedro Roquefias to establish the Franciscan order in Ecuador [Habig 1945:189]. Ricker was the son of the chief huntsman of the Duke of Brabant, and on his mother's side, he belonged to the influential Van Marselaer family. Similarities between the friars are evident: both of them were young noblemen who started their careers at the Flemish court, both joined the same Franciscan convent in Ghent to start work as missionaries in the New World, both were offered twice a bishopric but refused the title, and established schools of trades and arts, the Colegio de San Andrés de Quito and the *doctrina* of San José in Mexico City, in order to facilitate the practicalities of the transculturation process of the indigenous populations under their care. In both institutions, carpenters, cobblers, painters, builders, musicians, singers were trained. Although Gante was first in these endeavours and therefore probably influenced deeply the work of Ricker, both men must have shared a similar upbringing and education, an upbringing that can be seen reflected in the dynamic pedagogic techniques developed to facilitate the Christianization of different indigenous communities [Lepage 2008:6-7, 25, Lepage 2007:46-50, Rodríguez Lorenzo 1999, Habig 1945:191-2, Werner 1994:472-4, DaCosta Kaufmann 2009:43].²⁶

3.1.2 Gante's education

Evidence suggests that Gante was a highly educated man. However it is extremely difficult to determine if he attended Leuven, Paris or even one of the schools of the Brethren of the Common Life. Several historians support the theory that Gante attended the University of Leuven before working at court [Castillo Pérez 1963:19, Torre 1995:18, García Icazbalceta 1972, Zulaica 1991, Ceuleneer 1931:17, Kobayashi 1996:165, Ridder 1985, Rubial García 2002:40]. Román Zulaica suggests that is highly conceivable that Gante studied in Leuven not only as a result of his elevated social rank, but because later in his life he received several

²⁶ The school of San Andrés was established by de Ricker 1555. It was the first of its kind in South America and provided a model for the subsequent establishment of schools aimed at indigenous students in the area. From the inception of the evangelical mission in the city of San Francisco de Quito in 1535, the Franciscans developed close ties with the viceroy of Peru, Antonio de Mendoza (1490-1552) who had been the first viceroy of New Spain. The education aimed to have a complete curriculum that would equip them to practise a Christian lifestyle, in a similar manner to the *doctrina* of San José. However, unlike Gante's school, Ricker's had a more encompassing scope as it was aimed at indigenous people, mestizos, poor Spaniards and creoles [Lepage 2008:73-6, Lepage 2007:46-8].

licences to become ordained and was even offered the archbishopric of New Spain. Zulaica claims that Gante would have not been offered such high honours if he had not possessed higher education before entering the Franciscan order [Zulaica 1991:64].

The student records of the University of Leuven dating from the period in which Gante would have had attended the institution, that is from 31 August 1485 to 31 August 1527, show a Petrus de Gandavo in the years 1507, 1512 and 1513, however this does not mean that this Petrus was actually Gante, as it was a common occurrence to join a name with a place of origin. The name Mura and its variations, however, do not appear in the list, making it impossible to know if Gante attended or not [Ridder 1985:152].²⁷

Kobayashi on the other hand, reflects that Gante must have been educated either at the University of Leuven or under the precepts of the Brethren of Common Life which followed the principles of the *Devotio Moderna* movement [Kobayashi 1996:165].²⁸ Verlinden supports this, and suggests that Gante quite likely attended a school of the Brethren of Common Life under the guidance of Petrus Scotus, where he learned Latin. Unfortunately there is no evidence to support this claim [Verlinden 1986:112]. It is highly probable, however, that from a young age Gante was influenced by the ideas of the Brethren and therefore of the *Devotio Moderna* movement, as it was the prevalent educative system of the Low Countries, including Flanders, and can be seen implemented in Gante's pedagogic strategies.

3.1.2.1 The *Devotio Moderna* movement and Gante

By the 1500s the *Devotio Moderna* movement dominated the mystic and pedagogic landscape of the Low Countries and the Rhine area, even though it was starting to lose its impetus. The school at Deventer in the Netherlands was still a popular choice for many young

²⁷ Brun Martínez and Kobayashi suggest that in Leuven University Gante met Erasmus [Brun Martínez 1977:7, Kobayashi 1996:165, Torre 1973:11]. In 1502 Erasmus moved to Leuven, by this time Gante must have been 20 or 23, a likely age for him to have been in Leuven. However the name Pedro de Mura does not appear in the records at this time in particular [Student records from the University of Leuven are compiled by Schillings in the *Matricule de l'Université de Louvain* 1962, Torre 1973:10, Brun Martínez 1977, Ridder 1985:152]. It seems probable that in the case the two men actually met, it probably would have been at Charles' court, where Erasmus was a councillor and Gante a courtier.

²⁸ The origins of the *Devotio Moderna* movement can be traced back to an earlier mystical tradition from the last half of the 13th century in Germany led by the Dominican Eckhart (ca. 1260-1328). Eckhart considered that communication with God could be achieved by everyone. He believed that it was indispensable to preach and write in vernacular instead of Latin [Lockyer 1988:96].

pupils who later became part of the intellectual elite of the time.²⁹ It is conceivable that Gante was one of the many students that attended the basic schools inspired by the Brethren of Common Life, as can be suggested by Gante's educative work. His work shared several characteristics with the movement, in particular an encompassing view of Christianity; the Brethren of Common Life pursued an interest not only in educating but also in taking care of the poor. The community emphasised a dynamic combination of religion and learning while following a set of guidelines that would direct them to a purer, earlier or primitive version of the Church, a Church that would follow closely the teachings of Christ. In the same fashion, Gante pursued a dynamic, multi-layered education, in which instruction was not only based on teaching Christian theology or even literacy but embraced other facets of life such as his school of trades. The school of trades aided his Nahua pupils to develop in areas that were not permitted by the Spanish administrators of the Viceroyalty. Learning a trade allowed the Nahua students to pursue a place in the new Colonial society. In this way Gante can be seen, similar to the members of the Brethren of the Common Life, as a practical and innovative man whose interests went beyond the mere Christianization of the Nahuas, a man who tended to the practicalities of life in a complex, unequal society, a society in which Colonial Mesoamerican people did not possess the upper hand.

Moreover the *Devotio Moderna* movement was heavily influenced by Franciscan devotional notions and if Gante indeed attended one of these schools, it probably was a pivotal factor behind his decision to become a Franciscan [Licker 1950:57]. Franciscans shared many important ideas with the Brethren of Common Life. The Philosophy of Christ can be seen as an example of this; at its core was a way to fight the corruption existing in the Church, which could only be achieved by following the examples of Christ's life and his doctrine as it appeared in the Gospel. The intention of both religious groups was to return to an earlier form of devotion, avoiding the formality and the dogmatic definitions present in the Church at the time [Rubial García 1996:67-8].³⁰

²⁹ Students of this famous school are Pope Adrian VI and Erasmus. Erasmus' own experience with the Brethren of Common Life was not very positive and he often criticized it [Augustijn 1991:12-3].

³⁰ One of the major proponents of the Philosophy of Christ was Erasmus, and Franciscans were the most fervent supporters of his ideas. Indeed some of the critique that Erasmus had made on Church matters was exactly the same as the Observant had made of the Conventuals.

The Observant (Friars Minor) and the Conventual were two of the main branches in which the Franciscans were divided. The Observant movement began in 1390 and eventually gained control over the order. Their main goal was to observe the Rule of Saint Francis as approved by Pope

Another fascinating aspect of the Brethren that could have appealed to Gante is that it was almost entirely composed of laymen.³¹ Although the movement had members of the clergy, it never became clerical and adherents were often discouraged from becoming ordained [MacCulloch 2010:367, Nemeč 1980:387]. Gante was a lay brother; even though during his lifetime he received several licences to become ordained, he humbly turned down the privilege as he preferred to focus on his evangelical work. Probably this decision was a result of the early influence of the Brethren in Gante's life.

On the other hand, as part of the intellectual repertoire of Christian spirituality in Medieval and early modern Europe, the devotional ideas behind the movement were prevalent during the evangelization of New Spain. Missionaries employed one of the most significant devotional books resulting from the *Devotio Moderna* movement, the *Imitation of Christ* [ca. 1424-27]. The *Imitation of Christ* became one of the most influential spiritual handbooks in all Europe and between 1470 and 1520 eight-hundred manuscripts and one-hundred and twenty print editions were made [Tavárez 2013:204-210]. The *Imitation* was an accessible devotional guide written by one of the major figures in the movement Thomas à Kempis (ca. 1379-1471) for an audience with no formal theological education. The work revolves around the ideals of piety, inwardness of spirituality and the rejection of multiple outward forms of religious display [McWilliams 1999]. A copy of the *Imitation* has been found in the catalogue of the Franciscan library in the Convento of San Francisco in Mexico [Morales 1996:367-397]. In addition to this, two translations into Nahuatl of the *Imitation* were made during the 16th century in New Spain. The most important, although incomplete, translation was probably written by Alonso de Molina and is kept at the Royal Library of El Escorial, Spain. The second anonymous translation is also incomplete and is located at the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University [Tavárez 2013:204]. The translation into Nahuatl of the *Imitation* suggests that the devotional ideas of the *Devotio Moderna* movement were a source of inspiration for the early missionaries' writings in New Spain.

Honorius III in 1223, following closely the ideals of Saint Francis of ascetic piety (such as Gante), whereas the Conventual branch lived and interacted in convents [Rubial García 1996:72, Delno 1989:299] [For an exhaustive overview on the division of the Franciscan order into Conventual and Observant see Muscat 2008].

³¹ Not all members of the clergy were ordained to be priests. In particular there were many members of the minor orders who although not ordained could claim clerical status [Rafferty 2011:16-7].

3.2 Charles V and Pedro de Mura

King Ferdinand of Aragon died in 1516, leaving Charles as the ruler of the territories of Castile-Aragon. In 1517, accompanied by a select group of Flemish courtiers, Charles prepared a trip to a country of which he was now finally king [Curtis 2013:59-62].³² Ezequiel Chávez claims that before becoming a friar, Gante was one of the courtiers led by the influential advisor of the king, Monsieur de Chièvres, who accompanied Charles on his first journey to Spain in 1517 [Chávez 1934:165].

Ezequiel Chávez identifies Pedro de Mura (Gante) as the courtier named Monsieur de la Mura cited in Bartolomé de las Casas *Brevísima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias* [1552]. Bartolomé de las Casas sets the encounter during his journey to the Spanish court in 1517. The Dominican friar was seeking an audience with the monarch concerning the legislation regarding indigenous peoples in the West Indies. While las Casas was waiting for a royal audience he was aided by a Monsieur de la Mura –nephew of Monsieur de Laxao *sommelier du corps* (or chamberlain)³³ of the king. During the encounter, las Casas described the complex situation of the West Indies to de la Mura who was deeply moved. Bartolomé de las Casas describes Monsieur de la Mura as follows:

Aquel caballero... discreto, pio y buen cristiano, y estimado del rey y de toda su casa real [...] llamado “mosior de la Mura” sobrino de mosior de Laxao, sumilier, del rey muy querido y más que otro [...] su privado. [Las Casas 1961 II:422 cited in Chávez 1934:165].

³² Although Charles' rule became increasingly Hispanicized, his government remained cosmopolitan; he had people from Burgundy, Spain and Italy working in diverse affairs in his court [Curtis 2013:59-62].

³³ Monsieur de Laxao is the Hispanicised name of Charles Poupet, Lord de La Chaux. He was born ca. 1460 in French Comte, and started his service in the court of Philip the Fair, where he was councillor, *sommelier de corps*, and later on chamberlain. After Philip's death, he worked for Maximilian of Habsburg and by 1510 he started working in the regency of Marguerite of Austria, occupying himself with the education of the young Charles. In 1516, Poupet was sent to Spain in order to observe the regency of Ximénez de Cisneros. As a member of the council of Burgundy since Charles' childhood, he accompanied the ruler in his first journey to Spain, and stayed in there after Charles had returned to the Netherlands. Poupet also served Charles as an ambassador at the court of Henry VIII of England [Morales *et al* 2000:351-2]. Poupet was also linked with the overseas Spanish enterprise, as a royal warrant dated from the 24 September 1518 addressed to the officials of the province of Castilla del Oro in South America indicates. The warrant states that Poupet needed to receive part of the '*Quinto Real*' (a tithe destined for the monarch) from the profits made by Vasco Núñez de Balboa in his explorations in the South Sea [Orden de pago a Carlos Puper, Archivo General de Indias. INDIFERENTE, 419,L.7,F.765V; *El Descubrimiento y la Fundación de los Reinos Ultramarinos*, 1982, p.239].

Monsieur de la Mura promptly supported las Casas' cause and interceded with his uncle Charles Poupet Monsieur de la Chaulx (Laxao) for an audience. Charles Poupet was one of the most important men at court and offered las Casas great assistance in his business. If Chávez' assumption is indeed correct, it is probable that las Casas considered the meeting important enough to be included in his *Brevísima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias*, not only because it granted the audience and support from an important courtier such as Charles Poupet, but also because it was the first time he met Gante [Chávez 1934:165, Torre 1973:18, Ridder 1985:154; Macnutt 1908, Fagel 2000:121, Thomas 2010].

Although it remains uncertain at what moment Gante decided to take the habit, if Chávez' supposition is accurate, it can give us a clue regarding when Gante decided to become a lay brother, delimiting it somewhere between 1517 and 1522. Indeed, by 1522, according to a letter from Gante dating from 1558 and addressed to King Philip, Gante states that he had accompanied Charles V on his second trip to Spain already as a Franciscan friar. This opens up the possibility that the meeting with Bartolomé de las Casas became a pivotal moment in the life of Gante, a meeting that helped him to take the decision to become a missionary in the New World.

Bartolomé de las Casas probably was a great influence in Gante's life, although belonging to different orders; both men were deeply invested in the welfare of the indigenous population and fought all their lives to defend them [Ridder 1985:153-4]. Interestingly enough, the name Peter Mura or any of Gante's possible name variations, does not appear in the lists of courtiers of Charles. The name la Chaulx, on the other hand appears with the dates 1515-1522 as a Chamberlain and as Sumillier de Corps (this entry refers to Charles Poupet), and a Jehan de la Chaulx appears in 1515-1517 as a 'Trompeta de los arqueros de corps' in the Burgundian house of the Emperor, but no other people appear that could be linked to the elusive Mura [List of Charles V courtiers presented in Fernández Conti 2000]. It is possible that Bartolomé de las Casas' Hispanicized version of the name Pedro de Mura differed from the Flemish original version. However the lists of Charles' courtiers do not present people with other probable variations of the name Mura that could lead to Gante.

3.2.1 The New World: Missionaries

The news of Christopher Columbus' encounter with the indigenous populations in the West Indies likely reached Gante when he was a child. The amazing stories of the indigenous peoples inhabiting the islands filled Europeans with visions of exotic richness. Soon,

Spaniards were travelling to the far islands, wanting to exploit and share the abundance.³⁴

The encounter of the two worlds had a profound impact on the Church. Not only did it open the possibility of adding new converts to their churches (missionaries to be, based on the prevalent Christian discourse, believed they had the moral duty to save indigenous peoples from their heretic, pagan beliefs) but also after Bartolomé de las Casas denounced the mistreatment of the native communities by Spanish exploiters, they positioned themselves as champions and defenders of the indigenous peoples. Thus the evangelisation was articulated as an imperious necessity, employing the Gospel to justify and guide their actions.

As early as 1493, Pope Alexander VI (1493-1503), in the bull *Inter Caetera*, granted monarchs Isabel and Ferdinand from Castile-Aragon and their descendants the authority and jurisdiction over Christian affairs of the indigenous populations of all lands to the west and south of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands. This ordinance established the obligation of the rulers to give Christian instruction to the indigenous peoples. On the 28 July 1508 Ferdinand of Aragon was granted another Papal bull, this time from Pope Julius II (1503-1513). The bull granted the monarch religious control over the new territories in the Americas; however it also implied heavy economic ecclesiastical duties. The bull stated that the ruler of the Spanish kingdoms was to become the patron of all bishoprics, dignities and benefits of the Indies. This royal patronage (*Patronato Real*) meant the Spanish crown was obliged to donate tithe and to sustain not only the clergy resident there but also the missionaries travelling to the Americas. Therefore, the Spanish crown was responsible for the construction of buildings, convents, hospitals and schools amongst other institutions. Thus, the king had a direct control over the entire Church except in dogma and doctrine [Kobayashi 1996:133, Castañeda 1949:297, Rafferty 2011:20].

With the purpose of regulating and organizing the educative Christian programme, the laws of Burgos were promulgated in 1512. In many ways, the Burgos laws established one of the

³⁴ Bartolomé de las Casas was the owner of an *encomienda*, where he witnessed the duress experienced by the indigenous peoples under Spanish rule. He worked relentlessly to protect and defend them. The books of Bartolomé de las Casas such as *Brevissima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* [1552], *Entre los remedios que refirió por mandado del emperador rey nuestro señor para reformatión de las Indias* [1552] *Representación dirigida por el padre Las Casas al Emperador*, *Historia de las Indias* [1561] and *Historia Apologética* [1559] generated a commotion in Europe and were employed as a source of the Black Legend, as the friar pointed out the atrocities the Spanish conquistadors were committing against the indigenous residents of the islands. In his treatises, las Casas presented the existent problems and proposed recommendations for the evaluation of the Council of the Indies, the dismantling of the *encomienda* system, and the direct control of the Spanish Crown over the Amerindians [León Portilla 2010:288, Nájera 2012:590].

most employed educative models used during the evangelization of New Spain. The Burgos laws decreed each *encomienda* to be responsible for the Christian education of their indigenous labour force [Castañeda 1949:297]. From each *encomienda* a clever young boy was selected to be instructed in Christian religion, he would learn how to read and write and then would go on to pass the knowledge to the other members of his community [Kobayashi 1996:157]. This pedagogic strategy, although useful, could never satisfy the demand of an increasingly large subjugated population. As new territories were conquered, larger numbers of missionaries were needed to start the evangelization in proper form.

Franciscans were one of the first orders to respond to this call.³⁵ Francisco de los Ángeles Quiñones and father Juan Glapion were possibly the first members of the Franciscan order interested in doing missionary work in the Americas.³⁶ Juan Glapion belonged to the high courtly circles of Charles V –he was the confessor of the young monarch— and probably met Gante before he entered the Franciscan convent in Ghent.

On the 25 April 1521, Glapion and Francisco de los Ángeles Quiñones received all missionary privileges from Pope Leon X in the *Alias Felici recordationis*. Later that year, however, during the Franciscan Chapter of Carpi in Italy³⁷, Francisco de los Ángeles was named General *Ultramontano*³⁸ of the Franciscan order preventing him from doing missionary work. Moreover, after the General Chapter in Burgos on the 29 May 1523, Francisco de los Ángeles was elected General Minister of the Franciscan order. Francisco de

³⁵ Franciscans already had experience with indoctrination. During the second half of the 13th century Franciscans travelled to the Far East, founding a mission in China that lasted from 1294 to 1368. As part of this mission Juan de Monte Corvino coined pedagogic tools that were employed later on in New Spain. For example he gathered children, baptized them and instructed them in matters of Christianity so subsequently they could instruct their peers in order to supply the lack of preaching friars [Sánchez- Herrero 1990:251-2].

³⁶ Juan (or Jehan) Glapion was born in la Ferte Bernard (Mans) in 1460 and entered the convent of Cordeliers del Mans. He was General Commissary of the Franciscan order at Rome, Provincial of France, and the guardian (prior) of the convent of Saint Francis in Bruges. During the incarceration of Maximilian I during the Flemish revolt, father Glapion succeeded in liberating the ruler. In gratitude, Maximilian named Glapion his confessor. He was also part of the Franciscan elite as the administrator of the Franciscan Province in France. He was named confessor of Charles V in 1521 after de los Ángeles' suggestion [Kieckens 1880:12, Werner 1994:456].

³⁷ Chapters were meetings held by the Franciscans to discuss matters of the order.

³⁸ *Ultramontano* makes reference to the central European countries of the early 16th century [Morales 2014:38].

los Ángeles' new rank would never allow him to set foot in the Americas³⁹ [Kieckens 1880:12, Abad Pérez 1992:33-4, Pérez Luna 2001:16, Rubial García 1996:96, Mendieta 1596:21-5, Ricard 1966:22, Werner 1994:456].

3.2.2 Pedro de Mura becomes a missionary

If Chávez's suggestion is true, sometime after the encounter narrated by las Casas in his *Brevísima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias*, Mosieur de Mura decided to become a Franciscan friar. Gante returned to Flanders, where he entered the convent of Saint Francis in Ghent. It is probable that during Gante's stay at the institution, he heard the news of Hernán Cortés' 1519 expedition to what nowadays is known as Mexico. The strange tales of complex indigenous societies whose cultural traits seemed marvellous and terrifying at the same time probably ignited further his aspiration to become a missionary. But he was not alone in this; two other Franciscan friars, Juan de Tecto (Johann Delckus) and Juan de Ayora (Johan van der Auwern), were harbouring plans to become missionaries themselves [Ridder 1985:154].⁴⁰ Tecto was not only the guardian (prior) of the Franciscan convent in Ghent, alongside Father Glapion he was one of the confessors of Charles. This could suggest that Gante had already met Glapion and Tecto when he was working at Charles' court. It is even possible that he was encouraged by Tecto to enter the Franciscan monastery in Ghent, of which he was the guardian.

The Franciscan order could have attracted Gante for several reasons. Beside personal preferences, Gante probably found the long-standing tradition of missionary work of the

³⁹ Despite these early setbacks, Francisco de los Ángeles' mind was still set on the Indies and he advised Charles to petition Pope Adrian VI for a bull concerning evangelical work in America. In the *Omnimoda* bull, signed in Zaragoza 9 May 1522, the regulations concerning the duties of both king and Pope were established. The bull is divided in two principal parts. The first contains the canonical and pontifical mission of the mendicant orders for the evangelization of the Indies. The intervention of the superior religious of each of the orders, joined by the Spanish crown was included in this section as they were in charge of the mendicant orders working in America. The intention was to assure proper organization of the missions. The second part of the bull established the faculties granted to the superiors of the missionary orders to exercise the bureaucratic affairs of each one of the respective missions [Rubial García 1996:162]. It allowed a limited amount of freedom in front of the highest hierarchies of the Church of Rome. The Church could not be opposed to let voluntaries go, and most important: missionaries worked under the King's tutelage [Abad Pérez 1992:33].

⁴⁰ Juan de Tecto, also known as Juan du Troict was professor of theology at the University of Paris, guardian of the Franciscan Convent in Bruges and later guardian of the convent of the same order in Ghent. Motolinía said of Tecto: 'Creo no haber pasado a estas partes letrado más fundado que él' [cited in Werner 1994:465-470]. Juan de Ayora was a distinguished orator and according to some sources a relative of the King of Scotland [Kieckens 1880:13, Rubial García 1996:100].

order appealing. Saint Francis (1181-1226) and his followers dedicated most of their time to evangelical duties amongst the non-Christians. Saint Francis himself travelled to Egypt, Northern Africa and Spain with the objective of Christianizing Muslims. Additionally, Franciscans were keen on educative work [Rubial García 1996:19].



Fig. 7 Convent of Franciscan friars in Ghent [Source: <http://www.motecuhzoma.de/Gante-es.html> 30/6/2011].

It remains uncertain how long Gante resided in the Franciscan house, but by the year 1522, in the company of Tecto, Ayora and Glapion, he sailed in Charles' fleet to accompany the monarch on his second trip to Spain on the 27 April. Their purpose was to sail to the Americas from Spain. The clerics' decision, however, was not entirely supported by Charles. After Glapion had decided to become a missionary and subsequently leave for America, Charles had been obliged to rely more and more on Juan de Tecto as a confessor. Although in the beginning he was hesitant, Charles was convinced by Francisco de los Ángeles to send Tecto and his group alongside Glapion to the New World [Kieckens 1880:13]. [The journey is mentioned in three of Gante's letters of 1558, 1552 and 1532].

The fleet arrived at the port of Santander, Spain on the 22 July 1522, just three months after their departure from Flanders. Soon after, Charles assembled his dignitaries in Valencia where on 4 August Charles received the third letter of Hernán Cortés [1485-1547] regarding

the war waged against the Mexica [Kieckens 1880:14, Mendieta 1596: vol. 1 chapter 4, Cortés 15th May 1522, Werner 1994:466-7]. Gante describes this moment in his 1558 letter to King Philip II:

Y es el caso que yo vine con S.M., del Emperador nuestro señor cuando vino a España y desembarco en Santander, con otros dos religiosos, en compañía del Clapion, su confesor. El uno se llamaba Fr. Juan de Teta, Guardián de Gante, servidor muy leal de V.M. En donde tuvimos nueva que Hernando Cortés había descubierto estas tierras y populosos reinos, a los cuales, deseando mejor y más cumplidamente servir a Dios y a la Corona Real, procuramos venir [...] [Gante 23rd June 1558 in Torre 1973:221].

This opens up the possibility that the Flemish missionaries were amongst the first persons to hear the news of the fall of the mighty city of the Mexica: Tenochtitlan. After all, the group probably stayed close to the ruler, as they were part of his inner circle of advisors and most importantly two of its members were the young ruler's confessors. According to Mendieta, after receiving Cortés's letter, Charles reunited his advisors to discuss the legalities surrounding this new possible dominion [Mendieta 1596:vol.1 chapter 4].

It is probable that after hearing the pleas of Hernán Cortés petitioning for clergymen to Christianize the indigenous communities, the missionaries decided to offer themselves for the task and urged both Charles and the Pope for permission to go to Mexico. However they only received Charles' license. Pope Adrian had just been elected and was not in Rome as of yet, and therefore was still not invested by this period of time, making it impossible for him to give them the proper papal licences [Ridder 1985:155, Werner 1994:468-9].

Although almost no information comes from this interval in the missionaries' lives, this time of waiting probably was an intense period of planning strategies to fulfil the missionary work. It is probable that they waited for the papal privilege in the city of Valladolid. There is evidence that at least Glapion was in this city when he died on the 4 September 1522, which would suggest that the group had stayed together until this point of time [Kieckens 1880:12, Abad Pérez 1992:33-4, Pérez Luna 2001:16, Rubial García 1996:96].

Moreover, Charles V following the duties established by the aforementioned papal bulls, requested Francisco de los Ángeles to select, in addition to the Flemish contingent, another accomplished group of Franciscan missionaries to go to the Americas. He was aware that the Flemish group would have not been able to indoctrinate such a numerous population. In 1523, in a visit to the Franciscan province of San Gabriel in the Extremadura region in Spain,

de los Ángeles selected Fr. Martín de Valencia to become the leader of the first group of Franciscan missionaries to go to New Spain. Subsequently Martín de Valencia hand-picked twelve missionaries, a parallel to the Twelve Apostles of Christ. The Apostolic Twelve, as they were commonly named, were Martín de Valencia, Francisco de Soto, Martín de la Coruña, Juan Juárez, Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo, Toribio de Benavente, García de Cisneros, Juan de Fuensalida, Juan de Rivas, Francisco Jiménez, Juan de Palos and Andrés de Córdoba [Pérez Luna 2001:18, Abad Pérez 1992:35, Morales 2001:339-340, Stresser-Péan 2009:5-6].

Martín de Valencia and his Apostolic Twelve prepared for the missionary duties in the reformed observant monastery of Santa María de Los Ángeles in Sierra Morena in Spain. However, there is scant evidence to clarify the ecclesiastical instruction received by the first missionaries. As Lepage suggests, they probably prepared as much as possible before journeying to the Americas, studying papal decrees, Spanish law, and current debates regarding the indigenous peoples, in particular Bartolomé de las Casas accounts, Columbus' writings and the letters from Hernán Cortés [Lepage 2008:30-1]. Moreover they probably studied the efforts of conversion made with the Muslims of Granada, and drew useful elements that could be employed later on in their own mission.

Did the Flemish missionaries meet the Apostolic Twelve during this period? It is probable, although both groups were preparing for missionary work while waiting for the Papal permits, as early as May 1523 the three Flemish missionaries were already embarking from the port of Seville with destination to Veracruz, Mexico without the licences.⁴¹ Why did the Flemish missionaries leave before the Twelve? Although difficult to answer, it is probable that the conquest of Tenochtitlan was the main reason behind this. Hernán Cortés considered clergymen as optimal intermediaries between the subjugated indigenous populations and the

⁴¹ On 31 August 1522 Charles ordered the administrative units in Seville: 'que fray Juan de Tecto y fray Juan de Arévalo, frailes de la Orden de San Francisco, van por comisión de sus prelados y con voluntad y consentimiento nuestro a las Indias, islas e tierra firme del mar Océano, a visitar los frailes de su Orden (...) vos mando que deis a los dichos fray Juan de Tecto y fray Juan de Arévalo y sendos compañeros (...) pasaje franco en mantenimientos (...) desde esa ciudad hasta la isla donde primeramente quieren ir a entender en lo susodicho, porque de ahí adelante han de ser proveídos por los nuestros oficiales de cada isla' [cited in Werner 1994:467-9]. Later on Diego Columbus, governor of Hispaniola received an order 'Fray Juan de Tecto y fray Juan de Arévalo (...) van por comisión de sus prelados y voluntad y consentimiento nuestro a esas partes a visitar los frailes de su Orden (...) y ver lo que de ellos son útiles e idóneos para estar e residir en esas partes y hacer fruto en la instrucción y doctrina de los moradores de ellas y las otras cosas de su oficio queden, y los que no fueren tales los hagan venir a sus monesterios, como veréis por su poder e comisión'. On 20 March 1523 Tecto and his companions received supplies for their voyage from Seville to Hispaniola [cited in Werner 1994:467-9].

Spanish troops; following Cortés' logic the missionaries would smooth the relations with the restless indigenous populations [Cortés 14th October 1524 and 3rd September 1526].

Moreover, Cortés was a zealous man, who wanted to fulfil his Christian obligations as the laws of Burgos demanded. The urgency of Cortés' petition is in all probability the reason behind the promptness of the Flemish missionaries' voyage to Mexico. Moreover the Flemish missionaries were with the monarch when Cortés' letters arrived, and they probably offered themselves for the job almost immediately. Their close connection to Charles was likely a decisive factor behind his decision to send the Flemish as fast as he did. Another possibility lies in the preparation given by the missionaries; it would have taken at least six months more for the Twelve to be granted licences and be ready for their evangelical duties. It is unknown for how long or what was included in the instruction, but it is possible that the Flemish missionaries who were not only part of the intellectual humanistic inner circle of Charles' court but had been preparing for a while were deemed to be ready for the task at hand, and did not need further preparation. Thomas Werner on the other hand, suggests that Francisco de los Ángeles waited for the Franciscan General Chapter in Burgos in 1523 to decide on the matter of which missionaries to send to America. In addition to this, Werner believes that the Flemish trip was not to establish the Franciscan order in Mexico, but it was more of a reconnaissance trip [Werner 1994:467-9].

In October 1523 the Twelve were given the bulls *Alias felices* and *Exponi nobis fecisti*, and two more documents: the Obedience and the Instruction which are amongst the most significant Franciscan documents of the time as they delimited the power and obligations of the Franciscans in New Spain [For a complete overview of the documents of the Obedience and the Instruction see Mendieta 1596: chapter IX, Rubial García 1996:163].⁴² The Apostolic Twelve embarked for America the 25 of January 1524 from the port of Sanlúcar de Barrameda near Cádiz. After several months and multiple stops they arrived at the port of San Juan de Ulúa the 13 May 1524 [Pérez Luna 2001:20, Rubial García 1996:163, Betancourt 2004:33, Kieckens 1880:18].

⁴² In the Instruction it was decided that the First Franciscan province in Mexico was going to be named Province of the Holy Gospel.

3.2.3 Intellectual influences in Spain's missionaries: Erasmus and the northern humanism

Although the Twelve, perhaps, did not possess the intellectual background of the Flemish missionaries, they probably received a high level of education. The level of intellectual reform of Spanish convents has often been assumed to be inexistent. However, in the late stretch of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th century the five kingdoms of Spain became a hotspot in which Italian and northern humanism converged and mixed. The confluence of these intellectual currents created a stimulating atmosphere that made possible an early and unique pre-reform of the Spanish church and monasteries, of a more structural nature rather than philosophical, led by the influential Cardinal Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros that had direct repercussions for missionary work in New Spain [Delno 1989:299-230, Schevill 1939:93-116]. For example, the first Archbishop of New Spain, Juan de Zumárraga and other Franciscans such as Martín de Valencia and his Twelve—who came from reformed Franciscan observant monasteries—were keen on the efforts at reform promoted by Ximénez de Cisneros [Delno 1989:309, Rubial García 1996:112].

Spain at the time presented a complex religious panorama. While these progressive reformation ideas were spreading, the mystical movement of the *alumbrados* (illuminated) was popular with religious men. Although the *alumbrados* movement turned out to be quite short-lived, according to Schevill it had strong repercussions on the religious life of Spain. Schevill considers that the reformation in Spain did not evolve in the same way as Lutheranism in Germany, precisely because these large groups of *alumbrados* prevented it from happening [Schevill 1939:93-116].

On the other hand, the renovating activity of Ximénez Cisneros created the proper environment to introduce the influences of the intellectual current of northern humanism and the Philosophy of Christ in Spain. Indeed, a select minority of observant friars were influenced by Erasmian piety [Rubial García 1996:72-3]. Bataillon suggests that diffusion of biblical humanism was a result of Spanish concerns related to spirituality and evangelization. Probably from all the countries in West Europe it was Spain that had the most intense contact with other religions. Muslims and Jews had large populations in the region. Concerns related to the best evangelical procedures were a priority of the Spanish Church [Bataillon 1983]. These currents joined the *Devotio Moderna* movement. The ideals of the movement were shared by many Franciscans [Rubial García 1996:74-5].

Erasmus' writings were widely disseminated through the University of Alcalá between the years 1522 and 1525, a period that coincides with the preparation of the Twelve. Indeed it seems that notions from Erasmus' ideas influenced them on some level. These intellectual currents were brought by many early Franciscan missionaries travelling to New Spain, affecting in many ways the process of evangelization [Trabulse 1978:227]. According to Trabulse, although Franciscans and Erasmus shared ideals such as a pure Church and the imitation of Christ, Erasmus' ideas did not reach the core of Franciscan belief, as Franciscans had an eschatological evangelical perspective. However evidence seems to suggest otherwise for the early Franciscans working in New Spain [Trabulse 1978:237-9].

The extent of the influence of Erasmus' writings on the written work of missionaries in New Spain has been intensely disputed.⁴³ However, evidence seems to suggest that Erasmian humanism permeated a number of catechetical and devotional materials printed in New Spain. [For more on this debate see: Trabulse 1978, Bataillon 1983 and Pardo 2004:6.] Trabulse claims that the development of Erasmian biblical humanistic thought in New Spain had a very different trajectory from Spain. He divides this influence into three phases. The first phase stretches from 1535 to 1548 and corresponds with the so called 'Golden Age' of the evangelization. The openness of the first missionaries towards Erasmus's works is evident at this time. The doctrinal writings of the first Archbishop of New Spain, the Basque Juan Zumárraga, often contained selections from well-known authors of the time. In his *Doctrina Breve* [1539] he modified paragraphs from texts by Erasmus, in particular passages from the *Paraclesis* and the *Enchiridion*. Zumárraga also edited the Erasmian-influenced catechism of Constantino Ponce de la Fuente. Because of this, Zumárraga has often been accused of unorthodoxy by modern scholars. However, during Zumárraga's lifetime the works of Erasmus had not been prohibited. It was nine years after Zumárraga's death, in 1559, before the *Enchiridion* was prohibited in Spain and its colonies. On the other hand, it is probable that Zumárraga's *Doctrina Breve* was taken out of circulation in 1559 by the Council of the Indies due to the *doctrina's* link with Erasmian literature. However, the *Doctrina Breve* was declared free of heresy soon after [Carreño 1949:312-7, 321, Kerson 2000:183].

⁴³ Erasmus is a unique figure in the mosaic of intellectual scholarship of Europe [Grendler 1983:89]. Probably one of the greatest achievements of Erasmus was the creation of a new way to analyse the Bible, often referred to as the philological approach. Erasmus wanted to reform the Church back to its origins [Jarrott 1970:119]. For Erasmus, the Church was an obstacle to achieve communication with God and the only way to communicate with God was by following the example of Christ [Erasmus's thought has been the subject of a wide range of scholarly works, such as Augustijn 1991, Grendler 1983, Jarrot 1970, Bataillon 1983, Augustijn 1991, and Trabulse 1978].

The second stage typified by Trabulse, runs from 1548 to 1571 and is characterized by a slightly more negative attitude regarding Erasmus' works. The work of Erasmus had been considered heretical by the Council of Trent (1545-1563)⁴⁴ and during this phase in Spain a small number of doctrinal writings that showed Erasmian inclinations were recalled and their authors prosecuted. However, the reaction towards Erasmus during the Counter-Reform period in New Spain contrasted with Spain's attitude towards his writings.⁴⁵ Although the second Archbishop of New Spain, the Dominican Fr. Alonso de Montúfar, needed to follow closely the lineaments dictated by the Council of Trent, he had an almost mild reaction towards Erasmus's works, with a limited number of inquisitorial processes against doctrinal texts influenced by Erasmus. Bataillon suggests that this mild reaction was because a great number of doctrinal texts made in New Spain were influenced by Erasmus; moreover Erasmus' books were printed and distributed widely in New Spain from the beginning of the evangelical enterprise [Trabulse 1978:226, 237, Bataillon 1983]. Indeed even though by 1559 the works of Erasmus had been prohibited, *doctrinas* influenced by the scholar were still employed in New Spain [Kerson 2000:187, Carreño 1949:312-7, 321, Trabulse 1978:224-296]. Trabulse's third phase corresponds with the formal establishment of the Inquisition in New Spain, which contradictorily, showed an even more tolerant attitude to Erasmus' writings [Trabulse 1978:238-9].⁴⁶

The degree of influence that Erasmus' writings had on the piety and devotional instruction of Gante's texts in particular is difficult to determine. Erasmus was a well-known figure in the courtly circles of Charles. The scholar had been appointed councillor of Charles in 1516. On Charles' ascension to the throne of Aragon in the same year, Erasmus wrote a treatise on how

⁴⁴ In the 1530s, Charles summoned together with the Pope the Council of Trent in order to reform the Catholic Church [Rafferty 2011:33].

⁴⁵ Before the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the printing and consequent distribution of the works of Erasmus in Spain was ample; many of his books had been translated early on. Vernacular translations of Erasmus started to gain popularity by 1527. For example the *Enchiridion* was translated by Alonso Fernández de Madrid as early as 1526 [Trabulse 1978: 224-296]. After 1530 Spanish support of Erasmus' writings decreased. The arrival of Lutheranism and the creation of a united front of Charles V with the Church of Rome against unorthodox Christianity worked in detriment of Erasmus' influence in Spain. Trials were being held against Erasmus' supporters as well as *alumbrados* [Schevill 1939:103]. This period of time is referred to as the Counter-Reformation, and it deeply affected the Council of the Indies which ordered the immediate suppression of any last remnant of Erasmian thought [Schevill 1939:103].

⁴⁶ Books of Erasmus published in New Spain were the *Enchiridion* [1503], the *Adages* [1500] and his edition of the works of Saint Jerome [1516] [Trabulse 1978:237].

to rule following Christian piety ideals entitled *The Education of a Christian Prince* [1516] and dedicated this to the monarch [Jardiner 1997:16, Augustijn 1991]. Moreover Charles was raised under the intellectual guidance of northern humanism and Erasmian piety and was deeply aware of the necessity for Church reform [Curtis 2013:59-62, Rafferty 2011:32]. It is a fact that Gante was familiar with Erasmus' thoughts not only as a courtier of Charles but also while working in New Spain as many *doctrinas* were influenced by Erasmus. It is probable that to some extent, Gante agreed with many of Erasmus' religious ideas. For example, Erasmus believed that Biblical instruction should be available for all, and favoured vernacular translations of scripture as it opened up the possibility for all levels of society to read the Gospel [Grendler 1983:96].

According to Rubial García Franciscans were also influenced by messianism. The reform of the Spanish Church and the triumphs over the Muslims in Spain were for the Franciscans a clear sign of a united Christianity destined to spread over the face of the earth. Messianism took hold in Spain as a result of an inherent consideration that they were chosen by God in the defence and propagation of the Christian faith, namely, the Franciscans considered themselves to be the chosen ones to start the mission of reformation of the Church. According to Rubial García most of the first missionaries to arrive in New Spain shared the idea of a renewed Christianity, in which all the Mesoamerican peoples would play an important role [Rubial García 1996:74]. The popularity of this movement coincided, according to Delno, with the reformation in the Franciscan Order, the Protestant Reformation and the encounter with the New World [Delno 1989:302]. However, it is almost impossible to be certain that Gante's work was also influenced by this messianic view, or even if the majority of the Franciscans working in New Spain had an eschatological perspective on missionary work [for an overview of Messianism influence on Franciscans see Schuetz-Miller 2000:771-2].

3.3 The influences of Gante

Gante's work can be pinned to a specific socio-cultural context, shaped and influenced by the intellectual currents made available to him by his upbringing in courtly circles and later on by the guidelines of the Franciscan rule. How deep the intellectual and religious movements occurring in Europe at the time permeated the work of Gante is difficult to assess. In his letters, Gante does not mention any element that could indicate his intellectual influences. Nevertheless, when we review Gante's significant work in the wider historical and cultural context we can distinguish certain notions of the *Devotio Moderna* movement and from the

intellectual northern humanism such as his interest in pedagogy and the schools of trades set up to form artisans. In addition, Gante followed thoroughly the guidelines set by the Franciscan order in New Spain. Moreover, although it is difficult to define his exact blood relationship with Charles, it is precisely this upbringing as a member of the royal family which gave him the necessary intellectual tools to deal with the transculturation problems from the evangelization and gave him the connections necessary to be a frontrunner in these events.

In the context of New Spain, the different attitudes towards the work of Erasmus in the period of the Counter-Reformation shows that agency played a vital role in the selection or disregard of rules and legislations from the Colonial regime. Franciscan missionaries such as Gante followed the guidelines and philosophical ideas set out by their order, but also they had personal ideas and made their own choices regarding the composition of their doctrinal writings. This can be seen reflected in Gante's work, which although circumscribed by Franciscan devotions, also demonstrates how the friar was able to make personal choices and followed lineaments established by the *Devotio Moderna* movement in addition to examples of previous conversion efforts on Muslims in Granada in his establishment of San José.

This framework or structure can be identified with Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' in which individuals carry out practises related to tradition, learned and unconscious knowledge. Structural changes lead to variation in practise, the way this variation manifest itself is dependent upon the choices and reactions of individuals [Bourdieu 1977]. Gante and his missionary work can be seen in the above context, adapting to new structural conditions and devising localized and individual responses.

The contact between worlds generated a new, unsuspected situation which needed innovative responses. Papal bulls and legislation provided by the Spanish Crown delimited the Franciscan endeavour; however, the agencies of both missionaries as a group and Gante as an individual played a large role in the process of evangelization of New Spain as we will see in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Fr. Pedro de Gante and his missionary work in New Spain

In the previous chapter I explored the intellectual currents that quite likely influenced the young Gante. These intellectual currents in addition to his upbringing as a member of the royal family of Charles V formed the missionary-to-be. In the present chapter Gante's life and work during the early evangelization years in New Spain (1523-1572) will be analysed in the wider complex political and social context of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. Gante worked in a close setting of the Franciscan order in the Basin of Mexico, however, the work of the Franciscans saw itself modified and limited by the other mendicant orders, the First and Second *Audiencias* and the power of the Archbishops. The wider efforts of the Franciscan order in New Spain will be analyzed in order to determine the impact of their cumulative agency in the process of evangelization, and to determine if the personal agency of Gante shines through or had an impact on the overall approach. It is distinctly possible that Gante's approach differed from that of other missionaries, even fellow Franciscans, not only because he was the only Flemish missionary in a setting primarily composed of Spanish and French friars but also because his personal upbringing and intellectual influences separated the missionary from the rest.

Additionally, an insight into the early pedagogic tools honed by the Franciscans will be presented. Gante was one of the earliest pioneers in educational endeavours; his school for the elite Nahua children in the convent of San Francisco will be seen in this context. Through an analysis of his educative efforts traces can be seen of the intellectual influences he had from the *Devotio Moderna* movement and the previous conversion experiments in Granada.

Understanding the world Gante lived will present an insight into how he became an agent of transculturation, and will allow the understanding of his works in the wider setting of the early efforts of the evangelization and his impact on them. In this chapter, I hope to show how Gante's work altered profoundly the short, medium and long-term processes of transculturation, illustrating how through his agency he helped to establish new cultural traits that formed modern Mexican identity.

4.1 Early missionary efforts in New Spain

From its inception, Hernán Cortés' military expedition to Mexico was accompanied by four members of the clergy. Franciscans Diego Altamirano (who was Cortés' cousin) and Pedro

Melgarejo, Mercedarian Bartolomé de Olmedo and Juan Díaz.⁴⁷ Although they played a pivotal role during the conquest, both as councillors and intermediaries between the Colonial Mesoamerican populations and the conquistadors, most of the clergymen were not capable of converting the large indigenous populations they were encountering. They lacked, moreover, the papal and royal privileges and infrastructure necessary, later brought by mendicant orders when they arrived in Mexico [Abad Pérez 1992:32, Irigoyen 2008:36, Rubial García 2014:26].

As I have mentioned, Hernán Cortés petitioned in several letters to King Charles V for clergymen to start the evangelization.⁴⁸ By late August 1523, Charles V sent the Flemish committee: Juan de Ayora, Juan de Tecto and Pedro de Gante. Following the precepts of the Franciscan order, the Flemish contingency had travelled from the port of Veracruz to Mexico-Tenochtitlan barefoot. The cultural landscape they travelled through was very different from anything they had come into contact with before and it probably made a deep impression. The missionaries had intended to lodge in Mexico-Tenochtitlan, the *altepetl* of the Mexica,⁴⁹ but the city was undergoing intense destruction/construction work and was not yet completely pacified and the environment was tense. Thus, Hernán Cortés sent the

⁴⁷ Bartolomé de Olmedo preached to Mesoamericans through an interpreter. His role during the military conquest of Mexico was particularly important as oftentimes Olmedo needed to rein in the zealotry of Cortés who was keen on fighting against idolatry [Stresser-Péan 2009:4].

⁴⁸ For example, in his fourth letter from 14 October 1524, now compiled in the *Cartas de Relación* [1868], Cortés petitioned for members of the mendicant orders to be sent, in particular Franciscans and to a lesser extent Dominicans. We need to take into consideration that the fourth letter was written at a time when the first Franciscans had already arrived in Mexico. It is probable that the Franciscan group were the ones to suggest to Cortés that members of the regular orders were better suited for evangelical work than members of the secular clergy who would also be more prone to the corruption already existent in the Church [Betancourt 2004:23-4, Delno 1989:306, Cortés 1868: Cuarta Carta de Relación, Rubial García 2014:26].

⁴⁹ It is difficult to determine the exact date of the founding of Tenochtitlan. According to the Codex Mendoza the Mexica founded Tenochtitlan in Lake Texcoco in 1325, while calendrical documents mention the dates 1312, 1317 and 1318 [Hernández 2004]. The Mexica, led by non-hereditary dynastic rulers or *Huey Tlatoque* (in Nahuatl: great speakers, *tlahtoani* for singular), became the dominant military power in the area, employing their military skills to cement the formation of alliances with other *altepeme*, or city-states, from the Lake Texcoco.

As other peoples from the Valley of Mexico, the Mexica were organized in city-states called in Nahuatl *altepetl* (*altepeme* in plural) made up by several neighbourhoods or *calpullis*, which were pivotal as administrative sections. As units of workforce and tribute to the ruler, each one of them was specialized in a particular trade. Most of this social organization was respected by the Spaniards after the conquest and served as a framework for the developing of missionary strategies during the initial years of the evangelization [Restall *et al* 2005:4, López-Austin 2004:601-620].

missionaries to the nearby city of Texcoco, at the north-east border of Lake Texcoco. In this city, the Flemish started the process of evangelization by baptising the Texcocan *tlahtoani* Ixtlilxochitl [Kobayashi 1996:167, Kieckens 1880, Torre 1973, Stresser-Péan 2009: 560, Río Hernández 2005:2].

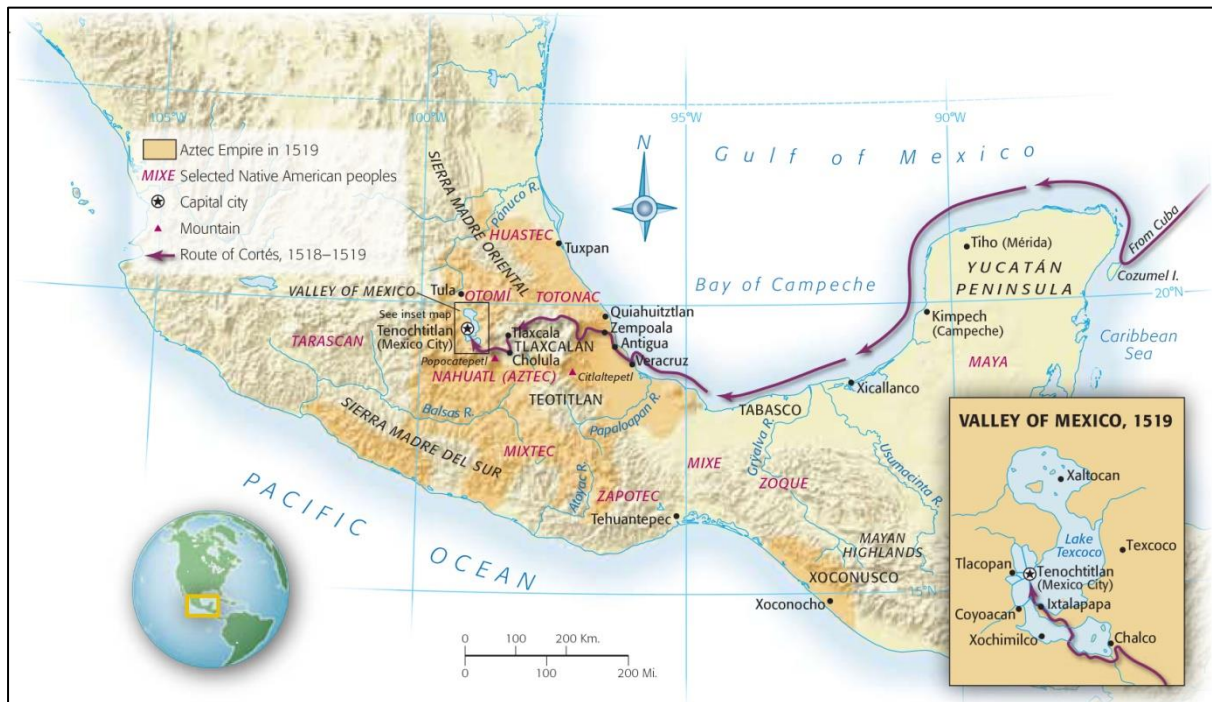


Fig. 8 Map of the Mexica Empire in 1519

[Source:<http://college.holycross.edu/faculty/cstone/span312/bernardiaz.html> 12/08/2014]

From that point onwards and after observation of Nahua political, cultural and economic systems, the Flemish missionaries developed a coherent set of strategies to convert the Nahua groups residing in the Valley of Mexico to the Christian faith.⁵⁰ Gante in his letter from 1558 addressed to King Philip II (1527-1598), narrates the first months of the missionary project:

Empero, la gente común estaba como animales sin razón, indomables, que no los podíamos traer al gremio y congregación de la Iglesia, ni a la doctrina, ni a sermón, sino que huían desto sobremanera, y estuvimos más de tres años en esto, que nunca como tengo dicho, los pudimos atraer, sino que huían como salvajes de los frailes, y mucho más de los españoles. Mas por la gracia de Dios empecelos a conocer y entender sus condiciones y quilates, y como me había de haber con ellos, y es que toda su adoración dellos a sus dioses era cantar y bailar delante dellos, 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 eran dedicados a sus dioses, compuse metros muy solemnes sobre la Ley de Dios y de la fe, y como Dios se hizo hombre por salvar al linaje humano [...] y también diles libreas para pintar en

⁵⁰ In the beginning, missionaries focused mainly on the Nahua groups residing in the Basin of Mexico.

sus mantas para bailar con ellas, porque así se usaba entre ellos, conforme a los bailes y a los cantares que ellos cantaban así se vestían de alegría o de luto o de victoria; y luego cuando se acercaba la Pascua, hice llamar a todos los convidados de toda la tierra, de veinte leguas alrededor de México para que viniesen a la fiesta de la Natividad de Cristo nuestro Redemptor, y así vinieron tantos que no cabían en el patio [...] [Gante 13th June 1558 in Torre 1973:55-61].

Gante's words present a dark and complex dilemma for the missionaries. The Flemish Franciscans did not only encounter a very unresponsive society, traumatized by the war, they also were faced with a language barrier. Gante's paragraph reveals, however, the dynamic method of communication that allowed him to observe and analyse Nahua customs and practises and adapt devotional elements from Nahua religion into the Christian repertoire. As Francis Xavier Luka observes, people such as Gante were adept at assimilating the *mentalité* of the other in order to convert people by means of appealing to their own traditions [Luca 2004:374]. This can be seen as a magnificent example of expedient selection.

At the beginning the missionaries communicated by gestures, by interpreters, and/or forced Nahuas to memorize the prayers in Latin. However, these measures soon proved ineffectual [Williams 1991:310, Ricard 1966:54]. Learning Nahuatl was by all means a lengthy process which took most of the missionaries' time. The Flemish interacted continuously with the children of the noblemen of Texcoco allowing the Franciscans to expand their Nahuatl vocabulary. The Franciscan chronicler Mendieta in his *Historia Eclesiástica Indiana* [1596] narrates the learning process of the missionaries:

Pusóles en corazón el señor que, con los niños que tenían por discípulos de volviesen también niños como ellos, para participar en su lengua. Y así fue que, dejando a ratos la gravedad de sus personas, se ponían a jugar con ellos con pajuelas y pedrezuelas, el rato que les daban de huelga, y quitarlos el empacho con la comunicación. Y traían siempre papel y tinta en las manos, y, en oyendo el vocablo al indio, escribíanlo, y al propósito que les dijo. Ya en la tarde, juntabanse los religiosos y comunicabanse los unos a los otros escritos, y lo mejor que podían, conformaban a aquellos vocablos el romance que más les parecía convenir [Mendieta 1596 cited in Torre 1973:12].

In 1524, six months after the arrival of the Flemish Franciscans, the Apostolic Twelve led by Martín de Valencia arrived in New Spain [Morales 2001:335, Morales 2012, Alvar 1991:127]. The Apostolic Twelve were received by Hernán Cortés in Texcoco, where the two missionary groups came together. Their arrival was celebrated with a chanted mass. According to the Texcocan chronicler Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, the most important *pipiltin* (noblemen) 'Sabían muy bien los misterios de la misa, porque el padre fray Pedro de

Gante, como major pudo, y con la gracia de Dios, que era lo más cierto, les enseñaba la doctrina cristiana’ [Alva Ixtlilxochitl 1975:492].



Fig. 9 Cortés and Fr. Bartolomé de Olmedo receive the Apostolic Twelve, Mural painting in the convent of Ozumba, 18th century [Source: Rubial García 2014:29].

The Apostolic Twelve however, were appalled by the slow progress made by the Flemish missionaries. To their accusations Juan de Tecto replied the following:

Cuando llegaron los doce apostólicos varones, que fue el de mil quinientos y veinte y cuatro, viendo que los templos de los ídolos aún estaban de pie, y los indios usaban sus idolatrías sacrificios, preguntaron a este padre Fr. Juan de Tecto y a sus compañeros, que era lo que hacían y que entendían. A lo cual Fr. Juan de Tecto respondió “Aprendemos la teología que de todo punto ignoro S. Agustín” llamando teología a la lengua de los indios y dándoles a entender el provecho grande que de saber la lengua de los naturales se había de sacar [Mendieta 1596 cited in Torre 1973:12].

Tecto and his companions had been aware of their need of a profound understanding of Nahuatl, deep enough to grasp not only the linguistic structures but also the semantics of the language if they were to prevent any hint of heretic connotations while communicating the Christian message.⁵¹ Indeed not only during the first years of Gante’s residence in Texcoco but later on in the rebuilt city of Mexico-Tenochtitlan the friar continued learning Nahuatl.

⁵¹ Later on Alonso de Molina noted Nahuatl complexity in his introduction to his *Confesionario Mayor* [1569], highlighting the difficulties brought by the nuances and constant use of metaphors which made it a difficult language to be learned by the missionaries [Christensen 2010:20-1, 56-7].



Fig. 10 Mexico-Tenochtitlan in Lake Texcoco [Source: <http://soldeloslatinos.blogspot.co.uk/2011/10/los-aztecas.html> 12/08/2014].

According to a number of Franciscan documents [*Código Franciscano* [1889], Mendieta [1596], Motolinía [1858], Gante [27th June 1529 in Torre 1973:40-3]] missionaries learned the language almost immediately. Martín de Valencia writing to Charles in 1532 praises the ability of missionaries to learn indigenous languages:

Queríendolo así la Provincia divina, estos hermanos míos fueron tan doctos en la lengua de los naturales, que en muy breve tiempo, aunque no sin muchos trabajos y vigiliat, les pudieron encaminar en las cosas de nuestra santa fe [...] en su propia lengua [Martín de Valencia 17th November 1532 in *Cartas de Indias* 1887:55-6].

Could this be an embellishment from Martín de Valencia in order to legitimize their progress to the highest hierarchies of the Franciscan order? It is difficult to determine the veracity of

the statement. The knowledge of Mesoamerican languages amongst the friars differed greatly, varying from missionaries who could not speak at all any indigenous language to missionaries who could not only talk Nahuatl fluently but also had mastered other indigenous languages such as Otomí.⁵² A missionary with knowledge of Nahuatl was a commodity, they were held in high esteem and employed widely to teach the catechism, give the sacraments and translate the Gospel [Rubial García, 2002:40-1]. Schwaller, investigating a series of census questionnaires issued in 1569 in order to determine whether the priests serving in parishes in New Spain were fluent in any Mesoamerican language, showed that in almost every parish located in an area predominantly indigenous there were missionaries fluent in Nahuatl or Otomí, or in the main language spoken by the community [Schwaller 2012:679]. By 1575 it became a prerequisite for friars who wanted to start the evangelization in rural areas to know Nahuatl or another relevant Mesoamerican language [Pardo 1996:30, Arjona 1952:259, Christensen 2012:691].

4.2 The Viceroyalty and Mesoamerican peoples

The arrival of the Spanish in Mesoamerica had a profound impact upon the numerous Mesoamerican communities that populated the variegated lands. Although the military conquest of Tenochtitlan –the seat of the Mexica power—in 1521 and the subsequent colonization of other Mesoamerican regions by Spanish forces have often been studied as a simple process of acculturation, in which Mesoamericans were forced to replace their own political, economic and cultural structures for European ones, evidence suggests that the process was complex and took place across in a wider timeframe than originally thought⁵³ [Navarrete 2001:377-380].⁵⁴ Navarrete claims that the Mexica as well as other ethnic

⁵² Many friars also preached by means of interpreters, especially in marginal areas such as the Chichimec in the north of Mexico [Rubial García 2002:40-1].

⁵³ For a long time after the conquest of Mexico-Tenochtitlan Spanish military expeditions were required to subdue other regions of Mesoamerica including the Maya area, west of Mexico and the north of Mexico

⁵⁴ Most of the sources available that narrate the history, religion and traditions of the Mexica peoples from the Mexico Basin were written by missionaries, indigenous people or conquistadors. Examples include the Florentine Codex or *Historia General de las Cosas de la Nueva España* [1575-1577] written by Sahagún (1499-1590), Diego Durán's *Historia de las Indias y relación de su idolatría y religión antigua con su calendario* [1587], indigenous historiographies such as Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl's *Historia chichimeca* [c.1610-1640] and soldier's chronicles such as Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva España* [1632] and Hernán Cortés' *Cartas de Relación* [Navarrete 2001:377-380, Restall *et al* 2005, Gibson 1976, Díaz del Castillo 1632 (1996)].

communities of the Basin of Mexico, the Valley of Toluca and the Valley of Puebla articulated the military defeat by imbedding it in common Mesoamerican political patterns, in which the most powerful group conquered and made tributaries of the weaker groups [Navarrete 2001:377-380]. Indeed evidence suggests that the indigenous communities did not consider the military conquest as an element of discontinuity of their own tradition [Navarrete 2001:393, Wood 2003].



Fig. 11 Map of Mesoamerica [Source: <https://danielopezgonzalez.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/mapa-mesoamerica.gif> 12/08/2014]

What adds to the complexity of the early Colonial landscape is the fact that during the early years of the Viceroyalty the Colonial administrators did not immediately replace the traditional power structures of the indigenous populations; indigenous rulers continued to be the nominal heads of state, controlling their indigenous subjects and extracting tribute under the *encomienda* system as they had been doing previously. In prehispanic times *altepepemes* subjugated by the Triple Alliance were permitted to maintain their own ruling system and local religion, thus allowing them to preserve their socio-political identity [Navarrete 2001:377-380, Premin 1992:445].

The level of political integration of the Colonial Mesoamerican communities differed, however, in every region depending on the number of Spanish inhabitants residing in the region as evident by the level of interaction in the Basin of Mexico and Michoacán.⁵⁵ Perhaps the most important factor behind the permanent establishment of the Spaniards in Mesoamerica was the four major epidemics that devastated Mesoamerica during and after the conquest. These epidemics were absolutely pivotal in the dynamic reconstruction of society during the Viceroyalty. The death toll severely affected the indigenous communities who saw their productivity reduced and their institutions weakened. In addition to this, harsh Spanish treatment, the forced migration of Mesoamerican communities by missionaries to ‘Indian towns’⁵⁶ and forced labour in the mines facilitated the demographic collapse of the Mesoamericans. In particular Mesoamerican nobility were diminished by the cumulative effects of marriages with the Spanish, sale of hereditary goods, the strengthening presence of European spheres of power, and the dismantling of networks of dependence based on nobility [Gruzinski 1993:65]. Regions devastated by disease and war allowed European, mestizo and black peoples to colonize these regions. Despite all the hardship suffered Mesoamericans still outnumbered Europeans in New Spain⁵⁷ [Navarrete 2001:381-2, 390-2, Restall *et al* 2005:7, García Martínez 2005:58-61, Reyes Valerio 1995:62-7, Rubial García 2002:41, McCaa 1995:40, Lara 2008:317-8, Álvarez Icaza Longoria 2010:303-325].

Gante did not work as an independent agent of the evangelization. Gante’s endeavours were not only articulated within the wider context of European Christianity and the guidelines established by the Franciscan order such as the Instruction and the Obedience and by papal bulls as I have shown in the previous chapter, but Gante also needed to adapt to the historical context of the Mexica and other Nahuatl groups residing in the Valley of Mexico. Indeed missionary work in New Spain was the result of composite elements working together [Van Oss, 1976:32]. The understanding of this increasingly complex context became crucial in the

⁵⁵ *Mestizaje* did not happen on a large scale during the 16th century. The colonial regime aimed to keep separated the different populations. Even so there never was a complete separation as the groups were in constant cultural exchange. By the end of the colonial period, a great part of the population in Mexico, remained indigenous and lived in independent communities [Navarrete 2001:340].

⁵⁶ A policy involving the massive movement of Mesoamerican communities into congregations or ‘Indian towns’ in order to better control the indigenous population, exact tribute and to help the evangelization [Rubial García 2002:46].

⁵⁷ Scholars such as the historian Bernardo García Martínez suggest that the Spaniards never reached more than 4 % or 5% of the total population and were distributed in major cities such as Mexico, Puebla, Guadalajara, Merida and Antequera [García Martínez 1976:95 cited in Lara 2008:312].

planning of evangelical strategies and in many ways also determined the outcome of the Christianization. The result of the power politics of the cultural groupings of Mesoamerica deeply affected the evangelization of Mexico as in many ways the Spanish military conquest repeated pre-existing patterns of indigenous conflict, in which the military conquerors demonstrated by their success the supremacy of their God(s) [Restall *et al* 2005:5, Navarrete 2001:376-381]. Missionaries, such as Gante, thus played a fundamental role, not only as pacifiers of the Mesoamerican population by acting as intermediaries between the groups but also because they started a multi-vectorial process of transculturation through Christianization by observing cultural elements and political structures that aided the missionary enterprise, despite the fact that in the beginning cooperation was not voluntary but rather a way to accommodate Spanish demands [Navarrete 2001:375, 389, Morales 2008:143, Klor de Alva 1992:30].



Fig. 12 José Vivar y Valderrama: El bautizo de Cuauhtémoc por fray Bartolomé Olmedo (mediados del siglo XVIII), Museo Nacional de Historia [Source: https://hemi.nyu.edu/cuaderno/censura/html/t_evan/tevan_info.htm 12/08/2014]

4.3 Franciscan expansion

In 1524, Franciscans started the construction of convents⁵⁸ in the Valley of Mexico and the

⁵⁸ Convents were constructed almost immediately by indigenous peoples as part of their tithe. Convents were a Franciscan priority as they served a double role, as a residence for missionaries and

region of Puebla; they installed houses in centres of economic, political and religious importance such as Tlaxcala, Huejotzingo, Texcoco, Churubusco, and Tenochtitlan [Ricard 1966:64]. In this way, the Franciscans worked closely with several ethnic groups –Nahuas, Otomies, Mazahuas— and as a result mastered numerous Mesoamerican languages [Morales 2008:137]. The number of Franciscan missionaries increased over time and by 1536, just thirteen years after the arrival of the Flemish group, there were almost sixty Franciscans in New Spain. By the year 1569, three hundred Franciscans were active in ninety-six convents, plus one thousand more visiting friars operating in the four provinces. In the Holy Gospel province alone there were more than two-hundred and ten missionaries active in fifty-three convents [Rubial García 1996:91, Kobayashi, 1996:132].

Franciscans working in New Spain formed an international group of mostly Spaniards, French and Flemish. Within the Spanish group we find an array of different ethnicities whose interests often clashed. The majority of Spanish missionaries came from the province of San Gabriel de la Concepción in Extremadura, Spain, where a large number of observant Franciscans resided. Other Franciscans came from the observant convent of Salamanca, a burgeoning centre with close intellectual ties with the University of Salamanca. Most of the non-Spanish Franciscans came from observant convents in Flanders and Aquitania. The French were the most numerous. By the end of 1524, Gante was to become the only Flemish missionary active in New Spain [Rubial García 1996:95-100].

students and as schools. Churches on the other hand were built at a later stage as they were considered of secondary importance to the evangelical enterprise [Reyes Valerio 1995:62-7].



Fig. 13 Convento of San Antonio de Padua in Texcoco where Gante started his pedagogical endeavours [photograph by the author, 2012].



Fig. 14 Fray Juan de Zumárraga by Luis Cabrera, 18th century, Museo de la Basílica de Guadalupe [Source: Noguez 2014:54].

4.4 Gante in Texcoco

As we have seen, by 1525 Gante was the only Flemish friar working in New Spain. Gante mentions briefly the fate of his Flemish companions in his letter from the 31 October 1532 addressed to Charles V: ‘Los dichos fray Juan de Tecto y el otro sacerdote fueron con el marqués del Valle Don Hernando Cortes a Cabo de Honduras, e a la vuelta fellecieron con tormenta y trabajos del camino’ [Gante 31st October 1532 in Torre 1973:43-5].

The journey to Honduras was extremely hazardous; the group was confronted by aggressive indigenous groups, while also faced with famine. According to Mendieta [1596] the journey became too challenging for the frail Tecto, who died. It is probable that the same end befell Ayora, who was older and in a weaker state of health than Tecto. Rubial García supports the theory that both friars drowned while they were returning from the expedition [Rubial García 2014:30]. The news of the demise of his companions made Gante question his purpose as a missionary in New Spain and the possibility of returning to Flanders. Gante overcame his doubts and set himself to realizing Tecto’s plans to write a catechism in Nahuatl, a precedent for Gante’s own translations. [Kieckens 1880:20, Torre 1973:21, Gante 27th June 1529 in Torre 1973:40-3]. This event in Gante’s life shows how he saw the Flemish contingent as a separate group from the Twelve; this might have been related to a language/nationality issue but also to intellectual upbringing.

Hernán Cortés’ trip to Honduras also proved to be a decisive moment in establishing and securing the Colonial regime. Fearing a Nahua insurgency against the diminished Spanish

troops, the missionaries left in Tenochtitlan and Texcoco under the command of Motolinía decided to act first. Without the help of the Spanish conquistadors, who did not want to become involved in the conflict, Franciscans set themselves to the systematic destruction of temples and Nahua religious paraphernalia. It is probable that Gante was part of this Franciscan committee. Mendicants' swift decision hit hard the Nahua psyche, destroyed all hopes of insurrection and discouraged any unrest while the main core of Spanish soldiers was absent. Franciscans eventually would employ this event to secure ecclesiastic privileges to support their cause against the secular clergy [Gruzinski 1994:72, Stresser-Péan 2009:63, Rubial García 2014:30].



Fig. 15 Chapel of Balvanera, San Francisco Mexico [photograph by the author, 2012]

For three and a half years, Gante remained in Texcoco. During this time he made several expeditions to Tlaxcala and other provinces near the Valley of Mexico [García Icazbalceta 1972:9]. During this time, Gante initiated together with other missionaries such as Motolinía cultural negotiations between the two different world views in order to make the sacraments

available to the indigenous peoples. Gante's endeavours appear to have been extremely successful as he states in his letter from 27 June 1529:

En esta provincia de México hemos bautizado yo y otro fraile mi compañero, más de doscientos mil, y aun tantos, que yo mismo no se el número. Con frecuencia nos acontece bautizar en un día catorce mil personas; a veces diez, a veces ocho mil [Gante 27th June, 1529 in Torre 1973:40-3].

Though this paragraph certainly feels like an overstatement on Gante's part, as it clearly states that the Nahuas were willingly becoming Christian, his words should be understood in the wider context of the early evangelization. Indeed, Stresser-Péan observes that the high estimates made by the missionary imply that the rhetoric of the letter was a political strategy to showcase the success of the Franciscan evangelization to the Crown, more than presenting a real overview of the process [Stresser-Péan 2009:17].

However, there must be a part of truth in his statement, a result of converging elements during this period in time. In the specific case of the Valley of Mexico from 1525 to 1540 there were religious persecutions; aspects of Nahua belief became clandestine –which helped to preserve paraphernalia and rituals [Gruzinski 1993:15]. Temples, images and sculptures were destroyed and myths were not allowed to be repeated in public spaces. It is certain that the Nahuas did not immediately take to the missionaries –Nahuas considered friars to have strange if not aberrant religious practises— but after a period of about five years Nahuas started to show a greater interest in Christianity [Morales 2008].⁵⁹ Why such a sudden change of heart? While it is evident that although the Nahuas were mainly coerced to become externally Christian, certain Nahuas started to be interested in becoming Christian as well [Lara 2009:54]. Stresser-Péan considers that the Nahua acquisition of Christian religion was a result of cultural fatigue. The Nahuas had seen their power reduced after the military conquest and the epidemics; Mesoamerican cosmology had started to lose its moral status. Under constant pressure from missionaries and the Spanish administration in New Spain, the Nahuas underwent a process of cultural fatigue. Under this stress they sought relief in Christianity. Franciscan missionaries, as Stresser-Péan suggests, despite being authoritarian were also inclined to help the Nahuas. Conversion was seen as an option for the Nahuas to improve their lives [Stresser-Péan 2009:19-20]. As Pastor suggests, with the suppression of Nahua devotional practises, Nahuas were forced to use Christian rituals such as the

⁵⁹ Diego Muñoz Camargo, a Tlaxcalteca writing at the end of the 16th century, mentions how Tlaxcaltecs believed the missionaries ill or insane [Morales 2008].

sacraments to re-establish community links, their identity and to negotiate a renewed but different relationship with the supernatural world. Nahua religious practises were modified and adapted to Christianity creating thus a Nahua Christianity [Pastor 2003:62-3, García de León 2004:54-61]. As Pardo suggests, in the introduction of the sacraments and other forms of Christian rituals to the Nahuas, there were more factors involved than simply coercion [Pardo 2004:9].

The missionaries mistakenly attributed the sudden Nahua acceptance of Christianity to their persistent teachings and believed Nahua beliefs had been eradicated in the converted Nahuas [Pastor 2003:63]. This cultural misunderstanding explains the difficulties faced by the second generation of missionaries after 1550, who encountered an increased resistance on the part of the Nahuas to abandon their own symbolic (religious) system [Navarrete 2001:398].

Although of course missionary teachings played an important role, we need to see this development in the context of the Mesoamerican tradition of adopting new deities. For example, as I have mentioned previously, after military defeat, towns subjugated by the Triple Alliance adopted the gods of their conquerors, as the deities of the enemy had proved to be stronger than their own [Navarrete 2001:377-380, 397-8, Kobayashi 1996:146-7, Restall *et al*, 2005:174]. Nahua religion, polytheistic in nature, was inclusive; so adopting the new God of the Christians did not necessarily imply (in their view) turning away from their own deities.⁶⁰

4.5 Gante and the chapel of San José de los Naturales: the pedagogic work

In 1526, after the construction of the Convent of San Francisco was completed, Gante moved to Mexico City to become the first chaplain of the chapel or *doctrina* of San José de los Naturales attached to the convent of San Francisco. Chapels such as San José were often called *doctrinas* as in these places not only the sacraments were administered but also Christian doctrine was given to the children. Even though they were not properly parishes they functioned as one. San José had multiple functions, it was also employed to give the sacraments, especially baptism and marriage, and even occasionally it was employed as a

⁶⁰ An example of this comes from Motolinía's *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España* [1858], which narrates how during the night the missionaries were being kept awake by the sound of Nahuas playing ritual drums during their religious festivities: 'Era esta tierra un traslado del infierno; ver los moradores de ella de noche dar voces, unos llamando al demonio, otros borrachos, otros cantando y bailando: traían atabales, bocinas, cornetas y caracoles grandes, en especial en las fiestas de sus demonios' [Benavente Motolinía 1858, Tratado 1, Chapter 2].

cemetery [Schuetz-Miller 2000:764]. Chauvet considers Gante the architect of the chapel of San José; it was the first open-chapel in New Spain [Reyes Valerio 1995:62-7, Chauvet 1950:22, Morales 2012]. It was in these liminal places where the transculturation process started.⁶¹

4.5.1 Franciscan education as an enabler of transculturation

I will explore in particular the case of the Nahuas in the Basin of Mexico as they were the core recipients of Franciscan missionary education and because the main model for Franciscan pedagogy was developed first by Gante in the *doctrina* of San José. Indeed – although the education offered in New Spain to indigenous peoples was given by five religious orders Franciscans, Augustinians, Dominicans, Mercedarians, and Jesuits— the education of the Nahuas was first initiated by the Franciscan order, and most of the other orders employed methods already invented or honed by the Franciscans.⁶² In these pedagogic efforts we can see Gante’s agency, which reflect not only his intellectual upbringing but also his ideas regarding Nahua intellectual capabilities.

Gante and other Franciscan missionaries employed an array of pedagogic techniques to transmit their message such as songs, *autos* or theatrical plays, dance, rhetoric, and the audio-visual method (graphic depictions of Biblical scenes in pieces of cloth). Franciscan educative techniques were widely employed in the different educational programs developed by the Franciscans in their *Juntas Apostólicas* and proved to be very succesful in introducing Christianity in the Valley of Mexico.

⁶¹ Beside this chapel, Gante also established a *visita* (visit) system within the four barrios in which the Nahua population of Tenochtitlan was divided (San Juan Moyotlan, San Pablo Teopan, San Sebastián Atzacualco and Santa María la Redonda Cuepopan) in which non-resident friars visited other chapels to perform their religious duties [Truitt 2008:2,15].

⁶² The Franciscan order was not the only mendicant order working in New Spain. The Dominicans arrived as early as 1526. They were led by Tomás Ortiz. In the beginning the Dominican contingent was severely affected by several deaths of its members which resulted in an initial period of inactivity. After Tomás Ortiz returned to Spain, the pious Domingo de Betanzos was elected as the leader of the Dominicans in New Spain [Pardo 2004:3]. The Dominicans were active from the south-east of the Basin of Mexico (in the modern states of Morelos and Oaxaca) to Chiapas and often vied for power with their Franciscan counterparts [Betancourt 2004:24].

The Augustinian order arrived in 1533 and established themselves in the modern states of Guerrero and Hidalgo, which were areas outside of Dominican and Franciscan jurisdiction. Unlike the Franciscans, the Augustinians mostly educated the creoles, and children from all socio-economic levels [Betancourt 2004:24-5]. During the final years of the 16th century, more religious orders arrived, the Carmelites (1585), the Mercedarians (1594) and the Jesuits (1572) [Ricard 1966:2-3].

4.5.1.1 Franciscan Pedagogic Techniques

Performances of Biblical scenes in theatrical plays (or *autos*) were an important part of medieval Franciscan educative tradition and were swiftly adapted to a new context for the Nahuas. Theatrical representations intertwined Nahua and Spanish elements such as music, singing and the use of flowers. The first recorded religious play was a representation of the Eucharist which took place in Tlaxcala in 1538 as part of the Corpus procession. Plays such as *La conversión de San Pablo* (1530), *Juicio Final* (1533) and *La caída de nuestros primeros padres* (1539) relied mostly on Nahua actors. By the 18th century, theatre had become an intrinsic part of Nahua heritage even to the extent that Colonial authorities were regarding it with distrust and repressed both performances and scripts [Popp 1980:65-6, Truitt 2010:325, Suárez de la Paz 1999:24-25, Kobayashi 1996:144, Rubial García 1996:170, Ricard 1966:194-206, Williams 1991:314, Surtz 1988:333-344, Gruzinski 1994:176, 91].



Fig. 16 ‘La Predicación en el Nuevo Mundo’ in *Rhetorica Christiana* [Valadés 1579].

Franciscans needed to find a way to communicate their precepts and adapted a tool widely used by the Church and in particular the Franciscan order in medieval Europe: the use of paintings depicting biblical scenes.⁶³ Indeed, Franciscans brought with them a large pictorial pedagogical tradition. Illustrations were important in European Medieval titles such as the *Biblia pauperum* and the *Speculum humanae salvationis* and during the 15th century catechetical instruction was given to children aged seven to ten with the aid of illustrated catechisms which helped them to memorize doctrine [Acker 1995:413, Leone 2008:59-60]. Mesoamerica was a fertile ground, as the missionaries had noticed the presence of

⁶³ Biblical scenes were not only depicted in catechisms for pedagogical purposes, they were also carved on the façades of churches, such as the Cathedral of Orvieto in Italy, for illiterate people to learn the basics of Christian faith.

Mesoamerican pictorial writing which some of them mistook for paintings. Christian imagery soon took hold in the imagination of the Nahuas and proved to be very successful. European habits of visual representation such as the use of perspective and balance were widely and rapidly accepted by Nahua painters and are present in numerous pictorial manuscripts and mural paintings from the period of contact [Acker 1995:403-20, Lara 2008, Gruzinski 1995:53-77].

The audio-visual method, often referred to as the Franciscan method, consisted of images displayed on linen cloths hung on walls [see fig.16].⁶⁴ The content of the pictures was explained by the missionaries to the students [Kobayashi 1996:143, León 1900:723]. Mendieta observed that the audio-visual method was started by Jacobo de Testera. [For a more detailed analysis on this see chapter 5.] Elaborated and widespread during the first years after the conquest, the audio-visual method was in turn adapted and adopted by other mendicant orders in their evangelical missions, to the chagrin of the Franciscans themselves, who were reluctant to share their audio-visual innovations and presented a claim to the Council of the Indies to prevent other mendicant orders stealing ‘their’ method. Franciscan reluctance to share the audio-visual method can be attributed to the control the religious order had over the evangelical work in New Spain, a control that was threatened by the newly arrived Dominicans, Augustinians and later on the Jesuits [Lara 2008, Acker 1995:403-420, Bravo 1977:26, Zamora 2011:558, Gruzinski 1995:55, Ricard 1966, Kobayashi 1996:144, Rubial García 1996:170, Williams 1991:310]. The audio-visual method, however, fell into disuse relatively quickly and by the end of the 16th century almost no missionary employed it [Mendieta 1596: book 3, chapter XIX].

The Nahuas, as well as other inhabitants of the Valley of Mexico, gave great importance to music in religious celebrations. The music used by Nahuas in their rituals was adapted by the missionaries and thus made to appeal to indigenous sympathies [Schwaller 2005:67-8]. In 1527 Gante started to teach European music to Nahuas and assembled a Nahua choir in his chapel. In a letter to King Philip written in June 1558, Gante took credit for first introducing the Christian doctrine in a song to the Nahuas –a very solemn song about the law of God and the faith— as well as describing the first Christmas pageant at the chapel of San José and its large Nahua attendance [Burkhart 1998:363, Bierhorst 1985:111]. Martín de Valencia wrote a letter to Charles V in 1527 relating how the Franciscans (with all probability Gante) had

⁶⁴ The method was also conveyed in stamps.

trained Nahua singers in two types of vocal music, plainsong –that was similar to Gregorian chant—, and polyphonic or part-music [Truitt 2008:105]. It is unknown where Gante received his musical education. The historian Spell suggests Gante was probably instructed as a customary part of his church education in the theory of music, organ playing and singing, although it also could have been at court [Spell 1922:373].⁶⁵

Franciscan interest in teaching European music led to the training of a large number of Nahua singers and musicians who played diverse instruments both of European and Mesoamerican origin. Music was so esteemed by the Nahuas that by the end of the 16th century it became necessary to limit the number of singers and musicians helping in Church services, especially as Nahuas were offered a reduction in tribute payments for performing during mass. Noticing Nahua fascination with European music, Zumárraga wrote to Charles V in 1540: ‘More than by preaching they are converted by music’ [Cited in Cuevas 1914:99]. Nahuas also composed plays, which allowed them to incorporate aspects of Nahua culture to the chagrin of ecclesiastic and administrative authorities [Rubial García 1996:173, Truitt 2010:311-2, Aguilar *et al* 2002:75, Spell 1922:372-8, Versèniy 1989:221; Popp 1980:64].

Large song compendiums such as the *Songs of the Mexicans* (*Cantares Mexicanos*) can also be dated to the early evangelization period. These songs formed part of a larger oral tradition from before the conquest as attested by the use of language and themes. The *Cantares Mexicanos*’ songs were collected from Nahua informants and written in alphabetic script during the 1550s, 1560s and 1570s. According to John Bierhorst, the songs were collected by a ‘transcultured’ Nahua, probably Antonio Valeriano from Azcapotzalco [Bierhorst 1985:9]. Much of the content of the songs was altered to suit Colonial ecclesiastical authorities [Schwaller 2005:70, León-Portilla 2002:144-5].

Bierhorst claims that although Gante did not publish any of the songs of the *Cantares*, he was the first one to recognize their importance for evangelical purposes, and transliterated and modified a selection of songs in alphabetic script Nahuatl to be performed, likely serving as the inspiration for the *Cantares*. Gante, however, does not seem to have been directly involved with the compilation of the *Cantares Mexicanos*. Most likely it was also Sahagún’s project. Nevertheless, it is probable that some of the songs prepared by Gante were later on included by Sahagún in his *Psalmody Christiana* [Bierhorst 1985:111].

⁶⁵ For an insightful review of music in New Spain see Spell 1922.

Some songs of the *Cantares Mexicanos* were dedicated to a muse, a king, hero or a god, and even one of the compositions, the *Old Man's* song, refers to Gante 'San Franco ontlatoa fray Pedro ye nechnahuatia nicuicanitl (San Francisco speaks! and Fray Pedro commands me as I sing)' [Bierhorst 1985:23, Truitt 2008:108-9, León-Portilla 2002:141-142, Poole 1994:341]. Moreover the *Children Song*, a post-Conquest song, seems to make reference to the chapel of San José: 'Here begins a children song, or little-children song, that used to be sung there in Mexico at the feast of San Francisco. It was composed in our lifetime: when we were living there at the church and as yet we were little children' [Bierhorst 1985:12].

On the other hand, the *Psalmodia Cristiana*, a compendium of written Nahuatl liturgical songs, was composed by Sahagún around 1564. Manuscript copies of the *Psalmodia* were distributed amongst Nahuas to sing and dance in churches with the intention of correcting and improving the psalms. The songs were finally printed by Ocharte in 1583 [León-Portilla 2004:17]. Sahagún organized the songs thematically around the celebrations of the liturgical calendar. The *Psalmodia* includes songs regarding the sign of the cross, the *Pater Noster*, the *Ave Maria*, the *Salve Regina*, the Decalogue, the commandments of the Church, the seven sacraments, and the blessings of paradise. There are also songs regarding feasts of the saints such as Saint Philip, Saint James and Saint Anthony of Padua [Schwaller 2005:69, León-Portilla 2002:146; León-Portilla 2004:29, Truitt 2010:316].

4.5.1.2 Pedagogic Programs

According to Kobayashi, Franciscan educative programs for Nahuas consisted of four main areas –divided according to educational goal and social stratus. The first program concerned education geared towards the children of the nobility. The second program was aimed at commoners and involved catechetical instruction in the open *atrios* of the churches. The third program instructed practical education in crafts and trades. The fourth program was geared towards the education of indigenous noble girls [Kobayashi 1996:189].

The establishment the Franciscan educative system was inspired by an institution in Granada, Spain, established for the purpose of indoctrinating Muslims: the Colegio de la Santa Cruz [Kobayashi 1996:101]. The school in Granada served the missionaries in New Spain as a model which could be improved and adjusted to the particular context at hand. The Colegio Real de la Santa Cruz in Granada was formally established by a royal warrant in 1526. It had been the idea of the first Archbishop of Granada, the Hieronymite Hernando de Talavera, a fervent supporter of the ecclesiastical reforms of Ximénez de Cisneros. Talavera developed a

series of religious and political actions that included the establishment of a school to aid in the conversion of the Muslim inhabitants [SilverMoon 2007:58-9]. The school was a burgeoning centre of transculturation that received in its classrooms more than two hundred Muslims from the area. The main goal of the institution was to create a base of converted Muslim children to aid with the indoctrination of their peers and the training of future missionaries. Similarly to Gante's San José, the Colegio de Santa Cruz in Granada consisted of two attached buildings, having the dual purpose of being both a school and residence [Kobayashi 1996:101-3].⁶⁶

4.5.1.2.1 *Educating elite Nahua children*

Education aimed at the children of Nahua noblemen, resident in the missionary schools, became an extremely successful tool in the propagation of the Christian faith: Nahua children educated by missionaries would later on instruct their peers [Máynez 2012:17, Códice Franciscano 1889:177-186 cited in Kobayashi 1996:175]. Gante explained in more detail the educative set-up of his school in San José in his letter from 1529:

Por ser la tierra grandísima, poblada de infinita gente, y los frailes que predicán pocos para enseñar a tanta multitud, nosotros los frailes, recogimos en nuestras casas a los hijos de los señores y principales para instruirlos en la fe católica, y aquellos después enseñan a sus padres. Saben estos muchachos leer, escribir, cantar, predicar y celebrar el oficio divino a uso de la iglesia. De ellos tengo a mi cargo en esta ciudad de México al pie de quinientos o más, porque es cabeza de tierra. He escogido a unos cincuenta de los más avisados, y cada semana les enseño a uno por uno lo que toca decir y predicar la dominica siguiente [Gante 27th June 1529 cited in Torre 1973:40-3].⁶⁷

By educating the upper layers of society, the Franciscans intended to preserve the hierarchy and political structures of the Nahuas. Franciscans never intended to replace the social structure with a Spanish oriented one. Their only interest was to introduce Christianity [Kobayashi 1996:189, Williams 1991:308].

⁶⁶ In addition to this, Zumárraga employed the Colegio de la Santa Cruz in Granada as an argument in favour of the establishment of the school of the same name in Tlatelolco. In February 1537, Zumárraga wrote to the king: 'Porque si S.M., habiendo en España tantas universidades y tantos letrados, ha proveído a Granada de universidad por razón de los nuevos convertidos de los moros' [Kobayashi 1996:103].

⁶⁷ Gante had numerous students and very little personnel to teach. To cover the staffing needs, he asked the most advanced students to become teachers of the less experienced ones. This system known as Lancasterian, was important in the evangelization of New Spain as it helped to instruct a larger number of pupils in less time [Castillo Pérez 1963:23].

Education at San José showed a unique mixture of both European and Nahua pedagogic systems.⁶⁸ Coincidentally, the Mexica educative system shared certain characteristics with its Spanish equivalent; such as a division based on future occupation of pupils and social rank.⁶⁹ Amongst the Mexica, there were two institutions aimed at two different layers of society: the *Telpochcalli* (the house of youth) and the *Calmecac* (line of houses).⁷⁰ The *macehuales* (commoners, the deserved ones) were sent to the *Telpochcalli*. The classrooms were attached to the local temple of each *calpulli*. However this was not a clear cut division as there was some extent of social mobility, admission to these schools also depended on the patron deity of the parents [Félix Lerma 2005:48]. The curriculum included history, religion, rhetoric and the economic activity of their *calpulli* and military training. Girls attended separate schools where they learned household duties such as cooking and sewing [Aguilar *et al* 2002:66]. The children of the *pipiltin* (noblemen), on the other hand, were sent to the *Calmecac*. The main aim of this institution was to teach leadership in religious, military and political life. Unlike the numerous *Telpochcalli*, there were only two *Calmecac*, one for boys and another one for girls. In these schools discipline was strict. Pupils studied the calendar cycles, history, arithmetic, architecture, astronomy, agriculture, law, warfare and music. Although the *Calmecac* stressed religious education not all the students were destined to become priests,

⁶⁸ The adaptation was soon followed by the Dominicans and later on the Augustians and Mercedarians [Reyes Valerio 1995:62-67].

⁶⁹ Instruction had close ties with the Church, with clergymen in charge of education and schools attached to monasteries and churches (*doctrinas*) [Kobayashi 1996:103]. Several ecclesiastical councils and synods agreed upon the educative instruction of Spanish children and the pedagogical materials they needed to learn, however, we need to keep in mind that Spain at the time was not a unity, but composed by several kingdoms with independent administration. As early as 1367, the Synod of Segorbe ordered all children to be instructed in reading and writing. It was, however, only in 1480, during the Synod of Toledo that the establishment of a parochial school, in which children would be instructed in Christian doctrine, was proposed [Sánchez- Herrero 1990:237, 245, Kobayashi 1996:104]. During the 16th century the increase of literacy in Spain was the direct result of the ecclesiastical reforms made by Cardinal Ximénez de Cisneros, who supported the pedagogical theory of Spanish humanist Luis Vives (1493-1540), who highlighted education as a means to transform society by being provided to young people [Kobayashi 1996:104]. Education in Spain was predominantly based on rhetoric, complemented with an array of pedagogic techniques to improve memory skills (*ars memoriae*). This array included a complex mixture of tools which ranged from illustrations and singing to repetition after the teacher in order to memorize the subject [Kobayashi 1996:104].

⁷⁰ The education system of the Mexica was vital in cementing the different layers of society as they were instructed to live in accordance to one's destiny and to perform the ritual to the divinities. Education was obligatory for each member of the community and the formal age to start school began from the age of seven. The entrance ceremony consisted of long speeches revolving around subjects such as obedience, diligence, humility, self-discipline and cleanliness. Nahua children were also taught moral values at home, schools and at the temples [Morales 2008:140].

many were preparing to assume positions in the army, public administration and the legal system [Bravo Ahuja 1977:22-3, Aguilar *et al* 2002:64-5]. Not unlike European schools, in the *Calmecac* the *tlamatinime* (or wise men) established an oral educative system in which students were obligated to memorize a series of discourses and additional comments on codices.⁷¹ The art of speaking or rhetoric was a very important part of the education and teaching in both Mexica and Franciscan schools.⁷²

Franciscan schools, moreover, followed not only the austerity and strict discipline of the *Calmecac* school but also of their own monastic regime. Pupils were closely observed by the missionaries in order to prevent any contact with the exterior world. Pupils were, for example, not allowed to visit or even contact their families [Kobayashi 1996:180, Bravo Ahuja 1977:22-3, Reyes Valerio 1995:62-7, Morales 2008:145]. Gante explains the logic behind this measure:

Mando a toda la tierra que de veinte y cuarenta leguas alrededor de donde estábamos, que todos los hijos de los señores y principales viniesen a México a San Francisco a aprender la ley de Dios y a la enseñar, y la doctrina cristiana, y así se hizo que se juntaron luego poco más o menos mil mochos, los cuales teníamos encerrados en nuestra casa de día y de noche, no les permitiendo ninguna conversación con sus padres, y menos con sus madres, salvo solamente con los que los servían y les traían de comer; y esto para que se olvidasen de sus sangrientas idolatrías y excesivas sacrificios [Gante 13th June 1558 in Torre 1973:55-60].

In the beginning, all Franciscan schools for noble children were boarding schools. This changed, however, with time, as Sahagún mentions:

A los principios, como hallamos que en la república antigua criaban los muchachos y muchachas en los templos [...] tomamos aquel estilo de criar los muchachos en nuestras casas, y dormían en la casa que para ellos estaba edificada junto a la nuestra [...] Pero como no se ejercitaban en los trabajos corporales como solían [...] porque ejercitábamos con ellos la blandura y piedad que entre nosotros se usa, comenzaron a tener bríos sensuales [...] y así los echamos de nuestras casas para que se fuesen a dormir a casa de sus padres; y venían a la mañana a las escuelas a aprender, y esto es lo que ahora se usa [Sahagún 1969 book 10 chapter 27, Rodríguez Lorenzo 1999:41].

By 1532 indigenous children were receiving Christian education in the monasteries of the most important Spanish congregations: Cholula, Huejotzingo, Tlalmanalco, Tepeaca,

⁷¹ For more information regarding Nahua educative system see Sahagún's chapter VIII of his *Historia General de las Cosas de la Nueva España*.

⁷² Of most importance was the *huehuetlatolli* (speeches of the old) a genre that comprises the moral precepts in which the Mexica children were educated, this genre was modified by the missionaries and was widely employed in missionary translations [Bravo Ahuja 1977:23].

Texcoco, Cuauhtitlan, Tula, Coyoacan, Cuernavaca, Acapixtla and Tlaxcala. The largest group of students, over 600, took lessons in the *doctrina* of San José [Morales 2008:146].

The curriculum of the Franciscan schools consisted of the principal prayers, the explanation of the most important devotional aspects of the Gospel alongside subjects such as arithmetic, literacy, binding and illumination of books, engraving, printing and singing [Kobayashi 1996:180, 186].⁷³ Initially instruction was given solely in Latin; the children just repeated and memorized the prayers in this language. Soon after the friars started to learn the indigenous languages and were able to instruct in Nahuatl. In 1580, Philip II, by means of a bull dated 19 September 1580, gave Nahuatl the title of ‘general language of the Indians’ not only because it was so widely spoken in Mesoamerica before and after the conquest but also because of its importance in practises of religious indoctrination. In many ways, the missionaries tried to avoid the Hispanicization of the indigenous population, preserving in general terms their culture and avoiding as much as possible any contact with Europeans [Máynez 2013:13, for an overview of Nahuatl language in New Spain see Appendix 5].

Proper Latin instruction was only given from May 1533 onwards in San José. However, the teaching of Latin seems to have been more generalized than was previously thought. This was particularly the case during the early years of the evangelization as the missionaries still hoped to prepare Nahua children for the priesthood [Rodríguez Lorenzo 1999:41, Kobayashi 1996:185-6]. As Kobayashi observes, the introduction of Latin as part of school curriculum started secondary education in New Spain. The first teacher of Latin grammar was the French Arnaldo de Basacio who developed a new method of teaching Latin in San José. Basacio later on instructed using the method in other cities such as Tlatelolco and Tulancingo [Kobayashi 1996:185-6].

The Nahua children raised by missionaries were essential to the evangelical project. They were not only eloquent and knowledgeable in Christian lore but also had substantial freedom of movement. Commissioned by the missionaries, they moved from city to city, employing the network of trading routes used by *pochtecas* (merchants) they were able to transmit the Christian message to areas with little or no contact with the Spanish population [Kobayashi

⁷³ Juan Caro, an old priest, helped Gante in his school by teaching music. Although Caro was not able to talk in Nahuatl he was able to teach the students singing in the European tradition [Kobayashi 1996:181].

1996:182, Bravo Ahuja 1977:55-7, Rubial García 2003:58-61].⁷⁴ Gante, occasionally, accompanied them on their travels to cities in the vicinity of Mexico-Tenochtitlan:

Los domingos salen estos muchachos a predicar por la ciudad y toda la comarca, a cuatro, a ocho, o diez, a veinte y treinta millas, anunciando la fe católica, y preparando con su doctrina a la gente para recibir el bautismo. Nosotros con ellos vamos a la redonda destruyendo ídolos y templos por una parte, mientras ellos hacen lo mismo en otra, y levantamos iglesias al Dios verdadero [Gante 27th June 1529 in Torre 1973:40-3].

The children had another important advantage for the Franciscans. Being of noble families, upon their return to their home towns the children were supported by their parents' authority in transmitting the Christian message to their peers. In many ways, evangelization on a large scale was only possible because these indoctrinated children pushed conversion to the next stage. Working as a sort of 'fifth column' they changed the dynamics of the evangelization process, providing an internal dimension. The children, as active agents of Christianization, became invaluable assistants to the missionaries in the destruction of indigenous religious paraphernalia; moreover they functioned as informants, spying upon the religious activities of their peers [Kobayashi 1996:182-3, Bravo Ahuja 1977:55-7].⁷⁵ The information provided by the Nahuatl students was extremely useful for the friars, who could exactly identify the individuals still worshipping the Nahuatl deities. As Gante relates in his letter:

Toda la semana los más hábiles y alumbrados en las cosas de Dios estudiaban lo que habían de predicar y enseñar a los pueblos los domingos y fiestas de guardar, y los sábados los enviaba de dos en dos (que no había otro sino yo con otros religiosos que no éramos más de cuatro para un mundo) a cada pueblo al alrededor de México cinco y seis lenguas, y a los de diez y de quince y de veinte algunas veces, de veinte en veinte días, y a otras más o menos; salvo cuando era fiesta y dedicación de los

⁷⁴ It is important to keep in mind that most of the Nahuatl *pipiltin* were not really interested in sending their children to the Franciscans; however there was peer pressure and coercion not only from the missionaries but also from the Spanish ruling class. Some of these noblemen, instead of sending their own children, sent instead children of their vassals. When the noblemen noticed that the pupils received many advantages from missionary education, they started to send their own children [Kobayashi 1996:185-6].

⁷⁵ One of the major incidents of this 'fifth column' occurred in Tlaxcala, where missionaries' pupils murdered the priest of the god Ometochtli. The act, although not condoned by the Church, probably had terrible consequences in the psyche of the resistant indigenous populations, who realized that they had enemies in their own midst [Kobayashi 1996:184]. Another incident of importance happened to a group of young Nahuats, amongst them the grandson of Xicotencatl the Elder (Cortés's chief Tlaxcalan ally) who were sent by Martín de Valencia to accompany a party of Dominican friars on an evangelical journey. In the Cuauhtinchan region (in modern Puebla) they set about smashing the deities' statues and destroyed the shrines, earning the animadversion of the local indigenous lords who beat the youngsters to death [Haskett 2008:185-212].

demonios, que enviaba a los más hábiles para las estorbar; y cuando algún señor hacia fiesta alguna en su casa secretamente, los mismos que yo enviaba a ver me venían a avisar, y luego los enviaba a llamar a México y venían a llamar a capitulo, y los reñía y predicaba lo que sentía y según Dios me lo inspiraba. Otras veces los atemorizaba con la justicia, diciéndoles que les había de castigar, si otra vez lo hacían; y de esta manera unas veces por bien y otras por mal, poco a poco se destruyeron y quitaron muchas idolatrías: a lo menos los señores y los principales iban alumbrándose algún poco y conociendo al Señor; y procuraba siempre de aficionarlos al yugo suave del Señor y a la Corona Real [Gante 13th June 1558 in Torre 1973:55-61].

The missionaries could act upon the information provided by their informants, apprehending the participants to be punished when these religious practises and rituals were taking place [Kobayashi 1996:184].⁷⁶

4.5.1.2.2 *Macehualtin education*

The education of Nahua elites was complemented by catechetical instruction given to the *macehuales* (commoners) in the open *atrios* of the *doctrinas*. This strategy was especially designed to accommodate the Nahua custom of worshipping in open spaces. Mendieta mentions that both the *pipiltin* and the *macehualtin* children took certain classes together. The *macehualtin*, however, only had classes during the morning, while the *pipiltin* followed the boarding school regime [Ricard 1966:209, Rodríguez Lorenzo 1999:40].

The most important place where instruction was received was the open *atrio* in the Convent of San Francisco, where thousands of people would gather to receive daily instruction. Early in the morning a pre-selected Nahua (usually referred in Spanish as *mandón* or *mandones* in plural) was sent to the different neighbourhoods of the city to bring the *macehuales* to attend mass. The Nahuas were then gathered in the *atrio* where attendance was taken. There were punishments for those who did not attend. Education included the key prayers and most of the

⁷⁶ Two common methods missionaries employed to punish Nahua transgressors were public whipping and head shaving. Head shaving was a punishment employed by the Mexica prior to the arrival of the Spaniards to punish drunkards, youngsters who misbehaved and for priests who committed crimes before being executed. The missionaries through Nahua collaborators became aware of this penalty and employed it as a particular punishment for idolatry or for speaking against Christianity. This was an extremely harsh and humiliating punishment for the Nahuas, which they often complained of. According to Sahagún, in Mesoamerican tradition by taking the enemy's hair the warrior's reputation was taken away as hair transferred the vital force known as *tonalli*, an animistic entity which mainly resided in the head. The notion of *tonalli* was pivotal in Nahuas' understanding and structuring of the world, it was given to each individual and had a notion similar to personhood. By shaving the transgressor, the missionaries were taking away his vital force. [For more on the animistic entities of the Nahuas see chapter 6] [Pardo 2006:89-95, López-Austin 1988, 1:313-6.]

instruction was given in songs, to facilitate its dissemination [Kobayashi 1996:192-3, Rubial García 1996:168-9, Aguilar Moreno *et al* 2002:152-3].

4.5.1.2.3 *School of trades*

Catechetical instruction was complemented by the school of trades and crafts established by Gante in 1530 in the *doctrina* of San José. This institution was unique and performed an important role in the dynamics of interaction between Nahuas and Spaniards, as Mendieta exemplifies in his small biography on Gante [1596]

[Gante] [...] junto a la misma escuela ordeno que se hiciesen otros aposentos o repartimientos de casas, donde se enseñasen los indios a pintar; y allí se hacían las imágenes y retablos para toda la tierra. Hizo enseñar a otros en los oficios de cantería, carpintería, sastres, zapateros, herreros y los demás oficios mecánicos, con que comenzaron los indios a aficionarse y ejercitarse en ellos [Mendieta 1596 in Torre 1973:67].

This was the first and only attempt, as Reyes Valerio suggests, of an integral education for indigenous peoples designed in Mexico. The learning of a trade was, however, only available for older children who had already mastered the catechism. Trade teaching was pivotal, as European craft work was not easily available in the early period of New Spain and often tended to be extremely expensive. Nahua artisans thus, were involved in every stage of the construction process of convents, churches, administrative buildings and houses for the Spaniards.⁷⁷ Gante, as well as other Franciscans, considered these artisan trades to be an extremely useful instrument for the incorporation of Nahuas in the new Colonial society. It provided economic sustenance for their families while at the same time solving the Spanish demand for skilled artisans [Reyes Valerio 1995:62-7, Kobayashi 1996:196-8, Quiñones Keber 2013:7].

Gante's school of trades was strongly influenced by the *Devotio Moderna's* education system. Indeed by employing the model of the *Devotio Moderna's* education system, associating literacy with practical skills, Gante developed the basis of an educative system that was to be re-employed four hundred years later, even after the Mexican revolution [Castillo Pérez 1963:23].

⁷⁷ European trades alongside with Nahua skills, were important for the reconstruction of the capital of New Spain. Most churches were being built and decorated by indigenous hands, thus creating an indigenous art style called *tequitqui* in which hybridization between the material culture from both traditions occurred. In *tequitqui* art, the new and the old intermingled creating a new form of art and therefore a new appreciation of the world [Quiñones Keber 2013:10].

4.5.1.2.4 Education for girls

Franciscan chronicler Vetancourt wrote in his work *Teatro Mexicano: Crónica de la Provincia del Santo Evangelio de México, Menologio Franciscano* [1697] that Gante also established a school for girls, el *Colegio de niñas*. The school was financed by the empress Isabella of Portugal, who additionally sent six matrons in charge of teaching European domestic skills to the girls. However, according to Francisco de la Maza, this was a mistake of Vetancourt as Gante was not the founder of the *Colegio de niñas* instead the school had been established by the convent of San Francisco and a religious guild under the guidance of Zumárraga [Maza 1972:94].

The girls were taken away at the age of six or seven, and were taught Christian doctrine. When the girls were twelve they were taken back to their families with the purpose to marry them with the educated, ‘transcultured’ boys of the Franciscan schools [Carreño 1949:61]. Education for Nahuatl girls failed soon as not only Nahuas were reticent to send their daughters, but girls sent to convents had few marriage prospects as noblemen did not want to marry girls educated in European ways. Moreover, there was a lack of nuns running the institution [Kobayashi 1973].

However, even though education for girls failed, Nahuatl women were active participants in religious activities, as early as 1552 they had leadership positions in indigenous confraternities. In the chapel of San José at least four women were appointed *cihuatepixque* (the women in charge of people), a position most often held by males [Truitt 2010:416, Ricard 1966:210-212].

4.5.1.3 Secondary Education in New Spain: The Colegio de la Santa Cruz

The education offered in New Spain to the *pipiltin* children prior to the establishment of the *Colegio* was of a very basic nature and in no way sufficient to prepare students for future employment in Colonial administration [Rodríguez 1999:50]. Latin was generally not in the curriculum, especially in primary schools, but as we have seen selected pupils of Gante were taught Latin. The progress made with regards to Latin by Gante’s pupils was one of the factors that ensured the establishment of the Colegio de la Santa Cruz [Betancourt 2004:35, Romano 2004:260, Ricard 1966:221-235, SilverMoon 2007].

The Colegio was opened in 1536 in the hope of establishing a Mesoamerican clergy which would be the start of the creation of an ‘Indian’ Church. In the beginning the institution had

only sixty pupils –all male children of the Nahua nobility— chosen by Zumárraga from among the best of San José. Teachers at this institution were part of the Franciscan intellectual elite of the time: Juan de Gaona, who had taught rhetoric, logic and philosophy in the Sorbonne in Paris, Juan de Rocher, Andrés de Olmos –grammar teacher and author of the first grammar in a Mesoamerican language—, Arnaldo de Basacio, who started teaching Latin in the *doctrina* of San José and then moved on to the Colegio de la Santa Cruz, Bernardino de Sahagún and Francisco de Bustamante just to name a few [Ricard 1966:221-235]. They developed a curriculum based on the intellectual currents of northern humanism, following the seminary tradition of the mendicants as well: the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric and logic) and the *cuatrivium* (arithmetics, geometry, astronomy and music). Theology and the gospel were also studied as well as indigenous medicine [Romano 2004:258, Ricard 1966:221-235, Máynez 2013:20-1, Williams 1991:308, Carreño 1949:65, Morales 2008:147].

In the institution two types of project were developed: translating Christian doctrinal texts and historiographies to reconstruct the indigenous past. The institution prepared Nahua students to work as printers, translators, illuminators, and editors. Indeed literate pupils of this institution became important translators.⁷⁸ The students wrote sermons, critiques, prayers and confession manuals, hagiographies, songbooks, glossaries, grammars, *doctrinas* and primers in diverse Mesoamerican languages [Morales 2008:147, Máynez 2013:21].⁷⁹

The second type of collaborative work done in the Colegio was of an ethno-historical nature. The most famous work produced in the institution was the *Historia General de las Cosas de la Nueva España*, also known as the *Florentine Codex*, written by Bernardino de Sahagún (1499-1590) and his Nahua informants.⁸⁰ This manuscript consists of twelve books with approximately two-thousand illustrations produced by Nahuas using European techniques.

⁷⁸ The Latin abilities of the students were renowned. Miguel, the Nahua teacher of grammar at the Colegio, was so familiar with the language that while he lay dying he conversed in Latin with Francisco de Bustamante [Ricard 1965:221-235]. Although all members of the college seem to have known Spanish only Latin and Nahuatl were practised [Ricard 1966:224].

⁷⁹ Luna Nájera observes that the setting up of the Colegio de la Santa Cruz and the subsequent donation of Zumárraga's library to the College –establishing thus the first library in Spanish America—, together with the introduction of the printing press, highlight the importance given to literacy and the book by missionaries [Nájera 2012:580]. Zumárraga's library held titles by Plato Aristotle, Plutarch, Cato, Cicero, St Augustine, Aquinas, Vives, Nebrija, and Erasmus [SilverMoon 2007:108].

⁸⁰ Sahagún's has been treated exhaustively in other sources see Máynez 2001:197-204, León-Portilla 1988:5-11, Romano 2004:270, Ricard 1966:58, Nájera 2012:586, López Austin 1992:57-81.

The bilingual text in Spanish and Nahuatl provides a rich account of the culture, religion, devotional practises, society, economics, and history of the Mexica and Tlatelolca people [Romano 2004:266]. Although the main objective of the *Historia* was not direct indoctrination, this type of document was compiled to comprehend the nuances of Nahua beliefs [Máynez 2013:21-2, Baudot 1974:23-45, SilverMoon 2007:15]. Another important collaborative work from this institution is the *Codice Badiano* also known as *Libellus de Medicinalibus Indorum Herbis* [1553] written by a well-known Nahua doctor, Martín de la Cruz and by Juan Badiano who translated the work from Nahuatl into Latin. The book consists of one-hundred and forty pages and eighty-nine illustrations in which the properties of medicinal plants are explained and illustrated in an exquisite, colourful and elaborate way, resembling the style and format of a European *herbolarium* [Máynez 2013:21]. Because of Sahagún and Badiano's works, Romano proposes that in many ways, the Colegio de la Santa Cruz became a centre of Nahua studies, a liminal and ambiguous place where Nahuas and Franciscans collaborated, engaged in dialogue and entered into socio-cultural negotiations [Romano 2004:260, SilverMoon 2007:55-6, Estarella 1962].

4.6 Gante and his work for the province of the Holy Gospel

Gante was also in charge of several administrative activities for the province of the Holy Gospel. Mendieta mentions some of his responsibilities:

Entendía en examinar a los que se habían de casar, y aparejar los que se habían de confesar y los que habían de recibir el Santísimo Sacramento de la Eucaristía. Predicaba cuando no había sacerdote que supiese la lengua de los indios, la cual él supo muy bien; puesto que era naturalmente tartamudo que por maravilla los frailes le entendían, ni en lengua mexicana los que la sabían, ni en la propia nuestra. Pero era cosa maravillosa que los indios le entendían en su lengua, como si fuera uno de ellos [Mendieta 1569 in Torre 1973:67].⁸¹

In addition to this and following his practical disposition, Gante organized two religious guilds for the Nahuas intending with this to increase works of charity and Christian devotion. The most famous of the religious guilds was the brotherhood of the Very Holy Sacrament, which helped to increase devotion towards the Eucharist and the Virgin amongst Nahuas. The

⁸¹ Zumárraga concurs with Mendieta, and in his letter to the Toulouse Chapter from 12 June 1531 relating the most important news about his diocese, mentions the importance of the work of Gante: 'Entre los frailes más aprovechados en la lengua de los naturales, hay uno en particular, llamado Pedro de Gante, lego. Tiene diligentísimo cuidado de más de seiscientos niños. Y cierto él es un principal paraninfo que industria los mozos y mozas que se han de casar, en las cosas de nuestra fe cristiana, y como se han de haber en el santo matrimonio, y industriados, los hace casar en los días de fiesta con mucha solemnidad' [Chauvet 1970:3].

brotherhood of the Very Holy Sacrament was in charge of the Easter processions [Ricard 1966:181-2]. Gante also commissioned the construction of several chapels, churches and even a hospital. Gante describes his architectural work to his colleagues and family in Ghent:

Yo por la misericordia de Dios y para honra y gloria suya, en esta provincia de México donde moro, que es otra Roma, con mi industria y el favor divino, he construido más de cien casas consagradas al Señor entre iglesias y capillas, algunas de las cuales son templos tan magníficos como propios para el culto divino, no menores de trescientos pies y otras de doscientos [Gante 27th June 1529 in Torre 1973:40-3].

Gante's architectural projects were achieved in only six years. Although Gante's statement may be interpreted as an embellishment or exaggeration on his part, available evidence from the Codex Osuna suggests that Gante indeed oversaw the construction of several buildings, employing Nahuas as a workforce. For example, f.8v of the Codex Osuna indicates that besides the chapel of San José, Gante built four more chapels in Mexico City, in each one of the segments in which the Nahuia population was divided –Santa María, San Juan, San Pablo and San Sebastián [García Icazbalceta 1972:12, Williams 1991:308].



Fig. 17 Detail of Codex Osuna. Sick Nahua in the Hospital de Indios established by Gante [Source: https://hemi.nyu.edu/cuaderno/censura/html/tevan/tevan_info.htm 12/08/2014]

Possibly one of the most important institutions under the care of Gante was the Hospital de Indios which was located in the environs of San Francisco in the west of Mexico City. Gante started the construction of the hospital in July 1529. The hospital was of such large dimensions that according to sources it had a capacity for three or four-hundred people.

Gante praised the institution in his correspondence with Charles V:

Un hospital tenían estos indios en esta ciudad, donde se curaban los indios enfermos, lo cual ellos hicieron a su costa, y en el eran curados y consolados los indios enfermos; e para el colegio de los niños se lo tomaron, con cargo de hacerles otro tal y tan bueno; y demás del detrimento que han pasado los enfermos ha dos años, que ni si se hace el otro, ni se le vuelve el hospital. Por reverencia de Dios, que pues es tan necesario, V.M., se lo mande volver, o que con toda brevedad se les haga el otro, y no permitan que se mueran los enfermos por no tener donde se curar [Gante 15th February 1552 in Torre 1973:46-55].

The hospital was short-lived, however, closing only after a few years when the Viceroy of New Spain decided to seize the building from the Franciscans to instead establish the Colegio de San Juan de Letrán, the first school for mestizo children. The Franciscans were promised another building for their hospital, but this never materialized [Maza 1972:94].

For his numerous enterprises Gante depended both upon Nahuas and the Spanish crown. The amount needed to support his architectural projects must have been enormous. In a letter from 31 October 1532 addressed to Charles, Gante petitions for financial support for both his hospital and school:

Para todo esto siempre procure buscar la limosna que puedo, y trabajosamente se puede haber, porque los naturales son pobres todos los mas [...] V.M., si manda porque del todo sea suya la obra, nos puede hacer limosna con que a nosotros nos quite de trabajo y se satisfaga todas las necesidades de sus nuevos súbditos y vasallos [...] Y si V.M., manda sean dos o tres mil hanegas de maíz cada año, los mil para la escuela y las otras para la enfermería y enfermos, esto o lo que V.M., mandare, es justo y muy bueno, y gran crédito y ejemplo para los naturales [Gante 31st October 1532 in Torre 1973:43-5].

García Icazbalceta suggests that Charles V ceded alms of an unknown amount [García Icazbalceta 1972:13]. However, evidence suggests that Charles V paid close attention to Gante's petition as we will see in chapter 9 regarding the license granted to the Hospital de Indios in relation to printing *cartillas*. It is likely that more of Gante's petitions to the monarchs were successful as evidenced by the letter of Alonso de Escalona the provincial of the Franciscans in New Spain notifying King Philip II of the death of Gante. In the letter Escalona also mentions that many enterprises of Gante were indeed financed by Philip's father Charles V:

Hemos perdido uno de los mejores obreros en Fr. Pedro de Gante. Dios se lo llevo así para darle el premio, según lo sabe dar a sus servidores; que fuera harto pesado y molesto, si diera cuenta a vuestra majestad de lo mucho que hizo y obro por acá, pues que la tierra esta henchida de su fama; fue pastor infatigable, trabajando en su ganado cincuenta años, muy distinto de aquel obispo Casaus [sic Casas], que las abandono y murió lejos dellas; mucho agradecimiento le deben estos indios, y nosotros los

religiosos, pues que le daba bríos el ser deudo tan allegado del cristianismo padre de V.M., que por su medio nos era gran favorecedor, y nos otorgaba muchas de las mercedes que todos habíamos menester [Chauvet 1968:368].

In 1548, after the death of Gante's close friend and colleague, Zumárraga, Gante was offered by Charles V the archbishopric of New Spain. Gante, however, rejected the privilege.⁸² This was not the only privilege he rejected. During his life Gante had received at least three licences to be ordained. The first from Pope Paul III, the second from the General Chapter celebrated in Rome in 1538 and the last one from Charles V. Despite the licences, Gante remained a lay man. He considered that becoming ordained could have interfered with his multiple duties.⁸³

In Gante's place the Dominican Alonso de Montúfar was now elected as archbishop. The relationship between the two men was strained almost from the start. Montúfar was resentful of Gante's influence over the Nahuas and is known to have uttered the words: 'Yo no soy arzobispo de México, sino Fr. Pedro de Gante' [Morales 2008:144, Kieckens 1880:41, García Icazbalceta 1972:14]. Clashes amongst the religious orders were not rare in the early years of New Spain. Disputes between members of the different orders and the seculars concerning authority over indigenous towns, territories and evangelical strategies were commonplace, often resulting in complaints presented to the archbishops and to the Council of the Indies or in violent clashes involving both missionaries and indigenous communities [Van Oss 1976:32-3, Betancourt 2004:25, Cartas de Indias 1887:147-151, Ricard 1966:242-263]. The letter from the Dominican Andrés de Moguer from 10 December 1554 where he complains about Gante to the *Audiencia* of the Council of the Indies can be seen as an example of the conflict between orders:

Franciscanos han ocupado tres cuartos del territorio, y no tienen suficiente gente, a veces solo dan misa una vez al año "Y su señoría del señor arzobispo [Fr, Alonso de Montúfar], quiriendo como pastor remediallo y dalles ministros a sus ovejas, como su

⁸² According to Francisco Morales Gante worked as Zumárraga's secretary and translator as early as 1527 [Morales 2008:144, Morales 2014:39].

⁸³ Although some scholars have doubted the last assertion, the *Rhetorica Christiana* by Valadés confirms this: 'Fue varón de mucha humildad, la cual mostro en que desecho y no hizo caso de tres licencias que le enviaron, sin el procurarlas ni saber dellas, para ordenarse sacerdote. La primera del papa Paulo Tercio, la segunda del capítulo general celebrado en Roma, siendo generalísimo de la Orden Fray Vicente Lunel; porque oyendo su fama los padres que allí se juntaron, les pareció que tal varón no había de estar en estado lego. La tercera de un nuncio apostólico que estuvo en corte del Cesar, Carlos Quinto, y sería por ventura a contemplación del mismo Cesar que, según se dijo arriba, aun arzobispo lo quiso hacer' [Valadés 1579:222].

pastor, a selos dado algunos pueblos y no los an querido obbedesçer ni dalles de comer, y según dizen, por consejo de un Fray Pedro de Gante, fraile lego de la horden de San françisco, y el señor arçobispo [Fr. Alonso de Montúfar], del enojo, açoto quatro o cinco dellos en la carçel , y tanpoco le obesçen [Cartas de Indias 1887:124].

The letter highlights the fundamental role that Gante played for Franciscan administrative affairs, a role that often put him in conflict with missionaries from other orders over jurisdiction of territories and methods of evangelization. Conflicts such as these often made Gante clash directly with the second archbishop of New Spain Alonso de Montúfar. The resentment of Montúfar towards Gante interfered, however, directly with Gante's work. A false testimony against Gante allowed Montúfar to exile him to Tlaxcala, thus removing Gante from the Franciscan powerbase in New Spain. Gante only remained in Tlaxcala for a short amount of time as the accusations were false [Kieckens, 1880:42]. Agustín de Vetancourt, in his *Teatro Mexicano* [1697] described how the Nahuá parishioners of Gante petitioned the Real Audiencia for Gante's return to San José:

Se valieron de la Real Audiencia, volvió a México, y salieron a la laguna de Texcoco a recibirlo con una flota de canoas, hacienda un escuadrón con danzas y diversos regocijos que puso a toda la Ciudad en admiración, porque en brazos lo trajeron hasta el convento [Vetancourt Menologia 1697:67]

This paragraph suggests that Gante was held in high esteem by the Nahuas. Mendieta, in his small biography of the friar, provides another insight into Gante's relationship with the Nahuas stating that:

Y a esta causa fue muy querido, como se vio muy claro en todo el discurso de vida. Y con ser fraile lego, y predicarles y confesarles los otros sacerdotes, grandes ciervos de Dios y prelados de la Orden al Fray Pedro solo conocían por particular padre y a él acudían con todos su negocios, trabajos y necesidades; y así dependía del principalmente el gobierno de los naturales de toda la ciudad de México y su comarca, en lo espiritual y eclesiástico [Mendieta 1596 in Torre 1973:68].

In the *Anales de Juan Bautista*, Gante is referred by Nahuas as 'Our beloved friar' [cited in Reyes García 2001:291]. [For more historical snippets on the importance of Gante in New Spain see Appendix 4.] Although we need to be careful assessing Franciscan and Nahuá sources related to Gante's work, as the Franciscan writers could be justifying the actions of the order to the Crown or the Nahuá writers cementing the alliance with the Franciscans, most of the sources seem to acknowledge the importance of Gante. Because of this affection, in 1552 Gante urged Charles V to send a group of Flemish missionaries from the convent of Saint Francis in Ghent to New Spain [Gante 15th February 1552 in Torre 1973:46-55]. Gante believed that the Nahuas under his care would feel more comfortable with people such as

himself, thus easing the process of evangelization. Gante's idea suggests that Nahuas reacted differently towards Gante than towards his French and Spanish counterparts, it also indicates that Gante's personal touches (agency) with regards to the evangelization of New Spain significantly contributed to his success and need to be considered carefully.

Gante's approach to evangelical affairs was probably the result of his upbringing in noble circles, an education/background that in many ways gave him the intellectual humanistic tools necessary to grasp not only the belief system of the Nahuas but also the socio-political complexity of both Nahua and Spanish/European society. If Gante's petition for more Flemish missionaries from the convent of Ghent, where Gante took his Franciscan vows, had been granted it would probably have ensured the continuation of his personal approach to the evangelization process; which would have benefitted from missionaries with a similar intellectual background. No new Flemish missionaries were, however, sent to New Spain at that time.

4.6.1 Decline of mendicant orders and Gante's death

Franciscan control and that of the other mendicant orders over the evangelization effort saw a slow decline after the arrival of Alonso de Montúfar. Montúfar was keen on imposing secular authority in New Spain. His stance on the matter was confronted by the mendicant orders who opposed the increase of secular power. The *Patronato Real* had granted the missionaries privileges so they could administer the sacraments, a privilege normally reserved for the secular church. The granting of this privilege had ensured, however, substantial animosity from the secular clergy towards the missionaries. The animosity between the missionaries and the secular clergy was further increased by the fact that the mendicant orders did not want interference from members of the secular clergy in New Spain as the seculars' lack of interest in indigenous affairs would have endangered the completion of the evangelical project as started by the mendicants [Interestingly in the region of the Andes where evangelization was in charge of the secular order and the Jesuits the trajectory of conversion differed vastly from Central Mexico as I will show in chapter 6]. In a letter to Charles V, Gante urged the king not to allow the secular religious hierarchy to take control over Nahua education [Truitt 2008:26-7, Cline 1993:456, Van Oss 1976:32-3, Rubial García 1996:89, 113]. However, the mendicants were not expected to continue evangelical work after the Church in New Spain was established, instead it was expected that the seculars would rule over ecclesiastical affairs.

The fundamental ecclesiastical differences between the secular and regular branch of the church led to a conflict of authority over the control of the Nahua population, a conflict which would eventually end with the secularization of the *doctrinas* and convents of the mendicants and the seclusion of the missionaries in monasteries during the 18th century.⁸⁴

For example the debate regarding secularization of the *doctrina* of San José started as early as 1552 and ended in a series of presidential orders during the 1850s and 1860s. Gante requested Philip II in June 1558 to decree for his Christian *doctrina* to remain in the convent [Truitt 2008:280, Chauvet 1950:28, Álvarez Icaza 2010:303-5]. It is uncertain what Gante meant by this statement. It is probable that Gante was petitioning for the *doctrina* of San José not to become secular and to stay as part of the convent of San Francisco

The conflict also had economic roots, as the seculars wanted to include the Mesoamericans in the general tithe that was levied on the Spanish population. They believed that this was necessary to provide for the enlargement of the secular clergy. The mendicants, on the other hand, received most of their economic support from the Mesoamerican communities not only in terms of alms, but also with regards to the construction of buildings. If the Mesoamerican communities now were obliged to pay the tithe in addition to their contributions to the mendicant orders, the secular church would use a significant proportion of the missionaries' financial supporting for its own purposes thereby undermining the missionary effort and their financial independence. This independence, as Padden suggests, was pivotal for supporting the process of indigenous conversion and to avoid a similar situation to what had happened in the West Indies [Padden 1956:337-8].

The clash between mendicants and seculars became vicious; allegations and accusations were made on both sides. In 1561 Montúfar and the first bishop of Michoacan Vasco de Quiroga

⁸⁴ In 1744, Ferdinand VI, by a royal warrant, signed in the Buen Retiro, ordered the mendicant orders to rescind their authority, give away the convents in each indigenous town to the secular clergy and to enter monasteries in the cities. In less than fifty years, the mendicant orders were reduced to twenty-one convents in the main cities of New Spain [Morales 2012, Morales 1996:369].

King Ferdinand's measure was aggravated one hundred years later, when President Interim of Mexico Ignacio Comonfort issued a decree in September 1856 ordering the suppression of the convents. However, the convent of San Francisco was only suppressed on September 28 1860 following the Reform Laws. San Francisco was reduced, seized by the government and subsequently divided into lots and sold to individual bidders [Truitt 2008:280, Chauvet 1950:28]. The chapel of San José was destroyed around 1856 under the lineaments of the *Ley de Desamortización de las Fincas Rústicas y Urbanas de las Corporaciones Civiles y Religiosas de México* (25 June 1856). Under this law ecclesiastical properties were expropriated by the state, which resulted in the destruction of the chapel of San José. From the convent of San Francisco only the chapel of Balvanera remains.

(1470-1565) sued the Franciscan, Augustinian, and Dominican orders for the abuse of indigenous peoples: 'Have inflicted and are now inflicting many mistreatments upon the Indians, with great haughtiness and cruelty, for when the Indians do not obey them, they insult and strike them, tear out their hair, have them stripped and cruelly flogged, and then throw them into prison in chains and cruel irons, a thing most pitiable to hear about and much more pitiable to see' [Van Oss 1976:32]. The conflict between seculars and mendicants often ended in violence. In 1569, on the Feast of the Assumption in Mexico City, a group of Nahuas led by a few Franciscans, including Gante, was marching in the yearly procession from the *doctrina* of San José to celebrate mass at Santa María la Redonda, a chapel dedicated to the Assumption. Members of the secular clergy blocked the street aiming to stop the procession, harassing the Nahua who was carrying the holy images. Gante, alongside an official from the Audiencia tried to mediate the dispute. The argument escalated into a riot between the Nahuas and the secular clergy, who finally fled. I agree with Burkhart's suggestion that this passage reflects the alliance established early on between the Nahuas and the Franciscans, an alliance that each group employed to protect their own interests. Franciscans used the alliance to secure a better treatment for Nahuas, and at the same time to protect the status and power of the Franciscan order in the Colonial society, whereas Nahuas used the alliance to secure better treatment [Burkhart 1998:363-4, Burkhart 2008:375-6].

Gante also voiced his opinions on Mesoamerican welfare in his letters to the ruling monarch. Following the example of Bartolomé de las Casas, Gante used his correspondence with Charles and Philip to denounce the ongoing mistreatment of the Nahuas. The Viceroyal regime of New Spain was based on the systematic economic exploitation of indigenous labour. Although the enslavement of indigenous people was abolished almost immediately, systems were created to supply the high demand for workers. The *encomienda* system took care of this by distributing the indigenous communities between the Spaniard overlords who were allowed to dispose of the work and products of the indigenous peoples under their jurisdiction. The only obligation of the Spanish administration was to provide instruction in the Christian faith. In 1542 the New Laws, prohibiting both the establishment of new *encomiendas* and their inheritance, led to the decline of the *encomienda* system and the rise of the *repartimiento* system. The *repartimiento* forced indigenous peoples to work for Spaniards in exchange for a salary. It did not incorporate, however, the obligation to provide Christian teachings to indigenous peoples [Rubial García 1996:175, Navarrete 2001:393-4, Nájera 2012:592]. In a letter from 15 February 1552, Gante assessed negatively the

repartimiento system, suggesting that the harsh demands of the system prevented indigenous peoples from receiving proper Christian instruction. Gante suggested in this letter some measures to remedy this, in his eyes, unsatisfactory situation [Gante 15th February 1552 in Torre 1973:46-55]. The encomienda system was re-issued in a modified version in 1552 only to be abolished in 1718.

Although Gante intended to explain the situation personally to the king, he never received the proper licences. Gante spent the last of his days working at the chapel of San José. It has been widely accepted that Gante died in the year 1572. The exact day of his passing remains unknown, however the *Bibliotheca Universa Franciscana* by Juan de San Antonio based on the *Martyrologio Franciscano* mentions the 29 June [Torre 1973:15]. On the other hand Nahuatl sources such as the Codex Osuna and Chimalpahin mention the 20 of April [León-Portilla 1985:316-7]. According to the majority of the sources [see Mendieta 1596 and León-Portilla 1985 and Appendix 4] the Nahuatl reacted with great sadness to his demise. Religious events in honour of Gante took place in each one of the guilds, churches and schools established by him. His Nahuatl parishioners even petitioned the Franciscan order for Gante's body to be buried in San José.

In the 19th century, after the destruction of San José, a surviving bone of the forearm of Gante was still preserved in the cloister of the main vicar of the church of San Francisco. By December 1860, during the expulsion of the Franciscans from San Francisco, Fr. Agustín María Moreno took the bone and when he died on the 13 of April 1878, José María de Agreda y Sánchez, minister at the time of the province of the Holy Gospel acquired the bone. Currently the location of Gante's remains is unknown [Kieckens 1880:63].



Fig. 18 Gante's statue in the place where the chapel of San José stood previous the chapel's destruction, Mexico City [photograph by the author, 2012]

4.7 Concerns with the Success of the Evangelical Effort

After the decade of 1550 concerns regarding the success of the evangelization started to arise amongst the missionaries. The inquisitorial trials of Don Carlos Ometochtli and other Nahuatl converts created doubts regarding the degree of Christianity of the neophytes, and the success of the Franciscan evangelization.⁸⁵ As Burkhart suggests the question of whether Nahuatl were real Christians or not has always been viewed from a European understanding of what

⁸⁵ The success of the evangelical enterprise has been questioned by modern scholars. [For more on this: Gibson 1975, Lockhart, 1992, Burkhart 1989, Gruszinski 1993, Klor de Alva 1992, López-Austin 2000, Navarrete 2001, Kobayashi 1996.]

being Christian means. Missionaries judged Nahua conversion according to their own Eurocentric view and constructed their own representations of what that Nahua behaviour meant. However, when a Nahua opted to become Christian he did it with his own understanding of what Christianity was, based on his own reality. Burkhart observes that when Nahua agency is analysed, the active responses of the Nahuas to the Christianity introduced by the missionaries show how Nahuas adopted and adapted Christianity to their own context helping to shape the Church in New Spain [Burkhart 1998:362].

The transculturative efforts of missionaries such as Gante can be seen in the short and long term. In the short-term through Nahua documents from the 16th century such as census, testaments, inquisition trials and other administrative documents written by or for Nahuas and in the long-term through ethnological studies of modern Nahua populations residing in the Valley of Mexico.

Nahua documents from the 16th century provide answers in regards to the successful introduction of Christianity in the short term e.g. to what degree Nahuas adopted Christian beliefs and which aspects of Nahua belief systems they were able to retain [Wood 1991:259]. Sarah Cline, who analysed censuses from the Cuernavaca region in what is now the modern state of Morelos dating between 1530s and 1540s, provides interesting data concerning the degree of acceptance of Christianity.⁸⁶ Cline's work allows us to comprehend the reception of Christian religion from local viewpoints [Cline 1993:454]. In the Morelos censuses the patterns of baptism reflect the acceptance of the sacrament, indicating differences regarding areas with more missionary contact and peripheral areas. In communities with close ties with the Spanish or missionaries there appears to be more conversions with resistance almost absent. Coercive practises were not necessary to any great extent in these communities. In addition, baptism and conversion seem to be targeted at a certain section of the population: male children of the nobility [Cline 1993:477- 8].

Although this could have been a localized introduction of Christianity, when compared with other sources from the Valley of Mexico, we can see large-scale trends. Testaments also provide valuable answers. The invocation of a Saint or the Virgin in the opening line of a testament is, as Wood observes, only a tentative indicator of piety, as a premade template

⁸⁶ The three volume censuses are preserved in the Colección Antigua of the Archivo Histórico of the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia and deal with six Nahua communities: Huitzillan, Quauhcnicjinollan, Tepoztlan, Tepetenchic, Molotlan and Panchimalco.

could have been followed. The contents of testaments, on the other hand, provide an interesting view of personal devotion and worship. In testaments, some Nahuas left alms for the Church or inherited holy images, whereas other Nahuas did not leave any element associated with Christianity [Wood 1991:270]. Christensen analysed a set of testaments from the Nahua and Maya area from the entirety of the Colonial period to examine the impact of the cult of the saints. Christensen reached the conclusion that the cult of the saints was introduced by phases. During phase one, Mesoamerican communities started the slow adoption of patron saints. During phase two, the devotion to the Virgin Mary as a church patroness became increasingly popular and Mesoamericans possessed and worshipped her image, often giving it as an inheritance. Membership of confraternities designated to promote the worship of specific saints also became popular during phase two. During phase three, the cult of the saints was securely established and the testators owned figures of saints. Some communities, however, did not go through this three-phase process, most likely because these communities were located in peripheral locations [Christensen 2010:276-7].

Testaments and censuses show that Nahua adoption of Christianity was active and passive at the same time [Greenleaf 1978:319, 336]. On the other hand, inquisition trials show the mechanisms by which different communities responded to forced Christianization. From 1536 to 1543 Zumárraga received authority from the Spanish crown to establish an episcopal inquisition in Mexico City. Urged by the Franciscan order, the archbishop used his inquisitorial authority to hold nineteen trials for religious crimes.⁸⁷ Anyone who practised Mesoamerican rituals and devotions after receiving baptism was in danger of punishment [Barroso (w/y):10]. However, only a small portion of the trials were held against Nahua noblemen from the Valley of Mexico. One of the most famous trials was the one of Carlos Ometochtli of Texcoco, a former student of Tlatelolco and grandchild of Netzahualcoyotl. Carlos Ometochtli was accused in 1539 of spreading the heretical propositions of Martín Ocelotl, a self-made priest or shaman, who induced the Nahua noblemen to abandon Christianity and return to their old religion.⁸⁸ Carlos Ometochtli had been raised under the

⁸⁷ From June 1539 to May 1540 Gante assisted Zumárraga and Sahagún in questioning Puxtecatl Tlayotla and others in order to discover who had saved the statues of the temple of Huiztilopochtli. The image had been saved by Nahuas from destruction when the Spaniards conquered Tenochtitlan [AGN Inquisición, tomo 37, exp. 3; Greenleaf 1978:323, Stresser-Péan 2009:21].

⁸⁸ Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo, the guardian of the convent of Texcoco, was a witness during Martín Ocelotl's trial in 1536. He accused Martín of sorcery, bigamy, and heresy, stating that Ocelotl was a dangerous element for the Nahua society. Fr. Antonio claimed that Gante supported his statement, as

protection of Hernán Cortés and had been baptized by the first missionaries to arrive, Gante and his Flemish companions. Carlos Ometochtli was condemned and burned at the stake by Zumárraga the 30 November 1539 [Lopes Don 2006:39-46, Romano 2004:259, Estarella 1962, Quiñones Keber 2013:3, Proceso Inquisitorial del Cacique de Texcoco 1968]. The trial made a deep impression on the Nahua population, and served as a warning for any other nobleman who was inclined to return to the old ways.

The trials against noblemen ended when the Council of the Indies revoked the archbishop's inquisitional powers in 1543 after disagreeing with Zumárraga's strong measures. Philip II formally established a Holy Office in New Spain in 1571; however, trials against indigenous peoples were prohibited [Lopes Don 2006:27-8]. [For a complete overview of the inquisition under Zumárraga guidance see Greenleaf 1962.]

In the historic long term, the work of William Madsen on Christo-Paganism and the work of Stresser-Péan on Nahuas residing in the Sierra Norte of Puebla are a great example of ethnological studies of modern Nahuas. Madsen's ethnographic work on the Nahua inhabitants of San Francisco Tecospa, near Milpa Alta, thirty kilometres south-east of Mexico City presents an interesting overview of the development of Christianity in a Nahua population. The region was Christianized by Franciscans during the 16th century; it is even possible that one of these Franciscans was Gante as his name is mentioned in various parishes, chapels and convents in the south of Mexico City. Selected beliefs of Christianity such as the Trinity were studied by Madsen in the early 50s. Madsen discovered that the Nahuas of Tecospa had difficulties grasping the concept of Holy Trinity, they worshiped a single three-person God, but they did not seem to understand the nature and role of the Holy Ghost [Madsen 1957:152 cited in Stresser-Péan 2009:546]. For the Nahuas of Tecospa the relationship between God and humans was not based on love, instead they prayed to Christ in several avocations such as the Lord of Chalma, the Christ of Mercy, and the Christ of San Pablo. The most important figure after Christ was the Virgin of Guadalupe, called by them as *Tonantzin* (our mother), whom the Nahuas of Tecospa believed relieved the sorrows of people and had saved the world from a deluge. One of the most venerated saints was Saint Francis, the patron of Tecospa, who had saved, according to local folklore, their harvest from droughts on two occasions [Madsen 1957:144-5 cited in Stresser-Péan 2009:555]. According to Stresser-Péan, the Christianity of the Tecospa Nahuas shows a great inclination towards

the Flemish friar was also acquainted personally with Martín Ocelotl. However Gante did not testify in this trial [Lopes Don 2006:212, Proceso de Indios idólatras y hechiceros 1912:24-5].

Mesoamerican devotions. Remnants of Nahua religion have permeated to this day. For example the Tecospa peoples believe in the balancing order of two opposite forces: life and death, warmth and cold, masculinity and femininity [Stresser-Péan 2009:556]. [For a lengthier explanation on these opposite life forces see chapter 6.]⁸⁹ As indicated by the previous devotional elements, the Nahuas of Tecospa are a great example of how Christianity was introduced in the area, showing the adaptations made by the Nahuas overtime.

After a close reading of the long and short-term effects of missionary evangelization, it seems evident that, as Truitt observes, Nahuas accommodated Christianity in their own terms and accepted elements of Christian belief, such as the places of religious worship, social status of church officials, a belief system, ritual obligations, social benefits and the numerous religious celebrations [Truitt 2008:74]. Probably the most successful introduction was the cult of the saints, in which the patron saint of the local church became the symbolic head of the indigenous community. Similarities with the prehispanic Nahua devotion are clear, as each *calpulli* or neighbourhood had a local deity that served as its symbolic head. Eventually this analogy facilitated the introduction of the cult of the saints [Christensen 2010:276-7].

Christianity was adapted and modified throughout Mesoamerica, and became in many ways a compendium of several ‘Christianities’ influenced by local sacred beliefs [Restall *et al*, 2005:176, Graham 2011]. However, we need to keep in mind that even with local undertones it was indeed Christianity. This process also happened in Europe. Christian religion in Europe was varied, while in the cities it was of a more hierarchical nature (with bishops acting as civil officials in the government) outside urban areas it was delineated by local folklore. Religious life was centred on pilgrimages, processions and celebrations of the patron saint. Many of these devotional features were also popular in New Spain, in particular the local cult of the saints and the Virgin [Poole 1994:344-5]. Similarly Christianity in Central Mexico was not a unified and systematized body of dogma and practise [Burkhart 1998:362]. The same intensity of evangelical activities (as for example in the valley of Mexico) was simply not possible in more peripheral areas which lacked the infrastructure which came with the

⁸⁹ The Nahuas of Tecospa believe that each person has three souls: the immortal soul spirit which goes to heaven or hell after death, the soul called in Spanish *sombra* (shadow) linked to the individual day of birth, very similar to Nahua *tonalli*, and the soul called *aire de noche* (*yohuatl ehecatl*) or wind of night, which is connected with the body during life and is a ghost after death. The soul *aire de noche* can be related to the concept of *ihiyotl*, the third animistic entity of the Mexica. The belief of three souls is a striking similarity between the devotions of the Nahuas of Tecospa and Mesoamerican beliefs. In addition to this, Tecospa’s Nahuas believe that animals, trees, stones, mountains, watercourses possess souls [Strasser-Péan 2009:557].

presence of larger numbers of conquistadors and missionaries [Reyes Valerio 1995:62-7, Navarrete 2001, Restall *et al* 2005:175, Pastor 2003:63].

4.8 Gante and the Evangelical Enterprise

Gante was at the centre of Franciscan missionary work in the Basin of Mexico. As explained in the previous chapter, in Europe Gante had already been closely involved in the early preparations for the mission to Mexico as a result of being a member of a highly selective group of elite Flemish missionaries who worked closely with Charles V. Gante and his Flemish contingent became the first missionaries to arrive in Central Mexico to start the evangelization process. The Flemish group developed a series of strategies to understand the Nahuas in order to convert them. Learning the language and customs of the Nahuas was indispensable to start the process of evangelization as Tecto highlighted when accused by the Twelve. The importance given by this group to language and culture sets the Flemish group aside.

Processes started by Gante, such as the establishment of educative *doctrinas*, the school of arts and trades, the hospital, confraternities, songs and autos resound through time and helped quick start the early phase of the evangelization in the Valley of Mexico. Gante's active responses and his intense collaboration with the Nahua students of the *doctrina* of San José positioned him as one of the frontrunners of the evangelical enterprise. His involvement with the Christian education of the Nahua highlights his particular scope and differentiates him from the majority of missionaries working at the time. It is likely that this interest is the result of the Northern humanist influence prevalent at court. Although Gante followed lineaments from the Burgos Laws and previous conversion experiments in Granada while establishing the education for both *pipiltin* and *macehuales*, he went a step further joining elements of Nahua cultural life to facilitate the introduction of the new faith. His educative endeavours formed a Nahua nobility which was deemed intellectually capable of entering a secondary educative system and the Colegio de la Santa Cruz was established as a result. Moreover following ideas from the *Devotio Moderna* movement Gante established the school of trades, with this aiming to form a complete Christian individual. Gante did not neglect the practical aspects of life of his Nahua converts, he understood the historical setting he was living in and acted accordingly. This holistic approach sets him aside from the other missionaries.

Gante possessed enough power and the intellectual capacity to be considered a viable option to become the next Archbishop of New Spain, an honour which he considered unnecessary as

he had more than enough administrative duties and becoming bishop would have forced him to neglect his mission as an educator. His position in the hierarchies of the Franciscan order and his intellectual upbringing as a courtier of the house of Habsburg allowed him to plan and develop several strategies designed to support the Christianization of the indigenous population while at the same time trying to integrate the Nahuas into the new society that was New Spain; the results of these strategies reverberated in the medium and long term in the introduction of Christianity.

The evangelization of the Centre of Mexico was in many respects an intellectual experiment on the part of the Franciscans. The most noteworthy aspect of the evangelization process was the open-minded approach of Franciscans such as Gante. Although the success of the conversion during the early colonial period was challenged by the missionaries themselves, the historical records present a process that was anything but straightforward. On the contrary, it was active and passive at the same time and depended greatly on gender, age group, location and the personal agency of the convert to be. The Christianization of the Nahuas in this light was possible as Gante put himself in a liminal place, approaching the Nahuas by employing analogous elements of their own traditions in order to secure a swift and smoother conversion. However, he did not work alone. His work was delimited by Franciscan guidelines, the other orders working in New Spain, the Church, the First and Second Audiencia, the Viceroyalty and the Nahuas.

Maybe one of the most important developments was the missionaries' interest in learning Mesoamerican languages. This not only helped to preserve the languages, but also allowed the Nahuas and other ethnic groups to articulate their histories into the dynamics of the new society [Kobayashi 1996:175]. In the next chapter an overview of ecclesiastical translations in New Spain will be presented in order to contextualize the work of Gante into the wider setting of Christian translations made by missionaries helped by indigenous aides.

Chapter 5: Catechisms in Images, Cartillas and Doctrinas

Even though missionaries brought from Europe exemplars of didactic material, there were insufficient copies for the unexpectedly large number of Mesoamerican pupils. New pedagogic material aimed at the specific context at hand was an urgent necessity. Because of this, during the Viceroyalty a large number of translation projects were set in motion under the patronage of ecclesiastical authorities. The Mendicant friars created a large corpus of Christian doctrinal literature in autochthonous languages. From 1524 to 1572 in the region of New Spain only, one hundred and nine doctrinal texts were published. Eighty of them were written by Franciscans, sixteen by Dominicans, eight by Augustinians and five were anonymous [Nájera 2012:576-7, Ricard 1966 48-9, Wonderly *et al* 1963:117]. These texts included sermons, catechisms, hagiographies, hymns, confessional manuals, *cartillas* and *doctrinas* and were widely employed by the missionaries in the schools attached to churches and convents such as the *doctrina* of San José led by Gante. The new vocabulary resulting from these efforts created a new language register known as doctrinal Nahuatl. Doctrinal Nahuatl permeated other genres as well such as letters, petitions, and testaments and became an inherent part of the vocabulary of the new society [Burkhart 1989:191, Tavárez 2000:23, Máynez 1999:279, Christensen 2010:17-9].

According to Rodríguez Lorenzo in his study regarding literacy in New Spain, there were two types of materials employed not only for Christian instruction but also for the alphabetization of the inhabitants of New Spain. The first type was reading primers (in Spanish *cartillas*) which can be divided in two groups. The first group was written in Castilian and was at first aimed at Spanish children, but were later on also employed by mestizo and indigenous children during the Hispanicization process which started in the later 16th century. The second group consisted of *cartillas* designed by the missionaries and specifically aimed at Mesoamerican children such as Gante's *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* [1569]. They were written in an array of Mesoamerican languages and were generally made in a range of materials due to lack of paper and paper mills in the early period [Rodríguez Lorenzo 1999:52].

The second type of pedagogic texts was composed of two sub-groups: catechisms (which presented a series of texts that needed to be memorized such as the *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, Creed, *Salve Regina*, Articles of Faith, Commandments of God and the Church and the Sacraments) and *doctrinas* which added besides the aforementioned content a lengthier

explanation of its most important points [Rodríguez Lorenzo 1999:52]. The *Doctrina Christiana* by Gante is an example of this genre.

In addition, there seems to have been two targeted audiences for devotional texts in Nahuatl: the *macehualtin* and the *pipiltin*. Texts for *macehualtin* or commoners were simple translations of the most basic Christian prayers such as *cartillas* and catechisms; these texts were also intended for children or adults without previous Christian instruction. The texts for *pipiltin* or indigenous nobility were *doctrinas*, treatises and lengthier catechisms made for the already ‘transcultured’ literate-Nahua neophyte who required a more complex knowledge of Christianity.⁹⁰

The three works by Gante – the *Catecismo*, the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla*— are excellent examples of doctrinal writings. As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, Gante started the translation of Christian doctrine soon after his arrival in Central Mexico, an idea that seems to have been inspired by his Flemish colleague Tecto. Each one of his works seems to be aimed at a different section of the population; this diversification of his work highlights his ample pedagogic scope as he did not only aim to convert *pipiltin* but also the *macehualtin*. By being one of the first missionaries translating doctrinal writings he became a fundamental figure in the creation of a doctrinal Nahuatl, an example that was going to be followed by subsequent missionaries.

In the particular case of New Spain, Schwaller observes that from the period ranging from 1539 to 1840, approximately one hundred and fifty-six religious texts were printed in Nahuatl; they could be bilingual (Spanish and Nahuatl) or monolingual (Nahuatl language only), with the majority of the texts, twenty-seven in total, printed during the 16th century. This indicates that after the 16th century the production of printed material in Nahuatl decreased [Schwaller 1992:7]. Schwaller reflects that after the initial evangelization period in which doctrinal material in Mesoamerican languages was crucial, the demand for this material to aid newcomer priests to communicate with the neophytes diminished. Schwaller attributes this lack of demand to the birth of new generations of Spanish children born in New

⁹⁰ According to Romano, most of the translated doctrinal material was only limited to *pipiltin* as missionaries considered *macehualtin* intellectual abilities inferior [Romano 2004:264]. This characteristic is also evident in devotional literature in Spain; the texts were also modified according to social status, learning abilities and conversion goals. In this way, pedagogical Christian texts constructed a multifaceted Christianity even before the arrival of Christianity in New Spain [Zamora 2011:557-582, Christensen 2010:58-9].

Spain, who grew up with Nahua children and were fluent in the language such as Molina, one of the most famous Franciscan *nahuatlato*s.⁹¹ Some of these children would eventually become clergymen, lessening the need for doctrinal material in Nahuatl. Schwaller continues this argument observing that Nahuas were also learning Spanish, which became a second language for them. Schwaller adds that the quality of Nahua doctrinal texts was such that improvement was not necessary. He illustrates this point with the *Vocabulario de la lengua Castellana y Mexicana* [1555] by Molina. Molina's *Vocabulario*, based on the Spanish-Latin vocabulary by Nebrija reprinted in 1516, was one of the most accurate and extensive lexicographies employed during the evangelical mission. The quality of the work was such that it remains one of the most influential works ever written in Nahuatl [Schwaller 1992:7, Barroso (w/y):3, Máynez 2013:24-5].

Schwaller's statement, however, fails to acknowledge the continual use of Nahuatl and Nahuatl religious pedagogic texts well into the 18th century. Moreover the Nahuatl writing system continued to be used during the 16th century as can be attested by codices and a number of catechisms in images. Indeed these catechisms were still in use around the Valley of Mexico in the 18th century. The lack of demand for religious texts printed in Nahuatl was due to policies adopted at the Second and Third Council of Mexico which forbade indigenous peoples from being ordained and prohibited them from being in possession of printed Christian materials. The hopes of the first generation of missionaries to have a Mesoamerican priesthood were abandoned, leading to a decrease in translated devotional material.

The content of *cartillas*, catechisms and *doctrinas*, as suggested by Burkhart, reveals how Christianity was presented to the Nahuas, and the mechanism by which Christian concepts were translated and explained, a process that reflects the transculturative processes between mendicant missionaries and Mesoamericans [Burkhart 1998:377]. It also gives us an insight, as Denis Janz suggests, into what the author regarded as important to transmit while at the same time reflected the religious consciousness of the period [Janz 1982:4–5]. In addition to this, the content also reflects how the missionaries judged Nahuas' intellectual capabilities [Borges 1960:27, Pineda 1992]. Christian pedagogical narratives such as the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*, the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana*, and the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* by Gante provide us with a fascinating way of studying how one particular intellectual

⁹¹ Proficient speakers of Nahuatl.

understood the religion, doctrine and theology of his own controversial time and culture. The texts represent the negotiation in which Nahuatl linguistic elements and cultural categories were borrowed to describe Christian cosmology. What proportion of these linguistic elements was transcribed by Nahuatl students and how much by missionaries? Although a difficult question to answer, evidence suggests that the doctrinal literature of New Spain was penned through an intense collaboration between missionaries and their Nahuatl collaborators/pupils. Hints of Nahuatl poetic language and oratorical stylistics can be seen throughout the translated doctrinal texts, specifically in the use of Nahuatl linguistic borrowings such as epithets and metaphorical writing [Burkhart 1998:377]. Nahuatl collaboration indicates that Nahuas and other Mesoamericans were not passive subjects of the evangelization process but active participants in the transculturation process [Christensen 2010:61]. [For more on this discussion see chapter 6.]

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the historical context of the pedagogical texts of the evangelization in order to understand the works of Gante in their contextual setting and his agency in the translation of these texts. The chapter is divided into three main sections, each one delving into the different genres Gante's doctrinal writings can be ascribed to.

The first section delves into catechisms in images. The intrinsic characteristics of catechisms in images will be analyzed in order to contextualize Gante's work within the larger setting of this genre. To understand the mechanisms of selection and adaptation of glyphs during the translation of Christian prayers, and to determine if standardization of glyphs occurred, an analysis of the potential origins of the catechisms and the similarities and differences between catechisms in images and the picto/logographic script of the Nahuas will be presented. Gante has been one of the figures credited with the authorship of this type of catechisms, a discussion of the different theories on the authorship of catechisms in images is important as it can add to the understanding of the agency of Gante in the creation of this particular type of catechetical tool. To conclude this section a brief introduction to the Mexica writing system is presented. Catechisms in images had largely been understood through the paradigm of European writing, however, representational elements in them showcase that this is only partially true. An analysis of the glyphs shows elements from the Mexica writing system, therefore it is indispensable to present an overview of the Mexica writing system, to determine to what extent the system was borrowed and adapted. The final point of this section presents the different theories concerning how catechisms in images were read.

The second and third sections of the chapter will provide a contextualized overview of the alphabetic-script works by Gante. As an introduction I will present an overview of the process of transcribing oral Nahuatl into alphabetical writing. This process, which was probably started by the Flemish missionaries during their stay in Texcoco, was one of the most important aspects of missionary work as it helped to preserve Nahuatl for posterity. It also confronted the missionaries with a new language and forced them to change their previous understanding of language. The creation of grammars and vocabularies was a side-process in the elaboration of doctrinal writing, helping plenty of missionaries to learn the language and to develop new translations of Christian treatises and doctrinal writings.

In order to contextualize the *Doctrina Christiana* an overview of the different stages in missionary translations and of the different types of *doctrinas* according to their authors will be made to better understand the role Gante's *Doctrina Christiana* played within the context of catechetical literature in New Spain. Writing *doctrinas* was never a fixed process. New *doctrinas* were written constantly trying to achieve a better translation. I will explore the missionaries' attempts to create a standardized *doctrina* that would have helped to have a unified translation. To end this section an overview of the most important *doctrinas* written at the time of Gante is made to exemplify the continuous creation of new translations and the manner, by means of these translations, the missionaries were collaborating and proposing new ways to translate Christian terminology.

In the third section, the role reading primers played in both Spain and New Spain will be explored. Reading primers were fundamental in the spreading not only of Christianity but also of literacy. The *Cartilla* by Gante is particularly important as it not only presents one language but three, allowing it to become a tool employed by different social groups. I will briefly narrate the history of the establishment of the printing press in New Spain, an important development that significantly aided the conversion process by (re)producing hundreds of primers, *doctrinas*, catechisms, gospels and other Christian texts. These printed texts were essential in the development of literacy amongst the Nahuas, which helped the Nahuas to have a voice in the new colonial setting.

Gante was a significant player in the translation of doctrinal writing and his works need to be contextualized to understand the process of translation, Gante's agency during this process and how they must have influenced their audiences in the short and medium-term.

5.1 Catechisms in Images

Catechisms in images,⁹² often referred to as indigenous catechisms or Testerian catechisms, terms that point to the different people to whom the authorship of the catechisms has been attributed, were a very popular tool in spreading the basic devotions of Christianity in New Spain as can be attested from the large number of extant copies. It is probable that many copies of catechisms in images were made for Mesoamericans to keep them always at hand, to continuously learn and study them. In fact catechisms in images proved remarkably durable as they were in use from the beginnings of the 16th century until the 18th century, a time frame that vaguely corresponds with the years Mexico was under Spanish rule [Gruzinski 1993:47, Christensen 2010:22]. While Glass and Galarza [Glass 1975:280-296, Galarza 1980:14] mention only thirty-five exemplars, Normann [1985:26-9] published a list of forty-two extant manuscripts.

5.1.1 *The format of catechisms in images*

All the catechisms in images have characteristics in common. The catechisms are made with European paper, bound in a European fashion.⁹³ The measurements of these catechisms range from five to twenty centimetres in height. In general all of them contain the key principles of Christian doctrine, following closely the content of printed *doctrinas* and primers: *Per Signum*, *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, Creed, *Salve Regina*, the Ten Commandments, the Articles of Faith, and the sacraments, amongst others [Bonilla 2002:6]. The use of a logo/pictographic writing system which deployed glyphs, Christian symbols and the innovative *mimicking* of Nahua glyphs to convey Christian terminology; a unique system that adapted itself to the new demands of a new historical setting. Zamora Ramírez observes that the catechisms possessed the unique quality of employing both the Nahua writing system and cultural categories, alluring to Nahua sensibilities [Zamora 2011:11]. The figures in the catechisms are two-dimensional, drawn in black, spaced evenly and located inside black horizontal lines or registers that help to point the reading direction [Normann 1985:47-51].

⁹² As Whittaker suggest, although the term ‘pictogram’ has been customarily employed when discussing the glyphs that compose the catechisms, its connotation refers to a sign that depicts what it denotes, for example a flower for the word flower. However, for the case of catechisms in images, the term is not accurate enough, as the system was composed also of ideograms and phonograms. For this specific context Whittaker proposes the term logograms or ‘word sign’ and as such will be employed in this work [Whittaker 2009:53, 59].

⁹³ Except for the Humboldt fragment, which was presumably painted on *amate* paper and is now located in the Berlin Museum [Normann, 1985:54].

Depending on the catechism, the number of lines varies. Bonilla Palmeros suggests that the distribution of glyphs in lines was made according to the structuration of the world in Nahuatl cosmology, in which celestial representations occupied the superior part of the line, terrestrial ones appeared in the lower part, and elements representing actions implying the totality of the cosmos appeared in the centre of the line; however this characteristic is not present in all of the exemplars [Bonilla 2002:3]. Unlike most Nahuatl codices, the catechisms can be read following a linear system, always starting from the upper left corner, continuing in a straight line to the opposite right page and from top to bottom. Images are presented on both sides of the page. In the catechism of Sahagún, the direction of a person's face indicates the reading direction, an element derived from prehispanic tradition [Bonilla 2002:4, Galarza 1992:41]. The use of colours from mineral, vegetal and animal origin such as red, blue, green, black, grey, pink, ochre, and yellow was applied selectively in the catechisms. It is probable that on some occasions colour also had a symbolic charge, especially when associated with particular garments [Galarza 1990:154, Bonilla 2002:9, Truitt 2008:92-3, Johansson 1995, Cortés 1987:99, Zamora 2013:3].⁹⁴

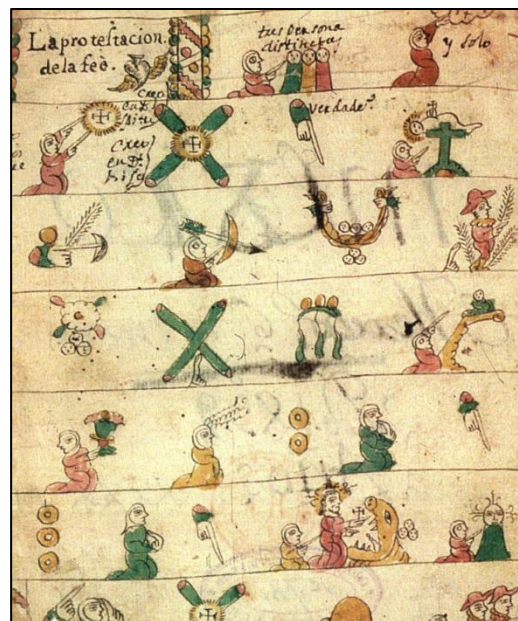


Fig. 19 Catecismo 078, Sahagún [Source: Bonilla 2014:86].

⁹⁴ In the Nahuatl tradition colour had an associated meaning. For example, black was associated with the north and death, blue with the south, red with the east, light, blood and fire, and white with the west. Juxtaposition of colours had also a meaning, for example, black and red signified wisdom [Galarza 1990:154, Bonilla Palmeros 2002:9, Johansson 1995].

Catechisms differ, however, in the number of sentences, the order in which the contents are presented, language, and style, pointing towards a personal choice by the individual or individuals producing it. For example some of the catechisms such as the one attributed to Gante added the doctrine in the form of questions and answers. Although the language of the majority of the catechisms seems to be Nahuatl, there are some catechisms whose language is still undetermined, and it is thought they might represent other families of languages from the region [Galarza 1990:125]. Catechisms present also different styles, a development in the stylization of the glyphs can be seen as they became more Europeanized and less abstract. A precise chronology of the different remaining catechisms based on their stylistical differences is difficult to establish, as probably this variation could be a result of both temporality and location, as they would follow the language and style trends of the region they were made in. Galarza intrigued by these differences, questions if they were indeed the result of linguistic and cultural differences, or if they were related to the ability of the painters [Galarza 1992:9]. On the other hand, evidence seems to suggest that in the earliest catechisms glyphs seem to have been made with greater care, employing colour for its symbolic meaning, and borrowing more elements from the Nahua writing system [Sánchez Valenzuela 2003:237-263, Bonilla 2002:3-4, Johansson 2001:117]. Nevertheless, there seems to be certain similarities in glyphs, could this evidence a set of model glyphs or a prototype established that was copied by other schools?

Marginalia –written in alphabetic script, sometimes in Castilian and sometimes in transliterated Nahuatl–, are also present in certain catechisms. In all cases, marginalia seem to have been added at a later time and their function is to explain the meaning of the glyph. According to Galarza the presence of marginalia indicates that the missionary or cleric in charge was not able to read the glyphs anymore. Galarza adds that on the other hand any Nahua with a pictorial writing system education would have been able to understand the catechisms. However, I disagree with Galarza, as most of the glyphs present a mixture of European and Nahua iconography, in which the symbolic association of the Nahua glyphs was modified to convey the Christian message. Therefore it is probable that the marginalia would have helped both groups, as the cultural associations of many glyphs would have been lost after centuries of Colonial establishment [Galarza 1992:8]. Indeed, Bonilla Palmeros observes that the individuals employing the catechisms at the time of their production were knowledgeable of Nahua script but the persons who employed, re-used and copied them later, needed the text next to the glyph to explain the contents [Bonilla 2002:6]. In this manner, the

catechisms were employed by the Mesoamericans in two different ways intimately related to the historical context in which they were living. Catechisms made during the early years of evangelization were employed by Mesoamericans with knowledge of the Nahuatl writing system, the text had a more profound range of meaning, more in accord to their own cultural categories, although it was slightly modified to adapt to the new Christian context. However, when the same catechisms were employed by Mesoamericans decades or centuries later they were only used as a mnemonic tool as most of the cultural baggage that would have helped Mesoamericans to interpret the semiotic nuances of the glyphs would have been already lost or incomplete.

5.1.2 Origins of catechisms in images

During the first stages of the evangelization, the missionaries started to experiment with the Nahuatl writing system in order to expedite the sacrament of confession. According to Motolinía, the sacrament of confession was first administered in New Spain in 1526 and soon became popular among the Nahuas who presented themselves in large numbers to be confessed. Motolinía retells his first-hand experiences of how the missionaries urged the Nahuas to draw their sins in their own pictorial system in order to save time in his *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España* [1541]:

Yo no tengo de confesar sino a los que trajeren sus pecados escritos y por figuras ... luego comenzaron tantos a traer sus pecados escritos, que tampoco me podía valer, y ellos con una paja apuntando, y yo con otra ayudándoles; y de esta manera hubo lugar de confesar a muchos, porque ellos lo tratan tan bien señalado con caracteres y figuras, que poco más era menester preguntarles de lo que ellos allí traían escrito y figurado; y de esta manera se confesaban muchas mujeres de las indias que son casadas con españoles [Benavente Motolinía 1541 (1858):95].⁹⁵

Unfortunately these pieces of paper have not survived as it would have been interesting to compare the confessional glyphs with those in the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* to see if there were similarities or writing conventions that could spring up in relation to the representation of sin or other difficult-to-translate terms. It seems probable that the method devised to

⁹⁵ Motolinía's claim for the most part is doubted by scholars as it seems to ignore not only the problem of communication but also he seems to suggest that the Mesoamericans had grasped the purpose of self-examination prior to confession and the psychological conditions necessary to atone and the nature of penance as expected in the Christian ethos [Pardo 2004:105-106, Williams 1991:310, Lara 2008:56, Pardo 1996:29]. This seems quite unlikely as the stage of communication between the two groups was in its incipient phase, and the nuances required to explain such dissimilar concepts would have taken years to perfect. [For more on this see chapter 6.] This paragraph also shows that several sectors of Nahuatl population were knowledgeable of the Nahuatl writing system, including women, illustrating thus a more encompassing literate population than often thought.

confess Mesoamericans by the early missionaries was the starting point for the elaboration of catechisms employing the Nahuatl script.

5.1.3 Authorship

There are two theories concerning the authorship of catechisms in images, indigenous or missionary authorship. Pictorial manuscript specialist Joaquín Galarza supports the theory of indigenous authorship claiming that a small section of Nahuatl students in missionaries' schools, were *tlahcuilos* or codex painters, who when attending classes given by the Franciscan missionaries took notes using their picto/logographic script. Galarza supports the view that these Nahuatl collaborators probably elaborated the first exemplars of catechisms by observing Christian iconography in European religious stamps. Galarza is of the opinion that the *tlahcuilos* copied the images and assimilated them with some glyphs from their own tradition, eventually transforming the structure originally created by the missionaries. Galarza thus presupposes that these catechisms in images were the sole creation of indigenous *tlahcuilos* [Galarza 1992:8, Galarza 1990:126, Bonilla 2002:2, Galarza 1992-b].

The second theory supports the idea that missionaries were the sole producers of catechisms in images. This second theory can be divided into three groups: scholars that attribute authorship to Testera,⁹⁶ to Gante or without adducing them to a missionary figurehead. Lockhart is a supporter of missionary authorship; although not proposing any particular missionary, he suggests that in all likelihood catechisms in images were made under ecclesiastical auspices. He bases his suggestion on the few similarities with the Nahuatl writing system catechisms had, for example the use of logograms attempting to follow spoken texts and a vocabulary of signs which does not include prehispanic glyphs that appear frequently in other Nahuatl post-conquest pictorial documents [Lockhart 1992:334]. However, although sometimes the logograms seem not to share elements with the Nahuatl writing system, after a careful analysis a series of stylistic elements provide evidence of the hand of Nahuatl collaborators in their production. Bonilla Palmeros suggests that the presence of Christian

⁹⁶ Testera (1460-1570) was born in Bayonne, France. He was a member of French nobility, who joined the Franciscan order in the province of Aquitaine in 1500. Testera had been once chamberlain to King Francis I and by 1508 he moved to Seville. He was recruited by Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo, one of the Apostolic Twelve –while working as a preacher at the court of Charles V in Spain [Chauvet 1970:4]. Soon after his arrival in Mexico in 1529, Testera took bureaucratic charge of Franciscan affairs and became a key collaborator of Zumárraga. Nevertheless, Testera soon abandoned Mexico City to start the indoctrination of other areas, such as Jalisco, Michoacán and Puebla. In 1533 after the Franciscan Chapter, he was elected Superior of the Franciscan mission in New Spain and later became the custodian of the province of the Holy Gospel [Galarza 1992:7, Ricard 1966:70].

iconography and a structure similar to that of written *doctrinas* and catechisms indicates that the Nahuas worked indeed under ecclesiastical orders, in a close collaboration with missionaries [Bonilla 2002:8].

Other scholars such as Miguel León-Portilla, Nicolas León and Fidel Chauvet have argued that the catechisms were firstly manufactured by Jacobo Testera, whose last name gives them their common denomination of Testerman [Aubin 1885 (2009), Normann 1985, Acker 1995:411, Chauvet 1970:6, Thompson 1959:352-3, León 1900:722, Rodríguez 2008:121]. This common assumption was first made by Joseph Aubin based on Mendieta's *Historia Eclesiástica Indiana* [1596] which narrates Testera's missionary labours, underscoring the latter's lack of fluency in any Mesoamerican language and his educative endeavours to communicate the Christian message despite this lack of fluency [Cortés 1987:59, Zamora 2013:3]. That Testera lacked fluency in Mesoamerican languages has been supported by a number of scholars, among them the French historian Ricard [1966:70] based on the absence of *doctrinas* or catechisms written by Testera. However this lack of evidence is not sufficient evidence to prove that Testera did not learn any Mesoamerican language. According to Mendieta in the *Historia Eclesiástica Indiana*, Testera was able to speak Nahuatl to some extent, but not enough to be able to preach in it, so it was necessary for him to use interpreters [Mendieta 1596, book 3, chapter XIX:665]. Testera selected his interpreters from the assistants and students of Gante [Chauvet 1970:6]. But doubtful of the comprehension of Christian doctrine by such recently converted Christians, Testera decided to incorporate the audio-visual method, a task aided by Gante and his students. According to Mendieta, Testera asked Gante's students to draw the basic precepts of Christian thought on large pieces of cloth. Mendieta's narrative only demonstrates how Testera employed this method but he never refers to the fact that Testera invented the system [Zamora 2013:3].

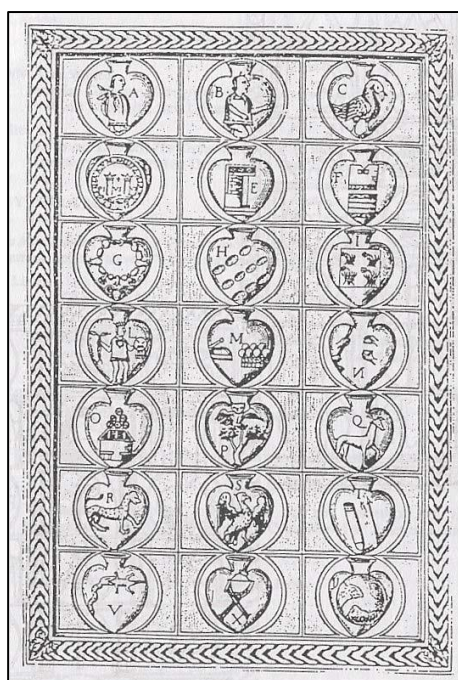


Fig. 20 Testerian alphabet, *Rhetorica Christiana* by Diego Valadés [1579] [Source: Abott 1996: 43]

Testera also introduced a mnemonic system to facilitate Nahuas' attempts to learn the alphabet, in which letters were associated with figures or concepts in order to ensure memorization. This system has its roots in Europe, where large cloths were hanged at the entrances of *doctrinas* for children to learn the alphabet. The system proved so popular that after the invention of the printing press the pictorial alphabets were included in primers [For an exhaustive overview of the implications of this pedagogic tool as *ars memoria*, see Morcillo 2012]. The introduction of this system by Testera probably appealed to Nahua sensibilities and helped ease the introduction of the alphabet. Theories that attribute the creation of catechisms in images to Testera are mostly based upon this fact, however, introducing pictorial alphabets, a system already existent in Europe and adapting it to the Nahua context does not imply that Testera indeed created the catechisms in images, or understood Nahua glyphs as a writing system, or even that he understood the nuances of the language that permeate from the catechisms in images.

Evidence used to support Testera's authorship of catechisms also includes his alleged introduction of the 'Rebus' system, a system that uses morphograms⁹⁷ for its phonetic values

⁹⁷ Writing is composed by two main blocks: the morphogram and the phonogram. The morphogram according to Whittaker is 'a discrete unit of meaning (morpheme) or a compound of such.' Morphograms can represent lexical morphemes, e.g. nouns, verbs and adjectives, or compounds of the same. In the last case morphogramas are known as logograms [Whittaker 2009:54]. By employing a

alone [Whittaker 2009:10]. The ‘Rebus’ system was employed as a phonetic mnemonic tool for Nahuas to remember Latinate concepts. It was elaborated in a fashion in which the missionaries selected Nahua morphograms to represent different sounds which were painted in conjunction with other glyphs, so that when pronounced together they approximated the sounds of the required Latin words. In this system, the glyphs followed a logical sequence that could not be modified. It was only following this sequence that the Latin pronunciation could be read. For example, the first line of the *Pater Noster* was formed by a small banner, which could be read as *pantli*, followed by a glyph which represented a cactus that was read as *nochtli*. In the end it could be read as *pantli nochtli*, a positively close phonetic approximation to the Latin ‘Pater Noster’ [Robertson 1994:53, Bonilla 2005:2, León 1900:726, Normann 1985:49].

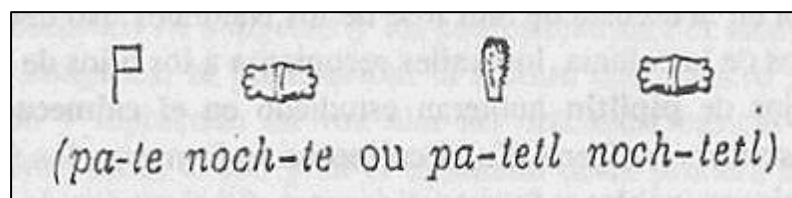


Fig. 21 Pater Noster in the ‘Rebus’ system [Source: Acker 1995:411]

Testerian’s mnemonic alphabets and his use of the ‘Rebus’ system, however, were in essence very different from the complex writing system employed in the catechisms in images. Although both sources employed Nahua glyphs, Testera used them in a phonetic way, joining two or more glyphs to replicate the sound of a Latin word, a trait that can only be encountered in geographic or personal names in Nahua writing. In the catechisms these glyphs generally remain as morphograms, their semantics generally following more closely the Nahua tradition. Even though the ‘Rebus’ system was employed to some extent in the catechisms it was applied in a very dissimilar manner, and always represented Nahuatl words [Robertson 1994:53, Johansson 2001:95].

Both Galarza and Bonilla Palmeros, although they take contrasting positions, agree that Testera was not the creator of the catechisms. According to Galarza, the thematic content of the catechisms, as well as their format and the use of traditional writing are indicators that they were made by *tlahcuilos*, the only ones with the artistic capabilities to paint glyphs [Galarza 1992:7]. Bonilla Palmeros, on the other hand, supports the theory of missionary

morphogram in the ‘Rebus’ system they stop being morphograms and become phonograms, as they are only employed for their phonetic value [Whittaker 2009:54].

authorship, observing that there were other friars working with audio-visual materials with the Nahuas prior to the arrival of Testera such as Gonzalo Lucero in Antequera and most importantly Gante in the Valley of Mexico [Bonilla 2002:2].

The last theory of authorship attributes the catechisms in images to Gante. This hypothesis is sustained by the copy of the *Catecismo en pictogramas* in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, which is probably the oldest extant catechism of this type of pedagogic tool. The signature of Gante appears on the last page [f.43r]. This theory is not without its critics, especially exponents of the Mesoamerican authorship theory, such as Galarza, who criticizes the use of the signature as proof of authorship. According to him it is more probably an assertion of ownership [Galarza 1990:126]. Resines argues against this on the grounds that books and booklets were rare in the period and often shared by missionaries, therefore the signature does not necessarily mean that the booklet belonged to Gante but rather it is proof of his authorship. Supporting this is Ann Normann's suggestion that it is not likely that Gante employed the catechism as his personal book of devotion [Normann 1985:66]. Gante's signature can be seen either as evidence of possession, authorship or at least his role as imprimatur. Regardless, we can infer that he was part of the process of production of the catechisms [Tapia Zúñiga (w/y):32]. However not only the signature should be taken into account to make such a deduction; style and content need also to be assessed.

In this thesis, I will analyse the catechism in the hope of adding information to help scholars assess the matter. Based on the evidence available such as Gante's signature and the analysis of the *Catecismo*, I propose a third theory of authorship that supports the idea that catechisms were a product of cooperation between Gante and Nahuas.

5.1.4 How to make a catechism in images

According to Resines [2007:38] to elaborate this type of catechism it was necessary for the missionaries to establish a multi-vectorial dialogue with the Nahuas, a dialogue that needed to be as clear as possible to avoid translation misunderstandings. The transposition of thought was a complex, nuanced process in which alteration in the meaning of words, Christian interpolations, and intentional suppressions occurred constantly [León-Portilla 2000:197]. From his analysis of several catechisms in images, Resines summarizes the process of elaboration of these catechetical tools in four stages.

1. Selection: in which a selection of the glyphs to be employed was made in accordance with the goal: the translation of doctrine.
2. Accommodations: in which a glyph was adjusted to signify something different from what was intended originally in Nahuatl.
3. Incorporation of new concepts: terms of Christian religion could not be translated using exclusively Nahua glyphs; therefore the use of Christian symbols was necessary.
4. Elaboration of new logograms: missionaries needed to elaborate new glyphs that joined European concepts and the Nahua writing system [Resines 2007:38].

The making of the catechisms then, was a multi-layered and complicated process which required a vast comprehension of the workings of the Nahuatl language as well as a vast knowledge of Christian iconography.

5.1.5 The writing system of the Mexica

The creation of the catechisms was a multi-layered and complicated process which required a vast comprehension of the workings of the Nahuatl language as well as a vast knowledge of Christian iconography. If indeed Gante was the author of the *Catecismo* he must have adapted the writing system of the Mexica in particular as he was in closer contact with the Nahuas residing in Tenochtitlan. The writing system of the Mexica, as many other variants from Central Mexico, had its roots in the Mixtec script [for a review on this see Normann 1985:42-7].

In the Mexica writing system there were three types of glyphs: calendrical, numeric signs and pictorial logograms to write names of individuals, places and historical events. These glyphs reflected the polysynthetic elements of oral Nahuatl; roots and affixes were generally integrated in the logograms. Following this, glyphs could be joined together with other glyphs representing the affixes or the roots or could integrate the roots and affixes into a single glyph [Lo 2014]. Resines classifies the components of the writing system of the Mexica as follows:

1. Logograms without symbolic representation. For example a painting describing a situation.
2. Logograms with symbolic representation, in which the image of an object represents a concept. For example, a feather represents the concept of 'precious' [Lara 2008].

3. Ideograms, relating an idea with the icon without the use of any action.
4. Phonetic: Phonetic glyphs represented sounds. For example to represent the place called *Chapultepec*, the Nahuas employed a glyph representing a grasshopper (*chapul*) and another glyph representing a mountain (*tepetl*), therefore it was the place of the grasshoppers, *Chapultepec* [Galarza 1992:55-7].
5. Phonetic/pictographic hybrids [Resines 1992, Gruzinski 1993:11]. Certain glyphs could be polyvalent, that is they were employed both as a logogram and as a phonetic sign.

Reading glyphs did not necessary mean that it was done by following a linear order; on the contrary reading could jump from one side to the other of the codex [Lo 2014]. In the next chapter I will show how the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*, although presenting similarities with the Mexica writing system, adapts it in a new way, integrating Christian/European elements to it and in a way creating a new system that departs from the original Mexica script.

Transmission of information among the Mexica and other Nahua groups was achieved through oral and painted resources [Gruzinski 1993:13].⁹⁸ The writing system was named in Nahuatl *in tllilli in tlapalli* (in black and red ink). The themes of the manuscripts presented a varied array of genres such as history, genealogy, cartography, economy (tributary codices), ethnography, almanacs, natural history and litigation [Galarza 1997:6-13, Ayala Falcón 2000:180].

The *tlamatinime* (the ones who know about things) were people specialized in the preservation of knowledge, whereas *tlahcuilos* or painters were trained in different areas and lived in special establishments sometimes attached to administrative buildings such as temples, market buildings and palaces. *Tlahcuilos* could be male or female and were selected at an early age, without regard for their social class [Galarza 1997:6-13]. We need to keep in mind that authorship was not an important concept amongst the Mexica or any other Nahua groups. Codices were not signed by their authors. Each one of these *tlahcuilos* was specialized in different subjects [Galarza 1997:6-13]. In order to read the codex the *tlapouhqui* or reader extended the codex –which was folded like a concertina— on the floor on top of a special reed mat, specially designed to protect them. Subsequently, the *tlapouhqui*

⁹⁸ There are some doubts concerning the number of literate Nahua people. Some sources considered that it was restricted to the nobility [Marcus 1992:7-27, Burke 1987:21-42] whereas other scholars suggest that there was also a non-religious writing destined for bureaucratic affairs pivotal to the administration of the territory [Acker 1995:403].

read/interpreted the content of the codex to the audience, who were seated surrounding him [Johansson 2001:77-93].

Mesoamerican codices were made of all sorts of material such as *amate* (fig tree) paper, deer skin, cotton fabric, and maguey fibre paper, covered by a layer of thin plaster. Colonial codices were generally made of paper—as is the case of the *Catecismo en pictogramas*—or vellum. Prehispanic codices had different formats. Paper strips were the most common, a horizontal composition that could be used as a roll or screen and subsequently folded.

In general pictorial manuscripts were collected in libraries called *amoxcalli*. These repositories of knowledge were swiftly destroyed before the arrival of the mendicant orders; in 1521 the indigenous allies of Cortés set fire to the archives of Texcoco. But it was the Franciscans who started the systematic destruction of temples' images and paintings in the Valley of Mexico, Puebla and Tlaxcala [Gruzinski 1993:14]. The number of Mexica codices preserved to this day is reduced. Only twenty prehispanic codices have survived. Although many codices were destroyed some of them were sent to the king of Spain as presents, permitting their survival [Galarza 1997:6-13]. The writing system of the Nahuas can be found also in many pictorial manuscripts made by indigenous *tlahcuilos* after the conquest, a style that on some occasions shows a strong European influence but maintained traditional Nahuatl characteristics.

5.1.6 How to read a catechism in images

Bonilla Palmeros in his study of the Egerton catechism analyses three proposals scholars have made in relation to how to read the glyphs. The first one belongs to Galarza, who suggests that all glyphs need to be read by a minute analysis of the glyphs forming the text. Bonilla Palmeros disagrees as he considers this impossible; some Christian images in the catechisms cannot be read but need to be identified with their symbolic meanings. The second proposal is to read the prayer in Spanish, the problem behind this is that catechisms were designed for indigenous peoples in their own languages. The last proposal corresponds to the 'Rebus' system in which the phonetic values of the images are used for words, thus glyphs do not correspond anymore to the original meaning of the plastic representations but to their phonetic values [Bonilla 2002:5, Bravo 1977:26, Thompson 1959:354].

A detailed study of Gante's catechism reveals that at least two of these propositions are valid in the reading of catechisms in images. Galarza's minute analysis of the composing elements

of the glyphs is important to understand all the nuances of the glyph; however, as Bonilla proposes, 16th-century Christian iconographic elements cannot be read following this system but need to be understood as concepts. On the other hand, the ‘Rebus’ system—a system scarcely used in the Nahuatl writing system—seems to be present in composite glyphs that can be read in Nahuatl, which again could indicate that indeed, as Bonilla suggests, the text was not a Spanish version of the prayers but a Nahuatl one instead. A composite approach, taking into account the complex mixture of systems, not entirely Nahuatl and not entirely European, seems to be the most opportune approach. Indeed Galarza indicates the complex mixture of the glyphs in these catechisms, showing that they have four different functions: a) Iconic: it can represent an element such as corn or the meaning behind the element. b) Symbolic: is the layer of meaning of an object, every figure, exists in a symbolic system. c) Phonetic is when a glyph represents a sound, such as the hand that represents the term *maatl* (or in the case of the flower *xochitl + chihua: mochihua*) c) Positional: the value depends on the place the objects are [Galarza 1992:55-7].

5.2 Transcription of oral Nahuatl

Gante’s early attempts to communicate Christian doctrine to the Nahuas were based on the Nahuas’ own pictographic system. However, the urgent demand of transmitting Christian precepts, fuelled by the large Nahuatl population, forced him to explore other means of communication. Alongside other missionaries and in a close collaboration with his Nahuatl pupils, Gante thus started the lengthy process of transcribing Nahuatl sounds into alphabetic script. Indeed a formal transcription of Nahuatl into the Latin alphabet was probably done for the first time by Gante as evidenced by his letter from 1529, in which he concludes in Nahuatl: ‘Ca ye ixquichs ma moteneoa in toteh in totlatoauh in Jesu Christo; que se traduce así: por lo demás no tengo ya que decir, sea loado Nuestro Dios y su bendito Hijo Jesucristo’ [Gante 27th June 1529 in Torre 1973:43, Máñez 2013:15-6]. It is probable that this was the first time that written Nahuatl was read out loud for a non-elite audience in Europe.

The phonetic transcription of Nahuatl facilitated in many ways the process of communicating Christian doctrine and the writing up of Christian didactic material. Adapting the letters of the Latin alphabet to Nahuatl phonemes was, however, complicated as several Nahuatl phonemes did not have an exact correspondence in Latin or Castilian and vice versa [Rodríguez Lorenzo 1999:55, Barroso (w/d):4-5]. There are twenty Nahuatl phonemes and they are generally well represented in the Latin alphabet. In total, the missionaries employed seventeen letters of the

Latin alphabet whereas prevalent sounds in Nahuatl needed to be displayed by compounds of consonants such as ‘tz’ or ‘tl’ [Rodríguez Lorenzo 1999:55, Lara 2008:334-340, Máynez 2013:26, Garona 2007:103]. In many cases, the friars invented symbols or employed diacritical marks to record sounds without equivalent. The glottal stop, a feature of Nahuatl, was first devised by the Nahua linguist Rincón, who suggested accented vowels. This system was later adopted by Horacio Carochi in 1645 in his *Arte de la Lengua Mexicana* [Grass 1965:63, Wonderly *et al* 1963:116-7]. [For an encompassing study of this process see Lara L. 2008.]

In addition to this, missionaries employed linguistic principles of Latin grammar as a guideline with the hope of establishing useful comparisons in order to analyse Nahuatl and other Mesoamerican languages. Grass mentions as an example how Molina, discussing Nahuatl pronunciation, could say that in Nahuatl double ‘l’ (‘ll’) needed to be pronounced in a similar manner to how ‘villa’ was pronounced in Latin and not with the Spanish pronunciation [Grass 1965:62]. However the structure of Nahuatl and Latin differed greatly, in particular the declinations which made the process of creating Nahuatl grammars more difficult. The *Vocabulario* by Molina [1555] is perhaps one of the most important works that showcase the process of transcription. Molina created a comprehensive and elaborate lexicography by using already existent Nahuatl terminology and by creating a vast number of neologisms [Hernández de León-Portilla 2001:238-239]. Another pivotal text that served as a basis for the Nahuatl grammars was Antonio de Nebrija’s *Arte de la lengua castellana* [1492]. Unlike the Latin grammatical books of Nebrija, which were hugely popular, the Castilian grammar was often ignored as vernaculars were considered imperfect. However, the Castilian grammar did not go unnoticed by the missionaries who used it as the base for their Nahuatl grammars and vocabularies [Torre Revello 1960:215]. These grammars were pivotal for missionaries, they were not only helpful for translating doctrinal writings in an understandable, correct grammar but also cemented the vocabulary employed by them eventually standardizing the language used for conversion.

5.3 Doctrinas

Doctrinas in New Spain have been categorized by several scholars into groups. [For more information regarding *doctrinas*’ classifications see Tavárez 2000, Christensen 2010, Resines 1992, Zamora 2011.] Tavárez and Christensen’s classifications present the multi-faceted, complex dynamics of the doctrinal translations taking place during the period in which Gante

was active. Tavárez has divided the missionaries composing doctrinal texts in Nahuatl during the 16th century into three groups based on the stages of evangelization. Tavárez's classification permits the comprehension of the translation process and the impact it had during the 16th and early 17th century; moreover it helps to understand the importance works such as the *Doctrina Christiana* had in the later development of doctrinal literature.

The first group belongs to the earliest missionaries arriving in New Spain between 1520 and 1550. Authors from Dominican and Franciscan orders, some of them with a clear humanistic background, such as Pedro de Gante, Andrés de Olmos, Alonso de Escalona, Francisco Ximénez, Juan de Ribas, Juan de Romanones, Jean Focher and Arnaldo Basace belong to this first group. This group of missionaries established the first strategies for translation and created a new set of vocabulary know as doctrinal Nahuatl. The second group started working in New Spain from 1550 to 1590, during this period the production of doctrinal texts reaches its peak, not only with regard to the number of religious texts being printed but also with respect to the diversity of genres. During this period, the Augustinians started to produce such works as well. Amongst the most important authors are Domingo de la Anunciación, Juan de la Anunciación, Alonso de Escalona, Juan de Gaona, Jerónimo de Mendieta, Alonso de Molina, Bernardino de Sahagún, Alonso de Truxillo, Miguel de Zarate and an anonymous group of Dominicans. The work of the third group of Church scholars spans the years 1590 to 1620 and although it never achieved the quality of the previous two groups, corrections were made to the body of Nahuatl translations already in existence. The most important members of this group are Pedro de Arenas, Juan Bautista Viseo, Martín de León, Juan de Mijangos and Antonio del Rincón [Tavárez 2000:23-4].

Christensen [2010] on the other hand, divides Christian pedagogic texts into three groups: printed texts written by missionaries, unpublished texts written by missionaries, and unpublished texts written by indigenous aides. In the first group, printed texts were written by missionaries with or without the help of Nahua aides, although on some occasions Nahua collaborators also served as ghost-writers while missionaries became editors of the text. The texts were aimed at a wider regional audience and they were subject to strict censorship by ecclesiastical authorities. The *Doctrina* by Gante is an example of the first group [Christensen 2010:61]. The second group of religious texts in New Spain were unpublished and unofficial writings written by missionaries and/or by indigenous aides for local audiences in situations where printed material was not readily available. They were subject to mild censorship and even though they lacked the strict contents of printed texts, they did not deviate from

orthodoxy. Most texts seem to have been elaborated by indigenous aides under the supervision of a missionary or a priest, who was in charge of editing and laying out the text [Christensen 2010:90-2]. Writings from the third group are unpublished texts written entirely by indigenous Church stewards intended for an indigenous audience. With no censorship from the Church or guidance from a priest or missionary, indigenous stewards reinterpreted their own version of Christian thought, a process which often led to what missionaries considered heretical misunderstandings.⁹⁹

According to Christensen, the roots of such misunderstandings were derived from insufficient training by clergymen, and/or Mesoamerican signs of defiance to the Church by attempting to preserve ancient religious practises [Christensen 2010:93- 4]. This process is evidenced in the substantial doctrinal variation apparent between printed and unpublished texts. During the early evangelization two doctrinal texts written by missionaries or indigenous stewards around the same period of time could be very different, the result of personal preferences and guidelines established by the different orders as I will show shortly. Moreover, unpublished texts could often contain material that religious authorities considered to be heretical as they contained local understandings of Christian doctrine, understandings which sometimes differed from the Christian doctrine taught by the Church [Christensen 2010:6-8, Graham 2011:78]. Christensen's classification presents a complex mosaic of doctrinal writing taking place in New Spain; the dynamics of translation differed from populous regional centres such as Mexico City and distant geographical areas where the Church's presence was scarce. According to Christensen there seems to be a diverse conceptualization of Christianity based on location in which peripheral sites showed a different understanding than centralized places [Christensen 2010:7-8].

5.3.1 Standardization

In order to develop evangelization strategies the missionaries working in New Spain held several meetings during the 16th century. The meetings discussed organization of 'Indian towns', the conflict with the secular clergy, and the persistence of Nahua religion [Ricard 1966:15-24]. One of the major preoccupations of the ecclesiastical councils concerned the capacity of indigenous peoples to understand Christian faith. Indeed missionaries' perception of Nahua intellectual capabilities influenced deeply the strategies of conversion developed in

⁹⁹ There are several notable examples of devotional texts written in Nahuatl such as the *Comedia de los Reyes* (dating from the beginning of the 17th century), a cycle of prayers to the Virgin in the *Santoral en mexicano* and selected songs from the *Cantares mexicanos* [Burkhart 1998:377].

these meetings [León-Portilla 2010:281]. Educational programmes and in particular the content of pedagogic Christian texts was discussed at length [for an exhaustive analysis of all the meetings held during the 16th century see Dussel 1979]. In the particular case of New Spain the missionaries followed the liturgy established by the archdioceses of Toledo and Seville. In addition to this, the *Doctrina* by Pedro de Alcalá was employed widely by missionaries in New Spain as a sort of template [Christensen 2010:79-80, Durston 2007:20-21]. These rituals were modified after the Council of Trent with the introduction of the Tridentine Roman Ritual (which is still in use as a ceremonial guide for the Roman Catholic Church) [Durston 2007:20-21, Christensen 2010:79-80]. Every religious council from the beginning of the evangelization project in New Spain agreed upon the project for a canonical body of texts to be translated into various Mesoamerican languages. Clergymen nevertheless could never agree on finishing a standardized corpus, thus resulting in the creation of numerous *doctrinas*. This situation was very different from the measures taken by the Third Council of Lima. The trilingual catechism (Spanish, Quechua and Aymara) commissioned by the Council would be employed during the entire Colonial period [Ottman 2003:69-70, Durston 2007:246].

During the Junta de Prelados of 1546, two *doctrinas* in Nahuatl –an abridged one (or *tepiton* in Nahuatl) for beginners and a long one for more advanced Nahua students— were commissioned. Both *doctrinas* served as the basis for Gante’s *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* [Abad Pérez 1992:45]. During the First Mexican Provincial Council of 1555 it was re-established that all Mesoamerican peoples should learn the basic tenets of Christian instruction. A short *doctrina* and a lengthier *doctrina* were commissioned again for the standardization of Christian instruction. However, the measures taken by these councils seemed not to be successful as five years later the second archbishop of New Spain, the Dominican Montúfar, dissatisfied by the diversity in the explanation of the sacraments commissioned a new manual under the title *Manuale sacramentorum* a ritual handbook specific to the Mexican Church [Cortés 1987:43, Máynez 2013].

As I have mentioned, the Council of Trent (1545-1563), in its attempt to find viable reformation options for the Roman Church through the examination of the doctrines and beliefs established the devotional texts that churchmen were to follow [Lugo 2006:71, Rodríguez 2008:120]. It was during the Council of Trent that the process of standardization of the Christian liturgy started. This liturgy is divided in three genres: the missal (to use during mass), the ritual (for the administration of the sacraments) and the breviary (for the

canonical hours) [Durstun 2007:20]. On the instruction of the Council of Trent, the *Catechismus Romanus* (Tridentine Roman Ritual) [1566] became the papally sanctioned and standardised version of Christianity. This text, although widely employed in New Spain, was translated into the vernacular only two hundred years later. Despite the Council of Trent's effort variation in content and structure continued [Durstun 2007:20]. Because of this in 1577 the Council of the Indies requested King Philip II's approval for a single catechism for all the colonies [Christensen 2010:58-9, 69-70].

Despite these measures *doctrinas* present slight content variations depending on the missionary's personal preferences, his understanding of Nahua cultural categories and cosmology and on his order's guidelines [Christensen 2010:72, 293-4, Ottman, 2003:69-70, Payas 2005:148, Acker 1992:78]. In general terms, however, the devotional literature resulting from these Councils —reading primers, *doctrinas* and catechisms — shared the same basic content in most of the cases, normally following the historical antecedent of Saint Augustine's *doctrina*. The content included the key prayers that every Christian needed to know by memory, i.e. the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the *Ave Maria*, the *Salve Regina*, the Sign of the Cross and the Confession, in addition to the fundamental themes of Christian piety: the Ten Commandments, the Articles of Faith, the Sacraments, the Commandments of the Church, the Acts of Mercy, the Powers of the Soul, the Seven Deadly Sins, the three Christian virtues, Cardinal Virtues and the Five Senses [Payas 2005:148].

During the initial stage of the evangelical enterprise missionaries were allowed certain liberties to decide the content of their *doctrinas*. However, after the First Mexican Provincial Council in 1555, manuscript and printed copies of devotional works written in indigenous languages were heavily regulated. Every new edition needed to have the approval of an ecclesiastical language expert and had to be signed by its author. More restrictions came after the directives of the Council of Trent and the Third Mexican Provincial Council which now also restricted doctrinal projects. Every *doctrina* printed in New Spain needed to be reviewed by inquisitorial and ecclesiastical authorities who were in charge of confiscating copies forbidden by the inquisition and books without ecclesiastical authorization, known in Spanish as the *Licencia del ordinario*. These restrictions reflect on the narrative and complexity of doctrinal texts. For example, writings from the early evangelical period tend to be lengthy treatises. After the lineaments introduced by the Council of Trent, texts became shortened and simplified, focusing instead on concepts such as idolatry and sexual misconduct [Christensen 2010:72, 293-4, Ottman 2003:69-70].

5.3.2 *Most important Doctrinas*

Gante's *Doctrina Christiana*, as one of the earliest examples of Christian pedagogic texts in Nahuatl, must have not only influenced other *doctrinas* during the 16th century, it probably was also influenced by contemporary authors from New Spain and Spain and by the regulations of the Church [Cortés 1987:49]. The creation of new *doctrinas* was in many ways a dialogue amongst missionaries to refine solutions to existing epistemological translation problems.

One of the most significant Christian *doctrinas* from New Spain was written by a group of anonymous Dominicans in 1548 and saw two later editions in 1550, one from the 12 February and the other from the 7 April: the close printing dates indicate that this *doctrina* was in high demand [Ricard 1966:46]. The work entitled *Doctrina Cristiana para la instrucción de los indios* reflects the evangelical ideals of the Dominican order during the beginning of the indoctrination, as well as Dominicans' ideas regarding the intellectual and moral capacities of indigenous peoples. The *Doctrina Cristiana para la instrucción de los indios* a bilingual text (Spanish and Nahuatl) in parallel columns, is based on the *doctrina* written by Pedro de Córdoba in Santo Domingo between 1510 and 1521 [Pardo 2004:64, Durán 1981:45-54, Medina 1987, Burkhart 1989:196-7]. Córdoba's manuscript was later taken to New Spain to be published in 1544. By 1548, the text was modified by the Dominicans, containing –besides the key principles of Christian doctrine— the prayer of confession, and an explanation of the Articles of Faith as a series of forty sermons. It also included a reading primer with the prayers in Latin and a *doctrina* in ten questions and answers. The language was direct and persuasive and the themes employed were deemed most suitable for new converts. Gisela von Wobeser is of the opinion that the change of format of the *Doctrina Cristiana para la instrucción de los indios* in its New Spain's version was to facilitate the diffusion of pedagogical content. The intended audience was missionaries preaching in Nahuatl [Wobeser 2008:1-2, Pardo 2004:65, García Ahumada 1994:216-8, Payas 2005:148, Acker 1992:78].

The *Doctrina Breve* [1539] written in Castilian by Zumárraga, was the second book printed in New Spain. The text was targeted to the neophyte as well as clergymen and presents the most important themes of the Christian doctrine such as the Articles of Faith, the sacraments, the Decalogue, the seven deadly sins, the corporal senses, the three Christian virtues and a description of the different forms of idolatry. Zumárraga developed his *doctrina* as a sort of

template for the elaboration of other *doctrinas* translated into Nahuatl [Pardo 2004:64, Durán 1981:54-60].

Zumárraga penned only three *doctrinas*: the *Doctrina breve* [1543/44], the *Doctrina Christiana* [1545/46] and the *Regla Christiana breve* [1547] [Kerson 2000:182]. However, Zumárraga's work as an editor was pivotal for the evangelical enterprise. Zumárraga commissioned and functioned as editor of the *Doctrina cristiana en que en suma se contiene todo lo principal y necesario que el cristiano debe saber y obrar* printed between 1545 and 1546. In the same year, Zumárraga commissioned the publication of the *Doctrina Cristiana Breve* by Molina. This Nahuatl work enjoyed such popularity that it was reprinted several times right down into the 20th century: 1546, 1570, 1606, 1675, 1718, 1732, 1735, 1744, 1888, 1889 and 1941. Molina's *Doctrina* was considered superior to all other existing *doctrinas* and was employed in different Nahua-speaking regions. In 1546 Zumárraga edited the *Doctrina Cristiana mas cierta y verdadera para gente sin erudición y letras, en que se contiene el catecismo información para indios*. The content of the book was based on the *Suma de doctrina Cristiana* by Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, a work heavily influenced by the work of Erasmus [Jones 1967:423, Carreño 1949-b:314-5:323, Rodríguez 2008:122-3, Medina 1987:77-8]. [For an insightful account of Zumárraga's accusations of plagiarism see Jones 1967.]

When Montúfar declared all previous *doctrinas* deficient, in particular Franciscan *doctrinas*, Domingo de la Anunciación was commanded to compose two new *doctrinas*: a short *doctrina* based on the existent *doctrinas*, and a lengthier one. Both *doctrinas* were published in 1565 under the approval of the First Mexican Council. Although the *doctrinas* were supposed to be employed in all the regions under Colonial rule, the Nahuatl edition was never translated into any other indigenous language [Christensen 2010:75].

5.4 Cartillas

The role that reading primers or *cartillas*¹⁰⁰ played in the development of literacy in the Late Middle Ages and the early modern period in Europe is undeniable. Their importance and popularity was such that several copies were brought to America by missionaries to teach the

¹⁰⁰ Valton highlights that the term reading primer in Spanish, *cartilla*, does not refer to its content but alludes to its format—a small pamphlet of two sheets of paper folded in eight or sixteen pages depending on the size of the sheet of paper. The Spanish word *cartilla* was commonly employed to designate a printed work that did not exceed sixteen pages [Valton 1947 in Bravo Ahuja 1977:31, Nájera 2012:577].

Mesoamericans the key principles of Christian faith and the basics of literacy to young children and recently converted adults. *Cartillas* showcased the importance Europeans were starting to give to the written word over other forms of transmission of knowledge such as oratory [Bravo Ahuja 1977:22].

The text of the *cartillas* was accompanied by handsome engravings. Most of the illustrations accompanying the texts were biblical scenes; however, there were also engravings depicting letters of the alphabet shaped like everyday objects that helped the student to become acquainted with the letters. Thus two forms of expression –pictorial and the written word— were combined not only as mnemonic devices but also as a successful instrument to transmit knowledge.

New Spain's *cartillas* although sharing both structure and content with their Spanish counterparts were slightly modified and adapted to the local needs, as such reflecting to a considerable extent the agency of individual missionaries in their interpretation of Christianity and of the Mesoamerican worldview they encountered. The *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* [1569] by Gante can be seen as an example of these primers modified for the context of the New World. As Bravo Ahuja observes, the *Cartilla* appears to be a prototype, as it is in itself a stage in the process of literacy acquisition. With this primer, basic pedagogic techniques were established in New Spain and continued to be employed for the duration of the Viceroyalty [Bravo Ahuja 1977:51].

5.4.1 The tradition of primers in Medieval and Early Modern Europe

To understand the role that *cartillas*, such as the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer*, played in the larger context of evangelization in New Spain, it is necessary to introduce the panorama of the educative use of primers in Europe during the late Middle Ages and the early modern period. Primers were a very special development that in many ways surpassed previous pedagogical techniques; they were indeed the first 'text books' aimed for children in modern history. In primers, however, Christianity and education were intricately interwoven. As the main goal of education was Christian instruction rather than literacy itself, it is probable that Christian doctrine was taught prior to the basic instruction of reading and writing.

Primers were diverse in their structure and content. The majority, however, contained the alphabet (vowels and consonants by themselves or together forming syllables such as ba, be, bi, bo, bu), the numbers, and the basic prayers. Depending on their author, primers could also

contain expanded Christian doctrine, basic equations, very basic grammatical notions, illustrations and addendums of educative and religious texts such as Cato, Solomon, and Pythagoras. The set of the key prayers was generally in Latin, some with a translation into Castilian or Arabic, in particular when they were aimed at conversion, such as the *Arge para ligeramente saber la lengua arabiga* [1505] by Pedro de Alcalá. There are even cases of primers to be sung along to such as the one by Juan de Ávila *Doctrina Christiana que se canta Oydnos vos por amor de Dios* [1550] and the *Cartilla para mostrar a leer a los niños con la doctrina christiana que se canta “amados hermanos”* [1576] printed by Francisco Gúzman in Toledo. The most important primer printed in Spain perhaps was the *Cartilla y doctrina para enseñar a los niños a leer* [Granada, ca. 1496] by Hernando de Talavera.

Christian instruction followed an established order: the sign of the cross, the ten commandments of God, and the dominical prayers such as the *Ave Maria* and the *Pater Noster* [Infantes 1995:40-1, 48, 55, Sánchez-Herrero 1990:246, 249, Infantes 2004:233-4]. The content was distributed in small leaflets of no more than eight pages (in 8°) and generally smaller than 25 cm, a size that facilitated the transport of primers as well as ensuring relatively low prices, allowing primers to become a prolific educative tool in use throughout the centuries. Added to that, after the invention of the printing press, it became suddenly easier to print primers in the thousands making them the most ubiquitous pedagogic tools [Infantes 2004:235-6, Infantes 1995:40-1]. Because of this, reading primers were versatile and relatively inexpensive options for young students seeking to acquire Christian knowledge and as Nalle suggests ‘during the sixteenth century one could learn to read with inexpensive primers without ever owning a book’ [Nalle 1989:70, Nájera 2012:577].

Victor Infantes in his study of reading primers published in Spain during the early modern period observes that in addition to printed sheets of paper and *libros de cordel* (comedies, short novels, hagiographies) primers were the most commonly printed material [Nájera 2012:577, Infantes 1995:36]. Rueda argues that this commercial triumph was not only due to an increase in literacy but also the extent of Spanish territorial expansion. Newly subjugated populations in need of religious conversion created a substantial demand. It was precisely this mixture of a real demand for evangelical pedagogic material, literacy, a small and as such easily distributable format and inexpensiveness which made *cartillas* indispensable for the evangelization in the Spanish expansion [Rueda 2010:18, 21].

Despite the popularity of primers few copies remain to this day. It seems that the same characteristics that made them popular and widespread did not facilitate their preservation. Being regarded as cheap and easily replaceable commodities, primers carelessly were disposed of or fell to pieces from extensive use.

5.4.2 Primers in New Spain

The catalogues from the printing houses of the period and the *Casa de Contratación de las Indias* alongside the remaining reading primers, provide an overview of the pedagogical uses of *cartillas* in New Spain.¹⁰¹ The exact number of primers imported to New Spain is very hard to reconstruct as the records of the *Casa de Contratación de Indias* were destroyed by a fire in 1604. The greater part of ship registers of the vessels that travelled to America up until the year 1582 was also lost to the flames. Only thirty-three registers, dated to 1582, have survived, making it difficult to make generalizations about the number of primers sent to New Spain [Torre Revello 1960:217]. However, it seems that primers were transported, early on, in great quantities from the printing houses of Seville to the New World. Indeed, since 1501, missionaries had brought with them large supplies of missals, breviaries, confessional manuals, Bibles and other devotional literature [Leonard 1992:92].

Publishing primers was seen as a profitable enterprise by printing houses and printing privileges were often disputed. Unscrupulous printers avoided laws imposed by Crown and Church by supplying the market without the license of the *Casa de Contratación*. On occasion, primers were sent to be printed in other lands, for example in the great printing houses of Antwerp (nowadays in Belgium), probably in order to reduce costs and to ensure quality [Torre Revello 1960:217]. According to Torre Revello, although manuscript devotional texts in Nahuatl were sent to the printing houses in Europe, problems of transportation which on occasion ended with manuscripts getting lost and the great amount of time needed for the journey, made sending manuscripts to be printed in Europe a less desirable option [Torre Revello 1960:217].

It was clear that New Spain was in dire need of a printing house of its own and after long and difficult negotiations, initiated in conjunction by the first Viceroy of New Spain Antonio de Mendoza, Zumárraga and Charles V the first printing press was established in Mexico

¹⁰¹ The *Casa de Contratación* (House of Trade), established in Seville by Queen Isabel in 1503, was a body of the Castilian Crown in charge of administering and regulating Spanish colonization and exploration by controlling trades, collecting taxes and approving travels of exploration.

ca.1540. The evangelical educative work of Gante would not have been possible without the introduction of the printing press in New Spain, which was fundamental for the production of reading primers and other forms of devotional literature. The concession was given to Juan Cromberger from Seville. Seville had become a bourgeoning centre of the typographic arts and the most famous of these printing houses was the House of Cromberger. After arduous negotiations between Cromberger and Zumárraga during 1534-1535 and an exchange of favours between the printing house and the archbishop, the establishment of a press in New Spain became a reality. This establishment was granted the exclusive rights to supply primers and other printed material to New Spain by a warrant dated to the 6 June 1542 that allowed a profit margin of one-hundred per cent [Leonard 1992:95-7].

In 1539, Juan Cromberger contracted the Lombardian Juan Pablos in order to set up the first printing press in Mexico City [Leonard 1992:95-7]. The contract between Cromberger and Pablos is documented in many surviving texts. The contract was supposed to remain in force for ten years and specified the obligations of both Cromberger and Pablos [Zulaica 1991:18, Lafaye 2004:95, Poot 2008:332, Kerson 2000:183, Dahlmann 1894:392].

Pablos's press was already fully functional by 1540 and printed mostly devotional literature or administrative documents for the Viceroyalty. The first printed book according to the *Cartas de Indias* of 1867 was the *Breve y mas compendiosa doctrina Christiana en lengua Mexicana y castellana, que contiene las cosas mas necessarias de nuestra santa fe catholica, para aprovechamiento destos indios naturales y salvación de sus animas* by Zumárraga. Unfortunately, there are no surviving copies of this title. From the second book printed in Pablo's press the *Manual de adultos*, an instruction manual on how to perform baptisms, only two pages remain. In his long career, Pablos printed thirty-seven books.¹⁰² Gante was one of many missionaries that sent his books to be printed by Pablos's press. Gante's *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* was printed by Pablos, not only in its first edition of 1547 but also that of 1553. The *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* was printed in 1569 not by Pablos but by the second printer established in New Spain, the Frenchman Pedro de Ocharte. This exemplar was, however, a reprint. It is probable that an earlier edition was previously printed by Pablos. The printing quality of both Pablos and Ocharte was exceptional. They shared

¹⁰² Other devotional texts printed in Pablos' house were the *Doctrina christiana en Lengua Huasteca* [1548] by Juan de Guevara, *Catecismo y Doctrina Christiana, en idioma Utlateco* [1556] by Francisco Marroquín, *Diálogo de doctrina christiana* [1559] by Maturino Gilberti, *Doctrina Christiana* [1565] by Domingo de la Anunciación, *Doctrina Christiana en lengua Zapoteca* [1567] by Pedro de Feria, *Doctrina Mixteca* [1567] by Benito Fernández among others [Dahlman 1894:393-4].

similarities in production as the presses and the types employed by the two printers were the same. This high quality is reflected in both printed works by Gante [Chocano 1995:6].

The printing press in New Spain proved quite a profitable business. The dire need for devotional literature, grammars and glossaries in the Mesoamerican languages to be used as pedagogic material created a substantial demand. Licences and privileges for the printing of devotional material for the Church were highly coveted. In 1553 and 1556 respectively, Philip II ceded this privilege to the *Hospital Real de Indios*, an institution established by Gante. This privilege gave the hospital exclusive printing rights on the sale of primers in New Spain. The economic profit to support the hospital could have been the stimulus behind Gante's idea to elaborate a *cartilla* targeted to as wide an audience of Nahuas and Spanish residents as the *Cartilla* probably was. Rueda argues that this was a very common financing method, which saved the Crown added costs. Completing this task, however, was not easy for the administrators of such places as the Hospital de Indios. They did not print the material themselves but needed to agree with the printers the publishing of their material and the resultant financial implications [Rueda 2010:23, Reyes Gómez 2000].

The successful introduction of the printing press in New Spain, however, did not stop the import of European primers in Castilian and Latin, which were imported until the late 17th century. Why primers were imported from Spain until very late, even though several printing houses in New Spain were functioning already? The reason behind this is simple, the decrease of the Mesoamerican population, in conjunction with new Crown policies that established Castilian as the official language of religious instruction, reduced the need for bilingual or trilingual primers. Moreover, because paper was still an expensive commodity in the New World, primers from Spain were often preferred as they were cheaper [Rueda 2010:20].¹⁰³

After the introduction of the printing press bilingual or trilingual primers combining a great array of languages started to be printed: Zapotec and Castilian, Huastec and Castilian, Tzotzil, Latin and Castilian, or Castilian, Nahuatl and Otomí such as Melchior de Vargas's *Doctrina christiana, muy util, y necesaria, en castellano, mexicano y Otomi* [1576]. The primer by Gante is one example of the rarer trilingual catechisms [Rodríguez Lorenzo 1999:52, Rueda 2010:21]. It is interesting that the majority of the primers always included a

¹⁰³ Paper mills were very unusual and expensive during the early decades of the Viceroyalty [Rueda 2010:20].

Castilian text, showing that all primers probably were intended to be used by Spanish children as well.

In the New World, only three primers targeted children specifically: Maturino Gilberti's *Cartilla para los niños en lengua tarasca* [1559], Bartolomé Roldán's *Cartilla y doctrina christiana, breve y compendiosa, para enseñar los niños, y ciertas preguntas tocantes a la dicha doctrina, por manera de diálogo* [1580], and Zumárraga's *Doctrina cristiana breve para enseñanza de los niños* [1543]. Two primers specifically targeted indigenous illiterate adults and children belonging to all socio-economic classes: Pedro Betanzos' trilingual *Cartilla de oraciones en las lenguas guatemalteca, utlateca y tzutigil* [date unknown] and Gante's *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* [1569] [Infantes 2004:232, Nájera 2012:578, Zulaica Garate 1990:81, Nájera 2012:577].

5.5 Literacy in New Spain

The concept of writing in the early modern period, as Mignolo observes, was closely interwoven with the alphabet and the idea of the book. The book was used as a reference point to qualify other material carriers of information (such as the codices) and writing systems [Mignolo 1992:311-2]. The missionaries' idea that Mesoamerican communities were illiterate had a large and persistent influence over the writing and historiography of the Colonial age. Mignolo claims that between the early and final years of the 16th century several theories connecting the lack of literacy with a lack of intelligence were articulated and in many ways the introduction of literacy by the missionaries reflects their own conceptions regarding the intellectual capabilities of the Mesoamericans [Mignolo 1992:317]. For example, Gante highlighted the intellectual poverty of Amerindian languages in a letter addressed to Philip II in 1558, where he commented regarding the literacy of the indigenous people before the arrival of the missionaries that they were 'people without writing, without letters, without written characters and without any kind of enlightenment' [Gante 23rd June 1558 in Torre 1973:221]. Interestingly enough, his evangelical efforts seem to contradict his words, as can be seen from the *Catecismo en pictogramas* and the elaborate, intricate content of the *Doctrina*.

Regardless of what missionaries believed about intellectual abilities of the Mesoamericans, after just a few decades, the Nahua elite was combining their own writing system with the alphabet, and were also producing a large corpus of texts in transliterated Nahuatl. The nature of such texts, as Lagos observes, allow us to understand how the introduction of a new

writing system implied restructuring the way in which the Nahuas comprehended their world [Lagos 2002:14].

Lockhart's analysis of a vast number of neglected Nahua documents allowed the author to chart the changes that the Nahuatl language underwent during the Viceroyalty period. He classified these changes in three stages. During the first stage (1519-1550) contact between the two groups was very limited, as the Spanish colonizers were still fighting the indigenous populations. Even after the military defeat of the Mexica, there were other factors that prevented contact, such as the relatively small number of Spaniards in the very vast area of the Valley of Mexico and the *encomienda* system¹⁰⁴ which forced the Nahuas to pay tribute [Lockhart 1992:263]. According to Lockhart during this period, alphabetical written Nahuatl was hardly changed, mainly because missionaries, not Nahuas were producing Nahuatl alphabetical texts. There are few documents written by Nahuas in a transliterated form of Nahuatl in this period as they were still employing their own traditional picto-logographic system. Nahuas instead of borrowing Castilian words for the new objects they were coming into contact with described the innovations by using neologisms based on Nahuatl [Lockhart 1991:8]. During the second stage (1550-1650) there is a massive amount of surviving evidence written in a transliterated form of Nahuatl, which by this time was already adopted by the Nahuas and had spread quickly. The majority of documents written down in Nahuatl during this period were produced by Nahuas educated by missionaries [Lockhart 1991:7]. These documents mainly deal with sales and grants of land, litigation, town council minutes and testaments [Lockhart 1991:8, Lockhart 1992:330]. Nahuas also were starting to adopt Castilian words in their texts. This unique process maps the Hispanic impact on the Nahua population. However, this was a multidirectional process as Nahuatl words also entered the language of the Spaniards, enriched it and travelled with it; words of Nahuatl origin were in common usage by Spaniards in their conquest of the Philippines such as *chile*, *tomate*, *calabaza*, and *tabaco* [Girard Lozano 1981:415]. The third stage (1650-1821) covers the rest of the Colonial period and shows an exponential development of Nahuatl writings. Viewed critically, Lockhart's three phases seem to change smoothly without any evident reason behind their evolution, and he does not take into account political or cultural changes that could have kick-started the changes to Nahuatl. Two of these stages, however, are intricately

¹⁰⁴ The *encomienda* system was used by the Crown to regulate and reward Spanish colonizers and indigenous labour in the Americas. In this system, the person granted with an *encomienda* received a number of indigenous people, who needed to work for them in forced labour. In return, the colonizer was obliged to give Christian instruction to the indigenous people under his care.

related to the work of Gante. During the first stage, Gante alongside other missionaries was working in the creation of catechetical and devotional texts translated into Nahuatl, while at the same time missionaries were teaching Nahua students the basics of literacy. The results of these pedagogic efforts culminated in stage two when the Nahua pupils of Gante and other missionaries started the creation of documents written in a transliterated form of Nahuatl.

Reading primers such as the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* played a fundamental role in this process. Missionaries such as Gante, Motolinía, Zumárraga, Testera and Mendieta wrote about the ease with which Nahua children and adults had learned how to read and write.

Mendieta mentions that:

Después se fueron haciendo muy grandes escribanos en todas las letras, chicas y grandes, quebradas y góticas. Y los religiosos los ayudaron harto a salir escribanos, porque los ocupaban a la continua en escribir libros y tratados que componían o trasuntaban de latín o romance en sus lenguas de ellos [...] [Mendieta1596 Book IV, chapter XIV:38-9].

This paragraph evidences not only the elevated level of literacy that Nahua people possessed, but also the agency Nahua people had in the elaboration of devotional texts. They were an integral part of the process, by employing their own language to translate Christian doctrine they were able to accommodate and reinterpret the new religion into their own cosmology.¹⁰⁵

Gante's introduction of the alphabet and Renaissance discursive genres was very successful and helped a select few Nahuas to articulate historiographical accounts of their communities, reconciling the past with the Spanish political dominance [Kobayashi 1996:147, Mignolo 1992:304, Brian Amber 2010:124]. Through their narratives, indigenous writers were protecting their inheritance by showing that the military conquest was also won by Mesoamericans supporting Hernán Cortés [Payas 2005:194-6]. Indigenous and mestizo writers were able to reconstruct their ethnic identity, bringing together in this manner both past and present by interpreting the speeches and writings of their ancestors and taking inspiration from the 'books of the years' or *xiuhmatl* [Brian Amber 2010:139, Velazco 2003:29, Gruzinski 1993:52]. Most of the codices, accounts, diaries, and historical writings share a very similar attitude; they interpret evangelization in an optimistic light and incorporate Mesoamerican history into the wider context of Christian history. Mesoamerican writers highlighted the swift conversion of their ancestors to demonstrate their alliance with

¹⁰⁵ The first ethnic group to become literate were the Nahuas, soon followed by the Mixtecs, Yucatecs, and Mayas [Restall *et al* 2005:11-3].

the missionaries and the Crown. In this way, the Nahua writers were not only adapting Christianity to their own reality but also Christianizing the prehispanic past [Christensen 2010:5-6, Gruzinski 1993:62]. An exception to this trend is the mestizo writer Diego Muñoz Camargo who added to the narrative the voices of resistance and the violence that was used against them [Rubial García 2002:27-30].

One of the first accounts written by Nahua hands was the *Relato de la Conquista*, an anonymous work, possibly written by a Tlatelolca in 1528. If the date is true, it is an unexpectedly early date, taking into consideration that missionary work had only started five years previously. The importance of this narrative cannot be overstated, as it not only represents a Tlatelolca perspective on the Spanish conquest, but also provides insights into the fast spread of literacy among the Nahua nobility [Kobayashi 1996:174]. By 1560, Sahagún and his Nahua informants started the compilation of the *Historia Natural de las cosas de la Nueva España*, also known as the Florentine Codex. It is noteworthy to mention chapter eleven in this context, a narration of the conquest seen through the eyes of the inhabitants of the twin city of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, Tlatelolco. On the other hand, Cristóbal del Castillo, Diego Muñoz Camargo, Fernando Alvarado de Tezozomoc, Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl and Domingo Chimalpahin presented the mestizo and Nahua visions of their ethnicities and the conquest. The narratives written by this group represent in many ways a pinnacle of evangelical work. These Nahua students of Gante and the Colegio de la Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco integrated the European philosophy of language, historiographical conceptions, and the European material carriers of information and modes of expression into their own Nahua narrative. The majority of these historiographical accounts, however, had a limited circulation in manuscript form and were only printed between the late 19th and early 20th centuries [Mignolo 1992:323-4]. [For a more detailed account of indigenous and mestizo writers see: Adorno 1989, Velazco 2003, Schroeder 2010, Brian 2010.]

The progress of literacy even reached small indigenous communities which produced a vast number of textual sources, as attested by the vast numbers of *títulos primordiales* –documents written by Mesoamericans which legitimised claims on certain geographical areas. *Títulos primordiales* reveal the vision of the indigenous communities on the conquest and subsequent Christian conversion [Navarrete 2000:373, León-Portilla 2000:196, Payas 2005:197-9, López-Austin 2000:228, Velazco 1998:34].

Spanish society in New Spain, however, regarded indigenous literacy with distrust.

Accusations regarding heretic connotations and misinterpretations were abundant; intellectual and moral capabilities of the Mesoamericans were deemed inferior [Kobayashi 1996:147]. Kobayashi observes that this animadversion of Spanish society did not directly affect the literate Mesoamerican. By creating historiographies and *títulos*, Colonial Mesoamericans employed literacy to renegotiate frontiers and to legitimize and ensure their positions [Kobayashi 1996:147].

5.6 Doctrinal writings and Gante

In this chapter I presented a contextual overview of doctrinal writings in order to understand the works by Gante in this particular setting. Gante was a trendsetter as one of the first missionaries tackling the translation of Christian doctrine into Nahuatl. His agency can be seen from the beginning; by creating three very different pedagogical tools he was aiming to convert not only the *pipiltin* living in the Franciscan convents but also the *macehualtin* who attended mass on Sundays.

By creating a catechism in images, Gante shows that he was not only open-minded towards the Nahuas by adapting their own script into a ‘Christian’ version, but also that he was flexible enough to understand that Christianization could establish liminal places where a dialogue could take place, facilitating thus the introduction of Christianity. Catechisms in images, as a genre, were honed during the early stages of the evangelization to communicate when a common language was absent. Gante was heavily involved in the process as the signature in his *Catecismo* attests, whether as author or imprimatur. Indeed it is possible that catechisms in images originated in the school of San José. The complexity of the glyphs employed in the catechisms suggests a close collaboration between missionaries and Nahua students, in particular as the glyphs, although heavily charged with Nahua imagery seem to present constructions that point to a dialogue between the two groups, as I will show in chapter 7.

Gante’s alphabetical script texts depart from a Nahua-influenced writing system and follows European guidelines. Gante started the transcription of oral Nahuatl into alphabetic script helping the language to be preserved and disseminated during this period. Grammars and vocabularies started to be written in order to help the process of writing and translating catechetical material. Learning Nahuatl grammar not only challenged the missionaries’ preconceptions of language, they were fundamental to the translation of Christian pedagogical texts without fear of heretical misunderstandings.

Gante's pedagogical texts were restricted by the decrees of the Church, Franciscan Councils and the Crown. Despite these restrictions Gante had ample scope to introduce his personal preferences while translating Christian doctrine into Nahuatl, not only in regards to the content but also in the explanation of the basic doctrines of the Church. This was a development that seems to have been more the norm amongst missionaries, as we have seen from the content of the most important *doctrinas* employed in New Spain. The variation in content could have been a side result of the search for standardization. Accommodations were made by missionaries in order to improve the teaching of Christian doctrine and their own personal preferences and ideas regarding the intellectual capabilities of the target audience.

On the other hand, reading primers were aimed at an illiterate audience. Texts such as these created new opportunities for the Nahua students of Gante and of other missionaries. By spreading literacy, reading primers were useful in giving the Nahuas a new set of tools to be used in the new colonial context. They gave the Nahuas a voice, not only to write historiographies of their people, inserting their history in the wider setting of Christian history, but also by allowing them to pursue litigation and defend themselves in the intricate bureaucracy of the Spanish administration in New Spain. Literacy at the same time, proved to the European colonizers the intellectual capabilities of the subjugated people, creating discomfort and conflict as many administrative members wanted to stop the spread of literacy and other intellectual enterprises. Despite this attitude, Nahuas continued to employ literacy as a way to insert themselves in the new society at hand.

None of this would have been possible without the introduction of the printing press, which helped to reproduce doctrinal writings en masse, taking the progress of the evangelization to the next level as missionaries could travel to far away regions with copies of catechetical material and start the conversion with a very basic understanding of the language.

To present Christian doctrine to the Mesoamerican communities it was indispensable for the mendicants, such as Gante, to translate the content employing Nahuatl and other Mesoamerican vernaculars. In the next chapter I will present the problems and complexities faced by Gante and missionaries like him while translating Christian beliefs employing Nahuatl and Nahua cultural categories.

Chapter 6: Nepantla: Missionaries and translation

The mendicant missionaries who arrived during the formative years of New Spain were faced with an almost insurmountable task: the evangelization of millions of Mesoamericans who were separated from the mendicants by a profound language barrier. In the beginning, the missionaries employed gestures, signs, and interpreters but none of these techniques proved useful to preach Christian beliefs. It was necessary for the missionaries to break through the language barrier themselves. Learning the autochthonous languages was the first step towards approaching and understanding 'the other.' This process however, turned out to be more complicated than expected, as the missionaries were confronted by a set of problems, resulting not only from the translation into a non-Romance, non-Indo-European vernacular, but also the transposition of an entire system of thought, Christian theology and cosmography. To achieve this, Nahuatl culture was employed by the missionaries as the frame of reference to translate and explain Christianity [Pardo 2004:12]. However, in this process the missionaries also destroyed much of the conceptual repertoire of the Nahuas.

Through translation missionaries in New Spain were confronted with a world harbouring conceptual categories they could not entirely comprehend. Moreover, trying to explain Christian doctrine employing these categories proved a daunting task. Using the different languages of the conquered lands to transcribe the intellectual repertoire of early modern Europe involved out of necessity a negotiation between indigenous and European cultural categories. The translation of Christian doctrine, a system of thought completely alien to Nahuatl understanding, was according to Tavárez the result of a dialectical process of both production and reception in which neither of the two cultures were dominant, as previously thought, but were forced to negotiate [Tavárez 2002:21-3]. It is difficult to ascertain, as Payas wisely points out, to what extent missionaries were aware of the implications that these linguistic elements had for the translation or if in any case they tolerated them, for what they considered the greater goal of evangelization. Poole observes, however, that the missionaries appeared to have been unaware of this process and they unknowingly incorporated in their beliefs and practices indigenous cultural elements [Poole 1994:344]. I agree with Payas' position, since evidence seems to suggest that the urgency of the evangelization process forced missionaries to allow to some extent these negotiations, and in particular permitted the incorporation of indigenous elements into Christian devotion as occurred in the

evangelization of ‘barbarian’ Europe [Payas 2005:150-1, Graham 2011].¹⁰⁶ However, the missionaries believed that by associating these elements with Christianity, they were transmuting their original meaning, thus making them Christian [Burkhart 1989].

Expressing Latinate concepts in the context of the cognitive frameworks of Mesoamericans was in this sense doubly challenging and haunted by the spectre of heretical accommodations. Not only was it the transposition of Christian terminology employing Nahua concepts, concepts that only could have been understood to a certain degree by the missionaries themselves and then reintroduced to the Nahuas, losing and distorting information in the process. Through mistranslation there was a reformulation of Christianity by the Nahuas, a Christianity that developed with Nahua undertones as evidenced by the accommodations made of the veneration of the goddess Tlazolteotl to explain the concept of sin by Gante. [For more on this see chapter 7.] On the other hand, the translation of Christian theology by the missionaries, assisted by their Nahua students, started a bilateral process of comprehension of the other, a process that built bridges of understanding and proved pivotal in the formation of a new society and culture [Borges 1960:27, Pineda 1992]. Although evidence is scarce, it is highly likely that in this process missionaries such as Gante were profoundly affected by Nahua culture. After all, as I have explained in chapter 1, missionaries were along with the Nahuas in Nepantla. This borderland place of ambiguity, of creation, destruction, dialogue and challenge, must have affected the missionaries in subtle ways. Sigal notes that the influence and effect of indigenous cultures on missionaries can be seen if one looks closely [Sigal 2011:63-4]. To exemplify this he explores the case of Toribio de Benavente who when arriving in Mexico adopted the Nahua name Motolinía, a Nahuatl word that means poor. By adopting a Nahua name, Sigal proposes he was defining himself and reshaping his own identity in relation to the Nahuas [Sigal 2011:64]. This also seems to be the case for Gante. In his letter from 1529, he stated that he had already forgotten his mother tongue as a result of spending all of his time thinking and speaking Nahuatl [Gante 27th June 1529 in Torre 1973:40]. His daily interactions with the Nahuas had come to occupy him to such an extent that he began to forget his own origins and language. I am not suggesting that he felt Nahua or abandoned his European identity. But in a subtle way Gante, like Motolinía, here reshapes his identity and asserts the extent to which his relation to the Nahuas, by working and living so closely alongside them had begun to erase the traces of his past. This is evidenced by

¹⁰⁶ This occurred similarly in the conversion of Peru, in which the confluence of Andean and Christian devotional elements was deliberately sought out in the translation of Christian texts [Durstun 2007:246].

Mendieta's description of Gante's linguistic progress: 'Predicaba cuando no había sacerdote que supiese la lengua de los indios, puesto que era naturalmente tartamudo, que por maravilla los frailes le entendían ni en la lengua mexicana los que sabían, ni en la propia nuestra. Pero era cosa maravillosa que los indios le entendían en su lengua como si fuera uno de ellos. Compuso en ella una doctrina que anda impresa bien copiosa y larga' [Mendieta 1870(1596) 4:53-57]. Other traces of the impact that their pedagogical arrangements had on the missionaries, can be seen in the translation process itself. As explained in chapter 1, in order to translate a complex Christian concept into Nahuatl, the missionary first needed to clearly define what that concept was. They then needed to break the concept down into its constituent components in order to find analogous elements from Nahua cultural categories. While doing this the missionary also needed to prioritize which elements of the complex concept were the most important for the purpose of instructing the Nahuas. By challenging in this way ('reverse engineering') his knowledge of complex Christian concepts, the missionary was achieving a deeper understanding of his own religion. This deep understanding was not shared by the majority of clergy in Europe, who did not need to analyse concepts in order to explain them to an audience that was already familiar with Christian thought. Therefore, the missionaries not only by the mere act of thinking and speaking in Nahuatl but in particular by translating complex cultural categories into another language needed to reevaluate their understanding of their own cultural categories. By attending so closely to Christian concepts for the purposes of translation, missionaries paradoxically gained greater distance and objectivity and so were able to understand their own Christianity in a more profound way. Furthermore, by translating texts into Nahuatl missionaries' ideas regarding what language was, were challenged. This is evident from the Nahuatl grammars and vocabularies written during this period, which were not only based on Nebrija's Latin works but in particular on his *Arte de la lengua castellana* [1492], previously largely ignored because of the importance given to Latin as a language. The missionaries moved even further away from Latin, giving greater and greater importance to vernaculars. Another important issue was the search for standardization of prayers during the 16th century. The development of doctrinal writing in New Spain by continuously trying to find better translation solutions based on indigenous understandings of ideas previously presented almost certainly shaped the standardization and deep structures found in prayers. These translations were pivotal since at this time many Christian prayers were beginning to be standardized (as can be seen in chapter 7, 8, and 9 regarding the Ave Maria, the Articles of Faith and the Pater Noster prayer). Indeed, the 16th century, as Durston notes, was a time of

great transformations in Christianity regarding both linguistic and evangelical policies [Durstun 2007:55]. The Catholic Church and its missions were not stable or consolidated until after Trent [Durstun 2007:55]. In the specific case of evangelical policies, the strategies of conversion inspired by missionaries' work with indigenous groups and their responses became a ground for discussion not only among the missionaries in New Spain, but also among the administrative heads of the Christian Church in Europe. Valadés' journeyed, for example, to Europe in order to publicize the evangelical policies of both Gante and Focher [Branley 2008:316, Galpin 2007:2-3, Carrasco 2000:33-66, Maza, 2012:15-42, González García 2006:200]. In this way, Nahua responses to the evangelical strategies implemented by the missionaries reshaped the Church's own guidelines on evangelization. Although the available evidence is scant, it is legitimate to ask whether there was a degree to which Nahua categories permeated the missionaries' understanding of Christianity? While almost impossible to answer, the depth of their engagement with Nahua culture and the processes they must have engaged in through translation strongly suggests that it must have done so.

In this chapter I will present an overview of the translation problems encountered by Gante in rendering Christian doctrine into Nahuatl. The chapter is divided in two sections. The first section delves into the strategies of intersemiotic translation –that is a translation from a written form into a non-written form— a technique employed by Gante and other missionaries while translating catechisms in images. The second part of this chapter will analyse the interlingual translation employed while translating Christian doctrine into a written form of Nahuatl in *doctrinas* and *cartillas* [Jakobson 1959:w/p]. The analysis of translation solutions made by missionaries will exemplify Gante's role as one of the earliest translators of the pedagogic genre. The most important translation solutions will be highlighted in order to understand the semantic accommodations that needed to be made in order to translate such dissimilar concepts. In addition to this, I will review Nahua influence in the translation process. Although the evidence is subtle, it is possible to distinguish the extent of the influence of Nahua collaborators in Christian translations. This is important and it reveals a facet of dialogue between missionaries and Nahuas and how it affected and shaped the introduction of Christianity in the area. For this I will analyse Nahua input in both catechisms in images and doctrinal writings. To conclude this chapter I will present a comparative analysis of doctrinal translations in New Spain with Pastoral Quechua in order to determine if the trajectories of translation were affected by the different agencies of its translators. In New Spain translation of devotional writings was mainly done by mendicant

friars whereas Pastoral Quechua's translations were directed by seculars and Jesuits. This similarities and differences will aid to the understanding of the translation process in New Spain and the important role of its actors during the translation process.

6.1 The translation process in catechisms in images and the Nahua mind set

The translation process of key Christian principles into the writing system of the Nahuas resulted in the development of a new mixed system that used Christian symbols, Nahua glyphs and at the same time invented new images that *mimicked* the Nahua writing system in order to convey the Christian message. The *Catecismo* thus, although being Christian, can be seen as a material embodiment of *Nepantla*. As I have mentioned in chapter 1 Nahuas often referred to themselves as being in *Nepantla*, in between two roads, not exactly Nahua but also not European; Gante's *Catecismo* reflects this liminality.

Before the formal analysis of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* [see chapter 7] an overview of the intersemiotic translation process requires discussion. Nahuas and Spaniards were profoundly immersed in the world of the supernatural; it was the 'backbone' of their societies and the framework with which they comprehended the world and acted upon it. Although Nahua and European cultural categories seem very dissimilar, on occasion cultural categories overlapped; religious concepts and devotions resembled strikingly one another in certain basic traits. The similitudes led some missionaries to believe Mexica religion was a deformation of Christianity, a corruption of belief instigated by the devil. It was a misinterpretation of Nahua religious categories on the part of the missionaries based on their own European medieval conceptions that led to problems in translating religious concepts from one framework to another [Graham 2011].

How to render such concepts as one God, the Devil, the Trinity, the Holy Spirit or even the idea of the Virgin Mary into a Nahua worldview employing Nahua images that had no equivalents in Christian theology was an intrinsic problem for the missionaries. This issue was critical for them as they needed to produce an unambiguous translation that could be understood by the Nahuas without obscurity or leading them astray. This incommensurability of experience and untranslatability led missionaries such as Gante to use cultural borrowings or simply employ Spanish or Latin images to evoke certain theological terms like God, or the Holy Trinity. Although the aim of doing this was to avoid misinterpretation, it often generated confusion. When incorporating Christian beliefs into a Mesoamerican religious

system what was interpreted, negotiated and adapted was not necessarily the same thing as that which the missionaries intended.

In a world where a common language was absent, images became essential. They were complex and did not only represent words, but also contained in themselves a set of structuring principles like a language and a system of thought. Gante, during the elaboration of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*, had the difficult task of avoiding constructs that could cause misinterpretation and confusion. An analysis of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* shows how the translation of one system to the other could be very complicated and often misleading. Resines points out that certain elements can be distinguished in this process of translation.

1. Designation of common elements: in which certain elements that were familiar in both cultures were employed as communicators, an example of this is the flowers that in both European and Nahua contexts seem to represent the soul [Johansson 1995].
2. Designation of particular objects: in which specific objects are designed to signify something in particular, e.g. a glyph representing a dagger could represent evil. This glyph was not part of the Nahua or European symbolic repertoire but a concept probably derived from the context of a violent conquest. Another example is the devotion of the goddess Tlalzolteotl (Filth-eater) which was employed as an analogy for the Nahuas to understand the concept of sinner in the *Catecismo* [Johansson 1995].
3. Designation of abstract concepts: Gante needed to choose which abstract concepts to use and which glyphs worked best. Certain abstract elements were not easily translatable into Nahua glyphs and vice versa, so it was necessary to use Christian symbols. An example of this could be the idea of the Holy Ghost represented in Christian imagery as a dove.
4. Use of Spanish cultural elements: when Nahua glyphs were not sufficient to convey a meaning it was necessary to borrow Spanish signs or symbols. An example of this can be seen in the catechism 078 attributed to Sahagún, where the glyph used to represent 'Pontius Pilate' is a figure dressed in European fashion [see fig. 22] [Zamora 2013:12]. The glyph thus reflects Nahua and missionaries' negative ideas of the Spanish administrators in New Spain.



Fig. 22 Pontius Pilate, Creed, Sahagún's catechism 078 [Source: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8458427z>]

5. Use of indigenous grammatical elements: an element quite abundant in the catechism is the use of Nahuatl glyphs to designate verbs and prepositions (e.g. *maitl* or hand representing the imperative and the negative) [Resines 2007:36].

The *Catecismo* presents a hybrid system; it embodies a middle step between Nahuatl and European communication systems. This hybridization was fundamental to generate new categories in the indigenous imaginary and was employed deftly by Gante to introduce Christianity by engaging Nahuatl tastes. The glyphs depicted needed to be carefully chosen from an array of multiple signs. It must have been a lengthy job, in which signs were selected according to the message missionaries intended to transmit. It was an incredibly difficult process in which a sign needed to signify the same thing not only to its author but also to its multiple readers, readers who did not share a cultural milieu. If many connotations were given to a glyph it could lead to content distortion, bringing misunderstanding and therefore the missionaries would have failed in their initial objective of transmitting Christian thought. To avoid this, the sign needed to be rejected or adapted. Even the process of transmutation could lead to loss of the original message. Another important step in the process was the incorporation of new concepts and ideas, ideas that had no referents in Nahuatl tradition, in which case it was necessary to employ Christian symbols. However when Christian symbols proved inefficient new signs needed to be elaborated. On many occasions these signs turned out to be hybrid, sharing Christian/European and Nahuatl traits. The choices Gante needed to make for the elaboration of the *Catecismo* were indeed not simple. Gante needed to follow the codes of Nahuatl religious writing, which were very different from non-suitable bureaucratic Nahuatl writing, and deeply embedded in a non-familiar cosmology. With the help of his students, Gante created a new graphic system.

The imagery of the glyphs evolved over time. The glyphs became embedded in the Nahuatl imaginary and changed alongside the new society. Christian images became paradigmatic in a new culture in which old Nahuatl categories were discarded or were forced to accommodate

to the early modern European system of thought. The significations of the new imagery increased in complexity as they involved many cultural, historical and theological references not in all cases fully explained to the indigenous population [Gruzinski 1995:56].

But in the end, how many people had access to the same catechism, or whether all the catechisms had a standardization of glyphs is very difficult to assess and therefore it is hard to elucidate the penetration of this system, not only among Gante's students, but also other layers of society of the new Christian Nahuas. Indeed, to what extent were the catechisms a prototype and trial as opposed to representative of a project of intercultural communication, one of many attempts along specific lines to open a way for communication, pedagogy and conversion is a difficult question to answer.

6.2 Cartillas and Doctrinas: Epistemological issues and translation solutions

Translating Christian doctrine into Nahuatl was a laborious process that required multiple revisions and accommodations to prevent misunderstandings or mistaken interpretations; the risk of falling into error was high, especially while translating so dissimilar a cosmology. While trying to separate themselves from Nahua religion, missionaries could not escape selecting elements of Nahua cosmology, instilling them with Christian nuances to serve as a bridge of understanding, only possible because cultural classification systems tend to overlap with each other, creating communication bridges based on analogies. Nevertheless, these analogies were misleading; Nahuas could easily reinterpret them according to their own culture, thus reinforcing their old beliefs [Burkhart 1988:234-5, 252-3, Douglas 1999 (2007):378-381 cited in Madajczak 2011, Murillo 2010:312].

6.2.1 The dynamics of translation

During the 16th century, missionaries and their Nahua aides developed several translation strategies. In Gante's *Doctrina Christiana* and later on in his *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* we can see that the majority of these strategies were employed. The first strategy was the use of Spanish loan words. When a concept was extremely difficult to translate, or did not have a clear equivalent in Nahua vocabulary, or if they wanted to avoid heretical connotations, missionaries rendered the concepts in Spanish. Gante, for example, in the segment pertaining to the Articles of Faith [f.22v] in the *Doctrina* uses the following Spanish loan words: *dios, artículos, apóstoles, Evangelio, anima, criador, Sancta María, Evangelica, apóstol, cruz,*

limbo, angel, sanctissima trinidad, persona, iglesia, sacramento, pecado capital, altar, bautismo, matrimonio, penitencia. Most of this Spanish Christian vocabulary is found extensively in other *doctrinas* and confessional manuals of the time, such as the *Confessionarios* by Molina. The loan words appear in a range of subjects such as divinity, ecclesiastical titles, administrative, calendar and festivities, objects and/or sacred places, moral Christian teachings, social and religious relationships, objects and living beings. On occasion Spanish loan words were modified by Nahuatl particles, which indicate pronoun, gender and plural, such as *noconsciencia*, *xpianome*, *tanima*, *sabadotica*, *cruzittech*, *sanctohuan*.¹⁰⁷ In other instances, the Spanish loan word modified the main Nahua word, which is the case for the words *tlatlacolli veniales* (venial sins) or *tonantzin Sancta Yglesia* (Our Holy Mother Church).¹⁰⁸ In this way, elements difficult to translate were made intelligible by association with Nahuatl terms. Moreover the Nahua term acquired another semantic meaning. In addition, Spanish terms were paired with Nahua terms to form semantic couplets, in order to explain a difficult concept. After some time when the concept had already been internalized, the Nahuatl cultural borrowing would not be employed any longer leaving instead the Spanish term. For example the Nahuatl word *yolia*, referring to a life force located in the heart which continued living after the death of the individual, was employed to translate the term soul, a term that was not always easily understood by the Nahuas, as there was not a straightforward equivalent in their cosmology as we will see shortly. Due to this, sometimes the term *yolia* was paired with the Spanish word for soul, *anima*, which eventually replaced the Nahuatl term [Ramírez 2006:30]. It was also a common occurrence for translators to alternate in the same texts between Nahuatl and Spanish for example *tlamacehualiztli* with *penitencia* (penance), *Mictlan* with *infierno* (hell), *teopixqui* with *sacerdote* (priest), *teotl* with *Dios* (God). It is probable that missionaries alternated between terms as a result of the context of the word, believing that in some contexts, a better word was needed to avoid confusion or heretical constructions [Máynez 1999:280-3, Christensen 2010:89-90, Murillo 2010:313, Zamora 2011:12, Barroso Peña (w/y):3-4].

¹⁰⁷ Highlighted in black is the modifying Nahuatl particle that can denote plural, singular or gender. Both *xpianome* (Christian) and *tanima* (soul) appear in Gante's *Doctrina*.

¹⁰⁸ Máynez suggest that in order to understand the choice behind borrowed lexical items a detailed study that analyses the terms comparing their number in order to identify their distribution patterns is necessary. There seems to be a randomness in relation to which terms were borrowed and which ones were translated. She continues that only by studying these patterns it will be possible to develop uniform criteria regarding the use of Spanish loan words [Máynez 1999:283-4].

The second translation strategy was neologism. To create neologisms, Nahuatl roots were combined in a new form; an example of this is the sacrament of the Eucharist which was translated by missionaries using the neologism *teo_tlaxcallo*. Combining thus the Nahuatl root *teo* meaning divine with the Nahua noun *tlaxcalli* which means tortilla (a flatbread made of corn). *Tortillas* were an important part of the daily diet of Mesoamerica. Employing the word *tortilla* suggests the conscious use of a term highly familiar to the Nahua audience and thus able to link more closely to indigenous conceptions. The sacrament was then translated as ‘divine tortilla’ [Tavárez 2000:24]. The host was translated by Gante in his *Doctrina* by the difrasism¹⁰⁹ *yn hostia consagrada yn tlatochihualli tlaxcaltzintli* (the host consecrated, the tortilla made sacred) [Gante 1553:f. 43r cited and translated in Montes de Oca 2009:107]. Another case of neologism is the Nahuatl word for crucifixion *mamazohualtiloz* (to spread arms) [Manuscrito 381: 7 cited in Montes de Oca 2011:68].¹¹⁰

The third strategy was the translation of a Spanish term trying to find a corresponding term in Nahuatl. The Christian concept of sin helps to illustrate this. The concept of sin was absent from Nahua cosmology; the closest referent was probably the concept of pollution [Zamora 2013:4]. During prehispanic times the Mexica believed in two opposite forces: a light, warm dry force and a cold and humid one. These forces were in an equilibrium system which needed to be kept in balance. If a transgression was made and the balance between the opposites was broken, the individual became polluted and needed to perform a sort of penance. This concept of imbalance and pollution was similar, but not identical, to the idea of sin and confession in Christian liturgy [Burkhart 1996:170, DiCesare 2009]. The concept of ‘sin’ therefore was almost impossible to translate as there was no clear equivalent in Nahuas’ worldview. The Dominicans employed in their 1548 *doctrina* the root *ihtlaco-a* (to spoil or damage) for sin. Gante employed for the concept of sin the Nahua noun *tlatlacolli* (something spoiled, ruined, or damaged) [Gante 1553:f.44r]. Both verb and noun have a large range of meaning and could be used for any kind of mistake or error [Christensen 2010:48, Schwaller

¹⁰⁹ Difrasism or ‘couplet kenning’ is a type of linguistic structure consisting in the juxtaposition of two roots or lexemes with a similar semantic content. This couplet pattern with a metaphorical function was widely employed in Nahuatl. Several of these couplets appear in the *Coloquios* of Sahagún, for example in ‘atl in tepetl’ (the water, the mountain, which means ‘the city’), ‘tloque in nahuaque’ (the lord of the near and far which means the Omnipresent One, God) ‘cententli ontentli’ (one lip, two lips which means speaking indirectly) [Bright 1990:440, Montes de Oca 2009:91, Montes de Oca 2004:191].

¹¹⁰ The term started to be employed by 1559 in an anonymous collection of sermons in Nahuatl [Tavárez 2000:24].

2006:396-7]. However, although the semantic of the terms overlapped they were not synonymous [Griffiths 2007:72-7, Ramírez 2006:307]. The terms were charged with a different semantic nuance and did not have the moral charge that the conceptual category ‘sin’ had [Zimmerman 2005:11, Tavárez 2000:24, Burkhart 1989:33]. A more neutral solution was also presented by Gante: ‘yn amo qualli tlaneqliztli’ (in bad will) [Gante 1553:f.79r].

The fourth strategy was semantic extension in which concepts were explained; paraphrases and metaphors were also part of this tool. This strategy was commonly employed to translate terms, such as ‘angel’ or ‘maker’, which did not have a clear equivalent in Nahua cosmology, or in order to explain a concept in depth such as penance *tlamaceualiztli* (the meriting of things) [Ramírez 2006:307, Burkhart 2001, Montes de Oca 2011-b:131].

The fifth strategy was to borrow terms from Latin. This solution was employed occasionally by missionaries and served a similar function as the Spanish loan word strategy. Words such as *Spiritu Sancto* and *Sancto* are examples of this. The Our Father prayer was maintained as *Pater Noster*, although later on was changed to the Nahua term *totatzine*. The logic behind this is difficult to discern [Zamora 2011:17-8, Resines 2007:120, Murillo 2010:312, Barroso Peña (w/y):4, Montes de Oca 2011:131].

Variations exist between original texts and the Nahua translation mostly in the use of capital letters, abbreviations, adjectives and terms that sometimes appear translated while others are kept in Spanish. There are also more abbreviations in Nahuatl texts than in Castilian’s ones. Zamora attributes this to Nahua syntax which forced the missionaries to explain concepts; employing thus a larger amount of space. However, as space was reduced they needed to use abbreviations copiously. Doctrinas in Nahuatl also present a noticeable use of adjectives that are not present in the Spanish, for example *Yglesia-Sancta Yglesia* and *Cruz-Sancta Cruz* [Zamora 2011:17-8].

From the evidence available, missionaries seem to have been quite positive about their own understanding of Nahuatl and believed it was deep enough to transmit Christian religious ideas. However, in many ways, although employing the same words they were discussing different realities; this can be seen for example in Lockhart’s concept of double-mistaken-identity [Murillo 2010:307, Lockhart 1992]. Missionaries were also aware that the semantic nexus behind the Christian religious lexicon was difficult to translate [Zimmerman 2005:9]. Zimmerman argues that the major problem for evangelization was not the assimilation and

acceptance of the new religion by the Nahuas but the translation of religious concepts themselves which according to him was in many ways met by a cognitive resistance by the Nahuas [Zimmerman 2005:9]. This was probably was a result of double-mistaken-identity. Indeed, in this re-contextualization of terms, as Murillo Gallegos observes, the Nahua semantic behind a term was understood by the missionaries within the context of Christianity and vice versa the newly-introduced Christian terms were understood by the Nahuas in the context of Nahua cosmology [Murillo 2010:312, Lockhart 1992]. Moreover, the translation of Christian doctrine became more difficult as the structure of Nahuatl differed vastly from any language with which the missionaries had come in contact previously [Grass 1965:59].¹¹¹ Finally, as Ramírez suggests, missionaries not employing the same words for the same concepts often created confusion and inaccuracies [Ramírez 2006:307]. Christensen disagrees with this; he suggests that it was rather the explanation of the doctrine given later by the missionaries or Nahua stewards, which was responsible for the observed variety in Mesoamerican Christianity [Christensen 2010:138, 295].

6.2.1.1 Problematic concepts

As already mentioned, the major problem around which translation revolved was not of a methodological but epistemological nature. This difficulty is especially apparent when elements from Nahua culture had no equivalent in a European setting, or were concepts without reference in Mesoamerican cultures. This problem was solved by adding new vocabulary both in Nahuatl and in Spanish. However, most issues came about when both contexts (Nahua and European) shared similar religious concepts but which possessed slightly different cultural meanings that could develop into ambiguity or heresy. In many ways translatability and its reception depended upon the common traits shared by both cultures [Murillo 2010:300, Payas 2005:137]. Gante in his *Doctrina* was one of the first missionaries to tackle this problematic; more often than not, his solution was to borrow Spanish loan words for Christian concepts without a clear equivalent in Nahua cosmology. As mentioned in the previous chapter, although Gante's solutions probably were employed by his collaborators and pupils, the search for a correct, more refined translation free of heretical connotation was common in the *doctrinas* of the 16th century in New Spain. Some

¹¹¹ One of these characteristics is the use of affixes to form polysyllabic compound words such as *notlazomahuizteopixcatatzin*, a term that was also employed for priest, which translates as 'venerable minister of God, that I love as my father' [Grass 1965:59].

of the most problematic concepts faced by Gante and his colleagues will be explored in the following segment.

6.2.1.1.1 *Penance*

Gante in the *Doctrina Christiana* decided to use the Spanish loan word *penitencia* (penance) instead of seeking a translation in Nahuatl of the word [Gante 1553: f.21v]. Interestingly, in Molina's *Confesionario Mayor*, the author paired the Spanish word of *penitencia* with *tlamaceualiztli* (the meriting of things). As we have seen previously regarding the pairing of Nahuatl/Spanish nouns, eventually *penitencia* would appear by itself. Christensen claims that Molina's solution is a good indicator that the text involved significant collaboration with Nahuas [Christensen 2010:35].

6.2.1.1.2 *Divinity*

The concept of the divine was inherently different for Mesoamericans. The Manichaeic view of the world that was prevalent in early modern Europe, in which the supernatural world was divided into good and evil, was different in Mesoamerican belief. In Mesoamerican cosmologies, at least as far as is known, there were two opposite forces: a light, warm dry force and a cold and humid one [López-Austin 2000:245-250]. Nahua deities did not possess absolute power and their personalities and attributes shifted constantly [Nicholson 1971]. There was also no absolute polarity between evil and good, everything existed in relation with its complement or opposite which alternated indefinitely [López-Austin 2000:245-250, DiCesare 2009:121]. The expression for good (*qualli*) existed but they did not have a term for evil (as the opposite of good), instead they used the construction *amo qualli* (no good), however it did not refer semantically to bad [Montes de Oca 2009:109].

Generally the concept of divinity was translated by employing the Nahuatl root *teo* to express divinity or the concept of divine being. In Nahuatl *teo* could be employed both as a noun and a verb and possessed a wide and complex range of meanings. As Burkhart [1989] suggests, the noun *teotl*'s use as a concept from a pagan cosmology contradicts the Christian belief in a perfect God. Despite knowing the nuances of the word, most Franciscans appropriated it to refer to their own god. However, after some time the use of the word *teotl* fell into disuse, being replaced with the Spanish loan word *Dios*.

Gante knowing the ambiguity of the word *teotl* seems to have preferred mostly the Spanish loan word *Dios* as we can see on several occasions in the *Doctrina Christiana*: 'Yehica ca

can iceltzin in totecuyo dios in ce[n]quizca qualli' (Because truly he alone, Our Lord God, [is] perfectly good) or in a pairing with the Nahuatl *teotl*, as in the sentence 'ca nelli dios teotl' (our true Dios, God) [Gante 1553:f.45r translation by Tavárez 2000:24; Montes de Oca 2011:132]. Olmos also employs Gante's solution: 'Ca yehoatl in itocatzin yn Dios' (es el nombre de dios) [Olmos 1552 (1996):34, cited in Montes de Oca 2011:132]. Molina employs the pairing of the two words as well (Spanish/Nahuatl) 'ycel teotl dios' (one God, Dios). Murillo observes that this Nahuatl-Spanish pairing was intended for the easy identification and separation of both supernatural beings, thus differentiating between the prehispanic deities and the Christian God [Murillo 2010:302-3].

Moreover, Gante employs other strategies in his *Doctrina*, for example by reusing the noun *teotl* and infusing it with a new meaning: 'ca teotl ca ypalnemohuani techihuani teyocoyani' (Dios, por quien vivimos, el hacedor de la gente, el creador de la gente) [Gante 1553:f. 23r in Montes de Oca 2011:132, Tavárez 2000:24]. He also employs *teotl* in a new difrasism to denominate god 'yn toteouh yn totlatocatzin' (nuestro dios nuestro señor) [Gante 1553 cited in Montes de Oca 2011:134]. It is possible that the abundance of solutions in the translation of divinity explored in the *Doctrina* not only reflects Gante's knowledge of the language but also an intense collaboration with Nahua aides. Although these solutions at some level would have had heretical connotations, they seem to be the most appropriate for Gante's *Doctrina*. It is probable that as the *Doctrina* was intended for Nahuas already raised and educated by him, therefore he believed the old nuances of the noun *teotl* had already been replaced in their mindframe by Gante's European idea of deity.

Very occasionally Nahua aides employed the same epithets from prehispanic deities such as Omoteotl, Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl. Epithets such as: *tloque nahuaque* (the lord of the near and far), *ilhuicahua tlalticpaque* (lord of earth and heaven), *yohualli-ehécatl* (night-wind, that can be translated as invisible and tangible an epithet often attributed to Tezcatlipoca), *ipalnemoani* (for whom one lives also attributed to Tezcatlipoca and to the Sun) and *teyocoyani* (creator of people) [Christensen 2010:38-9, Murillo 2010:305].

6.2.1.1.3 Devil

The noun 'devil' was paralleled with pre-contact deities such as the Lord of the Mountain or other inhabitants of the nether regions in which the cosmos was divided. Sorcerers and shamans were also used as parallels. In Gante's explanation of the enemies of the soul in the abridged section of the *Doctrina*, he uses the word *tlacatecolotl* (human owl) for 'devil,'

which in the Nahua imaginary was a shape-shifting human with the ability to inflict sickness on people [1553:f.85r]. In Bartolomé de Alva's *Confessional Manual*, the author explains how the devil took the form of Tlaloc, Huitzilopochtli and other gods from the Mexica pantheon. Sahagún on the other hand associates the devil with Tezcatlipoca, probably derived from a misconception of the deity, an enemy of Quetzalcoatl, who was widely seen as a benevolent deity. Moreover Tezcatlipoca was the deity of the *tlacatecolotl* and shamans. Olmos' *Tratado sobre los siete pecados capitales* [1552] like the majority of Nahuatl doctrinal texts uses the term *tlacatecolotl*, as for example: 'yn tlatlacatecolo' (which is translated by Olmos as 'los diablos') [Olmos 1552 (1996):242 cited in Montes de Oca 2011:132, Christensen 2010:44-6, García de León 2004:54-61, Schwaller 2006:396-7].

6.2.1.1.4 Heaven

The Nahua believed in the existence of levels, both celestial and subterranean, where individuals went after death.¹¹² However, the mechanism by which a person arrived at their final destination did not depend entirely on the quality of his/her life (although it played a role) but on the manner of death [Baquedano 2011:203]. After a person died the many components that formed a human (the body, the blood, and the animistic forces –*teyolia*, *tonalli*, and *ihiyotl*) disintegrated. One of the animistic forces: the *teyolia* went to one of the different places in the afterlife: Mictlan, Tlalocan and the Home of the Sun [Baquedano 2011:203-4]. Mictlan was the destination for the people who died of natural death. Mictlan was divided in nine levels and was ruled by the deity Mictlantecuhtli and his consort Mictlancihuatl [López-Austin 1988 1:333]. The second destination, Tlalocan, the 'earthly paradise' was the place of the god of rain, Tlaloc. People who died by drowning, struck by lightning, dropsy and gout, all elements related to Tlaloc, went to Tlalocan [Schwaller 2006:391, Baquedano 2011:206-7]. The third destination was only temporary; the House of the Sun was considered a place of glory and joy, a place where people stayed before going to other destinations. People who died in battle, captives who were killed by their enemies, sacrificial victims and women who died in childbirth went there [Baquedano 2011:208]. [For an in-depth overview of death amongst the Mexica in both historical sources and archaeology see Baquedano 2011].

¹¹² Nahua geography was divided into three planes along the vertical axis: the sky (*Ilhuicatl*), the surface of the earth (*Tlactipac*) and the underworld (*Mictlan*) [Schwaller 2006:392].

Neither Tlalocan nor the House of the Sun were an exact equivalent of heaven and most missionaries preferred to use the Spanish loan word *cielo*. Gante used the noun *ilhuicatl* (sky) instead [Gante 1553:f.28v, Zamora 2011:17-8].

The Dominican *Doctrina Cristiana* from 1548 includes a section regarding the concept of heaven, which is described as a place within the sky, where eternal riches and eternal prosperity abound. In this place suffering, heat, cold, and sadness do not exist. To name this place, the Dominicans, preferred to use the term ‘cenpapacoaya anozo parayso’ (*cenpapacoaya* meaning glory, a place of great rejoicing, conjoined with the Spanish *paraíso* (paradise)) instead of *ilhuicatl* [Schwaller 2006:405]. Molina in the Nahuatl to Spanish section of his vocabulary published in 1571 presents several definitions of *ilhuicatl* and its variants translated as ‘*cielo*’, with one exception: *ilhuicatl itic* (inside sky), defined by Molina as ‘*cielo empireo o parayso celestial*’ (celestial paradise) [Schwaller 2006:409].

6.2.1.1.5 Hell

This term shares a similar problem to that of Heaven; there was no equivalent to Hell in Nahua cosmology. To translate the concept of ‘Hell’, elements from the Nahua afterlife were borrowed. Most authors such as Gante seem to prefer the term Mictlan (place of the dead). Molina seems to be an exception to this; in his *Confessionario Mayor* he employs an invented term *tlatlacoltexcalco* (in the sin oven). As we have seen, in the Nahua imaginary Mictlan was the underworld where the majority of the dead dwelled and unlike Christian Hell did not have any negative connotations. García León suggests that in order to adjust to the new cultural context, the intrinsic qualities of Christian Hell were modified. Instead of being a place of fire and flames, Nahua Christian Hell became a place of cold and darkness [Christensen 2010:47, García de León 2004:54-61, Zamora 2011:17-8]. The Dominicans in their *Doctrina Cristiana* [1548], on the other hand, borrowed the Spanish term for ‘Hell’, ‘*infierno*,’ rather than Mictlan. However, in certain passages they paired ‘Hell’ as *Mictlan infieros*. Schwaller suggests that this could have provided a physical reference of hell as located in the underworld (Mictlan) [Schwaller 2006:406].

6.2.1.1.6 Soul

The majority of texts from the Valley of Mexico, including Gante’s *Doctrina*, seem to prefer the borrowed Spanish term *anima*. It is probable that Gante did not find a clear correspondence for the Christian concept of soul and preferred to borrow the Spanish term

instead. In Nahua cosmology the concept of a person was very complex. Each individual had three animistic entities or souls, one residing in the head named *tonalli* (irradiation, solar heat), another in the heart named *teyolia* or *yolia* (could be affected negatively or positively through the persons' decisions) and the last one in the liver named *ihiyotl* (breath). These three animistic entities needed to preserve a balance of sorts, otherwise the person was in danger of becoming sick [López-Austin 1988 1:313-6]. Although there are several similarities between *teyolia* and the concept of soul in Christian cosmology, the term was never employed by itself, but in the company of the Spanish borrowed term *anima*, probably to avoid misunderstandings [Christensen 2010:49-50].

6.2.1.1.7 *The Holy Trinity*

The concept of Holy Trinity had already generated a large amount of discussion in early Christian and Medieval Europe and represented a delicate theological translation problem. As Tavárez indicates, although important, the concept played a very small role in Nahua Christianity as it was only used in the act of crossing oneself and while writing the opening line of testaments. The Dominicans were amongst the first to undertake the translation of the term. In the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Española y Mexicana* from 1548, the concept of the Holy Trinity was introduced as follows: 'in dios te⁻ta[h]tzin in dios te⁻piltzin ihua⁻n dios Spiritu Sancto ye⁻intin personas-meh zan ce⁻ huel nelli dios' that translated as 'God the Father God the Child and God the Holy Spirit three persons, only one true God' [Tavárez 2000:25]. Gante did not translate the term in his *Doctrina*; instead he employed the Spanish borrowing *Santísima Trinidad*.¹¹³ The majority of problems related to this concept had nothing to do with the translation of the term, but revolved around the explanation of the concept. Constant adjustments in the explanation of the Holy Trinity were seen to be necessary to avoid any hint of heretical connotations. Tavárez illuminated this argument using the work of the Franciscan Juan Bautista Viseo. Bautista Viseo, who authored at least eighteen doctrinal texts assisted by his Nahua aides from the Colegio de la Santa Cruz, pointed out in his *Advertencias para los confesores de los naturales* [1600] what he considered to be two major errors made by the early missionary attempts to translate the

¹¹³ Tavárez suggests that practical as ever Franciscans were not really interested in improving or correcting their translation of ambiguous concepts such as the Trinity in Nahuatl and the simple enumeration of the name of the three persons was regarded as proof that Nahuas understood the concept [Tavárez 2000:35]. Elizabeth Graham suggests that friars avoided the translation of the term Holy Trinity because it was close to the Nahua concept of deities being mutable, defying thus the idea of one god [Graham, personal communication].

concept. The first error was a mistake related to the intrinsic unity of the Trinity, whereas the second error related to the separate character of the three divine persons. Through the question/answer segment of his *Advertencias* he noticed that when Nahuas answered the conventional question ‘How many persons are there in our God?’ the answer was ‘Our Lord is indeed three persons.’¹¹⁴ Whereas when the Nahuas answered the question: ‘These persons are how many deities?’ Nahuas replied to the plural question saying ‘They are three deities.’ The fallacy of this answer could imply a heresy, taking into account that they considered the Trinity to be three separate deities, instead of one singular god. Bautista Viseo suggests, according to Tavárez, that the most appropriate answer to this question according to most missionaries—which appears in both the Dominican *doctrina* from 1548 and the *Doctrina Christiana* by Gante was— ‘Three persons, only one true deity ruler’ (in Nahuatl: ēy *personas*, zan cē, huel nelli teōtl *Dios* tlahtōani). ‘I believe in just one indeed true god, almighty, three personas, dios the father, and dios the child and dios spiritu sancto. These three personas, are just indeed one true god, just one is his divinity, just one is his lordship, just one is his power, just one is his being. These three personas are not separate. He governs himself as one: so I believe’ [Gante 1553:f.1v, f. 69v, translation by Tavárez 2000:29-30]. In the 1553 edition of Gante’s *Doctrina*, he introduces the concept of Holy Trinity at the beginning of a summary of Christian Doctrine employing a formula created by the Dominicans: ‘Dios tēta[h]tzin ihuān dios tēpiltzin ihuā dios Spiritu Sancto n yēintin persona-meh zan huel cē nelli teōtl ahmō ōme ahmō ē (God the Father and God the child and God the Holy Spirit three persons, only really one true god, not two not three’ [Tavárez 2000:25].

This answer, however, had two possible interpretations. The first one, an ‘ambibological’ interpretation that had two senses.¹¹⁵ The first sense of the sentence would be: ‘Three persons, but only one true God altogether.’ The second meaning, however, was slightly different ‘Three persons, *only one* of them being a true god.’ Tavárez explains that the Nahuatl numeric quantifier ‘one’ (in Nahuatl *ce*) has two scopes in the sentence, a wide scope which refers to the entire sentence as a whole and a narrow scope, which refers to only one of the three persons, an ambiguity that could confuse the neophytes, giving the sentence a narrow

¹¹⁴ From the 1520s missionaries often employed the question-answer method in order to discern the level of understanding indigenous students had of the notions taught by them [Tavárez 2000:29-30].

¹¹⁵ Sentences that had two senses because of the position of the words, not the words themselves.

scope, implying the heresy that only one of the three persons was the true god [Bautista 1600:f.51v cited in Tavárez 2000:29-30].

6.3 Nahua influence on the translations

Collaboration between the Nahuas of central Mexico and missionaries in the creation and translation of doctrinal texts is a phenomenon documented not only by the works of Gante. Sahagún himself commented upon the importance of Nahua students involved in the translation of devotional literature. He remarks that: ‘Since they are already instructed in the Latin language, they explain to us the true sense and figures of their own language, as well as the incongruities that we sometimes are guilty of in our sermons and writings’ [Ricard 1966:224]. We know that such Nahua students associated with San José and later the Colegio de la Santa Cruz were heavily involved in such activities [Morales 2008:147, Máynez 2013:21, Romano 2004:260, SilverMoon 2007:55-6, Estarella 1962]. Molina also made use of Nahua students when writing his 1571 dictionary of Nahuatl. In this case it was the Texcocan Hernando Ribas who assisted him [Sell 2008:28]. [For more on the collaboration between Nahuas and missionaries in the writing of doctrinal writings see Sell 2008:27-29.] Collaborative endeavours between missionaries and Nahuas were, therefore, not by any means unheard of.

In this collaborative process Nahua students played a variety of roles. They operated as scribes, ghost-writers and editors. They served as editorial advisors to the missionaries and under the latter’s supervision wrote unofficial ecclesiastical texts targeting local audiences. These Nahua assistants even produced religious texts unsupervised, which were disseminated to the indigenous populace, containing their own interpretation of Christianity [Christensen 2010:90-2]. Interestingly some of these texts were penned on the blank pages of printed works. An example of one appears in the last blank leaves of the 1553 *Doctrina* by Gante in the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico.

The ecclesiastical authorities worried that active Nahua involvement in the creation of Christian texts would produce *doctrinas* full of heretical connotations. For this reason Nahua translators were almost never credited, even if entire translations can be ascribed to them. This was because the missionaries feared difficulties in securing publication if too close an association with Nahua assistants was advertised [Christensen 2010:13, 62-4, Payas 2005:226]. Therefore it is quite difficult to access the extent of Nahua collaboration in the

translation of Christian doctrinal material. The texts themselves, however, provide clues as to their involvement. Although it is difficult to discern the influence of Nahuas on ecclesiastical writings except in very nuanced ways, almost all of these translations reflect in their vocabulary, misspelling of loan words and stylistics (such as metaphorical or reverential speech) the input, negotiation and accommodation of Nahua collaborators. When translating religious texts from Spanish to Nahuatl, Nahua scribes/assistants and the missionaries themselves were out of necessity forced to draw upon the Nahua cultural background in order to describe, visualize and make comprehensible Christian religious concepts for an indigenous audience [Christensen 2010:89-90].

The work of Gante in particular showcases the collaboration that existed between missionaries and Nahuas. His work not only makes use of alphabetic Nahuatl but also utilises the traditional Mexica writing system.

As will be shown in chapter 7, Gante's *Catecismo* presents interesting insights into the level of interaction between him and his Nahua collaborators/pupils. Nahua influence is visible not only in the presence of different stylistic traits in comparison with other catechisms in images but also in the nature of glyphs chosen. The *Catecismo en pictogramas* and the *Incompleto*, both intrinsically related to Gante, present indeed, stylistic traits that show a very heavy Nahua influence, particularly, in their use of colour, the absence of perspective and gradation of colour, the position of figures (looking sideways, frontal pose only used to represent divinity), and the use of single glyphs instead of compound images representing scenes.

The style of both catechisms is similar, showcasing that they were probably made around the same time and most likely followed a single prototype. Possibly one of them was the prototype. In comparison to the later *Catecismo 078*, it is clear that the nature, character and complexity of the glyphs employed has changed. The speech scroll is, for example, an element not present anymore in 078 and similarly the use of hands as phonetic elements. [For details of the stylistic analysis and interpretation see chapter 7.] These subtle differences, which showcase a more intense use of glyphs derived from the Nahua imaginary, illustrate that the author of the *Catecismo en pictogramas*, Gante, was not only more aware of the traditional Mexica writing system and its different layers of meaning than the author(s) of

078 but also the intricacies of Christian iconography.¹¹⁶ This suggests we are dealing with a work produced through intense collaboration between missionary and Nahua(s). This is evident in particular in the modification of the semantics of the glyphs or the lack of knowledge (on the part of the missionary) of the different layers of meaning of certain glyphs. Glyphs depicting a flower, could, for example, also be related to sexuality [Sigal 2011:4-9]. Another example is the glyph depicting an incense pouch to represent sin, which reflects the way Gante appropriated an element of Nahua ritual paraphernalia and reintroduced it with a negative semantic connotation. On the other hand certain elements retained their original Nahua meaning such as the feather, the speech scrolls and the *icpalli*. The use of colour adding another layer of meaning (such as red for divinity) also retains Nahua attributes, which could imply that a Nahua was involved in the creation of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and the *Catecismo Incompleto*. We can also note the heavy presence of so-called phonetic glyphs. These glyphs, although, representing Nahua words were in limited use prior to the arrival of the Spanish in Tenochtitlan. This illustrates that the missionaries utilised and reshaped the indigenous writing system, made available to them through Nahua aides, to express particular Christian concepts and further their evangelical goals.

The extant examples of catechisms in images illustrate, indeed, the different degrees of collaboration between missionaries and indigenous peoples. Analysis of the Catechism 078 shows, for example, next to indigenous influences an even greater European input as reflected in its use of Christian elements such as the use of persons carrying vessels to represent the concept of guilt instead of the incense pouch employed by Gante to represent the concept of sin or the depiction of the sun to depict each day instead of the temples (*momoztlae*) in Gante.

What is also noteworthy in this respect is the appearance in other catechisms of marginalia explaining the images in the text. The latter were used to help explain the content of the catechism, suggesting that indigenous readers at some stage had lost the ability to interpret the glyphs depicted. Based on this evidence it appears likely that Nahuas were involved in the production of catechisms, not only as advisors and as copyists, but also helping to adapt the

¹¹⁶ We need to keep in mind that in the Catechism 078 there is also a usage of glyphs from indigenous origin, however, there seems to be more European characteristics in this particular catechism. [For more on the comparison between the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and Catechism 078 see chapter 7].

original meanings of glyphs in order to fit Christian concepts. In addition they were readers and consumers of the catechisms that were produced.

With regards to the works produced by Gante in alphabetic Nahuatl, it is more difficult to discern the degree of collaboration between missionary and Nahuas. It appears that works such as Gante's *Doctrina* and *Cartilla* were made by a team of collaborators which included several of his Nahua students. From the start of his missionary endeavour Gante was assisted by his Nahua students from Texcoco. They helped him master Nahuatl and it is very likely that they also assisted him in the preparation of his works for publication. Their involvement is vital because Gante would have wanted to make sure that his translation was clear and would not lead to misinterpretations and heresy. It is possible that each of these students performed a different task as scribes, editors or consultants. The production of his alphabetic script writings also, probably consisted of at least two stages, similarly, as noted in chapter 4, to Sahagún's translation of the *Psalmody Christiana* [León-Portilla 2004:17]. The first stage of the process sees Gante making the initial translation. The second stage represents an editorial phase in which Gante and his Nahua students review the translated texts and made accommodations in order to facilitate its understanding by Nahua audiences.

Nahua influence on the alphabetic script writings by Gante can be seen, for example, in its use and modification of Nahua imaginary concepts such as *Mictlan* and *tlatlacolli*. Such concepts were modified and had their meaning adjusted in order to express what Gante intended. It is likely that the concepts were explained by a Nahua to Gante who might have thought they were similar enough to hell and sin. Then Gante interiorized the concept and reintroduced it in its modified 'Christianized' meaning. The texts also make use of reverential and metaphorical speech and epithets. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, epithets applied in particular to Nahua deities are now used to refer to god and the devil. We also see the use of particular forms of speech such as iteration and salutations. Iteration was a common form of speech found in the discourses of the elder or *huehuetlatolli* and was widely employed in Nahua oral sources as an eidetic tool. As demonstrated in chapter 9, iteration can be identified both in the *Doctrina* and in the *Cartilla*. However, it is of particular importance in the *Cartilla* as this Nahua form was used as a useful tool for the memorization of long texts and could be easily adapted to song. This leads to the possibility that the prayers in the *Cartilla* were sung. Its use in the *Cartilla* showcases Gante's ingenuity in selecting and modifying specific elements of Nahua culture in order to better convey Christian ideas and notions. The use of salutations such as the one that appears in the introduction of the Ave

Maria –*maximopaquiltitit*, which can mean ‘Saint Mary brighten up’, a standard Nahua salutation [Acker 1990:85] — also shows Nahua influence. Comparative analysis of the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla* (see chapter 8 and 9) illustrates how the process of translation and the searching for appropriate solutions for the expression of Christian doctrine in Nahuatl led to an intensive dialogue between Gante, his fellow missionaries and their Nahua assistants as can be seen in the translation of difficult terms noted in this chapter. The latter helping the former to make the new Christian doctrine understandable and conceptually available to indigenous audiences.

In summary, Nahua influence on the various works of Gante can be documented and takes various forms. The clearest signs of indigenous involvement are visible in the catechism. The choice of and rendering of the glyphs demonstrating clear Nahua influence. Furthermore, numerous stylistic elements were borrowed from Nahua sources. Indigenous influence on Gante’s Nahuatl written texts is more difficult to ascertain as it is present in more nuanced forms. Nevertheless the use of specific Nahua concepts can be identified such as reverential and metaphorical speech and epithets. The utilisation of iteration and salutations also displays Nahua influence. It is clear therefore that the works of Gante demonstrate profound Nahua influence on a number of levels. Their form and substance was heavily influenced by this indigenous involvement, which resulted from the missionary need to communicate effectively a new religion to an audience unfamiliar and unaccustomed to many of its doctrinal concepts and cosmology. The accommodation reached through Nahua assistants and intermediaries helped to make understandable without compromising or altering the Christian message to the Nahua populations of the valley of Mexico.

6.4 Comparison between Pastoral Quechua and Nahuatl doctrinal writings

In this section I will present a brief comparison between doctrinal writings in Nahuatl and Pastoral Quechua (doctrinal translations in Quechua) in order to understand the important role the agency of missionaries played in the translation process in Mexico. A comparison with texts written in Pastoral Quechua allows a deeper understanding of the varied dimensions of the process of translation, a pivotal facet of the evangelization of New Spain. Doctrinal texts in New Spain and other areas of the Spanish American Empire developed in different ways. In the region of the Andes the trajectory of evangelization differed vastly from Central Mexico. The length of time between the earliest evangelical efforts and the policies of Counter Reformation, as introduced by Philip II, was shorter than in New Spain.

The nature of the evangelization in the Andes is marked by a stricter policy and an aim to achieve standardization by following closely Tridentine guidelines [Durstun 2007:503].

According to Durstun in his *Pastoral Quechua: The History of Christian translation in Peru, 1550-1560* [2007] doctrinal texts in the Andes can be divided into four major stages: *primera evangelización* (ca. 1550-1580), the Third Council corpus, the post-council literature (ca. 1590-1640) and the mid-century literature (late 1640s) [Durstun 2007:503]. Due to limitations of space and relevance with regards to the chronology of doctrinal writings in New Spain during Gante's life, I focus on the two first stages.

From the first period only a few textual fragments have survived. These all belong to one single author Santo Tomás. The translation efforts during this phase were small in scale and less systematic than translations belonging to the second stage [Durstun 2007:350]. The evidence available characterizes this stage as a moment of limited experimentation with translation and an inclination from the clergymen to use adopted terms and neologisms instead of loanwords. Translations from this early phase have more freedom both in the choice of translations strategies and in terms of the texts translated. However, the material still needed to follow guidelines from the Second Lima Council (1567-68) which was held in order to apply the Tridentine decrees in Spanish South America [Durstun 2007:72]. The second stage involves the majority of extant Pastoral Quechua translations. The material follows the strict guidelines of the Third Lima Council (1581) [Durstun 2007:503]. These guidelines followed the most important tenets of the Counter Reformation: doctrinal standardization to retain doctrinal purity and universal catechetical instruction [Durstun 2007:504]. The most important achievement of the Third Lima Council was the commission of an official catechism under the title *Doctrina Christiana y catecismo para instrucción de los indios*. The text was first written in Spanish, probably by José de Acosta, and then translated to a Southern Quechua variant. The trilingual text was printed in 1584 and was made obligatory in the archdiocese of Lima and the dioceses under its jurisdiction, which covered all of Spanish South America [Durstun 2007:123]. The second stage is characterized by being highly controlled and centralized [Durstun 2007:499].

As can be seen from the above, the evolution of doctrinal texts in the Andes was very different from New Spain. In New Spain doctrinal translation enjoyed a greater degree of freedom, was more prolific, involved more languages and was more diverse terminologically [Durstun 2007:501]. This was the result of the lack of agreement regarding standardization –

as I have mentioned in the previous chapter there was no canonical body of vernacular texts in New Spain. Indeed terminological debates in New Spain were common well into the 17th century [Tavarez 2000: 32]. In addition to this, the role that the Mendicant orders played in New Spain differed vastly from clerical activities in the Andes region where they were never as autonomous as in New Spain and could only work within certain restrictions [Durston 2007:502]. Indeed, the translation program of the Third Lima Council was directed by the secular Church and the Society of Jesus and not the Mendicant orders [Durston 2007:500]. The limitations established by the Third Lima Council resulted in a restricted range of genres, the absence of indigenous collaboration and restrictions applied to the publishing of Quechua texts, which could not be printed without accompanying translations in Latin and Spanish. These limitations resulted in Pastoral Quechua being presented as supplementary in relation to Latin and Spanish [Durston 2007:511-2]. Another important element is the different role the printing press played in this process. Whereas in New Spain the printing press was introduced in 1539-1549 and permitted the printing of numerous doctrinal and catechetical texts in different languages, printing in Peru only began in 1584. As Durston notes, printing was introduced as an instrument for the standardization and homogenization of translation to a far greater extent than in New Spain [Durston 2007:502].

In terms of the range of genres translated, as New Spain there were certain texts that were not translated into Pastoral Quechua such as the Bible [Durston 2007:282]. On the other hand, a variety of liturgical prayers were translated into Quechua. The Psalms were excluded on the grounds that they were Biblical texts [Durston 2007:283], however, in New Spain Sahagún had translated them in his *Psalmodia Mexicana*. The manuscript form of the *Psalmodia* was allowed to circulate in 1564 by Viceroy Mendoza, was printed in 1582 and approved by the Third Ecclesiastical Council in Mexico in 1585 [Anderson 1984:107-8]. There also seems to be a very limited number of religious songs written in Quechua, unlike the *Cantares Mexicanos* and the *Psalmodia Mexicana*. Both works were compendiums of sacred hymns and Psalms to be sung. It seems that the nature of Quechua itself impeded translated hymns as clerics found it difficult to maintain the metrical form of the original in the music [Durston 2007:283]. Instructional literature such as Thomas à Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ* was not translated into Quechua. The majority of Quechua religious literature is catechetical in nature— catechisms, *platicas* and sermons [Durston 2007:286]. This again differs from what we see in Central Mexico. As noted above, Molina had carried out a translation of à Kempis' work. [See chapter 3.] In Peru there is also an absence of translations of theologically

complex works and religious plays, the latter in New Spain dating to the period 1550 to 1650 [Durston 2007:286]. As pointed out in chapter 4 religious plays were widely popular in the context of Central Mexico [Durston 2007:287].

The available evidence indicates that the translation process itself differed as well. In the Andean region texts were first composed in Spanish and only then translated into Quechua [Durston 2007:285]. While we know that in the devotional writings in central Mexico, texts seem often to have been composed directly into Nahuatl. In Pastoral Quechua there are awkward syntactic constructions that follow the Latin version almost verbatim. It has been suggested by Durston that this seems to be a deliberate choice by the translator rather than reflecting his lack of fluency in the language [Durston 2007:305]. It probably also indicates that the original was in Latin. The situation is different in New Spain as can be seen in Gante's translation of the *Cartilla* and *Doctrina*, which not only uses Nahuatl syntax, but also expands on complex theological notions for their better understanding. [For more on the translation of the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla* see chapter 8 and 9].

We can also note the absence of native genres in Pastoral Quechua. Durston questions the issue of indigenous authorship as there is no evidence of collaboration between missionaries and indigenous assistants as occurred with translation of Christian texts into Nahuatl [Durston 2007:290]. Durston asks whether this betrays an absence of cooperation between clergymen and the indigenous populations in Peru, or if the clerics went to great lengths to hide such collaborations. Durston adds that the ability of indigenous peoples to express Christian theology accurately seemed to have been challenged more strongly in Peru than in other areas of the Spanish empire [Durston 2007:290].

In this section I will focus in particular on the first stage of translation in Peru and will contrast it with the first stage of translation in New Spain, which encompasses roughly Gante's life, in order to understand the different trajectories translation projects had in Central Mexico and Peru and explore what can be discerned about the agency of religious translators from these different trajectories. Missionaries in the Andes employed similar translation solutions to the translations in Nahuatl discussed previously in this chapter. The most important of these was the intensive use of loanwords to render complex Christian theological terms. Both doctrinal Nahuatl and Pastoral Quechua during this stage appear to have more Spanish loanwords than Latin [Durston 2007:337]. Nevertheless, translations from the first stage in Pastoral Quechua, as exemplified by the works of Santo Tomás, employ a

large number of neologisms for complex Christian concepts such as *Diospayanan* (God's assistant) for 'saint' instead of borrowing Latin or Spanish words [Durstun 2007:338-339]. By contrast, during this early stage in New Spain there is a more intensive use of Spanish and Latin loanwords in relation to complex Christian notions. For example, instead of finding a Nahuatl neologism for Saint the word was borrowed from the Latin 'sancto'. Nevertheless there are limited exceptions to this. For example in Pastoral Quechua the word 'rezar' was borrowed from Spanish for 'praying', whereas in Nahuatl the word employed was *machitiliztli*, derived from the verb *machtia* (to learn/preach).

Santo Tomás, like missionaries in New Spain, also made use of semantic extension. For example, the line from the Ave Maria, 'Hail Mary, full of grace', was translated as *Dios ancha coyassungui, hochanacmi canqui* (God loves you very much, you are sinless). In this way Santo Tomás was conveying the meaning of grace through the result of an action [Durstun 2007:338-339]. In the *Cartilla* [as can be seen in chapter 9] Gante translates the line as *Sancta Mariae maximopaquiltitit, timotemiltitica in gracia* (Saint Mary rejoice! You are extended in gracia). Gante in contrast to Santo Tomás has thus borrowed the term 'gracia' from Spanish in order to avoid misunderstanding.

Interestingly after the Third Lima Council uniformity in terminology was preferred and translators avoided both paraphrases and neologisms. Neologisms and borrowed terms from Quechua were now employed in a very limited way. However, some of these terms continued to be used after the Third Lima Council. One example of this is the Quechua noun *hucha*, a word for 'debt' or 'obligation'. This term was employed for 'sin'. Similarly to the situation in Central Mexico, the Andean concept of *hucha* did not carry the sense of a voluntary act which polluted the individual soul and had to be confessed in order to gain absolution. The concept of *hucha* was related to an Andean ceremony of purification after a transgression in order to avoid ulterior consequences [Durstun 2007:345-6]. This term continued to be used after the Third Lima Council [Durstun 2007:338-339]. In Central Mexico, as noted earlier in the chapter, a Nahuatl concept was also borrowed *tlatlacolli* (something spoiled or damaged) [Gante 1553, 1569]. This reflects the problems clergymen had in both regions in defining the concept of sin and shows how they tried to find indigenous analogies, which would help indigenous peoples to understand the action or emotion associated with the concept of sin. Another complex translation is the word and idea of 'God'. In Pastoral Quechua the Spanish loanword 'Dios' was employed for God. An exception to this is the work of Juan de Betanzos, author of several catechetical texts in Quechua during the 1540s, who employed

the word Viracocha for God [Durston 2007:344]. In Central Mexico, as noted earlier, the missionaries employed both the words *teotl* and ‘Dios’. The word *teotl*, however, did not refer to a specific god, as in the case of Viracocha, which probably caused confusion among Andean peoples who probably associated the Christian God with Viracocha. [Durston 2007:364]. In the case of the concept of ‘soul’ neologisms and adapted terms were employed in Pastoral Quechua such as *songo*, *camaquen*, *gamaynin* and *ucupi cac runa* (our heart, our camaquen, our interior person). These terms appear in the Spanish-Quechua section of 1560 Santo Tomas’ dictionary and were employed in conjunction, because by themselves they were not adequate to convey the full range of meanings of soul [Durston 2007:349]. By way of contrast, as we have seen in this chapter, missionaries in New Spain preferred to employ the Latin/Spanish borrowing of *anima*, sometimes paired with the Nahuatl *teyolia*. After the Third Lima Council the loanword ‘anima’ was also employed instead of compound Quechua solutions. This preference for Spanish and Latin loanwords after the Third Lima Council can also be seen in the use of the loanword ‘santo’ to replace the previously used neologism *Diospa yanan* (God’s servant) [Durston 2007:350]. Another problematic concept was the word ‘virgin’ attributed to the Holy Virgin Mary. In Santo Tomás’ version of the Confiteor, Mary is addressed as *sehora sancta Maria tazqui diospa maman*. The word *tazqui* has a meaning close to ‘virgin’. Durston notes that the concept relates more to a designated age group and that it is not clear to what extent the concept of virginity was part of the language before [Durston 2007:351]. The Dominican Nahuatl *Doctrina* from 1548 uses the term ‘virgen’ instead as an analogue term was absent [Sigal 2011:97]. In the Articles of Faith of Gante’s *Doctrina* [1553] Gante employs the words *cequizca ychpochtli* that translate as ‘always maiden.’ The word was also employed for adolescent girls and young women. Interestingly in Pastoral Quechua ordinary virgins were designated with another Spanish loanword ‘donzella.’ In this way, the word *tazqui* was reserved only for the holy virginity of Mary [Durston 2007:351]. As noted from this comparison it can be appreciated the difficulties that both groups of translators had in their search for terms in conveying the exact meaning of Christian concepts. There seems to be a preference, however, in borrowing Spanish and Latin terms for complex notions, as can be noted by the examples from New Spain and Pastoral Quechua’s translations from the Third Lima Council.

Another interesting comparison of translation is the borrowing of epithets. In contrast to New Spain where epithets for Nahuas deities were commonly employed, the use of epithets in Pastoral Quechua is more closely associated with the Inca sovereign. Nevertheless certain

epithets such as *ussapu*, *tocapu*, *acnupu*, and *huallpayhuana* were associated with Viracocha. Durston suggests that the use of these epithets in a Christian context was intended to allow Andeans to formulate their relationship with God in terms that were more familiar to them [Durston 2007:456]. By adapting elements of Andean cosmology the clerics were following established Christian pedagogical methods of expedient selection. These pedagogical methods were meant to capture the attention of the indigenous peoples [Durston 2007:448]. However, after the Third Lima Council clerics preferred to use primarily metaphorical Christian speech and epithets of Andean origin became scarce. Andean elements appear only in subtle ways in passages of description and narrative rather than in relation to specific religious terms [Durston 2007:364].

In conclusion, doctrinal Nahuatl and Pastoral Quechua had very different trajectories. Translation efforts in Peru were thwarted by the guidelines of both the Second and Third Lima councils, which closely followed guidelines established by the Council of Trent regarding doctrinal purity and standardization. The creation of a canonical catechism in the Andes curtailed the dialogue between missionaries and indigenous collaborators and frustrated the attempts to find the best translation solutions. In addition to this, the limited autonomy of the Mendicant orders in the area severely affected proselytising endeavours and in particular translations. In Central Mexico there was a dialogue not only between missionaries but in particular with indigenous collaborators. This allowed a better understanding of both Nahuatl and Nahuatl cultural categories. In Peru collaboration with indigenous peoples appears to have been non-existent or heavily restricted. In this we can see different levels of agency among missionaries at play. While in New Spain missionaries such as Gante created liminal places of dialogue, in Peru this does not seem to have been the case. This is reflected in the translations. Whereas the translations from Central Mexico show a diversity of genres, terminology, the borrowing of contents and a deeper understanding of the cultural categories of the Nahuas, in the Andean region translations seem to be highly restricted in this respect, as can be seen by the syntax of the texts, in which translation from a Latin or Spanish source appears almost verbatim. Gante, seen in this light, had the freedom to affect in a multifarious way the translation process and created liminal spaces of dialogue in which missionaries and Nahuas interacted. Interestingly the comparison between some of his translation solutions and those of Santo Tomas' shows the level of Spanish and Latin borrowing for the explanation of complex Christian concepts. This appears to reflect Gante's early understanding of the lack of analogous concepts in Nahuatl, as a result of his intense

collaboration with the Nahuas under his charge. Here we can thus see demonstrated his desire to avoid confusion and keep the terms employed as orthodox as possible. This search for orthodoxy can be seen later in Peru following the Third Lima Council. Finally, doctrinal Nahuatl texts also reveal missionary ideas related to the intellectual capabilities of the Nahuas, who at least during the first stage of missionary work in New Spain, were deemed capable enough to attend secondary education, learn Latin, approach complex devotional literature and even to become priests.

6.5 Lost in translation? Missionary translation efforts

I have shown in this chapter that Gante was one of the first missionaries to begin the process of translation of Christian doctrine into Nahuatl. According to the categories established by Jakobson [1959], Gante's work presents two different examples of translation, intersemiotic translation and interlingual translation. Intersemiotic translation was a necessary tool to compose the *Catecismo*, a complex mixture of Nahua glyphs and Christian iconography. The translation of the *Catecismo* faced several challenges, as elements of the Nahua imaginary needed to be taken out of their context and inserted into new concepts and thus re-contextualized, an evident case of 'entextualization' as proposed by Leone [2008].

The *Cartilla* and the *Doctrina* are examples of interlingual translation. Interlingual translation also had its challenges, as Nahuatl again was employed to translate a very dissimilar belief system: Christianity. Gante, like other missionaries of the time, developed several strategies to solve the complexities of translation: loan words from Nahuatl, Spanish and Latin, semantic extensions and neologisms. These strategies although they helped to refine translations, on occasion could be interpreted by Nahuas and missionaries in different ways, a problem that showcases the concept of double-mistaken-identity as proposed by Lockhart [1992], in which the same elements were interpreted by the different groups according to their own framework, in particular concepts sharing similarities.

Nevertheless, in the context of New Spain, as Zimmerman observes, a transculturation by subordination or appropriation developed in which the indigenous and Spanish traits mixed and were rebuilt again in a new form [Zimmerman 2005:11-12, 15, 22]. Transculturation by subordination as noted by Zimmerman makes allusion to the fact that transculturation does not only look at cultural interaction as interaction between equals but also implies a relation of inequality of power or subordination such as was the case in New Spain. An aspect of the transculturation process was expedient selection, this is missionaries' accommodation of

concepts of the Nahua imaginary. These concepts were reinterpreted by the missionaries and reintroduced to the Nahua, but with different associations and intrinsic meanings.

Zimmerman's idea seems to suggest that even though missionaries tried to avoid the influence of Nahua religion, there was a sort of reciprocal transculturation between missionaries and Nahuas in which Nahua cultural categories entered and influenced Christian notions [Zimmerman 2005:11-12, 15, 22]. Although it is quite likely that at some extent this happened, there is scant evidence to be sure this occurred in reality. I consider that these reciprocated transculturation happened but in slightly different lines. As I have discussed in the beginning of the chapter, it probably occurred as a side effect of the translation process. The borrowing of Nahua cultural categories and language by the missionaries to transmit their message, forced the missionaries to analyse and deconstruct their own complex Christian notions in order to select which elements of the concept had similarities with Nahua cultural categories. This can be seen for example in the translation solution of semantic extension in which a term or a compound of words explained a concept; on many occasions the compound word alluded to a specific action derived from the Christian notion. For example the use of *tlamaceualiztli* (the meriting of things) to describe penance or the expression used by Gante for contrite *Nehuapol tixcoya tiquitozq* (what we are to say to make one self humble). In this way the missionary needed first to understand the Christian notion in all its complexity and levels, second he needed to rank what was according to him the most important element for the Nahuas to understand, and third he needed to find an analogical term that could convey that specific facet of the Christian notion. In this way the missionary challenged his own preconceived idea of the Christian notion and defined it in a more profound way. This also helped to shape the outward form of Christianity in Central Mexico. Employing the same example of contrite we can see that missionaries, such as Gante, were not able to determine if the Nahua had interiorized the term, therefore the missionaries needed for the Nahuas to exteriorize the concept, by highlighting an action related to the notion of contrite the missionary could see that the Nahua had indeed understood it. This pushed the Church in Central Mexico in a different trajectory than missionaries had planned in the beginning of their missionary enterprise. Missionaries from the early phase wanted to establish a Church closer to the Northern Humanist ideal of an interiorized religion and to its original Apostolic roots [Rubial García 2004:106, Montes de Oca 2011-b:131]. However, by requiring to see the outward forms of devotion (sometimes even in an exaggerated form) the missionaries needed to move away from their planned form of devotion and shaped the Church in the area according to their immediate needs and Nahua culture. Translation of

Christian concepts into Nahuatl indicates a conquest not only in spiritual terms but in terms of individual and social identity. In other words, Nahua communities were conquered through the appropriation of their own language by Europeans. However, as Burkhart observes, through Christian pedagogic texts, glimpses of the continuity of indigenous cosmology, rituals and practises can be seen. This seems to be a side-effect of the translation process in which vernacular languages of the Mesoamerican peoples and in particular Nahuatl were employed. By employing Nahuatl as the language of indoctrination, Christianity was reinterpreted through Nahua cosmology, using Nahua cultural categories. As Burkhart observes, in this way missionaries inadvertently allowed the retention of a large amount of indigenous belief within the context of Nahua Christianity, just as Christianity in Europe retained a large amount of indigenous belief from pre-Christian European thought. Christian concepts thus acquired a new level of meaning and symbolic associations while at the same time Nahuatl language acquired new modes of expression and terminology. Christianity was thus 'Nahuaticized' [Burkhart 1988:234-5, 252-3, Graham 2011]. This process is interpreted by Carbonell as cultural translation: a level of interaction that takes place whenever an alien experience is internalized and rewritten in a culture where the experience is received [Carbonell 1996:81 cited in Ríos Castaño 2007:124].

Nahuas were an important part of the translation process. As Sahagún pointed out, Nahuas were able to show the missionaries where they had employed misleading terms or produced incongruent translations. This collaboration was an extremely useful tool in the creation of clearer doctrinal texts, which avoided heresies or misinterpretations [Ricard 1966:224]. This input can be appreciated, although subtly, in Gante's work. It is particularly evident in the context of the *Catecismo* which displays an incredible knowledge of Nahua cosmology and the Mexica writing system, which clearly points to the input of Nahuas. Although it is less evident in the *Doctrina* and *Cartilla*, Nahua collaboration can be seen in the use of metaphorical or reverential speech, salutations, iteration and the borrowing of complex Nahua concepts such as Mictlan. The collaboration allowed a selected group of Nahuas to become an essential part of the process of Christianization in which they played an important role in the accommodation of terms and concepts. Their importance is evident in particular when we compare the development of Pastoral Quechua in Peru with that of doctrinal Nahuatl. Collaboration between clerics and indigenous peoples seems to be absent with regards to Pastoral Quechua. Although it is quite likely that there was some degree of collaboration in the translation process (possibly undercover), the lack of evidence

of collaboration between the groups shows how clerics in the Andes area seem to have judged negatively the intellectual capabilities of the indigenous population and their ability to contribute to the creation of Christian texts in the local language. This lack of collaboration also shows how in many ways the understanding of the texts by the Andean peoples could have been more limited than in New Spain. Nahuas dialogue with the missionaries during the process of translation was able to assure the friars that the local population understood what was being transmitted. This feedback, however, was not possible in the Andes. Moreover, by trying to keep their translations as standardized as possible clergymen in the Andes were not able to find more adequate translation solutions which could have conveyed the message better.

In many ways the translation process in Peru and Mexico showed a different developmental trajectory. Although similar translation solutions were employed, the flexibility of translation process in New Spain did not occur in the Andes region. This situation seems to have been the result of several factors such as the close following of the guidelines of the Council of Trent and the Third Lima Council by the Andean clergymen, both of which were keen on imposing Counter Reformation ideas. In addition to this, Pastoral Quechua translations were directed by seculars and the Jesuits. The limited autonomy of the mendicants in the Andean area seems to suggest that that the power of the mendicant orders in New Spain was an important aspect in their different approach to the translation process. For example, the particular agency of the missionaries operating in central Mexico can be appreciated from the large amount of translations they produced, the diverse genres employed and the flexibility of the translation solutions. The absence of a canonical body of texts forced the missionaries to establish a dialogue not only amongst themselves, but also with the Nahua population in order to produce both a coherent and effective translation of the Christian discourse. In this way, both mendicants and Nahua collaborators worked together in shaping the future of Christianity in Central Mexico.

With this, I hope to have presented an overview of the most common problems encountered by the missionaries and their solutions while translating Christian doctrine. This overview is essential to understand the work of Gante in a contextualized manner. In the next chapters I will expand on this analysis to identify how Gante drew elements from the Nahua imaginary, gave them a new meaning and adapted them to transmit the Christian message. By studying sections of the *Catecismo*, the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla* it would be possible to see the particular agency of Gante and his interaction with his Nahua students.

Part Three

Chapter 7: The Catecismo en Pictogramas

During the complex process of evangelization, the missionaries' concepts of language, alphabet and books were challenged by the writing systems and material carriers of expression of the different indigenous groups they encountered. How missionaries –with the help of the Nahuas— appropriated, relocated and redeployed these different systems for their own evangelical purposes is the main subject of this chapter. The focus will be on the *Catecismo en pictogramas* (ca. 1527-1529) by Gante. The *Catecismo* was the first step in the replacement of writing systems and material carriers of information. This replacement would have tremendous consequences for Nahua conceptual categories as it transformed the way Nahuas comprehended the world.

In this chapter, I will analyse the formal attributes of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* in the Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE, *MS Vit.26-29*) in order to determine not only authorship but the translation process of catechetical instruction by means of a system that emulates or mimics the logo/pictographic writing system of the Nahuas and how this was combined with 16th-century Christian iconography. In the *Catecismo* the Nahua script was deployed, transformed, and ultimately transmuted by its association with Christian imagery; thus Nahua glyphs were Christianized. The *Catecismo* thus can be seen as an example of intersemiotic translation –that is oral and visual codes transferred into a written code or a new painted one [Ríos Castaño 2007:125, Zamora Ramírez 2011:566-7]. By studying the formal attributes of the catechism, trends and patterns in the transposition process will be made clear. In order to conduct this analysis, the Galarza iconographic method will be employed in the study of a prayer taken from the *Catecismo*, the *Pater Noster*, perhaps the most significant prayer in the Christian repertoire, and probably the first to be translated by missionaries. The Galarza method has proved essential to analyse and understand the content of catechisms in images as this descriptive method, which analyses not only graphic elements but the semantics of the glyphs according to both Nahua and European contexts, can give us a better understanding of the semantics and content of the *Pater Noster*. The Galarza method is very helpful in determining the basic structure of the catechism and analysing the connection between the elements depicted in the exemplar, connections that point to the specific choices that were made during the translation process [Galarza 1992:20, Bonilla 2004:12].

This catechism will be compared with another catechism attributed to Gante's school, the *Incompleto*, in order to determine if they were indeed made by the same hand/institution, and

if there existed a prototype, as suggested by Normann [1985]. Formal elements of the *Pater Noster* prayer of the *Catecismo* will be then compared with Sahagún's *Indigenous catechism 078* in the Bibliothèque Nationale of France in Paris. The similarities and differences between these catechisms will be analysed in order to identify whether any standardization or writing conventions had come into being in relation to the transliteration of the prayer and to discern if there were innovations in the Nahuatl glyphs employed to represent Christian concepts [Resines 1993:666]. My hope is that comparison will lead to a new understanding of the creation process as well as authorship and standardization. In addition, my approach considers the extent of the collaboration between missionaries and Nahuatl, and the collaboration between missionaries themselves.

7.1 Physical description

The state of conservation of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* is very good. The sheets of paper of the *Catecismo* are uncut; the height is different in almost all the folios, but overall the book is 7.7 cm height and 5.3 cm wide. Unlike many Colonial codices, the material used for the catechism is European paper.

The *Catecismo* goes from page one to sixty-five. Two blank pages with the seal of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid separate the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* from the *Catecismo Incompleto*.¹¹⁷ The *Catecismo Incompleto* goes from page sixty-seven to eighty-two.¹¹⁸ On page eighty-three the signature of Gante appears. Normann observes that the location of the thread holes on page eighty-three indicates that the final page does not belong to the *Catecismo Incompleto* but to the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* [Normann 1985:67]. This tells us the binding was not original but subsequent to production. In the *Incompleto* we find again the little stamp of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid. On page eighty four, a blotch next to a large 'D', an 'E', and a 'G' appear. Justino Cortés [1987:184] suggests that someone wanted to write 'De Gante.'

The figures are distributed in five horizontal lines or registers; each line contains six figures (a register occupies two pages). The glyphs are positioned inside these strips, starting on the upper left side and ending on the bottom right side. In this way, the 'text' must be read from

¹¹⁷ The name *Catecismo Incompleto* was coined by Luis Resines in his study of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* [Resines 2007:230].

¹¹⁸ On page eighty, after the last pictogram of the *Catecismo Incompleto* illegible handwriting appears.

left to right and from top to bottom. The figures and registers are outlined in black ink, and figures are bi-dimensional filled with bright red, yellow, blue and green colours. Lines start on the verso of the preceding folio and continue on the recto of the next directing thus the reading direction. The starting reading point can be found on the upper right corner of the page.

The *Catecismo* starts with a handwritten note on the recto of folio two. It says the following in Castilian ‘Este librito es de figuras con que los misioneros enseñaban a los indios la doctrina al principio de la conquista de la Indias’ [Gante 1527:f.2r]. Scholars agree that this note was added later, probably in the 18th century [Cortés 1987:75]. On the recto of folio three, in the centre of the page, there is a violet ink stamp of the Archivo Histórico Nacional and another blue one, of smaller size, with the abbreviation of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid. According to Justino Cortés this means that the catechism was originally kept in Mexico and for reasons yet unknown it was sent to Spain on the 20 January 1897.

Underneath these two stamps, three small drawings appear; two of them are impossible to identify, the third represents a figure. However, according to Justino Cortés these figures represent a person, two faces, a hand and the sketch of a wing. They are not coloured [Cortés 1987:76].

The date of composition of this work is uncertain. According to Cortés [1987, p.77] it is possible that the catechism was written between the years 1527 and 1529. Cortés bases his argument on the number of copies produced and the duration of time the *tlahcuilos* of Gante needed to learn and understand the basic premises of Christian doctrine, these *tlahcuilos* were not only helping with its manufacture but were also the immediate addressees of the book. For the purposes of this work, I will build my analysis upon Cortés’ assumption as it is quite likely that the first attempts to communicate Christian doctrine to the Nahuas were based on images more than words as the knowledge of the language by the missionaries must have been in the initial stages at that point. Moreover, if the date of the catechism is indeed as early as 1527/29 it probably means that it was the result of an intense collaboration with the Nahuas, as evidenced by the analysis of the catechism; the nuances of the language and Nahua cultural concepts are very strong, indicating Nahua involvement in the process of creation.

Ann Normann suggests that six catechisms in total might belong to the so-called Gante group: the already mentioned *Catecismo en Pictogramas*, and *Catecismo Incompleto*, to

which she adds the *Mucagua*,¹¹⁹ the Princeton catechism, the stolen catechism of Tulane University, and the Alphonse Pinart copy of the missing Tulane catechism.

Normann after examining selected glyphs and the content of each of the copies reached the conclusion that the catechisms were copied from an earlier non-extant one –the prototype. All of the examples have similar dimensions, approximately 7.7 x 5.5 cm. I agree with Normann’s suggestion that such small size evidences their use by young children trained by missionaries. It must also have been particularly useful as their small size made them easily transportable and could be carried constantly by the owner to consult [Normann 1985:36]. Normann divides the exemplars in two sub-groups based upon a comparison of selected glyphs that have been slightly modified as they were copied several times by different people. In the first group, the meaning has been lost as the glyphs have become distorted whereas the second group shares identical glyphs, which probably indicates not only that they are older, but that they followed the original prototype; the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and the *Catecismo Incompleto* both belong to this latter group [Normann 1985:61- 4].

7.2 The Pater Noster Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer or *Pater Noster* was the answer Jesus gave to his disciples when they inquired on how they were to pray, which Jesus responded to with the *Pater Noster* [Christensen 2010:118]. Derived from the Vulgate, it was expected that it would be memorized by all Christians and therefore its translation maintained a large degree of consistency; for this reason in particular the *Pater Noster* prayer has been selected to be analysed. As a popular prayer it probably was one of the first catechetical texts to be translated. Its complexity also highlights the difficulties encountered when translating and can indicate if the glyphs are a representation of an oral or written prayer and/or the original language.

Following the Galarza iconographic method for analysing codices, the different glyphs of the *Pater Noster* prayer of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* have been counted, described and their

¹¹⁹ The *Mucagua* (Cod. 1257-B) is preserved in the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid. It has a similar content to the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*. However it also presents certain additional features in its fifty-four folios. It presents the sign of the cross, the *Pater Noster*, the *Ave Maria*, *Salve Regina*, the Creed, *Mea Culpa*, the doctrinal summary, Articles of Faith, the Decalogue, the commandments of the church, the sacraments, the acts of mercy and the final prayer. Unlike the *Catecismo*, it also contains the prayer for the dead and the prayer for the living. The glyphs of the *Mucagua* although simpler are identical to the glyphs that appear on the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and the *Incompleto*, helping to ascribe this exemplar to Gante’s school [For an exhaustive comparison between the glyphs of the *Mucagua* and the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* see Resines 2007].

associations have been analysed. The denomination and numeration of the glyphs is based on the works of Justino Cortés and Luis Resines. It is important to maintain this sequence to facilitate comparison. Thirty figures in total appear in the *Pater Noster* prayer of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*.

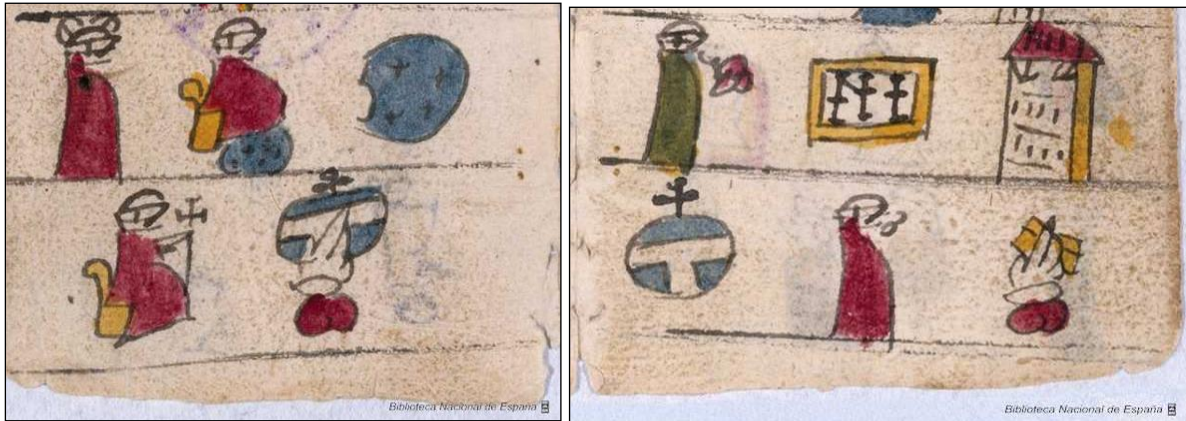


Fig. 23 *The Pater Noster Catecismo en Pictogramas, Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid. pp. 4-5*
 [Source:<http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000057904&page=1> 10/10/2011]¹²⁰



Fig. 24 *The Pater Noster Catecismo en Pictogramas, Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, pp.6-7*

After comparing the *Pater Noster* prayer in the *Catecismo*, with both Nahuatl written versions in the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* [1569:f.2r] and the *Doctrina Christiana* [1553:f.79r], sentences of the *Pater Noster* can be identified as a whole. By comparing the prayers of such dissimilar works I try to identify if indeed the *Catecismo* followed a written form of the prayer. The selection of the *Pater Noster* in the *Cartilla* and the *Doctrina* was

¹²⁰ Both images have been trimmed to show only the *Pater Noster*. All further examples of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and the *Catecismo Incompleto* are taken from the digital copy of the *Catecismo* facilitated by the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid [<http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000057904&page=1> 10/10/2011]

made on the basis that both works were probably also authored by Gante. Other catechisms in images, such as 078 in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris attributed to Sahagún and BM Egerton MS2898 located in the department of the Africa, Oceania & the Americas at the British Museum were consulted in order to determine standardization or written conventions that would help clarify glyphs.¹²¹

7.2.1 Analysis of the Pater Noster prayer with the Galarza method

The first line of the prayer can be translated into English as follows: ‘Holy Father you are seated in heaven.’ The *Pater Noster* both in the *Cartilla* and *Doctrina* opens in Nahuatl as: ‘Totatzine yn ilhuicac timoetztica’, ‘Oh our lord in heaven you are’ [Acker 1990:86]. (I based the analysis on the translation made by Geertrui Acker of the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* which tries to be as close as possible to the Nahuatl grammatical structure [1990:86-7]).

The sentence is composed of three glyphs, employing simple but delicate images, mixing European and Nahua symbols as seen in the image below.



Fig. 25 G19-Father G20-You are seated on heaven G21-heaven

The first glyph, G19, represents the concept of ‘Holy Father’ and depicts a standing figure wearing a long red robe, which does not seem to have any Nahua influence, and resembles representations of customary garments of Franciscan missionaries or religious Christian figures such as saints or Jesus Christ; on top of his head he has a halo, an image that comes from Christian imaginary and in this context represents divinity.

G20, the second glyph of the sentence shows a similar figure only differentiated by the lack of halo and being seated in an *icpalli*. An *icpalli* is the Mexica equivalent of the European chair. Made of reed, it was a symbol of status; its use was reserved only for people of prominent hierarchical rank in Precolumbian times [Aguilar Moreno 2007:75]. It was also the seat of one of the most important deities of the Mexica pantheon, one of the gods of creation

¹²¹ The Egerton Manuscript 2898 was made on European paper and consists of fifty-five pages of images with the later inclusion of text to clarify the meaning of the glyphs [Bonilla 2002:6, Galarza 1992:13].

Ometecuhtli. In many ways more than a chair it was a throne and therefore a symbol of power ('seat of power'). Appearances of *icpalli* in pictorial manuscripts are numerous, from the *Codex Mendoza* to the *Codex Cozcatzin*. In glyph G20, under the feet of the figure a blue circle with stars appears. The reading of this glyph then is, 'father/lord you are seated on heaven.'



Fig. 26 Moctezuma seated on his *icpalli* taken from *Codex Cozcatzin*, folio 2
[Source:http://www.mexicolore.co.uk/images-3/338_05_2.jpg 12/7/2014]



Fig. 27 Glyph G20-Father you are seated on heaven [Gante 1527]



Fig. 28 Modern-day *icpalli* [Source: <http://www.decoration-mexique.com/PBSCProduct.asp?ItmID=2501960> 5/10/2011]

G21, the third glyph of this sentence, represents a blue dented circle (it is uncertain why this glyph is dented) with stars in its interior that represent the sky. Zamora observes in her analysis of the catechism of Sahagún, that the elements inside the circle are not stars but crosses, suggesting that only Christians could enter heaven [Zamora 2013:8]. Although it seems to be a glyph of Nahua origin, its meaning was transformed from Nahua ‘sky’ to Christian ‘heaven’. This can be seen as an example of the process of elaboration of the catechism described by Resines in which accommodations often occurred, and the meaning of a glyph was adjusted to signify something different from what was intended originally in Nahuatl. Moreover, the glyph appears repeated in both G20 and G21, an element that seems to point to the grammatical structure of Nahuatl in which iteration is found often. Heavily rhythmic, balanced patterns in iteration are memory aides for oral communication, possibly suggesting that the prayer is indeed in an oral form of Nahuatl [Ong 1982:34, Pineda 1992:151-161].

The second line of the *Pater Noster* can be read in English: ‘Praised be thy name, descend upon us your kingdom’ and in Nahuatl: ‘Macenquizca yecteneualo yn motocatzin. Mahualauh yn motlatocayotzin’ (Please that your name is completely praised. Please descend upon us your kingdom) [Acker 1990:86].



Fig. 29 G22-Praised G23-name G24-descend upon G25-your kingdom G26-on earth

The first glyph, G22, represents a standing figure, dressed in a long green robe, from his mouth a virgule or speech scroll in the form of a flower comes out. A flowered virgule is a Nahua symbol of ‘flourished’ speech, power and good actions; in this context it represents praise, in Nahuatl *yectenehua*. This pictogram also appears in the catechism of Gómez de Orozco [Galarza 1980:82, Acker 1990:77-89].

The second glyph, G23, has its origins in Christian imagery; representing the sign INRI, Jesus of Nazareth king of the Jews, which was given to Jesus by Pilate, and later nailed by the Romans to the top of the cross [Resines 2007:115]. Although this is a very abstract representation, we can find it in numerous catechisms such as Egerton. However, the Egerton

examples are less stylized and depict alphabetical writing. In this context G23 means ‘thy name’ (*mocatzin* in Nahuatl).



Fig. 30 G23 ‘Thy Name’



Fig. 31 ‘Thy Name’ *Pater Noster* Egerton f.2v [Source: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=218502&objectid=649998 14/07/2014]¹²²

According to Resines the third glyph of the sentence, G24, represents a tower. However, it is difficult to assert this. Compared with other catechisms in images such as the Egerton (where the glyph does not appear in the *Pater Noster* section but in the section regarding the Articles of Faith) and in Sahagún’s catechism, the glyph that represents the idea of ‘descending’ is a stair. It is quite likely that glyph G24 represents a tower with a stair in its interior; however, the use of colour and structure could be an indication that this is a phonetic composite glyph with roots and affixes integrated in the logogram reflecting the polysynthetic elements of oral Nahuatl.



Fig. 32 ‘Descending’ Articles of Faith Egerton f.12r

¹²² All further examples of the Egerton 2898 are taken from the digital copy of the catechism facilitated by the British Museum, London [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=218502&objectid=649998 14/07/2014].



Fig. 33 'Descending' *Pater noster*, Catecismo 078 f.3r [Source: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8458427z> 12/07/2014]¹²³

The fourth glyph, G25, is a seated figure dressed in red robes and holding a sceptre, which is a symbol of power in Europe. In this way, in glyph G25 two symbols of power from the two cultures intermingle, the *icpalli* and the sceptre, to indicate the concept of kingdom. The red robe according to Johansson could indicate a being of divine origin [Johansson, Personal communication].



Fig. 34 G25 'Your Kingdom'



Fig. 35 Articles of faith Egerton f.16r

The fifth glyph, G26, shows another European-influenced glyph, the orb. In Christian imagery the orb is given to kings and emperors as an emblem of their power on Earth, of special interest is the association of a hand with the orb, it appears as though the hand is

¹²³ All further examples of the Testeteriano O78, attributed to Sahagún are taken from the digital copy of the catechism facilitated by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris [source: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8458427z> 12/07/2014].

holding the orb. Zamora observes that the ‘T’ inside the orb, represents the Greek letter ‘Tau’, which according to Franciscan iconography represents the concept of ‘earth’; also it could represent a *mappa mundi* [Zamora 2013:7]. The hand represents the Nahuatl word *mailt* (hand) but from the word only the particle *ma* is employed because this is a composite glyph: logographic and phonetic. The particle *ma* is used for reverential speech, which could indicate that this is a petition. The hand and the orb together seem to signify ‘please on this Earth’.



Fig. 36 G27 Earth G28 your word G29 will be done G30 in heaven

The third line can be roughly translated into English as follows ‘In earth thy will/word will be done as it is done in heaven’ in Nahuatl as ‘Machihualo yn tlatlcpac yn ticmonequiltia, Yn iuhchihualo yn ilhuicac: ma no’ (Please, that in Earth everything you want is done as it is done in Heaven) [Acker 1990:86]. The sentence is composed by four glyphs. The first glyph G27 is the orb, which in this context again signifies ‘The Known World’ or ‘Earth’. The second glyph, G28, is a standing figure in red garments from whose mouth comes out a speech scroll. This glyph is very similar to the one representing praised; but similarly to G25 the figure in G28 is dressed in red which indicates a being of divine origin. Unlike G22 the virgule that comes out of the mouth of G28 is not a flower but just a simple virgule. The glyph means to talk, word, or will. The next glyph, G29, is again the phonetic particle *ma*; this is a composite sign and the hand is holding what appears to be a yellow quadrangle. The hand presents a garment of European fashion, red sleeve and white lace cuff. In this context the subjunctive *ma* is modified to act as a petition to mean ‘May thy will be done’. The fourth glyph of the sentence G30 represents heaven.



Fig. 37 G31 please G32 give us G33 Holy bread/tortilla G34-G35 each day G36 we need

The fifth line of the *Pater Noster* prayer consists of five glyphs, although two of them are repeated. In English it can be translated as ‘Please give us the bread of each day we need’ and in Nahuatl ‘Auh yn axcan maxitechmomaquili yn totlaxcal ymmomoztlaye totech monequi’ (and please today give us, our *tortillas* that we need) [Acker 1990:86].

The first glyph, G31, represents a vertical hand with a white European cuff, and a red sleeve; the hand is surrounded by four small circles. This again signifies the phonetic particle *ma* (derived from the Nahuatl word *mailt*) although its context has modified its meaning. According to Resines it means ‘now’, but there is no strong evidence to support this claim [Resines 2007:119]. Galarza mentions that this glyph in particular is used in the Egerton as a separating element between sentences. However, in Gante’s catechism it seems to be used differently, more as the phonetic transcription of the syllable *ma* from *mailt* (hand) which in Nahuatl was a particle that signified the imperative, optative or subjunctive, employed to introduce sentences and in this case in particular seems to be used as a petition [Galarza 1992:43-4, Acker 1990:80].

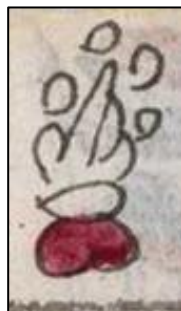


Fig. 38 G31 ‘Please’



Fig. 39 Pater Noster Egerton f. 2r

Acker analyses this sentence and compares it with the *Pater Noster* prayer in Nahuatl from the *Cartilla* by Gante as *ma xitechmomaquili*, where *ma* is a prefixed particle for the second person for gentle and gracious appeal. In this context then, its meaning would be nearer to ‘please give us’ [Acker 1990:80].

The second glyph, G32, is one of the most intricate of the *Pater Noster* and shows two figures, facing each other; the figures are wearing long robes, one red and another green. Their gesture seems to indicate they are giving/receiving a circle with a cross on top. The figure in red could be divine while the figure in green would be a living person. The circle, which could represent the host, resembles a piece of bread or a *tortilla*. In other catechisms, like the one by Sahagún, the round object is also a representation of a *tortilla*. It has been noted that it is a *tortilla* and not a piece of bread that appears in every catechism in images; indeed it was one of the most important glyph standardizations of this type of pedagogical tool. The cross on top of the sign gives it a religious connotation. In this way the tortilla becomes sanctified, holy. The meaning of the entire glyph could be the verb ‘to give’ by adding the tortilla, another layer is added and it could be read as ‘give us our *tlaxcalli*.’

The third glyph, G33, is a repetition of the last sign, representing a tortilla or bread. This type of composite structure of two glyphs in which an element is first depicted and then repeated in the following glyph seems to be a recurrent feature following Nahua rhetoric.

Glyphs G34 and G35 are a composite glyph. According to Resines the glyphs depict a pyramid with a cross on top. This idea is not so far from its Nahua meaning, they actually represent the Nahuatl word *momoztli* which in Mexica architecture are small temples or altars. Generally when two figures are identical and positioned one next to the other and repeating the same action they represent the plural [Galarza 1992:42]. The two glyphs, representing the plural of *momoztli*, *momoztlae*, can be interpreted then as the phonetic transposition of the word *momoztlaye* which means ‘daily’ [Johansson 1995, Acker 1995:403-420, Resines 2007]. Therefore the two temples signify ‘each day or daily’. The temples have crosses on top, in this way sanctifying them to remove any heretical connotations. The glyphs are also employed in other catechisms such as the Egerton, highlighting standardization across different catechisms.



Fig. 40 G34-G35 ‘Daily’ (*momoztlae*)



Fig. 41 'Daily' Pater Noster Egerton f. 2

The last glyph, G36, represents a standing figure wearing red; the robe is covered by small pointy shapes that resemble thorns (*huiztli* in Nahuatl). On the upper part of the robe, a small design that seems to suggest a feather or a palm can be seen. The red garment indicates that this figure is a divinity. It is possible that this is a phonetic glyph in which each one of the elements depicted represents roots or affixes integrated in the logogram to represent the word *monequi* (require), however it is difficult to assess if indeed this interpretation is correct. Most sources, such as Resines, suggest that this glyph signifies 'we require/need' [Resines 2007]. In summary, the sentence can be translated into English in the following way: 'please give us the holy tortilla, the holy tortilla of every day that we need.'

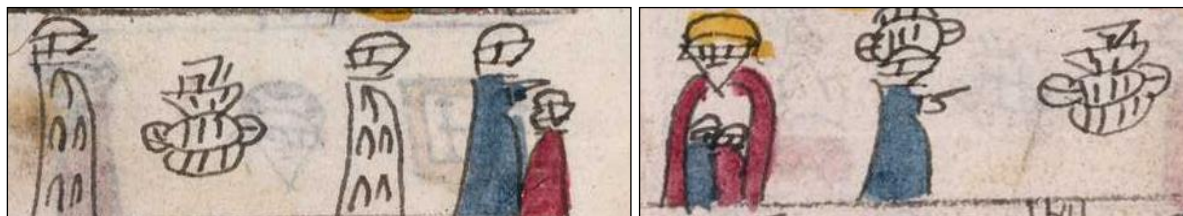


Fig. 42 G37 sinner G38 sin G39 sinner G40 forgive G41 Jesus G42 forgive sins G43 sin

The sixth line contains eight glyphs, and it is one of the most complex in the *Pater Noster*. In English it could be translated as: 'Forgive our sins as Jesus forgave our sins' and in Nahuatl: 'Maxitech mopopolhuili yn totlatlacol yniuh tiquimpopolhuia yn techtlatla colhuia' (Please forgive our sin as we forgive those who trespass (against) us) [Acker 1990:86].

Glyph G37 represents a standing figure. There is no colour in his garment and presents n-shaped elements in the interior of his robe, they appear similar to the representation of thorns. However these elements are represented differently to the thorns that appear in G36, which suggests a different nature. One possible interpretation could be that they represent dirt spots, as if the figure was polluted. This glyph has also been found in the pictorial manuscript of the *Proceso de Cuatitlan* [Galarza 1979:154-5, Johansson 1995]. According to Acker this sign

represents the Nahuatl noun *tlatlacoanime*, a noun that in Nahuatl means sinners/defective [Acker 1995:403-20]. According to Johansson, the image of ‘sinner’ in the catechism of Gante is quite similar to the way the Nahuas used to portray the attire of the goddess Tlazolteotl [Johansson 1995].



Fig. 43 Tlazolteotl gives birth to Centeotl, Codex Borbonicus [Source: <http://wwwuser.gwdg.de/~agruens/aztec/reignat.html> 12/12/2014]

Like many other deities in Nahua cosmology, the goddess Tlazolteotl (filth-deity) had a fluid nature and a diversity of facets, her role varying according to context.¹²⁴ The goddess is the seventh figure among the deities of the night, associated with the moon, childbirth, newborn babies, medicine, medicinal plants, and with the textile industry; indeed she weaves the

¹²⁴ Nicholson noted the nature of Nahua deities as interrelated and fluid. He then proceeded to group and label the deities into compounds of entities that shared interrelated associations [Nicholson 1971:17]

destiny of men [DiCesare 2009:119, Giasson 2001:138-9]. Most importantly, however, for this specific context she was a deity of sexuality and the negative excesses associated with illicit aspects. These excesses were seen in Nahua cosmology as impurities and filth (*tlazolli*) [Giasson 2001:138-9]. The term *tlazolli* describes a series of impurities and transgressions within Nahua moral discourse and connoted negative behaviours [Burkhart 1989:88]. Sigal in his work, *The Flower and the Scorpion* [2011], on Nahua sexuality and the concept of sexual sin as introduced by the missionaries, develops the idea of the *tlazolli* complex. Sigal notes that the main elements of the *tlazolli* complex before the arrival of the Spanish –trash, rubbish and excrement— meant for the Nahuas a disturbance of the cleanliness required for the proper functioning of life [Sigal 2011:19]. The *tlazolli* complex is intrinsically related to dangerous excesses that can kill an individual [Sigal 2011:213]. Sigal adds, however, that a certain level of disruption was seen as a necessary part of life. Nevertheless, the imbalance created by an excess of this *tlazolli* was a profound concern for the Nahuas [Sigal 2011:19, 39].

Tlazolteotl and Tezcatlipoca (Smoking mirror) were two deities associated with impurities, transgressions and their subsequent removal.¹²⁵ Tezcatlipoca through the priests of the goddess Tlazolteotl could cause, punish and remove these transgressions and impurities (*tlazolli*) [Giasson 2001:150-1].¹²⁶ Tlazolteotl in particular was thought to remove impurities and granted forgiveness for sexual transgressions. If an offender repeated an offense for which he or she had already forgiven, Tlazolteotl could provoke his or her death [Giasson 2001:138-9]. Sahagún provides a description of the significance of Tlazolteotl for the Nahuas: ‘La adoraban en orden de tenerla propicia para el perdón de los pecados carnales y deshonestos [...] eran muy devotas a esta falsa diosa las personas carnales, y le hacían sacrificios y ofrendas para que les perdonase sus pecados[...] se confesaban los viejos, aunque habían hechos muchos pecados en tiempo de su juventud, no se confesaban dellos hasta la vejez, por la opinión que tenían que el que tornaba a reincidir en los pecados, al que se confesaba una vez no tenia remedio’ [Sahagún 1969 1:55]. Mendieta contrary to this described how the Nahuas confessed to a priest of Tlazolteotl twice a year or when they were sick [Christensen 2010:182-3]. In this confession ceremony Nahuas went to a temple of the

¹²⁵ Tezcatlipoca was associated by the Nahuas to the underworld, obsidian, mirrors and divination. During the evangelical period he was associated by the missionaries with Lucifer [DiCesare 2009:123].

¹²⁶ Sigal in his study *The Flower and the Scorpion. Sexuality and Ritual in Early Nahua Culture* translates *tlazolli* as trash instead of filth [Sigal 2011:2].

cihuateteo goddesses dressed in a skirt covered in the motif of half-moons that adorned Tlazolteotl's garments. The Nahuas left the skirt at the shrine and returned home, symbolically having removed their *tlazolli* [Truitt 2008:91-2].

Although it is difficult to know to what extent missionary sources are factually correct, given misinterpretations on their part or misguided explanations on the part of their Nahua collaborators, it is quite likely that missionaries like Sahagún and Mendieta identified analogous elements and reinterpreted them according to their own Christian world view. This, however, does not necessarily mean that similar devotions or moral ideas did not exist among the Nahuas. On the contrary, it is probable that they were very similar and that is why the missionaries saw fit to highlight them in their chronicles. In this context in particular, it is quite likely that there were sufficient similarities between Christian notions of confession and sin and Nahua cultural categories like *tlazolli* related to transgression, for the missionaries not only to describe them in their texts but also to borrow and appropriate lexis associated with certain rituals associated with the deity in their translations.

Sigal suggests that during the early stages of the evangelization, when the Nahuas heard the explanation of confession and sin by the missionaries, they identified these terms with the *tlazolli* complex [Sigal 2011:18]. The missionaries then interpreted the concept of *tlazolli* and, most importantly, the Nahua desire to avoid excess as similar to the Christian notions of sexual sin and confession [Sigal 2011:39, Johansson 1995]. However, in Nahua cosmology these concepts were intricately related to the goddess Tlazolteotl. By introducing the notion of *tlazolli* to explain the concept of sexual sin and transgression, the missionaries needed to understand the nature of Tlazolteotl. As I have previously mentioned, cosmological notions of divinities were not as straightforward for the Nahuas as they were for the missionaries. DiCesare based on an iconographic analysis of mother goddesses such as Tlazolteotl, Teteionnan (mother of the gods), and Toci (our grandmother) reaches the conclusion that there are no secure elements that can distinguish these goddesses as separate entities. For example the cotton headdress, the broom and facial blackening appears in images of each one of these deities [DiCesare 2009: 107]. The ritual attire represented in the depictions, relates to ideas of human sexuality in relation to fertility, filth, purification, cleansing and protection. The cotton headdress, in particular, has two meanings: potential productivity and the Nahua idea of *tlazolli* [Johansson 1995, DiCesare 2009:104]. DiCesare argues that it was the missionaries, trying to convey Christian conceptual categories to indigenous audiences, who by borrowing elements of Nahua cosmology were the ones who fragmented the identity of

the goddess by compartmentalizing her ambiguous and fluent facets according to the Christian dichotomy of good and evil [DiCesare 2009:104]. As noted in chapter 6, the Nahua world of the supernatural was ambivalent being neither good nor evil [DiCesare 2009:121]. DiCesare suggests, for example, that the names Toci and Teteoinnan were honorific epithets used to denote Tlazolteotl in her role as patroness of midwives, newborns and healing [DiCesare 2009:107]. The missionaries, however, deconstructed the multiple facets of the goddess. Teteoinnan and Toci were seen by them as benevolent maternal figures, whereas Tlazolteotl was seen in negative terms [DiCesare 2009:105]. The missionaries by making use of expedient selection misinterpreted the complex nature of Tlazolteotl identifying her different facets as separate entities. In this way, as noted by Sigal, the Franciscan missionaries forced Nahua concepts of morality into a Christian framework [Sigal 2011:100]. Not only, did the missionaries attribute negative connotations derived from Christian associations to an indigenous deity, but at the same time, as noted by Sigal, they unwittingly preserved the memory of this goddess in the minds of their Nahua audience [Sigal 2011:39, DiCesare 2009:110].

Even simplified in this way, the nature of Tlazolteotl remained ambivalent. She was still a dual goddess, related to trash and cleanliness, excess and moderation. She was simultaneously capable of inspiring transgressions, giving filth and trash while at the same time forgiving and washing the individual clean [Sigal 2011:40, DiCesare 2009:116]. When the idea of Tlazolteotl was appropriated by the missionaries, there was an attempt to limit the ambiguity of the goddess and she was reintroduced only with her negative aspects—as a symbol of illicit sexual activity—and with a new layer of meaning associating her with Lucifer [Sigal 2011: 40, 84].

It is necessary to understand this as a by-product of the process of expedient selection. In this way missionaries chose elements that they thought were similar, reinterpreted them, giving them a new meaning based on their understanding of Nahua cultural categories, to later reintroduce them, fragmented and changed to the Nahuas during the process of conversion. However, how the Nahuas understood the reintroduced version of the goddess Tlazolteotl is open to debate and can be seen as an example of double-mistaken-identity in which Nahuas and missionaries thought they were discussing the same categories but they were in reality discussing very different notions.

As already noted, in iconographic representations Tlazolteotl is depicted with a broom and unspun cotton in her headdress. The deity wears a garment with half-moons that has striking similarities to Gante's depiction of sinners, as can be seen in Codex Borbonicus folio 13 (see fig. 43). Depictions of Tlazolteotl in the Codex Borbonicus are not coloured in. The aforementioned discussion begs the question as to why Tlazolteotl's attire was selected to represent the sinner in Gante's *Catecismo*? The available evidence suggests that the borrowing of Tlazolteotl's attire by Gante was related not so much to her relation to the *tlazolli* complex and sexual sin but more to her relation to the ceremony of Nahua confession. The Nahua term employed for confession was *neyolmelahualiztli* (heart straightening), a compound verb derived from the noun *yolli* (heart) and the verb *melaua* (straighten out). When a transgressor wanted to confess to Tlazolteotl the action required was to 'unburden one's heart or to straighten one's heart' [Sigal 2011:39]. Another noun employed for confession is *yolcuitia* meaning 'to declare one's heart' [Sigal 2011:277]. In the Nahua confession to Tezcatlipoca through Tlazolteotl, the individual confessed that he/she had deviated from the moral path or had come into contact with *tlazolli*. In this way the confessant stated how he or she had come into contact with filth and so broken the balance [Sigal 2011:95-6]. It was this action of confession, to unburden or declare one's heart, which Gante required of his parishioners. It is worth noticing that the element chosen from Tlazolteotl's attire by Gante to depict sinner was not the headdress or broom (elements which as mentioned previously could be associated with other mother goddesses) but with the skirt. The skirt as illustrated by Mendieta was an important part of this ritual of confession. The Nahuas left the skirt adorned in motifs associated with Tlazolteotl in the temple of the *cihuateteo* goddesses after confession, removing thus their *tlazolli*. The ritual of confession was deemed by Gante similar enough to be borrowed, but more importantly he wanted to convey the idea of confessing a moral transgression and the specific outward performance required to confess.

In addition to this, as suggested by Truitt, Gante charged the depiction semantically with Christian notions. Truitt, while comparing the similarities between the glyph of sinner (G37) and the image of Tlazolteotl, notes that the glyph also presents a Christian component. When people who had been forgiven for their sins relapsed or were punished by the Holy Inquisition they had to wear a *San Benito* garment.¹²⁷ Truitt believes that the designs on the garments could not only represent Tlazolteotl's cleansing of impurity ritual but also a *San*

¹²⁷ A penitent's outer garment, depicting demons or the fires of hell.

Benito. I agree with Truitt's suggestion that the representation of sinner by the semicircles or half-moons inside the garment in glyph G37 likely joins two sets of symbolic associations: the devotion of Tlazolteotl and the *San Benito* garment [Truitt 2008:91-2, Johansson 1995]. By selecting the garment employed by the Nahuas in their ceremony of confession and modifying it in a certain way that could also be interpreted as a San Benito, Gante showed the symbolic importance attached to this attire in relation to confession. By choosing the attire as a symbol of the sinner he was joining what he considered similar elements from both devotions and creating a symbolic element double-charged with cultural referents from both cultures. But most importantly he wanted the Nahuas to perform, to act the part of the repentant sinner. By selecting two elements of religious paraphernalia intrinsically related to the ritual of confession he was encouraging his flock to outwardly show signs of their repentance.

After analysing and comparing G38 with Nahua codices, it can be seen as a pouch of incense used by Mexica priests, the *copalxiquipilli* (incense bag). However it is necessary to mention that Gante chose the sign to represent the Nahuatl word *tlatlacolli* (defective/impure/polluted) pointing in this way to the Nahua priests as sinners and their devotions as sinful [Acker 1995:403-20]. In this way sin was equated with Nahua priesthood, linking Nahua cosmology with the devil. It is an interesting equivalence made by the missionary in which the Nahua cosmology is demonized with huge scope for misinterpretation. For the Nahua students Precolumbian priests did not imply something diabolical or evil, concepts they lacked as well, but on the contrary the priests were an important element of the Nahua belief system [Acker 1990:84].

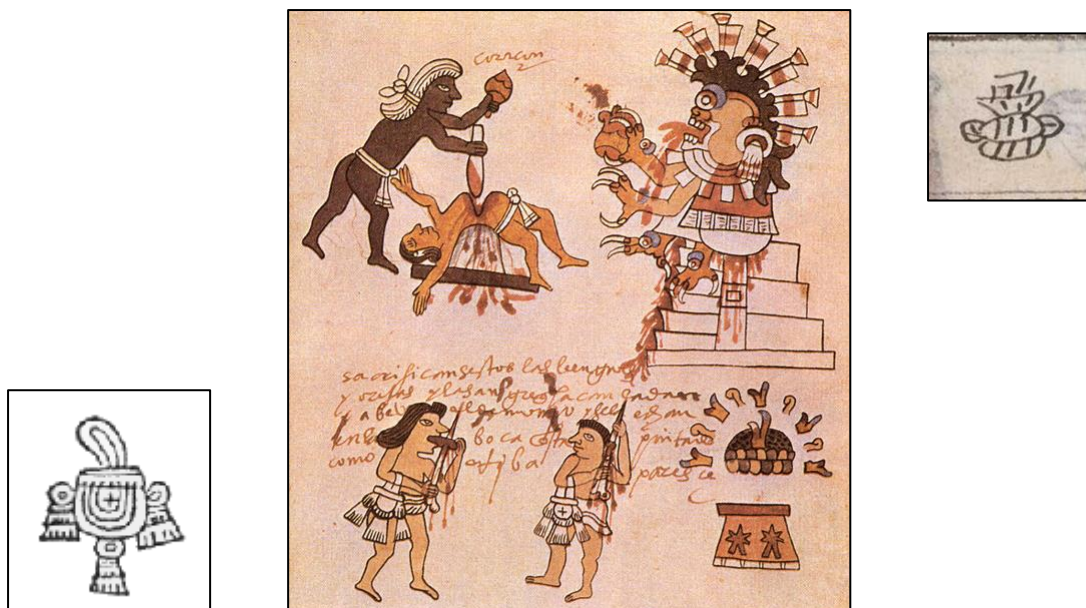


Fig. 44 Copalxiquipilli in Codex Tudela compared with G38 in Catecismo en Pictogramas
 [Source: <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/aztec-human-sacrifice.htm> 10/10/2011]

G39 represents sinner. Glyph G40 is a composite glyph formed of two figures. The left figure, dressed in blue and slightly bigger than the other figure, is holding his hand as making a forgiveness gesture to the figure in the right dressed in red. The glyph represents the concept of forgiving. Glyph G41 is another composite glyph, formed of three figures. The central figure of bigger dimensions is represented frontally, an indicator of divinity. He is embracing two smaller human figures. He is wearing a long bi-colour garment. The top robe is red and the undergarment is white. It is interesting that the bi-colour robe resembles many representations of the Christ of the Sacred Heart, which have the same colours, red and white, associated with this particular incarnation of Jesus. Within this context, the presence of the Christ of the Sacred Heart is of special interest as this incarnation of Jesus in particular was employed to represent the sacraments of Christianity. The Sacred Heart of Jesus was stabbed with a spear by the Romans during the crucifixion, from his heart blood and water came out, signifying divine mercy. In this way Jesus sacrificed himself to forgive humanity. According to Resines this glyph means 'receive us', however taking into account the previous argument, it is probable that the author/authors of the catechism chose this representation of Jesus in particular because of its symbolic relation to the concept of forgiveness; therefore an approximate meaning would be 'as Christ forgave us'. Note that the two figures of minor scale in glyph G41 have red and blue garments, alluding to the fact that all people, of all social classes and status are forgiven by Jesus Christ.



Fig. 45 Glyph G41 Pictogramas on the left and an image of the Christ of the Sacred Heart on the right [Source: <http://www.todocoleccion.net/preciosa-figura-sagrado-corazon-jesus-altura-39cmts-ancho-20cmts~x27857652> 10/10/2011]

Glyph 42 presents a very similar figure to the one in glyph G40, a standing figure dressed in a blue robe, probably a priest or a friar, as blue garments seem to suggest. His hand in horizontal fashion seemingly makes a forgiving gesture. On top of his head appears the incense bag of the Mexica priests. It signifies ‘forgive the sins’.

Glyph 43, the last glyph of this sentence is a repetition of glyph G38 and represents sin. In conclusion this sentence can be read as follows: ‘To the sinner, his sins, to the sinner, we forgive, as Jesus forgave, we forgive the sins.’ As seen from the translated sentence the presence of iteration is strong.

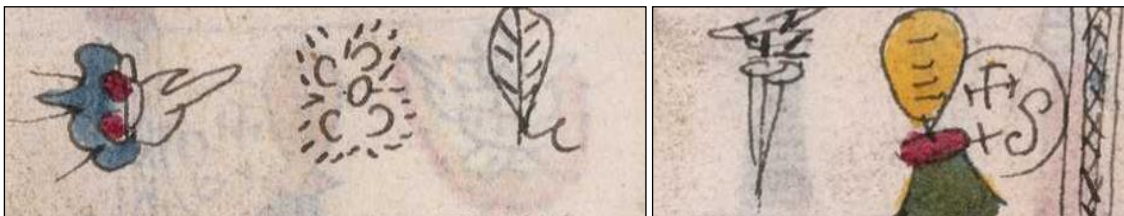


Fig. 46 G44 no G45 will be done G46 precious/soul G47 evil G48 amen of Jesus

The last line in the Pater Noster prayer in the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* is: ‘Macamo xitech motlalcahuili ynic amo ypan tihuetzizque yntlatlacolli: ma xitechmomaquixtli –ynihucpa yn amo qualli, maymochihua Amen’ (Please do not leave us do we do not fall in sin. Please, so to us, against no good, please that it may be done. Amen) [Acker 1990:86-7].

The first glyph of the last sentence, G44, depicts a hand, unlike previous representations of the word *maithl* the hand is represented horizontally, with the index finger extended. According to Resines the cuff, is a representation of the mouth of hell signifying ‘free us’, unfortunately he does not elaborate further on this statement. For Sánchez Valenzuela the horizontal hand means ‘free us’ as well [Sánchez Valenzuela 2003:249]. However, the

particle *ma* in this case means the negative, in Nahuatl *macamo*, suggesting that the position of the hand and the cuff indicates a semantic change of attribute from petition to negation.

Glyph G45 represents a flower with four petals. Flowers of four petals are a recurrent image in the Mesoamerican repertoire. Their significance is variable. According to Resines it means in the interior. On the other hand for Sánchez Valenzuela the flower means ‘against our’. The latter seems to be a forced analysis of the written version of the prayer on the glyph [Sánchez Valenzuela 2003:249, Resines 2007]. In the catechism of Gómez de Orozco a stylized flower represents the word *tlaçotli* (precious) [León-Portilla, 1979:13]. The flower, most likely, is used for its Nahuatl phonetic value of *mochihua* (may be done) and it will be interpreted as such in the present work. Johansson makes an interesting point while discussing the role of the flower. Whereas in the Christian imaginary a flower represents the soul and spiritual perfection, in Nahua cosmology it was related to the soul of the departed. This similarity was appreciated by the missionaries who merged in one glyph, the flower, two very different cosmologies [Johansson 1995].

Glyph G 46 represents a feather. In Nahua tradition feathers were considered precious and holy [Lara 2008].

According to Acker Glyph G47 represents a thorn (*huitztli* in Nahuatl). She refers to other glyphs of similar appearance in the Colonial Codex *Proceso de Cuautitlán* as well as the mural painting of the Franciscan convent of Cholula that depicts the mass of Saint Gregory which shows the symbols of the passion to support her suggestion [Galarza 1979:154-5, Monterosa *et al* 1990, Acker 1995:403-20, Normann 1985:76]. Although there is the possibility that this glyph represents a thorn, it is also likely that it represents a European-style dagger. Steel was unknown in Mesoamerica; obsidian knives were widely employed instead. As a product of European provenance and because of its important role during the military conquest, the steel dagger could have had negative associations to the Nahua mind. The negative connotations of the dagger could have been appropriated by the missionary and used to mean evil. This motif also appears in the Egerton MS with similar connotations, although not in the context of the *Pater Noster*, an indication that suggests that although the same glyphs were employed, they were employed in different circumstances, depending on the context and choices of the author/illustrator.



Fig. 47 G47 'Evil' *Pater noster* Pictogramas

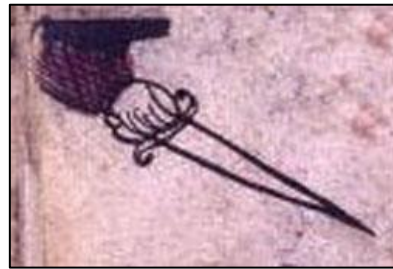


Fig. 48 'Evil' Egerton f.12v¹²⁸

The last glyph G48, represents a circle with horizontal lines in its interior, the circle appears on top of a trapezium; attached to the right side of the trapezium is another circle with the 'I' and 'S' written inside —the first and last letters of the name of Jesus. The meaning of this last glyph is 'amen' of Jesus. In summary the last sentence can be translated in the following way: 'Do not let evil come to our precious soul amen Jesus'. In this way alphabetic script is incorporated in the catechism. As we will see in the section regarding Sahagún's catechism, the incorporation of these sets of letters in the glyph representing 'amen' was a convention. Zamora Ramírez suggests that the introduction of letters instead of a glyph representing Jesus could be a result of ethnocentrism, with preference given to the European alphabetical form instead of a Nahuatl form, however it also could be a Christian standardization as this was employed in all the catechisms in images [Resines 1992:283, Zamora 2013:19].

From the previous descriptive analysis of the *Pater Noster* prayer and following the second layer of the Galarza method there are some tendencies that are easy to identify and occur in accordance with the process of making the catechisms as proposed by Resines [2007] [see chapter 5]. The glyphs were selected and accommodated in order to fulfil the end goal, the translation of Christian doctrine. Many of the figures show European influence and are employed to introduce new concepts from the Christian imaginary, i.e. the crosses, the *orb*,

¹²⁸ Note that this representation of evil does not appear in the *Pater Noster* prayer of the Egerton, instead a figure of the devil appears.

the kneeling man being forgiven for his sins by the priest, the halos, the representation of the name of Jesus and the use of alphabetic script. Others are typical of Nahua glyphs, such as the feather, and the flowers. Some glyphs can be interpreted as new coinages based on European associations like the dagger that seems to represent evil. Other signs seem to mix traits of European origin with those of Nahua origin, as in the case of the seated figures which mixed elements of Nahua culture (seated figures signifying power) and Christian (seated figure holding an orb).



Fig. 49 'Orb' Pater Noster Pictogramas



Fig. 50 'Orb' Pater Noster Egerton f.2r

Glyphs also shared analogous meanings in both cosmologies, such as the flower. However, other glyphs were adjusted to signify something different from what was normally intended, especially glyphs of Nahua origin, a clear case of 'entextualization' [Leone 2008:61]. For example the meaning of the glyph for sky was modified to mean something without equivalent in Nahua culture –'heaven'. This is even more striking in the glyphs that represent 'sinner', a case in which devotional elements from a Nahua deity, Tlalzolteotl, were appropriated and transmuted to transmit Christian concepts. Two forces were at work here. Firstly, the association with the devotion of Tlalzolteotl was taken out of its original context, reinterpreted and then re-introduced by the missionary as sinful, while at the same time the ritual associated with the deity was borrowed to explain the concept of sin, a concept without referent in a Nahua world view, but similar enough for the missionaries to use. By borrowing these elements and redeploying them in the context of Christianity, their original ties with the Mexica religion were transmuted.

The majority of the anthropomorphic figures are looking to the right; only one appears to look frontally –which seems to suggest divine status. This seems to be a convention borrowed from Nahuatl pictorial writing, in which figures are always shown in profile [Normann 1985:44]. None of the figures present Nahua attires and could point to an incipient Christianization of the population. However, European garments were prohibited to the Nahua population, except on some very rare occasions [Wood 2003]. So representing

European garments could be symbolical, showing the Nahuas as Christians. The colouring of the garments also adds different layers of meaning to the glyphs, an aspect which draws not only on Nahua colour symbolism employed in pictorial manuscripts but also on Christian symbolism. The colour is consistent throughout the catechism and does not share characteristics in its application with European habits of visual representation; there is no gradation of colour, perspective or volume [Acker 1995:413-5]. As Bonilla Palmeros suggests, in Mesoamerican tradition red (obtained from the cochineal) and blue (from the *xiuhquilitl*) were employed by persons of high status [Bonilla 2004:9]. In the *Catecismo* red is associated with divinity and high birth, blue figures—based on the context in which they are performing religious duties, as in the case of the glyph representing ‘forgiving’—could represent priests while green figures could represent the neophyte. The figures appear to be proportionate; however, dimensions are not always similar, in particular glyphs G40 and G41. G40 possibly represents a kneeling person, while G41 appears to be a representation of Jesus with two smaller figures in its inside, as if embracing them, showcasing the highest hierarchy of the divine being. Indeed certain figures such as Jesus Christ seem to have larger dimensions which would imply hierarchy.

All figures in the *Pater Noster* prayer are male. Female figures do appear in other prayers of the *Catecismo*; however they do so very sparingly and represent Saint Mary as in the *Ave Maria*. Saint Mary is distinguished from male figures by her head-to-toe garment, which is like a mantle or cloak; she also appears frontally [Normann 1985:67].

A large number of the glyphs seem to be used with a phonetic value. However, as we have mentioned previously, this was a rare occurrence in Nahua script. An example of this is the hands. Four hands are depicted in total; each one of them is associated with different objects, except one that appears by itself. Possibly the hands indicate the Nahuatl word *maatl*, employed for its phonetic value *ma*, which is an introductory particle for clauses expressing wishes, commands, admonitions and the negative form. Depending on their different association with objects they could change their meaning to represent different wishes, commands, and the negative. Another example are the temples used phonetically to represent the word *momoztlae*. As I have suggested in chapter 5, phonetic glyphs not related to personal or geographical names are quite likely to indicate the heavy involvement of a missionary.




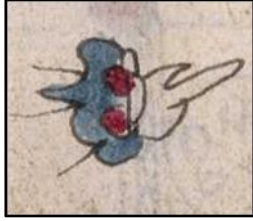
			
On earth	Will be done	Please	No

Table 1 Different uses of *mañt* in the *Pater Noster* prayer

In this way glyphs in the *Catecismo* can be divided into two major groups: phonetic (such as the hands or the temples) and ideographic. By joining elements from Nahua devotion, simple phonetic glyphs and composite phonetic glyphs that include affixes and roots, we can see that elements of the culture and the writing system of the Mexica were appropriated. However, the way in which they were displayed, joining elements from Christian devotion together with the Nahua, such as the image of the sinner that joins the devotion of Tlazolteotl and the San Benito garments, suggests the widespread use of phonetic glyphs not related to personal or geographical names, an atypical element as can be seen from the analysis of Mexica writing in chapter 5. The linearity of the reading and the use of Christian symbolism, as I have explained in the previous chapter, suggests a heavy collaboration between the missionary and the Nahua students, highlighting not only Gante's interpretation of Nahua culture but also the agency of the Nahuas in the process of elaboration.

Although similar, the content does not seem to follow the written version of the *Cartilla* [f.2r] or the *Doctrina* [f.79r]. It seems to have followed an oral Nahuatl version of the prayer as can be deduced by the rhythm and iteration [Resines 1992:283].

7.3 Catecismo Incompleto

In this next section I will compare the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* to its accompanying *Catecismo Incompleto*. These catechisms in particular provide excellent examples of the process of the elaboration of catechisms in images as they share a large number of glyphs. Moreover they not only show the presence of standardization—a set of morphograms that could indicate they were employed by the same school—but also the existence, as Normann suggests, of a prototype that these exemplars were following. How many copies were made during the manufacturing process? During how many years was each of the exemplars employed? Were they employed by successive generations of students? Were they disposed of after use? Were they only used by illiterate Nahuas, before learning alphabetic writing?

Although the answers to these questions are difficult to discern, some approximations can be suggested after analysing and comparing the bound catechisms.

Although Gante's signature appears at the end of the *Catecismo Incompleto*, Ann Normann suggests that the folio in which Gante's signature appears is bound to the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and not to the *Incompleto*, as the two manuscripts seem to be punctured with different thread holes. However, the *Catecismo Incompleto* presents certain elements that could suggest an author with a better understanding of European style conventions and alphabetic writing [Resines 2007:232-3]. Normann suggests that even though both the author and date of origin is unknown, it is probable that both works are a reproduction of a prototype catechism that no longer exists [Normann 1985:79].

The *Incompleto* is strikingly similar to the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*. It is also divided into five registers, with six glyphs in each line. All morphograms are outlined in black ink, with colouring in red, green, blue and yellow. On some occasions a figure is painted first in one colour and then in another to obtain a different shade similar to the *Catecismo*. Purple and green robes seem to have been achieved by this process. Figures are two-dimensional, less abstract than is the case with the *Pictogramas*, and more precise; most of them present facial features, with long noses, eyes and mouths. Faces are shown in profile, except glyphs that seem to represent God, who appears frontally. The glyphs present in this catechism are almost identical to the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*. However, there seems to be more attention to detail in Christian iconography, even the letters that comprise the glyph for 'name' (INRI sign) are written in alphabetic script.



Fig. 51 'Name' Pictogramas p.59



Fig. 52 'Name' Incompleto p.71

Although a large number of phonetic glyphs feature (such as the horizontal hand representing *macamo* –the negative), most of the glyphs are ideographic. Representation of Nahua elements seems also to be standardized as is suggested by the presence of the glyph for sin, the flower, the feather, the sinner and the mortuary bundle.



Fig. 53 'Macamo' Pictogramas p. 61



Fig. 54 'Macamo' Incompleto p. 75

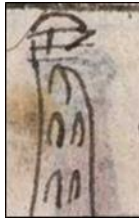


Fig. 55 'Sinner' Pictogramas p.6



Fig. 56 'Sinner' Incompleto p. 73

Although the *Catecismo Incompleto* only contains three catechetical texts: the sacraments, the acts of mercy and what seems to be a prayer for the dead or a sign of the cross, Ann Normann suggests that the catechism is not incomplete, but was shortened on purpose. Could this indicate that the *Incompleto* was a later addition to the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*, bound by the user during the 16th century as a sort of addendum? This seems quite unlikely as the texts overlap except for the last unidentified prayer.

After a quick overview of the acts of Mercy present in both the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and the *Catecismo Incompleto*, standardization in structure and glyphs can be seen. Indeed, the Acts of Mercy seem to follow, almost glyph by glyph, the same sequence. There is some variation, however, in the representation of the sinner, in the introductory sentence and in the representation of evil. In the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* 'evil' is represented by a dagger; in the *Incompleto* 'evil' is represented by a devil-like creature.



Fig. 57 'To dress' Pictogramas p. 60



Fig. 58 'To dress' Incompleto p. 75

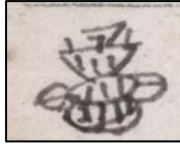


Fig. 59 'Sin' Pictogramas p. 65



Fig. 60 'Sin' Incompleto p. 76



Fig. 61 'Evil' Pictogramas p. 63



Fig. 62 'Evil' Incompleto p.77

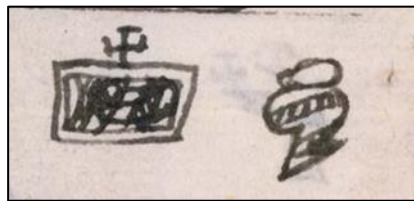


Fig. 63 'To bury the dead' Pictogramas p. 62



Fig. 64 'To bury the dead' Incompleto p. 74

The question whether these two catechisms are following a prototype is difficult to answer, Normann based on a rigorous analysis, both in content and style, of the four catechisms belonging to the Gante group, reached the conclusion that the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* is the most faithful copy of the prototype, which according to her was created between 1523 and 1572, as most of the glyphs seem to have been borrowed from Nahua tradition. However, she reaches the conclusion that the 'Rebus' system was employed only partially, as for her most of the glyphs seem to be ideographic, permitting the catechism to be interpreted in Spanish, Latin or Nahua [Normann 1985:121-2]. The analysis of the *Pater Noster* prayer has shown

contrary to what Normann suggests, that these catechisms were indeed following a Nahuatl oral version of the prayer as indicated by the significant number of phonetic glyphs.

On the other hand, the *Catecismo Incompleto*, according to Normann, was elaborated not directly from the prototype, or even from the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*, but from still another catechism based on the prototype [Normann 1985:124]. According to Normann, an element in common in all the catechisms belonging to the Gante group is the sequence of prayers, which all sources repeat accurately, and which could indeed indicate the existence of a prototype. However, the small variation between catechisms can be also an effect of temporality. Normann discusses that not all the catechisms belonging to the Gante group were made during the 16th century, for example the Princeton catechism can be dated to the early 19th century [Normann 1985:123]. Could it be possible that the small differences between the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and the *Incompleto* are a result of being made at different times? To determine which one of the catechisms was first is difficult, although Normann believes that the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* is an earlier copy of the prototype than the *Incompleto*. It is possible though that both copies were made during the same period, in the same place, as the glyphs employed in both catechisms are the same or strikingly similar. Moreover neither of the copies presents glosses or marginalia that could suggest that the original meaning had been lost. By representing two versions of evil, the catechisms evidence again that the author of the *Catecismo Incompleto* was more in line with the Christian imaginary. It is possible that its author was a missionary working with Gante and his transculturated Nahuas, aiming to copy the device to preach to other students. It is even possible that it was Gante himself. Although the most likely possibility, is that it was an overzealous Nahua neophyte carefully copying the newly introduced alphabetic script and European visual habits of representation. We need to keep in mind that even in the different prayers in the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* there are on occasion inconsistencies in representing the same concepts. From this we might deduce that there was someone directing the collaborations, almost certainly Gante, but different Nahua artists/copyists, who introduced minor inconsistencies or idiosyncrasies in representing the same concepts.

The presence of several catechisms employing standardized glyphs suggests not only the presence of a prototype, as suggested by Normann, but also an intensive collaboration between Gante and his students in which morphograms were discussed, adopted, adapted, and copied by several persons at the same time, therefore allowing changes in the usage of glyphs. The use of elements derived from Nahua culture such as the flower, the *maitl*

particles, the *icpalli*, and the temples referring to *momoztli* among others show that elements from the Nahua imaginary were employed in the creation of catechism. Although the semantics of these elements was modified, taken out of its original context (a case of entextualization) and transferred to a new context, giving a new layer of meaning. This process was only possible by an extensive collaboration between Nahua and missionary, as it must have been extremely difficult for the missionary to be intimately acquainted with the symbolic layers of the object depicted; only after a dialogue with a Nahua knowledgeable about the writing system and symbolic significance of glyphs would the missionary have been able to choose the selected elements and modify them accordingly. In addition, the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and the *Incompleto* presents elements from the Christian imaginary and devotion, the intricacies of which probably were only evident to a missionary. The glyphs then became charged with symbolism from the two cultures; however, this did not represent a contradiction for the missionary as the elements, albeit carrying a Nahua religious connotation, were transmuted by being employed in the new context. Through their contact with Christianity, the Nahua glyphs became Christian. The *Catecismo* could only be the result of intensive cooperation, as it does not follow the general prescriptions of the Nahua writing system, which was employed during that time as evidenced by the majority of extant Mexica codices, but conforms in itself to a transitional system, merging cultural categories of the two religious constructs.

7.4 Catechism by Sahagún 078

The second example analysed in this chapter, by way of comparison, is a catechism in the collection of the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* in Paris 078 attributed to Sahagún by the Italian historian Lorenzo Boturini (1702-1753) in his *Idea de una nueva historia de América Septentrional* from 1746. Boturini does not adduce any supporting arguments to justify this theory. Other scholars have followed this suggestion, for example Cortés [1987]. However, the arguments of these authors are far from solid [Zamora 2013:4, Bonilla 2014:84]. It has generally been assumed that Gante and Sahagún worked together in conversion matters at some point in their professional lives, and as we have seen in chapter 4 regarding the *Psalmodia Christiana*, Sahagún was inspired by Gante's musical work to collect the psalms. If Boturini's hypothesis is true, it is possible that Sahagún was inspired by Gante's catechism in images, and adapted the tool for his own purposes. On the other hand, Bonilla Palmeros observes that the pictorial style of the Catechism 078 (also known as Testerman 078) and its similarities with *Catecismo 076* (an exemplar extant in the same repository in the BNF which

presents glosses in Otomí) could suggest that Catechism 078 was made by *tlahcuilos* living in the South of the modern state of Hidalgo. These *tlahcuilos* might have copied closely an earlier version of the catechism made during the 16th century [Bonilla 2014:84].

The catechism has only eleven pages and the paper is of European provenance. Its dimensions are much larger than the *Catecismo*, measuring 15 x 21 cm. It is generally well preserved, although some pages are worn down at the edges. The space is divided into eight horizontal segments. There are spaces between sentences that indicate when one sentence finishes and another one starts, similar to Gante's *Catecismo*. However, unlike the work of Gante it has titles in Spanish. The reading goes from left to right and across the two pages.

The catechism presents not only glyphs, but also alphabetic script (Castilian) which introduces each prayer, and on occasion there are marginalia accompanying the glyphs. The glyphs are of small dimensions due to the reduced space. Images have a range of light-shade colours such as yellow, green and red. As with Gante's catechism, each colour provides an extra layer of meaning [Zamora 2013:4-5]. For example the figures of God, Jesus Christ and Virgin Mary always appear in red –probably an allusion to their divine status. Crowns, halos, suns, earth-monsters, and numerals appear in yellow; however whether or not this adds a new layer of meaning or is just a conventional representation is difficult to answer. Green is mostly used in the garment of the figure of the narrator; however, other colours are also shown in the narrator's garments such as red and yellow. Application of colour and its subsequent meaning is not homogeneous throughout this catechism, probably a result of following European stylistic conventions, more than Nahuatl writing tradition.



Fig. 65 Catecismo 078 in the BNF, Paris: *Pater Noster* prayer, pp.4-5



Fig. 66 Morphogram interpretation of Catecismo 078

This catechism presents some striking differences in comparison with the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and the *Catecismo Incompleto* reflecting thus the agency of their authors. Its manufacture seems to have been carried out more carefully than Gante's catechisms. The glyphs bear a close resemblance to European pictorial styles and the majority of the glyphs depict scenes consisting of two or more figures with a strong Christian influence. In the specific case of the *Pater Noster* prayer, both the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and *Catecismo 078* have the same number of glyphs, thirty. The number of registers differs, while the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* has five, *Catecismo 078* has eight. The figures are located in different places in relation to the registers, probably as indicated before by Bonilla [see chapter 5], in relation to the planes in which the universe was divided, i.e. elements related to heaven, such as the sky, represented in the upper section of the line, whereas images related to the underworld are located in the lower section of the line [Bonilla 2004:4-5]. The majority of figures look to the left, except three who look to the right, two of them are in the act of descending (S6 and S24) and the last one S28, seems to be facing in the opposite direction from the vase with flowers the figure is holding. This particular aspect of the glyph is interpreted by Bonilla as the negative of the glyph (for a more detailed analysis of this glyph see below). There is also an organization into a hierarchy of images which according to Bonilla could have an added phonetic value [Bonilla 2004:4-5].

Some elements recur in both Gante and Sahagún's catechisms such as the seated figures, the depiction of heaven, the flower, the orb and the use of the letters 'I' and 'S', meaning that

these could have been standardized representational conventions. It is necessary to note that the majority of these seem to have roots in Christian imagery. However, even if the glyphs bear a close resemblance to each other, the majority of the glyphs in Sahagún's catechism seem to be more detailed than Gante's, and sometimes even depict whole scenes which include a narrator, in a very European fashion. Just to present some examples, the glyph representing 'Holy Father', S1, shows not one figure like G19 from the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*, instead it shows four standing figures. The one at the left side is larger in dimension than the other figures and represents a Franciscan friar, wearing long grey robes, the colour of Franciscan attires until the middle of the 18th century. For the Franciscan order, grey symbolizes the ashes humans are made of. The Franciscan missionary depicted looks to the right and points with two fingers to three small figures at his right side, which probably portray the neophytes hearing the narration of the friar. He is also employed to represent the idea of 'Holy Father'. In Nahuatl tradition the association of the priest with its god was quite common and priests were usually represented with the same attire as their deity; in this way high priests were 'images of the gods' [Johansson 1995]. For example the priests called *tamacazqui* were at the same time both priests and images of the god of rain *Tlaloc*. In this way the Franciscan friar is at the same time the image of God and his priest. According to Johansson it is quite possible that the missionaries made use of this apparent confusion as a pedagogical tool [Johansson 1995, Zamora 2013:7]



Fig. 67 'Holy Father' in G19 from Pictogramas and in S1 from Catecismo 078



Fig. 68 'Narrator' Catecismo 078 and pointing finger from Egerton catechism f.26r

The glyphs appear at times to represent a piece of narrative which is highlighted by the presence of a figure who seems to play the role of a narrator, pointing with a finger to the scene. This figure always appears kneeling. Zamora observes that the gesture would have taught Nahuas the correct position to pray [Zamora 2013:8]. His simple attire, quite different from the Franciscan one, could indicate that the narrator is a Nahua neophyte, instructing his peers in the key precepts of Christianity.



Fig. 69 ‘You are seated in your throne’ S2 and G20

Another example of similarities between the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and the Testerman 078 are glyphs S2 and G20, both of which show a figure seated on an *icpalli*, representing ‘you are seated in your throne’. The only difference is that the glyph in Sahagún’s catechism seems to be more intricate and includes the narrator but not the morphogram of heaven.



Fig. 70 ‘Thy kingdom’ S7 and G25

Glyphs S7 and G25, which seem to represent ‘Your Kingdom’, are quite similar to the previous ones. However, it is noticeable that in Testerman 078, the European sceptre of the sitting figure shown in the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* is replaced in analogous glyph S7 by a flower, which is a symbol of lordship for the Nahuas. The figure is also wearing a crown, joining in this way European and Nahua symbols.

The use of the particle *ma* (from *maitl*) is less evident in Testerman 078 with only one possible example (S17). However, in Sahagún’s, the hand of the narrator could also be represented, pointing to the three dots (which are Nahua numerals) next to a representation of a quite

Europeanized image of the sun representing thus ‘Each day’.



Fig. 71 S17 ‘Each day’, G31 ‘Please give us’

Depictions of heaven not only show similarities between Gante’s catechism and Sahagún’s, but also with other Nahua codices such as the Codex Borbónico [Bonilla 2004:6-8]

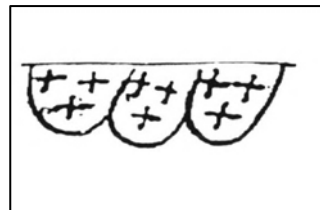


Fig. 72 Depiction of ‘sky’ in Gante, Borbónico and Testerman 078 [Source: Gante taken from digital copy of *Catecismo en Pictogramas* by Gante Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000057904&page=1>, Codex Borbónico taken from Bonilla 2004, and *Catecismo 078* provided by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8458427z/f5.image>]

Another example is the flower that is represented in both catechisms and served the phonetic purpose to depict the word *mochihualo* (may it be done)



Fig. 73 *Mochihualo* in Gante and *Catecismo 078*

There are two elements in particular in *Testerman 078* that could be related to the Nahua imaginary. First, the phonetic glyph representing the conjunction ‘as’ which depicts a raccoon, in Nahua *mapach*, read by Bonilla as *mochihuapan* (as). Moreover, according to different contextual associations, the glyph *mapach* could have had a different meaning. For

example when associated with the flower it could be read as *mochihua* (it may be done), and indeed sometimes the two glyphs were employed interchangeably [Bonilla 2004].¹²⁹



Fig. 74 Glyph S 11 conjunction ‘as’ in Catecismo 078

The other element is the palm (in Nahuatl *yczotl*) that appears in figure S18, which according to Bonilla Palmeros, joins the idea of martyrdom or Christ and in Nahua could also be used as a conjunction according to its phonetic value [Bonilla 2004:88].

There seem, however, to be more differences than similarities between the catechisms, especially taking into account how the majority of the glyphs represent Christian scenes instead of single glyphs. They also seem to be more ideographic in nature than phonetic, without the rhythm and iteration present in Nahuatl rhetoric. Moreover there are striking differences regarding the content of the prayer. Based on Bonilla Palmeros’ interpretation of Sahagún’s catechism in his master’s thesis entitled *Entre Imágenes y Oraciones: Un Acercamiento al Catecismo Indígena 078 de la Biblioteca Nacional de París, Francia* [2004] whole sentences differ. Such is the case of glyphs S18 to S22, which are related to the forgiveness of sins. In Sahagún’s catechism, this line consists of the following glyphs:



Fig. 75 S18 Bless us S19 in our work S20 as (in) S21 we bless S22 the work of the poor

Bonilla Palmeros suggests that a reading of the sentence of the prayer in Nahuatl would be ‘Yhuan xitech teochihua yn totequitl quen tehuan titeochihua yn tequi motolinameh’ that would translate as ‘Bless our work as we also bless the work of the poor’. This would correspond with the section of the prayer ‘Please forgive our trespasses as we forgive the people who trespass against us.’ Testerian 078’s depiction seems to have more Christian imagery than Gante’s; his reflects a search for equivalents in Nahua tradition in order to

¹²⁹ Other authors such as Carolyn Dean on her research of the catechism entitled *Libro de oraciones* and Acker regarding the Pater Noster prayer observed that this glyph also appears to represent the conjunction ‘as’ (yuhquin in Nahuatl). They suggest that it is some form of rodent, probably a mouse [Dean 1991:211-274, Acker 1995:413, Bonilla 2004].

explain the concept of sin. The sentence in Testerian 078 is also semantically different as Gante's sentence can be translated as 'Please forgive us sinners our sin, as you forgave our sins.' The figures of glyphs S19 and S22, which as Bonilla suggests, are related to the idea of work, are represented carrying vases; one figure is fully dressed and the other is semi-naked to highlight his poverty [Bonilla 2004:89-91]. I disagree with Bonilla's interpretation, as the concept of the vases probably more than representing work represent the idea of sin as people carrying a weight with them. Probably the line can be read as follows 'Jesus forgives our guilt/misdeeds as we forgive the guilt/misdeed of the less fortunate'.

The second sentence of Testerian 078 that differs from Gante's version runs from glyph S23 to S26:



Fig. 76 S23 Do not leave us S24 to fall S25 in temptation S26 and free us S27 here

Bonilla Palmeros interprets this sentence in Nahuatl as 'Macamo xitech tlalcahuia inic amo yn panpa tihuetzisque yn tenetecoltiliztli yn tlacatecolotl yuan ma xitech momaquixttili nican' and can be read in English as 'Please do not let us fall in the temptation of the evil spirit, and free us here'. Interestingly again, representations seem to be more Christian, except for glyph S27, which Bonilla suggests represents a mound (*tlatelli*) which is pointed at by a finger (*mapilhuia*), a locative employed in Nahua imagery, representing the word 'here' (*nican*) [Bonilla 2004:91-100].



Fig. 77 'Hell' Catecismo 078, S24



Fig. 78 'Hell' Articles of Faith, Egerton. f.18r

Glyphs S24 and S26 seem to represent Jesus descending into hell or limbo after his death, to achieve forgiveness for humanity. In both figures the mouth of hell is represented by an animal with an open mouth. Bonilla Palmeros observes that this animal is a pig (*pitzotl*) having more relevance to the Christian imaginary as a dirty, polluted animal [Bonilla 2004:215]. We need to remember that pigs were brought from Spain, and therefore they were

not a cultural referent for the Nahuas which could suggest that these representations of hell might have European origins. As Graham observes, the open mouth represented in medieval European art is a maw, which symbolizes the gates of hell. The representations vary, sometimes human figures are entering the maw, at others they are waiting next to the maw, and a third one shows Jesus rescuing souls from a open maw [Graham 2011:265]. Bonilla Palmeros, suggest that these figures join the Mesoamerican representation of the opening of the underworld or Mictlan, which was on occasion represented as the open mouth of a composite creature –with saurian, mammalian and fish traits—, with the Christian imaginary [Bonilla 2004:215, Thompson 1959:352-3]. The representation of the gates of hell can be seen as a case of Lockhart’s double-mistaken-identity, as the symbolism of the maw was quite different between Mesoamerica and Europe, but the missionaries distorted the original meaning of the Nahua images in their catechisms in images [Graham 2011:265]. This motif, although not present in Gante’s catechism is also present in the Egerton.



Fig. 79 S25 ‘Devil’ Catecismo 078

While in the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* evil is represented by a European dagger, G47, in Sahagún’s catechism, glyph S25 [see fig.79] is depicted by a standing anthropomorphic figure, with horns in its head and the face appearing frontally. Its body is covered in spots, similarly to the representation of sinners by Gante. It is extending both arms towards a small kneeling figure holding a cross in his hand. This is clearly a Christian image of the devil.



Fig. 80 S14 ‘We need’ Catecismo 078

Another interesting glyph from Sahagún’s is S14, which according to Bonilla Palmeros means ‘we need’ and represents the idea of Christ giving himself during the Eucharist [Bonilla 2004: 214-217]. Although it is probable that indeed the scene represents Christ and the Eucharist, there are some elements that could have led to misinterpretation. The figure,

although dressed in red as representations of Jesus in these catechisms tend to be, does not show any of the other symbolic imagery related to Jesus, such as a halo or even facial hair. On the other hand, the element of a sword on top of the head could be associated with the Spaniards as it is a blade of European origin, and as we have seen in Gante's catechism, the blade was associated with evil.



Fig. 81 S28 'Do not take your love away' Catecismo 078

The last figure to be analysed here is glyph S28 which represents, according to Bonilla, 'Do not take your love away'. The scene depicts two figures, the ever-present narrator and a female figure holding a vase of flowers. Love is represented by flowers held in the hand of someone. The face of the person who, by wearing a red garment, is indicated as divine and probably a female (Saint Mary?), is looking in the opposite direction from the rest of the figures which would suggest according to Bonilla Palmeros, the negative [Bonilla 2004:97]. This feature does not appear in Gante; instead the horizontal hand is employed.

In summary, clearly the two catechisms were painted by different artists. The catechism 078 displays a more marked European influence. The difference in design and the nature of the scenes depicted suggest that the catechism 078 is posterior. There is the interesting assimilation of God the father with the figure of his representatives on earth, the Franciscan missionary, an assimilation that reflects the position of priests in relation to deities in prehispanic times. Colour is employed differently in Gante as well. In Gante's the different colours of the garments were related to the different rank of individuals. On the other hand, in the 078, colour is employed only in relation to divinities. Elements in Gante's catechism are not distributed in the different sectors of the registers (related to the planes in which the world is divided, heaven, earth, hell/*Mictlan*) as occurs in the 078.

The catechisms both show a standardization of sorts, especially in glyphs presenting elements of Christian imaginary, such as orbs and depictions of Christ. Nahua glyphs also present standardization but to a lesser degree, especially flowers, *tortillas* as holy bread and the representation of heaven as the glyph of sky. However, the catechism of Gante seems to use more phonetic Nahua glyphs. It is interesting to note that these phonetic glyphs are different

in both prayers, probably because they were neologisms. Iteration is not as frequently present in the 078 as in Gante's catechism. This could mean that Gante's catechism was elaborated through a deeper collaboration between Nahuas and Gante as it has more elements from the Nahua imaginary, it also seems to follow the Nahuatl prayer whereas 078's version is of a more ideographic/mnemonic nature. This could not only indicate the agency of the author, but also that the catechism attributed to Sahagún was posterior as by that time some of the Nahua cultural elements were already in disuse.

The catechisms varied slightly in content as we can see from Table 2 in Appendix 1 comparing Gante, catechism 078 (Sahagún), Mazahua and Egerton.¹³⁰ All catechisms generally presented the key principles of Christian doctrine (which are the prayers every Christian needed to know: the *Pater Noster*, the *Ave Maria*, the Creed, the *Salve Regina* and the *Confiteor* or confession [Morín 2002:25]); but in more intricate devotional texts of Christianity they differed vastly probably a result of the agency of the missionary. For example, the content of Sahagún's and Gante's catechisms varies slightly, in particular in relation to the concept of sin. Sahagún's catechism adds one whole sentence related to sin, possibly in order to explain in depth the concept. However, even if trying to avoid confusion, the glyphs could have been interpreted in a different way than intended by the missionaries [Bonilla 2004:4-5, Resines 1992:260, García Ahumada 1994:221].

The Mazahua catechism is the only one in this list that was probably written in another language: Otomí. However, it also presents similar glyphs to those found in Gante's *Catecismo* e.g. the use of hands. The greatest similarities, however, are not found in relation to indigenous glyphs but with Christian ones [Leon 1900:728-9].

A comparison of these texts belonging to different languages begs the question of whether signs chosen were translated from a vernacular oral version of the prayer, or if they are independent codifications of the same message. Tapia Zúñiga claims that it is highly likely that the glyphs are independent versions of the Vulgate, which every missionary knew [Tapia Zúñiga (w/y):35]. Acker observes it would be necessary to establish a genealogical tree of the different catechisms in order to determine the manner in which they were produced. For

¹³⁰ It is important to note that the content of Gante's catechism and the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* [1553] is the same, except from the brief doctrine in questions and answers added in the *Catecismo* [Normann 1985:74].

example, the Mazahua catechism seems to be a copy of Gante's.¹³¹ Moreover, she adds that in order to establish a link to Mesoamerican writing systems it is necessary to study the earliest examples such as Gante's and the Gómez de Orozco catechism which display lots of similarities [Acker 1995:413]. Indeed these links, seems to be evident after observing other Nahua codices. According to Truitt, in the *Codex mexicanus* in year five rabbit there appears a picture of two people pointing at what seem to be stars. The drawing of their hands is similar to Gante's catechisms [Truitt 2008:90]. *Codex Sierra* [ca. 1550-1564] shows a mixture of glyphs both from the contact and prehispanic period. Whereas the year bearers such as 8 *calli* remained prehispanic, glyphs related to Christianity show similarities with the ones employed in catechisms in images [Thompson 1959:353].

7.5 Conclusion

The *Catecismo en Pictogramas* is a great example of the process of transculturation started by the Franciscan missionaries in New Spain. As we have seen, catechisms proved to be a very popular method of transmitting the key principles of Christianity, and they continued to be used even in the 18th century. However, there seems to have been a developmental trajectory in this process consisting of two stages: an initial phase, corresponding to the early years of the evangelization process, in which Nahua writing conventions were still alive and could be read and interpreted without the help of glosses or marginalia that facilitated the understanding of the text; and a second phase, in which Nahua writing conventions were in disuse and the original meaning of the glyphs was already lost by this time. In this stage the catechisms were only employed for their mnemonic value, to help illiterate people to remember the key principles of faith, more in accord with the European tradition of engravings accompanying primers and *doctrinas*.

The *Catecismo en Pictogramas* is exemplary in demonstrating the difficulties of the intersemiotic translation of Christian theology into a foreign pictorial script [Ríos Castaño 2007:125]. The author of this booklet seems to have had a great understanding of the Nahua language and world view; glyphs borrowed from the Nahua imaginary show the process of cultural borrowing and acquisition of the missionary, and how he interpreted and reintroduced that imaginary in order to serve his own goals. However, what was understood by the Nahuas after this process is difficult to ascertain, but there must have been an ample

¹³¹ The Garrett Collection of Mesoamerican Manuscripts (C0744) [GCMM] contains two Testerian Otomí catechisms. Although both were likely copies of earlier works, the existing manuscripts date between 1775 and 1825 [Christensen 2010:22].

scope for misunderstanding. After an overview of the glyphs it is notable that certain elements could not have been conveyed by employing Nahuatl glyphs only, but needed to be represented using visual elements drawn from Christian iconography. In general both the *Catecismo en pictogramas* and the *Catecismo Incompleto* make heavy use of both sources in creating a new set of depictions never seen before.

With regards to authorship I ascribe to the third theory [see chapter five]. From all the catechisms in images the only one to hold a signature belongs to Gante. His involvement in the process as attested by his signature, the importance of his pedagogic work in the *doctrina* of San José and his deep knowledge of Nahuatl would suggest that he was indeed a forerunner in the process of manufacture of these pedagogic booklets. The signature on this copy would mean not only that it belonged to Gante but that he was central in the creation of these pedagogic tools, probably directing the efforts and giving the final approval on the many copies made of the *Catecismo*. Thus, as Tapia Zúñiga suggests the catechisms were not a clandestine interpretation of Christian religion, but were heavily regulated recodification made and disseminated by missionaries such as Gante [Tapia Zúñiga (w/y):32]. In addition to this, in the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* it is very difficult to appreciate major characteristic Nahuatl writing system traits. However, Nahuatl influence can be seen in the glyphs of sky, flowers, the hands, the feather and in the virgules representing speech. On some occasions these glyphs were used in the Nahuatl tradition, but in others they were modified to adjust to the oral version of the prayer. For example the hands that signify the word *mahtl*, which means ‘hand’, were used in the *Catecismo* for their phonetic value, employing its root particle, *ma*, and modifying it according to its association and context to signify negation or gracious appeal. This type of phonetics was employed in a limited way in the codices of prehispanic origin, mostly used in topographic signs and personal names, which could indicate that the catechism was made by/or under ecclesiastical authority [Whitaker 2009:56]. The catechism also presents ideographic glyphs meant to transmit concepts that are profoundly immersed in the Christian imaginary [Johansson 2001:101].

Another argument that could support the idea of missionary involvement could be linearity. The starting point for reading Mexica codices could be at different points on the manuscript. Codices could have several layers of information and the reader could choose a different point to start one narrative or another depending on what was required [Johansson 2001:101]. So a text could be read in numerous ways and so contained many more layers of information. The *Catecismo en Pictogramas* differs greatly from this. It starts in a European fashion from

left upper part to right bottom; the glyphs are also divided into horizontal lines to facilitate reading. However, the reading includes both pages at the same time. In many ways the catechism seems to be a hybrid book, not entirely Nahua, not entirely European. Another important element that argues against the theory of indigenous authorship is the use of European paper. Paper mills in New Spain were non-existent during the first years of New Spain, and it was long after the installation of the printing press that the first paper mills were established. Therefore the amount of European paper in the colonies was very limited and it was mainly used by Europeans. Taking this into account, the use of a considerable amount of paper given to indigenous people to write the catechism does not seem plausible. One final point to indicate the heavy involvement of a missionary in the collaboration process would be the use of Christian imagery which demonstrates a specific insight into the European *ethos*.

To produce these catechisms Gante must have studied the Nahua script; something made more difficult as the writing system was deeply intertwined with the belief system of the Nahuas. By creating these catechisms, Gante and his ‘transcultured’ Nahuas joined two diametric opposites: European didactic art and the Nahua writing system, creating thus a bridge of communication between two cultures [Acker 1995:403-420, Bravo 1977:27]. Catechisms must have been a product of trial and error, a product of a dialogue between Gante and the Nahua. It must have been an arduous process in which Gante and his Nahua pupils adjusted the composition of the catechism multiple times, changing glyphs and modifying and discarding them as a part of the process of creation of this pedagogic tool.

Catechisms in images as a genre proved to be quite standardized in format and structure as seen by the comparison of several examples in existence such as the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*, the Testerian 078 attributed to Sahagún, the *Catecismo Incompleto* and the Egerton. The selection of morphograms and therefore the process of translation seems to have been different for the Testerian 078 and Egerton than for the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and the *Incompleto*, showing, as Normann suggests, there were diverse models or prototype catechisms copied by different people at different times. Indeed the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and the *Incompleto*, although different in style, shared an almost identical structure and morphograms, following what seems to be a Nahuatl oral-based variation of the prayer that does not exactly correspond with the written versions of the *Doctrina* or *Cartilla*. However, these accommodations are so minimal that they do not change the main meaning of the message. On the basis of this analysis, I propose that both the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* and the *Catecismo Incompleto* were possibly created around the same time: there is almost no

variation in morphograms, the structure is the same, there are no glosses or marginalia, the application of colour is similar; but whether they were both copied from the same prototype is impossible to say. The *Incompleto* seems to be following the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*. As I mentioned already the *Incompleto* is a complete text, consisting of only three sections; at least two of the sections are basically the same as in the *Catecismo*: the Sacraments and the Acts of Mercy. However the content of the last section is still undetermined. The differences in the content of the catechisms do not explain why the author of the *Incompleto* decided to present only three sections of the catechism. Moreover, the *Incompleto* also presents styles and conventions that seems to reflect European visual habits of representation, such as the inclusion of alphabetic script, facial features, and a careful painting of both Christian iconography and Nahua morphograms, suggesting that this could be the work of a missionary or of a Nahua student, a *tlahcuilo*, trying to copy attentively and carefully the paintings in front of him.

The diversity amongst catechisms begs the question concerning whether catechisms were produced only by Franciscans or also by members of the other orders working in New Spain at that moment. Can it be that what was referred to as the Franciscan audio-visual method was indeed more than the linen painted with biblical scenes, but also included the catechisms in images which Franciscans saw as their invention and did not want borrowed by other orders?

In the next chapter we will explore the following developmental step in the transculturation process by means of an analysis of the second work of Gante: the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* [1547, 1553], a *doctrina* in which the conversion effort was crystallized, underscoring the collaborative effort of Nahuas and missionaries.

Chapter 8: The *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana*

In this chapter I will explore the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* by Gante. It was the first published alphabetic Nahuatl work by the missionary. The *Doctrina* highlights the process of transition from a system of transmission based on Nahua glyphs to European forms of expression. To achieve this, an exemplar of the second edition dated from 1553 and currently located in the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN) in Mexico City will be analysed. The *Doctrina Christiana* will be used as a springboard to understand the dynamics of evangelical translation activity and the ingenuity of the friar in handling culturally complex terms. In particular, an analysis of the *Doctrina* will be carried out, not only regarding its physical format and content but also placing special emphasis on the translation of the Apostles' Creed. The Apostles' Creed has been selected as this text introduced the Nahua convert to the basic premises of Christian piety. Moreover a developmental trajectory of the translation process can be gleaned from the comparison of the Apostles' Creed in the *Doctrina Christiana* with the Apostles' Creed present in Gante's *Cartilla* [1569] and in Alonso de Molina's *Doctrina* [1546]. Gante needed to work in close collaboration with his Nahua pupils, who aided him in the linguistic nuances that such a translation implied; through a thorough analysis of the *Doctrina* I will therefore be able to determine to what extent the composition of the *Doctrina* was a collaborative process instead of the work of a single author. To conclude this chapter, the study will be further enriched by an iconographic analysis, based on Panofsky's method, of a selected sample on the engravings which accompany the Articles of Faith in both the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla* in order to identify the existence of specific models or representational conventions which could point to the creation of engravings by the same artist or school. These engravings were fundamental in the slow replacement of Nahua imagery by a European one. In so doing a greater understanding of the process of pictorial elaboration and the translation of Gante's texts can be approached and pinned within the larger historical context.

A three-layered analysis of the *Doctrina* allows an understanding of the complex process of creation of this particular type of Christian instructional works. The selection of themes, the translation process and the making of the engravings point not only to the targeted audience but also the intricacies of Gante's work as a translator and his ideas regarding his own faith. The facets of Gante's *Doctrina* reveal the agency of the missionary and the level of cooperation between the friar, other missionary translators and the Nahua population,

revealing Christian translations as liminal places which permitted to a certain extent a dialogue, in which cultural categories were discussed and incorporated in a new form of narrative.

A contextualized, theorized analysis of the *Doctrina* to understand the work as a whole has never been attempted before. Scholarly works have been generally devoted to doctrinal writings from other missionaries such as Molina and Sahagún. An analysis of Gante's *Doctrina* is vital to add a pivotal point of view on the process of evangelization, as he was one of the first missionaries to learn the language, transliterate oral Nahuatl to alphabetic script and to write a Christian *doctrina*. By means of a three-layered analysis the agency of Gante will be revealed and will help to bring a clearer understanding of his importance during the early stages of the transculturation process.

8.1 Editions of the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana*

Gante's *Doctrina* is one of the oldest printed *doctrinas* in a Mesoamerican vernacular. In 1547 the *Doctrina Christiana en lengua Mexicana* by Gante was published under Zumárraga's instructions. Gante's *doctrina* written in alphabetic Nahuatl enjoyed such popularity in New Spain that it was not solely used by Franciscans but also by other orders such as the Augustinians, who decided in their first provincial assembly held in 1534 to employ it until Agustín de Coruña was able to produce an Augustinian catechism [Otmann 2003:284-6, Lara 2008:58, Resines 2005:3]. Juan de Torquemada (1562-1624) indicates that Gante's *doctrina* was still a popular work during the 17th century, possibly serving both Nahuas and missionaries with a deep knowledge of Nahuatl [Torquemada 1615 (1983) book 16 chapter 8, vol.3:154-5, Zamora 2013:2-3, Christensen 2010:174, Máynez 2002:276, Carreño 1949:323-7].

Unlike the other works of Gante, the *Doctrina* has at least eight extant copies attributed to Gante. Six of these copies can be ascribed to the two certain editions of the work: 1547 and 1553. The other two copies share a similar content, which allowed them to be ascribed to the friar, but have an unknown date of edition.

The earliest exemplar, dating from the first edition of 1547, is held at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. This copy is incomplete; some of its opening and closing pages are missing. It is particularly difficult to ascertain if the last part of the book has lost its pages, or

if more content was added to later editions [Mulhare *et al* 2002:217].¹³² There is another copy attributed to Gante in the Spanish American Collection of the John Carter Brown Library (JCBL) in Rhode Island, dated by García Icazbalceta to 1547 [1972:391-2].¹³³ After briefly studying a digital copy of the *Doctrina* in the JCBL, several differences with the 1553 copy of the AGN can be noted. The JCBL copy is incomplete, only one hundred and twenty-four pages remain and it lacks both frontispiece and colophon. However it is very likely that the JCBL copy was penned by Gante as it shares similar content, translations, engravings and lettering as the 1553 edition in the AGN.¹³⁴ The *Doctrina* in the JCBL seems to be made up of only two different sections: a lengthier and an abridged *doctrina*. This exemplar lacks the devotional section. It is written completely in Nahuatl. Indeed Latin seems to be absent from the JCBL exemplar, and almost all headings are in Castilian instead of Nahuatl which could suggest that the JCBL exemplar belongs to the 1547 edition. The printed work ends on f. 71r and is followed by an eight page question/answer manuscript named ‘*Modo breve de confesar a los indios*’ (A brief confessional manual for Indians). The handwriting seems highly stylised, and not very legible. This begs the question if the manuscript section was also written by Gante or by an eventual owner of the *Doctrina*. The digitized letters of Gante, extant in Spain’s Archivo Histórico Nacional in the Colección Documentos de Indias, present a clear, precise handwriting. Gante’s hand differs from the handwriting of the manuscript section of the *Doctrina* in the JCBL, indicating that they were not written by the same person.¹³⁵ Evidence suggests that the extant *Doctrina* was possibly owned by a missionary who was not fluent in Nahuatl, but, who needed to preach and confess in Nahuatl and wrote the brief confessional manual in Nahuatl to aid him in this task.

¹³² García Icazbalceta dates the Huntington copy of the *Doctrina* to the year 1547 because it has foliation, a characteristic not found in editions after 1548. It also shares the same content on most of its pagination as the *Doctrina* from 1553 [Zulaica 1991:67-8].

¹³³ Call number b3906657. John Carter Library. Spanish American Collection/Mexico incunables collection <https://archive.org/details/doctrinacristian00gant>.

¹³⁴ The typography is black in this edition in contrast to the 1553 edition which has red and black typography.

¹³⁵ ‘Ca de Pedro de Gante sobre el servicio personal de indios’ (Gante, 15/2/1552) (DIVERSOS-COLECCIONES,23,N.59); ‘Petición indulgencias de enterramientos’ (Gante, 23/06/1558) (DIVERSOS-COLECCIONES,24,N.36); ‘Petición indulgencias de enterramientos’ (Gante, 23/06/1558) (DIVERSOS-COLECCIONES,24,N.35); ‘Sobre la muerte de Juan de Zumárraga’ (Gante, 20/7/1548) (DIVERSOS-COLECCIONES,23,N.19).

Four exemplars have been dated to the 1553 edition. Comparison between the exemplars of the 1553 edition and the exemplars of the 1547 anonymous edition suggests that both editions were authored by Gante; however none of the extant copies is complete [Schwaller 1992:13]. In the edition from 1553, Gante has expanded the content of the 1547 edition, adding vespers, matins, a short doctrinal dialogue and introduced for the first time the concept of the Holy Trinity [Mulhare *et al* 2002:217, Tavárez 2000:26]. The various copies of the 1553 edition are held in different locations: at the Latin American Collection of the Nettie Lee Benson Library of the University of Texas at Austin, and in the Ayer Collection in the Newberry Library in Chicago, Illinois. In Mexico there are two other copies, one in the particular collection of Salomon Hale and another one at the Archivo General de la Nación. The foliation of the 1553 copies of both the AGN and the University of Texas at Austin are identical [Mulhare *et al* 2000:217].

Rodríguez has found another possible edition of the *Doctrina* in the copy located in the Biblioteca Cervantina of the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey; however, this exemplar lacks the seal of impression. Although the content is similar to the edition of 1553 several of the differences could indicate that it belongs to another edition. However, in the *Bibliografía Mexicana del siglo XVI* from García Icazbalceta only two editions appear: 1547 and 1553 [Rodríguez 2013:83, García Icazbalceta 1972]. Rodríguez, based on the work of Manuel Toussaint *Catálogo de algunos libros antiguos* [1933],¹³⁶ observes that the exemplar in the Biblioteca Cervantina must have been published between 1563 and 1572. After a typographic examination of the Biblioteca Cervantina exemplar and the 1547 and 1553 editions and a subsequent study of engravings from Pedro de Ocharte and Juan Pablos presses, she pinned the copy of the Biblioteca Cervantina to the year 1556 [Rodríguez 2013:83-90].

Another unknown edition of the *Doctrina* has been identified by Schwaller in the Lilly Library at the University of Indiana.¹³⁷ Although the copy is incomplete—it has only one-third of the leaves and the frontispiece is absent—after a thorough comparison between this copy and the one located at the University of Texas, Schwaller concludes that this work was also by Gante, but probably a later edition [Schwaller 1973].

¹³⁶ Manuel Toussaint (1890-1955) was one of the most important leading figures in the study of art history in Mexico [For an extensive bibliography of Manuel Toussaint see Mantecón 1957].

¹³⁷ Call number PM4068.1 .P49 D63 vault.

In addition to these copies Vetancourt hints that there was an earlier edition than 1547, however no copies remain. According to his *Teatro Mexicano* [1697] Gante's *Doctrina* was first composed as early as 1525, only two years after his arrival in New Spain. According to Vetancourt, before the introduction of the printing press in Mexico, diffusion of such large pieces of text was often complicated. To solve this, Gante sent a manuscript copy of his *Doctrina* to Antwerp to be published. Beristain, who wrote a magnificent, five-volume, bibliographical study of almost five-thousand books printed in Spanish America during the Viceroyalty period [the *Biblioteca hispano-americana-septentrional* (1816-1821)] disagrees with Vetancourt's assertion and suggests that this edition was not printed in 1525 but three years later, in 1528, again in Antwerp. Beristain concluded that the work was later reprinted in Mexico in 1533, years before the introduction of the printing press in New Spain [Beristain 1816-1821 (1947) cited in Zulaica 1991:66, Fabrizio 2010, Burkhart 1989:198].¹³⁸ The exact trajectory of publication is very difficult to ascertain and it seems implausible that Gante would have sent his text to be printed in Antwerp, when all the licences to print material destined for New Spain were given by the Crown to the house of Cromberger in Seville. Additionally, printing of Mesoamerican languages in European presses often resulted in grammatical mistakes and the long journey sometimes resulted in the loss of the manuscript [Torre Revello 1960:217, Chocano 1995:13]. Gante, being a practical man, probably tried to avoid this. Moreover the early date of the *Doctrina* would imply not only that this was the first *doctrina* written in Nahuatl, but also a deep and intricate knowledge of Nahuatl linguistics and semantics that seems implausible to have been achieved after Gante had been in New Spain for only two years. On the other hand, if this was the case it could suggest that the level of collaboration between Gante and his 'transcultured' Nahuas was more intensive than previously thought.

8.2 Description of the *Doctrina Christiana* 1553

The edition of the *Doctrina Christiana* to be explored in this chapter was printed in 1553 and it is currently held in the AGN in Mexico City.¹³⁹ The copy was chosen for this study as it is one of the most complete exemplars to date and unlike other copies it can securely be

¹³⁸ A fragment from an earlier edition than 1547 of Gante's *Doctrina* has been reported in an unidentified private collection. According to Otmann the exemplar probably dates from 1539 or 1540, the beginning of the printing press in New Spain [Otmann 2003:284-6].

¹³⁹ The copy is located in the Archivo General de la Nación/Instituciones Coloniales/ Regio Patronato Indiano/ Bienes Nacionales (014)/.

attributed to the friar. The copy has one hundred and sixty-two octavo folios. The text is printed in gothic type in two colours, red and black, with typography of exceptional quality. The text is accompanied by fifty-five woodcut illustrations, often placed at the beginning of each section. The *Doctrina* is written in Nahuatl, while some sections, in particular in the *doctrina tepiton* (abridged *doctrina*) present a bilingual text in Nahuatl and Latin. Some titles are randomly written in Spanish while others in Nahuatl.

The title of the *Doctrina* is written in red ink in Spanish: *Doctrina xpiana en legua Mexicana*. The episcopal emblem which represents a friar teaching the doctrine to a group of children appears below the title and is the same as in the previous edition of 1547. Virgules come out from the friar's mouth and Tarascan (Purepecha) is written in their interior: 'Ichuca Dioseueri bandaqua' (Here is the word of god). Icazbalceta claims that the image must have been reused from a book written in Tarascan that nowadays has been lost. To add more mystery to this, the first book printed in Tarascan was the *Arte de la lengua Tarasca ó de Michoacán* by Maturini Gilberti dating from 1558, nine years later than the first edition of Gante's *Doctrina* and five years later than the 1553 edition. This could suggest that there were earlier printed works in Tarascan [Zulaica 1991:66-8, Acero Durántez 2012]. Underneath the episcopal emblem the text continues in Nahuatl with the Sign of the Cross: 'Per signum crucis. Icamachiotl Cruz/ Yhuicpa/in toyahua/ xitechmomaquixtili/ Totecuyoe diose ica inmotocactzin Tetatzin/ yhua tepiltizin/ yhuan spissancti/ ame Jesus.'¹⁴⁰ On the right side of the AGN's copy appear marginalia that mention the name María de los Ángeles, probably a former owner of the copy.

¹⁴⁰ 'Here is the sign of the cross: towards with water [to anoint oneself with water]. Save us from our enemies, our lord God, in the name of the father, and of the son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen Jesus' [translation by the author].

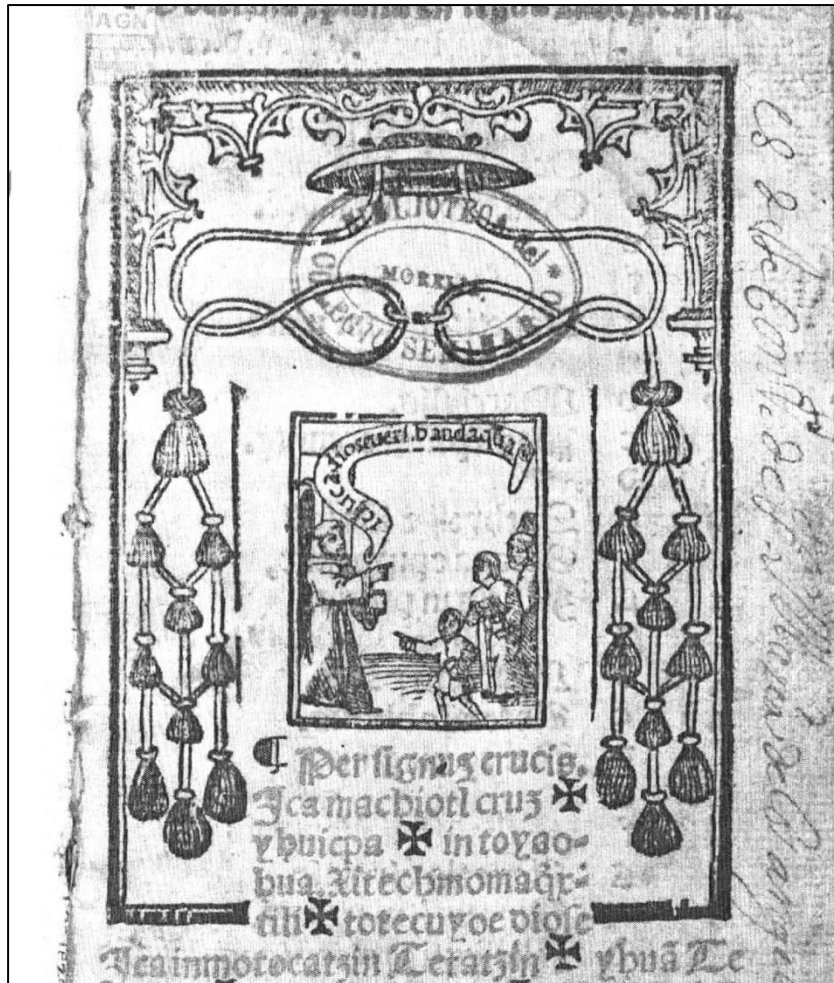


Fig. 82 Frontispiece *Doctrina Christiana en lengua Mexicana* [Gante 1553].

Folio one starts with the Roman alphabet, an interesting addition that probably helped the Nahuatl student of the *Doctrina* to learn and remember the alphabet. Underneath the alphabet, the *Doctrina* commences properly with the following title in Spanish: ‘Comiēça la doctrina christiana en lengua Mexicana’. To accompany the text an engraving showing a missionary surrounded by small figures, probably neophytes, appears.

The *Doctrina* has a Nahuatl table of contents that starts from unfoliated page 325 and ends on page 328 [see appendix 8]. The colophon is in Spanish: ‘A honra y gloria de nuestro señor Jesuxpo y de su bēdita madre: aquí se acaba la presente doctrina xptiana en lēgua Mexicana. La ql fue recopilada por el R. P. fray Pedro de Gāte de la ordē de sant frācisco. Fue impressa en casa de Juā Pablos impressor de libros. Año de 1553.’

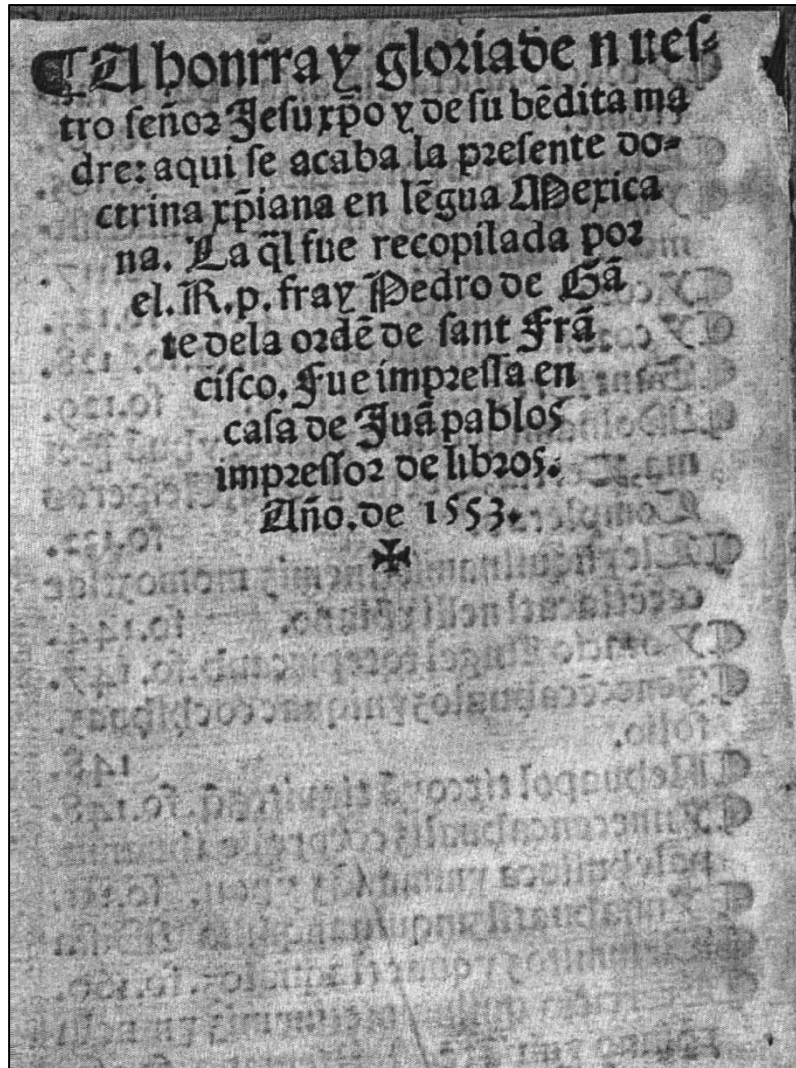


Fig. 83 Imprint of the Doctrina Christiana [Gante 1553]

The 'Sello de Aprobación' by Manuel de Alcaraz de Real is on page 344:

Aprobacion del R.P. Fr. Manuel de Alcaraz del Real y Militar Orden de Nuestra Señora de la Merced Redemcion de Cautivos, Mestro de los del Numero de la Provincia de la Visitacion de Nueva España, Regente que fue de estudios tres veces, y comendador del convento grande de esta Ciudad de Mexico, Rector del Ilustre Colegio de los Comendadores de San Ramon Nonato de esta Corte, y Elector General, etc [Gante 1553:344].

Unfortunately the *aprobación* is undated, but it was probably given after 1593, the year of the arrival of the Mercedarian order in Mexico. Why was it approved by a Mercedarian, and why so late? Probably, this means that by 1593 the *Doctrina* was not only employed by Franciscans and Augustinians but also by Mercedarians arriving in New Spain. On page 360 an approval of the content by the Jesuit Cristóbal Escobar Llamas dating from 1758 shows that the *Doctrina* was still being used at that time for purpose of indoctrination by Jesuits.

The *Doctrina Christiana* ends with an un-foliated three column list of liturgical activities that goes from page 346 to 360.

8.3 Structure and Content Analysis

Generally, the content of the *doctrinas* could be presented in four ways: a straightforward narrative, sermons, the question-answer and the dialogue method. The dialogue method took place between two individuals, who could be teacher and student, a very popular format as it presented the content in a didactic fashion. Gante's *Doctrina* does not lend itself to a clear cut or easy classification, as it combines the question/answer and the dialogue method showing his extensive pedagogic experience with the text in question.

Gante's *Doctrina* is divided into two main parts, a catechetical and a devotional part. The first part of the volume encompasses eighty-six folios and contains the catechetical instruction that in turn is divided into two sections: a lengthier *doctrina* and a *tepiton* or abridged *doctrina*. The format of the lengthier *doctrina* is presented by means of a dialogue and question/answer method. The dialogue has an anonymous Nahuatl first-person singular speaker who explains to a neophyte the main elements of Christianity. The *tepiton* section summarizes the previous material without the question and answer format [Ottman 2003:266, Burkhart 2001:58].

The devotional section of the *Doctrina* encompasses seventy-six folios, and contains a series of exemplary instructions for every Christian to follow, such as a daily examination of conscience, a series of prayers of contrition, a guide to confession, a guide to hearing mass (as a recapitulation of the life of Christ), an instruction to receive the Eucharist, a series of crowns or *corona* bead-prayers, the prayer of Saint Gregory, the passion, a profession of faith to be said daily, a prayer to be said at night, a prayer to the Guardian Angel, a series of prayers before sleep, an art of dying well, an instruction for attending mass, a set of prayers at meals, a meditation upon hearing the clock strike and finally a set of guidelines for studying the most important elements of the *Doctrina* for each day of the week [Ottman 2003:284-6, Cortés 1987:46]. [The entire content of the *Doctrina Christiana* according to section is in Appendix 2, Table 3].¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ The table of contents is present at the end of the *Doctrina*, after f. 162. However, the items listed in the table of contents have generally Nahuatl titles, unlike most of the titles within the text and on occasion folio numeration does not correspond. Whole sections of the *tepiton doctrina* are not mentioned at all and there are serious problems with the foliation.

Gante's *Doctrina* showcases his agency in selecting relevant Christian doctrinal texts in order to create a multifaceted pedagogic work. His *Doctrina* has catechetical material appropriate for the recent convert (as we can see by the incorporation of the *doctrina tepiton*) but also for the more experienced Christian Nahua as seen both by the lengthier *doctrina* and the devotional section. The content underscores Gante's belief in the considerable intellectual and moral capabilities of the Nahua *pipiltin*, as it is evident that the work mainly targeted them. By following the devotional section, the Nahuas were expected to achieve a virtuous Christian life; in this way a Nahua's individual behaviour needed to comply with the lineaments and expectations of European cosmology. Moreover, the selection of catechetical and devotional narratives illustrate Gante's ideals of devotion and piety, and reveal which elements of Christian belief Gante thought were the most beneficial for his pupils' instruction.

8.3.1 Themes

Mulhare and Sell illustrate Gante's agency in the composition of the *Doctrina* in their study regarding bead prayers in the devotional section of the *Doctrina* [Mulhare et al 2002:218-9]. Prayers using beads became a regular practise amongst the neophyte Christian Nahuas during the 16th century. In Gante's *Doctrina*, Nahuas were instructed to recite prayers repeatedly with the help of a string of beads, to prepare physically and spiritually to attend mass, and as a penance after confession; beads were recommended in the *Confesionario Mayor* [1569] of Molina and in the *Sermonario* [1548] by Sahagún [Mulhare et al 2002:218-9].

According to Mulhare and Sell, the bead-prayers present in Gante's work are not variant texts from the Rosary as could have been expected. They are variants of other bead-prayers practised in Europe at the time. They consist of four 'crowns' or '*coronas*': the 'Crown of Our Lord Jesus Christ', the 'Crown of Saint Mary', the 'Crown of the Five Wounds' and the 'Floral crown'. Of all of these only the 'Crown of the Five Wounds' is still employed in Mexico.¹⁴² Gante selected these bead-prayers because they were appropriate tools of indoctrination. The 'Crown of the Five Wounds' had the appeal of being part of the Easter Week celebrations, while the 'Floral crown' was the easiest to remember as it did not include meditations. While still a lengthy bead-prayer, it was ideal for use in penance.

¹⁴² The 'Crown of Our Lord Jesus Christ' relates different events of the life of Jesus. The 'Crown of Saint Mary' exalts the virtues of the Virgin Mary. The 'Crown of the Five Wounds' deals with the Crucifixion and the 'Floral Crown' asks Mary's intercession on behalf of the penitent [Mulhare et al 2002:220].

Mulhare and Sell suggest that Gante did not include the Rosary in his *Doctrina* for a variety of reasons.¹⁴³ First of all, unlike bead-prayers, the Rosary was penitential. In addition, it was not declared the official Church pedagogical bead-prayer until the 1570s. Moreover, the order that introduced the Rosary was not Franciscan but Dominican. But most importantly of all, these bead-prayers were better tools for indoctrination as they provided supplementary instruction; the Rosary, by itself was not helpful in explaining religious dogma [Mulhare et al 2002:222]. For example the ‘Crown of Saint Mary’ due to its simple structure could have been adapted into a song. The *coronas* were ideal to teach the Christian Nahuas the most important tenets of faith as they explained dogma illustratively and pedagogically, emphasizing key events from the Gospels and Church tradition. They were perfect eidetic tools as each one of the events described was given a memorable title, listed in chronological order, and ordered in thematic groups [Mulhare et al 2002:222, Burkhart 2001:118-9].

With the selection of these bead-prayers, Gante helped to establish Christian piety in New Spain. From this repertoire, the ‘Crown of the Five Wounds’, which centres on a Franciscan popular devotional theme, the veneration of the Five Wounds of Christ,¹⁴⁴ is probably the most significant historically in the medium- and long term as this crown in particular is currently used in Mexico. The ‘Crown of the Five Wounds’ also helped to establish the popular piety of the Passion of Christ as it deals with Christ’s Crucifixion. Mulhare and Sell suggest that this was the first bead prayer taught by Gante to his Nahua pupils as the text of the prayer was kept short, without a lengthy explanation, unlike the narrative of the other bead prayers, indicating that the ‘Crown of the Five Wounds’ was already known by his Nahua pupils [Mulhare et al 2002:227, 230-1].¹⁴⁵

Gante’s personal choices while composing the *Doctrina* reveal his ideas concerning the dynamics of the evangelization and his interest in the creation of a Mesoamerican clergy. The

¹⁴³ The Rosary has been ascribed to St. Dominic (ca. 1170-1221), founder of the Dominican order. Other theories suggest that it was made by a Carthusian monk, Dominic of Prussia (1384-146). In Dominic of Prussia’s *Liber Experimentiarum* [1458] he claimed to have authored a series of phrases on the life of Christ that were to be meditated on while reciting the *Ave Maria*. These fifty-meditations or mysteries resulted in the first versions of today’s Rosary [Winston 1993:622].

¹⁴⁴ The veneration of the Five Wounds of Christ revolves around Saint Francis’ reception of the stigmata [Mulhare et al 2002:227].

¹⁴⁵ The crown of the ‘Five Wounds’ is still popular in Mexico mainly due to the international movement ‘Mary Queen of Peace’ with roots in a 1980s Bosnia-Herzegovina movement. The movement has a Mexican branch in Guadalajara. The crown that is employed currently has been expanded [Mulhare et al 2002:229].

narrative of the work has such detail in its explanation that it seems to be addressed to a Christian Nahua neophyte who was considered by the missionary as the future of the Church in New Spain. Ottman claims that Gante's comprehensive catechetical and devotional instruction reflected his ideas regarding the intellectual abilities of his Nahua students to the point that each segment of the *Doctrina* can be translated and addressed almost unchanged to a European audience [Ottman 2003:170-3]. Ottman suggests that in contrast to his contemporaries, Gante presented a vision of Christianity characterized by a dynamic relationship between God and the individual, a relationship based on penitence and mercy. In his *doctrina* Gante offered a complete guidance for a fulfilling Christian life, a life that although full of mistakes can be mended again and again through God's mercy by paying heed to the examples of the lives of the saints and imitating Christ. According to Gante it is only through their examples that the individual could achieve salvation through God's mercy. Following this idea, Gante introduced successfully the cult of the saints in his lengthy *doctrina* through a series of questions and answers regarding the relationship between the individual and the saints through their images. He recommended acting according to their example, following their actions, employing the Holy images of the saints as a pedagogic tool: 'For this reason our Lord Jesus Christ wished that their images be kept on earth, so that we will take a manner of life from them, every person, as it will be recounted in our book, our writing, so that we will learn from them. And for this reason where we see images, everywhere in churches, we will not just wonder at them, we will stop to look, we will become alert, we will say this was a person like me. But in the way that our Lord Dios strengthened him, may he also so strengthen me; may I follow in victory all those who are there' [Gante 1553:ff.13r-13v cited and translated in Ottman 2003:178]. The images of saints served then as a reminder, they were more than simple objects to be admired; they were meant to be analysed, their attributes told a story and provided a model for emulation. The images did not have their divine substance within, as images from Nahua divinities had. The cult of the saints was for the friar a pedagogic device. The cult of the saints became one of the most successful elements introduced by the missionaries as the Nahuas adopted and adapted the saints as a sort of replacement for their *calpulli* deities. The saints' intrinsic characteristics were modified combining prehispanic and Christian traits, an element that can be seen in the modern Nahua populations of Tecospa and the saints they favour, such as San Francisco.

I concur with Ottman's proposition that Gante did not see conversion as a one-time event; on the contrary, Gante believed that to become a good Christian, fall and redemption were

important parts of the process and in many ways these are two of his most fundamental beliefs. Gante's thoughts on redemption, Ottman discerns, become clear in the section of the *Doctrina* regarding the sacrament of confession, where it is stated that the sacrament needs to be employed as a remedy for human's inevitable fall into sin [Ottman 2003:79-80, 225]. Gante's posture differed in many ways from his contemporaries, who were disappointed after seeing the earliest results of the initial phase of the evangelization, claiming that Mesoamericans were not capable of becoming fully Christian. Gante, on the other hand, comprehended that it was not a straightforward process, but a process with many twists and turns. He wanted his Christian neophytes not to fear Christian religion as the Nahuas had done before with their own deities. Gante, in his 1529 letter addressed to his family and colleagues of the Franciscan convent, explained succinctly how the Nahuas were afraid of their religion and rulers, and it was what he believed a culture of fear that obligated them to conduct human sacrifices. He wanted his Christianity to have an opposite effect; he wanted to show that redemption and a relationship with God were attainable through penance and more importantly through mercy [Gante 27th June 1529 in Torre 1973:40-3].

8.4 The translation process in Gante's *Doctrina Christiana*

To understand the translation process of the *Doctrina* by Gante the Articles of Faith will be analysed. The version of the Articles of Faith that appears in Gante's *doctrina* is the Apostles' Creed. Gante selected the Apostles' Creed or Common's Creed instead of the Nicene Creed for his *Doctrina*, probably because its association with each one of the apostles served as a brilliant pedagogic tool to explain difficult aspects of Christian dogma to the Nahua neophytes. Engravings played an important role in this, as images of the apostles were associated with the articles. Illustrations served as mnemonic devices. For this reason, the Apostles' Creed appears frequently in religious instruction books such as Gante's *Doctrina*. The association of each article of the Creed with each one of the Twelve Apostles can be traced back to a 5th-century tradition narrating how each one of the Apostles contributed to an article to compose the Creed during Pentecost. According to Gordon, the arrangement of the clauses of the Creed to form twelve articles is arbitrary as sixteen or seventeen clauses can be distinguished. He suggests that a number of treatises which omit the tradition also omit the usual arrangement of the clauses. Moreover, the ascription of the articles to the apostles does not seem to coincide with the personal characteristics of the apostles. Possibly they are distributed following previous lists in the New Testament or from the Canon of the Mass [Gordon 1965:634].

Determining the source texts of the translations has been a subject of much debate. [For more on this debate see: Payas 2005, Ottman 2003, Christensen 2010.] Christensen while comparing samples of New Spain *doctrinas* of the 16th century discovered that Christian dogma and prayers such as the Decalogue, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed shared a number of features, indicating thus the possibility that the majority of the *doctrinas* of this period derived from a similar source: the Vulgate and/or medieval tradition. Indeed, the translation of the Creed by Gante seems to be inspired by an existing model, the Vulgate which every Christian knew by memory. Interestingly enough, early 16th-century versions of the Creed had many variations but in New Spain there seems to be a large degree of standardization as evident by the following comparison between the Nahuatl version of the Apostle's Creed in Gante, Molina and Alva. It was only after the Nahuatl formula became established that these translations were employed as templates for future *doctrinas* and catechisms, as Molina's translation of the Articles suggests. Molina's *doctrina* became the most popular choice and was copied several times. For example, Bautista Viseo copies large sections of Molina's manual in his confessional from 1599 and even as late as 1718, Manuel Pérez, an Augustinian, published an updated version of Molina's work [Christensen 2010:81].

8.4.1 Translation of the Articles of Faith

In the *Doctrina*, Gante introduced the Apostles' Creed twice. The first time appears in the lengthier *doctrina* starting on f. 22v and concluding on f.36v. This section is presented by a teacher/narrator who introduces the Articles of the Faith to a student; each one of the articles has a title in Latin and Nahuatl, accompanied by a lengthy explanation in Nahuatl.

1.Nicnoneltoquitia Dios tetatzin yxquich yhueli: in oquiyocox yn ilhuicac: yntlalticpac. 2 Nocnoneltoquitia yn totecuiyo Jesu xpo totlatocatzi; ca huel iceltzin inipiltizin dios tetatzin. 3 Ca yehuatzin ynica Spiritu Sancto motlalitzino: motlacatili/ynichipahuaca xilliantzinco yn Sancta Maria cequizca ychpochtli. 4 Motlayhiyohuil ti ytencopa in pontio pilato cruz titech mamacohualtiloc momiqli, ihua totoc. 5 Auh motemohuy im mictlan: auh telhuitica in motcalitzino inintla mimicp 6 Auh motlecahui yn ilhuicac, ymayuh campa motlelitzino dios tetatzin yxqch yhuelli. 7 Auh ca opa hulamohiucaz yn qntlatzo teqtiquh yyolq: yhua imimicq 8 Nicnoneltoquitia yn dios spiritu scto 9 Yhua nicneltoca intonatzin scta iglesia tlaneltliloni, yie mochtin sctome ynin necetlaliliz tlaeltoqliztica. 10 Yhua yca inic qaltihuani i sacrametos inic polihui tlatlacolli 11 Yhuan nitlaneltoca ynuquacohontla cemanahuac mocha tlatatl mozcaliz. 12 Nitlaneltoca cemicac yolihuaz ca yuh mochihuaz [Gante 1553:ff. 22v-36r] [For the translation of the Articles see Appendix 2, Table 4].

The second time Gante introduces the Creed he does it in the *doctrina tepiton* on f.80r to f. 81r. The text is divided in three parts. Each article is introduced by the narrator/teacher in Nahuatl, followed by the Latin version and then a Nahuatl translation, but this time without lengthy explanation. Moreover, unlike the previous version, this text is not accompanied by illustrations. Here I will only show the Nahuatl version.

Ynicn huelticcaqzq yhuanpachihuiz toyollo totlatolpan moneq tiquitozq. Nicno neltoqtia dios tetatzon yxquichihueli:inoqyocox ynihuicac yntpc. Nicnoneltoqtia yn to. Jesu xpo yn totlatocatzin: ca hueliceltzin ynipiltzin dios tetatzin. Ca yehuatzin yca spu scto motlalitzino motlacatilli ynichipahuacaxillatzico i seta maria ceqzca ichpochtli. Motlahiyohuilti ytecopa in potio Pylato. Cruztitechmamacohualtiloc momiqli yhua totoc. Auh motemohui in mictla. Auh yeilhuitica moqtz mocalitzino ynintlamimicq. Auh motlecahui ynihuicac: ymahauh campamotlalitzino dios tetatzi ixqchihueli. Auh ca ompahualmohuicaz in qntlatzonteqliqih yyolq ihuan inmimicq. Nicnoneltoqtia yn dios spu scto. Yhua tonantzin seta iglesia tlaneltililoni: yyw mochinti sctome ynin necetlaliliz tlaneltoquiliztica. Yhuan yca yniqualtica sacramentos polihuin tlatlacolli. Yhuan nitlaneltoca, yniquacoontlan cemanahuac: mochitlacatl mozcaliz. Yhuan cemicac yollihuaz ca yuhmochihuaz [Gante 1553:f.60r] [For the translation see Appendix 2, table 4].

The two versions of the *Doctrina* are practically identical. A few words are added in each one of the versions respectively. For example in article 5 the *tepiton* version adds the word *moquetzqui* (to stand up) in its abbreviated form *moqtz*, although this word does not affect the content of the article, it helps to add a layer to the narrative of Christ's descent into hell and his resurrection. In addition, in articles 9 and 12 from the lengthier version appears an initial *nitlaneltoca* (I believe) which is omitted in the abridged version, probably to save space. Supporting this argument is the large number of abbreviations that appear also in the *tepiton* version such as: *to* for *totecuiyo* (our ruler) or *tpc* for *tlalticpac* (earth). The main differences are orthographic. However, by this time there was no standardization of orthography as of yet. The format of the two versions differs as a result of the rhetoric of the section. For example the version of the Apostles' Creed that appears in the lengthier section [f. 22v] presents not only a translation of each one of the articles, with its original Latin version, but also an extensive explanation accompanied by engravings that worked as an eidetic tool. It is possible that this section was aimed at a more advanced initiate, one with previous basic knowledge, who was in search of a more complex instruction, an instruction which allowed the reader or listener to comprehend the difficulty of the dogma. On the other hand, the version that appears in the *tepiton* section is a more concise, less instructional version, which presents the Creed both in Latin and Nahuatl without further explanation. Nevertheless, as in

the lengthier section of the *Doctrina*, the *tepiton*'s Nahuatl translation without being accompanied by a lengthy explanation, adds more nuances of information than the basic Latin version. Indeed the added content serves to clarify any doubts that would have risen from the Latin version.

The translation made by Gante presents several interesting examples, for example the introduction of the term crucifixion, which did not have cultural significance for the Nahuas. For this Gante employed the neologism *cruztitech mamaçoualtiloc* (his arms were spread on the cross). In this composite neologism, Gante borrowed the Spanish term *cruz* joined with Nahuatl words that served to specify or describe the action of being crucified [Christensen 2010:Appendix B, 1]. The neologism was also employed by other missionaries such as Molina, showing the beginnings of standardization. *Cruc* was not the only Castilian loan word; Gante also employed *sacramentos*, *scta iglesia*, *dios spiritu scto*, *scta Maria*, and *sctome*. Terms from the Nahuatl imaginary with a very different semantic meaning were also employed such as *ilhuicac* and *mictlan*.

The epithets for Saint Mary *cequizca ichpochtli* (always maiden) employed in the Articles of Faith were also used in other sections of the *Doctrina* as we will see in chapter's 9 analysis of the *Ave Maria* prayer [f. 80r]. However, the womb of Mary is introduced in a different way in the Articles of Faith. Instead of using *motlaçotlaaqllloxillantzin* (your precious fruit womb/ you are the fruit of her precious womb) as in the *Ave Maria* version of the lengthier *doctrina* [f. 22v], in both versions of the Articles, Gante employs the expression *yn ichipahuaca xillantzinco* (her pure womb).

In order to discern if a developmental trajectory of the translation process existed in the work of Gante, I compared the Apostle's Creed present in the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* [1569] with the aforementioned versions of the Articles of Faith. In the *Cartilla*, Gante presents the text in three languages, Castilian, Latin and Nahuatl. Castilian was omitted completely from the Apostle's Creed in the two sections of the *Doctrina*. The text in Latin is the same in the three variations of the Creed, but for this work I will focus on the Nahuatl version only.

Nicno neltoquitia in dios tetatzon yxquichyhueli, yno quiyocox ynihuicatl
yntlatlticpac. No nicnoneltoquitia yntotecuiyo Jesu Christo, yçayey yoytlacopoltzin
Dios:yehuatzin monacayotitzinoco ynica spiritu sancto: auh ytech motlacatiltzino yn
Sancta Maria muchipa vel nelli yehpochtli Auh topampa motlaihiyohuilti yencopa yn
pilato, mamacoualtiloc ytechcruz/ momiquilitococ Auh motemohuimimictlan,
eylhuitica moquetz mozcalitzino ynintlan yn mimicque Motlecahui ynihuicac,

ymayauhampa: motlalitziroto y nitlacotatzin dios yxquichihueli: auh ompa hualmehuitiz ynquintlatzontequiliquih yolque ymmimicque. No nicnoneltoquitia yn dios spiritu sancto, yhuan meneltoca yn sancta yglesia catholica ynezca yyeuatin ynixquictin yn christianome. No nicneltoca ynin necentlaliliz yn sanctome y sacramentotice muchihua, yhuantlaneltoquiliztica. No nicneltoca yntlatlacopolihuiztli. Yna mitlaneltoca ynohuelontlan cemanahuac occepa mochtlatl yoliz mozcaliz. No nitlaneltoca catepan mochiuaz yn cemicac yolili tli. Yhuan nitlaneltoca ca cemicac yolihuz. Maymmochihua [Gante 1569:f.3v] [For a translation of this section see Appendix 2, table 4].

The version of the *Cartilla*, although remarkably similar to the versions of the *Doctrina* presents key variations in content, especially in articles 3, 4, 6, 9, 10 and 11 [see table 4 in Appendix 2]. However, only 9 and 11 present a large degree of variation, as it seems that the author probably thought that certain sections of the Articles required more discussion. The *Doctrina*'s version of article 9: 'Yhua nicneltoca in tonatzin scta iglesia: tlaneltililoni, yie mochtin sctome ynin necetlaliliz tlaeltoqliztica' (I believe in our mother Holy Church's authority: and all the saints assembled in faith) was extended in the *Cartilla*: 'Yhuan nicneltoca yn sancta yglesia **catholica: ynezca y yehuatin ynixquictin yn christianome**. No nicneltoca ynin necentlaliliz yn sanctome y sacramentotice muchihua, yhuan tlaneltoquiliztica' (I believe in the Holy **Catholic Church: is the sign of all (they) Christians**. I believe in the assembly of the saints and in all the sacraments also in the faith) [Gante 1553:f.60r, 1569:f.3v]. A new layer of meaning with relation to the Church was added, firstly by introducing the specification of Catholic to the Church and secondly by explaining the Church as the sign or symbol of all Christians, an interesting addition taking into consideration the Reformation and Luther. In this way the Church represented Christianity free of heresy, and therefore the only one true Church.

Article 10 was also modified in the *Cartilla*, where no allusion to the virtues or sacraments as a medium to achieve the forgiveness of the sins is made. Instead of 'Yhua yca inic qaltihuani i sacrametos inic polihui tlatlacolli' (Also, in the virtues of the sacraments [that] destroy sins) in the *Doctrina* [Gante 1553:f. 60r], a simpler version appears in the *Cartilla*: 'No nicneltoca tlatlacopolihuiztli' (I believe in the forgiveness of the sins) [Gante 1569:f.3v]. Was this recourse to save space? It is difficult to assess, taking into account that the *Cartilla* version shows more nuances than the *Doctrina*'s version; moreover the *Cartilla*, unlike the *Doctrina*, presents iteration. As for example article 11: 'Yhuan nitlaneltoca yn ohuelontlan cemanahuac occepa muchi tlatl yoliz muzcaliz. No nitlaneltoca catepan mochiuaz yn cemicac yoliliztli' (And I believe at that time in the world again, all people will revive. I

believe eternal life will definitely be done) [Gante, 1569:f.3v]. Indeed this seems to display traits of Nahua speech, and it is seems likely that the *Cartilla* was intended to be recited out loud for *macehualtin* to memorize; it is even possible that this was done by singing. Therefore the *Cartilla* serves an eidetic function that is easier to digest than the *Doctrina*. Moreover, there seem to be more abbreviations in the *Doctrina* than in the *Cartilla*, probably to save space even though the *Doctrina* is a lengthier work.

The three versions of the Apostle's Creed by Gante, although presenting minimal variations, show a standardization of sorts. Table 4 in Appendix 2 shows the translations of the Creed present in the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla* respectively.¹⁴⁶ Note that the two versions of the *Doctrina* have been synthesized as there were not many differences in syntax and terminology. The differences between the two versions appear in bold.

8.4.2 The Apostles' Creed in other doctrinas of the 16th Century New Spain

The Nahuatl translation of the Creed made by Gante for his *Doctrina* is remarkably similar to other *doctrinas* printed in New Spain in the 16th century, such as Molina's *Doctrina* [1546], Domingo de la Anunciación's *Doctrina Christiana* [1565:ff. 13r-13v], Bartolomé de Alva, *Confessionario mayor y menor* [1634: f. 50v] and even the Nahuatl translation that supplements the glyphs of the Creed in the *Egerton Catechism* as marginalia. The content of the works is similar because they followed the Vulgate tradition. However, unlike Molina, Gante presents twelve articles instead of fourteen.

Amongst the *doctrinas* of the time, there appears to be slight variations in the epithets for Mary and God. Translated texts employed an array of epithets for the Virgin Mary, one of the most common was 'always true virgin', a phrase that is employed in Gante's *Doctrina*: *cenquizca ychpochtle* (always a maiden) and also in the *Doctrina* by Anunciación from 1565. However, this epithet is not present in the *Cartilla*; instead the third article of the Creed follows closely the translation composed by Alonso de Molina in his *doctrina* from 1546: *muchipa vel nelli ichpuchtli* (always true maiden) [Gante 1553:f. 60, 1569:f.3v]. This could suggest that the *Cartilla*'s version was changed to accommodate Molina's translation solution. [For a comparison between Molina and Gante's Articles of the Faith see Appendix 2, table 5].

¹⁴⁶ Translation based on Christensen's [2010] translation of the Creed in Molina's *Doctrina* [1547].

In the case of God, both Gante and Molina used the epithet *ixquich ihueli* (all his power) for almighty. The term appears in many early texts, as a first attempt, to render the concept of omnipotence. Not all missionaries agreed this was an appropriate translation. Christensen observes that Alva considered this translation improper, as *ixquich ihueli* does not mean the same as almighty, but instead ‘so much power’, *ixquich* signifies a finite thing, he offers then a new word *çenhuellitini*, that means someone able to do all [Christensen 2010:129-131].

Gante composed a thorough translation of the Apostles’ Creed, including all the main points while adding extra information on particular difficult to grasp concepts due to the lack of equivalents in Nahua cosmology. Christensen observes that Molina did this as well: terms such as resurrection or everlasting were explained in more detail than in the Latin version.

The translation made by Gante of problematic terms shows three trends. First when translating a noun without a cultural referent, he tried to avoid heretical connotations by borrowing Castilian terms, such as *sacramentos*, *yglesia*, *articulos*, and *missa*. Another noticeable element in Gante’s *Doctrina*, and other *doctrinas* of his time such as Molina’s, is the use of Castilian headlines. Indeed there seems to have been a larger degree of Castilian borrowing than Latin ones. If Latin was such an important language for Christianity, why was the vernacular selected instead to translate the majority of difficult concepts? This is a difficult question to answer. For example the headlines seem to have been written at random, some titles in Latin and some others in Castilian, which could suggest that the *Doctrina* was employed by Nahua stewards who might have been more familiar with Castilian than with Latin. Also Spanish-speaking missionaries were employing the *Doctrina*. In the case that the missionary was not fluent in Nahuatl, they would still have been able to read the headlines and proceed to read the Nahuatl explanation to their Nahua audience without the need to know the language.

The second trend was Nahuatl borrowings. Concepts such as heaven, hell and sin are all translated employing the most frequently used Nahua analogies, borrowings that Gante probably was one of the first to introduce as they seem to be the most standardized terms.

The third trend is the use of semantic extension. Semantic extension was used by Gante when he needed to translate a complex concept that involved an action of the individual. Gante translated the concept by describing the action that needed to be taken. For example to explain the word contrite, he employed the words: *Nehuapol tixcoya tiquitozq* (what we are to say to make one self humble/ bad old me), describing the action the Nahua was expected by

the missionary to perform when contrite, that is to show externally signs of remorse. In many ways, it must have been difficult for the missionaries to judge whether or not Christianity had been internalized by the Nahuas. Missionaries and Nahuas had different cultural referents and different ways of displaying piety. By ‘translating’ terms and explaining them further, the *Doctrina* instructed the Nahuas on how to behave in a way recognizable to the missionaries, encouraging thus an outward Nahua piety quite opposite to their northern humanist ideals of interiorization of devotion [Montes de Oca 2011-b:131].

Comparing both the structure and format of Gante’s *Doctrina* with Molina’s works is revealing. Although only a fragment of twenty-five folios is extant from the first edition of Molina’s *doctrina*, included in the *Códice Franciscano* collected and published by García Icazbalceta in 1880 [Máynez 2002:268-9], the structure adopted is almost identical to the *doctrina* written for the conversion of Granadan Muslims by the Hieronymite Pedro de Alcalá [Ricard 1966:102]. Similarly, Gante’s translation of Christian lore in the *Doctrina* and in the *Cartilla* (as I will show in the next chapter) was based on the translation made by Pedro de Alcalá for the conversion of Muslims. In addition to this, later editions of Molina’s work which are better preserved, such as the 1578 edition, present a thematic content, as Rodríguez notices, based on the four essential pillars of Augustine’s *doctrina* [Rodríguez 2008:126]. Gante’s *Doctrina* not only contains all the elements of the Augustinian *doctrina*, in both its lengthier and *tepiton* sections, but also added a devotional section trying to mould Nahua life to Christianity in all aspects of life. In this way, Gante’s agency showcases that although the friar followed the lineaments of the Franciscan order and the Church—related to didactic material for conversion based not only in the medieval tradition but also in their practical experiences with the Muslims in Spain—the missionary could add elements he thought were elementary to create a complete Christian individual.

8.5 Audience

Truitt considers that due to Gante’s language choice the audience of the *Doctrina* was limited to a clergy fluent in Nahuatl and literate *pipiltin* neophyte Nahuas. According to Truitt, writing the book only in Nahuatl was not useful for clergymen with limited knowledge of Nahuatl [Truitt 2008:99-101]. Although I agree with Truitt’s suggestion, he fails to acknowledge that texts were also read out loud. It is probable that missionaries with scant Nahuatl fluency read out loud sections of the *Doctrina* to a live audience. The *Doctrina*’s format of a dialogue probably was a tool to engage the audience.

In addition to this, evidence from *doctrinas* written in Mesoamerican vernaculars illustrate that the target audience was mostly Mesoamerican. In rural contexts *doctrinas* were widely employed by indigenous Church stewards (*fiscal* in Spanish). Local priests of small towns regularly employed the help of Mesoamerican community leaders. The stewards helped the clergy to provide parochial services in the various indigenous languages. In *pueblos de visita* (towns in rural areas that lacked a resident priest and received almost no ecclesiastical supervision) indigenous stewards were even allowed to employ religious texts in the absence of missionaries. Amongst the stewards' duties were helping to administer the sacraments, celebrate feast days, compose and deliver sermons, gather the indigenous population to attend mass, and collect the fees for masses. The duties of a steward would increase in *pueblos de visita* where they were also in charge of keeping written records, instructing in Christian doctrine, baptizing infants near death and burying and reciting prayers for the dead. Mesoamerican stewards in Colonial times were a fundamental part of the evangelization process especially as the number of missionaries and competent clerics was not substantial in distant areas [Christensen 2010:82-6, Graham 2001].

The case of Baltasar de San Juan can be seen as an example of this. Baltasar de San Juan was a Nahuatl steward in the parish of Metepec in the south of Toluca Valley near Mexico City. In the period between 1570 and 1600, Baltasar de San Juan collected a library composed by thirteen devotional books and evangelical texts translated into Nahuatl; most of the titles were authored by Franciscan missionaries. The collection included titles such as a Nahuatl translation of the *Contemptus Mundi*, the *Confesionario Mayor* by Molina and the *Doctrina Christiana* by Gante [Beligand 1995:26-7]. The library of Baltasar suggests that the *Doctrina* was indeed employed by Nahuatl Church stewards.

The latter is also supported by the handwriting sections of the 1553 edition of the *Doctrina Christiana*. On the page that follows the colophon, comes an eight-page manuscript text in Nahuatl, possibly scribbled by an indigenous steward or owner of the exemplar. The section is entitled in Spanish 'Cumieca er reperdorio de los dienpos' and the handwriting seems to be done with difficulty. The traces are not precise or uniform; however the text is clear and legible. The handwriting is slightly different from the autograph of María de los Ángeles appearing on the cover of the 1553 edition of the *Doctrina*. However, it is also likely that the autograph seems to be slightly more elaborate as the owner, María de los Ángeles, probably practised writing her signature. Also worth noticing, is that María de los Ángeles was possibly

a female Nahuatl speaker, indicating that Gante's *Doctrina* was not only aimed at an elite Nahua male audience, but also was employed by literate Nahua females.

Each of the paragraphs that constitute the manuscript text begins with the name of a month starting with January and ending with December and contains advice regarding agricultural matters, personal wellbeing and a brief description of the Zodiacal sign that dominates each month, a practise with faint similarities to the *tonalamatl*, the sum of sacred energies based on the *tonalpohualli*. The *tonalpohualli*, the two hundred-sixty day sacred calendar of the Mexica, was based on the movements of the sky and the influence of the Nahua deities. These forces converged and influenced a person's character and fate according to his/her day of birth [Burkhart 2012, Baquedano 2011:203].¹⁴⁷ After the final paragraph of the section for December a Latin prayer and an instructive sentence on how the prayer needs to be recited appear. The text named *Reperitorio de los diempos* is anonymous, and was possibly transcribed into Nahuatl during the 16th century. This type of almanac has an antecedent in the Arabic books of years, which were translated into Latin during the medieval period for European usage. However, books of years became so popular that by the 16th century the Arabic calendars were replaced by calendars written in the vernacular. Accommodations were made locally as the almanacs were annually variable and astronomical events were also added [López-Austin 1973:285].

Almanacs were modified to the context of New Spain. The manuscript in Gante's *Doctrina* is an abbreviated exemplar of its kind, an almanac copied by a Nahua who probably employed it for divinatory and agricultural matters. The therapeutic advice and general astrological information must have been a fascinating touch and probably created a great deal of curiosity, as the Nahua's religious calendars had been prohibited [Tavárez 1999:221-6, López-Austin 1973:286-7]. It could be interesting to ascertain if there were ties between the therapeutic advice offered in this text and Nahua medicine. López-Austin discerns that the *Reperitorio* was written by a Nahua speaker without knowledge of Spanish due to the confusion between phonemes, a phenomenon that betrays indigenous pronunciation, such as the change of the vocal 'o' for 'u', the 'r' for the 'l', the 'd' for the 't', the 'n' for the 'm', and the 's' for the 'n' and 'l'. On occasion the letter 's' is omitted as well. The author also writes *vertha* instead of *huerta*, *mellones* for *melons*, *menprillos* for *membrillos*, *narasas* for *naranjas* [López-Austin

¹⁴⁷ As we can see from this example, Spanish calendrical nouns such as months and days of the week were another loaned lexicon employed by missionaries as colonizers established their own calendar systems.

1973:285]. The signs of the zodiac are mostly misspelled, or have a Nahuatl name as in the case of Sagittarius (*tlaminqui*: archer) [López-Austin 1973:287]. On the other hand, Nahuatl words are written with spelling mistakes, or include letters that do not exist in Nahuatl, the ‘d’ for the ‘t’, the ‘r’ for the ‘l’, and the ‘g’ for the ‘c’ just to name a few. López-Austin observes that contrary to this, both the spelling and grammar of the paragraph in Latin is free of mistakes, suggesting that the author copied this paragraph from a book [López-Austin 1973:287]. Following López-Austin’s train of thought, possibly the main section of the *Reperitorio* was dictated by someone or written from memory after a lecture.

The *Reperitorio de los diempos* is not the only Nahuatl written almanac employed during the 16th century. Another example can be found in the *Codex Mexicanus* sheets IX-XI and XXIV-XXXIV, a Nahuatl reproduction of a European Book of Hours complete with the signs of the zodiac and in the Nahuatl almanac in the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam. The one-hundred and twenty-one folio manuscript probably copied or produced around 1758 contains the European calendar, astrology, astronomy and some medicinal instructions. The book is formed by the translation of two texts: the *Reportorio de los tiempos* from Andrés de Li [1492] and the *Lunari* [1485] from Catalanian doctor Bernat de Granollachs [Wichmann *et al* 2008:106-124].¹⁴⁸ A third example is the Fonds Mexicain 381, an eight-page manuscript held at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, which presents the signs of the zodiac with their corresponding month and instructions for each day of the week. The work presents correlations between days, months and signs of the zodiac. Tavárez detects that the Nahua author of the Fonds Mexican 381 consulted a Book of Hours without the supervision of a missionary as indicated by a series of misconstructions of the text, the result of a lack of contextual knowledge. [For a fascinating study of this Nahuatl manuscript see Tavárez 1999.]

The *Reperitorio de los tiempos* in the *Doctrina Christiana* ends on page 337 followed by a number of blank pages. From page 341 to 343 there is another manuscript section in Nahuatl. The second manuscript text in the *Doctrina* is a *huehuetlatolli* (the sayings of the old ones) addressed to new mothers [León-Portilla 2001:219]. The text is written with the same handwriting, although it is done in a more careful, delicate and precise manner. López-Austin observes that both texts seem to have been written by the same author, in a 16th-century hand [López-Austin 1973:285]. If the manuscript section was indeed written by the owner of the *Doctrina*, María de los Ángeles, it is probable that this section was penned by her to be read

¹⁴⁸ Catalogue number 3523-2.

after the birth of children, following Nahua oratorical tradition in which midwives often gave speeches to newborn babies, suggesting she might have been a midwife [Burkhart 2012, Sahagún 1969 book 6]. Through the *Doctrina's huehuetlatolli*, however, we see glimpses of Christian terminology pointing to a new format, in which Nahua practises and Christian imagery were combined. Old forms of piety such as the *huehuetlatolli* survived, but as objects, they were recontextualized in relation to Christianity, allowing them to survive and to lose, in the view of missionaries, their ties with the prehispanic past.

It seems that the last blank pages of the *Doctrina* were employed not only by Nahua stewards and elite Nahuas to annotate important information such as the *Reperdorio de los Tiempos* in the 1553 copy of the *Doctrina* in the AGN but also by missionaries as evident by the manuscript section in the *Doctrina* in the JCBL which presents a confession manual in Nahuatl to be read by a missionary. In this way, the *Doctrina* presents itself as a multifaceted tool, which could be used by both by males or females, Nahuas or missionaries. Thus the *Doctrina* articulates within many different facets of indoctrination.

8.6 The art of engraving

The *ars memoria* or art of memory employed by the missionaries in order to help in the Christianisation effort in Europe was a sophisticated system brought over from Europe as visual aid for Nahua students' memorization process. Devotional texts, catechisms, *cartillas* and *doctrinas* written by missionaries in Mesoamerican languages incorporated engravings depicting images complementary to the text. The system involved associating *loci* (places) and images with a particular object in order to facilitate memorization. In this way, the memorization of spiritual ideas could only be learned with the help of images.

The engravings present in devotional texts in New Spain, as Gruzinski suggests, were influenced by Flemish art in two ways. Firstly, most of the *doctrinas* imported and brought along by missionaries had been printed in Spain by printers of Germanic or Flemish descent. Secondly, Flemish art was brought to New Spain by Gante who in his school for trades in the *doctrina* of San José taught European styles and techniques [Gruzinski 1994:37]. Gante was a gifted painter who according to tradition created the Virgin of the Remedios –nowadays in the Church of Tepepan in the southwest of Mexico City [Gruzinski 1994:40]. The engravings Gante used as models were probably in the documents and books he brought when he travelled to Mexico. These works served as sources of inspiration for the Nahuas, who soon started to replicate them, replacing slowly Nahua imagery with European. The first engraving

made by Nahua hands dates from 1525 and was a copy from an engraving from a papal bull representing the Virgin and Christ [Gruzinski 1994:78- 80]. Gruzinski explains that this example underscores how the nexus between the book and engraving was there from the inception of the evangelical enterprise as the Nahua pupils of Gante learned how to read and write while at the same time developing new European ideals and models of art [Gruzinski 1994:82].

In this section I will finish the three-layered analysis of the *Doctrina* by studying the engravings in the work with the help of the Panofsky method. It is vital to see the *Doctrina* as a whole as engravings were an important pedagogical tool in a context in which images played a fundamental role. The *Doctrina Christiana* is accompanied by fifty-five woodcut illustrations often placed at the beginning of each section. They are important as mnemonic tools as well as illustrating the passage in hand. The engravings are of very high quality and demonstrate a developed sense of abstraction, such as the representation of the seven deadly sins in the form of a seven-headed monster being confronted by a figure with an upraised sword [see fig.84] [Gante 1553:f. 44v] and the five senses in the form of five standing figures each gesturing towards a different sense [fig.85] [Gante 1553:f. 63r].



Fig. 84 Mortal sins [Gante 1553:f.44v]



Fig. 85 The five senses [Gante 1553:f.63r]

The engravings present in the *Doctrina* show diversity in quality and technique. Gruzinski observes that simple engravings seem to alternate with engravings of Flemish inspiration. To exemplify this, Gruzinski mentions both the ‘Arrival of Christ to Jerusalem’ [fig.86] and the ‘Descent of Christ’. These two illustrations are more elaborate than the depiction of Christ resurrected or the crucifixion [Gruzinski 1994:81]. However, what seems to be evident from the different style of the engravings is that there were two or more engravers. The engravings ‘Arrival of Christ to Jerusalem’ and ‘Christ resurrected in his tomb’ [fig.87] exhibit a more

European style, whereas the ‘Ascension of Christ’ [fig.88] has a distinctly Nahua flavour, which suggests Nahua collaboration in the creation of engravings. Directed by Gante Nahua students were probably copying and modifying designs to accompany the *Doctrina*.

Ottman claims that these engravings must not only have served an illustrative purpose but also served as a memory cue, following both the European tradition of the art of memory and the Nahua one. By combining engravings with the recommendations made by Gante in the *Doctrina* –the examination of conscience, weekly program of mental prayer and the catechetical review—, would have ensured a good comprehension of the Christian faith [Ottman 2003:115].



Fig. 86 Arrival of Christ to Jerusalem [1553:f.109r]



Fig. 87 Christ Resurrected in his tomb [1553:f.100r] Fig. 88 Ascension of Christ [1553:f.117r]

In this section a comparison between the engravings of each one of the articles of the Apostles' Creed of the *Doctrina Christiana* and the Apostles' Creed of the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer*, both by Gante, will illustrate the process of engraving-making that accompanied these narratives. Although the Articles of Faith appear in two catechetical sections of the *Doctrina* –the lengthier and *tepiton*– engravings only accompany the explanation of the lengthier *doctrina*. Probably the intention behind this was to save space in the *tepiton* section as it was a concise version of the text.

The Articles of Faith of the lengthier *doctrina* [f. 22v] are accompanied by thirteen woodcut engravings. The first engraving appears in the introduction and represents a man wearing a crown. He is looking at the sky: the moon, the stars and the sun appear on the horizon. He is in a hilly landscape with trees. In the middle of the image a small lake is depicted with fish. Next to the lake a woman lying naked appears; she is surrounded by animals. The function of this engraving is to accompany the introduction, and the meaning behind it seems to be highly symbolic.



Fig. 89 The Articles of Faith [Gante 1553:f. 22v]

The other twelve illustrations accompanying the text represent each one of the Apostles with his symbolic attributes. They appear next to the introduction and explanation of each one of the articles. Although in general terms the themes of the engravings ensure similarities, the sets are different [to see the engravings of both the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla* see Appendix 2, table 6]. The engravings in the *Doctrina* are detailed, delicate and intricate whereas the ones in the *Cartilla* seem to have been made in a hastier manner. Furthermore, instead of separate images illustrating each one of the apostles, in the *Cartilla* the images of the apostles are presented together in one wood block, with captions in Latin explaining each one of the articles associated with each of the apostles. Although both sets of engravings are pedagogical and illustrative, we can see that they were aimed at different audiences. Whereas the set of the *Doctrina* served to illustrate the text and have a general association with the article in question, emphasis is given to the lengthy explanation of the article. Meanwhile the set that illustrates the *Cartilla* functioned in a more audio-visual way, helping the reader to remember the Creed in Latin. Comparing the two sets, we can see that the Apostles were represented with the same symbolic objects in both versions; however, body direction is different, inverse. While figures in the *Doctrina* look to the right in the direction of the text, the ones from the *Cartilla* are represented looking to the left, without being related to the directionality of the text. The engravings of the *Doctrina* are more detailed, probably because of the larger space of the *Doctrina*, whereas the ones in the primer appear all together in one image.

The differences in style seem to suggest the engraver was not the same person. Indeed the engraver of the *Doctrina* seems to be more comfortable with the technique and style of

engraving than the engraver of the *Cartilla*. We can not be certain if any of the engravings of the *Doctrina* were authored by Gante. However, the comparative analysis suggests that the engravers of both the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla* were possibly Nahua students of Gante's trade school of San José, who were following an engraving brought by Gante or other Franciscan missionary. The students followed attentively the design, however, the small differences between the engravings showcase that the artists had to a certain extent a freedom of style as can be seen from the most basic difference between the engravings, the Apostles of the *Doctrina* are represented with halos whereas the ones in the *Cartilla* are not.

The idea that Gante started an engraving trend in his school is highly plausible, as attested by similarities between the engravings of the *Doctrina Christiana* and the engravings of Diego de Valadés' *Rhetorica Christiana* [1579]. Valadés became the first *mestizo* to print a book in Europe by publishing in 1579 his *Rhetorica Christiana* in Perugia, a compendium of theology and history of the evangelical work in New Spain, highlighting principles and theories of rhetoric.¹⁴⁹ One of the most important characteristics of his six volumes *Rhetorica Christiana* is the quality of its twenty-six copper engravings. Valadés was probably taught engraving by Gante in San José [Jones 1991:312]. An example of the similarities between the engravings of Valadés and Gante can be found in the aforementioned representation of the seven deadly sins by Gante [fig.84], which shows a seven-headed monster, a figure that also appears as a detail in the engraving of the sins (in Spanish entitled *Alegoría de los Pecados*) by Valadés' *Rhetorica Christiana*.



Fig. 90 Detail of the *Alegoría de los Pecados* [Valadés 1579] [Source: <http://www.sip.illinois.edu/people/melendez/span535sp08/images.html> 21/04/2014)

The engravings of the *Rhetorica Christiana* illustrate several aspects of the education provided by missionaries in New Spain. The purpose of the illustrations, according to

¹⁴⁹ Valadés was fluent in Nahuatl, Tarascan and Otomí. Valadés travelled to Europe to publicize the evangelical policies of both Gante and Focher, for whom he worked as literary executor. In Rome, Valadés was appointed as Procurator General of the Americas, a position he held only for a few years after having disagreements with ecclesiastical authorities [Branley 2008:316, Galpin 2007:2-3, Carrasco 2000:33-66, Maza, 2012:15-42, González García 2006:200].

Valadés himself, was eidetic, because not everybody at the time was literate [Jones 1991:312]. The style of Valadés' engravings is not uniform; some are more intricate, symbolic and detailed than others. The engravings showing depictions of missionary work in New Spain present two artistic influences, European and Nahua, similar to Gante's [Maza 2012:39-41, Jasienski 2010:19-20]. Valadés probably learned the Nahua pictographic system from his time working and studying with Gante, who had adapted it with the help of his Nahua students [Branley 2008:100].

Gante is also the subject of Valadés engravings. In the *Rhetorica* an illustration entitled '*El modelo de lo que los frailes hacen en el Nuevo Mundo de las Indias*' depicts a patio with four chapels, one in each of the corners, resembling a Mexican *atrio* with its *posa* chapels. In the centre, the Apostolic Twelve appear. They are surrounded by scenes from the evangelization. In the upper right side a friar teaching the creation of the world appears, while at the left side Gante appears teaching the Roman alphabet by means of objects; another friar is teaching the sacrament of matrimony (symbolized by a flowering tree) while other friars are confessing or baptising. The illustration, as Branley observes, is an autobiographical reconstruction of Valadés' experiences as a child at San José; at the same time it serves to illustrate the range of activities pursued by the institution of the Church [Branley 2008:162-3, 165-6,169, Jones 1991:312, Gruzinski 1995:55].

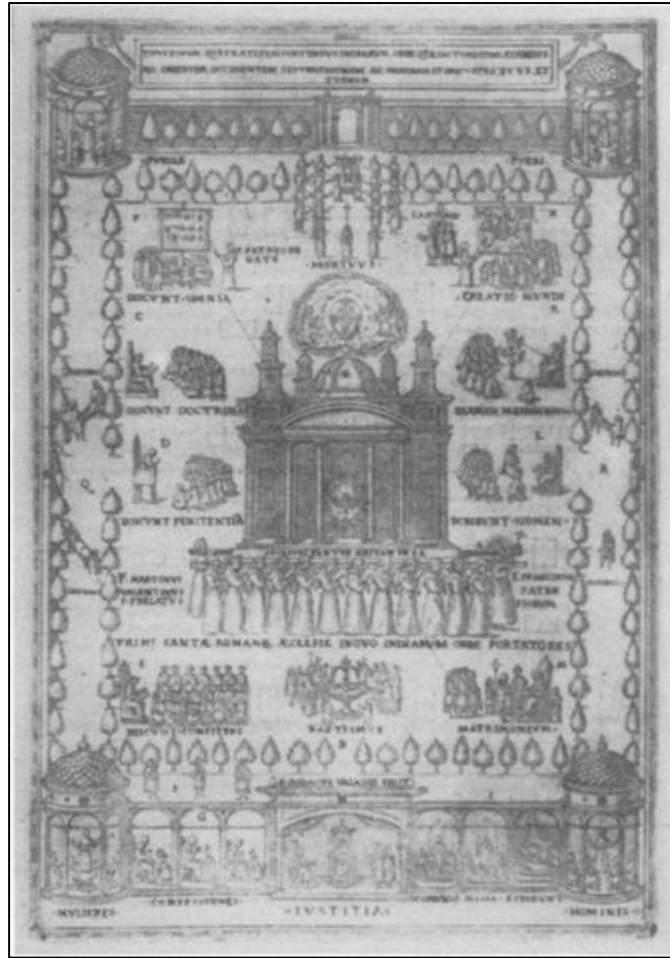


Fig. 91 *El modelo de lo que los frailes hacen en el Nuevo Mundo de las Indias* in *Rhetorica Christiana* [Valadés 1579].

Another interesting engraving from the *Rhetorica Christiana* is ‘*La Predicación en el Nuevo Mundo*’ which is possibly the most famous engraving by Valadés [See fig. 16, chapter 4]. It was copied several times, most importantly in the *Monarquía Indiana* by Torquemada. The engraving depicts a Franciscan friar standing in a pulpit explaining the Passion of Christ through paintings. The Mesoamerican audience is dressed in togas, instead of the traditional attire of the Nahuas: *tilmas* [Maza 2012:39-41, Jasienski 2010:19-20, Jones 1991:312, Galpin 2007:2].

After reviewing engravings of both the *Doctrina* and the *Rhetorica*, we can see that Gante and his disciple Valadés used imagery together with the written word in order to develop a cross-cultural communication to assist in the evangelization process [Ebacher 1991:148]. However, Gante’s *Doctrina* contains engravings in different styles suggesting the work of two or more hands. If one of these artists was Gante, although almost impossible to know with certainty, it is quite likely that the more Europeanized engravings were made by him. However, the presence of several styles implies that Gante encouraged his students to made

engravings to accompany his works. The similarities between the engravings of Gante's *Doctrina* and *Cartilla* and the work of Valadés showcase certain similarities that suggest them being the product of the same art school. This is all the more plausible taking into account that Valadés learnt the art of engraving in Gante's school of trades.

8.7 Conclusion

Gante's *Doctrina* is a fragment of a wider mosaic of Christian doctrinal texts in New Spain. At the same time it is a unique narrative that presents us with one of the earliest examples of a collaborative translation of doctrinal Nahuatl. As discussed in chapter 6, doctrinal texts in Nahuatl such as the *Doctrina Christiana* reveal the agency that both missionaries and Nahuas had in accommodating and reshaping the Christianity of the time. By contributing to this process, Nahuas became active participants in the transculturation process. Moreover, the *Doctrina* points to the introduction of the alphabetic script, a system that would slowly replace the writing system of the Nahuas. With this, Gante's works are exemplary in showcasing the transition of modes of expression brought by the missionaries.

Gante, as one of the missionaries belonging to the first group of mendicant humanist friars, as explained by Tavárez [2010] in his classification of *doctrinas* written in New Spain during the 16th century [see chapter 5], wrote the *Doctrina* influenced by the context at hand, following closely the guidelines of the Franciscan order without losing his own agency in the process. Gante was one of the pioneers of Nahuatl translation and his work therefore probably was used as a sort of template for later Nahuatl doctrinal translations. The evidence suggests that a standardization between catechetical texts existed to a certain extent, not only regarding the content but also the epistemological translation solutions employed by missionaries and Mesoamerican aides. Moreover, in the context of Christensen's typology [see chapter 5] Gante's *Doctrina* was both printed and ecclesiastically approved, demonstrating not only his close links to the highest ecclesiastical authorities but also his dexterity in Nahuatl.

Throughout Gante's *Doctrina*, his ideas regarding the introduction of Christianity by selecting the most appropriate themes are reflected in both the structure and content of the work. The format and structure of the *Doctrina*—divided into three main parts, two catechetical and one devotional—, had the goal not only of transmitting a basic understanding of the doctrine (the *tepiton* section) but also to provide an in depth Latin/Nahuatl explanation of each tenet of the faith (the lengthier section). The devotional section, on the other hand,

provided the Nahua with an encompassing guide to a well-integrated Christian life. Gante's deliberate choice to incorporate selected elements from the Christian repertoire, such as the bead-prayers, the introduction of the Marian cult, and the cult of the saints, suggests an understanding not only of Christian practises but also of Nahua cultural traits. Indeed most of these introductions provided the foundations of Nahua Catholicism, in particular the cult of the saints. The *Doctrina*'s complex structure served the dual purpose of instructing Nahua *pipiltin* initiates and providing European missionaries with sufficient knowledge of the language enabling them to work in the conversion of the Nahuas of New Spain and it probably was used not only in the area of the Valley of Mexico but in its surrounding area, as indicated by the case of Baltasar de San Juan in the Valley of Toluca. In addition, Gante's *Doctrina* was written during a period when Franciscans considered autochthonous clergy a possibility, and it is likely that Gante wrote his *doctrina* with this in mind.¹⁵⁰ Truitt suggests that Gante's letter addressed to Charles V in 1532 is strong evidence of his intentions, as Gante mentioned that selected Nahuas were being trained as teachers, preachers and writers [Truitt 2008:99-101]. In addition to content, structure, and format (a pedagogic dialogue between what appears to be a Nahua neophyte instructing an unconverted Nahua), the complex, nuanced rhetoric of the *Doctrina* suggests that the intention behind the work was to create a pivotal, instructive text for future Nahua clergy [Truitt 2008:99-101].

The elaboration of the *Doctrina* depended on a close collaboration between Gante and his 'transcultured' Nahua students in order to convey its message through pre-existing cultural traits. Gante tried to communicate Christian cultural values by means of the *Doctrina*, but translating from one language to another entailed making choices in order to communicate semantic nuances and match, as best they could, the syntactic particularities of the source to the target language. Gante's *Doctrina* thus is an excellent example of Lockhart's double-mistaken-identity. By employing Nahuatl to transmit Christianity and by not possessing a complete set of European cultural referents, Nahuas understood the Christian message according to their own semantic nuances and cultural background. At the same time what missionaries understood of Nahua cultural categories while translating Christian belief tended to be biased by their own prejudices and cultural categories complicating thus the situation [Montes de Oca:131, Murillo Gallegos 2007:3, Burkhart 1988:234-5, 252-3].

¹⁵⁰ Evangelical translated texts were indeed circulated amongst the indigenous students until the Second and Third church councils (1565/1588) forbade their possession by Mesoamerican peoples to prevent unorthodox views of Christianity [Gómez Canedo 1977, Payas 2005:145].

Gante's agency can be seen throughout the *Doctrina*. There is his ingenuity as a translator in his awareness of the semantic nuances of Nahuatl concepts and ideology. There is also his selection of themes. Gante's translation of Christian doctrine, as we have seen in previous chapters, is one of the earliest efforts, and most of his semantic solutions served as a basis for subsequent doctrinal translations. In this way, his work is groundbreaking. In his translation a dialogue not only between missionary and Nahuas but also among missionaries is revealed, as demonstrated by the comparison between the translation of the Apostles' Creed from both the *Doctrina*'s versions and the *Cartilla*, in which Gante accommodated Alonso de Molina's translation to his own.

Gante's *Doctrina* embodied the latest trends in pedagogic Christian tools, joining alphabetic script and image, making the *Doctrina* the ultimate device for conversion. Adding images to the text served as an eidetic measure. The images do not have the same function as in the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*, they do not function as script, but as an illustrative/pedagogic tool that allowed the reader to remember the text, giving the teachings a new dimension. New forms to represent the world were incorporated and new traditions were adopted. By establishing the trade school and introducing engravings in his works, Gante started the introduction of the concept of art. Before this, Nahuas did not have a concept of art, the representations in codices, sculptures and murals had a practical nature. They did not adorn gratuitously murals, vessels and codices; their function was intertwined deeply with religious thought. It added an extra layer to Nahua devotion. Representational elements were not signed by their authors. Gante's introduction of art as a conceptual category brought within a new field of Nahua expertise and Nahua artists started to be known. Although employing a device already employed in Europe during the Middle ages, Gante brought to the fore a radical change, bringing new cultural categories and a new way of understanding and representing the world.

As part of a wider cross-cultural communicative process, Gante's *Doctrina* negotiated across cultures and combined early modern European-Christian thought with Nahua discourse. Although they employed Nahuatl, missionaries and Nahuas were interpreting its message from different cultural perspectives. The negotiations taking place occurred however in many different ways depending on local cultural preferences and traditions, and on intrinsic characteristics of doctrinal writing [Murillo Gallegos 2010:312-3, Christensen 2010:138, 295, Restall 1997:260, Tavárez 2000:39-40, Ebacher 1991:135-6].

Chapter 9: Cartilla para enseñar a leer

In this chapter I will analyse Gante's only extant copy of the *Cartilla*. I will focus on the *Cartilla* to understand the process of alphabetical transcription which occurred during the early phase of the evangelization process. The analysis of the work will consist of three layers or stages. During the first stage, the format, structure and content of the *Cartilla* will be studied. The content and structure can be employed as a guideline to illustrate the choices behind Gante's selection of essential prayers and devotional texts. In this way, Gante's agency will help to understand his own views regarding the indoctrination and the intellectual capabilities of his students.

The second stage consists in analysing the translation of two of the most fundamental prayers in the Christian repertoire: the *Pater Noster* and the *Ave Maria* both present in the *Cartilla*, to later comparing them with their equivalents in the *Doctrina*. This will help us to understand the process of translation and help us to identify if indeed this primer was authored by Gante. In this, the focus will be on observable similarities between the translations of the texts considered. I will subsequently compare the prayers with the works of other contemporary authors, such as Molina, to identify elements of standardization and potential Nahua influence in the translation process.

In the third stage, a study of selected engravings from the *Cartilla*, based on Panofsky's method, will be made to understand the introduction of Christian imaginary through pedagogic texts.

Several questions related to the *Cartilla* remain unanswered. How many editions of this work were produced previously –the 1569 edition being a reprint? How many exemplars were printed? When was the first edition produced? How many primers were needed for the Nahuas? Unfortunately it is impossible to answer these questions as there is no evidence of other copies of the primer in the same of other editions in existence. The answers to such questions would have helped us to better understand the educative goals and strategies behind Gante's *Cartilla*. However, there are questions that can be answered through an analysis of the only extant exemplar of the *Cartilla* such as to which segments of the population was it given and if the primer was employed as well by the Castilian and creole population of New Spain. The structure and content of the *Cartilla* illuminates Gante's agency regarding which elements of Christian catechetical instruction he decided were better for a basic instruction of

Christianity. An analysis of the translation adds to an understanding of the evolution of the translation of catechetical texts and the comparison between the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla* illustrates the changes in the translation that could suggest that Gante was open-minded in the search for new solutions in order to have a clearer translation.

The comparison between the different works of Gante is important as it explores an often neglected author and helps us to understand the work of the missionary through time. As I mentioned in chapter 5, Gante's primer was different from the majority of primers employed in New Spain at that time, since it incorporated three languages in one, making it a singularly important catechetical material to be studied in the wider context of the evangelization. The versatility of the primer made it a flexible device for the transmission of European cultural categories and integrated the different social groups in unsuspecting ways as I will show later in the chapter.

9.1 Description

The *Cartilla para enseñar a leer*, printed in 1569 by Pedro de Ocharte, was the first text book printed in Spanish America, and followed the didactic procedures formulated by Zumárraga in his instructive catechism *Catecismo de la Doctrina Cristiana* [1548][Castillo Pérez 1963:24]. It is quite likely that this type of primer was not only employed by the students of the *doctrina* of San José, but was also sent to other *doctrinas* of the Holy Gospel Province. Maybe the *Cartilla* was even employed by the other mendicant orders as was the case with Gante's *Doctrina*, which was used by Augustinians, Mercedarians and Jesuits for a small period of time [Ricard 1966:48-9, Resines 2005:3, Lara 2008:58]. The specimen under investigation is currently located in the Huntington Library in San Marino California and is the only extant exemplar of the *Cartilla*. The primer seems to have had a convoluted history as it was previously bought in London, between 1923 and 1924, from Maggs Bross for the price £375 [Bravo Ahuja 1977:51]. How the primer left Mexico to end in London and then in the Huntington collection is open to speculation. Infantes in his study of Spain and New Spain primers, based on García Icazbalceta's *Bibliografía Mexicana del siglo XVI* [1886] and the work of Valton, mentions two other possible editions of the primer: one from 1568 and the other from 1572. However, there are no extant exemplars of these possible editions [Infantes 1995:52].

The primer consists of eight folios or sixteen pages (4°), printed on both sides in black ink. The lettering shows an exceptional quality. Almost all of the texts are printed in gothic types,

except for the final paragraph which is roman. The gothic types appear in different sizes. According to Valton's analysis of the primer, the two initial lines are not engraved in metal but in wood. The primer measures 20.5 height x 14.5 width [Valton 1947 cited in Bravo Ahuja 1977:19-20, Máynez 2013:15-6]. The work is trimmed along the top edge, with a loss of text due to this.

The title that appears in the frontispiece is *Cartilla para enseñar a leer, nueuamente enmendada y quitadas todas las abreuaturas que antes tenia*, highlighting this edition as an improved copy where mistakes and abbreviations were removed. As I have shown in the previous chapter, the *Doctrina* had many abbreviations possibly making it difficult to read the text. It is quite likely that earlier editions of the *Cartilla* also had many abbreviations; by removing them the reading of the prayers became more straightforward. The engraving from the frontispiece represents Saint Francis receiving the stigmata. [For more on the *Cartilla*'s engravings see the end of this chapter.] Underneath the wood engraving two printed lines appear with the abecedary in gothic lettering and the imprint: *México, en casa de Pedro Ocharte, 1569 años*.

The contents of the *Cartilla* followed a similar structure to contemporary primers made in Spain. This structure includes the abecedary, followed by the vowels and the consonants forming elemental syllables. The *Cartilla* does not, however, include numbers. The basic elements of literacy are then followed by the main prayers in three languages Castilian, Latin and Nahuatl. It is difficult to understand what determined the order of the languages and if this order was a reflection of the relative importance of the languages involved as seen through the eyes of Gante; on the other hand it is possible that it was related to the targeted main audience as they could focus on the prayers in their language first.

The content appears as follows: the *Pater Noster*, the *Ave Maria*, the Creed, the *Salve Regina*, the Articles of Faith, the Decalogue, the commandments of the Church, the venial sins and mortal sins, forgiveness of sins, the corporal senses, the corporeal works of mercy, the spiritual works of mercy, the enemies of the soul, the confession to help during mass, the blessing of the table and finally the Confiteor (I confess). The *Cartilla* concludes with a list of abbreviations. Thus the primer puts side by side basic elements of the Christian repertoire such as the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria*, with more complex, nuanced themes such as the five corporeal senses and the enemies of the soul.

Only the *Pater Noster*, the *Ave Maria*, the Articles of Faith and the *Salve Regina* appear in all three languages. The rest of the primer is written in Castilian, except for the *Confiteor* or I confess which appears only in Latin. The *Confiteor* is a fundamental element during mass which begs the question as to why this segment was printed in Latin only. Maybe it was the complicated nature of the *Confiteor* that made Gante save the theme for Nahuas with a better knowledge of Christianity and Latin. From other pedagogic Christian texts and royal warrants, we know that the second language instructed to Nahuas was not Castilian but Latin. Religious instruction in Europe was given in Latin and not in the romance languages which were seen as less perfect. Moreover, while creating grammars and glossaries in Nahuatl, the model of comparison was first Latin and then Castilian. Latin instruction also served as the basis of the creation of secondary education in New Spain. So, why is Castilian so prominent in the primer? Considering all this it is possible that Gante's *Cartilla* targeted mainly an audience of resident Spanish children (creoles), followed by *macehualtin* children and adults and to a lesser extent illiterate children of the Nahua elite.

As mentioned in chapter 5, in 1553 and 1556, Philip II ceded the printing privilege for all primers in New Spain to the *Hospital Real de Indios*, an institution established by Gante. It is probable that Gante wrote the *Cartilla* in the three languages to target a wider audience of both Spanish and Nahua *macehualtin* children and adults to boost the economic profit to support the hospital [Rueda 2010:23, Reyes Gómez 2000]. If this supposition is correct, then the date of the first edition of the *Cartilla* could be somewhere between 1553 and 1556.

Interestingly having a trilingual primer in Latin, Castilian and Nahuatl would have helped Spanish children to learn some Nahua vocabulary. Brain [2010] in her article regarding the learning of indigenous languages by Spaniards in New Spain observes that few studies have centred on Nahuatl language acquisition by non-missionary Spanish residents [Brain 2010:279]. Moreover, there are a limited number of sources that reflect Spaniards' fluency in Nahuatl and how they acquired it. Nevertheless, these sources show more fluency in Mesoamerican languages than previously expected. Indeed Spaniards in New Spain had several incentives to learn Mesoamerican languages, especially as the largest part of the population remained indigenous. By 1570 only 0.5% of the population was Spanish or Creole. Even Spanish communities were surrounded by large indigenous communities. Added to this, Spanish towns required a large indigenous workforce, making communication with Mesoamericans essential for the Spanish landowners who needed to deal with their workers on a daily basis [Alberro 2006:55, Brain 2010:280-1].

However, how Spaniards learned Nahuatl is still unclear. As Nesvig observes creoles were born into a multi-ethnic society with a profound interaction with Nahuas and it is probable they learned Nahuatl by immersion as there does not seem to have been a formal way to learn Mesoamerican languages for Spanish-speaking people [Nesvig 2012:747, Brain 2010:286-7]. Intensive contact must indeed have helped. Several Nahuatl interpreters of Castilian origin were conquistadors such as Juan Gallego (interpreter from the *Audiencia*), Francisco Gil, and Rodrigo de Castañeda amongst others. Moreover Spaniards were also in contact with their indigenous servants. Creole children must have been raised by Nahua domestic servants, allowing the children to become bilingual [Brain 2010:286-7].¹⁵¹ Nesvig suggests Nahuatl was becoming the second language of many Spaniards, reflecting a popular vernacular culture [Nesvig 2012:747].

It is probable that Gante's trilingual *Cartilla* was targeted to a new generation of Creole children, who would grow up bilingual. On some occasions, the children would become translators and interpreters such as, for example, Molina (1515-1585). The story of Molina is perhaps one of the success stories of the transculturation process. Molina, who was the son of a Spanish conquistador, as a child learned Nahuatl by playing with Nahua children. By 1524 he was sent on Cortés' request to live with the Franciscans, and in 1528 he became a member of the Franciscan order [Grass 1965:60, Hernández de León-Portilla 2001:236, Mendieta, 1596 (1870):220, 551, 685]. Molina was a prolific author who composed the first printed grammar in Nahuatl, the *Arte de la lengua mexicana y castellana* [1571] and worked in close collaboration with the Nahuas, in particular with the Texcocan Ribas, one of the attendees of the Colegio de la Santa Cruz, who was exceptionally fluent in Latin and helped Molina to write the *Arte y Vocabulario Mexicano* [Grass 1965:62, Brain 2010:289, Beals 1994:424].

On the other hand, little is also known regarding literacy instruction for *macehualtin* people. According to Klor de Alva, Colonial records show that Nahua notaries employed a vernacular form of written Nahuatl, that probably evolved from the *macehuallahtolli* (or common speech) spoken by the *macehualtin*, instead of the most elegant and elaborate speech of the *pipiltin* or nobles. Grammars and *doctrinas* composed by missionaries, such as the one by Gante, employed the speech of the *pipiltin*. It is logical to think that if the notaries were taught at mendicant schools they must have written their documents in *pipiltin* Nahuatl.

¹⁵¹ Cervantes de Salazar highlights that during the second half of the 16th century, Spanish women were fluent in Nahuatl, probably as they needed to be in close contact with servants of Nahua origin [Cervantes de Salazar 1914:33 cited in Brain 2010:286].

Writing the notarial documents in a vernacular form of written Nahuatl seems to suggest, according to Klor de Alva, that the missionaries did not have complete control over the literacy development of all Nahuas indicating that literacy was much more widespread than previously thought and not only restricted to *pipiltin* [Klor de Alva 1992:27-8]. It also indicates that *macehualtin* probably learned the basics of literacy with the help of *cartillas* such as Gante's during Sunday school.

The *Cartilla*, as the available evidence suggests, was a cheap but very successful device made available to the various socio-cultural groups that made up New Spain. In this way the primer can be seen as a multivectorial transculturation tool which served to integrate the different layers of the composite society.

9.2 Themes

The *Cartilla* reveals the individual agency of Gante. The selection of devotional texts included in the primer showcase which themes he considered suitable for his target audience to learn, his understanding of the Christian faith, and his theological ideas regarding evangelization.

One of these subjects is the explanation of the five corporeal senses. According to Cora Lagos [2002] the explanation of the corporeal senses sets aside Gante's *Cartilla* from other reading primers which do not introduce this subject. The subject, however, is discussed at length in more elaborate *doctrinas* and catechisms of the 16th century in New Spain. The theme of the five corporeal senses is an important theme in Franciscan piety and it is present in noteworthy Franciscan devotional texts such as Saint Bonaventure's *Long Life of Saint Francis, the Legenda Maior* [1260-1263]. The fifth chapter of the book focuses on Saint Francis' physical mortifications and the stigmata in relation to the corporal senses [Astell 2009:91-2].

In the *Cartilla*, the Five Corporeal Senses are presented only in Castilian, as it was probably a subject intended for Spanish readers, who had more experience with Christian themes than the Nahua *macehualtin* this primer probably was targeted at. Gante presents again this theme in his *Doctrina* [1553], this time in Nahuatl. Unlike the version of the *Cartilla*, the text from the *Doctrina* probably was targeted at literate *pipiltin*, as not only is it written in Nahuatl but also incorporates a lengthy explanation on the subject.

In the explanation of the five corporeal senses, Gante commends a series of measures to counteract sin, one for each of the senses. In this way, to avoid sin, an active response from the individual is necessary:

El primero, ver, contra este es contemplar, el segundo oír, contra eso orar. El tercero es gustar, contra este es abstinencia. El cuarto es oler contra este es pensar de que eres formado. El quinto es tocar contra este es obrar buenas obras [Gante 1569:f.6r].

The introduction of the five senses by Gante underscores the importance given by the Franciscan missionaries to the corporeal senses as pathways to sin and virtue. Sin was seen as an inherent part of the bodily nature of an individual, in which a combat between soul and body, virtue and sin conflicted and battled with each other [Lugo Olín 2006:71]. The notion that the body was related to sin and vice was also present in another theme introduced by Gante both in the *Cartilla* and the *Doctrina*: the enemies of the soul. The enemies of the soul in the texts of Gante are the world, the devil and the flesh. Gante adds that the worst enemy for the soul is the flesh ‘Porque al Diablo y al mundo los podemos echar de nosotros, pero a la carne no’ [Gante 1569:f.6v].

As suggested by Lugo Olín the five corporeal senses according to the Franciscans had a double role. Firstly, they were the receptors of the divine and the faith; by means of them the individual could achieve salvation. Secondly, the corporeal senses were the gateways of the flesh, which permitted an individual contact with the exterior world; the senses were the way for sin to enter the human soul. To overcome sin, it was necessary for the individual to play an active role. In addition to the simple measures stated by Gante, sin could be averted through the seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, confession, Eucharist, ordination, matrimony and the last rites [Lugo Olín 2006:72, Rubial García 1999:20].

The double-role of the corporeal senses, in particular the senses’ role as pathways of virtue was also fundamental for Franciscan missionaries in other pedagogical endeavours. Through elaborate visual rituals and paraphernalia the Nahua senses were penetrated. For example preaching and singing allured the sense of hearing, whereas visual representations, such as paintings, and plays, allured the sense of sight [Lugo Olín 2006:73]. [For an overview of the engravings that accompany the explanation of the corporeal senses see section on engravings below].

9.3 Comparative analysis of two prayers: The *Pater Noster* and the *Ave Maria* in the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer*

In this section, two basic prayers of the *Cartilla* will be analysed: the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria*. These prayers were selected in particular because they were the most basic and popular of the repertoire introduced by Gante in his *Cartilla* and quite likely were among the first prayers to be translated. Firstly, by comparing prayers from the *Cartilla* with versions from the *Doctrina* it is possible to reconstruct the chronological development of the translation process, resulting in the standardization of translation solutions. Secondly, I hope with this comparison to determine the mechanics of translation of the source prayers into Nahuatl. The translation will highlight the level of collaboration between the author and his Nahua aides. Thirdly, in the case of similarities existing between these samples, it will be helpful to determine if indeed the *Doctrina*, the *Cartilla* and the *Catecismo* were authored by the same person or school. Each one of the prayers of the *Cartilla* to be analysed in this section starts with a Castilian version followed by a Latin version and finished off with a version in Nahuatl. I will focus, however, only on the Nahuatl section.

9.3.1 *Pater Noster*

The Nahuatl version of the Lord's Prayer in the *Cartilla* appears as follows:

Totatzine yr.ilhuicac timoctztica ma cenquizca yecteneua lo ym motocatzin. Ma hualauh yn motlatocayotzin, ma chinalo yn tlalticpac yn ticmonequiltia yn iuh chiualo yn ilhuicac: mano yuh chihualo innican in tlalticpac. Auh ynazcan ma zitechmomaquili yn totlaxcal yn momoztlaze totech monequi. Ma xitechmopopolhuili in totlatlacol yn iuh tiquimpopolhuia in techtlalcalhuia. Macamo xitechmotlalcahuili ynicamo ypantihuetzizque yn tlailacoli: ma xitechmomaquixtili ynihuicpa yn amoqualli Maymmochiua. Amen [Gante 1569:f.2r].¹⁵²

The version of the *Pater Noster* prayer in the *Cartilla* is the same as the Vulgate version based on Matthew 6:1-4. On occasion an addendum appears in some manuscripts of Matthew, but in the *Cartilla* this addendum is omitted. However, the addendum is present in the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*, probably to add an extra layer of information. The reason

¹⁵² The translation by Acker is as literal as possible in order to account for the structure of the language: 'Aquí está su-traducido-está el Pater Noster Oh nuestro padre-rey. que-cielo-en-el tú-para ti, estás: por favor que enteramente alabado-sea tu-nombre. Por favor que:venga-hacia-aqui tu-reino, por favor que-hecho-sea tierra-en la tú-lo para ti quieres, así como-hecho-es cielo-en-el: por favor que también así-hecho-sea aquí tierra-en-la. y hoy por favór que-a nosotros-des nuestra-tortilla de cada día nosotros-de necesario. Por favor que-a nosotros- perdones. nuestra-culpa, así como nosotros-los-perdonamos a nosotros-ellos-ofenden. Por favor que-no-de nosotros -te apartes para que No en-el nosotros-caeremos pecado. Por favor que-a' nosotros- contra no bueno Por favor que-se-haga. Amén' [Acker 1990:86-7].

behind this difference is unclear, and probably it is linked to Gante's agency and the audience intended for both pedagogic texts.

The Nahua version of the *Pater Noster* illustrates how Gante adopted and adapted traits from Nahua mentality when translating the prayer. According to Acker's study [1990:79] on the *Pater Noster* prayer of the *Cartilla*, elements from Nahuatl grammar are deeply embedded in the prayer as, for example, the reverential forms of the nouns (adding the suffix *tzintli* or *tzin*) and verbs (*nino* or *timo* before the verb). Unlike the *Doctrina*, Gante borrowed more Nahuatl terms in his *Cartilla* than Spanish terms. Indeed there is only one loan word from Spanish: 'Amen'.

Differences between the content of the Spanish and Nahuatl versions of the *Pater Noster* prayer are small, however, these denote the difficulties of translation. For example the Castilian 'santificado' was translated with the Nahua composition 'cenquizca yectenehualo' from 'cenquizca' (completely) and 'yectenehua' (to praise), that roughly translates as completely praised, as there was no equivalent word for sanctified in Nahuatl.

Gante chose the Nahua word '*totlatlacol*' (our sin, our fault) for the Spanish noun 'deudas' (debts). In addition, in the same prayer in order to translate '*No nos dejes caer en tentación mas libranos del mal*' he translates in Nahuatl: '*Amo ypan' tihuetzizque yn tlatacolli: Maxitechmomaquqli yo ihuicpa yn amo qualli*' which glosses roughly as 'Please do not leave us so we don't fall in sin/temptation, please [protect us] against the no-good' [Acker 1990:86-7]. Thus for Gante the word *tlatacolli* seems to have a wider range of meanings, interchangeable even, such as sin, damage, fault, debt, and temptation, and could have been confusing for the Nahua mind. Díaz Cántora observed that Gante employed the term *totlatlacol* (our fault, our sin) instead of *totlaacoliz* (debt) as it appears in the Scriptures. After some research, Díaz Cántora noticed that in the catechism by Pedro de Alcalá, aimed for the conversion of the Granadan Muslims, the Arab word *dhunûb* for sin or faults was also preferred instead of debt.¹⁵³ The translation solution of both Pedro de Alcalá and Gante suggests, according to Díaz Cántora, that as the texts were aimed for conversion, they needed

¹⁵³ The Hieronymite Pedro de Alcalá was probably a converted Muslim himself. Born in Granada, Alcalá wrote an Arabic grammar: the *Arte para ligeramente sauer la lengua erauiga* [1505], a catechism in both Castilian and Arabic. Canfield argues that after a comparison of a sample of *doctrinas* and confessional manuals from the early years of the evangelization in New Spain and the works published by Pedro de Alcalá in Spanish and Arabic striking similarities are revealed in both form and manner of presentation, which would suggest that the work of Alcalá served as a model for *doctrinas* translated in the New World [Canfield 1934:66, Iannuzzi 2010:395-6, Sánchez- Herrero 1990:249, Grass 1965:62].

to be as clear and specific as possible. By using the word fault or sin, instead of debt, the missionaries were trying to avoid a word that could lead to misinterpretations if taken too literally [Díaz Cántora 2003:w/p]. Burkhart observes that even the term preferred by the missionaries, *tlatlacolli*, was misleading, because although it was employed by the Nahuas for moral misdeeds: ‘It also encompassed accidents, and crimes and other breakdowns of established order. It failed to convey the sense of personal moral responsibility, with its accompanying burden of guilt that sin bears in Christian theology’ [Burkhart 1996:170].

Gante’s translation of the last sentence of the Pater Noster: *Maxitechmomaquqli yo ihuicpa yn amo qualli* (please [protect us] against the no-good) draws from Nahuatl cosmology as they did not have a concept of evil. The expression Gante used to translate the concept of evil was the negation of good, which is in Nahuatl *amo qualli* (no good). Interestingly, the solution of the *Cartilla* is similar to the last line of the *Pater Noster* in Gante’s *Catecismo* which could suggest that both works were indeed made by the same author.

To determine if the *Cartilla* was authored by Gante a contrastive analysis of the *Pater Noster* prayer in both the *Cartilla* and the *Doctrina* will be made. The *Pater Noster* in the *Doctrina Christiana* appears on f.79r of the *tepiton* section (the abridged *doctrina*).

Totatzine ilhuicac timoyetztica ma moyectenehua inmotocatzin. Mahuallauh inmotlatocayotzin. Machihuallo inticmoneqltia yn tpc:yniuhchihualo inilhuicac. Totlaxcal momoztla yetotechmoneq: inaxca maxitechmomaqli. Yhua maxitechmopopolhuilitzino yn totlatlacol: yniuh tiqntlapopolhuia yntechtlatlacalhuia. Maxitechmoma nahuili ynicamo ipa tihuetzizq: ynamoqli tlaneqliztli. Yhua maxitechmomaqxtilitzino: ynihuicpa ynixqch amoqli Maiuhmochihua [Gante 1553:f.79r].¹⁵⁴

The texts of the two versions are mostly the same. Small variations, however, can be observed in the spelling of the words, the presence of abbreviations of Nahuatl and Latin words in order to save space (in particular in the *Doctrina*) and sentences or words introduced in order to expand a new layer of information or to clarify the text. This can be seen especially in the *Pater Noster* of the *Cartilla*, where words were added and small changes in the syntax, which do not alter its meaning, are more evident.

¹⁵⁴ Our Father you are in heaven, let your name be praised, please that your kingdom comes here, please that is done what you want in earth: as it is done in heaven, our tortilla each day that we need, today give us, please forgive our sins: as we forgive them who offend us, please do not leave us so we do not fall in ill-will, please [protect] us against the no good, please that is done. Amen [Acker 1990:86].

9.3.1.1 *Pater Noster*: Comparison between Gante and Molina

In order to see if there was a standardization of translation solutions amongst missionaries working in the early period of the evangelization a comparative analysis of the *Pater Noster* prayer in the *Cartilla* and the *Doctrina* with the version of Molina's *Doctrina Christiana* [1546] was made.

The translations of Gante and Molina's versions have very small differences. The *Pater Noster* in the *Cartilla*, unlike the other two versions presently discussed, incorporates a small alteration of the prayer when introducing a final line regarding the power of God on earth: 'Ma chihualo yn tlalticpac yn ticmonequiltia yn iuh chihualo yn ilhuicac: **mano yuh chihualo innican in tlalticpac**' (Please that is done in earth your will as it is done in heaven, **please that is done here in earth**) [Acker 1990:80-1]. The last line is a repetition, however, of the content of the first line. In this way, the sentence is repeated twice, an element that is reminiscent of an oral version. As I have shown in the previous chapter, iteration is also present in the Articles of Faith of the *Cartilla*; a repetition that probably served as mnemonic device of oral transmission, which could suggest that the prayer could be sung as well for an easier memorization.

Another difference between the three prayers, as observed by Christensen, is the translation of the term sin. Christiansen compared only the *Cartilla*'s version of the *Pater Noster* with Molina's version. In the sentence 'And lead us not into temptation,' the translation in the *Cartilla* appears as: 'Macamo xitechmotlalcahuili ynic amo ypan tihuetzizque yn **tlaitlacolli**' (please do not go away from us, so we do not fall in **sin**) [Acker 1990:86]. Whereas Molina translates it as: 'Macamo xitechmotlalcauili inic amo ypan tiuetzizque in **teneyeyecoltiliztli**'. Molina's version is practically the same with exception of the word *teneyeyecoltiliztli* (temptation) instead of the word *tlaitlacolli* (sin) as appears in the *Cartilla* [Christensen 2010:120-1]. We can see, however, that Gante comes up with another solution to the translation problem of sin/temptation in the *Doctrina*: 'yn amo qualli **tlaneqliztli**' (ill-will). The difference in translations between the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla* begs the question as to why the two versions of Gante's *Pater Noster* did not employ the same translation solution. Interestingly the term *tlaitlacolli* with its prefixed form *totlatlacol* (our faults) is employed in another sentence of the *Pater Noster* in the *Doctrina*: 'Yhua maxitechmopolhuilitzino yn **totlatlacol**: yniuh tiqntlapopolhuia yntechtlatlacalhuia' (please forgive our sins: as we forgive them who offend us) [Acker 1990:86]. Why then did Gante change the *tlaneqliztli* (ill-will) in

the *Doctrina* for the *tlatlacolli* in the *Cartilla*? It is possible that a previous edition of the *Cartilla* indeed used the solution *yn amo qualli tlaneqliztli* as it appears in the *Doctrina* but was later corrected to *tlatlacolli* in a new edition. Moreover, why was Molina's solution, *teneyeyecoltiliztli* (temptation) not employed by Gante in his works if Molina's *doctrina* has an earlier date than Gante's *Doctrina*? It is quite likely that Gante opted for this version as he thought it conveyed the meaning better.

Nevertheless, there are striking similarities in the translation solutions employed by both Gante and Molina [For a comparison between these prayers see Appendix 3, table 7.] It is possible that during the reprinting of the *Cartilla* a standardization of the translation was in the making as the three versions seem to use consistently the same vocabulary, albeit with very small variations in syntax and spelling. This standardization could suggest Gante was communicating intensively with other Franciscan translators such as Molina, trying to refine translation solutions to communicate Christianity without any hint of misinterpretation.

9.3.2 Ave Maria

The history of the *Ave Maria* (also called the 'Angelical salutation') prayer is complex. There is scant evidence suggesting that the Hail Mary was an accepted devotional formula before the year 1050 and from this year onwards the prayer appears in several verses in the *Little Office or Cursus of the Blessed Virgin* which was becoming increasingly popular amongst monastic orders at the time [Winston 1993:620]. By the 12th century the Hail Mary was becoming prevalent as a private devotion. The synod decree of Eudes de Sully, Bishop of Paris, mentioned that the 'Salutation of the Blessed Virgin' was known by the common people, alongside the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. By the end of the 15th century the prayer consisted of only two sections; an official third section present in more modern versions was yet not added, though there appears a version of the prayer closely resembling its final form in 'The prayer of Pope Alexander VI'. This version is found several times as an engraving and even decorates, for example, a bell. The first time that the Hail Mary prayer appears officially in its modern version is in a work from Savonarola the *Esposizione sopra l'Ave Maria* published in 1495. The official recognition of the *Ave Maria* can be found in the Catechism of the Council of Trent in the Roman Breviary of 1568 [Winston 1993:620]. It is possible that this version was already known at the time by the missionaries who arrived in New Spain, meaning that the prayer was commonly used even before its official sanction by the Council of Trent [Hail Mary 2012].

The introduction of the Virgin Mary into the Nahuatl imaginary was a highly successful introduction by the mendicants. Burkhart in her work on Marian devotion, in which she analyses several *doctrinas* elaborated by missionaries during the early years of the evangelization, suggests that Mary's role as a mediator between the individual and Jesus Christ, was intrinsically diametric to any Mesoamerican deities, which may be one of the reasons the Marian cult became so popular amongst Nahuas [Burkhart 2001:115].

Gante introduces the cult of Mary in his three works. In the *Cartilla* appears a simple version of the *Ave Maria* prayer, whereas in the *Doctrina*, two versions of the prayer appear in the context of a dialogue between a student and a teacher. The first version of the *Doctrina* is located in the main section, whereas the other one appears in the *tepiton* section. Beside this, Marian devotion is also present in the *Salve Regina* prayer, and in the devotional section in the Crown of Saint Mary, in a prayer for the dying to petition Mary to act on their behalf, in several prayers to be uttered while at church and in a segment concerning mass attendance [Burkhart 2001:119-120].¹⁵⁵

Below is presented the version in Nahuatl of the *Ave Maria* prayer as it appears in the *Cartilla*.

Yzcatqui ycuepca yn Ave Maria

Sancta Mariae maximopaquiltitit, timotemiltitica in gracia, motlantzinco moyetztica yntlatohuani. Di tiyectenehualoni tiquinmopanahuilia ynixqui na, yuan cenca yecteneh ualoni ynmotlacocone su christo. Y yo Sancta Mariae matopan ximotlatolti yu titlatlacoahuanime. Maymmochihua Amen [Gante 1569:f2v].¹⁵⁶

The *Ave Maria* prayer introduced by Gante in the *Cartilla*, does not add the concluding line 'Now and at the hour of our death' that was included in Savonarola's *Esposizione* [1495] and which later was officially included by the Council of Trent [1568] [Winston 1993:620].

Gante's prayer seems to be following rather the Vulgate version. However, the concluding line appears in the *Catecismo*, which suggests that the friar decided not to add the line in his *Cartilla*.

¹⁵⁵ To see an accurate account of the introduction of Marian cult in devotional texts from New Spain see Burkhart 2001 and Durán 1981.

¹⁵⁶ The translation by Acker is as literal as possible in order to account for the structure of the language: 'Aquí está su-traducido-está el Ave María, Oh. Santa María que-para ti te alegres, - extendida-estés en gracia, de ti-cerca-rev.-loc. para sí-está Señor Dios. Así que tú-alabada-eres digna, tú-las-para ti sobrepasas, todas mujeres y muy alabado-es dignó tu-precioso-hijo Jesu Cristo Oh Santa María que-nosotros-sobre para ti hables-en favor nosotros-los pecadores. Que se haga. Amén' [Acker 1990:87]

The text in Nahuatl is introduced by *Yzcatqui ycuepca yn Ave Maria* (here is the Ave Maria translated). There are several differences between the Castilian version and the Nahuatl one; the structure of the Nahuatl translation indicates the difficulties encountered by Gante in order to transmit the prayer into the Nahuatl language. The greeting line ‘*Dios te salve Maria*’ was translated as *maximopaquiltitit* (in Spanish *estáte alegrándote* (brighten up, be happy)) [Acker 1990:82] a reverential petition that according to Acker must have been a common form of salutation amongst the Nahuas [Acker 1990:85].

The word ‘*gracia*’ did not have a clear equivalent in Nahua vocabulary, therefore Gante decided instead of creating a neologism, to employ a Spanish loan word. Neither Molina in his *doctrina* from 1546 nor the Dominicans in their 1548 *doctrina* translated the concept of ‘*gracia*’; indeed it seems to be one of the most untranslatable concepts in the Christian repertoire [Acker 1990:85].

Interestingly, expressions were added or/and omitted in the Nahuatl version of the prayer. For example an addition was made with regards to the characterization of Virgin Mary as superior to any other women ‘*bendita tú entre las mujeres*’ (blessed are thou amongst women) which was translated in Nahuatl as ‘*yectenehualoni tiqinmopanahuilia ynixquichtin cihua*’ (you are worthy to be praised, you surpass all the other women) [Acker 1990:85]. The sentence ‘*el fruto de tu vientre Jesús*’ (the fruit of thy womb) was also not translated literally but as ‘*motlacoconetzin Jesu Christo*’ (your precious child Jesus Christ), therefore omitting the word womb and lastly in the sentence ‘*Sancta Maria virge madre de dios*’ (Holy Mary, Mother of God) the translation of mother of God is absent, whether it was a result of oversight while translating or carelessness from the printer is difficult to identify. To tackle this issue, it is necessary to compare with the version of the prayer in the *Doctrina*. The *Ave Maria* prayer from the *tepiton* section of the *Doctrina* [f. 80r] includes a Latin version. The prayer is introduced as a translation in Nahuatl of the Latin prayer by the teacher:

Maximopaqltitie scta Maria timotemiltitica yn gracia. Motlatzinc moyetztica yntlatohuani Dios. Ynic tiyectenehualoni tiqnmopanahuilia yn yxqchtincihua. Yhua ceca yectenehualoni inmotlacotlaaqllloxillantzin Jesus. O scta Maria cenquizca ychpochtle/intinatzin dios. Matopanximotlatolti intlatlacoanime. Mayuhmochihua [Gante 1553:f.80r].¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ Oh Saint Mary! Brighten up, grace is extended in you, our lord God is near you, you are worthy of praise, you are unique, your precious fruit womb, your son Jesus is worthy of praise, Oh! Saint Mary, always virgin, mother of god, intercede for us the sinners, Please that is done, Amen [Translation by the author based on Acker 1990:87].

There is another version of the prayer in the same *doctrina* which comes with interlineal Latin [f.21v]:

Ave Mari agra plena onstecuz, Quitozneq, maximopaqltitia Sacta Maria timotemiltitica yn gracia motlantzinco moyetztica intlatohuani dios. Benedicta tu in mulieribus. Q.n. Inic tiyectehualoni: tiquimmopanahuilia ynixquichtin cihua ynayac yuhque ynihuicac yntlalticpac ynayac ce yuhque yn angelome. Et benedictus fructus vetris tui Jesus. Q.n.

Ihuan cenca yectenehualoni ynmotlaco tlaaquilloxillatzin Jesus yyehuatzin yntotlacotemaqxticatzin Jesu xpo ynipiltzi dios: yn mitictzico qmocuilico initlaconacayotzin ynictech momaquixtilico. Ca toyec yoliliztlaqual omo chiuh ynic huilohua ynihuicac. Sancta Maria virgo mater Dei ora pro nobis peccatoribus. Amen Jesus. Q.n. O Santa maria ynantzin diose matopan ximotlatolti yn titlatlacohuanime. Ma yuh mochihua [Gante 1553:f.21v].¹⁵⁸

A comparison of the three versions of the prayer shows that although word spelling appears to have varied slightly among the different versions, the basic content of the prayers is the same, suggesting that they were penned by the same author/authors. [For the comparison of the different versions of the Ave Maria prayer by Gante see Appendix 3, table 8.] The versions of the *Ave Maria* prayer in the *Doctrina* add, however, nuances to the prayer. The version on folio 21v of the *doctrina tepiton* specifies, for example, the virginal nature of the conception of Christ by adding *cenquizca ychpochtle* (always maiden) and also *intinatzin dios* (mother of God) to the sentence: ‘O scta Maria **cenquizca ychpochtle** intinatzin dios. Matopanximotlatolti’ (Oh! Saint Mary, always virgin, mother of God, intercede in our behalf) [Burkhart 2001:130]. This modification does not appear in the *Cartilla*’s version or in the *Ave Maria* prayer present in the lengthier section of the *Doctrina*.

A second example appears on f. 21v of the *Doctrina*’s lengthier section. Each sentence of this prayer in Nahuatl is interlineated by a Latin sentence. In this way the reader could learn both versions at the same time. Extra content is added, however, to the Nahuatl version with regards to the uniqueness of the virgin: ‘Yn ayac yuhque yn ilhuicac yn tlalticpac yn ayac ce yuhque yn angelome’ (There is no one similar in heaven and earth, there is no one similar

¹⁵⁸ Oh! Saint Mary brighten up, grace is extended in you, our lord god is near you, you are worthy of praise, you are unique, there is no one like you in heaven or in earth, there is no one like you [amongst the] angels, your precious fruit womb, your son Jesus is worthy of praise. Our precious rescuer, Jesus Christ, the child of god, he took his precious body inside of you, so he came to save us from danger, he became our food of proper life, so that people could go to heaven. Oh Mother of God, intercede for us sinners, Please that is done, Amen [Translation by the author based on Acker 1990:87 and Burkhart 2001:129].

amongst the angels) and the role and nature of her son Jesus Christ: ‘Y yehuatzin yn Totlaçotemaq xticatzin Jesu xpo yn ipiltzi dios: yn mitictzico q mocuilico in itlaçonacayotzin ynic techmomaquixtilico. Ca toyec yoliliztlaqual omochiuh ynic huilohua ynilhucac’ (Our precious rescuer, Jesus Christ, the child of god, he took his precious body inside of you, so he came to save us from danger, he became our food of proper life, so that people could go to heaven) [translation by Burkhart 2001:129].

Certain elements of the translation reflect interesting aspects of Marian devotion. Burkhart suggests that the morphemes that composed the term –translated in the *Doctrina* but not in the *Cartilla*— *motlaçotlaaqllloxillantzin* (your precious fruit womb) possibly indicated that the praise was not directed at Jesus (the fruit) but at the womb of Mary, thereby indicating a profound knowledge of Nahuatl, which probably suggest an intensive Nahua collaboration during the translation process [Burkhart 2001:117].¹⁵⁹ This begs the question as to why *motlaçotlaaqllloxillantzin* was included in the earlier versions of the prayer in the *Doctrina* [1553] and not in the *Cartilla* [1569]. It is possible that it was seen as a better term to introduce in the *Doctrina* than in the primer due to the complexity of the concept. The term could also have been dropped after its review by other missionary translators.

Modifications present in the two versions of the *Ave Maria* prayer in the *Doctrina* seem to be targeted at an audience of literate, ‘transcultured’ neophytes, with an initial understanding of Christianity, who may have required a deeper explanation of the prayer. The *Cartilla*, on the other hand, not only because of its limited space but also as targeting an audience of largely illiterate *macehualtin*, with no previous understanding of Christianity, needed to be kept short and simple.

9.3.3 The Pater Noster and the Ave Maria: the difficulties of translation

After analysing the *Pater Noster* and the *Ave Maria* prayers the translation difficulties can be fully appreciated. The Nahuatl version of the *Ave Maria* in the primer shows many interesting issues born out of the translation of two, structurally, very dissimilar languages. For example the first line *Salve Maria* was translated as *Santa Mariae maximopaquiltitie*, which can mean ‘Saint Mary brighten up’. Acker observes that this initial salutation –which in Latin means health or good morning— could have been very difficult to translate. Why then was the word *maximopaquiltitie* (brighten up) chosen? Acker suggests that is possible

¹⁵⁹ Moreover, both versions also present grammatical elements of Nahuatl such as *tzin* for reverential speech.

that the selected term served as an analogous word in Nahuatl as it was a standard Nahua salutation [Acker 1990:85]. A similar issue can be observed in the *Pater Noster* with regards to the difficulty in translating the term sin. In the *Cartilla* the word employed is *tlatlacolli* (something damaged or spoiled) whereas the term ‘yn amo qualli tlaneqliztli’ (en la mala voluntad/ bad will) appears in the *Pater Noster* of the *Doctrina*, a solution also employed in the last line of the prayer in the *Catecismo en Pictogramas*. This discrepancy begs the question as to why such different solutions were employed. As already mentioned the word *tlatlacolli* can be found elsewhere in the *Doctrina* so why it was not employed in the last line of the *Pater Noster* as well? It is probable that Gante considered the word a better or simpler option and was as such later on introduced in the primer.

To solve the problem of untranslatable terms such as grace, Gante selected Spanish loan words to keep heretical meanings out of his text. He translated grace as *timotémilitica in gracia* (extended is you grace) as there was no equivalent term for the term ‘grace’ in Nahuatl [Acker 1990:87]. Another example from Spanish loan word is *Dios* (God), possibly not translated into Nahuatl in order to avoid misinterpretations.

Gante’s translation shows an elevated understanding of Nahua cosmology and language, which probably derived from an extensive collaboration between Gante and his transculturated Nahua students. Acker suggests [1990:78] that the level of Gante’s knowledge of Nahuatl is often reflected in his work in its adaptation of the Nahua mentality. We have seen in previous chapters that Gante’s knowledge of Nahuatl mentality was indeed profound, which again highlights his close collaboration with the Nahuas. He also ascribed to the similarities between the two groups by successfully employing analogies that would be familiar to his congregation such as, for example, the use of the word *tlaxcalli* (*tortilla*) instead of bread. The semiotic translation served as a field in which adaptations, resistances, exchanges and negotiation were taking place. How active the role of these Nahuas was it is difficult to determine. However as I have shown in the analysis of the *Cartilla* and the *Doctrina* traces of a collaboration between *pipiltin* Nahuas and Gante can be seen. The use of several forms of Nahua expression such as iteration, reverential speech and the presence of epithets and colloquial forms of expression such as the salutation present in the Ave Maria suggest a heavy Nahua input in the translation. As we have seen from the small changes in the translation evidenced from the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla* there was a dialogue, translations were early made and then adjusted in time depending not only on the targeted

audience but also the modifications probably were the result of a dialogue not only with the Nahuas but with other missionaries both from the Franciscan and other orders.

My previous comparative analysis also suggests that the *Cartilla* was indeed translated by Gante. It is also noticeable, however, that a high degree of similarity existed between the prayers of Molina and Gante. It is probable therefore, that by 1569, the solutions first employed by Molina and Gante were widely used by other missionaries as a model for their translations.

Spelling, on the other hand, did not follow a standard format [Peralta *et al* 2004:190]. This could have been the result of two factors. Firstly, the early dates of these works could have meant that the transcription of Nahuatl into its written version was still a malleable process, in which spelling was being transformed according to the different linguistic understanding of the missionary involved and his team of Nahua translators. Secondly, it appears that spelling was not considered an important factor in the linguistic studies of the day. Indeed, the first glossaries were just being made, eventually standardizing Nahua spelling.

9.4 Engravings of the *Cartilla*: The Five Senses

In his written catechetical texts, Gante followed a popular pedagogic device widely used in the instruction of Christianity in Europe by joining two forms of transmission of knowledge: the written word and the image. The *Cartilla* has thirty woodcut engravings (including the one on the frontispiece) of several dimensions, depicting biblical scenes. Some of them seem to incorporate Mexican motifs [Márquez Rodiles 1959:6, Valton 1947 cited in Bravo Ahuja 1977:19-20]. Whether the engravings that illustrate the *Cartilla* were made by Nahua or missionary hands is difficult to elucidate. Williams [1991:306] suggests that the engravings that accompany devotional texts reflect the first-hand observations of the missionaries and indeed the engraving from the frontispiece of the *Cartilla* seems to support this idea.

The engraving from the frontispiece represents Saint Francis kneeling. Strings come out from his hands and feet, the strings are attached to a figure in the sky representing the Holy Spirit; in this way Saint Francis acts according to the will of God. The engraving represents the moment in which Saint Francis received the wounds of Christ. Saint Francis receiving the stigmata is a traditional Franciscan subject, which appears as the emblem of the order and in the frontispiece of other devotional texts from New Spain such as *La vida del bienaventurado san Francisco* translated by Molina [1577] and the *Vocabulario en Lengua Castellana y*

Mexicana [1555] composed by Molina [Alcántara 2013:93].¹⁶⁰ What is compelling about the image is the background which although seems European (the presence of a church seems to indicate this) the flora such as the maguey demonstrate that the scene could be situated in New Spain, an element that would allure Nahua sensibilities. The appearance of such a Franciscan motif implies that the *Cartilla* was indeed written by a Franciscan.



Fig. 92 Frontispiece of the *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* [Source: Bravo Ahuja 1977:36]

Another fascinating engraving in the *Cartilla* is the one that accompanies the explanation of the corporeal senses. This engraving represents the five senses as individuals (from left to right: sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch). The illustration that accompanies the description of the five senses in the *Cartilla* is far from ordinary. Despite the popularity of the subject (which appears frequently in educational Christian texts) graphic representations of the five senses in pedagogic texts were seldom included [Nordenfalk 1985:2]. In Christian devotional texts, the five corporeal senses were represented in different manners for example by animals or by captions as in the case of Saint Augustine's manuscript *De Spiritu et anima* extant in

¹⁶⁰ *La vida del bienaventurado san Francisco* [1577] and the *Vocabulario en Lengua Castellana y Mexicana* [1555] employ the same woodcut engraving, unlike Gante's *Cartilla* which employs a different engraving but with the same motif.

the library of Trinity College, Cambridge. Saint Augustine's text features on f. 46v the figure of a friar with captions in red ink marking the location of the senses next to the appropriate organ [Nordenfalk 1985:5]. The five senses could also be represented allegorically by anthropomorphic figures personifying each one of the senses. However, after 1500 the male figures representing the five senses were replaced by female figures. According to Nordenfalk, it is probable that the change of gender in the representations was a result of associating womanhood with sensuality [Nordenfalk 1985:7]. It is fascinating to notice, that in the *Cartilla* the senses are represented by male figures, not following the trend established around 1500 in which the senses were represented by female figures. This could suggest that Gante employed an older, male-figure engraving of the five senses for his Nahua students to copy.

Gante presents also the five corporeal senses in an engraving of the *Doctrina Christiana* [1553:f. 63r]. Was the same engraving employed in both works or are we seeing a standardized motif usually employed in order to represent the five senses? This question is highly relevant as the majority of the engravings present in both the *Cartilla* and the *Doctrina* appear to be different. Although not exactly the same woodcut, the motif of the five senses is the same, a small difference seems to be the quality of the engraving, the one in the *Cartilla* is cruder in its finishing. It is probable, as the similarities between the engravings suggest that both engravings were made in the same place using the same model as they follow the same style. Probably they were made in the school of trades in San José by the Nahua students of Gante following an engraving possibly brought by the missionary.



Fig. 93 The Five Senses, *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* [Gante 1569:f.6r, source: Bravo Ahuja 1977:36]



Fig. 94 The Five Senses, *Doctrina Cristiana* [Gante 1553:f.63r]

9.5 Conclusions

In this chapter I analysed the primer in order to understand Gante's creative process in the elaboration of a Christian pedagogical text. Primers were popular tools, widely employed by clergymen to teach religious instruction and reading in Europe. They proved so useful that were soon brought by missionaries, however, the necessity of having a primer in the indigenous languages started a series of translation projects. The primer by Gante is perhaps one of the most popular of these primers as it not only contains Christian instruction in one language but in three in addition to engravings making it a multifaceted tool.

That Gante wrote the *Cartilla* has been generally assumed since Valton's work [1947], and indeed evidence seems to suggest that this theory is valid. The frontispiece of this work – Saint Francis receiving the stigmata— is a Franciscan theme, which suggests that the author probably was a Franciscan; the similarity between the types of the *Cartilla* and the *Doctrina* as proposed by Valton [1947] and the similarities between the translations of the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria* prayers in the three works by Gante indicates that they were probably made by the same person, or at least by the same school.

Gante's translation also shows a deep knowledge of Nahuatl language, indeed an ever-changing and evolving fluency in the language, as translation solutions were improved as evident in the translation of difficult terms of the Christian imaginary such as sin, or the womb of St. Mary. By the use of grammatical Nahua forms and expressions such as the Nahua '*maximopaquiltitit*' (rejoice/be happy/ brighten up) as a greeting to Saint Mary instead of borrowing the Latin salutation *salve*, we can deduce that there was a heavy involvement of

Nahua collaborators in the elaboration of this *Cartilla*. There is a development in the translation process as terms that appear in the earlier *Doctrina* are not employed in the *Cartilla* and the syntax on occasion differs slightly, however, the two translations show a great consistency of terms not only with each other but also with translations made by other authors such as Molina, suggesting that standardization was starting to occur at the time. In addition, contemporary Church discussions regarding its own identity were added in the *Cartilla* as I showed in the previous chapter with the translation of the Articles of Faith in the *Cartilla* where the specification of Catholic Church was first introduced in Gante's catechetical texts.

The importance of the languages employed in the *Cartilla* must not be overlooked. It is significant that the primer presents only the basic prayers in three languages, whereas the rest of the text is mostly in Castilian. This suggests two things, that the *Cartilla* was targeted to a mixed audience of both Nahua and Spaniard children, probably even adult *macehuales* with little or no previous knowledge of Christianity. Probably the most basic prayers were kept in Nahuatl to prepare the *macelhualtin* prior to baptism. Generally instruction given before baptism covered the following: the belief in one all-mighty and eternal god, Virgin Mary, the immortality of the soul and the evil brought by the devil, the commandments of God and Church, the articles of faith, obedience to the Catholic Church, the works of mercy, the pleasures of heaven, the benefits of mass, the sacraments of the Eucharist and baptism, the sign of the cross, the Lord's prayer and the Creed [Río Hernández 2005:4]. It is probable that Gante only translated the basic prayers as the Franciscans had already reduced the instruction prior to baptism. The syntax was kept simple and the presence of iteration is strong suggesting that *Cartilla* could also be sung. This work was not intended for the already literate 'transcultured' Nahua *pipiltin* as was the case with the *Doctrina*, which presents most of its content in Nahuatl and Latin.

By having the majority of its text in Castilian and Latin, we can assume that the primer was made with economic revenues in mind. This was not a specialist Nahua work, but a reading primer for both the Spanish residents and the Nahuas. It is probable that Gante received from the Crown in 1553 the printing concession for primers for his Hospital de Indios in response to his letter from 1552 [Gante 15th February 1552 in Torre 1973:46-55]. In Gante's letter from 1552, the friar complains that the original building of the Hospital de Indios had been seized by Viceroy Mendoza to establish a school for mestizo boys. The Crown quite likely gave Gante the concession in order to secure enough revenues to rebuild the Hospital de

Indios in another location. To receive more economic revenues for his Hospital de Indios Gante probably decided to write a trilingual primer with a wider scope that not only targeted the Nahua *macehualtin*, but also Spanish residents.

The primer was an abridged exposition of Christian subjects, presenting briefly the key prayers of the Christian repertoire in three languages, whereas more complex subjects such as the enemies of the soul, and the corporeal senses appear only in Castilian, or in Castilian and Latin. Introducing subjects such as this to the Nahua *macehual* probably was seen as difficult as most of them were deemed to have too low intellectual capabilities to comprehend the intricate concepts of Christianity. However, by means of the *Cartilla* Gante taught the *macehualtin* children basic literacy skills, in this way starting a vernacular cultural undercurrent, which would help to explain the vast amount of Nahuatl writings employing not the elaborate writing style of the *pipiltin* employed in missionaries' devotional texts, but the everyday language of commoners.

Primers such as the *Cartilla* initiated thus the steady replacement of the Nahua writing system. This process was however not unidirectional as not only were previous forms of understanding and preserving knowledge replaced but at the same time the nature of the process allowed the Nahuas to present and preserve their own narrative and discourses. In this way, Nahuas were able to articulate the conquest and incorporate themselves within the new society, acquiring as such a voice in a context in which the book and the written word had become the primary communication vehicles.

In the selection of themes, the translation process and the engravings the agency of the missionary is revealed. I hope to have shown in this chapter the flexibility of Gante's pedagogic work. He was interested in using the best devices and adapting methods from different cultures in order to transmit the Christian message. The primer presents in many ways the ultimate device for the introduction of European culture. The primer was focused for a wider audience of both Nahuas and Spanish. In this way the primer was employed to bring up children who would have been acquainted with two languages, showing in many ways the complexity of the cultural context in which they were living. By the use of texts and engravings Gante introduced to the Nahua masses European forms of transmission of knowledge and representation. By introducing the alphabetic script in his primer, Gante also allowed the Nahuas to have a voice in the new political setting, giving the Nahuas a tool to defend their interests. The *Cartilla* was also important in teaching young Nahua children

Latin, a success that was to start the Colegio de la Santa Cruz, a liminal place of collaboration between missionaries and Nahuas.

Conclusion

By studying the works and activities of Gante, one of the seminal missionaries operating in New Spain, this research has been able to significantly advance our understanding of the first years of the evangelization in Central Mexico. Although the importance of Gante cannot be denied, he has been one of the most neglected figures in studies of the early evangelization period. The majority of available scholarly works tend to centre on other important missionaries such as Sahagún and Molina. Added to this, scholarly works on Gante are scarce.

As we have seen, research on Gante can be divided in two groups. We have on the one hand studies focusing solely on his biography and on the other research of each one of the works individually. Whereas the *Catecismo* has received more attention by authors such as Resines [2007] and Cortés [1987], the *Doctrina* and *Cartilla* have been largely ignored. Only sections of Gante's written texts have been translated and analysed in the context of other doctrinal writings. The only work centred on a specific theme of Gante's *Doctrina* was the analysis of Mulhare and Sell [2002] regarding bead prayers. As we have seen, a theoretical and contextualized study employing a critical interpretative framework and encompassing both the biography of Gante and his three extant works has never been attempted before.

The present work has filled this void. Previous neglect of the figure of Gante and the importance of his work have resulted in a myopic perspective on the evangelization process in the area. Gante after all, arrived as part of the first wave of missionaries before even the famous Twelve. Alongside his Flemish companions, he was one of the first friars to learn Nahuatl and to transcribe oral Nahuatl into writing. Indeed the idea of writing a *doctrina* in Nahuatl was first conceived by his Flemish colleague Tecto. After his sudden death Gante picked up the idea and started the translation of the *Catecismo*, the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla*. His work in many ways was the foundational basis of many later missionary endeavours in Central Mexico. By omitting the figure of Gante, previous research has only been able to approach an incomplete understanding of the evangelization of central Mexico, a process upon which Gante's work, as shown in thesis, had a profound and deep impact.

In this study I have presented Gante's missionary work in the wider context of the evangelization of New Spain. I have proposed that Gante and his works played a critically important role during the early phase of the evangelization in the Valley of Mexico

facilitating not only the imposition of Christian religious thought on a variety of Nahua communities but also initiating a complex process of transculturation in which both Europeans and Nahuas played an active part. Employing an interdisciplinary conceptual framework that utilises selected notions from New Philology, colonial semiosis, annales theory and agency theory has allowed me to understand the work of Gante in a more theoretically informed manner. As such, my research has uncovered new insights which have permitted me to approach a better understanding of the importance of the agency of a particular missionary and its impact upon the wider evangelization process.

My work contributes to the new trends of New Philology which show that the evangelization of the Centre of Mexico was not a uniform process in which European missionaries, as agents of transculturation, successfully by means of similar approaches Christianised the indigenous populations. By focusing on the work and activities of a singular missionary, Gante, this research finds agreement in the arguments of New Philology. My work has demonstrated that the evangelization process of New Spain saw no uniform approach to the Christianization of the Mesoamerican communities but relied instead, to a significant extent, on the individual agency of missionaries such as Gante who were able to put their own stamp on things by applying various approaches and pursuing different goals and aims. This is true not only for the missionaries but also for the Mesoamerican communities who interacted with the former. Both the missionaries and, in our case, the Nahuas of the Valley of Mexico did not uniformly interact with one another. We are dealing with a variety of human agents coming from and subjected to various contextual backgrounds, which naturally led to varied patterns of interaction. The case of Gante is a clear example of such developments and therefore is ideal for demonstrating the varied approaches, aims and results that fell under the general heading of the evangelization of New Spain.

My study has also shown that missionary work in New Spain cannot be seen in isolation; missionary activity in New Spain needs to be studied as part of the wider socio-cultural and geo-political context in which it operated. My research has demonstrated that missionary work and strategy were actively influenced by their interaction with its Mesoamerican target audience. The Mesoamericans, through their own agency, helped to shape the form and localized outcomes of the evangelization process. In many ways the process of evangelization was conducted in Nepantla. This liminal social space, in between two roads, served as a place of dialogue, accommodation and rejection between missionaries and Nahuas. We need to keep in mind, however, that the missionaries operated in Nepantla not because they changed

their views on Christianity but because they made deliberate use of liminal spaces with the aim of establishing a place of dialogue in which the Nahuas could be converted. This challenging dialogue between missionaries and Nahuas resulted in a complex process of transculturation in which the successful introduction of Christianity was moulded to varying circumstances and developments resulting in varied and highly localized outcomes of the evangelization process.

The Christianization process had, for example, a different impact on the children of Nahua indigenous elites in comparison to those of commoners. Geographical distance, as I have shown, also severely affected the Christianisation process and different developments can be pointed out between Franciscan regional centres and areas of a more peripheral nature. The evangelization process, thus, never was a rigidly linear or uniform event. Local and/or regional socio-cultural and geo-political developments severely impacted the Christianization of New Spain and resulted in varying degrees of evangelical success and failure which led in the end to the creation of a highly complex form of Christianity with Nahua undertones.

The missionaries' methods of evangelization (most of them based on expedient selection) regarding both external (such as elements of Nahua pageantry) and interiorized forms of devotion helped to shape the face of Christianity in Central Mexico. This multi-faceted input can still be seen in modern day Mexico. The localized responses of both missionaries and indigenous peoples alike, have given the Catholic Church in Mexico a distinct character. Despite the presence of such regional elements Catholicism in Mexico cannot be understood as an indigenous syncretic form of Christianity in direct opposition to a non-indigenous European Christianity. The core theological belief of Christianity in New Spain is Christian and not Mesoamerican. In addition to this, Nahuas considered themselves Christians and not members of a syncretic religion. Christianity in New Spain should be seen as Christianity with localized undertones and not an impure derivative. After the Second Vatican Council of 1962-1965 the Catholic Church has named this process in which Christianity took on local/regional traditions and traits of conversion 'Inculturation theology'. Inculturation theology acknowledges the strategies of conversion that have historically involved local accommodations and adaptations [Durstun 2007:13]. In 16th-century Central Mexico, for example, it is possible to see a Christianity with Nahua undertones being developed. In modern-day Mexico this Christianity is still visible and not only pertains to indigenous populations but also to other sectors of the population as can be seen in the festivities related to Christmas. Examples in this respect are the use of piñatas representing the seven sins, the

nativity plays (which present indigenous peoples in lead roles in their fight against the devil and sin), the adornment of churches' entrances with flowers for the celebration of the Saints and finally in the offerings of food and traditional dances celebrated in honour of certain Saints. Such traditions developed through the interaction of Christian Nahuas and missionaries in the 16th century are still alive today.

Through analysis of Gante's work, I also have been able to demonstrate the cumulative agency of missionaries working in Central Mexico and the manner in which their input made the process of conversion different to other areas of Spanish America. This can be seen reflected, for example, in the comparison between doctrinal Nahua and Pastoral Quechua. The evangelical endeavour in both areas shows differences in the conceptualization of the conversion process. These differences can be attributed to the fact that mendicant missionaries were in charge of the conversion in Central Mexico whereas the secular order and Jesuits were directing the Andean efforts. In addition to this, because of the non-contemporary trajectory of both evangelical enterprises, clergymen from the Andean region followed more closely the guidelines of the Third Lima Council regarding doctrinal translations, curtailing in this way the Andean translation effort. The lack of indigenous input in Pastoral Quechua is also noticeable and highlights the different way in which the mendicant missionaries approached the Nahuas in Central Mexico. At least during the early stages of missionary translations, as started by Gante and his colleagues, there was a freedom and flexibility in the translation efforts. Collaboration with the Nahuas was an essential aspect of this process and helped the accommodation and understanding of Christian conceptual categories by the indigenous population.

In many ways, Gante represents the pinnacle of missionary work during the earliest stage of the evangelization. Through his work it is possible to see the beginnings of the cultural interaction between missionaries and the Nahuas via the use of expedient selection of conceptual categories. The missionaries' pedagogic endeavours made use of this expedient selection and created a conceptually new world in which both Nahuas and Europeans interacted, merged and appeared anew in varying and complex ways. In so doing a new society was created with mixed identities and complex self-perceptions. Gante's writings played, as argued in this thesis, a fundamental part in this process and clearly demonstrate the particular way in which this Flemish missionary approached the challenges and opportunities facing him. Gante was in many ways a pioneer; confronted with a novel situation he showed considerable initiative and innovation and by drawing on his varied background was able to

play a pivotal role in the creation of a new world which was neither European nor wholly indigenous.

Gante's agency

One focus of this research was the importance of Gante's background in shaping his view of Christianity and his approach to evangelical work. Previous studies of Gante are primarily of a biographical nature. A complete overview of his life and a critical analysis of his extant works in the context of the evangelization of New Spain, such as that presented in this study, has never been attempted before. Gante, as we have seen, was a unique personality in the context of the missionaries working in New Spain. Of Flemish origin and operating next to mostly Spanish and French missionary colleagues, his particular way of engaging the Nahua population differed from his contemporary counterparts. His cultural background and nationality evidently played a role in the way in which he approached his mission. Gante, as we have seen, indirectly acknowledges this himself when petitioning in 1552 to King Charles V to send missionaries of Flemish origin from the convent of Saint Francis in Ghent to Mexico [Gante 15th February 1552 in Torre 1973:46-55].

Gante's statement suggests two things. Firstly, that the Nahua population interacted differently with him than with other missionaries active in the valley of Mexico, an observation which he appears to have attributed to him being Flemish and not Spanish or French, although his intellectual upbringing, personality and socio-cultural background undoubtedly played an important part in this respect. Secondly, it is possible that Gante thought his evangelical legacy could be preserved or provided with a sense of continuity, only by Flemish missionaries of similar intellectual upbringing.

Although Gante's petition was not granted, the case of Jodoco de Rique in Ecuador appears to confirm this reading of Gante's correspondence. These two cases are unique in the context of the evangelization of the Americas and highlight the unique approach of Gante and the Franciscans from Ghent. Additionally it is worthwhile remembering that Gante's ideas concerning the translation of Christian doctrine into Nahuatl were developed in collaboration with his Flemish colleagues Juan de Tecto and Juan de Ayora, both dying soon after their arrival in New Spain. It is possible therefore to detect a 'Gentian' approach and/mind-set to missionary work, an approach which differed from that of Spanish and other Flemish contemporaries.

This study has indeed shown that the intellectual upbringing and education of Gante gave him the tools necessary to approach the evangelization of the Nahuatl population of the Valley of Mexico in an innovative way, which differed from other contemporary approaches of his missionary colleagues. As a family member of Charles V and with close ties to the house of Habsburg, Gante was raised among the social and intellectual elite. As a cultural insider of the Habsburg court, he understood the workings of the royal court and used this to his advantage in his petitions to the king such as the licence granted to Gante's Hospital de Indios for printing all cartillas.

Gante's work was also inspired by the precepts of northern humanism and in particular that of the *Devotio Moderna* movement. I have shown that the importance given to education by this movement translated itself into the multiple pedagogic endeavours of Gante, visible particularly in the establishment of his doctrina of San José and his school of trades. Indeed both the *Devotio Moderna* movement and northern humanism pay attention to the practical aspects of daily life by focusing on the acceptance of Christ without renouncing society. By giving not only Christian education to his Nahuatl pupils but also instructing them in a trade Gante prepared his pupils for the new Europeanised world in which they now found themselves. In addition to this, Gante's practical vein inclined him to do charitable work such as the establishment of the Hospital de Indios.

The approach (agency) of Gante was additionally, embedded, as I have shown, within the wider Franciscan world of religious and educative thought. Cardinal Ximénez de Cisneros' ideas behind the reformation of the convents in Spain, and the new ideological and practical situations the Franciscans were confronting in New Spain deeply transformed Franciscan ideology. One of the most important Franciscan ideas was the *Imitation of Christ*. The imitation of Christ did not only refer to Jesus it also extended to the apostles, the saints and in particular to Saint Francis. As seen in previous chapters this idea was extremely popular amongst Franciscans in New Spain who not only tried to live according to these standards, but intended the Nahuas to do so as well. The introduction of the cult of the saints by Gante was intimately related to this idea. I have demonstrated that in the *Doctrina en Lengua Mexicana*, Gante expressed the importance of following the example of the saints [Gante 1553:ff.13r, 13v]. Gante thus actively encouraged the Nahuas to follow and incorporate the moral examples of the saints into their lives. The cult of the saints became, as I have shown in chapter 4, particularly important for the introduction of Christianity amongst the Colonial Mesoamerican populations as it was in the evangelization of Europe [Graham 2011]. This

element of Christianity was almost immediately assimilated by the Mesoamerican populations, most likely because in many ways the saints could be easily associated with the numerous deities of the Mesoamerican religions whose place the saints now started to occupy.

Another important idea of both Franciscan and northern humanist thought, the search for a purer form of Christianity, closer in its simplicity to its foundational origins, was equally very important for Franciscan missionaries, such as Gante. Franciscans aimed to reduce the vast amount of ceremonies and medieval outward forms of devotion [Rubial García 2004:106]. The newly intended purity proved, however, impossible to realize in the context of New Spain. Gante writes in a letter in 1529 how after close observation of Nahua culture he had designed a series of strategies of conversion which would inspire Nahuas to appreciate Christianity. Fundamental to his strategy was the introduction of processions, theatre, music and songs into Christian religious practise [Gante, 27th June 1527 in Torre 1973:40-3]. Moreover, these outward forms of devotion presented characteristic elements from Mesoamerican religious tradition. Burkhart observes that Mesoamerican elements present in Christian pageantry did not trouble missionaries: ‘provided that the devotions met their criteria for seemliness and were directed toward suitable Christian sacra: God, Christ, the saints. That is, they were more concerned with the object than with the act, with the end recipient of the devotion than with its means of expression’ [Burkhart 1998:364-8]. The exuberant pageantry also provided the missionaries with enough evidence of conversion and Nahua piety [Burkhart 1998:369]. This is also apparent in Gante’s translations, as I have shown in chapter 8 regarding the *Doctrina*, Gante encouraged outward expressions of Christianity in his translation of contrite, *nehuapol tixcoya tiquitozq* (what we are to say to make one self humble/ bad old me). In this way, an outward form of devotion could be recognizable by the missionaries, who would have thought that the Nahua neophyte had already interiorized the concept.

Thus Gante drew upon and incorporated Nahua cultural elements which he thought would be familiar to Nahua audiences to help facilitate their conversion to Christianity. In this way Gante’s agency thus actively helped shape and give direction to the evangelical process, tackling opportunities and challenges in specific ways. In many ways it can be argued that Christianity in New Spain undertook a deliberate transformation under the guidance of Gante, a transformation aimed at convincing the Nahua population into accepting Christianity and

converting. This process, especially its outward expression of religious practise, impeded, however, the Franciscan ideal of returning to a pure, more interiorized version of Christianity.

Gante and his works

During the initial phase of the evangelization of New Spain new linguistic ideas were transmitted from one cultural group to the other and vice versa, creating in the process a new way of comprehending the world. Language, in this case Nahuatl, served not only as a bridge to communicate the Christian message but also as a way to transmit to the Nahuas a new understanding of the world which incorporated both Christian and Nahua elements. This reflects, as Payas suggests, the double role of translation: as a frontier and as a bridge. As a frontier because the translation had to take account of, and in some cases accommodate the resistance and consciousness of Mesoamerican communities. As a bridge because translation served to consolidate a new cultural awareness, acceptance and identity. Language and beliefs thus became two fundamental elements that worked as a platform for the construction of a new society [Payas 2005:33, 62]. In this context, missionary translations modified not only the receiving culture but also the source culture (that of the missionary). As I have mentioned previously, missionaries were forced to review their own cultural categories while selecting which traits needed to be transmitted to the Nahuas. By doing this, the missionaries were comparing and contrasting their culture with that of the Nahuas, defining and analysing the intrinsic meaning of important cultural categories in order to transmit a clear, understandable message. This dialogue, with indigenous peoples and other missionaries alike, was also a step toward the standardization of the basic tenets of Christian doctrine as can be seen in the progressive standardization of not only translation solutions but also of the content of the basic prayers. In this way the missionaries reviewed the most important tenets of Christian religion. The selection of texts to be instructed to the Nahuas was the result of a deep revision by the missionaries of the amount and nature of instruction necessary for the Nahuas to become Christian. In this way the missionaries needed to re-assess what being a 'true' Christian meant. In this process of translation the missionaries created, therefore, a new understanding of what language was and how to express coherently complex cultural and religious categories through this medium. In the process they also analysed and cemented their own cultural categories and created new parameters to understand the new world they were living in [Payas 2005:78, Ebacher 1991:135-6, Zimmerman 2005:2]. In this stage, for example, the modern ideas of language started to be developed, grammars and vocabularies of indigenous languages were being written helping to crystallize them and preserve them.

Indeed, one of the most important elements, as we have seen, of the Christianization of the Americas was the importance given to the translation of Christian doctrine into Mesoamerican languages [Rubial García 1996:170]. Gante was one of the earliest and most important translators of Christian devotional texts into Nahuatl. Evidence suggests that he was one of the first missionaries, if not the first, to record in writing oral Nahuatl and transliterate it into the Latin alphabet. The pedagogic works of Gante reflect his agency, not only with regards to the texts chosen by him to instruct the Nahuas but also in revealing his ideas regarding Nahua intellectual capabilities. The translation process involving these works also reveals, however, the presence of both Nahuas and missionaries working closely together in the Christianization process. By analysing the three works of Gante and comparing each other a wider perspective of the pedagogic aims of the missionary can be seen. His tools were varied; Gante took advantage from several different techniques available to him in order to transmit his message, from adapting the writing system of the Mexica in a hybrid system that shared elements from European and Mexica modes of transmission to a primer incorporating Latin, Spanish and Nahuatl in alphabetic script. From the beginning it is evident that Gante did not rely only in one method of indoctrination. Written words next to the image were deployed as pedagogic tools. Surprisingly Gante's pedagogical Christian translations as a whole have received little study, with most research focussing on specific sections of his texts. Little reference is made to his complete body of work. My research has adopted a different approach by studying and comparing his entire corpus in order to understand the nature of the translation process through time and authorship. The observed consistencies are revealing, pointing out how the nature of translation process evolved throughout the earliest phase of the evangelization. Additionally comparing the works of Gante with those of his contemporaries presents a new way of understanding the work of Gante in a wider framework and has helped to approach a greater comprehension of the cooperation and dialogue amongst missionaries and Nahua collaborators.

A subject often disregarded by other authors studying evangelical work in New Spain is the transition of modes of expression and material carriers of information. The present work has addressed this void. It is precisely in the written work of Gante that we can actually see the process of transition reflected through each one of its stages. From the *Catecismo* which employs a mix system of Nahua writing system and the European format of the book to the use of alphabetical script in his *Doctrina* and *Cartilla*, Gante showed he was a practical man, employing material from different sources and then adapting it to fits his goals.

The analysis, with the help of the Galarza method and Colonial semiosis, of the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* provided interesting insights into the elaboration of these catechetical tools. The available data suggests that Gante was one of the first missionaries experimenting with this new form of religious communication after his observation of Nahuatl script. It is even possible that he was the first missionary to do so. Catechisms were produced collaboratively with students copying from Gante, who was clearly a fundamental part of the process. The *Catecismo* was probably a copy made by him to teach his students, something which his signature seems to indicate. The catechisms in images are the result of this communication between Gante and his students; indeed it is probable that some or the majority of the catechisms were made by Nahuatl students under the tutelage of missionaries. In this way the importance of Gante's agency is brought to the fore in his willingness to employ the pictographic writing system of the Nahuas as an aid in his conversion efforts. Moreover by introducing Christian iconography in his *Catecismo*, Gante started the systematic replacement of Nahuatl imagery. The spread of Christian images imposed a new visual order based on European imagery which involved the inculcation of new meanings of individuality, god, body, nature, space, time and history [Gruzinski 1995:56, Graham 2011].

The comparison between Gante's catechism and the catechism 078 also shows that although all the catechisms employed a mixed system, the content and the selected glyphs were not consistent amongst all the catechisms. Indeed, there does not seem to have been a standardization of glyphs. It appears that each one of the catechisms was the result of the individual agency of the missionary involved and his collaborators. There are glyphs, however, that recur in the majority of the catechisms such as the flower, the sky, the tortilla as holy bread, and glyphs with Christian symbolism suggesting they were produced by or under ecclesiastical authority. The catechism of Gante, however, shows an exceptional knowledge of Nahuatl culture and cosmology. The description of sin by the use of the copal pouches of priests and garments of sinners that has similarities to the devotion of Tlazolteotl is a good example in this respect and is also an approach that does not seem to be present in other catechisms of the time.

Gante's hybrid catechism represents also the first step in the transition of modes of expression. Although employing a writing system which mixes Nahuatl and Christian glyphs the traditional indigenous material carrier, the codex, was already replaced by the shape of a book. The catechisms were made in booklets after the European fashion, meaning the use of European paper and the presence of a reading linearity going from left to right, top to bottom.

In this way, the catechisms represent a sort of middle step, in which the traditional communication devices of the Nahuas were slowly being replaced by European formats. Nevertheless, traditional codices were still being produced by Nahuas. Gante's *Catecismo* reflects the different degrees of the dialogue and negotiation between Nahuas and European missionaries, an interaction that often has been dismissed in the Colonial setting of New Spain as simply primarily a product of top-down imposition and control. However, the many different levels of transculturation that were occurring in New Spain during the first phase of the missionary effort from 1523 to 1572 were a result of a complex process of interaction between European missionaries on the one hand and the Nahua population on the other. The constant and intensive interaction between these two groups was a two-way process, in which the Nahuas learned to understand and accommodate Christian beliefs, while the missionaries acquired from their pupils a greater understanding of Nahua cultural heritage, history, customs, rituals and language, a body of knowledge which the missionaries employed to refine their production of evangelical materials so as to increase their effectiveness and acceptance by the indigenous populations of New Spain. These multi-vectorial influences of appropriation, negation and understanding of the other were fundamental in the construction of a new society.

The catechisms in images were a useful tool of indoctrination, a tool employed for over three hundred years. They highlight the mechanics of the missionaries' pedagogic techniques which made use of the indigenous population's own systems in order to create new modes of expression enabling Christian religion to be understood by the Nahuas. The catechisms were constructed by the intermingling agencies of both Nahuas and missionaries and although being a Christian production with a Christian theme they represent a middle way between two very different worlds and frameworks for understanding that world.

The second work by Gante analysed in this study was the *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* [1553]. This *doctrina* in many ways represents the culmination of the process of transition from one cultural system to another. Here, Gante showcases his own understanding of Christianity and the tenets of faith he wanted his 'transcultured' Nahuas to acquire. The structure of the text is highly pedagogic. The content is divided in three sections: a lengthy explanation of Christian doctrine, an abridged *doctrina*, and a devotional section. In this way Gante's *Doctrina* encompasses three different pedagogic genres in one, a development that ensured the *Doctrina*'s popularity amongst missionaries and Nahuas even until the 18th century. The structure and content of the *Doctrina* indicates that it was targeted at

knowledgeable Nahua Christians with a previous understanding of Christian beliefs and Latin literacy. Possibly it was even intended for those Nahuas training to be ordained as future priests. This deduction is supported by the Nahua owners of the copies of the *Doctrina*—as attested by the manuscript sections that accompany the printed text—, who may have been important members of the Nahua society such as a midwife and a church steward.

The translation of the *Doctrina* showcases the process by which an entire cosmological system of thought was transposed into another highly dissimilar one. Throughout this process the selection of Nahua cultural categories and grammatical elements of the Nahuatl language such as the use of devotional and diminutive particles, use of metaphorical speaking and epithets show not only a good understanding of the language and Nahua semiotics by Gante but equally indicate Nahua input in the translation process. In many ways the collaboration between Gante and the Nahuas aided Nahuas to accommodate the new religion into their wider cosmological framework. Indeed by opting to use Nahuatl as the language of conversion, missionaries such as Gante were adjusting and accommodating Nahua cosmology to Christianity.

Comparing the Articles of Faith of the *Doctrina* with other missionary authors of the time, shows a certain standardization of problematic terms translated. There is also evidence, however, of translations that were refined continuously such as the expressions employed to describe the concept of Holy Trinity. Additionally there are variations between the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla* that could point to a correction of mistakes or terms that Gante could have considered misleading. This occurs in particular in relation with the term sin. The avoidance of terms with heretical connotations was of the utmost importance when translating devotional Christian terms.

Lastly, the text chosen to be translated, the structure of the content, his explanation of the main dogmas of Christianity, the introduction of certain forms of devotion instead of others reflect Gante's ideas regarding Christianity, missionary work and Nahua capabilities. The aforementioned introduction of the cult of the saints can be seen as an example of this. The introduction of other bead-prayers instead of the Rosary not only highlight Gante's interest in having pedagogic tools appropriate for the context at hand, but also his allegiance to the Franciscans (as the Rosary was a Dominican introduction). The text highlights which elements of Christianity Gante deemed the more transcendental to impart to the Nahuas, such as questions related to the mercy of god, allowing the Nahuas to achieve a closeness with

Christianity not present in other doctrinal texts at the time. Interestingly, an overwhelming number of devotional introductions made by Gante are still in use in Mexico, such as the use of certain bead-prayers.

The *Cartilla para enseñar a leer* by Gante is a pivotal work in which an array of socio-cultural aspects from European tradition come together and interact: pedagogy, religion, language, literacy, translation, the image and the establishment of the printing press. Reading primers, such as the *Cartilla*, were simple but very effective tools, indispensable in bringing Christian education to the New World. Their use as pedagogic tools in Spain, reflects how literacy was gaining momentum after the introduction of Gutenberg's press. Before this, most education was delivered orally, literacy playing but a small part. The printing press meant that relatively cheap pedagogic texts such as primers were made easily available for other social segments of the Spanish population and in this way literacy became an attainable commodity, a commodity that transformed to the core pedagogical ideas in the early modern period.

These ideas were carried by the mendicant missionaries to Spanish America who with the motive of bringing Christian education, imported and created reading primers to indoctrinate the Mesoamerican population. The success of primers in New Spain, however, was only possible by the establishment of the printing press in Mexico City—the first of its kind in the Americas—which allowed the production of primers en masse. Now, primers could be adapted to the context, translating texts into the Mesoamerican vernacular languages. Gante, being a practical and innovative man, saw the opportunity and created, quite likely with the help of his already 'transcultured' students, a trilingual primer.

Gante's primer represents the second stage of the replacement of Mesoamerican writing systems and material carriers of information. The Nahuatl picto-logographic writing system was replaced by the alphabet, codices were replaced by books, new European languages were introduced, and perhaps more importantly European visual traditions started the slow replacement of Nahuatl traditional ways of seeing, understanding and representing the world. By doing this, Gante became one of the first missionaries to transcribe oral Nahuatl into the Roman alphabetic script. The process was complicated as many Castilian and Latin morphemes had no equivalent in Nahuatl; finding solutions challenged to their core the linguistic ideas of the missionaries, who tried to find grammatical equivalents. Grammars and

vocabularies were the results of this missionary linguistics that showcased the new discoveries based on Antonio de Nebrija and Lorenzo Valla's models.

The *Cartilla* is written in three languages, Nahuatl, Castilian and Latin. However, only the most basic prayers of the repertoire appear in Nahuatl, illustrating that the target audience of the text were not only *macehualtin* Nahua students and illiterate *pipiltin* but also Spanish children. Putting emphasis on the Castilian version of the texts could have served as a way to reduce printing costs and especially to earn more income for the printer and the *Hospital of Indios* as it would have reached a larger audience. The *Cartilla* also served as a transculturative aid for both European and Nahuas as several languages could be learned by the different communities that made up the colonial society.

The texts of the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla* are, as previously seen, accompanied by engravings. These illustrations served, however, a very different purpose from traditional Nahua pictographic writing. They served to illustrate the text and act as memory cues. The engravings show very little to no Nahua stylistic influence and utilise symbolic elements of Christian imaginary. A whole new concept of what representation is was communicated to the Nahua by means of these engravings. Dimension, gradation of colour and perspective were now introduced for the first time. It is likely that Gante introduced the art of engraving in his school of trades; the stylistic ideals of the school were passed from master to students as can be seen from the engravings of Gante's disciple: Diego de Valadés.

The idea of *ars memoria* was of particular importance for the development of Gante's work. In the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* Gante's observations on Nahua culture, and his own particular ideas on *ars memoria*, allowed him to understand the significance of the Mexica writing system and in the *Catecismo en Pictogramas* glyphs were, as we have seen, modified and recreated in order to develop a sort of middle system in which certain glyphs retained Nahua semantics, while others employed European imagery and served more as illustrations. On the other hand, the engravings that appear in the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla* can be seen as a part of *ars memoria*, as their sole purpose was to be a mnemonic aid for the student [Acker 1995:404].

Two by-products of the process of translation of pedagogic texts are evident: by transcribing and translating devotional texts, missionaries crystallised Nahuatl and other Mesoamerican vernaculars, allowing the languages to survive under European dominance, and with the preservation of the languages, in this case Nahuatl, the identity of the Nahuas survived albeit

transformed. During the translation, concessions to Nahua identity were made; the linguistic structures that reflected their cosmology were preserved. The use of the Nahua language, instead of Castilian or Latin, was an important emotional platform that allowed the indigenous peoples to feel more at ease in a world which was increasingly becoming more European.

By introducing the alphabet, Gante gave Colonial Mesoamericans the tools to write their own histories in a European format [Mignolo 1992:304]. As agents of transculturation themselves, the literate Nahuas acted as intermediaries and middle men, they participated in two worlds, without entirely belonging to either of them. With the help of their newly found European literacy, the Nahuas were able to reconnect the current moment with their Nahua past.

Some last words

In summary, by employing agency, annales theory, Colonial semiosis and the new trends of New Philology my research has critically analysed the works of Gante and has assessed his contribution to the wider evangelization of Mexico and the formation of New Spain. The use of agency theory has focused on Gante as an individual, and on his choices and actions, allowing me to identify specific strategies, preferences and techniques not only during his actions as an administrative figurehead for the Franciscans but most importantly for his role devising pedagogic methods. These methods benefited from his input as shown in the wide scope of his enterprises. Gante established the *doctrina* of San José, based on the Burgos Laws and the previous conversion experiments with the Muslims in Granada, but he took it a step further, establishing it as a liminal place of contact between the Nahuas and Franciscans. In this place, Gante devised with the help of his Nahua students and assistants new pedagogical techniques such as songs, plays, paintings and most importantly his catechetical texts: the *Catecismo*, the *Doctrina* and the *Cartilla*. It probably was this intense collaboration that gave him the necessary experience to hone these tools and to adapt them for a Nahua audience. I have shown that the work of Gante has several dimensions, by means of the *Catecismo*, *Doctrina* and *Cartilla* the missionary not only introduced a new religion, he changed deeply the way Nahuas understood the world and themselves. New concepts such as individuality and new forms of measuring time were introduced, however, despite these introductions elements of the Nahua belief remained. Gante selected elements of Nahua belief and customs that he deemed similar to the Christian tradition in order to appeal the Nahuas. These elements were then extracted and incorporated to the Christian belief, a case

known as expedient selection. It has been the subject of some debate as of why missionaries such as Gante permitted elements of Nahua devotion to remain and if he was aware that these elements could be misrepresented by the Nahuas. It is likely that Gante and other missionaries thought that introducing these elements by re-contextualizing them in a Christian context, the notions would lose their original semantics. This can be seen reflected in Gante's work. In his translation of the *Catecismo* Gante appropriated religious elements from the Nahuas such as the devotion of Tlazolteotl. However by incorporating them in a Christian narrative, he re-contextualized them, thus the elements lost their original meaning and became Christian. This also can be seen in the translation of his written works where he employed cultural categories of the Nahuas such as Mictlan, and gave them a new semantic.

As I have shown in the present work, the flexibility of Gante can be seen throughout his works, adapting elements of Nahua culture and modifying them. This flexibility and ingenuity was probably the result of his upbringing as a member of the court of Charles which gave him the necessary intellectual tools to achieve such a feat. Gante's background and intellectual upbringing thus enabled him to operate in a specific and distinct manner, different from that of other contemporary missionaries. The influence of Northern humanism and in particular the *Devotio Moderna* movement can be seen in the establishment of the school of trades. This institution was unique in the context of New Spain and allowed the Nahuas to be formed not only in Christianity but also to learn a useful trade. Gante's pedagogical endeavours formed a generation of Nahuas who, although being in a liminal place, could be an active part of the new society.

Due to the fact that he was part of the royal family and had close ties with the highest member of the Franciscans in his native Flanders, Gante became part of the evangelical enterprise from its inception in Europe. His early arrival in New Spain and his evangelical success allowed his approach to take root and serve as an inspiration to others. Gante became one of the most important leaders of the Franciscan order in New Spain. Having Gante's support was important as his political influence in religious circles determined in many ways the strategies developed by the missionaries.

In the Valley of Mexico, the area in which Gante worked, the assimilation of Christianity seemed to have been more intense than in other peripheral areas, possibly a result of the large Spanish population in the area. However, as I have shown in chapter 4, the acceptance of Christianity was different depending on social group, age, and location. Therefore not even in

the Valley of Mexico can a uniform evangelization be seen. Nevertheless, it was in the Valley of Mexico that the first missionary schools were established by Gante. These schools were pivotal in the introduction of Christianity to all socio-economic levels of Nahua residents living in Mexico City and its environs. Moreover *pipiltin* students of Gante, raised by him since their childhood, who had a profound understanding of Christianity, had a deeper impact on the indoctrination of Mesoamerica than the missionaries themselves. This does not mean, however, that the integration of Christianity in Nahua society was a uniform process. Don Carlos Ometochtli is an example in this respect. Raised by Franciscans, the lord of Texcoco was a supporter of the shaman Martín Ocelotl; a support that eventually led to his execution by the temporary Holy Inquisition set up by Zumárraga [Greenleaf 1978:323].

Annales theory has enabled this project to measure the outcomes of Gante's agency in the medium and long-term, placing his works firmly within the wider context of the evangelization of Mexico and contrasting his particular approach and solutions with that of other missionaries operating in New Spain. Gante's approach differed from his contemporaries working in Central Mexico and served as the basis of several side-processes that developed in the medium- and long term. Gante was a multifaceted and practical man; this can be seen reflected in his pedagogic works, songs and music, plays and engravings used for indoctrination. These pedagogical elements were taken by other missionaries, modified and reemployed by them. Through this we can see how the work of a single agent of indoctrination is important. In many ways, the evangelization of the Centre of Mexico was the result of several agencies working together, not only the agencies of the missionaries but also of the Nahuas. The long-term processes can be seen in modern Christian Mexico, in which Christianity still has Nahua undertones.

The use of New Philology and colonial semiosis facilitated a theoretical framework to understand the work of Gante. My work belongs to the new trends of New Philology as it focuses on the translation of ecclesiastical writings. Narratives such as this have been largely understudied until recent years and present an interesting new facet of the evangelization as it was by means of these texts that missionaries introduced European cultural categories. On the other hand, Colonial semiosis allows an understanding of societies from their own point of view. This is important as it also enabled the unravelling of the semiotic intricacies of the *Catecismo*, its cultural borrowings and intended meanings.

Gante is one of the most important figures in the history of Mexico. His work as a figure of transculturation during the initial contact period served as a springboard for a series of processes that would culminate in the successful introduction of European culture in Mesoamerica. As a cultural broker, he worked closely with the Nahua elite, introducing them to the new religion. The ‘transcultured’ Nahuas would then go on to change and transform the cultural structures of their societies. The introduction of Christianity did not only involve replacing one religion by another, it was a process involving the transformation of the two very different worlds, and entailed the negotiation of ideas of language, education, books and codices. Gante’s personal agenda and educational beliefs securely initiated the first steps in the complicated transculturation process involving the Nahuas and the European missionaries. The *doctrina* of San José became an influential melting pot, a place that was not entirely European nor entirely Nahua, but rather *nepantla*, a liminal place where two different cultures met and where the processes of transculturation played out. Both the missionary teachers and their young *pipiltin* students intermingled in this setting and helped create a new set of cultural guidelines. Through the *doctrina* of San José, the school of trades, the establishment of confraternities, processions and other forms of pageantry, and a series of devotions such as the cult of the saints and the Virgin, Gante facilitated the consolidation of the cultural reality of Nahuas, a cultural reality which is still existent in modern-day Mexico.

Glossary

Atrio: an open space, generally rectangular with a cross in the centre. At the bottom of the *atrio* there was a chapel. Several activities took place in *Atrios* such as preaching, teaching, celebrations, processions and administering of sacraments [García Martínez 2014:47].

Calmecac: school for the Nahuatl noblemen (in Nahuatl house of youth).

Calpulli: administrative sections in which Nahuatl cities were structured. They were units of workforce and tribute to the ruler, each one of them was specialized in a particular trade [Restall *et al* 2005:4, López-Austin 2004: 601-620].

Cartillas: Valton highlights that the term reading primer in Spanish, *cartilla*, does not refer to its content but alludes to its format, a small pamphlet of two sheets of paper folded in eight or sixteen pages depending on the size of the sheet of paper [Valton:1947 in Bravo Ahuja 1977:31].

Casa de Contratación de las Indias: the *Casa de Contratación*, established in Seville by Queen Isabel in 1503, was a body of the Castilian Crown in charge of administering and regulating Spanish colonization and exploration by controlling trades, collecting taxes and approving travels of exploration.

Convento: places of residence and work of the Mendicants during the evangelization. The term convent was widely employed in 16th-century documents from New Spain [Quiñones Keber 2013:15].

Council of the Indies: the Royal and Supreme Council of the Indies, known more commonly as Council of the Indies was a body of the Crown of Castile in charge of governing and administering in the king's name the Americas and Asia from 1524 to 1834.

Council of Trent (1545-1563): a church Council summoned by Charles V and the Pope in order to reform the Catholic Church.

Creoles: children of Spanish residents in New Spain.

Doctrinas: there are two meanings of the word. *Doctrina* was a common name to refer chapels where children were instructed on Christian matters such as the chapel of San José de los Naturales established by Fr. Pedro de Gante. The second meaning refers to lengthy Christian pedagogic texts employed for the instruction of Christian doctrine.

Encomienda: the *encomienda* system was used by the Crown to regulate and reward Spanish colonizers and indigenous labour in the Americas. In this system, the person granted the *encomienda* received a number of indigenous peoples, who needed to work for them in forced labour. In return, the colonizer was obliged to give Christian instruction to the indigenous peoples under his care.

Huehuetlatolli: one of the most characteristic Nahuatl oratorical expressions. The 'word of the elders' are a collection of discourses given at several stages in the lives of Nahuatl people and contained the moral values and traditions of the Nahuatl people [León-Portilla 2001:219, Montes de Oca 2004:193].

Licencia del ordinario: a licence given by the Church for devotional material to be printed.

Macehualtin: commoners (in Nahuatl the deserved ones).

Mendicant orders: Mendicant orders appeared during the 13th century in Europe; the name mendicant refers to the poverty vows made by its members, who lived by begging. To accomplish preaching, they had a very complex organization, with a head, a general master who followed papal commands, who was in charge of the various provinces or territorial areas in which the order was distributed. Many convents were dependent upon the provincial generals; each convent was ruled by a guardian or prior. Each three years a chapter or synod was assembled to elect the friar to rule over the province [Rubial García 2002-b:6].

Mesoamerica: Mesoamerica was a cultural area that extended from Central Mexico to Costa Rica. Mesoamerican peoples, although not politically unified or having a common identity or language, shared common cultural traits such as stratified societies, construction of stepped pyramids, religion and calendar systems [Wood 1991:262, Pardo 1996:30]. López-Austin suggests that the cultural unity of Mesoamerica remained during Colonial times particularly in aspects of communal and family relationships, agricultural beliefs, and the treatment of the human body amongst others [López-Austin 2004:602].

Mestizo: a child of Spanish and Nahua descent.

Mexica: although most commonly known as Aztecs, they referred to themselves as Mexica or Tenochca; for this reason the term used throughout this work will be Mexica instead of Aztec.

Nahuas: that is native speakers of Nahuatl, the main language of the Mexica and other indigenous communities from the Basin of Mexico such as the Tlaxcalteca, Xochimilca and Tlatelolca.

Nepantla: in Nahuatl in the middle or between two roads.

New Spain: the term New Spain will be used not in its administrative sense, but as Ricard did in his *Spiritual Conquest* [1966] in the sense given in the 16th century, covering the whole of the archdiocese of Mexico and the dioceses of Tlaxcala-Puebla, Michoacan, New Galicia and Antequera [Ricard 1966:1-2]. The head of New Spain was a viceroy, who served as the representative of the king. His power was limited, however, by an *audiencia* (high court) which acted on local matters and was responsible to the *Consejo de Indias* (Council of the Indies) in Seville and the King of Spain. Cities had *cabildos* (municipal councils) formed by elected officials from Spanish nobles. *Alcaldes mayores* and *corregidores* (Spanish officials) had jurisdiction over the indigenous countryside [Restall *et al* 2005:8].

Pipiltin: in Nahuatl means nobles or noblemen.

Provincia del Santo Evangelio: the Province of the Holy Gospel was the first Franciscan Province in Mexico established by the Apostolic Twelve in 1524. The Province expanded with the arrival of more Franciscans and occupied the modern states of Morelos, Puebla, Hidalgo, Guerrero, Veracruz and Tlaxcala [Morales 2012, Habig 1944:89].

Real Audiencia/ First Audiencia: the Royal Audiencia of New Spain was the highest tribunal in Mexico before the establishment of the Viceroyalty in New Spain. Its establishment was decreed by the Crown in December 13, 1527. The First Audiencia was led by Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán.

Repartimiento: the *repartimiento* was a legal system established by the Crown in order to replace the *encomienda* system. Under this system the indigenous peoples worked in exchange of a salary, and the employer was not forced to ensure his indigenous employees received Christian instruction.

Secular order: there were two branches of the Catholic Church. The secular headed by the archbishop and bishop was centralized and the regular or mendicant orders (regular for the *regla* or rules that the orders adhered to) whose authority was derived from Spanish Crown, under the *patronato real* [Van Oss 1976:32].

Telpochcalli: a school for the Nahua commoners (in Nahuatl line of houses).

Tepiton: in Nahuatl short.

Tilma: traditional Nahua attire.

Títulos primordiales: documents written by Mesoamericans which legitimized claims on certain geographical areas.

Tlahcuilo: Nahua expert painters of codices.

Tlamatimime: in Nahuatl wise men.

Tlahtoani: non-hereditary dynastic rulers (In Nahuatl great speaker).

Vulgate: the translation of the Bible made by Saint Jerome in Latin at the end of the fourth century A.D. By 1592 it was made the authorized version of the Roman Catholic Church.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Table for chapter 7

Table 2: Comparison between Gante, Sahagún, Libro de Oraciones and Egerton catechisms

Catecismo en Pictogramas MS Vit.26-29	Testeriano 078 (Sahagún)	Libro de Oraciones (MNA) number INV 10-163080 (Mazahua)	Egerton 2898 British Museum
Per signum	Per signum	Per signum	
Pater Noster	Pater Noster	Pater Noster	Pater Noster
Ave maria	Ave maria	Ave maria	Ave maria
Creed	Creed	Creed	Creed
Salve Regina	Salve Regina	Salve Regina	Salve Regina
Confiteor	Confiteor	Confiteor	
Brief doctrine in question and answers			Brief doctrine in question and answers
Articles of faith	Articles of faith	Articles of faith	Articles of faith
Decalogue	Decalogue	Decalogue	
The commandments of the Church	The commandments of the Church	The commandments of the Church	
Sacraments	Sacraments	Sacraments	
Acts of mercy	Acts of mercy	Acts of mercy	Acts of mercy
Final Prayer			
		The truths of faith	
		Capital sins	
		Large confession	
	Every faithful Christian	Every faithful Christian	
	Communion		
	Contrition		
			Rosary

Table 2 Comparison between Gante, Sahagún, *Libro de Oraciones* and Egerton catechisms [based on Sánchez Valenzuela 2003]

Appendix 2: Tables for chapter 8

Table 3-Contents of the Doctrina Christiana [1553]

Lenghtier Doctrina	Tepiton Doctrina (f.69v)	Devotional section (f.86v)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here starts the Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana (Here is told oh! Little brother what a Christian is) (f.1r) • the creation of heaven and earth (f.3r) • What our father God is like (f.4r) • Profession of faith (Here are the things that every Christian should learn and declare (f.5r) • Our Mother Saint Mary (f.7r) • Why, God father, made the saints? (f.7v) • Why God Father made the sacrament of matrimony? (f.13r) • The sign of the cross (f.14v) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pater Noster (f.16v) • Ave Maria and the Salve Regina (f.21r) • Articles of Faith (f.22v) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ten commandments of God (f. 36 v) • The commandments of the Church (f. 42r) • The mortal sins (f.44r) • Atonement of mortal sin (The virtues to avoid mortal sin) (f.55 v) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctrina Tepiton (f.69v) • Per signum crucis (f.79r) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pater noster (f.79r) • Ave Maria (f.79r) • Creed (f. 80r) • Salve Regina (f. 81r) • The ten commandments of God (f. 81r) • The commandments of the Church (f. 82r) • Mortal sins and virtues (f.82r) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atonement for mortal sin (f.83r) • Atonement for venial sin(f.83v) • The holy sacraments of the Church (f.84r) • The works of mercy (f.84r) • The enemies of the soul (f.85r) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potencies of the soul (f.85v) • The theological and cardinal virtues (f. 85v) • The gifts of the Holy spirit (f.86r) • The general confession (f.86r) (Cortés, 1987, p.46) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A guide to confessing properly (f.87r) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A guide to hearing mass (f.98r) • Prayer of the Holy Sacrament (f.100r) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer for the Holy Cross (f.101v) • Prayer for Saint Mary and the saints (f.102r) • Prayer for the saints (f.103v) • Here is what each Christian must hear during mass (f.104v) • What defines Mass? (f.105r) • An instruction to receive the Eucharist (f.117r) • Crown of Jesus Christ (f.123r) • Crown of Virgin Mary (f.128 v) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saint Gregory’s prayer (f.129v) • A meditation upon hearing the clock strike (f.132r) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily examination of conscience (f.144r) • Prayer for the Guardian Angel (f.147r) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of prayers before sleep (f. 148r)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sacraments of the Church (f.57r) • The corporeal works of mercy (f.59r) • The spiritual works of mercy (f.60v) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The five corporeal senses (f.63r) • The enemies of the soul (f.64v) • Theologian and cardinal virtues (f.66) • The gifts of the holy spirit (f.67r) • The proper eight things to be worthy of favours/praise (Las bienaventuranzas) (f.68v) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of prayers of contrition (f.148v) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art of dying well (f.151r) • Orders to answer during mass (f.158v) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a set of prayers at meals (f.160r) • Guidelines for studying the most important elements of the doctrina for each day of the week (f.161r) <p style="text-align: center;">Laus deo.</p>
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Table 3 Contents of the *Doctrina Christiana* [1553] according to section [translation by the author].

Table 4-Comparison of the Creed in the Doctrina Christiana [1553] and the Cartilla

<i>Doctrina 1553</i>	<i>Cartilla 1569</i>
<p>1-Nicno neltoquitia in dios tetatzin ixquich yueli : in oquiyocox in ihuicatl yn tlatlticpac. I believe in God the Father all-powerful he created the heaven and earth.</p>	<p>1-Nicno neltoquitia in dios tetatzin ixquich yueli: in oquiyocox in ihuicatl yn tlatlticpac. I believe in God the Father all-powerful who created the heaven and earth.</p>
<p>2-Nicno neltoqutia yn totecuiyo Jesu xpo yn tolatocatzin: ca hueliçeltzin yn ipiltzin dios tetatzin. I believe in our lord Jesus Christ our ruler, the only child of God the father</p>	<p>2-Nicno neltoqutia yn totecuiyo Jesu xpo yn tolatocatzin: ca hueliçeltzin yn ipiltzin dios tetatzin. I believe in our lord Jesus Christ, our ruler, the only child of God the father</p>
<p>3- Ca yehuatzin ynica Spiritu Sancto motlalitzino: motlacatili/yn ichipahuaca (her purity) xilliantzinco yn Sancta Maria cequizca ychpochtli. He was placed through the Holy Ghost: he was born of her pure womb St Mary, always maiden.</p>	<p>3- yehuatzin monacayutitzinoco yn ica spiritu sancto: auh y tech motlacatilitzino yn Sancta Maria muchipa vel nelli ichpuchtli. He came to assume flesh through the Holy Spirit. He came to be born of the always very true virgin Holy Mary</p>
<p>4- Motlaihiohuilti ytencopa in potio Pylato. Cruzitechmamacohualtiloc momiqui yhua totoc. He suffered by the word of Pontio Pylato. His arms were spread on the cross. He died and was buried.</p>	<p>4- Auh topampa motlaihiohuilti ytencopa yn pilato, mamaçoualtiloc ytechcruz/ momiquili tococ He suffered on behalf of us by word of Pontio Pylato, his arms were spread on the cross, he died, and was buried.</p>
<p>5- Auh motemohui in micatlan. Auh yeilhuitica moqtz mocalitzino ynintlan mimicq. When he descended to hell, on the third day, he stood up, he revived among the dead</p>	<p>5- Auh motemohuimimictlan, eylhuitica moquetz mozcalitzino ynintlan yn mimicque When he descended to hell, on the third day he stood up, he revived among the dead.</p>
<p>6 -Auh motlecahui yn ilhuicac: ymayauhcampa motlalitzino dios tetatzin ixquich yhueli He ascended to heaven, at your right hand, he sat, god father, all-powerful.</p>	<p>6- Motlecahui yn ilhuicac, ymayauhcampa: motlalitzinoto yn itlacotatzin dios yxquich ihueli He ascended to heaven, at your hand, he sat, God father, all-powerful</p>

<p>7- <i>Auh ca ompa hualmohuicaz ynquintlatzontequiliquih yn yolque yn mimicque</i></p> <p>From there he will come [descend] here to judge the living and the dead.</p>	<p>7- <i>Auh ca ompa hualmohuicaz ynquintlatzontequiliquih yn yolque yn mimicque</i></p> <p>From there he will descend here to judge the living and the dead.</p>
<p>8- <i>No nicnoneltoquitia yn dios spiritu sancto</i></p> <p>I believe in the Holy Ghost.</p>	<p>8- <i>No nicnoneltoquitia yn dios spiritu sancto</i></p> <p>I believe in the Holy Ghost.</p>
<p>9- <i>Yhua nicneltoca in tonatzin scta iglesia: tlaneltiloni, yie mochtin sctome ynin necetlaliliz tlaeltoqliztica</i></p> <p>9- I [believe] in our mother Holy Church's authority: and all the saints in this [Church] assembled in faith [as in the articles of faith?]</p>	<p>9- <i>yhuan nicneltoca yn sancta yglesia catholica: ynezca y yehuatin ynixquictin yn christianome No nicneltoca ynin necentlaliliz yn sanctome y sacramentotice muchihua, yhuan tlaneltoquiliztica</i></p> <p>I believe in the Holy Catholic Church: is the sign of all (they) Christians. I believe in the assembly of the saints and in all the sacraments also in the faith</p>
<p>10- <i>Yhua yca inic qaltihuani i sacrametos inic polihui tlatlacolli</i></p> <p>Also in the virtues of the sacraments [that] destroy sins.</p>	<p>10- <i>No nicneltoca yn tlatlacopolihuitzli</i></p> <p>I believe in the destruction/forgiveness of the sins.</p>
<p>11- <i>Yhuan nitlaneltoca yniqua cohontla cemanahuac mocha tlatatl mozcaliz</i></p> <p>And I believe at that time in the world all people will revive.</p>	<p>11- <i>Yhuan nitlaneltoca yn ohuelontlan cemanahuac ocçepa muchi tlatatl yoliz muzcaliz. No nitlaneltoca çatepan mochihuaz yn cemicac yoliliztli.</i></p> <p>And I believe at that time in the world again, all people will revive. I believe eternal life will be definitely be done.</p>
<p>12 <i>Nitlaneltoca cemicac yolihuaz ca yuh mochihuaz</i></p> <p>And I believe in the eternal life. May it be done</p>	<p>12 <i>Nitlaneltoca cemicac yolihuaz ca yuh mochihuaz</i></p> <p>And I believe in the eternal life. May it be done</p>

Table 4 Comparison of the Creed in the Doctrina Christiana [1553] and the Cartilla [1569] by Gante [translation by the author].

Table 5-Creed in Doctrina Christiana by Gante [1553] and in Molina’s Doctrina [1546]

Gante’s Creed <i>Doctrina Christiana</i>, f. 22v	Molina’s <i>Doctrina</i> (1546) Creed¹⁶¹
1- Nicnoneltoquitia Dios tetatzin yxquich yhueli: in oquiyocox yn ilhuicac: yntlalticpac	Nicnoneltoquitia in Dios tetatzin ixquich yueli: in oquiyocox yn oquimochiuili in ilhucatl in talticpac.
2 Noconeltoquitia yn totecuiyo Jesu xpo totlatocatz; ca huel iceltzin inipiltizin dios tetatzin.	No nicnoneltoquitia in totecuyo Jesu Christo yn çan huel yçeltzin ypiltzin Dios, in uel nelli totlatocatzin.
3 Ca yehuatzin ynica Spiritu Sancto motlalitzino: motlacatili/ynichipahuaca xilliantzinco yn Sancta Maria cequizca ychpochtli.	Ca yehuantzin monacayutitzinoco in ica Spiritu Sancto. Auh itech motlacatilitzinoco yn Sancta Maria muchipa vel nelli ichpuchtli.
4 Motlayhiyohuil ti ytencopa in pontio pilato cruz titech mamacohualtiloc momiqui, ihua totoc.	Auh topampa motlayhiouilti ytencopa yn Poncio Pilato: cruztitech mamaçoualtiloc, momiquili yhuan tococ.
5 Auh motemohuy im mictlan: auh telhuitica in motcalitzino inintla mimicp	Auh motemoui in mictlan: yeylhuitica mozcalitzino in yntlan mimicque.
6 Auh motlecahui yn ilhuicac, ymayuh campa motlelitzino dios tetatzin yxqch yhuelli.	Motlecaui in ylhuicac ymayauhampa motlalitzinoto yn itatzin Dios yxquich yueli.
7 Auh ca opa hulamohiucac yn qntlatzo teqtiquh yyolq: yhua imimicq	Auh ompa valmotemouiz yn quintlatzontequiliquih in yolque yn mimicque.
8 Nicnoneltoquitia yn dios spiritu scto	No nicnoneltoquitia in Dios Spiritu Santo
9 Yhua nicneltoca in tonatzin scta iglesia tlaneltliloni, yie mochtin sctome yn in necetlaliliz tlaeltoqliztica.	yhuan nicneltoca yn Sancta Iglesia Catolica. No nicneltoca in teoyotica innecentlaliliz yn Sanctome.
10 Yhua yca inic qaltihuani i sacrametos inic polihui tlatlacolli	No nicneltoca in tlatlacolpoliuilztl











¹⁶¹ I believe in God the Father All-powerful who created and made the heaven and earth. I believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, the really only child of God, our really true ruler. He came to assume flesh through the Holy Spirit. He came to be born of the always very true virgin Holy Mary. He suffered for us by order of Pontius Pilate, his arms were spread on the cross, he died, and was buried. He descended to hell, on the third day he revived from among the dead. He ascended to heaven to go sit at the right hand of his father, God All-powerful. From there he will descend to come to judge the living and the dead. Also, I believe in God the Holy Spirit and I believe in the Holy Catholic Church. Also, I believe in the spiritual gathering of the saints. Also, I believe in the forgiveness of sins, and I believe that all people will revive, and I believe that everyone will live eternally. May it be done (Amen) [Molina 1546:f. 69 Translation by Christensen 2010:129-131].











11 Yhuan nitlaneltoça yniquacohontla cemanahuac mocha tlacatl mozciliz.	yhuan nitlaneltoça ca oc çepa muchi tlacatl muzcaliz yuan
12 Nitlaneltoça cemicac yolihuaz ca yuh mochihuaz [Gante, 1553, ff. 22r-36r]	nitlaneltoça ca çemicac yolihuaz. Ma yuh muchiua.

Table 5 Creed in *Doctrina Christiana* by Gante [1553] and in Molina's *Doctrina* [1546]

Table 6 Comparison between the engravings of the Articles of Faith

Doctrina and Cartilla

Apostle	<i>Doctrina Christiana</i> (1553) f. 22v-36r	<i>Cartilla para enseñar a leer</i> (1569) f.3r
San Pedro-Credo in deus patrem omnipotente: creatorem celi et terre		
San Andre. Et in Jesu Christu fillui eius unicu: dominum nostruz		
Santiago. qui conceptus est de spiritu Sancto natus ex maria virgine		
San Juan. Pass ussub potio pilato: crucifixus mortuus et sepultus		
Santo Thomas. Descendit ad inferos tertia die resurrexit a mortuis.		

<p>Santiago. Ascendit ad celos sedet ad dexteri dei pris omipotentis</p>		
<p>San Felipe. Inde veturus est iudicare vivos at mortuous.</p>		
<p>San Bartolome. Credo in spiritu sanctus</p>		
<p>San Mateo. Sancta ecclesia catholica, sanctorum comunione</p>		
<p>San Simon- Remissione peccatoru</p>		





Tadeo- Carnis resurrectionez		
San Matias. Vitaz eternam		

Table 6 Engravings Articles of Faith in *Doctrina Christiana* [Gante 1553] and in *Cartilla* [Gante 1569].

Appendix 3: Tables for chapter 9

Table 7- Comparison of the Pater Noster prayer in Gante's Doctrina Christiana [1553], Cartilla [1569] and Doctrina Christiana [1546] by Molina

Gante's Doctrina [1553]	Gante's Cartilla [1569]	Molina's Doctrina [1546]
<i>Totatzine ilhuicac timoyetztica ma moyectenehua inmotocatzin</i>	<i>Totatzine yr.ilhuicac timoctztica ma cenquizca yecteneua lo ym motocatzin.</i>	<i>Totatzine in ilhuicac timoyetztica ma yecteneualo in motocatzin.</i>
<i>Mahuallauh in motlatocayotzin.</i>	<i>Mahualauh yn motlatocayotzin,</i>	<i>Ma uallauh in motlatocayotzin.</i>
<i>Machihuallo in ticmoneqtlia yn tpc:yniuh chihualo inilhuicac.</i>	<i>ma chihualo yn tlalticpac yn ticmonequiltia yn iuh chiualo yn ilhuicac: mano yuh chihualo innican in tlalticpac.</i>	<i>Ma chiualo in tlalticpac in ticmonequiltia in iuh chiualo in ilhuicac.</i>
<i>Totlaxcal momoztla yetotechmoneq: in axca maxitechmomaqli.</i>	<i>Auh yn azcan mazitechmomaquili yn totlaxcal yn momoztlaze totechmonequi</i>	<i>Yn totlaxcal in momoztlae totech monequi ma axcan xitechmomaquili.</i>
<i>Yhua maxitechmopolhuilitzino yn totlatlacol: yniuh tiqntlapopolhuia yntechtlatlacalhuia.</i>	<i>Ma xitechmopolhuili in totlatlacol yn iuh tiquimpopolhuia in techtlatlacalhuia.</i>	<i>Ma xitechmopolhuili in totlatlacol in iuh tiquimpopolhuia in techtlatlacalhuia.</i>
<i>Maxitechmoma nahuili ynic amo ipa tihuetzizq: yn amo qlli tlaneqliztli.</i>	<i>Macamo xitechmotlalcahuili ynic amo ypan tihuetzizque yn tlailacolli:</i>	<i>Macamo xitechmotlalcauili inic amo ypan tiuetzizque in teneyeyecoltiliztli.</i>
<i>Yhua maxitechmomaqxtiliztino: ynihuicpa ynixqch amoqlli</i>	<i>ma xitechmomaquixtili ynihuicpa yn amoqualli</i>	<i>Ma xitechmomaquixtili in iuicpa in amo qualli.</i>
<i>Maiuhmochihua</i>	<i>Maymmochiua. Amen</i>	<i>Ma yuh muchiua</i>

Table 7 Comparison of the Pater Noster prayer in Gante's Doctrina Christiana [1553], Cartilla [1569] and the Doctrina Christiana [1546] by Molina.

Table 8-Comparison between the versions of the Ave Maria in the Doctrina Christiana [1553] and in the Cartilla [1569]

<i>Doctrina Christiana</i> [1553, <i>tepiton</i> section:f. 80r]	<i>Doctrina Cristiana</i> [1553:f. 21v]	<i>Cartilla</i> [1569:f.2v]
<i>Maximopaqltitie sceta Maria</i>	<i>Maximopaqltitia Sacta Maria</i>	<i>Santa Mariae maximopaquiltitie,</i>
<i>timotemiltitica yn gracia.</i>	<i>timotemiltitica yn gracia</i>	<i>timotemiltitica in gracia</i>
<i>Motlantzinc moyetztica yntlatohuani Dios.</i>	<i>motlantzinc moyetztica intlatohuani dios.</i>	<i>motlantzinc moyetztica yntlatohuani Dios</i>
<i>Ynic tiyectenehualoni tiqmopanahuilia</i>	<i>Inic tiyectehualoni: tiquimmopanahuilia</i>	<i>tiyectenehualoni tiquinmopanahuilia</i>
<i>yn yxqchtincihua.</i>	<i>ynixquichtin cihua</i>	<i>ynixqui (chtin cih) ua</i>
	<i>Yn ayac yuhque yn ilhuicac yn tlalticpac yn ayac ce yuhque yn angelome.</i>	
<i>Yhua ceca yectenehualoni inmotlacotlaaqloxillantzin Jesus.</i>	<i>Ihuan cenca yectenehualoni ynmotlaco tlaaquilloxillantzin Jesus</i>	<i>yuan cenca yecteneh ualoni ynmotlaco (tzin Je) su christo</i>
	<i>Y yehuatzin yn Totlaçotemaq xticatzin Jesu xpo yn ipiltzi dios: yn mitictzico q mocuilico in itlaçonacayotzin ynic techmomaquixtilico. Ca toyec yoliliztlaqual omochiuh ynic huilohua yn ilhuicac.</i>	
<i>O sceta Maria cenquizca ychpochtle/intinatzin dios. Matopanximotlatolti</i>	<i>ynantzin diose matopan ximotlatolti</i>	<i>Yyo . Sancta Marlae matopan . ximotlatolti</i>
<i>intlatacohuanime.</i>	<i>yn titlatlahuanime.</i>	<i>yntitlatla.cohuanime.</i>
<i>Mayuhmochihua.</i>	<i>Ma yuh mochihua</i>	<i>Ma ymmochihua. Amén.</i>

Table 8 Comparison between the Ave Maria prayer of the *tepiton* section and lengthier section of the Doctrina Christiana [1553] and the version in the Cartilla [1569]

Appendix 4: Snippets of Gante in Historical Sources

Indigenous sources

Pipilcuícatl

The complete version of the *pipilcuícatl* in the *Cantares Mexicanos*:

In manticuicayecihcuihuican, in ti mexicahpipiltzintin, ye axcan motlecahui, o ye totahtzin San Francisco, yehuaya ilhuicac itech, ohuili. In tlapalamoxtlí m yollo, tipalapetol, in quexquich mocuic in toconehuilia Jesucristo, Zan tocontlayehuecalhui in San Francisco ya, yc nemico tlalticpac. A o anqui yanella nomache, maya pahpaquihuah, ma ic momalina tlayoli, techlamacehui on anqui ye tozcacauhtzin San Palacizco. Echamos de menos ya nuestro canto, nosotros, niños pequeños mexicas, ya llega hasta él, a él, San Francisco, nuestro padre estimado, allá en el interior del cielo. Libro de colores es tu corazón, tú, padre Pedro, los que son tus cantos, que a Jesucristo entonamos, tú los haces llegar a San Francisco, el que vino a vivir en la tierra. Así en verdad él es mi ejemplo, alegráos, que se entreteja nuestra dicha; por nosotros hace merecimiento quien lleva un collar de plumas, San Francisco [Cantares Mexicanos ff. 46r-48r cited and translated by León-Portilla 1985:331-2].

Nahua sources on Fr. Pedro's death

Chimalpahin describes the death of Gante:

2-Tecpatl xihuitl, 1572 ... no ipan in momiquilli in fray Pedro de Gante, cuatecontzin, teopixqui Sanct Francisco, in maestro catca in cantores Mexico. Auh in quimoto abril, oncan motoquititoc in capilla Sanct Joseph, Sanct Francisco. Auh in omoteneuhtzincototlawtahtzin, macihui zan cuatecontzin moyetzticatca, yece oppa in quihualmotlatitlaniilica don Carlos quinto, emperador Roma, inic arzobispo Mexico quihualmochihuiiaya auh iyoppaixti amo quimocelili in itlanahualtitzin emperador, zan ipan motlacenmachtli inic cuatecontzin moyetzticatca totlazotahtzin fray Pedro de Gante. Año 2-Pedernal 1572. En él murió fray Pedro de Gante, fraile tonsurado, lego, de San Francisco. Fue maestro de los cantores en México. Su reverenciado cuerpo fue enterrado el domingo, 20 de abril. Allá lo enterraron en la capilla de San José, en San Francisco. y aun cuando éste tan estimado fray Pedro era solamente un fraile tonsurado, lego, le rogó dos veces don Carlos V, emperador de Roma, que aceptara ser arzobispo de México pero otras tantas veces no aceptó lo que le pedía el emperador. Estuvo contento así como lego, nuestro amado fray Pedro de Gante [León-Portilla 1985:316-7].

In the Codex Osuna, Gante's death is mentioned as follows:

2-Tecpatl in otlatlauhtiloc ypampa omicohuac atlan yhuan otlamalloc, axcnn, In omotocac totahtzin fray Pedro de Gante, axcan, domingo, a 20 de abril. Miercoles a 9 días del mes de abril (1572) Hubo oración por los que murieron en el agua y por los

hechos cautivos, hoy miércoles, a 11 de días del mes de abril. Se enterró nuestro reverenciado fray Pedro de Gante, hoy, domingo a 20 de abril [León-Portilla 1985:331-2].

Missionary sources

Informe de la Provincia del Santo Evangelio in the Códice Franciscano [1889]:

Y de esta escuela tiene cargo Fr. Pedro de Gante, el cual vino a esta tierra habrá cuarenta y seis años antes que llegasen a ella los primeros doce que envió el emperador... y se ha perseverado a instruirles [a los indios] y aprovecharlos hasta el día de hoy que vive de edad de noventa años [García Icazbalceta 1941:6].

Fr. Pedro's importance in the Valley of Mexico

Mendieta described a scene that can help to clarify the relationship between the Nahuas and the Flemish friar:

Una india mexicana tenía por devoción vestir algunos frailes y fue lo a tratar un día con un siervo de Dios, llamado Fray Melchor de Benavente que, en aquella sazón, tenía cargo de los Indios de la capilla de San José, en la ciudad de México, y dijole: “Padre yo quiero vestir cinco religiosos, y a ti con ellos, que series seis”. Y fue los nombrando por sus nombres y, entre ellos, nombro al santo varón Fray Pedro de Gante que ya era difunto. A lo cual respondió Fray Melchor de Benavente: “Hija, ¿No sabes que Fray Pedro de Gante paso desta vida y es difunto? Ella replico: “Padre, yo lo doy en ofrenda Fray Pedro de Gante, dalo tú a quien quisieres [Mendieta 1596 in Torre 1973:69].

Another example of the importance of Gante in daily and/or important affairs in the Valley of Mexico can be seen in this extract from Mendieta:

Fué Nuestro Señor servido de obrar, resucitando un muerto, que no menos ocasión seria de cobrarle los indios la grande devoción que le tienen. El cual fué de la manera siguiente. En un pueblo llamado Atacubaya, una legua de México (visita que entonces era del convento de S. Francisco de México, y ahora tienen allí monesterio los padres dominicos), adoleció un niño de siete ó ocho años, llamado Ascencio, hijo de un indio cantero ó albañil, que se decía Domingo. Este Domingo, con su mujer y hijos, eran todos muy devotos de S. Francisco y de sus frailes, porque pasando por allí algunos de ellos, luego los iban á saludar y á convidar con lo poco que tenían y con la buena voluntad. Enfermo el niño Ascencio, y creciéndole el mal, los padres fueron á la iglesia de su pueblo, que tenia por vocación las Llagas de S. Francisco, y rogaron humilmente al santo fuese buen intercesor por la salud de su hijo. Y mientras mas iba en aumento la enfermedad del niño, ellos con mas afecto y devoción visitaban al santo en su iglesia, y le suplicaban se compadeciese de ellos. Mas como el Señor quería engrandecer á su santo con manifiesto milagro, permitió que el niño muriese, falleciendo un día por la mañana después de salido el sol. Y aunque muerto, no por eso cesaban los padres de orar con muchas lágrimas y llamar á S. Francisco, en quien tenían mucha confianza. Cuando pasó de medio día amortajaron al niño, y fueron á hacer la sepultura para enterrarlo á vísperas. Antes que lo amortajasen, mucha gente

lo vió estar frio y yerto y defunto. Ya que lo querían llevar á la iglesia, dijeron los padres que siempre su corazón tenia fe y esperanza en el glorioso padre S. Francisco, que les había de alcanzar de Dios la vida de su hijo. Y como al tiempo que lo querían llevar tornasen á orar y invocar con devoción á S. Francisco, súbitamente se comenzó á mover el niño, y de presto aflojaron y desataron la mortaja, y tornó á vivir el que era muerto, y esto sería á la misma hora de vísperas. Del cual hecho los que allí se hallaron presentes para el entierro (que eran muchos) quedaron atónitos y espantados, y los padres del niño en gran manera consolados. Hiciéronlo luego saber á los frailes de S. Francisco de México, y fué allá el famoso lego Fr. Pedro de Gante, que tenia cargo de los enseñar, y llegado, como él y su compañero vieron al niño vivo y sano, y certificados de sus padres y de otros testigos dignos de fe de lo que había pasado, hizo ayuntar el pueblo, y delante de todos dió el padre del niño testimonio cómo era verdad que aquel su hijo después de muerto había resucitado por la invocación y méritos del glorioso y seráfico padre S. Francisco. Este milagro se publicó, predicó y divulgó por todos aquellos pueblos de la comarca, con que los naturales fueron muy edificados, animados y fortalecidos en nuestra santa fe, viendo ya en esta tierra por sus ojos lo que nunca habían visto ni oído en ella, haber alguno resucitado después de muerto. Por lo cual muchos se confirmaron en creer los milagros y maravillas que de nuestro Redentor y de sus santos se leen y predicán [Mendieta 1596: Book 3, chapter LVI].

Appendix 5: The use of Nahuatl by missionaries in New Spain

From all the Mesoamerican languages, missionaries showed an inclination towards Nahuatl. The preference for the use of Nahuatl in *doctrinas* and *cartillas* was not a coincidence. Nahuatl was already the lingua franca of the territories conquered by the Mexica. Aware of this characteristic, missionaries successfully employed Nahuatl in most of their evangelical endeavours, resulting in the extensive dissemination of Nahuatl to other geographical areas and reinstating it as the official language of colonization [Payas 2005:7-8, Zamora 2011:567-8, Christensen 2012:692, Infantes 2004:231, Brain 2010:282-3].

Policies regarding the language of instruction of Mesoamericans were never static, though. During the 16th century the Crown published several edicts, often of contradictory nature. In 1550 the king signed two warrants, one for the Viceroy and the other to the Dominican General of the Province, regarding the substitution of Nahuatl with Castilian for the instruction of the Nahuas as the Crown considered the language less suitable to transmit the Christian message [Cortés 1987:50, Máynez 2013:14, Konetzke 1953:272, Bravo Ahuja 1977:33].

Regarding the question of language standardization, missionaries rather employed Nahuatl than Castilian, disregarding warrants and decrees, preferring instead to preach in indigenous languages. Grammars and primers continued to be translated into Mesoamerican languages. Indoctrinating the Mesoamerican population by employing their own languages and writing systems also simplified the process significantly and appealed to them more [Christensen 2012:692, Infantes, 2004:231, Brain 2010:282-3, Payas 2005:7-8].¹⁶² José de Acosta in his *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias* [1540] highlights the positive reaction of Mesoamericans when hearing Christian theology in their own language:

Vemos a los indios que cuando oyen a un predicador que les habla en su lengua nativa le siguen con grandísima atención, y se deleitan grandemente en su elocuencia, y son arrebatados por el afecto, y con la boca abierta y clavados los ojos están colgados de su palabra [cited in Paniagua Pascual 1989:446].

¹⁶² Although Nahuatl language was preferred, missionaries were also aware that doctrinal truths could be lost in the process of translation. For this reason, the First Mexican Provincial Council of 1555 decided that sermons could not be translated by indigenous peoples without the supervision of a missionary [Christensen 2012:693].

In addition, missionaries believed that unifying all the territories under one language would help to speed up the evangelization and consolidate the different ethnic groups under the Spanish crown, an idea supported by the viceregal administration. By 1558 the second viceroy of New Spain, Luis de Velasco (1550-1564), petitioned Philip II with a plan for the establishment of Nahuatl as the lingua franca. Payas claims that this was a feasible plan as the indigenous population was decimated by diseases and now concentrated in so-called 'Indian' towns or *pueblos de indios* [Payas 2005:13, Barroso Peña (w/y):5, Máynez 2013:13-4].

In contradiction to the previous royal warrants, by 1570, Philip II issued a royal warrant in which he declared Nahuatl to be the official language of all the indigenous peoples of New Spain. Again, by the end of the century several royal decrees ordered that only those clerics with knowledge of Mesoamerican languages could preach in indigenous towns. In 1596 a royal warrant found a middle ground and restated that clergymen were required to know Mesoamerican languages while at the same time Castilian should be implemented in convents' *doctrinas* in case indigenous peoples were interested in learning Castilian [Christensen 2012:692, Infantes 2004:231, Brain 2010:282-3, Payas 2005:7-8].

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