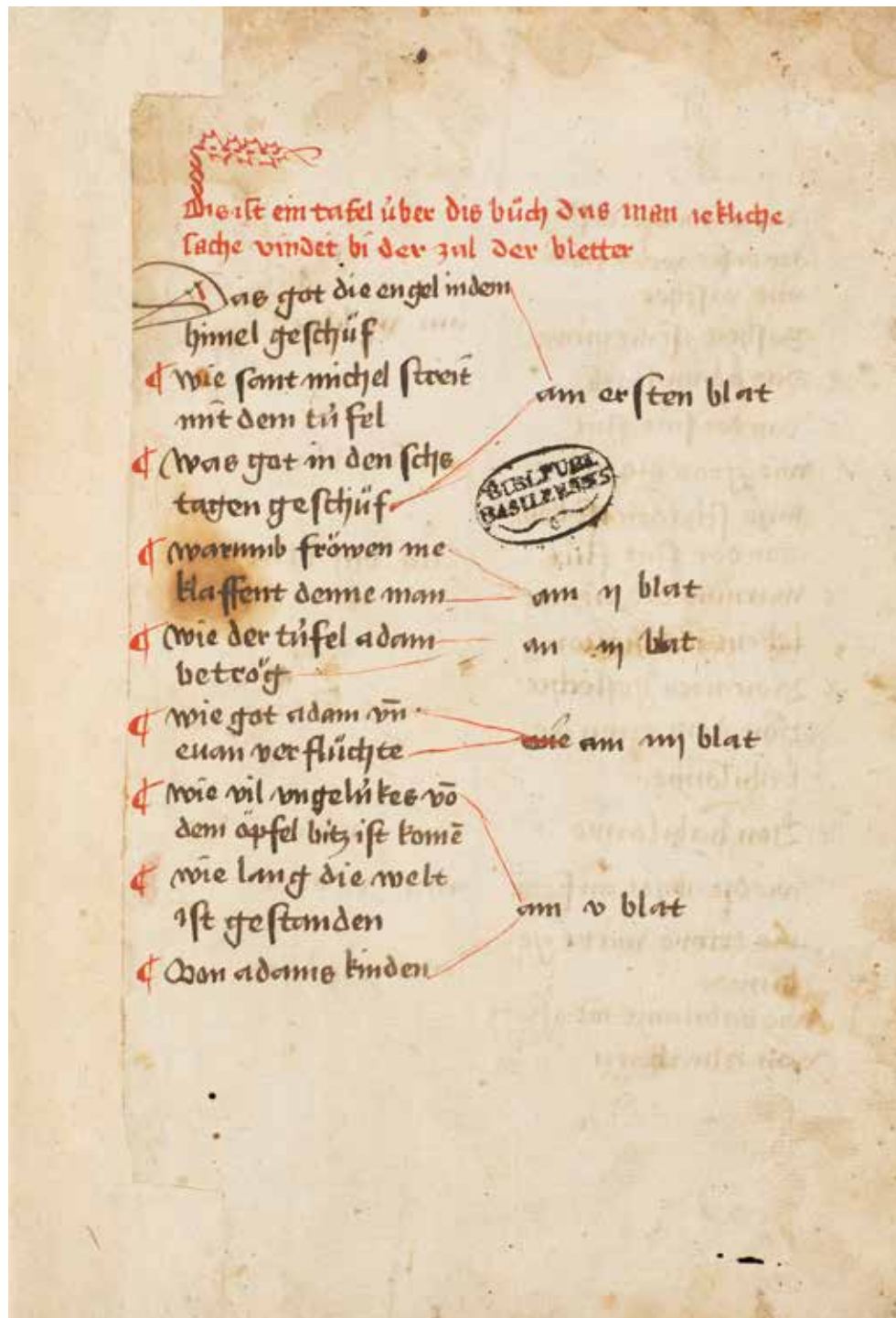


manuscript cultures

Hamburg | Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures

ISSN 1867-9617



Publishing Information

Indices – Tables of Contents – Registers

Edited by Bruno Reudenbach

We would like to thank the German Research Foundation (DFG) for its generous support of the Cluster of Excellence EXC 2176 „Understanding Written Artefacts“, which has made the printing of this journal volume possible.

Editors

Prof. Dr Michael Friedrich
 Universität Hamburg
 Asien-Afrika-Institut
 Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1 / Flügel Ost
 D-20146 Hamburg
 Tel. no. +49 (0)40 42838 7127
 Fax no. +49 (0)40 42838 4899
 michael.friedrich@uni-hamburg.de

Prof. Dr Jörg H. Quenzer
 Universität Hamburg
 Asien-Afrika-Institut
 Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1 / Flügel Ost
 D-20146 Hamburg
 Tel. no. +49 (0)40 42838 7203
 Fax no. +49 (0)40 42838 6200
 joerg.quenzer@uni-hamburg.de

Editorial Office

Dr Irina Wandrey
 Universität Hamburg
 Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures
 Warburgstraße 26
 D-20354 Hamburg
 Tel. No.: +49 40 42838 - 9420
 Fax No.: +49 40 42838 - 4899
 irina.wandrey@uni-hamburg.de

Layout

Nora Harms

Cover

Jakob Twinger von Königshofen, *Chronik (German Chronicle and Bernese Chronicle)*, 15th century, Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, E II 11, fol. 3^r; Table of contents: 'Dis ist ein tafel über dis bûch das man iekliche sache vindet bi der zal der bletter' ('This is a table about this book that you can find each thing by the number of the leaves').

e-codices – Virtual Manuscript Library of Switzerland

<DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5076/e-codices-ubb-E-II-0011>>.

Translations and Copy-editing

Carl Carter, Amper Translation Service

Print

optimal media GmbH, Röbel/Müritz
 Printed in Germany

ISSN 1867-9617

© 2022

Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures
 Universität Hamburg
 Warburgstr. 26
 20354 Hamburg

www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de

Funded by
 Deutsche
 Forschungsgemeinschaft
 German Research Foundation

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Article

The Painted Table of Contents in the *Florentine Codex*: Hieroglyphs of the Nahua Gods*

Anna Boroffka | Berlin

‘Vitzilobuchtli otro hercules’ and ‘Capitulo primero. fo. 1’.¹ These two inscriptions, claiming pre-Christian Nahua god Huitzilopochtli² to be ‘another Hercules’ and connecting him to the first folio of the first chapter, accompany the first and thus prominently placed miniature (Fig. 1) of the *Florentine Codex*.³ The codex, which has been included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register since 2015, is a highly illuminated New Spanish manuscript written in Nahuatl, Castilian and Latin in the scriptorium of the Franciscan monastery of Tlatelolco (now Mexico City) between c.1575 and 1577. The miniature of Huitzilopochtli is part of a synoptic table of Nahua deities, which opens the first book of the codex. The painted pre-Christian gods and their predecessors in an earlier related manuscript received considerable attention from researchers, but up till now, the series has never been analysed in terms of what it was designed for in the codex: as a painted table of contents, which presents the compiled figures as prefigurations of the corresponding alphabetic chapters. To understand the semantic implications of such an interlocking of image and script in a New Spanish manuscript, it is essential to recall the historical genesis of the *Florentine Codex* as well as the

special medial and epistemic status of images in Central Mexico during the Early Colonial Period (1521–c.1600). My article will therefore focus on these two aspects before discussing the function of the series of images within the manuscript and linking its visual organisation to the layout of a sixteenth-century mythographic manual on pagan European gods and Egyptian hieroglyphs.

1. Translating images: the genesis of the *Florentine Codex*

The *Florentine Codex* is the result of a large-scale project undertaken by the Franciscan missionary Bernardino de Sahagún (1499–1590).⁴ The Spanish friar, who adopted the name of his home town Sahagún (in the province of León) when he joined the Franciscan Order, reached New Spain in 1529.⁵ He spent his first years there working as a missionary before teaching at the Franciscan cloister school Colegio de la Santa Cruz de Santiago in Tlatelolco, which was a centre of the ‘spiritual conquest’⁶ of Mexico.⁷ This ‘conquest’ was, in fact, a ‘conquest of knowledge’ closely linked with – and often rooted in – practices of the New Spanish inquisition, officially installed in 1571, but active ever since 1536 under Juan de Zumárraga (1468–1548), Bishop of Mexico at the time and equipped with inquisitional powers.⁸ After the arrival

*This article is based on a paper given at the workshop ‘Indices’, held at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) at the Universität Hamburg in February 2017, it was submitted in October 2018. I am grateful to the organisers Bruno Reudenbach and Hanna Wimmer for the invitation and the stimulating discussions, which helped me to develop my thoughts. Furthermore, I would like to thank Irina Wandrey and her team from the editorial office. My research was carried out at the Sonderforschungsbereich 950 ‘Manuskriptkulturen in Asien, Afrika und Europa’, Universität Hamburg, funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) and as part of work being conducted at the CSMC.

¹ *Florentine Codex*, book 1, prologue, fol. 10r.

² On the veneration and visual representation of Huitzilopochtli, see Seler 1902–1923, vol. 4, 157–167 (‘Uitzilopochtli, der sprechende Kolibri’); González de Lesur 1967; Köhler 1973; Brotherton 1974; Hunt 1977; Nicholson 1988; Boone 1989.

³ *Florentine Codex (Historia universal de las cosas de Nueva España)*, c.1575–1577, European paper, 1,223 folios (31 × 21.2 cm), Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Mediceo Palatino 218–220.

⁴ The compilation of the *Florentine Codex* has been the subject of extensive research. An overview of the literature can be found in García Quintana 1999.

⁵ Mendieta 1973, vol. 2, 186. On Sahagún’s education in Spain, see Ríos Castaño 2014, 37–61.

⁶ Ricard 1933. On the Franciscan mission in Mexico, also see Baudot 1995, 71–120; Ríos Castaño 2014, 63–110.

⁷ The college was officially inaugurated in 1536 by the Bishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumárraga, and Sebastián Ramírez de Fuenleal (c.1490–1547), who was president of the Second Real Audiencia until 1535. It played an important role as an educational institution and centre of Franciscan studies. See Ricard 1933, 260–281; Steck 1944; Baudot 1995, 105–115; SilverMoon 2007; Lopes Don 2010, 135–136; Ríos Castaño 2014, 66–81.

⁸ On Zumárraga’s inquisition in New Spain, see Greenleaf 1961; Tavárez 2011, 26–61. For more on the New Spanish inquisition and its close connection to the Franciscans’ interest in pre-Hispanic knowledge, see Baudot 1995, 124–127; Lopes Don 2010; Chuchiak IV 2012; Ríos Castaño 2014.



Fig. 1: Huitzilopochtli shown in the *Florentine Codex*, Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Mediceo Palatino 218–220, book 1, fol. 10^r.

of the first organised group of Franciscan missionaries in Mexico in 1523,⁹ the Order pursued a strategy of implanting Christian faith, which rested mainly on three pillars: firstly, the mastery of Nahuatl (used as an indigenous lingua franca in Central Mexico), which enabled the missionaries to preach and hear the confession;¹⁰ secondly, the Christian education of young Nahua at the Franciscan cloister schools, aiming at turning the adolescents into important disseminators and assistants of the mission's work;¹¹ and thirdly, the acquisition of profound knowledge on pre-Christian rites and traditions in order to ask the right questions during confession and detect continuations of pre-conquest Nahua religion.¹² The relevance of this third aspect became clear in the late 1530s amidst Zumárraga's protracted but unsuccessful efforts at finding out the whereabouts of five hidden pre-Hispanic cult objects.¹³ The Franciscan Order realised that more effort had to be put into gathering pre-Christian religious information and started commissioning friars with the collection of this data, one of these friars was Bernardino de Sahagún.¹⁴

Sahagún's activity followed and used the working methods and writings of fellow Franciscan missionaries provided with the same task years before him.¹⁵ Andrés de Olmos (c.1480–1571), who was engaged with building up the first collection of pre-Hispanic knowledge in New Spain

in 1533, was a pioneer in this field.¹⁶ He had worked together with Zumárraga during the latter's inquisitional activities targeting suspected witches in the Spanish province of Biscay (Basque Country) and had accompanied Zumárraga to Mexico in 1528.¹⁷ Olmos's compilation was commissioned by the Franciscan Order, but even so, it was still motivated by the necessities of the Crown: after the official installation of the Viceroy of New Spain, the Spanish court required reliable data on the new subjects of the Spanish empire and the Franciscans were asked to supply relevant information.¹⁸ Olmos spent the years between 1536 and 1539 at the newly founded Colegio de la Santa Cruz composing his treaties on pre-colonial Nahua customs and beliefs. His writings were presumably used by Zumárraga for his inquisitional work in 1539.¹⁹ Around that time, the Franciscan Order – which apparently started to realise the importance of collecting pre-Christian information – commissioned another Franciscan, Toribio de Benavente, also known as Motolinía (1482–1569), with a similar compilation of knowledge, but this time solely on behalf of the Franciscan mission.²⁰ Several years later, in 1558, Sahagún was the last Franciscan to receive orders to compile any information in indigenous languages that might be useful for the Christian mission in Central Mexico.²¹ This was the starting point for the compiling process behind the *Florentine Codex*, but at the same time, it heralded the end of the independent Franciscan activity of collecting

⁹ Pedro de Gante (c.1480–1572) was among the first group of Franciscan friars to be sent to Mexico. The legendary Franciscan Twelve followed a year later, in 1524.

¹⁰ Regarding the linguistic work of the Franciscans, see Ricard 1933, 54–79, 345–352; Baudot 1995, 91–104.

¹¹ Ricard 1933, 249–259; Palomer 1963, 72–79; Kobayashi 1974; Lopes Don 2010, 35–37.

¹² Baudot 1995, 71–490.

¹³ Lopes Don 2010, 111–145. Sahagún was involved in inquisitional interrogations related to the search of these cult objects. The articles were bundles of cult artefacts (*tlaquimilolli*) composed of relics associated with pre-Hispanic gods. A drawing of these bundles of artifacts and their custody during 1521 and 1526 has been preserved (see Lopes Don 2019, Fig. 1). On pre-Hispanic *tlaquimilolli*, see Guernsey and Reilly 2006; Bassett 2014; Bassett 2015, 162–191.

¹⁴ Lopes Don 2010, 133–145. Earlier research interpreted the Franciscans' interest in pre-Hispanic knowledge as an abandonment of earlier punitive action, which was unsuccessful, and the beginning of a renewed mission focused more strongly on educational ends.

¹⁵ We must assume that Sahagún followed the model of other (not New Spanish) Christian writings about non-Christian cultures. The usage of a questionnaire, for example, resembles the way in which information was gathered in the thirteenth-century *Ystoria Mongalorum*, written by the Franciscan missionary John de Plano Carpini (c.1185–1252) at the order of Pope Innocent IV (c.1195–1254); see Hodgen 1964, 91; Brown 1978, 67–68. We also know that the library of the monastery of Tlatelolco owned a copy of the *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (1555), written by the exiled bishop of Uppsala, Olaus Magnus (1490–1557); see Mathes 1982, 60. Also see Ríos Castaño 2014, 123, n. 32.

¹⁶ Mendieta 1973, vol. 2, prologue (book 2, p. 81). Olmos's manuscript about pre-Hispanic rites and customs, called *Tratado de antigüedades mexicanas*, and a *Suma* of it have both been lost and can only be reconstructed through later copies and related texts; see note 46. An overview of his writings is provided in Baudot 1995, 163–245. On his collection of *huehueltolli*, see León-Portilla 2011.

¹⁷ On Zumárraga's and Olmos's activities in Biscay, see Mendieta 1973, vol. 5, 94; Baudot 1995, 124–126; Lopes Don 2010, 21–31.

¹⁸ The Franciscans were assigned this task by Sebastián Ramírez de Fuenleal, at that time bishop of Santo Domingo and president of the Second Real Audiencia de México; see Mendieta 1973, vol. 2, prologue (book 2, p. 81). Also see Wilkerson 1971, 295–302; Wilkerson 1974; Baudot 1995, 41–42, 121–245; Lopes Don 2010, 134–135. The interest in descriptions and information about the geography and inhabitants of the Crown's new possessions started to grow in the 1520s; Baudot 1995, 24–41; Lopes Don 2010, 134.

¹⁹ Lopes Don 2010, 140.

²⁰ Motolinía's manuscripts entitled *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España* and *Memoriales* and written between 1536 and 1541 are now lost, but we know they were commissioned by the Franciscan provincial Fray Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo; see Steck 1951; Baudot 1995, 274–284, 355–371; Lopes Don 2010, 135.

²¹ *Florentine Codex*, book 2, fol. 1^v. Sahagún received the commission from Fray Francisco de Toral (1502–1571), the highest prelate of the Franciscan Order and later bishop of Yucatán. *Ibid.*, book 1, prologue, fol. 1^r.

pre-Hispanic knowledge.²² In 1577, Philip II (1527–1598), who was becoming increasingly concerned that writing about pre-Christian Nahua rites and customs would rather promote than erase religious continuity, sent a royal *cédula* to the New Spanish viceroy Don Matrn Enriquez de Almansa (1510–1583) demanding the termination of Sahagún’s work and the confiscation of his manuscript.²³ The Spanish king furthermore advised the viceroy ‘not to consent to anyone in any way writing things about the superstitions and way of life these Indians had’.²⁴

1.1 Sahagún’s approach to the work

Sahagún tried to obtain pre-Hispanic information from oral accounts by questioning Nahua elders in Tepeapulco (Hidalgo) and Tlatelolco. This technique of knowledge acquisition followed a contemporary Franciscan practice also used by Olmos, who – 25 years earlier – had chosen the pre-colonial pilgrimage site of Tepeapulco to question local people on pre-Christian rites and traditions as well.²⁵ Sahagún’s work started in 1558 with the preparation of a now lost Castilian draft (‘minuta’ or ‘memoria’) containing the subjects his later work should cover.²⁶ The further chronology of gathering information, writing, compiling and re-writing the Nahuatl texts for the final *Historia universal de las cosas de Nueva España* (‘Universal history of the things of New Spain’),²⁷ as the original title of the *Florentine Codex* reads, can be established by Sahagún’s own accounts²⁸ and several preceding manuscripts preserved in Madrid.²⁹

²² Baudot 1995, 491–524.

²³ The *cédula* is from 22 April 1577 and is recorded in Sevilla, Archivo General de Indias, Patronato Real, vol. II, Minutas de Reales Cédulas, sec. 79. Published by García Icazbalceta 1886–1892, vol. 2, 249–250. Also see Browne 2000, 26–36.

²⁴ García Icazbalceta 1886–1892, vol. 2, 249.

²⁵ Mendieta 1973, 75; Nicholson 1974; Baudot 1995, 128–129; Nicholson 1997, 4–5; Ríos Castaño 2014, 151–198.

²⁶ *Florentine Codex*, book 2, prologue, fol. 1^v.

²⁷ In the sixteenth century, the front page, which contained the title and the name of the author of the manuscript, was removed for unknown reasons (some scholars speculate it was for fear of censorship); see Martínez 1989, 14–16; Rao 2011, 35–37, 40. The manuscript’s original title ‘historia universal’ was known to Philip II and the Council of the Indies; León-Portilla 1999, 167. It is also used in the *Memoriales en español* (see note 29). Nevertheless, researchers often refer to Sahagún’s manuscript as ‘historia general’ or ‘general historia’, wording taken from the tenth book of the codex (fol. 1^v).

²⁸ *Florentine Codex*, book 2, prologue, fols 1^v–2^r.

²⁹ The *Códices matritenses* are divided between the Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia (9/5524) and the Biblioteca del Palacio Real (II-3280). Francisco del Paso y Troncoso arranged the material in several sub-

Sahagún and his multilingual employees (baptised sons of the Nahua elites, who were educated at the Franciscan college in Tlatelolco) stayed at the Franciscan monastery of Tepeapulco for approximately two years and spent more than a year in the monastery of Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco in order to question local nobles.³⁰ These ‘interviews’ were carried out by using Castilian questionnaires designed in a similar way to confession and inquisition manuals.³¹ Sahagún’s questioning, thus, did not resemble a modern intercultural dialogue³² or scientific fieldwork resulting from either a slowly growing fascination about the ‘magic of the indigenous past’³³ or the friar’s struggle ‘against the boundaries of his scholastic training’,³⁴ as some scholars have suggested, but followed an interrogation practice developed for inquisitional trials:³⁵

manuscripts, which correspond to the different stages of Sahagún’s work: 1) *Primeros Memoriales* of Tepeapulco (c. 1559–1561); 2) *Manuscrito de Tlatelolco* (1561–1565), comprising the *Segundos Memoriales* (1561–1562), *Memoriales en tres columnas* (c. 1563–1565) and *Memoriales con escolios* (c. 1565) with first Castilian translations of the Nahuatl texts; and 3) *Manuscrito de 1569* (now lost) with a clean copy of the Nahuatl texts of the later *Florentine Codex*. Furthermore, a draft exists with Castilian translations of Nahuatl texts about pre-Hispanic deities. The manuscript, called *Memoriales en español* (c. 1569–1571), bears the title *Historia universal de las cosas de la Nueva España en doce libros y cuatro volúmenes, en lengua española. Compuesta y copilada por el muy reverendo padre fray Bernardino de Sahagún, de la orden de los frayles menores de observancia*; see Martínez 1989, 14. Also see Paso y Troncoso 1905–1907, vol. 7, 401 (fol. 1^v). On the history and contents of the *Códices matritenses*, see Ramírez 1885; Paso y Troncoso 1905–1907; Jiménez Moreno 1938; Ballesteros-Gaibrois 1964; Nicolau d’Olwer and Cline 1973, 190–193; Gibson and Glass 1975, 362–366; Martínez 1989, 4, 14; Bustamante García 1990; Sullivan 1997; Dibble 1999; Ruz Barrio 2010; Real Academia de la Historia 2013; Ríos Castaño 2014, 213–219.

³⁰ *Florentine Codex*, book 2, prologue, fol. 1^v.

³¹ For a reconstruction of the questions asked during the interrogations in Tepeapulco and Tlatelolco, see López Austin 1974. Also see Martiarena Álamó 1998, 209–210; Folger 2003, 230; Mainberger 2003, 186–192; Ríos Castaño 2014, 151–198.

³² Nicolau d’Olwer and Cline 1973, 188–189 call Sahagún’s questionnaire ‘strikingly modern’ and describe his method of gaining information as an ‘interview/roundtable agreement’.

³³ ‘Poco a poco los misioneros se sintieron atraídos por la magia del pasado indígena, comenzaron a estudiar sus costumbres y tradiciones, a penetrar en el secreto de su espíritu y se dieron a escribir todas las noticias que hubieran sobre el pretérito de estos pueblos tan alejados de la cultura europea. Así iniciaron la etnografía mexicana, La Historia General de las Cosas de la Nueva España, de Fray Bernardino de Sahagún; la Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España, de Fray Toribio de Benavente (Motolinia)’; quotation: Jiménez Rueda 1950, 105. This passage is also cited by Palomera 1963, 79.

³⁴ Klor de Alva 1988, 37.

³⁵ We must assume that Sahagún’s Nahua informants carefully checked and – if necessary – self-censored their answers; see Gruzinski 1992, 24; Navarrete Linares 2002, 105; Nicholson 1971; Ríos Castaño 2014, 199–211. According to Ríos Castaño 2014, 151–198 Sahagún’s working method followed Olmos’s technique of collecting data, stemming from the latter’s inquisitional experience. Sahagún was equally involved in inquisitional practices – it is known that he participated in three trials against indigenous people from New Spain; cf. Bustamante García 1990, 46–47; Lopes Don

the same questions were put to different people in order to compare their answers and confirm or contradict the veracity of the information.³⁶ Sahagún's writings clearly show traces of his method. By gathering alternative statements on a topic and placing them side by side, he created a text full of repetitions and synonyms, but rich in linguistic data and vocabulary, essential for New Spanish preachers and confessors, who were his original target audience.³⁷ Due to the fact that no pre-conquest manuscript survived the Spanish conquest and Christian mission of Central Mexico, Sahagún's writings turned into a major source of information about pre-Hispanic Nahua life and knowledge. But since the 1920s, research has shown a tendency to decontextualise Sahagún's work from the Franciscan mission and to present the friar as a pioneer of modern ethnography and anthropology.³⁸ This misinterpretation has recently been criticised by Victoria Ríos Castaño, who characterises Sahagún as a cultural translator and emphasises the religious and imperial motivation behind his project.³⁹ Nevertheless, Sahagún himself left no doubt about the aims of his work: using a well-established Christian metaphor, which goes back to Augustine of Hippo's (354–430) *De doctrina christiana* (c.426), he equates heresy with spiritual illness and compares his investigations on pre-Christian Nahua

customs and rites to the work of a 'physician of the soul' who needs to know about every aspect of a spiritual disease in order to employ the right medicine.⁴⁰

1.2 Pictures as evidence

Sahagún's trilingual assistants (or 'latinos' and 'gramaticos' as he calls them) mastered Nahuatl, Latin and Castilian and obviously played a key role within the multi-layered translation that took place during the first stage of the friar's work in Tepeapulco (c.1559–1561):⁴¹ Sahagún's previously prepared Castilian questions had to be translated into Nahuatl to be asked and the Nahuatl answers sometimes had to be explained to Sahagún. Finally, to record the answers, Sahagún's co-workers transcribed the oral accounts using the Latin script, introduced after the Spanish conquest of Mexico (1519–1521). Sahagún, furthermore, states that during his stay in Tepeapulco, his assistants deciphered and transcribed several pictures handed in as answers.⁴² These pictures are assumed to be indigenous drawings, which followed a pre-colonial pictorial recording tradition used by the heterogeneous Nahuatl-speaking ethnic groups of the Aztec realm.⁴³

The claimed utilisation and translation of Nahua pictorials for alphabetic writing is no isolated case, but apparently constitutes a typical method of collecting pre-Hispanic data during the Early Colonial Period.⁴⁴ A famous example is Olmos's *Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas*⁴⁵

2010, 136, 141. For a discussion of the problematic equation of the *modus operandi* of inquisitional questioning and ethnographic fieldwork, see Ginzburg 1989, 141–148.

³⁶ Sahagún himself linked this technique to the *Parable of drawing in the net* and a millenaristic concept when describing it as a fishing net ('red barredera') that helped him bring to light and judge all aspects of the indigenous language; see *Florentine Codex*, book 1, prologue, fol. 1^v. The expression 'red barredera' alludes to the *Parábola de la red barredera*, Biblia de las Américas, Mateo 13, 47–50. The Castilian translation of the Bible (the Reina-Valera) was first published in 1569. Regarding the Franciscans' millenarian vision of the New World, see Phelan 1956; McClure 2017.

³⁷ As one of his models, Sahagún cites the Italian lexicographer Ambrogio de Calepino (c.1440–1510). Also see Máñez 2002.

³⁸ Ødemark 2004, 98–103; Ríos Castaño 2014, esp. 16–33. For an extensive bibliography on the linguistic, ethnographic and anthropological value of Sahagún's work, see amongst others Toro 1923; Jiménez Moreno 1938; Garibay Kintana 1953–1954, vol. 2, 65–67; León-Portilla 1958, 9–12; Vincente Castro 1986; Klor de Alva, Nicholson and Quiñones Keber 1988; León-Portilla 1999; León-Portilla 2002; Kavanagh 2012.

³⁹ Ríos Castaño 2014. Ríos Castaño's work focuses on Sahagún's Nahuatl texts. The anachronistic labelling of Sahagún's work has been criticised by various scholars, including Todorov 1992, 240–241; Bustamante García 1989, 216–217; Bustamante García 1990, 376; Lockhart 1993, 28–29; Browne 2000, 54–55; Walter 2002; Ødemark 2004, 98–103; Solodkov 2010.

⁴⁰ *Florentine Codex*, book 1, prologue, fol. 1^r. The idea of a churchman as a 'spiritual physician', which was introduced in the first book of *De doctrina christiana*, was also used by Fray Andrés de Olmos in his *Tratado de hechicerías y sortilegios*; see Ríos Castaño 2014, 14–15.

⁴¹ *Florentine Codex*, book 2, prologue, fol. 1^v. Also see Kobayashi 1974, 357–387; SilverMoon 2007, 145–239; Ríos Castaño 2014, 211–223.

⁴² *Florentine Codex*, book 2, prologue, fol. 1^v.

⁴³ As far as we know, the Nahua pictorials comprised pictographic (mimetic-iconic) and ideographic signs and their phonetic use. On indigenous pictorial manuscripts, see, amongst others, Boone and Mignolo 1994; Boone 1998; Boone 2000. On the deciphering of the Nahuatl writing system, see Zender 2008; Whittaker 2009.

⁴⁴ Garibay Kintana 1953–1954, vol. 2, 71–73; López Austin 1974, 119–120; Cummins 1995a. Also see Ríos Castaño 2014, 169–174.

⁴⁵ *Libro de oro y tesoro indico*, Ex-Joaquín García Icazbalceta No. XXXI, Latin American Collection, University of Texas Library (CEN 1083; C/D 995). Gibson 1975, 345.

(‘History of the Mexicans as told by their paintings’); the alphabetic manuscript is a 1547 copy of the lost original, which claims to be based on indigenous drawings and stems from Olmos’s Tepeapulco ‘interviews’ with Nahua elders about pre-Christian rites and customs.⁴⁶ The royal official Alonso de Zorita (c.1512–1585),⁴⁷ the Dominican Diego Durán (1537–1587),⁴⁸ the Jesuit Juan de Tovar (1543–1623),⁴⁹ the Franciscan Juan de Torquemada (c.1562–1624)⁵⁰ and the New Spanish chronicler Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl (c.1578–1648)⁵¹ likewise state that they used Nahua pictorials as sources for their manuscripts. Although this usage of and reliance on indigenous drawings seems to have been a widespread phenomenon – if not a *topos* – in Early Colonial Mexico, it is far from self-explanatory, especially if we recall the activities of the New Spanish inquisition against pre-Hispanic manuscripts that took place more or less simultaneously.⁵²

⁴⁶ In 1540, three copies of Olmos’s original manuscript, called *Tratado de antigüedades mexicanas*, were sent to Spain, and one copy became part of Ramírez de Fuenleal’s library in Cuenca. (They have all been lost since then.) In 1546, at the request of the Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas (c.1484–1566), Olmos wrote a *Suma* of his original manuscript, which was used by the Franciscan monk Gerónimo de Mendieta (1525–1604) for his own work, *Historia eclesiástica indiana* (1596), but this was also lost. According to Baudot, the *Historia de los Mexicanos por sus pinturas*, written in Cuenca in 1547 by a scribe unfamiliar with Nahuatl, is not based on the *Suma*, but on the original copy of the *Tratado* sent to Fuenleal; see Baudot 1995, 193–217. Further information about Olmos’s *Suma* and the original *Tratado* manuscript has to be gleaned from a series of related writings, one of which is the *Codex Tudela* (c.1553, Madrid, Museo de América); also see Wilkerson 1971, 295–302; Gibson 1975, 353; Wilkerson 1974, 47–72.

⁴⁷ Gibson 1975, 315.

⁴⁸ *Durán Codex (Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e islas de la tierra firme)*, 1581, European paper, 344 folios (28 × 19 cm), Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Vitr. 26–11. Book III, 44. Todorov 1992, 213.

⁴⁹ *Tovar Manuscript (Historia de la benida de los Yndios apoblar a Mexico...)*, c.1587, European paper, 158 folios (21.3 × 15.2 cm), Providence, The John Carter Brown Library, Codex Ind. 2. The manuscript was intended for the Jesuit José de Acosta (c.1540–1600), who used several chapters of the text for his *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (published in 1590).

⁵⁰ Gibson 1975, 315.

⁵¹ In the prologue of his *Historia chichimeca*, de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl complains that only two of the indigenous people gathered to obtain picture-based information were actually able to understand the pictorial documents; see García Icazbalceta 1881, 360.

⁵² Christian burning of pre-Hispanic books is not the only reason we no longer have any pre-conquest manuscripts from the Central Mexican Nahua region. Sahagún writes about the destruction of Nahua manuscripts under the Mexican ruler Itzcoatl, for instance; see the *Florentine Codex*, book 10, fol. 142r. We also know of a major loss of pre-Hispanic documents in 1520 when Cortés’ indigenous allies from Tlaxcala set fire to the Texcoco palace of Nezahualpilli and the archives kept there. Other pre-conquest manuscripts were destroyed by the Nahuas themselves for fear of the inquisition that Zumárraga was conducting. Both incidents are described in Juan Bautista Pomar’s *Relación de Texcoco* (1582). See Pomar 1975, 1–2. On indigenous and Spanish book-burning in Mexico, also see García Icazbalceta 1881,

The main concern of Zumárraga’s inquisition (besides disciplining Spanish colonists) was to trace Nahua priests, pre-Christian cult objects and ritual practices. Within this scope, the ownership of a potential heretical pictorial could be turned into proof of maintaining forbidden religious practices and then lead to persecution. The most famous example of a Mexican trial involving a pictographic manuscript is Zumárraga’s case against the native leader Don Carlos Ometochtzin from Texcoco.⁵³ In 1539, Don Carlos, who was accused of owning a Nahua ritual calendar manuscript, among many other things (i.e. a *tonalamatl*, or book of the days), was tried, convicted and strangled, then his dead body was burned at the stake. The execution was a general warning to the Nahua community to respect the missionaries and their newly installed Christian rules.⁵⁴ Apparently, it was also received as a cautionary example to renounce pre-Christian manuscript practices: the New Spanish historiographer Juan Bautista de Pomar (c.1535–after 1601) writes in his *Relación de Texcoco* that after the trial, several newly baptised Nahua burned their pictorials out of fear of Zumárraga’s inquisition.⁵⁵

Zumárraga is also said to have celebrated the public burning of pre-colonial manuscripts in Central Mexico.⁵⁶ The openly performed destruction of books by a newly installed regime is a form of power demonstration and censorship with a long tradition in Europe⁵⁷ and Mesoamerica.⁵⁸ The Christian burning of Nahua manuscripts was closely connected with the Iberian inquisition and its action against converted Jews (*conversos*) and Muslims (*moriscos*),⁵⁹ likewise accused of

305–342, 349–371; McNutt 1912, vol. 2, 40–41; Robertson 1959, 25–33; Baird 1993, 23–24; Navarrete Linares 1998; Lopes Don 2010, 3–4.

⁵³ For details of the trial, see González Obregón 1910; Robertson 1959, 36; Greenleaf 1961, 68–75; Gruzinski 1993, 19; Boone 1998, 154–155; Boone 2007, 236; Douglas 2010, 6–7, 10; Lopes Don 2010, 146–174; Tavárez 2011, 26–61.

⁵⁴ Tavárez 2011, 26–61.

⁵⁵ Pomar 1975, 2.

⁵⁶ Lopes Don 2010, 4. A widespread but false accusation is that Zumárraga also burned down the Texcoco archives; see García Icazbalceta 1881, 305–342, 349–371.

⁵⁷ On the history and cultural and political implications of book-burning, see amongst others Speyer 1981; Rafetseder 1988; Körte and Ortlieb 2007; Werner 2007; Körte 2012.

⁵⁸ Navarrete Linares 1998.

⁵⁹ One famous example is the public burning of Arabic books at Plaza Bib-Rambla in Granada, which took place under the Franciscan cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436–1517). The exact date of the book-burning is unclear, but most scholars assume that it took place in 1500. In 1501, a royal decree was issued ordering the burning of all remaining Arabic books; Kamen 2014, 128–129; García-Arenal Rodríguez and Rodríguez Media-

secretly continuing their former religious practices.⁶⁰ By confiscating and destroying ‘heretical’ Jewish, Muslim and Nahua books, the Spanish and New Spanish churchmen tried to condemn, ban and even erase non-Christian religious practices through these artifacts.⁶¹ As in Central Mexico, these objects were not alphabetic writings, but pictorials, the destruction of the books was primarily a destruction of ‘heretic’ images. This aspect becomes perceptible in one of the few depictions of a Christian burning of pre-colonial manuscripts included in Diego Muñoz Camargo’s (c.1529–1599) *Historia de Tlaxcala* (1581–1584, fol. 242^r) (see Fig. 2).

The caption below the drawing, ‘Burning of all the cloths and books and adornments of the idolatrous priests by the Franciscan friars’, counts religious books among the heretical objects that were destroyed.⁶² But interestingly, the blaze of fire lit by the friars does not engulf any manuscripts, as the subtitle claims, but depictions of deity embodiments, flanked by masks and ritual attributes. What we can see here is the destruction of pre-Christian imagery equated with former religious practices. In addition to this, the Central Mexican confiscation and destruction of pre-conquest manuscripts was accompanied by considerable manuscript production, which replaced the Nahua originals with colonial copies and re-interpretations.⁶³ These new pictorial manuscripts – often created in the form of European codices, drawn and written with European pens in European ink on European paper – alter most physical and visual aspects of pre-Christian Nahua pictorials and withdraw their imagery from former manuscript practices. Eloise Quiñones



Fig. 2: *Historia de Tlaxcala*, 1581–1584, MS Hunter 242, Glasgow University Library, fol. 242^r.

Keber therefore interprets the colonial manuscripts as a material form of censorship; according to her, the re-interpretations are ‘another attempt at disengaging the indigenous manuscript from its suspect origins and authors and of exorcising the contents of those sections that were devoted to what were regarded as pagan gods, idolatrous religious beliefs, and superstitious rituals’.⁶⁴

In the process of destroying pre-conquest imagery and manuscript cultures and replacing them with colonial ones, a negotiation and merging of European and pre-Hispanic image concepts and practices took place. In his *Rhetorica Christiana* (printed in Perugia in 1579), Diego Valadés (1533–1582), a Franciscan missionary assumed to be born in Mexico and the son of a Tlaxcalteca and a Spanish conquistador, gives some insight into contemporary New Spanish image theories.⁶⁵ He interprets images as mnemonic aids, a concept based on a Classical theory of pictures as artificial memory.⁶⁶ He furthermore emphasises the pictorial potential to convey Christian faith to

no 2013, 41–42; Pérez 2014, 181–194. The destruction, carried out on the Catholic kings’ insistence, was aimed at eliminating religious books; Arabic books on medicine were spared and taken to the library of the University of Alcalá de Henares, founded by Cisneros; see Vallejo 1913, 35. A similar thematic separation was formulated in a degree from 1511 issued by Queen Doña Isabella, who demanded religious Arabic books to be destroyed, while those about medicine, history and philosophy were to be preserved.

⁶⁰ Lopes Don 2010, 20–51. Also see Perry and Cruz 1991.

⁶¹ Felix Hinz describes the destruction of pre-Hispanic knowledge by missionaries as a destruction of the ‘organisation and form of religious memory’ (‘Organisiertheit und [...] Geformtheit des religiösen Gedächtnisses’), but he explains the Franciscan burning of pre-Hispanic manuscripts with Spanish ignorance and a lack of interest in Mesoamerican cultures. Hinz thereby oversees the dialectic of destroying and rewriting indigenous memory. See Hinz 2005, vol. 2, 309 (quote: *ibid.*).

⁶² ‘Incendio de todas las ropas y libros y atavios de los sacerdotes ydolatricos que de los quemaron los frayles fr.’

⁶³ During the Early Colonial Period, numerous pictographic documents were used and manufactured under Spanish reign. About 500 pictorial manuscripts are preserved from Central Mexico. See Robertson 1959; Cline 1975. Regarding the usage of pictorial documents in post-conquest Central Mexico up to the end of the sixteenth century, see Boone 1998. See Quiñones Keber 1995 on European interest in these manuscripts.

⁶⁴ Quiñones Keber 1995, 231.

⁶⁵ Valadés’ book is dedicated to Pope Gregory XIII (1502–1585). Its first part was written and published in Rome. On Valadés’ family background, see Palomera 1963, 1–52, esp. 50–52. Valadés was a pupil of the Franciscan Pedro de Gante at the Franciscan Colegio de San José de Belén de los Naturales. He later became a teacher at the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco; see Palomera 1963, 53–72; McClure 2017, 137–138.

⁶⁶ See Taylor 1987; Báez-Rubi 2005.

the Nahua.⁶⁷ In doing this, Valadés draws on a European image concept attributed to Pope Gregory I (r. 590–604), who declared religious depictions as being on a par with religious scripture, underlining the didactic potential of pictures and their ability to communicate with the learned and the ignorant alike.⁶⁸ To argue his case, Valadés tries to sketch a New Spanish Franciscan practice that included Christian imagery and Nahua pictorial manuscripts, but at the same time excluded ‘heretical’ content – meaning ‘heretical’ pre-Christian Nahua images.⁶⁹ He thereby implements two lines of arguments: on the one hand, Valadés equates the pictorial notation system of the Nahua with Egyptian hieroglyphs and – embedded in a contemporary reception of hieroglyphs⁷⁰ – ennobles it as a system for recording universal knowledge and ‘truth’.⁷¹ On the other hand, Valadés limits his description to the usage of pictorial Nahua manuscripts in juridical, commercial and historiographical contexts, carefully avoiding mentioning religious pictorial manuscripts and pre-Christian Nahua practices.⁷² Instead of that, he describes the lively reaction of the Nahua towards Christian imagery during church services.⁷³ According to Thomas Cummins, Valadés tries to establish pictures as a ‘mutual space’ of agreement, shared by

the missionaries and Nahua of New Spain.⁷⁴ Sahagún’s reported usage of Nahua drawings during his inquiries in Tepeapulco may have been influenced by Franciscan image conceptions linked to Valadés’ theories about imagery. Furthermore, if we recall that Sahagún’s technique of data acquisition was rooted in Early Colonial confessional and inquisitional methods, we can assume the reception of another colonial image practice: the Franciscans Motolinía and Valadés detail how Nahua drawings were applied as non-verbal aids to ‘confess’ and ‘hear confessions’.⁷⁵ A technique apparently linked to the documented Early Colonial use of pictorials during inquisitional trials and court hearings, which, in turn, was apparently rooted in a pre-Hispanic Nahua juridical tradition.⁷⁶ In these cases – and in contrast to the non-verbal ‘confessions’ – an alphabetic transcription and translation of images took place: numerous colonial sources from Central Mexico describe how drawings were handed in at court, explained to the judge and transcribed into alphabetic text.⁷⁷ Within this context, images did not merely serve as memory aids or transcultural media for evangelisation, communication or confession, but as evidence provided with legal validity.

⁶⁷ Valadés 1579. Valadés claimed the transmission of Christian faith through images to be a Franciscan invention; Valadés 1579, part 2, chap. 27, 95. Also see Robertson 1959, 53; Palomera 1963, 306–307; Cummins 1995a, 158–159; Ortega Sánchez 2013. The Franciscan technique of using and inventing images for missionary purposes was adapted by Jesuit missionaries like Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) in China; see Hosne 2017.

⁶⁸ The topos of ‘images as the Bible of the illiterate’ was developed from European experiences of Christianising a largely illiterate population. Gregory’s position was reaffirmed by the second Council of Nicaea (787), the fourth Council of Constantinople (869–870) and the Council of Trent (1545–1563). Acosta, who defines images as ‘book(s) for idiots who don’t know how to read’ (*Historia natural y moral*, book 6, chapter 6) clearly refers to a similar conception of images. In his *Rhetorica Christiana*, Valadés describes images as suitable media to communicate with the ‘illiterate’; Valadés 1579, 95/230. On the European usage of images to transmit Christian faith, see Baxandall 1988, 40–45; Müller 2007.

⁶⁹ Cummins 1995a.

⁷⁰ Regarding the reception of hieroglyphs in Early Modern Europe, see note 194.

⁷¹ Valadés 1579, segunda pars, cap. 27, 93. Regarding Valadés’s interpretation of Egyptian hieroglyphs and their role in his argumentation, see Watts 1991; Bolzoni 2001, 222; Leinkauf 2001; Báez-Rubi 2004, 99–130; Kern 2013, 79–80; Ødemark 2017. Regarding the debate about the ‘hieroglyphic’ character of the Mexican recording system, see Ødemark 2004, 82–90; Kern 2013, 69–76.

⁷² Valadés 1579, segunda pars, cap. 27, 93–96.

⁷³ Valadés 1579, segunda pars, cap. 27, 93–96.

⁷⁴ Cummins 1995a, 159.

⁷⁵ Both friars describe how indigenous people communicated their sins via drawings. According to Valadés, small stones were put on the images to indicate how often a sin was committed; see Toribio de Benavente, *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*, trat. 2, cap. 6: ‘De cómo los indios se confiesan por figuras y caracteres (...)’; Valadés 1579, segunda pars, cap. 27, 96. Regarding non-verbal religious practices of the Franciscans, also see Watts 2000.

⁷⁶ On the pre-conquest juridical system, see Megged 2010, 38–47. On the practice of transmitting knowledge through images in Early Modern Europe, also see Kusukawa and Mclean 2006.

⁷⁷ The usage of pictorial documents in court was a practice shared by Nahua and Spaniards alike. In Mexico City in 1531, for example, Hernán Cortés brought a lawsuit against three members of the First Real Audiencia de México. Cortés’s lawyer based his case on eight pictorial documents and the testimony of three men, who were questioned by means of the images and a questionnaire. The related drawings are preserved in the *Huejotzingo Codex* (c.1530, amate paper, Washington D.C., Library of Congress). Also see Kahler 1974, 85–176; Warren 1974, 119; Cummins 1995b; Boone 1998, 179–181. Several other pictorials have been preserved that were involved in court hearings. The corpus of these legally binding pictorial documents includes a variety of manuscripts, such as tribute lists, historiographical, genealogical and calendrical documents and maps. Amongst others, see Selzer 1902, 245–252, 269–276; Borah 1983, 241; Lockhart 1992, 353–364; Gruzinski 1993, 40–46; Brotherston 1995, 154–176; Mundy 1996, 111, 183–211; Boone 1998, 164–193; Russo 2005; Boornazian Diel 2008; Lopes Don 2010; Douglas 2010; Ruiz Medrano 2010; Ruiz Medrano Kellog 2010; Ríos Castaño 2014, 169–174.

2. The listed pre-Christian Nahua gods in the *Primeros Memoriales*

An examination of sixteenth-century manuscripts written by New Spanish missionaries about pre-Christian Nahua customs and rites shows that Franciscans like Sahagún – but also Dominicans such as Durán or Jesuits like Tovar – claimed to have used indigenous drawings as a means of gleaned information. Furthermore, they took care to include related imagery in their writings.⁷⁸ These pictures are colonial creations, but within the *mis-en-page* of the manuscripts, they are presented as the original media of recording and sources of information, deciphered as alphabetical texts. One such example is Sahagún's compilation of pre-Christian Nahua deities (Figs 3a–f, 6a–c). The image series is a forerunner of the synoptic table of pre-Hispanic Nahua gods found in the *Florentine Codex* and part of Sahagún's first collection of material from Tepeapulco, contained in the *Primeros Memoriales*⁷⁹ (c. 1559–1561⁸⁰).

The *Primeros Memoriales* is a double-column manuscript bound as a codex, written and drawn on 88 folios of European paper.⁸¹ It contains alphabetic texts in Nahuatl and 546⁸² coloured drawings.⁸³ The codex shows traces of its compilation, including cut sheets, glued-in leaves, deleted words and intertextual notations. The inserted illuminations can roughly be divided into two categories:

(a) contextualised narrative scenes⁸⁴ and (b) single figures gathered in the form of series of images, amongst them the deity series. The sequence covers 13 pages in all (on fols 261^v–267^r) and belongs to the first section of the manuscript, which is now kept at the Biblioteca del Palacio Real.⁸⁵ Below the title 'Fifth paragraph, in which is told how each of the gods was arrayed',⁸⁶ it presents a list of 41 unframed figures in profile with a corresponding alphabetical text in Nahuatl. The images were sketched on the pages using grey European ink and European pens.⁸⁷ In a later step, several of the underdrawings were modified, the thicker black outlines were drawn and the colouring⁸⁸ of the pictures was performed.⁸⁹ Pictorial alterations to the deity illuminations reveal that several hands were at work here; the stylistic analyses that Ellen T. Baird and Quiñones Keber each undertook suggest the involvement of five artists altogether.⁹⁰ Some scholars identify these painters with the Tepeapulco elders questioned by Sahagún during his interrogations,⁹¹ while others believe them to be some of Sahagún's own assistants, also trained as painters but not entirely familiar with the pre-colonial painting traditions any more, or unknown regional artists.⁹²

⁷⁸ Cummins 1995a; Boroffka 2017.

⁷⁹ The title *Primeros Memoriales* was given by Francisco del Paso y Troncoso, who identified the 88 folios of the *Códices matritenses* as Sahagún's material from Tepeapulco; see del Paso y Troncoso 1905–1907. The *Primeros Memoriales* comprise four chapters, the first two (54 folios) of which are kept at the Biblioteca del Palacio Real (Ms. II-3280); the last two (34 folios) are in the Real Academia de la Historia (Ms. 9-5524).

⁸⁰ An alternative dating of the manuscript is 1558–1560.

⁸¹ The folios bear the watermarks of the 'pilgrim', the 'hand' and the 'snake', three typical sixteenth-century watermarks on paper fabricated in Italy and imported via Spain; see Hidalgo Brinquis and Ávila Corchero 2013. The watermarks were used to reconstruct the original form of the manuscript. See Quiñones Keber 1997, 20–24.

⁸² Quiñones Keber 1997, 16.

⁸³ The alphabetic text is written in Gothic and cursive European script and was divided into chapters and paragraphs. For a study of the texts and images of the *Primeros Memoriales*, see Nicholson 1973. Also see Glass and Robertson 1975, 188–189; Baird 1988a; Baird 1988b; Quiñones Keber 1988b; Baird 1993; Nicholson 1997; Quiñones Keber 1997; Nicholson 2002, amongst others.

⁸⁴ Mainly drawings of religious rituals, which show temples, people, deity impersonators, ritual offerings and sacrifices.

⁸⁵ On the gathering of the folios, see Quiñones Keber 1997, Fig. 3. For studies on the texts and images of the series, see Seler 1890; Peñafiel 1890; Seler-Sachs, Lehmann and Krickeberg 1927; Garibay Kintana 1956–1981, vol. 4, 279–290; León-Portilla 1958; Nicholson 1973, 211; Quiñones Keber 1988a; Nicholson 1988; Baird 1993; Ríos Castaño 2014, 219–221.

⁸⁶ The translation of the Nahuatl text is from Sullivan 1997, 93.

⁸⁷ Baird 1993, 118; Quiñones Keber 1997, 17, 34.

⁸⁸ During the Early Colonial Period, numerous organic pigments were substituted by natural and artificial inorganic pigments. The replacement may have been linked to the substitution of indigenous amate paper by European paper; see Kroustallis, Bruquetas and Roquero 2013. Analysis of the pigments and inks in the *Primeros Memoriales* and the *Florentine Codex* has shown that the scribes and artists of both manuscripts used traditional indigenous and European pigments; see González Arteaga and Egido 2013; Magaloni Kerpel 2011; Baglioni et al. 2011; Magaloni Kerpel 2013.

⁸⁹ Baird 1993, 34, 118–123; Quiñones Keber 1997, 24.

⁹⁰ Baird 1993, 33–34, 139–158; Quiñones Keber 1997, 33–37. Quiñones Keber suggests that different groups of artists might have produced the sketches and final drawings of the images; see Quiñones Keber 1997, 34.

⁹¹ See Gruzinski 1993, 9 on the education of Sahagún's respondents.

⁹² Baird 1988a, 222–227; Baird 1993, 109–112, 116–117, 139–158. In her analysis of the *Primeros Memoriales*, Baird points out several pictorial mistakes made by Sahagún's artists, which indicate their unfamiliarity with the material. In contrast to Baird, Quiñones Keber suggests that the artists of the *Primeros Memoriales* could be identified with painters from Tepeapulco, whose style was shaped by local artistic training or the usage of local pictorial models; see Quiñones Keber 1997, 33–37.

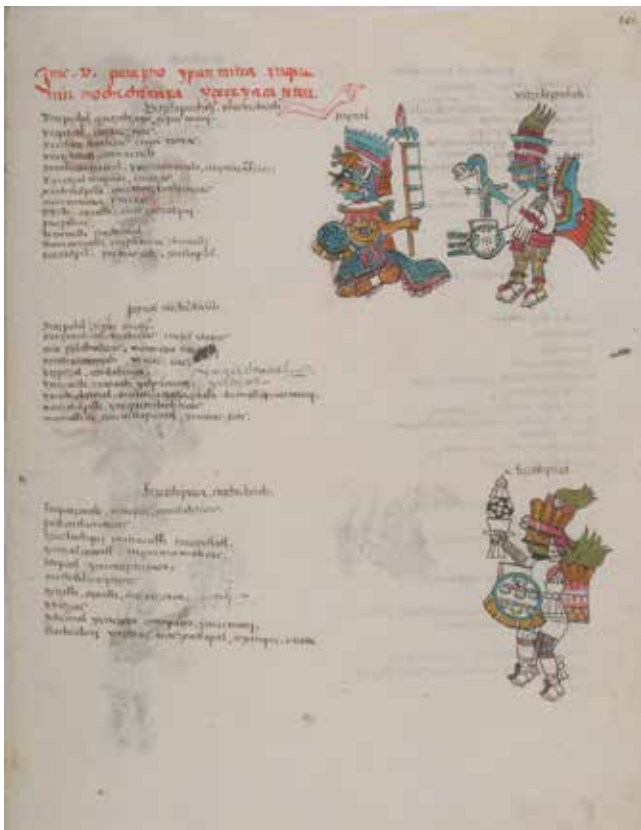


Fig. 3a: *Primeros Memoriales*, Array of the Gods, Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, Ms. II-3280, fol. 261r.



Fig. 3b: *Primeros Memoriales*, Array of the Gods, Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, Ms. II-3280, fol. 261v.

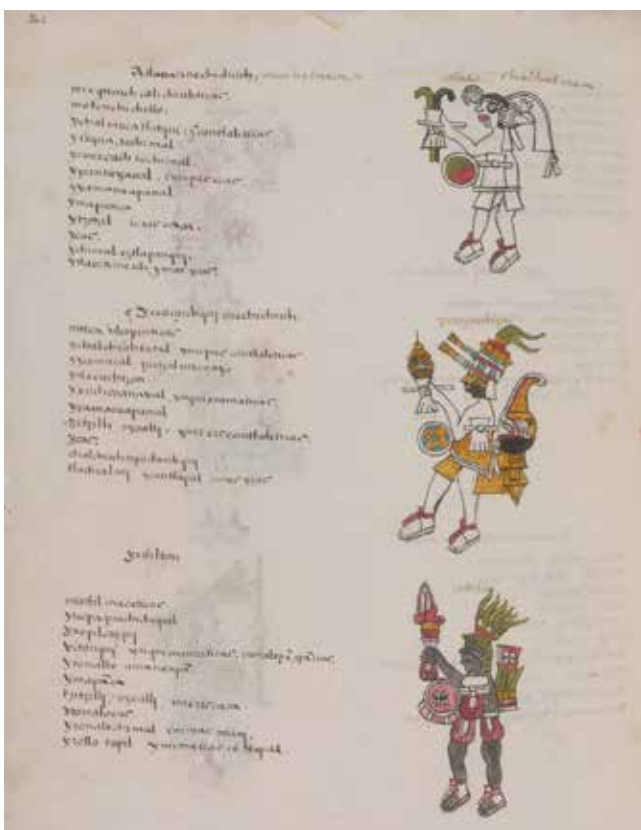


Fig. 3c: *Primeros Memoriales*, Array of the Gods, Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, Ms. II-3280, fol. 262r.



Fig. 3d: *Primeros Memoriales*, Array of the Gods, Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, Ms. II-3280, fol. 262v.



Fig. 3e: *Primeros Memoriales*, *Array of the Gods*, Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, Ms. II-3280, fol. 263^r.



Fig. 3f: *Primeros Memoriales*, *Array of the Gods*, Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, Ms. II-3280, fol. 263^v.

The deity figures have been inserted in the right-hand column of the manuscript, while the corresponding textual units are written in the left-hand column. Scholars generally assume the figures to have preceded the written texts on the manuscript pages. Furthermore, it is believed that the writings are alphabetic translations of the flanking images. However, the visual organisation of the series reveals some details that question the assumed picture dependency of the texts: while some of the illuminations seem to be almost finished, incorporating blank areas used as white colour, other figures are practically uncoloured, for example. This inconsistency attributes a sketchy character to the depictions, which does not quite fit in with the supposition that the images were the original media of recording and, thus, the bearers of the most accurate and complete set of information. Moreover, an examination of the page layout shows that the series postulates a correspondence between image and script rather than showing the actual process of deciphering pictorial content and transcribing it into alphabetical text. A process perceptible in the visual organisation of other colonial manuscripts, like the *mis-en-page* of the ritual calendar section of the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*⁹³ (Fig. 4) terminated in 1563. In contrast to this example, Sahagún's texts do not enfold around coloured drawings in different alphabetical attempts to interpret and translate the picture, but consist of juxtaposed paragraphs whose length does not correspond with the image fields, which tend to be longer.

⁹³ Manuscrit Mexicain 385, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. During the seventeenth century, the manuscript was owned by Archbishop Le Tellier of Reims (1642–1710), who donated it to the library of the French king.

yuhieznō

z	i	i	u	b

que gue co yott . omal sin
el enañado - oel sedejoe

*Siol delos
o te usi*

*In proprio nombres
homo que lize malsin
pe... malsin...*

*la pusa... los tepa
necas y... y de
en pegre las que
en el mudo...*

*Don se celebra... la fiesta
de la discordia... por...
de... una...
la figura... la dia...
...*

*Salvose
...*

hazian un agujero y el año de un conejo el año
que se para esta fosa y nacia una fosa en la tierra y luego
se se se fue fue coyote de senor de este heze dias huehue coyote
quiere dezir la rraposa viera aqui ayuna van los quatro dias
proximos al que cal coatl de tula que es el que tubo non bra
del pxi mex que calcoatl y a por a llaman un caño que es la
es bella venus de la qual se dicen las fabulas que to tienen
los y nacia en este semia catos y medicos
y fecedores y personas principales a qui en
esta semana de una fosa unido de una cava el año
de conejo ayunaba ala cava del pxi mex
y ahi se llama que que con te se como el lobo

Fig. 4: Alphabetic transcription of a deity image in the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, 1563, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Mexicain No. 385, fol. 3^v.

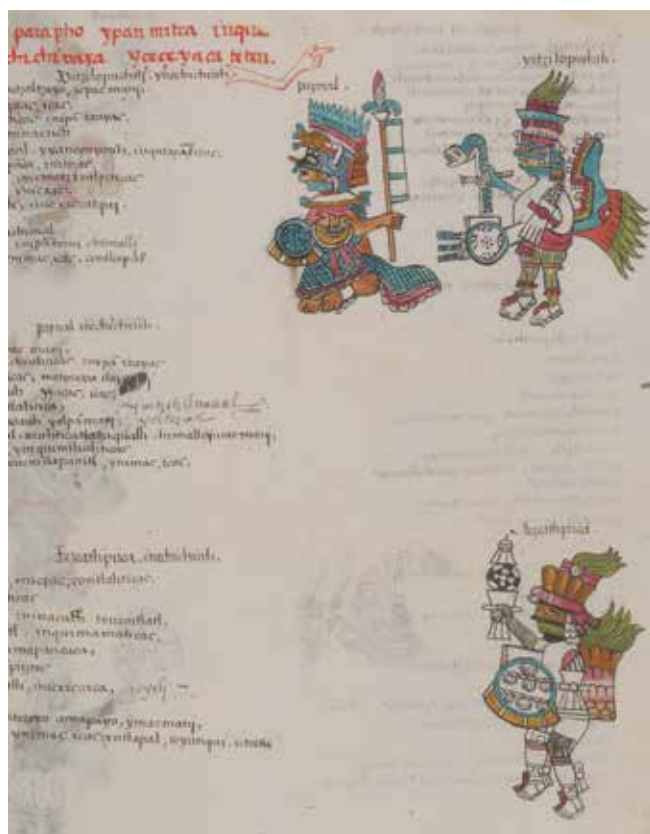


Fig. 5: Detail from *Primeros Memoriales*, *Array of the Gods*, Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, Ms. II-3280, fol. 261^r.

The list-like organisation of the texts and drawings of the *Primeros Memoriales* deity series follows the vertical structure of the manuscript columns. But interestingly, this visual pattern – which abandons the horizontal alignment of figures typical for the layout of pre-colonial screenfold manuscripts – was only established on the second page of the series, whereas the grouping of the first images (Fig. 5) shows an inconsistency that reveals the modification of an originally different plan:⁹⁴ the second figure, the image of Paynal, the deputy and messenger of Huitzilopochtli, was not placed below the drawing of Huitzilopochtli, but to his left. This, however, creates a horizontal reading order from right to left that does not match the vertical orientation of the columns and the inserted alphabetic texts.⁹⁵ The artists of

⁹⁴ Baird 1993, 155–156. Baird attributes the irregularity to a change of plans based on a pragmatic decision. She suggests that during the painting process it was decided that only three figures (rather than four) should cover each page because there was not enough space to accommodate four written textual paragraphs, see Baird 1993, 34.

⁹⁵ Baird suggests that the prototype used for the deity series may have been a ritual calendar manuscript (*tonalamatl*) with a linear reading pattern that meanders from right to left and left to right, similar to the sequence of 20

the *Primeros Memoriales* obviously planned to proceed with arranging the figures into pairs, but this undertaking was interrupted – as the unfinished underdrawing of Quetzalcoatl on the left of the finished and coloured Tezcatlipoca in the lower part of the manuscript page shows. Quetzalcoatl was then moved to the next page (Fig. 3b), and the problem created by the terminated parallel arrangement of the images of Paynal and Huitzilopochtli was solved by means of a manicule drawn in red ink.⁹⁶ The hand with the pointing finger (generally used to draw attention to part of a text) is attached to a long, bare arm with a bent elbow, which gesticulates over Paynal's head towards Huitzilopochtli. The manicule connects the text and drawing as corresponding units, thereby postulating an interdependency of script and image as well as equating both recording systems and their mutual translatability. Nevertheless, in order to establish this final page layout, it was the images that were rearranged to meet the needs of the texts, not the other way round.

2.1 Original and alteration

In the prologue of the second book of the *Florentine Codex*, Sahagún says the following about the Tepeapulco interrogations: ‘Everything that we discussed was given to me by means of pictures, which was the writing they had used of old, and the *gramaticos* explained them in their language, writing the explanation at the foot of the picture. Even now I have these originals’.⁹⁷ The identity of Sahagún's pictorial ‘originals’, through which his Nahuatl respondents supplied information, is unclear.⁹⁸ Earlier research assumed that his informants either handed in pre-Hispanic pictorials⁹⁹

deities connected to day signs (pp. 22–24) from the *Codex Borgia*; Baird 1993, 155–160, Figs 59–60.

⁹⁶ On the European tradition of using the manicule, see Sherman 2008. The bare arm in the *Primeros Memoriales* reminds one of the bare arm of Christ in the New Spanish Franciscan coat of arms.

⁹⁷ ‘Todas las cosas que conferimos me las dieron por pinturas que aquella era la escritura que ellos antiguamente usaban: y los gramaticos las declararon en su lengua escribiendo [escribiendo] la declaracion, al pie de la pintura: tengo aun agora estos originales’; *Florentine Codex*, book 2, prologue, fol. 1^v. The English translation is from Anderson and Dibble 1982, vol. 14, part 1, 54. The expression ‘al pie de la pintura’ (‘at the foot of the painting’) does not necessarily mean that Sahagún's co-workers placed the text below the images, but might – as Baird suggests – be a case of wordplay; Sahagún may have alluded to the phrase ‘al pie de la letra’ (‘word for word’, ‘literally’), but replaced ‘letra’ (‘letter’) with ‘pintura’ (‘painting’) in order to value the drawings as indigenous script and to emphasise the exactitude of his assistants while translating the images into alphabetic text; see Baird 1997, 32. Also see *ibid.*, 36.

⁹⁸ León-Portilla 1958, 14.

⁹⁹ Scholars have discussed a sequence of images taken from a ritual calendar manuscript (*tonalamatl*) or depictions of annual festivities (*veintena cere-*

from which images were excerpted or that they drew pictures from memory; the resulting drawings are either believed to be part of a lost manuscript which preceded the *Primeros Memoriales* or are identified with the images in the *Primeros Memoriales*.¹⁰⁰ This last assumption is not convincing, though, as the page layout (as detailed above) does not contain any evidence that a transcription of pictorial information into text actually took place; if anything, it presents the outcome of such a translation process. The European paper and the European ink and pens¹⁰¹ used to sketch the images on the pages also clearly indicate that pre-colonial imagery, taken from traditional amate paper pictorials, was not included physically.¹⁰² This aspect is also emphasised by the colonial style of the drawings and not least by the reception of several European – especially Christian – pictorial prototypes in other sections of the manuscript.¹⁰³ If Sahagún did indeed refer to the imagery of the *Primeros Memoriales* as the originals, we will have to apply a concept of authenticity here that does not correspond to material or stylistic originality.

Furthermore, it is known that several unilluminated chapters of the *Primeros Memoriales* record transcribed Nahuatl sayings, songs, poetry and vocabulary lists based on verbal memory and discourse and thus comprise information which probably lacked a pictographic tradition.¹⁰⁴ As Emily Umberger recently pointed out, even in case of Sahagún's deity series, we must assume that the figures are based on heterogeneous sources – although some of them may stem

monies) as the pictorial model for the deity series. Regarding the speculations about potential prototypes, see Zantwijk 1963; Barthel 1964, 79–100; Baird 1979, 179–222; Zantwijk 1982; Nicholson 1988, 230–231; Quiñones Keber 1988a, 256; Baird 1993, 155–157. The *tonalamatl* is a pre-Hispanic manuscript type; Boone 2007. Depictions of the *veintena* ceremonies, in contrast, might be a colonial invention; cf. Kubler and Gibson 1951; Brown 1978; Baird 1993, 104–117.

¹⁰⁰ Dibble 1968, 147, n. 8; Glass 1975, 14; López Austin 1974, 122–123; Glass and Robertson 1975, 187; Baird 1988a, 227; Quiñones Keber 1988a; Baird 1993, 158; Nicholson 2002, 96.

¹⁰¹ Quiñones Keber 1997, 17.

¹⁰² Glass and Robertson 1975, 188; Baird 1988a, 211.

¹⁰³ On the European elements in the drawings in the *Primeros Memoriales*, see Robertson 1959, 159; Baird 1988a, 212–220; Baird 1988b; Baird 1993, esp. 35–37, 131–138.

¹⁰⁴ Baird 1993, 32–33; Quiñones Keber 1997, 18–20. According to Sahagún, however, oral memory was linked to pictographic notations. In his chapter on the pre-Hispanic religious education of young Nahua, he states that all the lyrics of the taught songs, called divine songs, had been written down with characters ('caratheres') in the indigenous books ('les enseñauan todos los versos de canto, para cantar: que se llamauan diujinos cantos: los quales versos estauan escritos en sus libros por caratheres'; *Florentine Codex*, book 3, appendix, fol. 39^v). Also see Ødemark 2004 regarding the construction of a relationship between pre-Hispanic pictorials and the memorising of indigenous songs (defended by León-Portilla).

from pictorial prototypes, other drawings are more likely to have been inspired by oral accounts.¹⁰⁵ Seen against this backdrop, it becomes clear that Sahagún's statement on the pictorial basis of all of his Tepeapulco material should not be taken as a description of the compilation process of his writings.¹⁰⁶ It may actually follow a strategy of verification, as Robert Folger's study on the texts of the *Florentine Codex* suggests:¹⁰⁷ by citing Nahua drawings as ancient script and reliable sources (still kept as evidence and proof), Sahagún strives to authorise his alphabetic texts, which according to European standards – as Sahagún writes in the prologue of the second book of the *Florentine Codex* – lack adequate (meaning alphabetic) sources and therefore lack authority.¹⁰⁸ This strategy of authorisation is already palpable in Sahagún's earlier material compilation comprised in the *Primeros Memoriales* and – as the deity series shows – it attributes an important verifying role to the inserted illuminations: by showing drawings, Sahagún later relates to an ancient Nahua pictographic tradition, the *colonial* images turn into the alleged *original* sources of the writings. The drawings prove the veracity of the texts by presenting themselves as the supposed pictorial reference media, thereby disguising the oral basis of Sahagún's writings.¹⁰⁹

2.2 Oral memory, text and image

Alfred López Austin, who tried to reconstruct Sahagún's questionnaire on the basis of texts from the *Primeros Memoriales* and the *Florentine Codex*, suggests that the following questions were likely to have been asked during the Tepeapulco questioning: '1. What were the titles, the attributes, or the characteristics of the god? 2. What were his powers? 3. What ceremonies were performed in his

¹⁰⁵ Umberger 2014, 92.

¹⁰⁶ In Baird's opinion, 'Sahagún's description of the manner in which the *Primeros Memoriales* were compiled should be taken generally rather than literally'; Baird 1993, 36.

¹⁰⁷ Folger 2003.

¹⁰⁸ *Florentine Codex*, book 2, fol. 1^v.

¹⁰⁹ In some chapters of the *Primeros Memoriales* (as Baird's analysis of the section on astronomical and atmospheric phenomena suggests), Sahagún even introduced European motives to substitute existing pre-Hispanic ones, either because suitable pre-conquest models were not at hand or they did not match his expectations, which were shaped, of course, by European concepts (and images); Baird 1988a, 226; Baird 1993, 135–138. Also see López Austin 1974, 134–137. In these cases, Sahagún's reference to traditional Nahua pictorials serves to establish an aura of authenticity used to legitimise colonial image production, which replaces the very same native sources Sahagún cites in order to authorise his writings.

honour? 4. What was his attire?’¹¹⁰ The last question is assumed to have stimulated the pictorial and textual material gathered in the paragraph of the deity series. But it is far from clear how we should picture this supposed interaction of questions, images, oral discourse and script.¹¹¹ The colonial sources about pre-Hispanic Nahua pictorials indicate a linkage between the creation and interpretation of painted manuscripts and oral memory, but the nature of this conjunction is still being debated.¹¹² Some scholars suggest that pre-Hispanic pictorials served as a kind of outline, mnemonic device or aid for an oral performance or narration, while others emphasise the independence of both the painted manuscript tradition and oral memory.¹¹³ According to Serge Gruzinski, the ‘decoding’ of pre-conquest pictorials was a ‘two-fold operation: While the eye scanned the images, the reader uttered words inspired by oral tradition’; words and pictures ‘complemented one another, without the one being a version of the other’. Paintings were thus ‘made’ to speak and, in turn, ‘paintings reinforced and refreshed oral memory’.¹¹⁴ The verbal commentaries, linked to ‘reading’ or narrating indigenous pictorials and performed by trained interpreters, are believed to be (more or less fixed) memorised texts taught at the pre-Hispanic elite school (*calmecac*).¹¹⁵ Earlier research considered the alphabetic writings of Sahagún’s deity series from the *Primeros Memoriales* to be evidence of such taught and memorised knowledge.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ López Austin 1974, 123. Also see Todorov 1992, 233; Ríos Castaño 2014, 174–178.

¹¹¹ Quiñones Keber 1988b, 202–203; Baird 1988a, 211–212.

¹¹² Amongst others, see Gibson 1975; Lockhart 1992, 335; Leibsohn 1994; Boone 1994, 71–72; Boone 1998, esp. 192–193; Ødemark 2004; Navarrete Linares 2011, 175–176. For a further discussion of orality and script, see Ong 1982.

¹¹³ Kubler and Gibson 1951, 77; Robertson 1959, 28; Dibble 1968, 145; León-Portilla 1969, 11; León-Portilla 1971, 453. Also see Ødemark 2004. Eduardo de Jesús Douglas points out that pictorial manuscripts may have been used as memory aids for oral performances, but they were not necessarily limited to that function; see Douglas 2010, 14.

¹¹⁴ Gruzinski 1992, 15 (with reference to León-Portilla 1983, 64).

¹¹⁵ Boone 2000, 26–27.

¹¹⁶ León-Portilla 1958, 10, 36; Dibble 1968, 147–148; Ríos Castaño 2014, 178–179. Within the scope of this research, textual characteristics (like the standardised form of describing the deities’ attire) were attributed to pre-Hispanic oral tradition rather than to the friar’s own influence; López Austin 1974, 123–124, for instance, links the rigid structure of the answers recorded in the *Primeros Memoriales* and the first book of the *Florentine Codex* to memorised text taught in the pre-Hispanic schools. More recent studies, however, show a growing awareness of Sahagún’s Nahuatl texts as being colonial products; Ríos Castaño, for instance, suggests one should interpret the rigid structure of the deity series texts as evidence of the reorganisation and modification undertaken by the friar’s employees in order to create a homogeneous textual structure; see Ríos Castaño 2014, 179, 211–223.

The texts of the deity series focus on the outer appearance of the Nahua gods, described by following a top-to-bottom order from head to feet. In the section on ‘Vitzilopochtli’ (Huitzilopochtli), for example, we read:

Vitzilopochtli: On his head is a headdress of yellow parrot feathers with a quetzal feather crest. His blood bird is on his forehead. There are stripes on his face, on his countenance. Ear plugs of lovely cotinga feathers. On his back he bears his fire-serpent disguise, his *anecuyotl* [a type of back device, of uncertain meaning]. On his arm is an armband with a spray of quetzal feathers. The knotted turquoise cloth is bound around his loins. His legs are painted with blue stripes. On his legs are small bells, pear-shaped bells. His lordly sandals. His shield is the *tehuehuelli* [people destroyer]. Across the shield lie stripped [arrows]. His serpent staff is in his other hand.¹¹⁷

If we compare this text to the juxtaposed drawing of Huitzilopochtli (Figs 3a, 5), we find that the description and depiction do not entirely match. The image, for instance, shows – as Eduard Seler and Nicholson have pointed out – a serpent-shaped spear-thrower (*atlatl*) in Huitzilopochtli’s right hand, although the text identifies the ritual object as a snake staff (*coatopilli*).¹¹⁸ More differences can be found in the colouring of the drawing: the depicted headdress does not include the yellow parrot feathers described in the text, the knotted cloth wrapped around Huitzilopochtli’s loins is not turquoise, as the text claims, but red, the stripes on his legs are multi-coloured,¹¹⁹ not monochrome blue, and the spray of feathers on his armband is uncoloured, not green to mark it as the quetzal feathers mentioned in the text. We can find similar discrepancies in other sections of the deity series as well. One reason for this, Quiñones Keber suggests, is that the texts might have more closely matched Sahagún’s lost ‘original’ drawings (according to her annotated images,

¹¹⁷ Quoted from Ríos Castaño 2014, 119–220. See Sullivan 1997, 93–94 for the Nahuatl text and a different English translation.

¹¹⁸ Seler 1890; Seler 1902–1923, vol. 2, 368–396, 377–380; Nicholson 1988, 234.

¹¹⁹ The image shows blue and yellow-green stripes on Huitzilopochtli’s legs. The latter stripes may be the result of involuntarily mixing yellow and blue. Huitzilopochtli’s face is adorned with blue and yellow stripes. Nicholson points out that Huitzilopochtli’s body paint is blue, so it would therefore be more logical to interpret the depicted colour scheme as yellow on blue; the correct textual description would therefore be yellow (not blue stripes) on his legs; see Nicholson 1988, 234.

which Sahagún received from his Tepeapulco informants), not the figures redrawn in the *Primeros Memoriales*.¹²⁰ Although this assumption does not provide an entirely satisfactory explanation of the colour differences, the hypothesis that the texts are closer to the original source of information and not the images does fit in with the peculiarities of the visual organisation of the deity series mentioned above. However, we should consider the possibility that in some cases (and images) the discrepancy between script and image is not rooted in the modification of the original painting, but its potential absence. Which means that a systematic combination of both deity description and depiction might first have taken place on the manuscript pages of the *Primeros Memoriales*. This assumption furthermore allows us to speculate about a potential inversion of the supposed dependency of text and images: in some cases, the deity drawings may not have been the basis of the texts, but they may well have been pictorial (re-)translations of the writings and thus reconstructions (and postulations) of the original sources of information.

For further research on this topic it is also important to take into account that Sahagún's iconographic descriptions of the Nahuatl deities can be linked to the *ekphrasis* of pagan deities included in European sixteenth-century mythographic manuals.¹²¹ These are a literary genre that circulated in Early Modern humanistic and artistic circles and comprise texts on the iconography, veneration and legends of pagan Greco-Roman gods. From the second half of the sixteenth century, the manuals also included pre-Christian Egyptian, Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Mexican deities as well as illustrations of their appearance and attributes.¹²²

¹²⁰ Quiñones Keber 1988a, 295–261. Also see Nicholson 1988, 233–234.

¹²¹ See Sez nec 1953, 219–323.

¹²² Vincenzo Cartari's *Imagini de gli dei delli antichi* ('Images depicting the gods of the ancients') was an influential manual first published in Venice in 1556 (the original title was *Le imagini con la spositione de i Dei de gli antichi*). As of 1571, Cartari's publication was illustrated with woodcuts. In 1615, the antiquary Lorenzo Pignoria (1571–1631) added a second part dedicated to Asian and Mexican gods: Vincenzo Cartari, Lorenzo Pignoria (1615), *Seconda Novissima Editione Delle Imagini De Gli Dei Delli Antichi Di Vincenzo Cartari Reggiano*, Padua: Pietro Paolo Tozzi; Quiñones Keber 1995, 129–130; Mason 2001, 132–148; Lein 2002; Kern 2013, 91–99. Pignoria states that the woodcuts of the Mexican deities included in Cartari's manual and made by Filippo Feroverde are based on the coloured drawings from the *Icones coloribus ornatae idolorum Mexicanorum, Aegiptorum, Sinensium, Japonorum, Indorum* (Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, Ms. 1551), a manuscript commissioned by Cardinal Marco Antonio Amulio (1506–1572), presumably during his time as prefect of the Vatican Library between 1565 and 1566; see Cline, Gibson and Nicholson 1975b, 420; Robertson 1976, 490; Mason 2001, 132–133. The Mexican drawings were taken from the *Codex Ríos*, which has been part of the Vatican Library ever since the sixteenth century. The *Codex Ríos* itself is a modified sixteenth-century Italian version of the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*.

2.3 Teotl, teixiptla and Sahagún's iconography of Nahuatl deities

The heading of Sahagún's image series claims the drawings depict the outer appearance of pre-Hispanic deities. But what do the images show exactly? And to what degree do the figures match pre-Hispanic religious concepts and image traditions? Given the complete loss of pre-conquest manuscripts and most other imagery from Central Mexico, scholars are still trying to understand the Nahuatl pre-Christian definition of a 'deity' and his or her physical representation. It was Arild Hvidtfeldt who posed one of the key questions in this debate by pointing out the difficulty of translating and defining the Nahuatl words *teotl* and *teixiptla*.¹²³ Hvidtfeldt has suggested that *teotl*, pl. *teteo* (which has been translated as 'god' or 'deity' since the colonial era¹²⁴) does not refer to a pre-existing physical or iconographic entity, but to an immaterial and transcendental energy.¹²⁵ According to him, this 'sacred' (or divine) 'force' or 'power', as others call it,¹²⁶ is comparable to the Austronesian *mana* and can be incorporated in a variety of physical representations, i.e. the *teixiptlahuan* (localised embodiments).¹²⁷ Potential *teixiptlahuan* are weather phenomena, animals, special places (like mountains), humans in ritual clothing or cult images made of different material and wrapped in amate paper costumes.¹²⁸ In other words, it is the *teixiptla* that 'materialises' the *teotl*. But exactly how the materialisation and transfer of a *teotl* worked, what relationship between *teotl* and *teixiptla* existed and how different *teteo* were distinguished is unclear, and given the lack of pre-Hispanic sources it will probably stay heuristic.¹²⁹

¹²³ This debate has been summarised by Bassett 2015, 45–88.

¹²⁴ Bassett 2015, 52–56.

¹²⁵ Hvidtfeldt 1958. His studies are based on book 2 of the *Florentine Codex*.

¹²⁶ López Austin 1973, 139; Klor de Alva 1980, 68, 77–78; Read 1994, 45; Read 1998, 147, 271, n. 41.

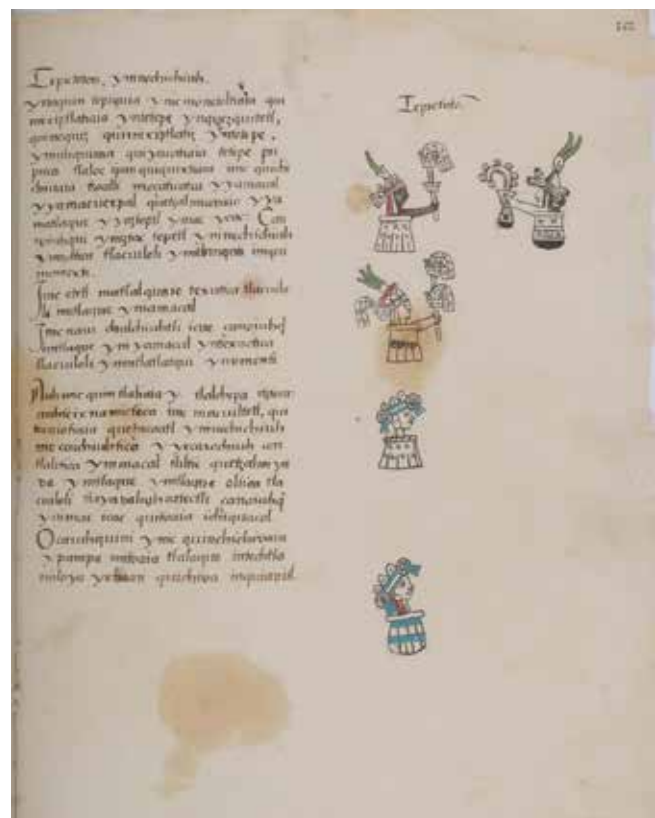
¹²⁷ Hvidtfeldt 1958. Bassett 2015, 56–60 criticises Hvidtfeldt's equation of two concepts that stem from different cultural contexts and in her opinion lead to a re-interpretation of *teotl* according to Hvidtfeldt's (limited) understanding of *mana*.

¹²⁸ Hvidtfeldt 1958.

¹²⁹ Besides ritual clothing, body paint and ritual objects, the rite and performance played a decisive role in defining a *teotl* and constituting a *teixiptla*; see Hvidtfeldt, *ibid.* Furthermore, the possession of eyes and a mouth seem to be crucial points in animating (or activating) a localised embodiment; see Bassett 2015, 130–161. Bassett also underlines the importance of the social interaction between the devotees and a *teixiptla*; *ibid.*, 192–194.



Colonial writings about pre-Christian Nahua religion show the missionaries' awareness of the terms *teotl* and *teixiptla*, although most friars had rather vague ideas about their meaning and mutual relationship.¹³⁰ In the Nahuatl texts of the *Florentine Codex*, the word *teotl* is repeatedly used to describe a divine entity and thus a deity, not a divine 'power' or 'force';¹³¹ *teixiptla* was applied to a deity's corporal materialisation.¹³² Nonetheless, Sahagún classified the image series in the *Primeros Memoriales* as '*teteu*' (gods), although it shows different anthropomorphic deity embodiments and therefore actually *teixiptlahuan*. The picture sequence can be divided into two groups: (a) the first 36 drawings present living human deity impersonators covered in body paint and dressed in ritual costumes; and (b) the last five images show inanimate deity figures moulded of amaranth seed dough and wrapped in amate paper costumes (Fig. 6c). Sahagún's visual organisation clearly distinguishes between the two types of corporeal forms. The larger deity impersonators form a coherent group of full body images facing the left side of the page (Figs 3a–f, 6a–b). The first and the last of the figures are seated (Figs 3a, 6b), while the others are shown upright in a walking posture. In contrast, the smaller dough



Figs 6a–c: Bernardino de Sahagún, *Primeros Memoriales*, *Array of the Gods*, Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, Ms. II-3280, fols. 266'–267'.

¹³⁰ Boone 1989; Bassett 2015, 45–161.

¹³¹ Bassett 2015, 89–129. Bassett assumes that Sahagún's understanding of *teotl* as 'god' reflects pre-Hispanic concepts.

¹³² Bassett 2015, 130–161.

bodies – described as ‘mountain figures’¹³³ or ‘Tlalocs’ involved in rain rituals¹³⁴ – are presented as passive objects with less of a physical presence (Fig. 6c). The figures are turned towards the right, facing a fifth one, showing how the statues had to be arranged on the ground; with the exception of their head and arms, their ‘mountain-shaped’ bodies are invisible under the amate paper clothing. Glosses next to the drawings emphasise the distinction between active and passive bodies: the dough figures are summed up under the heading *Tepictoton* (‘Small Moulded Ones’),¹³⁵ whereas each of the human impersonators bears an individual name written above his or her head.¹³⁶ The series thereby differentiates between individual deities and inanimate dough statues, shown as cult objects or idols of comparable minor corporeal presence and importance. This classification presumably follows a colonial and not a pre-Christian Nahua classification system since – as far as we know – the ritual materialisation of a *teotl* can be heterogeneous, but there is no indication of a *teixiptlahuan* hierarchy distinguishing between different kinds of ritual deity embodiments. The organisation of the series could therefore rather be linked to Sahagún’s European Christian background and his awareness of European discussions about divine corporeality and the problematic issue of statues and cult images.

The visual appearance of the deity impersonators in the first group (defined by their body paint, costumes and attributes) and the dough mountain figures in the second group is highly standardised. Each group contains drawings of approximately the same size, which practically all face in the same direction (except for one dough figure). The body language is equally uniform: the right foot of the deity impersonators is set in front of the left, the left arm is lowered and, in most cases, holds a ceremonial shield. The right arm is raised (except in the image of Paynal, Figs 3a, 5)

and equipped with a ceremonial stick or other ritual attribute; this gesture is imitated by most of the dough figures, which equally raise an arm holding a ritual object. The profile view of the figures and the standardised movement of their legs and arms reflect pre-colonial painting traditions. Nevertheless, in Sahagún’s knowledge compilation the images have been withdrawn from a pre-Christian Nahua pictorial or ritual context and translated into European (or colonial) viewing habits: the visual complexity typical for pre-Hispanic imagery was reduced and the figures were adapted to a more three-dimensional and anthropomorphic corporeality. In the context of the series and under the title ‘How each of the gods was arrayed’, one embodiment (or *teixiptla*) presented as an iconographic image and description is used as the identifier of one deity (or *teotl*). The ritual deity embodiment is defined as the outer appearance or array, composed of a figure’s clothing, attributes and ornaments. The title, text and image thereby generate an abbreviation: the construction of divine presence is reduced to the iconography of one possible materialisation – Huitzilopochtli’s embodiment is thus presented as a visual process, not a ritual one.

The iconographic character of Sahagún’s image collection was reaffirmed by earlier research (beginning with Seler’s studies at the end of the nineteenth century), which used Sahagún’s drawings as well as other images from the colonial Codex *Telleriano-Remensis* and *Codex Ríos* to establish the iconography of pre-Christian Nahua deities.¹³⁷ Seler’s approach was shaped by models of iconography and iconology developed by art historians like Aby Warburg and Erwin Panofsky.¹³⁸ Nevertheless, the attempt to apply these theories to the imagery of the surviving pre-Hispanic and colonial sources soon revealed their limits; in contrast to what Sahagún’s list of deities might suggest, the ritual and localised embodiments of a divine force or *teotl* appears

¹³³ Durán describes a ritual that involves a series of mountain figures; one of them represented the volcano Popocatepetl, the others smaller mountains around Mexico-Tenochtitlan. The statues were made of a dough consisting of amaranth seeds and maize kernels, and the smaller mountain statues were placed around the volcano statue. Cf. the *Durán Codex*, Ritos y fiestas, 85–86.

¹³⁴ Also see the *Florentine Codex*, book 1, chapter 21.

¹³⁵ Translation of the Nahuatl as in Sullivan 1997, 113.

¹³⁶ Hvidtfeldt points out that the names applied by Sahagún and other missionaries are not actually names of pre-Hispanic deities but cult names that differentiate between distinct rituals (and related cult objects) performed to materialise a divine force (*teotl*); see Hvidtfeldt 1958.

¹³⁷ Seler 1890; Seler 1902; Seler 1902–1923, vol. 2, 672–694; Seler 1902–1923, vol. 2, 767–904; Seler 1902–1923, vol. 2, 913–952; Seler 1902–1923, vol. 3, 410–449; Seler 1902–1923, vol. 3, 487–513; Seler 1902–1923, vol. 4, 64–98; Seler 1904. Also see Nicholson 1971, 408; Nicholson 1973, 211; Quiñones Keber 1988a; Sullivan 1982, 8–9; Nicholson 1988; Boone 1989; Quiñones Keber 1997, 28–29.

¹³⁸ Seler interpreted the costumes, adornments and attributes of the deity embodiments as iconographic symbols used to describe the deities’ characteristics and nature. Furthermore, he was convinced of the rebus nature of Mexican pictorials and applied this theory to the iconographic symbols which he perceived not as a ‘word-rebus’ but a ‘thought-rebus’. In his opinion, the representations of deities (in pictorials or as statues) were not embodiments, but symbols of the deities’ characteristics or even names; Seler (1902–1923), vol. 1, 407–416. Hans J. Prem, who defined Aztec glyphs as pictographics and hieroglyphics, criticised Seler’s theory of Aztec rebus writing; see Prem 1968. The debate is summarised in Bassett 2015, 79–81.

to be highly heterogeneous and cannot be defined by a stable iconography.¹³⁹ Henry B. Nicholson, who followed and modified Seler's iconographic interpretation, therefore started to integrate iconographic clusters, cult themes and deity-complexes in the identification and characterisation of pre-Hispanic Nahua gods, but maintained the importance put on identifying attributes, or 'diagnostic insignia' as he calls them.¹⁴⁰ Esther Pasztory, who describes Mesoamerican deities as complex arrangements defined by costumes, symbols and insignia, followed Seler's and Nicholson's emphasis on the primacy of iconographic 'insignia' as well.¹⁴¹ Umberger and Molly H. Bassett, in contrast, more recently showed the problematic side of this iconographic approach, which – by focusing on the outer appearance – tends to neglect the medial, pictorial and semantic context of a depicted deity embodiment and its individual social and religious functions.¹⁴² As Umberger stresses, 'the modern process of identifying deity figures by a system wherein fixed traits of costumes, accoutrements, and even gender are considered diagnostic may be misleading if conceived too simply'.¹⁴³ If we apply this to the listed pre-Christian Nahua deities in the *Primeros Memoriales*, the need for a critical reflection of intention, function and medial status of early colonial imagery becomes clear. Some of the illuminations may reveal more about the friars' religious interests, the limits of their knowledge and the transformation of pre-colonial sources than providing a reliable basis to decipher pre-Christian religious and visual Nahua cultures.

3. The compilation of the *Florentine Codex*

The image series on Nahua deities is part of the first chapter of the *Primeros Memoriales* on pre-Hispanic rituals and gods.¹⁴⁴ It is followed by chapters on pre-colonial Nahua concepts of the heavens and the underworld, rulership and things of mankind.¹⁴⁵ Later, during Sahagún's stay in

Tlatelolco, a fifth chapter about the things of Earth and Nature was added.¹⁴⁶ After this, the friar moved to the monastery of Mexico-Tenochtitlan where he spent three years compiling the Nahuatl texts and organising them into twelve books.¹⁴⁷ During this process, the first chapter about rituals and gods was split up into two books, one about deities and the other about the pre-Christian calendar, festivities and ceremonies. The visual appearance of the Nahua gods was thereby separated from information on the corresponding religious context.¹⁴⁸ Sahagún furthermore added two older writings: a collection of *huehuetlatolli* (formal Nahuatl speeches used by the Franciscans for missionary purposes) from 1547¹⁴⁹ and a text about the Spanish conquest dated around 1550 or 1555.¹⁵⁰ Finally, in 1569, a clean copy of the newly arranged Nahuatl texts was made (which included further information added by Sahagún's Mexican scribes).¹⁵¹ This final *Manuscrito de 1569* has been lost, but its texts are preserved in the Nahuatl column of the *Florentine Codex*. Nicholson's comparison of the Nahuatl texts in the *Primeros Memoriales* and the *Florentine Codex*, however, shows that little of Sahagún's Tepeapulco material was included in the manuscript version of 1569; the Nahuatl texts of the *Florentine Codex* mainly comprise information gathered in Tlatelolco and Mexico-Tenochtitlan.¹⁵² This means that the *Primeros Memoriales* must be regarded as an individual manuscript rather than a mere draft of the later codex.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, both knowledge compilations are connected by their manuscript architecture and the hierarchical organisation of the chapters, which elaborate on the macrocosm of the universe and the gods before turning to the microcosm of human beings, sorted into noble and ordinary peoples, and then discuss parts of the human body and diseases.¹⁵⁴

¹³⁹ Amongst other writers, see Seler 1902–1923, vol. 3, 450–455, vol. 4, 98–156. On the heterogeneous appearance of Huitzilopochtli, also see Boone 1989.

¹⁴⁰ Nicholson 1971. Quote *ibid.*, 408. Also see Nicholson 1976; Nicholson 1988.

¹⁴¹ Pasztory 1983, 79–81.

¹⁴² Umberger 2014, 83–84; Bassett 2015, 79–88.

¹⁴³ Umberger 2014, 93.

¹⁴⁴ The first paragraph, including the original title of chapter I, is missing. Paso y Troncoso named the chapter 'Ritos, Dioses' (Rites, Gods); Paso y Troncoso 1905–1907.

¹⁴⁵ Jiménez Moreno 1938, 32–33.

¹⁴⁶ Nicholson 1973, 208–234.

¹⁴⁷ *Florentine Codex*, book 2, prologue, fol. 1^v. Also see Ríos Castaño 2014, 225–229.

¹⁴⁸ Ríos Castaño 2014, 227.

¹⁴⁹ *Tratado de la retórica y teología de la gente indiana (Libro de la retórica)*, later book 6 of the *Florentine Codex*. Also see Cintora 1995; Espinoza 1997; Folger 2003, 224. For the Franciscan utilisation of the *huehuetlatolli*, see Baudot 1982; Ruiz Bañuls 2009; Ruiz Bañuls 2013.

¹⁵⁰ *Relación de la Conquista*. Later the text became book 12 of the *Florentine Codex*; Folger 2003, 224.

¹⁵¹ The lost manuscript may have been the copy Sahagún gave to Viceroy Enriquez; Ríos Castaño 2014, 109.

¹⁵² Nicholson 1973.

¹⁵³ Nicholson 1974; Quiñones Keber 1988a; Quiñones Keber 1988b.

¹⁵⁴ Quiñones Keber rightly points out that the structure of the *Primeros Memoriales* may have been shaped by the structure of Olmos's knowledge collection; see Quiñones Keber 1997, 18.

In the *Florentine Codex*, this taxonomy was extended according to a Christian *Scala Naturae* (Fig. 7) by adding a book on animals, plants and minerals.¹⁵⁵ The similar structure of the *Primeros Memoriales* and the *Florentine Codex* can probably be traced back to the (now lost) Castilian draft ('minuta' or 'memoria'), which Sahagún composed in 1558 on all the themes his final work should cover. Since the 1950s, research has been aware of the European classical and medieval models that shaped Sahagún's knowledge compilation; amongst others, the potential prototypes that are assumed to have been used are Aristotle's (384–322 BC) *Historia animalium* (350 BCE), Pliny the Elder's (23–79) *Naturalis historia* (c.77–79), Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana* (397–426), Isidor of Seville's (c.560–636) *Etymologiae* (c.630) and *De proprietatibus rerum* (c.1240) by the Franciscan Bartholomaeus Anglicus (c.1190–after 1250).¹⁵⁶

Sahagún's original plan was to divide the pages of his final work into three columns.¹⁵⁷ The central column was intended to contain Nahuatl text, the left one to provide a Castilian translation and the right one to offer a Nahuatl glossary, which was important for Spanish missionary preachers and confessors, Sahagún's original target audience. However, during a provincial Chapter Meeting in 1570, Sahagún's writings were examined by members of the Franciscan Order, who showed no inclination to provide any further financial assistance.¹⁵⁸ The project came to a halt and was shelved for over five years.¹⁵⁹ It was only with the help of Fray Rodrigo de Sequera, who was elected Franciscan commissary general

in 1575, that Sahagún was able to resume his work.¹⁶⁰ Sequera ordered a Castilian translation of all the Nahuatl texts and provided the means to create a new two-column bilingual manuscript – the *Florentine Codex*.¹⁶¹

By that time, the target audience of the manuscript had changed: the codex was no longer intended to be of use for the Christian mission, but to be sent to Spain for the president of the Council of the Indies, Juan de Ovando y Godoy (c.1530–1575), who was collecting data for his *Libro de las descripciones de Indias* and wished to see the manuscript.¹⁶² While the Castilian translation of the Nahuatl texts was written, the manuscript was adorned with about 1,855¹⁶³ illuminations, including the pre-Christian Nahua deities placed at the beginning of the first book and serving as a visual opening for the *Florentine Codex*.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ On Sequera's support of Sahagún's project, see Baudot 1988; Baudot 1995, 496–500.

¹⁶¹ For a comparison between the *Códices matritenses* and the *Florentine Codex*, see Gibson and Glass 1975, 366–368. According to Georges Baudot, the decision to translate the Nahuatl texts was influenced by the Spanish Crown's growing rejection of the usage of Nahuatl in Central Mexico during the second half of the sixteenth century; Baudot 1995, 94–104. Ríos Castaño 2014, 111 points out that the Castilian texts comprise two types of translation: 1) the Castilian texts begun in Tlatelolco for a missionary audience and 2) the texts written later for a Spanish audience.

¹⁶² *Florentine Codex*, book 2, prologue, fol. 2^r. Juan de Ovando y Godoy died shortly after Sequera's arrival in Mexico. In April 1577, Philip II wrote a letter to Viceroy Martín Enriquez and another to the archbishop of Mexico in May 1577 ordering the manuscript to be seized. In March 1578, Sahagún sent a letter to Philip II informing him that the year before, he had stopped working on the manuscript and had given it to Sequera. Sahagún offered to make a new copy of the manuscript if the codex did not reach Philip II, which shows that he had still kept some of his own writings. Sahagún's offer might be the reason why Philip II sent another letter to the viceroy in September 1578 ordering him to confiscate all the remaining documents in Sahagún's possession. In 1578, the archbishop informed Philip II that Sahagún had given his manuscript and all the remaining copies of it to Martín Enriquez. In December 1578, he wrote another letter to the king stating that Sahagún's manuscript and all the remaining related copies and originals had been shipped to Spain. The letters indicate the existence of two manuscripts, one given to Sequera in 1577 (almost certainly the *Florentine Codex*) and one handed to Martín Enriquez in 1578. Some scholars believe this second manuscript to be another copy of the *Florentine Codex*, which is now lost; cf. Nicolau d'Olwer and Cline 1973, 196–197. Also see León-Portilla 1999, 171. Others think it more likely that the second manuscript might have been the lost clean copy of all the Nahuatl texts (terminated in 1569 and now lost) or the *Florentine Codex*, which was given to Martín Enriquez via Sequera in 1578; amongst others, see Baudot 1995, 500–504; Bustamante García 1999, 336 ff.; León-Portilla 1999, 176; Benito Lope 2013, 18–19.

¹⁶³ Quiñones Keber 1988b, 206. The number of illuminations varies according to the counting system. Jeanette Favrot Peterson counted 1,862 primary figures and 601 ornamentals, for example; Peterson 1988, 274.

¹⁶⁴ On the deity series of the *Florentine Codex*, see amongst others Seler 1908; Robertson 1959; Sullivan 1982, 8–9; Nicholson 1988; Boone 1989; Gruzinski 1992, 65–77; Pohl and Lyons 2010, esp. 31–58.

¹⁵⁵ Also see López Austin 1974, 120; Bustamante García 1992, 326–330. Tzvetan Todorov describes the taxonomy of the manuscript as a scholastic *summa*; Todorov 1992, 235.

¹⁵⁶ Garibay Kintana 1953–1954, vol. 2, 68–71; Robertson 1959, 169–172; Robertson 1966; Bustamante García 1992, 355–364.

¹⁵⁷ *Florentine Codex*, book 1, prologue and 'al sincero lector', without foliation. Sahagún's original scheme is reflected in the visual organisation of the *Memoriales en escolios* (c.1665). See Ríos Castaño 2014, 216–219.

¹⁵⁸ See Baudot 1974 on the potential background of this conflict.

¹⁵⁹ *Florentine Codex*, book 2, prologue, fol. 2^r. According to Sahagún, the Order did not criticise the content of his writings, but refused to fund any scribes for further works. Sahagún was asked to finish the manuscript on his own, a task he was unable to accomplish due to his age and trembling hand; *ibid.* In 1570, Sahagún wrote two Castilian summaries in order to obtain approval for the continuation of his work, based on the existing 12 books of Nahuatl texts. The first one, called *Sumario*, was taken by Friar Miguel Navarro and Mendieta to Juan de Ovando from the Council of the Indies. The second one, called *Breve compendio de los ritos idolátricos que los indios desta Nueva España usaban en tiempo de su infidelidad*, was sent to Pope Pius V (1504–1572); Rome, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, A.A., Arm. I-XVIII, 1816. On the *Sumario* and *Breve compendio*, see Nicolau d'Olwer and Cline 1973, 194.



Fig. 7: Valadés, *Rhetorica Christiana*, Table with *The Great Chain of Being*, Perugia: Petrutius, 1579, table after p. 220.

4. The function of the painted table of contents in the *Florentine Codex*

The images of the pre-Christian Nahua gods are some of the few pictures redrawn from the *Primeros Memoriales*.¹⁶⁵ When they were copied (between c.1575 and 1577), the coloured drawings were edited for the new readership of the manuscript, which was now European. Whereas in the *Primeros Memoriales*, the deity images are presented as a list of unframed figures, which mainly face towards the left-hand column with the flanking Nahuatl text, in the *Florentine Codex*, the drawings are framed, separated from the alphabetical writings and turned into an image series that extends over six pages (Figs 8a–f). The viewpoint of the figures – which are still presented in the traditional pre-Hispanic profile view – now alternates according to the rhythm of flipping the pages: the deity embodiments of the first and the last page face towards the left (Figs 8a, f), but they are turned towards the right on the two double pages (Figs 8b–e). During their compilation, several drawings from the *Primeros Memoriales* were skipped, new figures introduced and the images rearranged.¹⁶⁶ While the number of dough figures stayed the same, the number of the human deity impersonators was reduced from 36 to 21 and a grouping of male and female deity impersonators took place (mixed in the *Primeros Memoriales*).¹⁶⁷ The visual complexity of the impersonator's body paint and ritual costumes was further reduced, mainly by diminishing the colourfulness of the prototypes: the vivid Maya blue (used frequently in the *Primeros Memoriales*) was replaced by green, and several ornamental elements (like the multi-coloured stripes on Huitzilopochtli's legs, Figs 3a and 5) were changed to grey (Figs 1 and 8a). The reinterpretation of the ritual costume of the deities also led to the infiltration of floral decoration clearly stemming from a European woodcut, now inserted as an ornament on Cihuacoatl's chest (Figs 9a and b). Furthermore, the three-dimensional nature of the drawings was augmented by adding shaded edges and altering the figure's corporal proportions.

Nevertheless, Sahagún's artists abstained from correcting pictorial errors (like missing arms) committed by the painters of the *Primeros Memoriales*; in one case (involving the Cioapipilti, Figs 10a and b), they even copied a dismissed underdrawing by inserting two connecting lines between the left sleeve and lower right hand of the goddess.

In contrast to the human deity impersonators, the dough figures remained practically uncoloured and were presented as a comparatively unimportant appendix (Fig. 8f). A closer look reveals that the images were regrouped. Their placement on the manuscript pages no longer shows the ritual arrangement of the statues on the ground (four of them facing a fifth one), but follows a new form of organisation that corresponds with the two-column layout: four of the figures, now glossed as representations of mountains, are placed in the right-hand column. Only one statue, which now bears the name of the deity Chalchiuhtlicue, was singled out and allocated in the left-hand column of the manuscript, directly below the last of the human deity impersonators. The new visual organisation of the statues thus classifies them into cult images of deities and personified representations of venerated natural sites.

In the *Florentine Codex*, the deity series is equipped with a foreword in which Sahagún informs the reader that the figures are images of the deities treated in the first book of the manuscript and were venerated by the native peoples of New Spain during their time of idolatry. He furthermore declares that each of the gods has his or her name written next to the head and the corresponding chapter and folio number at the feet.¹⁶⁸ The drawings thereby gain the function of a painted table of contents; the alphabetic glosses above and below the illuminations mark the iconographic figures as indexing images and establish a vertical reading direction, which corresponds to the vertical structure of the two-column manuscript page layout.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Quiñones Keber 1988a. Regarding the adaptation of the images in the *Florentine Codex*, also see Magaloni Kerpel 2014, 9–14.

¹⁶⁶ Quiñones Keber 1988a, 261–265.

¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, the number of the Cioapipilti has been increased to four.

¹⁶⁸ 'Al lector. Para la inteligencia de las figuras, o ymagines que estan aqui adelante: notara el prudente lector, que son las ymagines de los dioses, de que se trata en este primero libro: los quales adorauan estos naturales desta nueva españa, en tiempo de su ydolatria: cada vna tiene su nombre escrito iunto a la cabeça, y el capitulo, y numero de hoias, donde se trata del mismo dios, o ydolo: esta iunto a los pies'; *Florentine Codex*, book 1, fol. 9^v.

¹⁶⁹ In general, the pictures are structured in a top-to-bottom order; the system was only reversed on the last page of the series. In order to establish two coherent groups of deity impersonators and cult images, Chalchiuhtlicue, the first of the statues made of amaranth dough belonging to chapter 21, was placed at the bottom of the left-hand column, whereas the deity impersonator of Tezcatzoncatl belonging to the last chapter (chapter 22) was inserted above it.

The pictorial sequence of the deity figures follows the conventional alphabetic table of contents, so it does not replace a written directory, but rather forms a painted, parallel version.¹⁷⁰ The pictorial directory of the first book of the *Florentine Codex* is a unique example in the manuscript and – as far as I know – a singular case in the manuscript production of Early Colonial Central Mexico. But, as discussed later on, there is a predecessor in a printed sixteenth-century German mythographic manual on pagan gods, the layout of which was apparently influenced by an edition of Horapollon's *Hieroglyphica* included in the same publication.

As in the *Primeros Memoriales*, the picture series of the *Florentine Codex* focuses on the human deity impersonators, who are interpreted as pre-Christian Nahuatl gods. However, the Castilian and Nahuatl texts of the corresponding chapters are no longer restricted to a description of their ritual clothing, ornaments and attributes,¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Each of the twelve books of Sahagún's *Historia universal* is equipped with a Castilian title and prologue and an alphabetic table of contents, which lists the different book chapters. A closer look nevertheless reveals the inconsistent distribution of the contents within the manuscript. Also see Garone Gravier 2011. Most of the contents are placed at the beginning of the corresponding book (book 1 and books 6–12), but we can also find two overviews of the contents: besides listing its own contents, book 1 also includes the table of contents of books 2–5, and book 7 includes the table of contents of books 8–11 in addition to its own contents. These clusters indicate that the *Florentine Codex* was originally intended to be bound in two volumes, one containing books 1–5, the other containing books 7–11. Thus, book 6 and 12, both comprising older, previously written texts (see notes 149 and 150), must have been included towards the end of the compiling process. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the drawings of both books are the only uncoloured ones of the manuscript, hence both books may have been terminated in a hurry. Magaloni Kerpel 2011 interprets the lack of colours in book 6 as an imitation of woodcuts, not a result of haste in the compiling process of the manuscript. Also see Martínez 1989, 42. At the end of the compiling process, in 1577, the manuscript was bound in four volumes (vol. 1: books 1–5; vol. 2: book 6; vol. 3: books 7–10; vol. 4: books 11–12). In a second binding later, book 6 was incorporated into the third volume; see Rao 2011, 31 as well.

¹⁷¹ The Nahuatl writings still include a shortened description of the deities' clothing. In the Nahuatl text about Huitzilopochtli, for instance, we read: 'And he was thus arrayed: he had an ear pendant of lovely cotinga feathers; his disguise was the fire serpent. He had the blue netted sash, he had the maniple. He wore bells, he wore shells'. The English translation is from Ríos Castaño 2014, 220. The description of Huitzilopochtli's array is a reduced and lightly modified version of the Nahuatl text from the *Primeros Memoriales*. Details concerning the deity's head ornaments, face and body paint, sandals and shield are missing and a new form of adornment has been introduced (shells). Also see Anderson and Dibble 1950, vol. 14, part 2; Ríos Castaño 2014, 220. A subtle but significant novelty is the textual shift from present to past tense, which marks the description as a reference to former times, overcome by the Christian faith. In the Castilian text, the sole reference to Huitzilopochtli's ritual costume can be found in the mentioning of the fire serpent (*xiuhcoatl*), one of Huitzilopochtli's attributes, described here as a terrifying, fire-spitting dragon head ('cabeça de dragon, muy espantable: que echaua fuego, por la boca'), which does not relate at all to the tame serpent head pictured on Huitzilopochtli's spear-thrower. The quota-

tion is from the *Florentine Codex*, book 1, fol. 1^r. Again, the description of the array of deities does not entirely match the corresponding depiction. In the coloured drawing from the *Florentine Codex*, Huitzilopochtli's loincloth is still red, not blue as the text claims, the ear pendant is adorned with red, not the described turquoise cotinga feathers, and the bells and shells the text speaks of are barely identifiable in the image. In other cases (like the depiction of Quetzalcoatl and Chicomecoatl), the discrepancies arise from the fact that the image appears to be back to front in the *Florentine Codex*, while the Nahuatl text still refers to the prototype in the *Primeros Memoriales*, describing raised right arms (not left ones) and lowered left arms (not right ones). Also see Nicholson 1988; Quiñones Keber 1988a.

but – like the texts in European mythographic manuals – also detail the deities' characteristics and pagan veneration.¹⁷² It is here not the shared content (the iconographic depictions and descriptions) that interlock image and script, but the inserted folio and chapter numbers. This linkage draws on the systematic of alphabetical contents, employed as orientation aids, and the connection of two corresponding units – normally a chapter heading and chapter, but deity images and corresponding texts in this case. Seen against this backdrop, it is worth returning to Sahagún's statement once more, written in the prologue of the second book of the *Florentine Codex*, where he states that all the information collected was given to him in the form of pictures, which was the ancient Nahuatl 'script'.¹⁷³ Sahagún thereby marks indigenous drawings as pictographic or mnemonic containers of text – and his postulate is proved by the first images we are shown in the codex: the deity series, in which each figure is linked to an alphabetical chapter. Within this context, the drawings are presented as ancient Nahuatl sources and prefigurations of Sahagún's texts. The picture series is thus more than a painted table of contents; it turns into visual

¹⁷² In the Nahuatl text belonging to Huitzilopochtli, for instance (inserted in the right-hand column of the manuscript), we read: 'First Chapter, which telleth of the highest gods who were worshipped and to whom sacrifices were offered in times past. Humming-bird from the left (Uitzilopochtli), [was] only a common man, just a man. [He was] a sorcerer, an omen of evil; a madman, a deceiver, a creator of war, a war-lord, an instigator of war. For it was said of him that he brought hunger and plague – that is war. And when a feast was celebrated [for him], captives were slain; ceremonially bathed slaves were offered up. The merchants bathed them'; *Florentine Codex*, book 1, fol. 1^r. The English translation of the Nahuatl text is according to Anderson and Dibble 1950, vol. 14, part 2. This text alters the description of the properties attributed to Huitzilopochtli in the *Primeros Memoriales* (paragraph 10, fol. 270^v), where we read the following: 'Huitzilopochtli. He nourishes people. He makes people rich. He makes people wealthy. He makes peoples rulers. He is wrathful with people. He kills people'; quote: Sullivan 1997, 121. On the association of indigenous religions with Satanism, see Bauer 2014. For the mutilation of the deity's characteristics in the *Florentine Codex*, see Klor de Alva 1988, 49–50; Ríos Castaño 2014, 221. The Castilian version (inserted in the left-hand column) also emphasises Huitzilopochtli as the principal Mexican god, describing his veneration, but defaming him as a shape-shifter and sorcerer, pointing out that he was a common man who was only worshipped as a god after his death. On Huitzilopochtli's interpretation as a divinised human being, see López Austin 1973, 107; Bassett 2015, 63–64.

¹⁷³ *Florentine Codex*, book 2, prologue, fol. 1^r.



Fig. 8a: Deity series from the *Florentine Codex*, book 1, fol. 10^r.



Fig. 8b: Deity series from the *Florentine Codex*, book 1, fol. 10^v.



Fig. 8c: Deity series from the *Florentine Codex*, book 1, fol. 11'.



Fig. 8d: Deity series from the *Florentine Codex*, book 1, fol. 11^v.



Fig. 8e: Deity series from the *Florentine Codex*, book 1, fol. 12'.

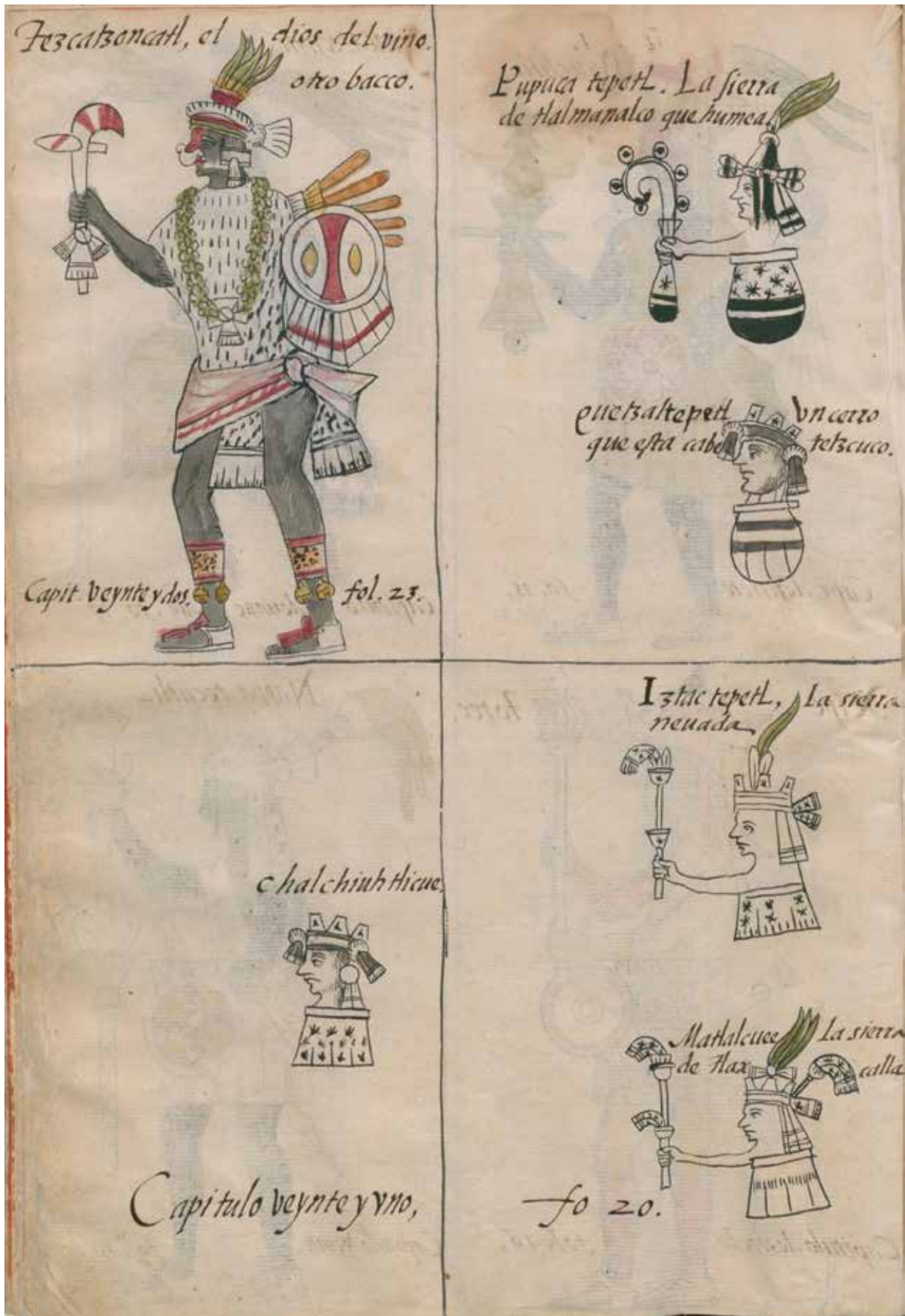


Fig. 8f: Deity series from the Florentine Codex, book 1, fol. 12r.



Fig. 9a: Detail from the *Florentine Codex*, book 1, fol. 10r.



Fig. 9b: Detail from the *Primeros Memoriales*, fol. 264r.



Fig. 10a: Detail from the *Florentine Codex*, book 1, fol. 11'.



Fig. 10b: Detail from the *Primeros Memoriales*, fol. 266'.

proof of the correspondence between image and script and the existence of pre-Hispanic pictographic originals, which were translated into writings. In short, the deity series becomes an argument in Sahagún's strategy of authorising.

4.1 Sahagún's deity series and Johannes Herold's Heydenweldt Nevertheless, Sahagún does not stick to a pictographic image theory, but mixes it with a rather European concept of images when defining the drawings of the deity series as the deities worshipped in pre-Hispanic times.¹⁷⁴ By interpreting the figures as mimetic depictions with an iconographic dimension, he adds another layer to the figures' meaning and medial status: the image series not only claims to be a prefiguration of the corresponding script, but it also functions as a visual collection of pre-Christian Nahua deities. Sahagún's painted table of contents thus works on two levels: on one hand it authorises his writings by presenting the alleged pictorial sources and suggesting a mnemonic status of the images used as ancient Nahua script. On the other hand, Sahagún claims a mimetic dimension for the figures, a medial status that is underlined by the usage of several of the deity depictions as pictorial prototypes for illuminations in other sections of the codex as well.¹⁷⁵

The compiled deity images from the *Florentine Codex* – which Gruzinski has called a 'catalogue of gods'¹⁷⁶ – are presented as a synoptic table, suggesting an overview of the pre-Christian Nahua pantheon understandable to a European readership.¹⁷⁷ Some of the figures bear alphabetic glosses, which interpret them as equivalents to Greco-Roman gods:¹⁷⁸ Huitzilopochtli is called another Hercules

(‘otro Hercules’),¹⁷⁹ Chicomecoatl becomes another ‘diosa Ceres’ (goddess Ceres), and Tezcatzontecatli was turned into the god of wine and another Bacchus (‘el dios del vino. otro bacco’).¹⁸⁰ Sahagún's iconographic construction of Nahua deities thus becomes the subject of a transcultural translation, which equates the Nahua figures to pagan deities from European antiquity.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, a hierarchisation of the Nahua gods takes place: the corresponding Castilian and Nahuatl chapters highlight the first deity of the series, Huitzilopochtli, as the principal of the Mexican gods.¹⁸² The following eleven deities (Figs 8a–c) are marked as being of

¹⁷⁹ In the corresponding Castilian text, the Hercules equation is explained by the deity's exceptional physical strength and martial skills; see the *Florentine Codex*, book 1. Based on these kinds of characteristics, Cornelia Logemann has interpreted the image series as an allegory; see Logemann 2012, 124. In the *Memoriales en tres columnas*, Sahagún interpreted Huitzilopochtli as another Mars, the god of war (‘otro Marte, dios de las guerras’) – a widespread simile in the writings of sixteenth-century missionaries and chroniclers also employed by Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (1478–1557) in his *Historia General y Natural de las Indias* (1535, book X, 54) and by the *Durán Codex* (book 2, 23–24). It is only the later *Memoriales en español* that equates Huitzilopochtli with Hercules; cf. Boone 1989; Olivier 2016, 193–196. We can only speculate on the reasons for this shift. See Pohl and Lyons 2016, 13–15; Olivier 2016, 197; Cummins 2016.

¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, Xiuhtecuhtli is called another Vulcan, the Cioapipilti and three flanking minor goddesses are interpreted as nymphs (‘Ninfas’), Chalchiuhtlicue is called an ‘otro Juno’ (another Juno) and Tlazolteotl is turned into another Venus (‘otro Venus’). Tlaloc, probably for want of a classical European prototype, is glossed as a rain god (‘dios de las pluujas [lluvias]’). In comparison with Sahagún's earlier writings, we can find several differences here: in the *Memoriales en tres columnas*, Paynal is called another Mercury (‘otro Mercurio’) and Teteosinnan another Artemis; neither of them were included in the later Castilian translation and the image series from the *Florentine Codex*, however. Furthermore, in the Nahuatl manuscript, Cihuacoatl was referred to as another Venus (‘otra Venus’), a comparison the *Florentine Codex* ascribes to Tlazolteotl. In the later Castilian translation, Cihuacoatl is called ‘our mother Eve’ (‘nuestra madre Eva’), which is not repeated in the glossed image of the *Florentine Codex*, however. The annotated Nahuatl text also calls Chalchiuhtlicue ‘another Neptune, goddess of the sea and the rivers’ (‘otra Ne[p]tuno, diosa de la mar y de los rios’), which was changed to ‘otra Juno’ in the Castilian translation and the glossed depiction of the *Florentine Codex*. Equating the Cioapipilti with nymphs was occurred in the *Florentine Codex*; Olivier 2016, 192–193; Laird 2016, 173–174.

¹⁸¹ The equating of Greco-Roman and pre-Hispanic gods can be interpreted as a forecast of Mexico's spiritual future as the European pagan gods are the ones early Christian writers – like Justin Martyr (100–165) in his *First Apology* (155–157) – identified with the demons cast out by Christ. This is a destiny Sahagún and his fellow missionaries anticipated for the pre-Hispanic deities as well, convinced as he was that their own god was the only true one, unique and therefore untranslatable. In the appendix of the first book, Sahagún quotes in Latin from the Book of Wisdom, 12, 13 (‘For there is no other God but Thou, who hast care of all’) and writes ‘This is thus revealed: Huitzilopochtli is no god; Tezcatlipoca is no god; Tlaloc and Tlazoltecutli are not gods; Quetzalcoatl is no god, neither is Cihuacoatl, etc.’ He concludes with Psalm 5:5: ‘All the gods of the gentiles are demons’; the English translation is according to Anderson and Dibble 1979, 63. See Laird 2016, 170–175 as well. On the transcultural translation of gods and the theological implications, cf. Assmann 1996.

¹⁸² ‘Capitulo primero, que habla, del principal dios: que adorauan, y a qujen sacrificauan los mexicanos. Llamando vitzilubuchtlit’; *Florentine Codex*, book 1, fol. 1^r.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, book 1, fol. 9^v.

¹⁷⁵ Also see Boone 1989, 31–33 who points out that the drawing of Huitzilopochtli was used as a ‘stock image’ in the *Florentine Codex*.

¹⁷⁶ Gruzinski 1992, 73.

¹⁷⁷ For more on Sahagún's organisation of the Nahua pantheon, see Umberger 2014, 90–93; Laird 2016, 172–173; Olivier 2016, 202–203.

¹⁷⁸ The comparison of pre-Hispanic and European gods is also repeated in the corresponding Castilian texts. The equating of Nahua deities with gods of Greek and Roman antiquity has its forerunner in the Castilian annotations to the Nahuatl text of Sahagún's *Memoriales en tres columnas* on fols. 33^r–45^r, composed in Tlatelolco between c. 1563 and 1565, and in a corresponding Castilian translation, *Memoriales en español* (c. 1569–1571), fols. 1^r–5^r, written in Mexico-Tenochtitlan. On equating pre-Hispanic and pagan deities, also see López Austin 1974, 125; Todorov 1992, 231–233; Gruzinski 1992, 65–77; Pohl and Lyons 2010; Laird 2016; Olivier 2016; Cummins 2016. Throughout the *Florentine Codex*, Sahagún repeatedly refers to classical antiquity to describe the pre-Hispanic past. In the prologue of the first book, for instance, he equates the ruined Toltec city of Tula with Troy, links the inhabitants of Cholula with the Romans, and the Tlaxcalteca with the inhabitants of Carthage. See the *Florentine Codex*, book 1, prologue, fol. 2^r.

superior importance as well, whereas the gods treated from chapter 13 onwards (Figs 8 d–f) are classified as of lower rank and dignity and the dough statues (Fig. 8f) are called ‘only imagined’.¹⁸³ This organisation of the Nahua pantheon was probably inspired by a contemporary classification of the Greco-Roman pantheon sorted into deities of major and minor relevance, with special importance being attributed to the twelve Olympic Gods, or *Dei consentes*.¹⁸⁴ By applying a related sorting of the Nahua gods and explicitly equating some of them to Greco-Roman deities, Sahagún assimilates the compiled pre-Christian Nahua deities into the pantheon of pagan gods of classical antiquity.

In search of a sixteenth-century model of a similar synoptic series of pre-Christian gods and – even more importantly – a similar interlocking of images and script, I came across Johannes Basilius Herold’s (1514–1567) *Heydenweldt Vnd irer Götter anfängcklicher vrsprung...* (‘Pagan world and the origin of its gods...’).¹⁸⁵ The book, printed by Heinrich Petri (1508–1579) in Basel in 1554, is a compilation and vernacular translation of different texts

¹⁸³ ‘El capitulo treze, trata, de los dioses: que son menores en dignidad, que los arriba dichos’; *Florentine Codex*, book 1, fol. 10. In the Nahuatl text it says ‘Thirteenth Chapter, which telleth of the little gods – the lesser [ones], who were considered the very old gods’; the English translation is according to Anderson and Dibble 1982, vol. 1, 11. The Castilian text says ‘dioses ymaginarios’ (imaginary gods). ‘Twenty-first Chapter, which telleth of those called the Little Molded ones (Tepictoton) (...) Those thus named Tepictoton were only imagined’; English translation according to Anderson and Dibble 1982, vol. 1, 21.

¹⁸⁴ The twelve Roman *Dei consentes* are Jupiter, Neptune, Apollo, Mars, Mercury, Vulcan, Minerva, Ceres, Juno, Diana, Venus and Vesta. The *Dei selecti* comprise Saturn, Orcus, Bacchus, Janus, Genius, Sol, Luna, Tellus and Bona Dea. The minor gods (*Dei indigetes*) also include demigods. Guilhem Olivier points out that this tripartite model was also used in Augustine’s *De civitate Dei contra paganos*, a book included in the library of the Franciscan monastery of Tlatelolco and from which Sahagún quotes in the prologue of the third book of the *Florentine Codex*; see Olivier 2016, 203. Also see Bustamante García 1989; Bustamante García 1992; Laird 2016, 172–174, 176. On Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* in the library of Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, see Mathes 1982, 33. The tripartite model was furthermore applied in the *Theologia mythologica* (1532, republished in 1558 as *Magazine of the Gods*) written by the German scholar Georg Pictor (c.1500–1569) to classify Greco-Roman deities and compare them to Asian and Egyptian ones; Sez nec 1953, 228. The same systematisation was used by the Dominican Bartholomé de las Casas (c.1484–1566) and the Franciscan missionary Fray Juan de Torquemada (c.1562–1624) in his *Monarquía Indiana* (1615). Regarding the classification of the Nahua gods, also see Gruzinski 1992, 65; Quiñones Keber 1988a, 261; Umberger 2014, 92; Laird 2016, 172; Olivier 2016, 202–203.

¹⁸⁵ Johannes Basilius Herold, *Heydenweldt Vnd irer Götter anfängcklicher vrsprung*, Basel: Henr. Petri, 1554. One copy of the book is kept at the University Library in Heidelberg: C1588 Folio RES (<http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/herold1554>). Amongst other texts, the compilation comprises six books of Diodorus Siculus’ *Bibliotheca historica* and Dictys Cretensis’ *Ephemeris belli Troiani*. On Herold, his activity in Basel and his *Heydenweldt*, see Sez nec 1953, 192, 195 (n. 25), 229 (n. 36), 240, 316; Burckhardt 1967; Mohr 2012; Plotke 2014; Gindhart 2017; Noll 2019.

on the pre-Christian knowledge of the pagan world. The first section of *Heydenweldt* comprises a treatise on the Greco-Roman pantheon, which opens just like Sahagún’s manuscript with a visual compilation or – as Herold calls it – a directory (‘verzeichnu[n]g’) of the most important pagan deities treated in the subsequent textual chapters (Figs 11a and b, Fig. 12).¹⁸⁶ Herold divides the male and female gods of classical antiquity into two groups, gathered on two double pages. The first compilation shows the twelve Olympic gods or ‘Dei consentes’ (Figs 11a and b), while the second table gathers eight ‘Dei selecti’ (Fig. 12).¹⁸⁷ The images are arranged symmetrically and set in rectangular and framed image fields. Each of the pre-Christian deities is labelled with an individual name. Unlike in Sahagún’s picture series, the deities are not set against a neutral background, but are part of narrative scenes. The corresponding textual chapters are dedicated to either one or two of the pagan gods. Prior to each of the texts, we find a repetition of the related deity figure taken from the initial synoptic tables (Figs 13a and b). By repeating the figures (easily done in a printed book), Herold interlocks the images and script, or rather the deity depiction and corresponding alphabetical description, in a strikingly similar way to Sahagún.

Herold’s chapters on the pagan gods are slightly modified translations of the mythographic manual *De deis gentium historia* written by Giglio Gregorio Giraldi (1479–1552) and first published in Basel in 1548.¹⁸⁸ An examination of Herold’s and Sahagún’s representation of the Greco-Roman and Nahua gods respectively reveals a set of similarities: like Sahagún’s descriptions of the Nahua deities in the *Florentine Codex*, Herold’s texts elaborate on the hierarchical position of the pagan gods, their characteristics and pre-Christian veneration. Furthermore, and typical of mythographic texts from the sixteenth century, a description of the deities’ outer appearance and attributes is included. In the book on Jupiter (Fig. 13a), for instance, the first figure from Herold’s deity series, Jupiter, is characterised as ‘generally depicted seated on an ebony throne, naked from head to belt, in his left hand a sceptre and in his right a thunder arrow, which he had shot

¹⁸⁶ Jupiter, Apollo, Minerva, Mars, Neptune, Ceres, Mercury, Juno, Diana, Vulcan, Vesta and Venus.

¹⁸⁷ Janus, Bacchus, Saturn, Sol, Genius, Luna, Plutus and Cellus. Furthermore, Herold placed a depiction of different antique games below the ‘selecti’, which he interpreted as predecessors of medieval knights’ games.

¹⁸⁸ *De deis gentium varia et multiplex historia*, Basel: Johannes Oporinus, 1548 (republished in Lyon 1565). On Giraldi and his manual, see Sez nec 1953, 226–278; Enekel 2002.

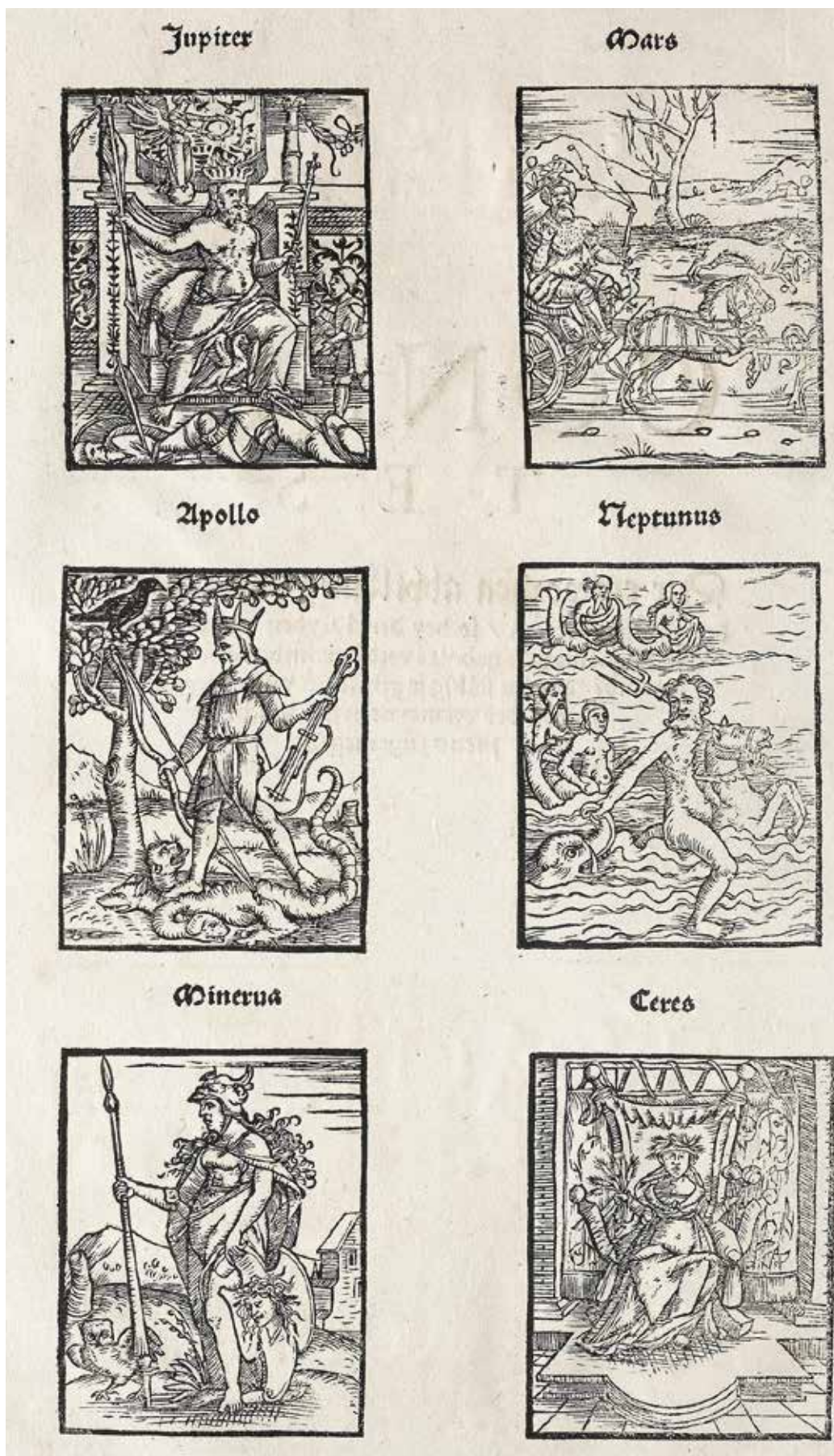


Fig. 11a: *Dei consentes*, from Johannes Basilius Herold, *Heydenweldt*, Basel, 1554, Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, C1588 Folio RES.

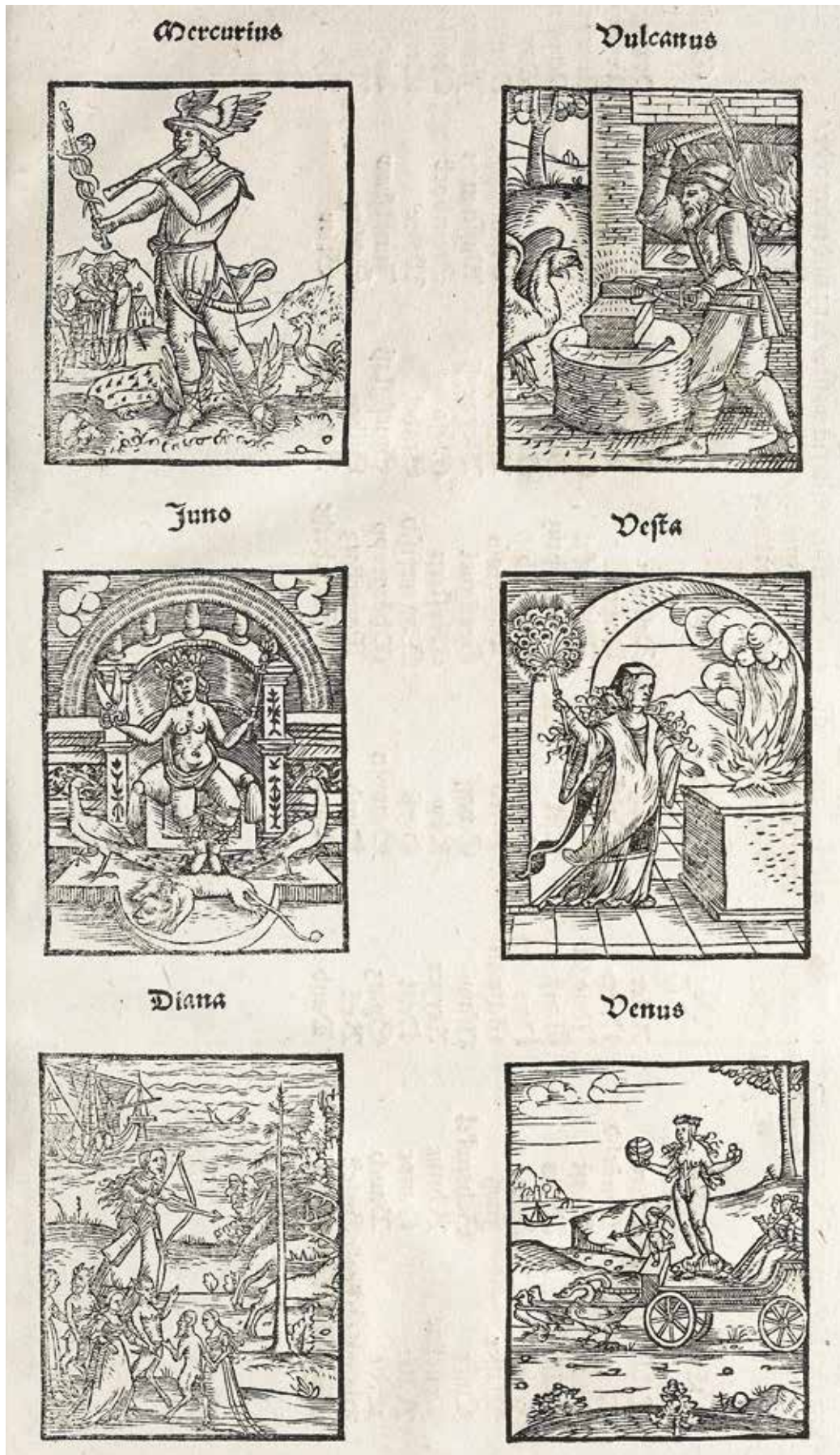


Fig. 11b: *Dei consentes*, from Johannes Basilius Herold, *Heydenweldt*, Basel, 1554, Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, C1588 Folio RES.

Janus



Saturnus



Bacchus



Sol



Fig. 12: *Dei selecti*, from Johannes Basilius Herold, *Heydenweldt*, Basel, 1554, Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, C1588 Folio RES.

Genius



Plutus



Luna



Tellus



Spil.

Das ander büch. Jupiter.



S nun anzeigen/wöllichs vnder den Heyden / die höchsten vñ mächtigste Götter geheissen/wil ich in sonderheyt von yedem nun was sye gehalten anzeigen. Vndersts von dē Jupiter / den sie den anfang aller dinge nannten / vñ auch für ein herren alles dessen so do wäre. Dañ wie die seel den leyb / also (sagt Cornutus) herrschet der Jupiter alle welt / der wegē ob die alten weisen leüt gleich wol wüßte / das ereinig vñnd alleinig / noch gaben sye ime vil zūnammens / vñnd vorab nannten jne die Latiner Jupiter als ein helffer / die Griechen (was der ist ein vrhab des lebens. Die

andern zūnammens wollen wir nach vñnd nach auch fürtragen / Cicero schreibt also von jme. Man zält vñnd sagt von dreyen Jupitern. Den ersten vñnd andern/wöllend ertlich / in Arcadien / des einen vatter habe Aether geheissen / des andern Celum / der dritt sey in Creta oder Candiern erporn vñnd ein son Saturni / do dan sein grab noch vorhandt seye. Varro aber / sagt wol von dreyhundert Jupitern / die hin vñnd wider durch den aber glauben der alten zūuerchren auffgworffen worden seyen.

Sein bildnuß gemeinlich sach man sitzend auff einem Helsenbeynin Königstül / von dem haupt bis zū der gürtel gantz plos / in seiner linken händ trüger ein Königstab / in der rechten hand ein Donnerpfeil den er über abschoss vff die Risen / die jme dan getödt vnder den füßen lagen. Nebē jme stünd / zur einen seytten ein Adler / der ein schönen Knaben fürret / wellicher Knab in der hand hatt ein schöns trinckgschir / vñnd jme dem Jupiter dor mit zetrincken bot. Er war auch vñden ab bedeckt.

ertlich als die Cretenser oder Candioten / maalten jne on ohren / die Lacedemonier gaben jme zū vier ohren. In der Sonnen statt Aegypti / do bildete sye jne / auß gold in gstalt eins jünglings / dnoch nit barter / gaben jme in die rechte hand ein geysel mit dero er klopfet / in die lincke ein straal sampt ertlichen ähern. Die andern machten jne in gstalt eins gstanden vñnd tapfermanns.

Martians Capella der bildet seinen Jupiter mit einer gflamerten Kron vff dem haupt / vber die selbig spreyt er jme ein rot schleyerlin vñnd ein weiß hembd / oben zum vberrock / gabe er jme von Lasur farb ein Kleyd das mitt steinlin versezt vñnd gestickt / in die rechte außgestreckte händ zwo Englen / die eine guldin / die and auß augstein / mit der linken / steürt er sich auff ein geygen mit neun seytten / ghüenet stifelin trägt er an / vñnd tritt auff ein garn.

Wir disem gmäl wolten sye zūuerst on geben / Erstlich das man bei seinem sitzen abnemmen solt / wie vnueränderlich / vñnd stätt sein gwalt wäre / das er aber oberteyls plos / solte zū verstont sein wie er in dē himblischen seynen gschöpffen / so sichtpar / wünderbarlich vñnd hell / darzū allein den englen

c ij sichts

Fig. 13a: The book on Jupiter, from Johannes Basilius Herold, *Heydenweldt*, Basel, 1554, Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, C1588 Folio RES, fol. e II.

Das dritte buch. Apollo vnd Sol.



S Wir nun an Apollinem kummen / erzält Cicero der selbigen vier / sage der vhralt vnder jnen sey von Vulcano exoren / vnd ein hütet der Statt Achen geachtet. Der ander seye ein son Corybantis in Creta / wöllicher mit dem Jupiter vmb die herrschafft der Insel gezancket. Den dritten habe Jupiter auß Laronaerzeüget / der sich zu Delo nider gelassen. Den vierden heyst er ein Arcadier / der habe auch das Landrecht do selbst auffgericht.

Nun dem Apollini so hernach ob jro gleich vil gewesen für einen gnommen / gibt man vier stuck zu / dorinnen er überreffenlich vor andern gepreyset. Er ist ein Harpffenschlaher / hernach ein erfunder der artzney vnd ärzt / ein schütz vnd werffer / zum vierden einen wharsager hielten sie jne / vnd so hob in disen künsten / das er als ein Gott dessen alles auffgeworffen ward.

Sein gstat ward also gemaaket ein vnbarterer jüngling der ein dryspitze Cron vff dem haupt / ein geygen in d lincken / in der rechtē ein bogen züschliessen / vnder seinen füßen lag ein dryhauptiger Drach von jme erschossen / der Lorberbaum doruff ein rappe saß / stünd neben jme.

Vnd dieweyl er zu zeiten an statt der Sonnen genommen / die über schwäncklich groß hitz / in dem lufft ein zerrüttig vnd säulung anrichtet / doruff dann der schelm oder pestilenz entstat / haben sie jme die sträl oder pfeyl zugeben / do här es noch bey vns der Butsch geheissen. Etlich geben jme zu das die Sonn on onderlass die f. uechtigkeit an sich biß in die lufft ziehe / doruff dann regen würdt / vñ die welt mit erneuert vnd abgewaschen / deshalben er so jungschaffen.

Porphyrus gibt zu / das diser Apollo am Himmel die Sonn / auff der erden Liber sey. Vnder der erden Apollo. Derhalb er drey zeichen habe / ein Leyren die do die züsamē hellung der himlischen läuff bedeiitte. Ein greyfften als ein jüdisch zeichen. Die Sträl als einem hellischen schadhafftē Gott / etlich geben jme einen rappen für den greiffen / das Phornitus widerficht derhalb das der selb vogel schwarz / vnreyn / vund do baß bey der helle der Sönen ein Schwan stünde / zü de das der Schwan so liebliche stün hat.

n iij Der

Fig. 13b: The book on Apollo and Sol, from Johannes Basilius Herold, *Heydenweldt*, Basel, 1554, Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, C1588 Folio RES, fol. n IIII.

at the giants, who lay dead below his feet. He is flanked by an eagle and a beautiful youth who holds a beautiful cup with which he offers Jupiter something to drink'.¹⁸⁹

Herold's iconographic description of Jupiter and the other pagan gods is based on Giraldi's unillustrated Latin writings.¹⁹⁰ For *Heydenweldt*, Herold not only translated and edited Giraldi's texts, but he also took care to include woodcuts of the deities, eager as he was to present his readers with a matching deity depiction and description (Figs 13a and b).¹⁹¹ Herold's images of the pagan gods are visual (re-) translations of an earlier *ekphrasis* and are thus text-based images. But within the visual organisation of *Heydenweldt*, the dependencies between the pictures and texts are reversed and a new image status is established: by presenting the woodcuts prior to the textual descriptions, Herold uses the figures as indexing images, which link the images and script as two corresponding units. Furthermore, by means of the woodcuts, he visualises – and thus establishes – an iconography of the pagan deities described in the subsequent text; it is now the material existence of the depiction that grounds and proves the description, not the other way round. In short, within *Heydenweldt*, the deity images (actually introduced as a novelty) are presented as pictorial sources and reference media.

Herold apparently gained his inspiration for systematically interlocking deity images and corresponding texts from the visual organisation of another section of *Heydenweldt*, which is entitled *Bildschrift* (picture writing) and comprises an illustrated translation of Horapollon's *Hieroglyphica*.¹⁹² Since Horapollon's Greek treatise on Egyptian hieroglyphs was rediscovered in 1419 and taken to Florence shortly after that, it stimulated numerous European translations.¹⁹³ Illustrated *Hieroglyphica* editions became common from the sixteenth century onwards. For the first time, these books made the alleged Egyptian signs visible by (re-)translating Horapollon's *ekphrasis* into images. The inserted depictions – the image of a scaly snake biting its own tail as a representation of the world (Figs 14 and 15a), for instance – are script-based imagery. They reconstruct the 'original' hieroglyphs alphabetically described and interpreted by Horapollon's texts. However, as the process of image formation was simultaneously a process of visualising and thus of re-establishing the pictorial prototypes of the texts, it led to an inversion of the dependency between images and script: the visual organisation of the illustrated *Hieroglyphica* editions does not present the newly created images as reconstructions, but as prefigurations of the writings. This supremacy of the picture is also evident in Herold's *Bildschrift*, which uses the same strategy of interlocking depictions and descriptions that we find in Herold's section on the pagan gods: each of the two books of the translated *Hieroglyphica* opens with a synoptic table – or 'directory' as Herold calls it – which presents the reader with an overview of all the signs treated and explained in the subsequent chapters (see Fig. 14).

¹⁸⁹ 'Sein bildnuß gemeinlich sach man sitzend auff einem Helfenbeynin Königstul/von dem haupt biß zu der gürtel gantz polss/ in seiner lincken hand trug er ein Königstab/ in der rechten hand ein Donnerpfeil den er über abschoss vff die Risen/ die jme dann getoedt vnder den fuessen lagen. Neben jme stund/ zur einen seyten ein Adler/ der ein schoenen knaben fueret/ wellicher knab inn der hand hatte ein schoens trinckschir/ vnd jme dem Jupiter domit zetrincken bot. Er war auch vnden ab bedeckt'; quoted from Herold, *Heydenweldt*, 43.

¹⁹⁰ Giglio Gregorio Giraldi, *De Deis gentium varia et multiplex historia...* Basel 1548, 75–76.

¹⁹¹ The origin of the woodcuts Herold used for *Heydenweldt* has not been clarified yet. According to Seznec, Herold derived his images from fifteenth-century engravers; see Seznec 1953, 240, n. 79. The same depictions of the pagan gods can also be found in Georg Pictor's *Apotheseos tam exterarum gentium quam Romanorum deorum libri tres* (Basel, 1558).

¹⁹² *Bildschrift Oder Entworffne Wharzeichen dero die vhralten Aegyptier/ in ihrem Goetzendienst/Rhaetten/ Gheymnussen/ vnd anliegenden gschaefften/ sich an statt der buochstaeblichen schriffen gepraucht habend. Inn zwei buecher durch etwa Horum ein Heylig geachten Priester vnd König in Aegypten/ vor dreytausent hundert jaren verfaßt/ vnnnd beschriben. See Gindhart 2017 regarding Herold's *Bildschrift*.*

¹⁹³ On the reception of the *Hieroglyphica* and the different translations and editions circulating in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Gindhart 2017, 246–267.

At the beginning of these texts, Herold inserted repetitions of the individual signs taken from the visual compilation of the directory (Figs 15a and b). By prepending the images and calling them *vorbilder* (models), he clearly marks the depictions as sources of the alphabetical writings. Herold's postulated textual decipherment and translation of the figures draws on the sixteenth-century European conception of Egyptian hieroglyphs as a form of picture-writing based on iconic symbols that incorporate an ancient and universal 'truth'.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, it follows the theories of neo-Platonists like Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), who was convinced that the Egyptians were able to 'comprehend an entire discourse in one stable image'.¹⁹⁵ This conception of images – which reverses the actual dependency of image and script by presenting pictures not as textual illustrations, but as ancient, text-independent containers of knowledge – is characteristic of other sixteenth-century illustrated editions of the *Hieroglyphica* as well. But Herold's *Heydenweldt* shows that this new 'hieroglyphic' image status could also be expanded and adapted to other knowledge fields of classical antiquity: by presenting iconographic figures of pre-Christian gods and interlocking them with corresponding texts in a way similar to his section on ancient Egyptian signs, Herold awarded the deity images a new epistemic role – the depictions were not presented as subordinated illustrations of the text, but as original visual sources.

5. Conclusion

The comparison of the synoptic tables of pre-Christian deities and their linkage to the subsequent chapters in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* (1577) and Herold's *Heydenweldt* (1554) reveals considerable similarities. In both cases, directories composed of iconographic image compilations are used to give a visual overview of a pre-Christian pantheon discussed in the corresponding textual units. Furthermore, by putting the synoptic tables in a prior position and employing a similar system of interlocking images and textual chapters, the deity figures are turned into media of evidence, pictorial sources and prefigurations of the writings. In Herold's *Heydenweldt*, the model of his visual compilation of pagan deities and the strategy of interlocking image and script was probably

inspired by his chapter on the ancient Egyptian writing system, *Bildschrift* (an illustrated and translated edition of Horapollon's *Hieroglyphica*), which was included in the same publication. However, to understand the potential influence of Herold's publication on Sahagún's manuscript, further research will be necessary in order to clarify models and successors of the visual organisation Herold used in his *Heydenweldt* and a possible reception of Herold's book or similar publications in New Spain. Nevertheless, given the emphasis Sahagún puts on Nahua pictorials as ancient sources of information and alternative script, a potential link between Herold's and Sahagún's visual organisation of images and texts on the pagan pantheon might be found in the shared influence of contemporary publications on 'picture-writing' or hieroglyphs as an ancient and alternative form of script, including the numerous illuminated *Hieroglyphica* editions circulating in the sixteenth century.

The analysis of the directory of pre-Christian Nahua deities in the first book of Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* reveals a usage of images that goes beyond an ornamental or illustrative function. Rather, it shows the strategic employment of pictures, which are presented as a painted table of contents and – at the same time – as ancient containers of text and authenticating sources of Sahagún's alphabetic writings. This strategy of verifying texts via images (and in some cases intentionally concealing the original oral sources in the process), which was developed in two consecutive steps to be found in the images and texts of the deity series from the *Primeros Memoriales* and the *Florentine Codex*, leads us to related questions about Sahagún's image production and the character and origin of his pictorial material. As Sahagún's description of the Nahua deities in the *Florentine Codex* resembles the texts of Early Modern mythographic manuals on pagan gods of European antiquity and the layout of the deity series can be linked to the visual organisation of sixteenth-century publication on Egyptian hieroglyphs, the necessity of a thorough contextualising of Sahagún's works in the cosmos of contemporary printed books imported from Europe becomes clear. For only by capturing the semantics implied in Sahagún's literary and visual models are we able to comprehend the cultural framing Sahagún used to reconstruct the pre-Christian Nahua past – and by understanding this framework, we might even be able to gain a better understanding of how Sahagún transformed and adapted his original material in order to fit it into the framework that was employed.

¹⁹⁴ On the European reception of Egyptian hieroglyphs, see Volkmann 1923; Assmann and Assmann 2003; Keiner 2003; Scholz 2007; Curran 2007; Kern 2013, 64–88; Gindhart 2017, 244–252. On the reception of hieroglyphs in Spain, see Germano Leal 2014.

¹⁹⁵ Curran 2007, 97.

der des ersten buchs Lori.

lxxxvij



hh 4

Ewigkelt.

Die Aegyptier / so sie die vnendlich ewigkelt bedeyten wolten vnnnd andern für schreiben / so malten sie Sonn vnnnd Mon / darumben das diese zwey vnschweiffende Liecht von ye weldten här zündend.



Ewigkelt.

Sye prauchen auch ein andere bedeutung die Ewigkelt zezeygen. Nämlich den schlangen / so man Basiliscum nennet / wölcher goldfarb angestrichen mit dem schwartz vnnnd schnabel / etlich Götter umb ringet. Vnd sagen das bedeytete darumben die Ewigkelt / seytēmal dreierlei ahrtē der schlangen seyen / die andern all vsserhalb der ahrt absterbe / dann diese sey vntōdlich / vñ allein tōdte sy andere thier mit seinem achem / on allen biß. So dan nun das leben vnnnd tōde gleich inn seinem gwalt stande / so schließ es billich die Götter ein.

Welde.



Die welt zeschreiben maalen sie ein schlangen / die schüppicht vnnnd von mancherley farbenn gleyßt / auch ihrs schwantz selbs frisse vnnnd im rachen hatt. Do die schüppē das gskirn bedeytten. So ist das thier eben wie die welde schwartzfärtig / seiner grösse nach zūachtē. Vnd die weil es so hāl oder glatt / bedeyt sie das wasser. Darumben aber das sie jārlich je hēbd hin fallen laße / vnnnd darmit je alter hin legt / zeigt sie gnüg an / in was weiß vnnnd wie die veränderung der jarläuff sich statts erneüwern vnnnd jüngen. Das sie aber ires eignen leybs sich selbs speiset / will anzeigen / das alles das yhenig / das durch Götliche fürsichtigkelt inn diser welt erzeüget / auch von ihm selbs wider zū grundt gericht würdt.

Jar.



Isis die Göttin ein weibsbild / würdt zūbedeytēnn das Jar gemaalt / dan bey den Aegyptiern ist Isis das Gskirn das inn ires sprach Sothis genant / bei den Griechē ἄστρούς. dessenhalben das eben dasselbig / das übrig gskirn etwz meistert. Vez groß dann klein erscheine / etwa dunckel etwa hell. Darzū wirt auß einem ersten auffgang vorgefagt vnnnd abgesehen.

33

Fig. 15a: Alphabetic decoding and explanation of the hieroglyphs (Bildzeichen), from Johannes Basilius Herold, *Heydenweldt*, Basel, 1554, Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, C1588 Folio RES, p. LXXXIX, detail.

xc **Heyliger gschrieffte war zeichen**

sehen/wie der gantz jarlauff sein werde/also dz sie Jsidem nit vnbillich für das jar schreiben.

Jar.
Noch ein ande bedeünuß des Jars nemmē sie ab dē für geschribnen palmenbaum. Dann eben vnder allen bāumen wider jro aller ahit/so truckt er yedes News mōs zeyt ein schoß/also das in zwölff Monatē/zwölff āst auffwachsen/vnd ein gantz volkommen jar darauß erlernet wirt.

Monat.
Nüzzeigen ein Monat/so maale si diser palmen āsten einen/oder aber ein obsich kōrten neüwē Mon/mitt seinen hōrnern. Des palmen āsts vsach/ist vor anzeige/der vmbthört Mon darumbē/das von stūd so er neüw wirt fünffgeshen seiner theylen lār stōnd/die er noch außfüllen soll. Also vollen/müssen wider fünffgehen theyl gemindert werden. domit so thört er in dreißig tagen die hōrner vnder sich.

Schalt jar.
In schalt jar anzūzeigen/maalen sie ein vierdten theil eines ackers. Ein acker aber hat bey jnē anderthalbhūdert schüch. durch desselben vierteyl sie das jar bedeüiten wöllen/thüt das von dem erstenn auffgang des sterns Jsidis/biß zū dem andern jrn auffgang/ein viertel ein jaro sich verlaufft. Das jar sagen sie halte drey hundert fünff vnd sechzig tag/deshalb sie alweg im vierdten jar/den übrigē einzālen/dann vier mal der vierde theyl/machen ein gantzen tag.

Gott.
In anzeigung Gottes für zūschreiben maalen sie disen vogel den Adler/darumbenn das der so fruchtbar vnd langwürig.

Sonn.
Darzü vermeinen sie das der Adler sey der Sonnen bild vnd warzeichen/dann vor anders gflügels ahit/so siche er gstracks inn die Sonnen strömen hinein. Deshalb die ärtz zū dem weethagen der augen/ein kraut prauchen (ich liß hie ein stein/den man *arvity* nennet.) derwegen so maalen sie zū zeitenn ein Adler/die Sonne/als ein herren des gichts zūbedeüiten. Darzü vergleichend sie dem Adler der Sonnen/vmb diser vsach willen/habē jro auch jne zūgeeignet/darumbē das das weiblin/sich so offte jme das mändlin lockt in der geyle/das er wo biß in dreißig mal sich begibt/ghorsamet. Also die Sonn/so sie dreißig tag vmbblauft füle sie den Mon/vnd macht jn scheynbar.

Hochheit.
So sie yemands hochachtend vnd als ein fürnemen anzeigen wöllen/so maalen sie auch ein Adler/vmb dessen willen/das das ander gflügel alles/so es sich in die hōhin schwingen will/gleich beseits vnd krumb vmb vffharen müß/do der Adler schnür schlechts vber sich steigt.

Vndertruckung.
Ingegen bedeüt der Adler auch eins vndertruckten jamer/der etwa im hohem ansehen gwesen/vnd gar in vnachtung kompt vff ein mal. Dan eben andere vōgel auch/all gmach vnd schlīm/s auß den lūfften sich nider lassen/do der Adler grad vnd schlechts nider scheußt.

Adel.

Fig. 15b: Alphabetic decoding and explanation of the hieroglyphs (Bildzeichen), from Johannes Basilius Herold, *Heydenweldt*, Basel, 1554, Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, C1588 Folio RES, p. XC.

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<<https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.7995>>.