

“HOLY FAMILY”. THE NAHUATL KINSHIP TERMS IN THE CONTEXT OF CHRISTIANITY

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Introduction

As written sources show, Nahuatl kinship terminology could have been used in a lot of different fields which are separated from broadly conceived “family”.¹ Brant Gardner has noticed three ways in which these terms functioned in the social sphere: “1) as a metaphorical borrowing of the structured biological semantic field to a non biological hierarchy; 2) marking relative deference in a social situation; 3) and marking inherent social rank” (Gardner 1982: 107-108). In the present paper I focused primarily on the first of these functions, that is, I searched for the meaning of particular Nahuatl kinship terms used in the context of Christian religion. My point of departure was Mary Douglas’ assumption that in every culture classification systems overlap each other and build the relations based on analogies (Douglas 2007: 378-381). In Nahuatl, kinship terms are inherently possessed (not “father” but always “my/your/our, etc. father”), which leads to the analysis of relations rather than focusing on separate categories. My purpose was not the reconstruction of roles played by different kinds in the Nahua culture on the basis of metaphorical usage of the names with which they were described; rather, I wanted to find out what other classification systems these names formed part of and to what extent they constituted junctions between different classification systems.

The material for my analysis comes from 16th-18th centuries. The texts I have chosen represent both the Spanish ecclesiastical literature aimed to reach the newly converted Nahuas and the documentation created by indigenous authors. The latter corpus includes among others: wills, letters and petitions, as well as Chimalpahin’s *Diario*, where

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to professor Ryszard Tomicki, who revised the text and shared with me his knowledge and experience. I also owe thanks to professor José Luis de Rojas and Justyna Olko, Ph. D., who provided me with materials and helpful advice.

the events related to the Catholic Church and to the Christian community's life of Mexico City are extensively treated. I have gathered about 600 attestations of the terms for father, mother and children. In the Christian context other kinship terms were used as well (*e.g.* for brothers or nephews and nieces), but given the size of the present paper, I have decided to limit my research to the most common ones. Moreover, I have analyzed only terms of reference, for investigating the usage of the Nahuatl terms of address would lead to the problematic area of honorifics, which, in my opinion, calls for a separate study. Following the scheme developed by Gardner, I started with a few notes on biological semantic field, focusing subsequently on the "social" relations. The analysis of the connotations of different terms was crucial, but purely linguistic issues such as grammatical forms or Spanish loanwords turned out to be of equal importance.

Biological semantic field

On the literal level of comprehension the kinship terms were most often used in the Christian context to describe the relationship between Jesus and either his mother (Mary) or father (God). The Nahuatl terminological system is governed by several basic criteria of which perhaps the most important one is the sex of a person designated by a possessive prefix (Gardner 1982: 102). Due to the obligatory possessed form of kinship terms every time they are used, they involve three persons: a speaker; a person referred to; and a reference point (Lockhart 1992: 73). For example: if Chimalpahin calls Jesus *ipiltzin Dios* (the son of God), then the chronicler is the speaker, Jesus the person referred to, and God the reference point. Some Nahuatl kinship terms that describe the same primary referent, differ depending on the sex of the reference point, thus splitting into two groups: "male" and "female". Notably, this is the way in which the terms for children operate.

According to this principle, when the authors wrote about Jesus as the son of God, they used the "male" term *-pil*, *e.g.*: *Jesu christo. y nelli ytlācopiltzin. Dios*² (Chimalpahin 2006: 116), but when they pointed out his descent from Mary, they used the "female" term *-coneuh*, *e.g.*: *s^{ta} ma^a cemicac ichpochtli ma nopan motlatoltiz yn ixpantzinco ytlazoconetzin tote^o*

² "Jesus Christ, truly the precious (or: legitimate) son of God". As far as this source is concerned, I follow the English translation of James Lockhart, Susan Schroeder and Doris Namala (Chimalpahin 2006). A particle *-tzin* frequently added to noun stems is a reverential suffix, usually not translated.

Jesu x^{o3} (Beyond, 1976: 64). Interestingly, when in the Christian context the terms *-pil* and *-coneuh* went beyond the “family” relations, they appeared both with male and female reference points.⁴ The author of one of the 18th century documents used the phrases *Dios yconetzin* (“the child of God”, here apparently: “a good Christian”, “a simple man”) and *Dios ipiltzin* simultaneously (Lockhart 1991: 108). The female saints and St. Mary were in turn, in the Christian context, the female reference points for the term *-pil*, e.g. in the phrase *ypilhuantzitzin yn Santa Clara* (“the children of St. Claire” or the Poor Clares, see below). Although the material analyzed lacks examples of the term *-coneuh* serving as a substitute for *-pil* (as in the above phrase “the child of God”), in biological field such situations took place. *-Pil* most often replaced *-coneuh* when the primary referent was a child of a woman of the upper social class, particularly a Spanish one. Given that the same grammatical principle worked for sacred beings, perhaps the right to use the terminology that belonged to the opposite sex was limited to those of high status. Anyway, as rare exceptions show, it was not observed very closely.

The terms *-ta* and *-nan* were used to describe relationships between biblical people, as well as between either God or Mary and Jesus. In the Nahuatl ecclesiastical literature the phrase *i(tlaço)nantzín Dios* (mother of God) is frequently attested (e.g. Molina 1569: 28r; Sahagún, 1997: 144) but the indigenous writers hardly used it. In their writings God and Mary were named Jesus’ father and mother only when the narrative didn’t leave a choice e.g. in the description of the image of Jesus praying in Gethsemane (Chimalpahin, 2006: 56) or in a statement of belief made in a testament (Beyond... 1976: 44). In other situations God and Mary were rather to be designated with special grammatical forms of kinship terms, acting as titles of rank.

Nahuatl kinship terms as the equivalents of Spanish titles

When writers wanted to render into Nahuatl the literal meaning of a Spanish term, they were most likely to make use of the indefinite possessive prefix *te-* added to a noun stem. For example Chimalpahin

³ “May St. Mary, the eternal virgin, speak on my behalf before her dear son our Lord Jesus Christ”. As far as this source is concerned, I follow the English translation of Arthur J. O. Anderson, Frances Berdan and James Lockhart. Here I have slightly revised it. In order to make things easier, I have superscripted all the abbreviations used in Nahuatl texts, which is not always in accordance with the transcription.

⁴ Lockhart (1992: 74) has noticed that *-pil* often appears with a female reference point and *-coneuh* (less frequently) with a male reference point.

writes about blessed (in his times – saint nowadays) Teresa of Jesus in the following way: *in omoteneuhtzino tenantzin La madre Sancta Theresa de Jesus Virgen carmelita descalça*⁵ (Chimalpahin, 2006: 288). What appears here are two equal terms for mother: Spanish *madre* and Nahuatl *tenantzin*. The common rhetoric of Nahuatl texts involves clusters of two or more synonyms and it seems that in this field the incorporation of Spanish loanwords opened new possibilities for the writers.⁶ Along with the term *-nan* Chimalpahin used in this way also *-ta*, e.g.: *auh yn teoyotica tettahuan yn Padrinos mochiuhtzinoque çanno yehuantzitzin*⁷ (Chimalpahin, 2006: 276). Here *teoyotica tettahuan* (spiritual fathers) is probably based on the Spanish expression *padres espirituales*, apparently being easier to translate into Nahuatl than *padrinos* (godfathers). *Tetatzin* itself was a synonym of the word *padre* and most often occurred with reference to God in the trinitarian formula, e.g.: *yn dios tetatzin yn [dios] tepiltzin yn dios esp^{no} santo*⁸ (Beyond... 1976: 54), where the designation of Christ *-tepiltzin* was sometimes replaced with *ypiltzin* (“his son”, or the son of God). The other persons called (though less frequently) with the title *tetatzin* were saints and ecclesiastics (Table 1).

Along with the literal translation of Spanish nomenclature into Nahuatl there was the phenomenon of ascribing particular grammatical forms of kinship terms to particular persons or categories of persons. Thus St. Mary was commonly called *tollaçonantzin* (our precious mother) and priests or friars *-totatzitzinhuan* (our fathers). Both names had eventually tied to their new meanings so closely that as far as the former was concerned the writers hardly felt compelled to give further explanations on whom they were talking about, e.g.: *yaxca nican tollasonantzin cobratia sa martin*⁹ (Beyond... 1976: 176); the word *totatzin* in turn, was often preceded by the demonstrative pronoun *inin* (this) or indefinite article *ce* (a), e.g.: *yn iPadrino mochiuh ce totatzin huel sancto*¹⁰ (Chimalpahin, 2006: 234). In such cases the translators of *Diario* (*The Annals of His Time*, 2006) sometimes ignored the possessive prefix *to-* and interpreted this term as simply “father” (not “the father of ours”) which was in my opinion the right thing to do. *Totatzin* often formed part of the phrase *totatzin fray*, e.g.: *quillacahualtique yn totatzin fr. Je-*

⁵ “The said mother saint Teresa of Jesus the virgin, a Discalced Carmelite”. Translation revised.

⁶ Lockhart usually interprets such Spanish-Nahuatl phrases in terms of the need for explaining the European terms to a Nahua reader (e.g. Lockhart 1992: 237-8).

⁷ “They likewise became their spiritual fathers, the godfathers”. Translation revised.

⁸ Literally: “God the Father; God the Son, God the Holy Spirit”.

⁹ “It is a property of the *cofradía* of our dear mother here in San Martín”.

¹⁰ “A very holy father [of ours] became her godfather”.

*ronimo de çarate*¹¹ (Chimalpahin, 2006: 200), parallel with the *tenantzin madre* above. As in the Christian religious context *tenantzin* was the Nahuatl equivalent for Spanish “mother”, *totaltzin* could have been treated in the same way as far as “friar” (*fray*) was concerned.

Interestingly, this argument does not apply to the word *tollaçonantzin*, because Nahuatl writers never used Spanish terms with reference to Mary (as well as to Christian God, Jesus or saints). *Tetatztzin* and *tepilltzin* used respectively with reference to God and Jesus occurred only in contexts controlled by the ecclesiastics such as the trinitarian formula. These contexts did not leave place for rhetorical solutions characteristic of Nahuatl literature, which is why the group of terms from the written sources that lack Spanish equivalents can be limited to: *tollaçonantzin* (St. Mary), *tonantzin* (Roman-Catholic Church) and *tollaçotatzin* (male saint).¹² All of these words are characterized by the prefix *to-* (our), suggesting that they describe a relationship, as opposed to the title-like terms preceded by the indefinite *te-*. The contexts in which the word *totaltzin* is attested point out to both these functions. For example, the inhabitants of Jalostotitlan begin their petition against the local priest with naming him *toteopixcauh tovicaria franco muñus*¹³ and then throughout the entire document continue to call him *totaltzin* (Beyond... 1976: 166-173). The lack of accompanying Spanish equivalents (*padre*, *fray* or *vicario*) and particularly of the name of the priest clearly tips the balance in favor of the meaning “our father”, or “a priest who serves our community”. Although in the earliest sources analyzed in this paper (the second half of 16th century) both meanings of *totaltzin* are attested, I presume that the more general one, “friar”, was secondary to the sense treated above (our father). Similarly, the grammatical forms *tollaçonantzin* and *tonantzin*, apparently “frozen” after some time, did not lose their function of describing relationships.

While in Nahuatl texts the ecclesiastics are referred to with both different grammatical forms of *-ta* and the Spanish term *padre*, the latter seems to be particularly associated with their highest supervisor—the Pope—. In the written sources he is always called *Santo Padre*,¹⁴

¹¹ “They restrained our father fray Gerónimo de Zárate from doing it”.

¹² For the comparison of grammatical forms *tonantzin-tollaçonantzin* and *totaltzin-tollaçotatzin*: see below. While the former differentiation was strict enough, the latter was much more fluid. In the present analysis it is a meaning that plays a key role, not a grammatical form of the term.

¹³ “Our priest and vicar Francisco Muñoz”.

¹⁴ I failed to find but one exception, which comes from the passage of *Coloquios y doctrina christiana* edited by Bernardino de Sahagún. When the king of Spain Charles V informs the Pope about the existence of Indians he addresses him with the term *tollaçotatzine* (o, our dear father) (Sahagún 1986: 104). The fact that the Nahuatl part of *Coloquios* was created with extensive help

never being referred to with any grammatical form of the Nahuatl *-ta*. According to Louise M. Burkhart, Rome was too geographically distant to play the role of the centre of the (Christian) world in the indigenous worldview, as it did in the European one (Burkhart, 1989: 70). Likewise, it was hardly present in the indigenous religious landscape of colonial Mexico, as is confirmed by the pattern of naming the Pope with a formal Spanish title which, as opposed to the Nahuatl terms, did not imply a relationship. Chimalpahin writes about the leader of the Catholic Church mostly in the context of organizational issues such as: new regulations, Papal bulls, privileges for religious orders, etc., which were probably of little interest for an average Mexican Christian. The best evidence for keeping the Pope at a distance by the Nahuas, is that the only example of calling him “our father” that I came upon (from a letter to a bishop by the way), uses the Spanish terminology: *nuestro padre* (Beyond... 1976: 174).

Father as owner

In his *Diario* Chimalpahin several times refers to St. Anthony the Abbot with the term *notlaçotatzin* (my precious father) or *notlaçomahuiztatzin* (my precious and revered father).¹⁵ For many years the chronicler had lived at the church of San Antonio Abad. In the name Domingo Francisco de San Anton Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuantzin the “San Antón” part derives from the name of St. Anthony (Schroeder, 1996: 38). The saint was also a patron of a religious order, but it is most likely that Chimalpahin never joined it (*ibid.*: 42). His relationship with St. Anthony consisted of living at the church under his patronage, meaning – at his home, which is clearly said in the following passage from *Diario*: *ynin tlahtolli nehuatl onicmachiyoti Don domingo de S. Anton Muñon Quauhtlehuantzin, macihui yn amo nolhuil nomacehual ynic nican nillatequipanotinemi ychantzinco y notlaçottatzin S. Antonio*¹⁶ (Chimalpahin,

of Sahagún’s well-educated Nahua associates (Sahagún, 1987: 20), eliminates the possibility of a linguistic error. In this source the Pope is referred to numerous times and always, except for this single situation, with the title *Santo Padre*. I believe that the term of address *tollaçotatzine* should rather be considered in the context of honorifics, where the usage of the term depends on a particular situation, than as a marker of inherent social rank. In *The Bancroft Dialogues* the term *notlaço(mahuiz)tatzine* is used several times by a town’s governor during a polite conversation with the prior of a Franciscan monastery (Karttunen and Lockhart, 1987: 166).

¹⁵ Chimalpahin 2006: 46, 250, 256, 258, 278, 290, 292.

¹⁶ “This account was recorded by me, don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Quauhtlehuantzin, who though I am not worthy of it have been serving here at the home of my precious father St. Anthony”.

2006: 258). Viewing a church as the home of its patron saint can be traced back to prequest times, when gods “lived” at the temples dedicated to them (Lockhart, 1992: 236-7).

Although the way in which in the Nahuatl culture the concept of kinship and the organization of household were related to each other is not entirely clear, we can be sure that this relationship did exist. It is attested in the passage from the Florentine Codex, cited by Susan M. Kellogg: *yn apeoa çan, yn ioaniolque, in vel icalloc, in centlaca, cemeoa, in vel icujtlaxcolloc, yn vel imecaioc*¹⁷ (after: Kellogg, 1986: 118). To place the phrase *huel icalloc* (the true inhabitants of his home) right after *ihuanyolque* (his relatives) meant, according to the stylistic principles of Nahuatl texts, to treat them as synonymous. Indeed, James Lockhart’s literal translation of the term *-huanyolque* is “those who live with one”. Lockhart also stresses that this term belongs to a whole group of words that refer to a “family” and focus on living with each other (Lockhart, 1992: 72). There are more such ambiguities: writing about Nahuatl kinship terms in his *Arte de la lengua othomí*, Pedro de Cárceres noticed that a dead child and the one who moved out for a reason were called in the same way¹⁸ (Rammow, 1964: 102).

Further examples in which the kinship terminology is associated with the issue of living in a particular place (a building, district or town) in a way parallel to that from *Diario* appear in the written sources published by James Lockhart (1991). Among others, the central character in one of the documents, Ana, described her plans for using a newly acquired piece of land in the following way: *ca ye polihuiç cad-elatzin yhua popotzintli nicnomaquilítaz y notlaçotatzin y santo sa Miguel ypanpa ca ytlalpatzincó y ninocaltia*¹⁹ (Lockhart, 1991: 74). St. Michael appears in the name of a town, where Ana planned to build a house -San Miguel Tocuillan, therefore he was its patron saint. The phrase “it is on his land that I am building my house” clearly indicates that he was also considered the owner of the entire town, an indigenous belief widely attested in colonial Mexico (Lockhart, 1992: 237). The usage of the term *-ta* for describing a relationship between owner and tenant appears again in this source at the end of the ceremony

¹⁷ Translation after Kellogg 1986: 118: *only the relatives, the people of the household - his family, they of the same parentage, of the same womb, those of the same clan.*

¹⁸ *Si es muerto el hijo o hija o otro pariente posponen catca [...] vel. nopiltzincatca [...] vel omo-miquili nopiltzin [...] y nota de este catca [...] que aunque el hijo no es muerto tambien usan del si ya no biue con los padres s. que sea ausentado de casa de sus padres.*

¹⁹ “Candles will be burnt, and I will go along providing incense for my precious father the saint San Miguel, because it is on his land that I am building my house”. As far as this source is concerned, I generally follow the English translation of James Lockhart.

of taking possession of land, when the *regidor* from San Miguel Tocuilan speaks to Ana on behalf of St. Michael: *ca oticmocnelili y mollaçotatzin*²⁰ (Lockhart 1991: 74).

Father as ruler and creator

In her pioneering work on Nahuatl kinship terms Helga Rammow analyzed among others the word *techiuhqui*, derived from *chihua* (make, engender) and translated as creator, lord (Rammow, 1964: 75). Its first meaning appears e.g. in *Discursos en Mexicano* published as *The Bancroft Dialogues* (1987: 146), where Christian God is described with the epithets in *totechiuhcatzin in toteyocoxcatzin* (our creator, our creator —here the second element of the phrase specifies the meaning of the ambiguous *techiuhqui*—). However, according to Rammow, it should rather be more often interpreted as “ancestor”, for it is in such context that it usually occurs in the sources. As far as the second probable meaning, “lord”, is concerned, in Molina’s dictionary the entry *Totechiuhcauan* is explained as: *los que gobiernan yrijen la republica* (Molina, 1977, II: f. 150r), thus, keeping in mind the possessive prefix *to-*, “our rulers”. The term *-ta* likewise involves connotations of power, creation and descent, occurring within a single noun.

The passage from *Diario* sheds interesting light on the way in which the Nahuas viewed the friars’ role: *yehuantin ye quinmopachilhuia. yn atzaqualca. in ye yxquich ica. ye quincauhque. yn achtopa yn tahuan yn intepachocahuan catca. calmenitas. descalços. Padreme.*²¹ (Chimalpahin, 2006: 174). It should be added here that those who governed the Atzaqualca after the Carmelites were also friars —the Augustinians—. One gets an impression that writing *yn tahuan*²² (their fathers) Chimalpahin did not put the reverential ending *-tzin* on purpose, in order to stress that this word was intended to be synonymous with *intepachocahuan* (their governors). Moreover, the status of the Carmelites is described with a single Spanish word (with Nahuatl plural ending) *-padreme*, not being complemented with the Nahuatl term *totatzitzinhuau*, as often happens in such situations. Perhaps to use the same word in two different

²⁰ “We thank you on behalf of your precious father”.

²¹ “They have been governing the Atzaqualca ever since their first fathers and governors, who were the Discalced Carmelite fathers, left them”.

²² Prawidłowo powinno być: *intahuan*.

meanings (“rulers” and “friars”) in a single clause would disturb the harmony of the text.²³

In passages from *Diario* that speak of Agustín del Espíritu Santo, the contexts of power and ownership for the term *-ta* merge. Agustín was the only ecclesiastic mentioned by Chimalpahin whom he honored by calling him *notlaçotatzin* (my precious father) and *notatzin* (my father). He was a son of Diego Muñón who belonged to the family that took care of the church of St. Anthony the Abbot, and most likely a nephew of don Sancho Sánchez de Muñón, *maestrescuela* in the cathedral. Although Chimalpahin gave distinction to don Sancho (Schroeder 1996: 39 and 46), in the account of the year 1591 it was don Diego whom he called a patron (*padron*) (Chimalpahin, 2006: 36). In the entry from 1611, apparently after the death of don Diego, the title *padron* appears together with the name of his wife, Leonor Marín. Likewise, in this year death of Leonor was recorded and Chimalpahin stated that: *yn axcan oncan ye no yehuatzin Patron mochiuhtzinotica. quimopiiallia. yn iteopancaltzin Sancto. S. Antontzin*²⁴ (*ibid.*: 172). The fact that Agustín was (in a sense) the owner of the church is confirmed by another passage: *y nothatzin Padre fray Augustin del espiritu Sancto Patron quimopachilhua y huel yxcoyantzincó yaxcatzin ynic quimopielia yn iteopancaltzin notlaçomahuizthatzin yn hueytzintli S. Antonio Abad*²⁵ (*ibid.*: 290). The reason for which Chimalpahin chose to use the term *no(tlaço)tatzin* with reference to Agustín was that he lived at the place both owned and “governed” by him at the same time.

Similarly, the contexts of power and ownership merged together when the term *-ta* was used with reference to Christian God. Two of the three examples available in the material analyzed come from testaments and involve a concept of God taking away testator’s life: *ytla nechmopolhuiz ynotlazomahuiztantzin dios*²⁶ (Karttunen and Lockhart, 1976: 98) and *ca ça nicnochielilia yn itlatoltzin yn notlaçotatzin dios yn*

²³ The term *-ta* in the sense of a “ruler” is attested as well in the contexts reaching beyond this paper, e.g. in the letter of the council of Huejotzingo to the king of Spain the authors addressed him: *titotatzin* (you, our father) (Beyond... 1976: 188).

²⁴ “He [Agustín del Espíritu Santo] now likewise becomes patron there and owns the church building of the saint St. Anthony”. During this stage the verb *pia* was already used in the sense of “to have”, but the preconquest meaning “to guard” is possible here as well (see: Karttunen and Lockhart, 1976: 44). In the *Annals* it was rendered into English as “is in charge of” but I believe that my translation is justified by the next passage from *Diario* cited in this paper.

²⁵ “My father, father fray Agustín del Espíritu Santo, the patron, who governs and as his very own property owns (or: has charge of) the church of my precious revered father the great St. Anthony the Abbot”.

²⁶ “If my dear father God destroys me...” As far as this source is concerned, I follow the English translation of Frances Karttunen and James Lockhart.

*quemman nechmotlatzontequililiz yníc nicahuaz yn tlalticpac*²⁷ (Beyond... 1976: 58). What is clearly seen here, is the difference between dry and formal title *tetatzin* and a more emotional *notlaço(mahuiz)latzin*, the latter undoubtedly implying the authority over man's life held by God. The third example comes from the document classified by James Lockhart as the "donation of houses and land to images". Its author, while listing different parts of his property, declares among others: *milli yn itechtzinco puhui yn dios notlaçotatzin*²⁸ (Lockhart, 1992: 462), using the term *-ta* in the same way as Ana did, when she was referring to St. Michael who owned her land (see above). It is worth mentioning that God was generally considered the owner of a household, though specific parts of household's property were assigned to different saints in order to "sustain" them, *i.e.* to buy candles, incense and ornaments for their images. Each saint who "lived" in a household (*i.e.* whose image was kept there) owned "his" part of the property and members of the family served him by performing various rituals. Among them one of the most important was sweeping, perceived in the pre-conquest tradition as a form of offering (Burkhart, 1989: 117; Lockhart, 1992: 238-239). All these motifs occur in the document providing us with the last example analyzed here. The author begins with an explanation that he used to sweep in front of the image of the Most Holy Trinity (probably housed in a local church). However, after some time the image was moved to a church school and his service was no longer needed. Now he wants "his house to be a home of God". Having "donated" to God several buildings and fields, the author continues with the bequests for: the images of saint Francis, Nicolas, Jacinto, and Mary, two crucifixes, and the *Ecce Homo* depiction²⁹ (Lockhart, 1992: 463). One gets the impression that God is treated here as a member of the pantheon of saints (including Mary and Jesus). When the author of the document is no longer able to serve him by sweeping, he decides on another form of offer-

²⁷ "I am only awaiting the word of my dear father God when he will sentence me to leave the earth".

²⁸ "A field that is dedicated (or: belongs) to God my dear father..." I follow the translation of James Lockhart here.

²⁹ Reading mundane documents and wills in particular, it soon becomes obvious that the Christian style of representing particular aspects of saints, like e.g. Mary at the Cross and the Assumption of Mary, was not really fully grasped by the Nahuas. Here too the crucifix and the motif of *Ecce Homo* are conceived as the images of two separate "deities" —or better, according to the belief in the actual presence of saints in their representations— two separate deities as they were. For more on this subject, see: Stephanie Wood "Adopted Saints: Christian Images in Nahuatl Testaments of Late Colonial Toluca", *The Americas*, v. 47, n. 3 (Jan., 1991), p. 259-293.

ring and dedicates a part of his property to “sustain” the Holy Trinity. Perhaps this disturbs the previous distribution of the property among the “saints”, to whom he is serving, therefore he reorders things and grants them some units of minor importance. As was established by Lockhart (1992: 239), these offerings did not actually mean that the property was ceded to the Church, but rather that the “donator” was becoming a “tenant” of sacred beings, who played a role of landlords.

Thus, the term *nollaçotatzin* used with reference to God includes information that he is the owner of land worked and buildings inhabited by the author of the discussed document. That the Nahuatl term *-ta* was really appropriate for the Christian God is showed by the fact that along with the relationships: landlord-tenant and ruler-subject it also connoted the meaning “creator”. Admittedly, in the material analyzed here I did not come upon an example which would associate God as “father” with the concept of a creator, but the term *-ta* is often attested referring to the founders of religious orders. *E.g.* Chimalpahin writes about Ignacio Loyola in the following way: *ynin huel yehuatzin achtopa intatzin huel yehuatzin yancuican ytlapehualtitzitzinhuan ytlanextiltzitzinhuan yn la compañía de Jesus teopixque*³⁰ (Chimalpahin, 2006: 164). It seems that the point of departure for setting a relationship described in this context with the term *-ta* is the creation of a religious rule by the order’s “father”. The motif of regulating religious living within a community, treated as the very beginning of the community’s existence, often appears accompanied by the term *-ta*, *e.g.*: *yn inteotlatepannemilitzin yn quinmottallilitehuac Regla ypan monemiztique ynic quinmonahuatilithehuac yn omoteneuhtzino ynllaçottatzin S. benito. Patriarcha*³¹ (*ibid.*: 236). Interestingly, when a founder was a female, as in case of blessed Teresa of Jesus, the author of the rule of the Discalced Carmelites, the term *-nan* was used in exactly the same way as *-ta*: *ynin omoteneuhtzino Sancta ca huel ynantzin yehuatzin oc ceppa quinmoyancuilili yn teopixcatlatepancanahuatilli regla*³² (*ibid.*: 288). Here, Teresa is even the “mother” not as much of the Carmelites, as of their rule, what makes the meaning of “creator” connoted by *-nan* far more obvious.

³⁰ “He was the very first father of the religious of the Company of Jesus and they were first started and manifested by him”.

³¹ “Their holy rules of life, the rule by which they are to live, that their said precious father St. Benedict the patriarch issued, ordered, and left behind for them...”

³² The said saint [Teresa of Jesus] was really the mother of and renewed for them [the Carmelites] the priestly constitutional ordinance, the rule.

Mother

Although in Nahuatl texts Teresa of Jesus and other female saints are addressed with the term *-nan*, in the Christian context this term refers mostly to St. Mary and occurs (apart from these passages where she appears as the mother of Jesus-*itlaçonantzin*) with either of two possessive prefixes: *to-* (our) or *no-* (my). The grammatical form *tollaçonantzin* (mahuiz)*nantzin* has already been discussed in the chapter on the equivalents of Spanish titles. It most often appears within the names of religious orders and *cofradías*, e.g. *yni monjastin ypillhuantzitzinhuan tollaçonantzin conception*³³ (Chimalpahin, 2006: 68); churches, e.g. *Tollaçonantzin nuestra Señora de las Mercedes* (*ibid.*: 304); and holy images, among them those ceded to family members in testaments, e.g. *nino-maquilia tollaxomaisnatzi de los ageles yahua sa fr^{co} ynemaqu in agustin de los ageles*³⁴ (Lockhart, 1991: 137). As the last two of the above examples show, Nahuatl did not customarily specify a name by giving a category to which the designated item belonged. This linguistic feature sometimes creates problems with establishing what the writer exactly had in mind: a church, a *cofradía*, or something else. At the same time one gets the impression that for the Nahuas there was no substantial difference between an image of a sacred being and a being itself, which is why to cede a figure of St. Mary actually meant to give St. Mary to a heir (Lockhart, 1992: 238). Donations of property to churches or *cofradías* associated with particular patron saints also look like their proper receiver was the patron saint himself (e.g. Beyond... 1976: 54: “four *tomines* is my offering to be devoted (or: to belong) to our dear mother St. Mary there at Tepeacac”). The belief in the actual presence of saints in material objects is rooted in the prequest tradition of central Mexico (López Austin, 2000: 30). The Franciscans tried really hard to eradicate the cult of images as well as to make the Nahuas venerate the saints themselves (Miłkowski, 1999: 26), however, as the sources analyzed here show, until 18th century these efforts had not yielded expected results.

The separate issue is addressing St. Mary with the term *-nan* bearing the possessive prefix *no-*, since it points to the relationship between Mary and the Nahuas in the religious life of colonial Mexico. In the material analyzed here, the grammatical form *notllaçomahuiznantzin* is

³³ “These nuns were children of our precious mother of Concepción”.

³⁴ “I give our precious honored mother of the Angels and the saint San Francisco to Agustín de los Angeles as his inheritance”.

attested only in testaments, probably because of personal character of this kind of sources. One comes upon it already in the initial part of will and it is worth mentioning that the context in which this form is attested does not find its equivalent in Alonso de Molina's model testament that was broadly used by notaries in colonial Mexico (1569: ff. 61r-63v). This context is a prayer for St. Mary's intercession with Jesus Christ on behalf of the testator, e.g.: *...notlasomahuiznatzin sata Maria mochipa huel neli yxpochtli ynic nopapan quimotlatlatiliatzinnos yn itlasomahuizseteConnetzin yn t^{lo} x^{lo}*³⁵ (Lockhart, 1991: 138). That the Nahuas particularly stressed the role of St. Mary as an intercessor is additionally suggested in one of the sources, by inserting this concept into the complex term *notepantlatocanantzin* (my intercessor and mother) (Beyond... 1976: 112). In other document the two elements of this designation have been separated: *notepantlatocatzin ytlazohnantzin ciuapilli Sancta Maria*³⁶ (Beyond... 1976: 44).

Far more problematic is the usage of the grammatical form *notlaço(mahuiz)nantzin* with reference to churches and *cofradías* having St. Mary and other female saints as patron saints, as well as to the images of female saints. The difficulties emerge when the contexts in which the term *-nan* is attested are to be classified and they result from the aforementioned usual ignorance of the specific category to which the proper name belongs. Special thanks should go here to the authors of *Beyond the Codices*, who successfully traced a lot of units hidden beneath otherwise obscure proper names (see: *ibid.*: 70, n. 2). In cases where they managed to establish what the grammatical form *notlaço(mahuiz)nantzin* referred to, it almost always was a *cofradía*, e.g.: *nicnomaquilitih ynotlazomahuiznantzin candelaria*³⁷ (*ibid.*: 70). In this and other similar examples, by "my mother" the writer most probably meant the patron saint of the *cofradía* to which he belonged, hence the term *-nan* would connote here a relationship between pupil and patron.

Choosing the term *nonan-* with reference to the image of St. Mary could have placed her within the group of the household saints (see: "Father as owner"). As all the examples analyzed here come from wills, St. Mary ordinarily appears in them, apart from the preamble, as a part of inheritance (thus most likely a picture or figure) or as a heir (an image, but also a *cofradía*, church, etc). In one of the sources the patron saint of a local church, St. Catherine, was treated similarly, receiving a granddaughter (!) of a testator along with a piece of land.

³⁵ "my precious honored mother St. Mary, forever a very true virgin, [I desire] that on my behalf she implore her precious honored one child, our lord Jesus Christ".

³⁶ "My intercessor his precious mother [of Jesus] lady Saint Mary".

³⁷ "I am giving him to (the *cofradía* of) my dear honored mother (of) Candelaria".

The task of the granddaughter was to work for St. Catherine (called *notlaçonantzin* by the testator), specifically on the field ceded to the saint (Beyond... 1976: 70). Following this example, to cede the property to St. Mary could as well be understood as to devote it for “sustaining” the churches under her patronage, her images, etc., while to include her into inheritance was nothing else than to make sure that the heirs will continue to take care of the units (images, churches, etc.) associated with her (see: Lockhart, 1992: 239).

Children

Along with the Spanish names of religious orders (e.g. the Franciscans, the Poor Clares) the Nahuatl writers used circumlocutions that included the term *-pil*, e.g. respectively: *yn sanct franco ipilhuan* (Beyond... 1976: 182) and *yn ipilhuan Sancta clara* (Chimalpahin, 2006: 26), or “the children of St. Francis/St. Clare”. Every patron could have been used in this way. In the written sources appear also “the children of St. Mary” —the nuns of the Conceptionist Order (e.g. *ibid.*: 68) or the Carmelites (e.g. *ibid.*: 30), and, more interestingly, “the children of the Holy Trinity”— the Trinitarians (e.g. *ibid.*: 204). In his analysis of this issue Ryszard Tomicki noticed that the term *-pil* was used in parallel way in prehispanic contexts, e.g. Diego Durán refers to the Aztec priests as “the children of god” and to the Toltecs as “the children of Sun”. As far as these examples are concerned, Tomicki suggested to classify the term *-pilhuan* as “people particularly devoted to a person they worship” (Tomicki, 2003: 265).

The second context in which the term *-pil* was used, identified by Tomicki, is “people submitted to somebody, who depend on or serve somebody” (*ibid.*: 265). The complaint against the priest of Jalostotitlan published by James Lockhart and Frances Karttunen contains a strong evidence for such meaning of “child”. Among others, the authors of the petition quote the words of the bishop and vicar general, who have scolded the priest in the following way: *xiquinyolali macehualtin ca mopilhuan*³⁸ (Beyond... 1976: 168). The answer of the priest is: *coz nopilhuan ca ypilhuan diablo*³⁹ (*ibid.*: 172). What emerges here is the symmetry of meanings between the terms *-pil* and *-ta*. Keeping in mind the passage from *Diario* where the friars were *expressis verbis* called “rulers” of the local people (see: “Father as ruler and creator”), the

³⁸ “Console the commoners, for they are your children”.

³⁹ “Are they my children? They are children of the devil”.

former quote can be translated with a great deal of certainty as: “Console the commoners, for they serve you”, and the latter parallelly: “Do they serve me? They serve the devil!” In the same class Tomicki included the Nahuatl circumlocution used as a synonym of the word “Christians”: *ipilhuan in dios* (the children of God) (Tomicki, 2003: 265). Chimalpahin gives the other version of this phrase: *ypilhuantzitzinhuan* (...) *Sancta yglesia* (Chimalpahin, 2006: 274) or “the children of the Holy Church”.

Having complemented his analysis with the third context, that is, the people who sacrifice their lives to Aztec gods (which, as is understandable, does not find an analogy in the Christian discourse),⁴⁰ Tomicki concluded that the term *-pil* carried a meaning of a serf, being at the same time synonymous with the word *macehualli* (*-vasallo*—Molina, 1977 II: 51v). Chimalpahin gives a clue for character of this serfdom. Writing about *cofradía* members, he uses the phrase *yn itetzinco pohui yn ipilhuantzitzin* (Chimalpahin, 2006: 240 and 296). Its first element means both “they belong to him” and “they are devoted to him” (Molina 1977 II: 84v) and the reference point of both elements of the phrase is a patron saint of a *cofradía*.

The next symmetrical relationship between the terms *-ta* and *-pil* is that of a founder and follower. One comes upon it i.a. in the passage from *Diario*, where the Antonines are described in the following way: *huel ypilhuantzitzinhuan y huel ytlacahuillohuan yn nican tlatlicpac quinmocaahuilitia yn ihcuac momiquilitzino omoteneuhtzino notlacomahuizthatzin S. Antonio Abad*⁴¹ (Chimalpahin, 2006: 292). Although the Hospital Brothers of St. Anthony followed the rule of St. Augustine, and Anthony’s patronage resulted from the history of the order (Rudge 1913), Chimalpahin seems to imply that it was St. Anthony the Abbot whom he considered the founder of this community (Chimalpahin, 2006: 292). Thus the “children” of the saint were, in a manner, his extensions “here on earth”, but also, which is *expressis verbis* claimed by Chimalpahin, his creatures. In a passage from *Diario* the chronicler speaks about the Theatines, founded by Gian Pietro Carafa, in the following way: *ynin ypilhuan huel achto ytlatlalilhuan yn Don Pedro carrafa*⁴² (*ibid.*: 202). Moreover, *-pil* is attested in the sense of a “creature” in the most obvious context, i.e. in which God is one of the members of a relationship.

⁴⁰ However, it points to a possibility that the phrase *ipiltzin in Dios* with reference to Jesus could have been understood ambiguously.

⁴¹ “The true children and relics of my said precious revered father San Antonio Abad, whom he left here on earth when he died”. The translation revised.

⁴² “They were the children and first creatures of don Pedro Caraffa”. Translation revised.

The angels, called in *Coloquios y doctrina christiana jpillhua tot^o. Dios* (children of our lord God), a bit further in the same source address Jesus with the following words: *timomacevalhuan timotlachiuahuan* (we are your serfs and creatures) (Sahagún, 1987: 182). This example is perfect to show how different connotations of particular terms overlap each other, depending on a person being referred to.

The grammatical forms

In the above listed contexts the term *-pil* appears in a multitude of grammatical forms: simple (e.g. *ipilhuan* “his children”), reverential (e.g. *ipiltzin* “his child”, *ipilhuantzitzin* “his children”), but also with the prefix *tlaço-* (e.g. *itlaçoipilhuantzitzin* “his precious children”).⁴³ The last of these forms, *-tlaçoipil*, most often meant a legitimate son or daughter (Molina, 1977: 119). In the Christian context it was used with reference to both friars and nuns (when the reference point was a patron of a religious order), as well as to Jesus (as the son of God) (Table 4). However, when the writer wanted to stress the Jesus’ descentance from Mary, he would rather have used the “female” term *-coneuh*, e.g. *ytlaçoconetzin tote^o Jesu x^o*⁴⁴ (Beyond... 1976: 64). The grammatical form used in this example seems interesting because neither the material analyzed for the present study nor the additional query came up with the examples of the usage of *-tlaçoconetzin* in contexts other than religious.⁴⁵ It means that this grammatical form has to be related somehow to the sphere of sacrum.

A 1738 document from Atzacapotzalco describes St. Francis with the term *tohueitatzin* (our great father), which is an interesting variation on *totlaçoatatzin* (Beyond 1976...: 102). It should be pointed out that the adjective *huey* (great) was introduced by ecclesiastics in order to replace the particle *teo-* (divine). For example, in course of evangelization the word *teoatl* (“sea”, lit. “divine water”) was replaced with *huey atl* (Tomicki 2003: 256). Moreover, according to Ryszard Tomicki, in many cases

⁴³ According to Horacio Carochi, the difference between the kinship term *-pil* and its homonym with the meaning of “noble” (*pilli*) is seen in their possessive forms. In case of the latter the possessive form derives from the abstract noun *pillotl* (nobility) and as such is *-pillo* (Carochi, 2001: 302). However, in his analysis of the term *pilli* Brant Gardner concluded that the distinction between its two meanings was not justified and that the usage of this term in the context of nobility was consistent with widespread occurrence of Nahuatl kinship terms in the social sphere (Gardner, 1982: 113). The same conclusions can refer to the word *pillotl* which in the context of kinship means “nephew”. In that case *-pillo* would be a possessive form of *pillotl*, not *pilli*.

⁴⁴ “Her dear son our Lord Jesus Christ”.

⁴⁵ Due to the limitation of material, prehispanic religion is excluded from the analysis.

the particle *teo-* should be understood in a more metaphorical sense, as “outstanding, wonderful, amazing, beautiful” (Tomicki 2003: 256-6, n. 16). Similarly, this semantic field is shared by the particle *tlaço-*, which occurs in such Nahuatl words as: *tlaçoyotl* “admirable and highly valued thing” (Molina, 1977 II: 119l), *tlaçotell* “gemstone” and *tlaçotilmatli* “precious cape” (*ibid.*: 119r). *Tlaço-* itself derives from the word *tlaçotli* “precious, expensive” (Siméon, 2002: 578; Molina, 1977, II: 119r) which in turn comes from *ço* “to draw blood by piercing someone”⁴⁶ (Molina, 1977 II: 25l). The self-sacrifice by bloodletting was of great religious importance in preconquest Mexico and blood itself was the food of the Sun that guaranteed the existence of the world in Aztec beliefs. Hence it can be stated that the particle *tlaço-* connoted, as well as *teo-* and later *huey*, the meaning of divinity and/or holiness.⁴⁷

In the Christian context *tlaço-* would rarely constitute an inherent part of a particular term. As written sources suggest, it was rather used to indicate relative place of different persons within the hierarchy of “holiness”. Thus Chimalpahin, when he writes about members of religious orders, often calls friars with the term *-tlaçopil(huantzi)tzin*, while with reference to lay brothers and sisters as well as *cofrades*, he prefers the terms *-pilhuan* and *-pil(huantzi)tzin*. The phrase *ipiltzin Dios* can mean “Christian”, or *e.g.* “angel”, while *itlaçopiltzin Dios* refers to nobody but Jesus. The word *tollaçotatzin* would rather be used with reference to saints, though sometimes it also means “priest”, while the usual term for a religious, *totatzin*, hardly appears with reference to saints⁴⁸ (Table 1). The last example shows that the principles that governed the using of *tlaço-* were treated somewhat arbitrarily. While when it came to saints the simple form was strictly avoided, the differentiation between friars and *cofrades* worked on a contrary: the prefix *tlaço-* was not mandatory with reference to the former, but it was never used with reference to the latter.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ One can follow the etymology of *tlaçotli* in the dictionary of Rémi Siméon: *tlaçotli* comes from *çoa* (Siméon, 2002: 578), or “spread, open, pierce”, etc. which in turn derives from *ço* (*ibid.*: 114).

⁴⁷ Lockhart claimed that the particle *tlaço-* was added to concepts from the religious sphere in order to locate them specifically in the Christian context (Lockhart, 1992: 552, n. 208).

⁴⁸ The material analyzed here provides just two exceptions: Molina and Chimalpahin address St. Francis with the term *totatzin* (Molina, 1569: 73v; Chimalpahin 2006: 46).

⁴⁹ The following level in the hierarchy of grammatical forms is *-tlaço-mahuiz-Ø-tzin* (precious and revered). Sometimes the pattern of using these forms seems quite clear, *e.g.* of two designations used with reference to the ecclesiastics, *totatzin* and *tollaçotatzin*, the former usually describes persons not esteemed by the author of the text. As far as the grammatical forms for saints are concerned (*tollaçotatzin* or *tollaçomahuizatzin*), the latter occurs accompanied by such epithets as “great”, “patriarch”, “prince”, etc., while for the former far more modest

Likewise, the term *tonantzin* (our mother) used with reference to the Roman Catholic Church, lacked the aspect of holiness, e.g.: *yn tonantzin s^{ta} yglesia catolica* (Beyond... 1976: 64). It most likely resulted from the fact that the usage of the grammatical form *tollaçonantzin* was limited to St. Mary.⁵⁰ No doubt, choosing the prefix *tlaço-* for Mary instead of Church represented the friars' influence on Nahuatl Christian nomenclature. Bernardino de Sahagún strongly opposed addressing St. Mary with the term *tonantzin* since he did not want to risk her identification with an Aztec goddess of the same name. However, as James Lockhart noticed, the form *tollaçonantzin* was inadvertently consistent with the pervasive concept of duality present in the Aztec culture. The common religious pattern could help perceiving St. Mary as a partner-goddess of Christian God, who was sometimes called *tollaçotatzin* (Lockhart, 1992: 252). It is in this very context, where the phrase *tonan tota* (our mother, our father) used with reference to pre-Christian deities (Karttunen and Lockhart, 1987: 130, 132) appears in *The Bancroft Dialogues*. It is included in the passage based on the text from *The Florentine Codex* that treats on the Aztec god of the underworld Mictlantecuhtli (*ibidem.*: 46). The authors of *The Bancroft Dialogues* simply exchanged the heathen deity for the Christian one. This transition must have involved the transfer of some preconquest connotations, e.g. a female aspect of Mictlantecuhtli, which were lost in translation, but still lurking in the lines of the dialogues.

The translation of Christian categories into Nahuatl became from the beginning one of the key problems for the Spanish friars being in charge of the evangelization in Mexico. They created so called "doctrinal Nahuatl" (Tavárez, 2000: 23) which, as far as the kinship terms were concerned, included i.a. the above analyzed grammatical forms *tetatzin* and *tepilltzin* ("God the Father" and "God the Son" respectively). Both these terms are mostly attested in the trinitarian formula but also in different doctrinal texts, aiming to explain the details of the new faith, e.g.: *Auh in quemmania in ixquich huelitiliztli, çan tictoneixcahuiltilia in tettatzin: auh in ixquich tlamatiliztli tictoneixcahuiltilia in tepiltzin: auh in ixquich in qualtiliztli, çan tictoyocatilia in spu sancto*⁵¹ (Sahagún, 1997: 170).

designations are attested. However, on the basis of the material analyzed here, it is difficult to suggest a general principle that would govern choice of grammatical forms.

⁵⁰ However, this division likewise should not be treated in absolute terms. For now the only example I came upon of the term *tonantzin* used with reference to St. Mary was found by Helga Rammow (1964: 178) in Bautista's *Huehuellatolli* (f. 51r). In the same source *tonantzin* occurs several times with reference to the Church as well (f. 73r, 74v, 75r).

⁵¹ "But sometimes we attribute omnipotence only to the Father, and we attribute knowledge of all things to the Son, and we give goodness only to the Holy Ghost". I follow the translation of Anderson and Schroeder.

Undoubtedly such usage of *tetatzin* and *tepiltzin* owed its existence to friars and their constant struggle to explain the concept of the Holy Trinity to the Nahuas which necessarily involved the meticulous differentiation of the three Persons. The indigenous writers made use of these grammatical forms only when copying an officially accepted formula, e.g. in testaments. Otherwise they referred to God with the name *Dios* or *Jesu Christo*.

In Nahuatl literature much more popular were possessive forms used to describe relationships, e.g. *-tatzin* with reference to the Christian religious. In *Confessionario mayor* Molina says to the reader: *yn teoyotica motahuan, ynteopixque* (your spiritual fathers, the priests) (Molina, 1569: f. 29v-30r), implying the way in which the friars could have tried to introduce this term. However, they soon lost control of the situation and *-tatzin* began to function within the Aztec system of meanings without the epithet “spiritual”. Although the designation “our father” was used with reference to friars in accordance with Spanish nomenclature, in Nahuatl it implied the relationship of power over life and estate and as such, it rather stressed the social status of priests than the spiritual care they took of Christian souls.

From the point of view of Church representatives even more dangerous indigenous modification of the “doctrinal Nahuatl” affected the terms *-tlazonantzin* and probably *-tlazotatzin*. While in 16th century the grammatical form *tollazonantzin* used with reference to St. Mary is attested in works of both Spanish and indigenous authors, by the 17th century a more descriptive one: *itlazonantzin Dios* (“mother of God”) had taken over in the former (see: “Mother”). During the same period the indigenous authors begin to use the grammatical forms *-tlazonantzin* and *-tlazotatzin* with various possessive prefixes with reference to saints (females and males respectively). One can assume that the term *tollazotatzin* used with reference to God was at first accepted (or even inspired) by friars, exactly as it took place with *tollazonantzin* for St. Mary. However, in order to accomplish their role in the Christian context in appropriate way, these terms should have functioned as proper names or titles and not as collective categories, which they soon became. In the texts from 17th century and later authored by the Nahuas *-tlazotatzin* refers to God and male saints, while *-tlazonantzin* to St. Mary and other female saints. The identical nomenclature implied the similar treating in the sphere of cult, which is perfectly visible e.g. in the story of a “sweeper”, told in the above chapter “Father as ruler and creator”. Despite the fact that it presented God as the owner of the household who suitably for his dominant position received the lion’s share of the estate, the text placed him on the level structurally identical to that of saints. God and saints seemed to be

equal as far as both the role they played in their worshipper live and his methods of serving them were concerned. This aspect of indigenous Christianity would have had to be visible for the ecclesiastics, if they had responded with the change of “official” nomenclature. Again, it supports the presumption that they were aware of the force of language, which helped the Christian sacred beings to be perceived parallelly to the pantheon of preconquest deities.⁵²

Conclusion

In the Christian context, basic kinship terms functioned within two classification systems: sacred beings (God, Jesus, St. Mary and other saints) and the churchly hierarchy (the Church itself, ecclesiastics, *cofrades*). In both they fulfilled a similar role, which consisted mostly of indicating a power relationship formed by several components: owning, worshipping, interceding etc. While the tables below contain detailed contexts for the occurrences of the analyzed terms, they do not reflect the fact that the “portraits” of particular persons described with a given term were composed of many elements. The Christian God addressed by his worshippers as *notlaçotatzin* is a good example. Although a particular textual situation could have stressed his role as the owner of believer’s house, at the same time the term implied that the person spoken of was a creator who had authority over life and death of the reference point. The term *ipilhuantzitzin* used with reference to the members of the religious order of St. Anthony the Abbot functioned in a similar way. Even if the text puts special emphasis on their role as the followers of the rule set by their patron, at the same time the word *-pil* implies that they also worship him.

Within the nomenclature presented here the parents-children scheme seems quite symmetrical. Undoubtedly, the former occupied a higher position in the hierarchy than the latter, which reflected the relations in the biological kinship sphere. The “father” was mainly viewed as creator, ruler and owner whereby the ownership and power relationships used to overlap each other as if they were two sides of the same coin. The unmistakable example is the aforementioned story of the “sweeper” at the church of the Holy Trinity: sweeping was a service provided for God;

⁵² For now there is no broader study on Nahuatl kinship terminology used in the context of Aztec religion. The analogy suggested here concerns not so much the nomenclature itself, more the classification. To place God, St. Mary and other saints within the same category of beings is to ascribe them the same degree of “divinity”, which is an easy way to bestow the characteristics of polytheism upon Christianity.

when it stopped, the compensation in devoting him a part of property became necessary. The author of the document perceived both of them as ways to serve God, what in turn made him the God's serf.

Similarly to "father", "mother" was creator and owner with the mild aspect of her image being "intercession" which can be easily included into power relationship anyway. Symmetrically, "child" was follower and serf (in the context of cult: worshipper). All these elements prove that the family relationships were projected onto classification systems present in the context of Christianity. Bernardino de Sahagún, in his chapter on model roles of various kinsmen, wrote about father in the following way: *in teta tlacamecaionelhoaiutl (...) cuexane, teputze, macoche. (...) tetlamachia, tlatlalia, tlatecpaña*⁵³ (Sahagún, 1961: 1). As far as good mother is concerned: *in tenan pilhua chichiua (...) tecemmati, texoxociomat teca mochiua*⁵⁴ while bad mother *teatoiaua, tetepexiua*⁵⁵ (*ibid.*: 2). Finally, good child *tlatlacamati, mocnomatini, mocnotecani, tlallaçocamatini tlamauiçtiliani, (...) tequixtia, tenemiliztoca, tetlaieiecalhuia*⁵⁶ (*ibid.*: 2).

Searching for analogies and junctions between the classification systems that make use of the same conceptualizations helps understanding the mechanisms which govern the typology within a given culture, but Mary Douglas postulates going further than this. The analysis of logical categories is supposed to be merely a point of departure for investigating their cultural base (Douglas 2007: 170). As far as the issues discussed in the present paper are concerned, the kinship terms are a key to know the basis of religious syncretism in colonial Mexico. The origin of this syncretism was the so called "nepantlism", the intermediary stage where the prehispanic structure incorporated nothing but superficial elements of Christianity while its body stayed unchanged (Burkhart, 1989: 188). The vivid example of this phenomenon is the replacement of Mictlantecuhtli with Christian God in *The Bancroft Dialogues*. In the introduction to his *Sermonario* Juan Bautista expressed the friars' concern about the faith of the Nahuas, who particularly *en vocablos y sentencias de la fe y en cosas morales* often mistook the terms or used them in contexts inappropriate from the point of view of Christianity (García Icazbalceta, 1886: 362). As Louise M. Burkhart (1989: 27) noticed, even the direct translation of

⁵³ Father [is] the origin of *tlacamecayoll*, the beginning of *tlacamecayoll*. [...] [he is] chief, ruler. [...] He distributes things justly, he establishes things, he makes things in order.

⁵⁴ Mother breastfeeds the children [...] she entirely dedicates herself to people, she caresses people, she carries about people.

⁵⁵ punishes people, she punishes people severely.

⁵⁶ is obedient, modest, humble, grateful, respectful. [...] It takes after its parents, it imitates [them] in life, it imitates the things they do.

the simplest Spanish terms into Nahuatl involved the risk of filling them up with the ideas unknown to ecclesiastics and contradicting their intentions. It concerned both classification systems analyzed here: sacred beings and churchly hierarchy. Moreover, particular meanings were connoted not only by the terms themselves, but also by their grammatical forms or the usage of Spanish loanwords. Above I suggested that choosing the “foreign” term *Santo Padre* was a sign of the distance between the Nahuas and the Pope. In fact, it can likewise be interpreted as excluding this dignitary from an indigenous classification system. On the other hand, the saints referred to with the terms *-tlazonantzin* and *-tlazotatzin* that helped them adjust to pre-Christian beliefs were, from the point of view of the friars, even too deeply incorporated into this classification system. Thus, in spite of the attempts to impose the Christian worldview on the Nahuas, the prehispanic structure of their beliefs lasted internally consistent and untouched.

SUPPLEMENT

The tables below present the material on which I based my analysis. In order to remain as clear as possible, I marked the plural only when a given grammatical form did not occur in singular at all. As the analysis has not included the problem of honorifics, the tables do not encompass the vocative form of kinship terms. If a sacred being is categorized as “owner”, it always implies the context of assigning property to “deities” in order to sustain them, discussed above. This category, as well as St. Mary as “intercessor” is most often attested in testaments.

TABLE 1. TATLI

<i>Reference Point</i>	<i>Grammatical Form</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Number of Attestations</i>
impersonal	te-ta-huan	godfathers	Chimalpahin 2006	1
	te-ta-tzin	godfather	Chimalpahin 2006	1
		lay brother	Chimalpahin 2006	1
		saint	Chimalpahin 2006	1
		God (God Father)	Beyond... 1976, Karttunen and Lockhart 1976, Lockhart 1991,	39

<i>Reference Point</i>	<i>Grammatical Form</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Number of Attestations</i>
1 person plural (we)	to-ta	Adam (first man)	Molina 1569, Rojas Rabiela 2000, Sahagún 1997	3
	to-ta-tzin	lay brother	Chimalpahin 2006	2
		ecclesiastic	Beyond... 1976, Chimalpahin 2006	38
		saint	Chimalpahin 2006, Molina 1569	2
	to-tlazo-ta-tzin	lay brother	Chimalpahin 2006	1
		ecclesiastic	Beyond... 1976, Chimalpahin 2006, Rojas Rabiela 2000	12
		saint	Chimalpahin 2006, Lockhart 1991, Rojas Rabiela 2000	17
to-huey-ta-tzin	saint	Beyond... 1976	1	
to-tlazo-mahuiz-ta-tzin	saint	Chimalpahin 2006	5	
Jesus	i-ta-tzin	God	Sahagún 1997	2
	mo/i-tlazo-ta-tzin	God	Chimalpahin 2006, Molina 1569, Sahagún 1997	12
ruler/s	mo/an-ta-tzin	ecclesiastic as ?	Beyond... 1976	2
other	mo/in-ta-huan	ecclesiastics as “spiritual fathers”	Molina 1569	1
		ecclesiastics as “rulers”	Chimalpahin 2006	1
	no/mo/in-ta-tzin	father of a biblical personage	Sahagún 1997	1
		ecclesiastic as “owner” and “supervisor”	Chimalpahin 2006	1

<i>Reference Point</i>	<i>Grammatical Form</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Number of Attestations</i>
		ecclesiastic as “creator” (founder of an order)	Chimalpahin 2006	1
		saint as “creator” (founder of an order)	Chimalpahin 2006	4
	no/mo/in-tlazo-ta-tzin	ecclesiastic as “owner” and “supervisor”	Chimalpahin 2006	2
		saint as “owner”	Chimalpahin 2006, Beyond... 1976, Lockhart 1991	10
		God as “owner”	Beyond... 1976	1
		saint as “creator” (founder of an order)	Chimalpahin 2006	2
		God as “ruler”	Beyond... 1976, Karttunen and Lockhart 1976	2
	no-tlazo-mahuiz-ta-tzin	saint as “owner”	Chimalpahin 2006, Beyond... 1976	4
	no-tlazo-mahuiz-ta-tzin	God as “ruler”	Karttunen and Lockhart 1976	1

TABLE 2. NANTLI

<i>Reference Point</i>	<i>Grammatical Form</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Number of Attestations</i>
impersonal	te-nan-tzin	blessed	Chimalpahin 2006	2
1 person	to-nan	Eve (first woman)	Sahagún 1986	3
plural (we)	to-nan-tzin	Church	Beyond... 1976, Chimalpahin 2006,	40

<i>Reference Point</i>	<i>Grammatical Form</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Number of Attestations</i>
			Karttunen and Lockhart 1976 and 1987, Molina 1569, Sahagún 1997	
	to-tlazo-nan	St. Mary	Chimalpahin 2006	1
	to-tlazo-nan-tzin	St. Mary	Beyond... 1976, Chimalpahin 2006, Karttunen and Lockhart 1976, Lockhart 1991, Molina 1569	34
	to-tlazo-mahuiz-nan-tzin	St. Mary	Beyond... 1976, Chimalpahin 2006, Lockhart 1991	12
Jesus	i-nan-tzin	St. Mary	Chimalpahin 2006, Sahagún 1997	11
	mo/i-tlazo-nan-tzin	St. Mary	Beyond... 1976, Chimalpahin 2006, Molina 1569, Sahagún 1997	14
other	no/mo/i-nan-tzin	mother of a biblical personage	Sahagún 1997	2
		saint as "creator"	Chimalpahin 2006	1
		St. Mary as "intercessor"	Beyond... 1976	1
		Church	Molina 1569, Sahagún 1997	2
	no-tlazo-nan-tzin	saint as "owner"	Beyond... 1976	1
	no-tlazo-mahuiz-nan-tzin	St. Mary as "intercessor"	Lockhart 1991	3
		St. Mary as "owner"	Beyond... 1976	4

TABLE 3. NANTLI, TATLI

<i>Reference Point</i>	<i>Grammatical Form</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Number of Attestations</i>
1 person plural (we)	to-nan, to-ta	God	Karttunen and Lockhart 1987	2

TABLE 4. PILLI

<i>Reference Point</i>	<i>Grammatical Form</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Number of Attestations</i>
impersonal	te-pil-tzin	Jesus (Son of God)	Beyond... 1976, Karttunen and Lockhart 1976, Molina 1569, Rojas Rabiela 2000, Sahagún 1997	26
God	i-pil-tzin	man as “worshipper”	Lockhart 1991, Molina 1569	2
		angel as “creature” and “serf”	Sahagún 1997	1
		Jesus	Beyond... 1976, Karttunen and Lockhart 1976, Molina 1569, Sahagún 1997	4
	i-tlazo-pil	man as “worshipper”	Molina 1569	1
	no/mo/i- tlazo-pil-tzin	Jesus	Carochi 2001, Chimalpahin 2006, Lockhart 1991, Molina 1569, Sahagún 1986 and 1997	40
	i-tlazo- mahuiz-pil- tzin	Jesus	Chimalpahin 2006	1
St. Mary, saint or Holy Trinity	i-pil-huan	<i>cofrade</i> as “worshipper” and “follower”	Chimalpahin 2006	1

<i>Reference Point</i>	<i>Grammatical Form</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Number of Attestations</i>
		friar/nun as “worshipper and “follower”	Beyond.. 1976, Chimalpahin 2006	5
	i-pil-tzin	cofrade as “worshipper” and “follower”	Chimalpahin 2006	8
		friar/nun as “worshipper” and “follower”	Beyond... 1976, Chimalpahin 2006	19
	i-tlazo-pil-tzin	friar/nun as “worshipper” and “follower”	Chimalpahin 2006	9
	i-tlazo-mahuiz-pil-tzin	friar/nun as “worshipper” and “follower”	Chimalpahin 2006	1
other	no/mo/i-pil-huan	man as “serf”	Beyond... 1976	4
		friar/nun as “follower”	Chimalpahin 2006	1
	i-pil-tzin	man as “serf”	Chimalpahin 2006	1
		friar/nun as “follower”	Chimalpahin 2006	1

TABLE. 5. CONETL

<i>Reference Point</i>	<i>Grammatical Form</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Number of Attestations</i>
St. Mary	mo-cone-tzin	Jesus	Sahagún 1997	1
	mo/i-tlazo-cone-tzin	Jesus	Beyond... 1976, Chimalpahin 2006, Molina 1569, Sahagún 1997	12

<i>Reference Point</i>	<i>Grammatical Form</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Number of Attestations</i>
	i-tlazo-mahuiz-cone-tzin	Jesus	Lockhart 1991	2
God	i-cone-tzin	man as “worshipper”	Lockhart 1991	2

TABLE 6. PADRE

<i>Category</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Number of Attestations</i>
ecclesiastic	Beyond... 1976, Chimalpahin 2006, Lockhart 1991, Molina 1569, Sahagún 1986	87
pope	Beyond... 1976, Chimalpahin 2006, Molina 1569, Sahagún 1986	55

TABLE 7. MADRE

<i>Category</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Number of Attestations</i>
blessed	Chimalpahin 2006	3

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