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## **The First Relation of Chimalpahin's *Diferentes Historias Originales*. Its sources and the author's intention**

**Resumen:** La Primera Relación es la introducción de una extensa obra sobre la historia de los pueblos indígenas del Valle de México escrita por el autor indígena Chimalpahin en su idioma maternal, el Nahuatl. El autor incorpora la historia indígena en el marco de Historia Universal, un concepto historiográfico categóricamente europeo. Así demuestra que los indígenas eran sujetos de la divina intención de salvar los hombres. Su argumentación se funda exclusivamente en obras filosóficas, teológicas e históricas del Mundo Antiguo como La Biblia, obras de filósofos de la Edad Antigua, de los Santos Padres así como de teólogos de la Edad Media y del Renacimiento.

**Summary:** The First Relation is the introductory part of an extensive work treating the history of the aboriginal population of the Valley of Mexico. It was written by the native author Chimalpahin in his mother tongue, Nahuatl. He fits the indigenous history into the framework of Universal History, an unmistakably European concept of historiography proving that the Indians have and always had a share in God's plan to redeem mankind. His argumentation is exclusively based on philosophical, theological and historical writings from the Old World ranging from the Bible, works of philosophers of the Classical World, Fathers of the Church as well as mediaeval and Renaissance theologians.

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\* Antropóloga trabajando en el campo de etnohistoria e arqueología de Centralmexico de la época posclásica y colonial temprana así como de filología Nahuatl; puntos de investigación: la obra del cronista Nahuatl Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin del siglo XVII, tendencia y subversión en la historiografía indígena centralmexicana; profesora del Nahuatl clásico de la Universidad Libre de Berlín; varias publicaciones, entre otros "Titlaca in nican Nueva España (Somos la gente aquí en Nueva España): la historia novohispana según los historiadores indígenas (siglo XVI y principios del XVII)" (2000), "Jaguar and Serpent. The Cosmos of Indians in Mexico, Central and Southamerica" (2000 juntos con Claus Deimel), "Domingo de San Antón Muñon Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, Diferentes Historias Originales. Aus dem Nahuatl übersetzt, kommentiert und herausgegeben von Elke Ruhnau" (2001).



The First Relation is the introductory part of a historical work comprising 8 chapters or relations which is called *Diferentes Historias Originales*. It was written in the first half of the 17th century by the indigenous author Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin in his mother tongue Nahuatl. The extensive work is the history of the many different native peoples who lived in the Valley of Mexico. It relates events from early pre-conquest times until the first decades of the colonial period.

At first glance there can not be detected any relationship between the subject matters of the First Relation and the following historical records. It only deals with Old World intellectual traditions and the Indians are mentioned only as its addressees who are exhorted to read and consider it carefully. The author discusses among others the philosophy of the Classical World, the descendance of mankind from Adam and Eve, the writings of Early Fathers of the Church, concepts of scholastic and renaissance theology, the biblical record of the Creation of the world and the Fall of Adam.

Dealing with those subject matters at the beginning of the representation of ancient Indian history appears to be meaningful if one considers the character of the *Diferentes Historias Originales*. Chimalpahin used the form of Universal History or *Historia Mundi* to communicate the history of his people, the natives of New Spain. The Universal History was a common type of historiography in medieval and Renaissance Europe predicated on a particular concept of history. The history of mankind is not a mere secular event but also the history of God's Salvation of man. A Universal History always starts with the very first landmark in mankind's history, the Creation of the world, and then continues with major events such as the Flood, the Tower of Babylon, the Exodus, the intellectual history of Classical World, etc. Then follows the second landmark in mankind's history, the Birth, Crucifixion and Ascension of Christ. Lastly it turns to the particular history of the people on whom the author's interest is focused (Romero Galván 1983: 44pp.). Thus, complying with the scheme of Universal History Chimalpahin deals in the First Relation with the Creation of the world and the philosophy of the Classical World. Other issues required by the Universal History, such as the Flood, the Exodus and the Birth of Christ are discussed in the following Second Relation.

Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, the author of the *Diferentes Historias Originales*, was born in 1579 as a descendant of one of the former ruling families in prehispanic Chalco, a region located in the south-east of the Basin of Mexico. In the middle of the 15th century Chalco was conquered by the Aztecs and became a tribute paying province of their empire. In 1522 it was turned into Cortés' *encomienda*. Since the age of 14 Chimalpahin worked for the church of San Antonio Abad in Mexico City. There he began to write the *Diferentes Historias Originales* which he finished in the first half of the 17th century. The year of his death is not known, but he certainly died after 1631, the latest date referred to in the *Diferentes Historias Originales*. The work does not only prove Chimalpahin's abundant knowledge of the pre-conquest history of the Valley of Mexico. It also testifies the author's deep-rooted Christian Faith and his profound education in the field of Roman-Catholic theology.

The *Diferentes Historias Originales* were directed primarily to Indian readers or listeners (Ruhnau 1998: 199f.). Their language, Nahuatl, had been the mother tongue of most of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico and the Lingua Franca in all parts of the former Aztec tribute empire. Then (and now) only very few Europeans could read or understand it. Aside from conserving the old, genuine historical traditions among the present and future generations of Indians, and making them proud of it (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 234v), the *Diferentes Historias Originales* were intended to consolidate the reader's Christian Faith (Ruhnau 1998: 200).

Chimalpahin wanted to prove to his indigenous readers that they had been intended for being Christians since primordial times. As descendants of the very first human couple, Adam and Eve, who had been created directly by God Himself the Indians form part of mankind, and thus, have a share in God's Salvation of man. By writing his chronicle as a Universal History Chimalpahin incorporated the history of the native peoples of Mexico into the scheme of the History of Salvation.<sup>1</sup>

Several times throughout the *Diferentes Historias Originales* Chimalpahin puts forward two major arguments in favour of the Christian Faith not being a new religious belief forced on the Indians, but their truly genuine one. As God uses to reveal Himself even to the heathens, as Chimalpahin explains, the author characterizes a number of events in the course of Indian history as examples of His revelation to the pagan Indians (Ruhnau 1998: 201pp.). Another argument is his firm refutation of the Franciscan doctrine according to which all the natives of America who died unbaptized in pre-Christian i.e. pre-conquest times are condemned to eternal damnation. He explains that the ancestors of his baptized indigenous contemporaries had been redeemed by Jesus Christ even when they did not know anything about it. They had been victimized by Satan who lured them into idolatry (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 9r).

The First Relation in particular, emphasizes the idea of God's revelation to the heathens. As God created the world and man, the mere existence of the world testifies that He is the only God, a fact which can not only be perceived by the Christians but also by the heathens. But He not only reveals Himself to faithful and pagan man in this general way. Many famous philosophers from the Classical World prove by their writings that God had revealed Himself to them, enlightening them to understand that He is the omnipotent power that keeps the world running.

Chimalpahin organized the First Relation into an introduction and two chapters. In the introduction he points out that he wants to explain how God revealed Himself to mankind in the course of history. By announcing that he is going to relate the Creation

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1 Salvation understood as the gracious acting of God towards every single human being, is the only way to redemption. Although God's will of Salvation became most evident in the Birth and Crucifixion of Christ, the history of Salvation includes all events of Salvation and Evil that are experienced by man throughout his history. This is not merely confined to experiences of Salvation in Jewish and Christian history but includes all of man's experiences at all times and places. Events of Salvation and Evil are caused by God and His will to redeem mankind; they are at the same time however events of secular history.

of the world, the life of Adam's and Eve's offsprings, the Birth of Christ and many other events he characterizes his chronicle as a Universal History.

The first chapter comprises two parts. Chimalpahin explains that God reveals Himself to man with every single feature of the world, and thus, not only to the Christians but also to the heathens, as it is reflected by the writings of many pagan authors of the Classical World. As examples he mentions works of Platon, Sophocles and Diogenes Laertios. But, most of the testimonies of God's revelation to man are to be found in the writings of Christian authors, such as Celio Rhodigino, Baptista Egnazio and Antonio Sabelico, and such as St. Augustine, one of the Early Fathers of the Church. Above all works of the different pagan and Christian authors that reflect God's revelation to man, Chimalpahin places the *Pentateuch*. To its author, Moses, God revealed Himself unmistakably. The *Pentateuch's* words were given to Moses directly by God Himself, and he did not revise them. Thus, the work contains the genuine Word of God, and provides mankind with a definite code of conduct. Finally, Chimalpahin proves that God revealed Himself to the artists at all times and places, because every single work of art is just a depiction of God's Creation.

The first chapter's second part deals with Adam. Chimalpahin refers his Creation, his Fall and Redemption, and he discusses his being the progenitor of mankind including those persons who later became the second generation of progenitors. As evidence of mankind's lineal descent from Adam he mentions the Book of Genesis.

The second chapter is organized in three parts. The first part's major issue is the Creation of the world according to the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. Incorporated in this description there can be found a discussion of the simultaneous Creation of heaven and the angels as it had been settled by the 4th Council of Lateran (1198-1216) (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 4v), as well as of the simultaneous Creation of fish and birds and their close relationship to each other caused by the similarity of the media they live in, water and evaporated water in the air, as it is explained by St. Augustine and Rupert of Deutz (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 5v; Chimalpahin 2001, 2: 11). Chimalpahin closes the first part by relating the Creation of man according to the Book of Genesis. The second part is focused on the character and physical appearance of man as the image of God. Chimalpahin quotes a number of theological theories dealing with this subject matter, such as Thomas Aquinas' anthropological doctrine, his doctrine of Creation, St. Augustine's doctrine of Trinity,<sup>2</sup> the anthropology of St. John of Damascus and the doctrine of original sin according to St. Denis. A discussion of the nature of Heaven and the Angels is the final part of the second chapter and also of the First Relation.

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2 I express my thanks to Simon Gerber who kindly revised my translation of the First Relation from Nahuatl into German as well as the corresponding annotations. He pointed out to me that the doctrine of Trinity treated by Chimalpahin is St. Augustine's and not that of Thomas of Aquinas, as I supposed.

Ample parts of the First Relation are quotations or translations of passages from distinct books including the Bible.<sup>3</sup> Others are Chimalpahin's commentaries, his own reflections and argumentations. These can be detected by the change from 3rd person or impersonal voice to 1st person either singular or plural or to imperative mood. Another indication of some considerations being Chimalpahin's own reflections derives from not being characterized as those of another author because no source is mentioned.

Mostly Chimalpahin not only communicates the name of an author but also the title of a particular work as the source of his quotation. Because most of the titles are in Latin or in Classical Greek he translates them into Spanish or into Nahuatl. Mentioning only an author's name as a source without the title of a distinct writing suggests that Chimalpahin did not have access to the original work but studied theological secondary literature. Thus, sometimes he may have quoted another quotation.

The following analysis will show who the authors are whose writings Chimalpahin used as sources and which of their theories and doctrines he discussed. It will also be explained in which way he used the authors' writings, quoting secondary literature about them and their doctrines or distinct works of them as primary sources, or even translating, more or less literally, passages of distinct writings into Nahuatl.

A number of reflections, concepts and doctrines expressed by philosophers from the Classical World, Early Fathers of the Church and scholastic theologians, such as St. Augustine, St. John of Damascus, St. Denis, Thomas Aquinas and Rupert of Deutz Chimalpahin deals with by obviously quoting secondary literature. At the beginning of the First Relation's first chapter (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 6r) Chimalpahin quotes a passage from a book the title of which, *Sentencias*, is a translation into Spanish. But, even as he presents a detailed quotation he certainly did not use a primary source but quoted secondary literature. He mistakenly attributes the work to the famous ancient Greek poet Sophocles, who is the author of many tragedies but of no work of prose. In fact, the literary genre called *Sententias* (Sentences) was common in the Classical World, but nevertheless, it is a typical feature of scholastic theological literature of the Middle Ages (*Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 9: 670ff.). The unquestionable Christian essence of the text which Chimalpahin quotes proves that it derives from one of the many compilations of doctrines of famous theologians, called *Sententias*. Obviously Chimalpahin studied a book about the genre from which he quoted mixing up authors and periods.

Relating the Creation of the world in the first part of the First Relation's second chapter Chimalpahin not only used the biblical record of the Book of Genesis' first chapter as a source but seemingly also a theological book about the Creation, maybe even a textbook for students. Incorporated into the relation of the Creation of heaven and earth there is to be found a short discourse about the 4th Council of Lateran's set-

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3 Chimalpahin probably used the Latin translation called Vulgata which is still relevant for Roman-Catholic theology.

tlement of the simultaneous Creation of heaven and the angels (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 4v), that probably derives from that book. Another quotation from a passage of that unnamed book can be seen in the discussion of the close relationship between fish and birds that had been created on the same day (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 5v). Chimalpahin points out that this quotation refers to St. Augustine and the German scholastic theologian Rupert of Deutz without mentioning particular works of these scholars. Aside from his own comment he adds to this quotation a short note saying that St. Augustine also had discussed the subsistence of the birds. It is surprising that Chimalpahin here deals with doctrines of St. Augustine using secondary literature, because, as will be shown in the course of this analysis, he had access to original works of the author. St. Augustin discusses the relationship between fish and birds in his three writings *De Genesi* [About Creation] (Aurelius Augustinus, vol. 15, 1957: 390f., 546f., 680f.), and the subsistence of the birds is among others subject matter of the chapter *Enarratio in Psalmum* 145 [Commentary on Psalm 145] of his work with the title *Ennarationes in Psalmos* [Commentaries on the Psalms] (Aurelius Augustinus, vol. 22, 1967: 789).

Following the record of the Creation of the world and of man there can be found a discourse about man being the image of God which is the second part of the First Relation's second chapter (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 2r-3v). In its course Chimalpahin quotes doctrines of Thomas of Aquinas, St. Augustine, St. John of Damascus and St. Denis concerning anthropology, Creation, Holy Trinity and original sin. All these quotations probably derive from a theological book about the Christian image of man that Chimalpahin studied thoroughly.

There is evidence, that concerning a number of other writings Chimalpahin quoted the original text i.e. he had access to the primary sources. This applies to two works of Platon, another book of St. Augustine, a history of the philosophy of the Classical World written by the Greek philosopher Diogenes Laertios, writings of the Italian authors Marco Antonio Coccio "Sabelico", Baptista Egnazio and Celio Rhodigino as well as the Book of Wisdom of Solomon from the Old Testament. As very first author mentioned right at the beginning of the First Relation's first chapter (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 1v) Chimalpahin presents Platon. He refers to two of the ancient Greek philosopher's works, mentioning their Latin titles, *De constitutione mundi* [About the constitution or condition of the world] and *Epistola* [Letter]. Because of the poor condition of the corresponding manuscript page of the *Diferentes Historias Originales* it can not be distinguished which of Platon's concepts Chimalpahin explains. The title *Epistola* probably refers to an edition of Platon's second letter, where he deals among others with three basic principles of the world, a doctrine which was later interpreted by St. Eusebius of Cesarea as an anticipation of the concept of Holy Trinity (Platon 1954: 17, 40). Because of the illegibility of the First Relation's passage in question it can not be decided which of Platon's works' Greek titles had been translated into Latin as *De constitutione mundi*. The Latin term *constitutio* may have either the meaning "legal constitution" or "physical condition". Thus, the title may be understood as

“About the constitution of the world” and thus, may refer to Platon’s work called *Nomoi* whose subject matter is the perfect legal constitution of states in all of the world. But, it can also be translated as “About the condition of the world” and thus, may be the Latin title of a writing called *Timaios*, where Platon deals with the formation of the world. In both writings Platon explains that an omnipotent divine power is responsible for the functioning of the visible and the invisible world (Ritter/Gründer 1984, vol. 6: 427pp.).

The third pagan author mentioned by Chimalpahin is the ancient Greek philosopher Diogenes Laertios who lived in the 3rd or 2nd century B.C (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 6r). He wrote the only history of classical philosophy. The work is written in Greek but Chimalpahin probably quoted from its Latin version with the title *De Vitis, Dogmatibus et Apothegmatibus Clarorum Philosophorum* [The lives, doctrines and sentences of famous philosophers]. Considering that many of his readers could hardly understand the Latin, much less the Greek title Chimalpahin translated it into Nahuatl. He quotes a statement of Diogenes Laertios about the wisdom of the god from the book’s introduction interpreting it from the Christian point of view.

Auh iyehuatl ytocha Diogenes Laercio yn ipa ynnemiliz yn tlamatinime yn mitohua mote-nehua philosophos iye quitoz quitenehuaz yn itzinpeuhcapa yn tlamachilliztli philosophia niman nic compehualtia yn quiteyititia quitenextilia yn queni yehuatzin teoyxtlamachilliz-tzintli yn tt. Dios. – And the author called Diogenes Laertios will say it, will mention it in the ‘Lives of wise men’ who are called, who are named philosophers, just at the beginning of the wisdom, of philosophy when he starts to show people, to reveal to people that God, our Lord is divine wisdom (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 6r).

[...] ut ait Heraclides Ponticus [...]: “Nullum enim hominum, sed solum Deum, esse sapientem”. – [...] as Heraclitus of Pontus says<sup>4</sup> [...]: “Truly there is not a single wise man, only the god is the one who is wise” (Diogenes Laertios 1739: 12).

Because the quotation renders faithfully what Diogenes Laertios (or Heraclitus of Pontus) says about the wisdom of the god one may safely assume that Chimalpahin studied a Latin and maybe also a Greek edition of the work.

In the first chapter of the First Relation Chimalpahin discusses intensively two of the many works of St. Augustine whom he calls the most outstanding Christian author. Unlike St. Augustine’s writings *De Genesi* and his commentary on Psalm 145 Chimalpahin quotes the original text of *De Civitate Dei* [About the City of God], a title which he translates into Spanish as *Ciudad de Diós*. He quotes a selection of St. Augustine’s statements about the divine city of Jerusalem in heaven and its worldly counterpart, the city of Jerusalem on earth which can be distinguished in various chapters of the book (Aurelius Augustinus, vols. 16/17; 1958: 715, 1176, 1246, 1249, 1540f., 1626f.).

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4 The statement Chimalpahin attributes to Diogenes Laertios was in fact expressed by the Ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus.

After the discussion of how the writings of St. Augustine and other authors from the early Christian period reflect God's revelation to them Chimalpahin goes on to books written by Italian authors from the renaissance period. He precisely characterizes these authors as compilers of books because they expressed their considerations about many kinds of subject matters (Durand-Forest 1990: 66). The way he summarizes major statements rendered in Celio Rhodigino's work *Antiquas Lectiones* [Time-honoured lessons] (Durand-Forest 1990: 67) proves that Chimalpahin had access to the original work. He does not translate the Latin title into Spanish, but reduces it to *Lectiones* (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 7r).

Despite of the fact that Chimalpahin mentions a work that he calls *Exemplos* only in a short note he probably had held it in his hands (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 7r). He attributes the writing called *Exemplorum Libri X* [Ten books of examples], the title of which he translated both into Spanish and into Nahuatl, not only to its actual author Marco Antonio Coccio "Sabelico" but also to another one, Baptista Egnazio. The edition of "Sabelico's" *Exemplorum Libri X* published in the year 1560 additionally comprises a commentary on the writings of the Roman historian Sueton provided with critical notes by Baptista Egnazio.

The first chapter of the First Relation closes with a discussion of the life of Adam, the progenitor of mankind (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 4r). Chimalpahin relates the Fall of Adam and his Redemption quoting the first and second verse of chapter 10 of the Book of Wisdom of Solomon according to the *Vulgata*, the Latin Bible of the Roman-Catholic church (*Biblia Sacra Vulgata* 1994: 1013f.). Seemingly Chimalpahin considered the biblical text as being too plain, and consequently added extensive verbal embellishment, but still renders its essence faithfully.

Haec illum qui primus finctus est patrem orbis terrarum, cum solus esset creatus custodivit, et eduxit illum a delicto suo; et dedit illi virtutem continendi omnia. – It (i.e. the wisdom) protected the father of the world who was created first, when only he was created, and saved him from his Fall; and it granted to him the power to rule over everything (*Biblia Sacra Vulgata* 1994: 1013f.).

Yn ipa amoxtli yn itoca Sabiduria quitohua yn teamoxtli yn Adam quimochihuilli yn tt. Dios yc quimochihuilli yc quimixquechilli ca yntatzin yn ixquichtin flalticpactli ypan nemi. Auh ca quimoquixtilli yn ipa yn itlapilchihual yn itlatlacol quichiuh. Auh yc momati ytallo yehica ynin flaneltilliztli ca mellahuac catholica yhuan neltocani ca iyehuatzin Adam ca quimochihuilli tlamacehualliztli penitencia yn itechpa yn itlapilchihual yn itlatlacol. Auh ca tlapopolhuiloc ca momaquixti. – In the book called Wisdom of Solomon the book of God says that God, our Lord created Adam; he created him, appointed him to be the father of all people who live on earth. And he expelled him because of the sins, the offences he committed. And this is known, this can be seen because this faith is the true one, the Catholic one and Adam is the true believer who did penance for his sins, his offences. And he was forgiven, he saved himself (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 4r).

As has been stated above, in the First Relation's first chapter Chimalpahin deals with two works of St. Augustine. After quoting passages from *De Civitate Dei* he translates

the very first phrases of St. Augustine's *Confessionum Libri Tredecim* [Thirteen books of confessions] (Aurelius Augustinus 1915: 1), the title of which he reduces to *Confessio* (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 6 v/7r). It is a literal translation of a praise of God. But, from the point of view of Aztec culture's peculiar style of glorifying verbally divine or human beings St. Augustine's praise is much too simple and plain, and thus, Chimalpahin added some verbal "decorations". The translation of the Augustinian text proves that Chimalpahin had studied Latin thoroughly and was capable not only to read it but to translate it adequately into his mother tongue.

Magnus es, domine, et laudabilis valde: magna virtus tua et sapientiae tuae non est numerus. Et laudare te vult homo, aliqua portio creaturae tuae [...]. – You are grand, Lord, you are really venerable: your power is grand and your wisdom is unnumerable. And a man who is just any part of your Creation wants to praise you [...] (Aurelius Augustinus 1915: 1).

Ca cenca ticenquizcahueytzintli yn tehuatzin tt. Dios, auh ca cenca tihuecapanolloni hualca tiyectenehualloni yhuan cenca huey y mohuellitzin amo ca caquin oncan huellitiz quipohuaz yn moteotlamachillitzin. Auh yece huell ixquichica onquinequi yn tlalticpac tlatatl yc mitzmoyectenehuilliz yehica ca oc ceccan motlachihualtzitzinhuan. – You are the very perfect grandness, God, our Lord, you are the very venerable, you are deserving even more praise. And your power is grand. Nobody will have power, will count your divine wisdom. And still a man on earth really wants to praise you there, because your creatures are in another place (i.e. on earth)<sup>5</sup> (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 6v/7r).

The first part of the First Relation's second chapter comprises the record of the Creation of the world and of man (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 4v-5v, 2r). Chimalpahin keeps to the biblical report rendered by the Book of Genesis in chapter 1, verses 1-26 (*Biblia Sacra Vulgata* 1994: 4f.). In his representation quotations and literal translations are alternating. If he just quotes the biblical text he mostly embellishes it verbally. Translating literally the words of the Book of Genesis he often ignores the original sequence of events and arranges them in a different way. Verse 26 which relates the Creation of man, Chimalpahin translates in a rather remarkable way. It is a literal translation with verbal embellishments comparable to that of the first phrases of St. Augustine's *Confessio*. The biblical record's words read "[...] et ait, faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram [...]" he (God) says "we shall create man as our image and likeness [...]" (*Biblia Sacra Vulgata* 1994: 5), which Chimalpahin, following faithfully Roman-Catholic doctrine, understands as an indication of Holy Trinity. Thus, he incorporates the translation into a vivid description of how Father, Son and Holy Ghost met and jointly thought over how to create man which culminated in the decision to create him as the image of God.

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5 Chimalpahin's translation into Nahuatl of the last phrase "[...] aliqua portio creaturae tuae [...]" is incorrect.

[...] qitohua yn ipa teamoxtlacuillo mocepantlallitzinoque yn iuh queni yez mononotzi-noque quimolnamiquillitinoque yn imeyxtintzitzin teotlacatzitzintin yn divinas personas Sanctissima Trinidad yn tetatzin quimonochilli yn tepiltzin yhuan yn S.piritu santo quimolhuillitino: “ma ticchihuacan yn tlatatl yn tixiptla yn topatillo [...]”. – [...] the written book of God says that the three divine Lords, the holy persons, the Holy Trinity assembled, they consulted each other they reflected on how it should be. The noble Father called for the noble Son and the Holy Ghost, he said to them: 'we shall create man as our representative, as our proxy (Chimalpahin 1949-52: F. 2 r).

As a Universal History the *Diferentes Historias Originales* should have started with a relation of the Creation of the world. But instead Chimalpahin first deals with how philosophers of the Classical World perceived God. This reflects clearly the major intention of the chronicle's First Relation. It shall prove to its readers that there is and always had been only one i.e. the Christian God. As the omnipotent creator of the world He had revealed Himself to the pagan philosophers of ancient Greece making them testify his power. Like those philosophers the ancestors of Chimalpahin's indigenous contemporaries had been heathens, and they could have perceived God's revelation to them as well. Subsequently, the history of the Valley of Mexico's native population that follows the First Relation comprises a number of events that Chimalpahin characterizes as examples of how God in fact revealed Himself to pagan Indians (Ruhnau 1998: 201ff.). Using this indirect argumentative strategy Chimalpahin tries to convince his indigenous readers that being baptized and living as Christians is nothing else but manifesting a religious belief they and their ancestors in reality had always followed even without being aware of it.

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