

Pre-Hispanic Indians of central Mexico were the authors of many books, made on bark paper or on tanned deer skin. The subjects of the books were extremely diverse, as they treated about historical events, genealogy of the aristocratic families or about economic topics, such as lists of tributes. One of the most interesting are the so-called holy books, which were kind of guides to the world for their users. On the basis of various calendar cycles, these books contain information used to predict the future, or, in fact, to model man's destiny - hence they are often called divinatory books. However, they contain a wealth of information, allowing to get an insight not only the pre-Hispanic Indian religion, but also to their world vision and even philosophical concepts.

In the colonial era the status of these books changed dramatically. While all the others could still be elaborated, these religious books were recognized as a "work of the devil", so they were banned and even burned. Only a few of them survived to our time, mainly because they were sent to Europe quite quickly as exotic gifts to the pope or to the king of Spain. One of them is *Codex Vaticanus B*, named in this way because it early appeared in the Vatican Library and it is kept there until today. In the same library another famous pre-Hispanic book, called *Codex Borgia* (because once it belonged to the Cardinal Stefano Borgia) is housed. Both books are very similar in terms of subject and the internal structure, but *Codex Borgia* is prettier, much better elaborated in terms of style, and it has excellent drawings and colors. In turn, *Codex Vaticanus B* is much smaller, it contains scenes much worse painted and the colors cannot be seen clearly because it is dirty.

The aim of the project is to conduct a thorough research on this often overlooked or forgotten by researchers codex, given its very high value as pre-Hispanic original source. The analysis will first focus on codicological study, that is, the analysis of the physical support of the document, the way of its elaboration, including the preparation of the support material, the organization of data, the manner of preparing plates and images, the ways of use of the document together with its use as palimpsest, as well as establishing the number of the authors of the document. It will be carried out on the original document held in the Vatican Apostolic Library. The second step will be the analysis of the content of the manuscript. This kind of study is the most challenging for the researchers, because there are no direct and clear data on how these books were read or used; neither are there any alphabetic glosses or comments that could help in the interpretation. The difficulty lies in the fact that these books were elaborated with very particular and unique graphic communications system, which is different from the alphabetical letters and other writings of well-known Old World, and, thus, which is often categorized as "pictography" or "mnemonic". As a matter of fact, this system has at least two levels of codifying information in the graphic signs; apart from its denotation, every sign has also plenty of connotations, which assure the ambiguity of the interpretation, proper for the divinatory books. It is therefore extremely important to choose a good method of analysis, in line with the latest developments in this field. The result of the work will be publishing of a new and complete commentary on *Codex Vaticanus B*, which will be accompanied by the latest release of the facsimile.