

The goal of the project is to prepare the critical edition of one of the earliest printed sources in colonial Nahuatl *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Española y Mexicana por la Orden de Santo Domingo*, printed in Mexico in 1548. It is the earliest dated broad ecclesiastical text in this language, however to date it was not investigated.

In the first years after the conquest the friars who arrived to the New World face an unprecedented task to introduce to indigenous people new Christian cultural concepts – such as the Holy Trinity, one God, the concept of sin, heaven and hell, paradise, angels and devils etc.). Since the evangelization from the beginning took place in indigenous language, its success depended on the right translation of these terms into Nahuatl, explaining them to the Nahuas. The source in question was created as the translation of the Spanish version of the text into Nahuatl.

As a result of the process of evangelization, the Nahuatl has changed considerably – some already existing words changed or extended their original meaning, in order to correspond with the Spanish terms, many neologisms were created, loanwords from Spanish were introduced into the language. The objective of the project is to indicate and carefully analyze (including the interlinear linguistic morpheme-by-morpheme glossing) this language phenomena, what will allow to discover, how this vocabulary was created and who in fact was their author.

The question of authorship of early Nahuatl Christian sources is particularly interesting. It seems that on such early level of the contact the Spaniards could not have sufficient proficiency in the language in order to create such broad, complicated explanations of the Christian faith. Presently, the research hypothesis states that probably they had to cooperate with indigenous people. It would mean that the Nahuas played an active role in the process of cultural translation in XVI century. The analysis of *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Española y Mexicana por la Orden de Santo Domingo* may confirm this hypothesis. First of all, it is written in very complicated, almost faultless Nahuatl. Secondly, it is possible to encounter in the text grammatical and syntactic constructions characteristic for the precolonial Nahuatl. Moreover, some of the mistakes made in translation indicate that the author of the Nahuatl version of the text did not always understand fully the nuances of the Spanish prototype.

Another interesting subject for investigation is the way, in which the early religious sources were created and how they influenced the later changes in the language. The text were prepared in the orders, where their translators developed new solutions in order to translate the Spanish text in the best way possible (they proposed neologisms, calques ect.). Only later the effects of their work were presented to the broader audience, the indigenous users of the language and permeated into the every-day use and written sources of other genres. It means that we can perceive the orders, in which the translation was made, as the specific “language laboratories”, dedicated to developing language solutions that was later put into use. The project will allow to investigate this mechanism, and comparison of the results of the analysis with other, later sources in Nahuatl will allow to demonstrate, how this vocabulary, created in the “language laboratories” functioned later.

The last research topic of the project is the question of how the Nahuas could understand the religious text and how could they perceive the terms describing the Christian concepts. In other words: how the new vocabulary and language contact phenomena could have been understood in the Nahuatl culture context. An interesting question is how the indigenous recipient of the text understood the text of the *Doctrina*... and if it was in accordance with the intention of the author, or whether the solutions proposed by the “language laboratories” were not always successful and could lead to misinterpretations of the Christian doctrine. jej przetłumaczeniu.

The edition of *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Española y Mexicana por la Orden de Santo Domingo* will include complete translation of the Nahuatl text into English (what will allow the broader discussion over the question of understanding the doctrine) and broad commentary, with all the results of the linguistic analysis of the text.