CHAPTER 5

Whose Enlightenment Was It Anyway?

Recent surveys of the Enlightenment have called into question earlier portrayals of this "rebirth of 'paganism'" as a secular, liberal critique of ancien régime religious and political values launched by a handful of great writers such as Voltaire and Diderot. Dorinda Outram, for example, has offered a different framework in which the Enlightenment is seen as revolving around controversies about gender, religion, government, science, and the exotic, in the context of the rise of new forms of sociability. This broadening of the concept of the Enlightenment to include all those involved in building the "public sphere"—a critical marketplace of ideas that forced state and Church to find new languages of legitimization—is salutary, but it nonetheless remains Eurocentric.[1] Although Outram has gone out of her way to acknowledge that there were many "publics" outside Britain, France, and Germany, including those in the British and Spanish American colonies, Greece, Italy, and eastern Europe, the controversies she studies are those that preoccupied the great minds of northern Europe.[2] Outram has justified her choice by pointing to the marketplace. Cheap books, newspapers, and periodicals homogenized and globalized the public sphere; the questions and controversies of the world were those that haunted northern European scholars and intellectuals.[3]

This approach to the Enlightenment is limiting and only partially right. The emergence of educated publics in Scotland, France, and Germany led to the development of a new art of reading and genres that called into question the value of traditional sources in writing the history of the New World. These new genres, in turn, framed public discourse in Spain (and the Papal States) and the Spanish American colonies. But the language and rules of northern European discourses and controversies were not passively transferred to the New World, Spain, or the Papal States. The themes that were significant to the public in Spanish America had less to do with building new religious and political languages than with constructing alternative, critical

epistemologies. The Spanish American Enlightenment was a dual process of creating such discursive space and consolidating a public sphere.[4]

It would, of course, be easier to disassociate the discourse of "patriotic epistemology" from the Enlightenment. I have, after all, described it as a project whose criteria of assessing and validating knowledge reinforced the corporate privileges of ancien régime polities. Moreover, it was a clerical construct, thoroughly informed by religious values, the antithesis of modernity. But to measure Enlightenment from this perspective would be to return to the paradigms Outram has challenged.

This chapter draws its inspiration from the works of Joseph M. Levine, who has shown the importance of antiquarian debates in reconstructing eighteenth-century cultural history.[5] Here, I examine the discourse of patriotic epistemology in Spanish America through analysis of three antiquarian controversies that took place in the 1780s and 1790s in the viceroyalty of New Spain. Unlike the authors described in the previous chapter, the participants in these debates worked in a rarefied environment characterized by rapid institutional and cultural change brought about by the Bourbon reforms, which challenged the Church's monopoly on knowledge. The reforms opened up, often by fiat, a public sphere in the colonies that made the discourse of patriotic epistemology slightly less clerical. However, they did not substantially alter its logic and content.

The debate triggered by the discovery in the central plaza of Mexico City of a number of ancient monuments, including the famous "Solar Stone," demonstrates that the Spanish American Enlightenment was not merely a belated reflection of ideas first tried out in Europe. Representatives of the Enlightenment in New Spain who participated in the debate were explicitly attempting to develop a critique of Eurocentric epistemologies. Their critique was organized around questions and preoccupations that reflected the colonial status of the region. The practical political dimensions of the Spanish American Enlightenment are examined in the second section of this chapter through analysis of the debate that took place in the 1780s and 1790s in New Spain over the whereabouts and final destination of Lorenzo Boturini's collection. I contend that it never left Mexico, despite all the efforts of the crown, because the Creole intelligentsia successfully plotted to keep it at home. The third section of the chapter returns to the debates over the stones found in the plaza of the capital of New Spain, focusing this time on participants who can hardly be characterized as members of the Enlightenment. Using the long overlooked works of José Ignacio Borunda, I

reconstruct the clash between old and new forms of scholarship in Spanish America, maintaining that the traditions of the Baroque did not disappear but had a lasting and powerful influence in the late-colonial period. In the fourth and final section, I turn to yet another antiquarian debate, this one triggered by the discovery of the ruins of Palenque in the 1780s and 1790s. Palenque pitted a "philosophical" methodology based on the insights of the northern European social sciences against a patriotic, "baroque" paradigm. The debate introduces the reader to the rich culture of the Spanish American Baroque through an analysis of the scholarship of those involved in the study of the ruins and sheds light on the lasting religious preoccupations of the Creole-clerical elites of Spanish America. Finally, the debate shows how Creoles deployed the discourse of patriotic epistemology to undermine the authority of foreigners who dared to get involved.

The Stones: Interpreting the Spanish-American Enlightenment

From August 1790 to June 1792, excavations for public works projects undertaken by the viceroy, Juan Vicente de Guemes Pacheco de Padilla, second count of Revillagigedo (r. 1789–94), introduced the citizens of Mexico City to a series of remarkable archeological discoveries. Giant boulders were revealed, which had to be lifted with pulleys or blown to pieces. Two monuments in particular attracted the attention of the local literati: the monstrous figure of an Aztec deity, known today as Coatlicue, which went to the university for further study (Fig. 5.1a), and a huge wheel carved in stone, the so-called Solar Stone, which was assigned to the cathedral chapter for display (Fig. 5.2).[6] When the boulder carved with the Aztec deity attracted a stream of curious Amerindian visitors to the university, the authorities, fearful of encouraging a pagan revival, buried it again.

The discovery of these stones set off a wave of learned speculation, notably by José Antonio de Alzate y Ramírez and Antonio de León y Gama, two leading luminaries of the Mexican Enlightenment. The two men's approaches differed substantially. Prompted by the criticisms of his nemesis, Alzate y Ramírez, León y Gama sought to interpret the stones, producing one of the most epistemologically sophisticated texts to appear in the Atlantic world in this period. Conversely, Alzate y Ramírez, representative of a less rigorously scholarly aspect of the Enlightenment in Mexico, refused to speculate about the meaning of the stones. But when the epistemologies of these two authors are compared, their differences vanish. León y Gama's

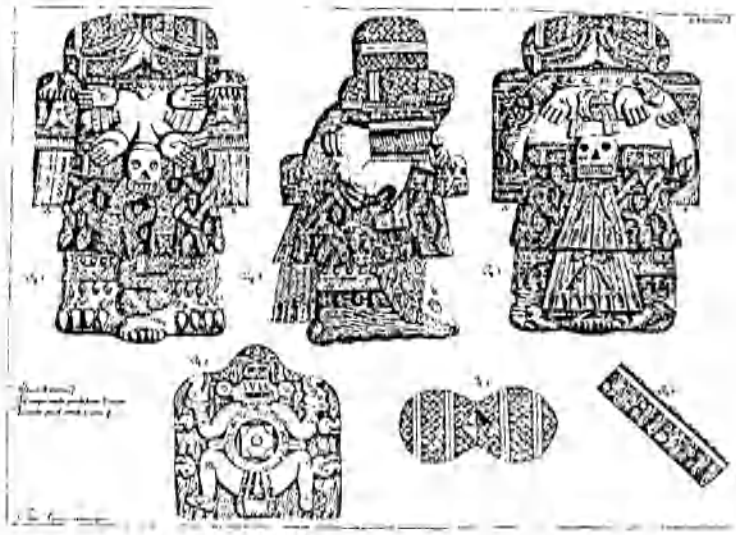

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FIGURE 5.1. Nahua aesthetics. (a) One of the many stones found in the central plaza of Mexico City from 1790 to 1792, now known to represent the Aztec deity Coatlicue. According to Antonio de León y Gama, it was a composite of the hieroglyphic attributes of at least seven Mesoamerican deities. Jose Ignacio Borunda also interpreted it as a montage of hieroglyphic signs, which he read as logograms that were veiled allegories of historical events. From Antonio de Leon y Gama, *Descripcion historica de las dos piedras* (Mexico, 1792). (b) Colonial representation of Tlaloc, "god of the rain," that originally belonged to Fernando de Iva Ixtlilxochitl. From Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, *Giro del mondo* (Naples, 1699–1700). Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library, Brown University, Providence, R.I. León y Gama used these illustrations to argue that the Indians had mastered the principles of mimetic representation, and that the figure of Coatlicue was the product of deliberate distortion, not ignorance of aesthetic principles.

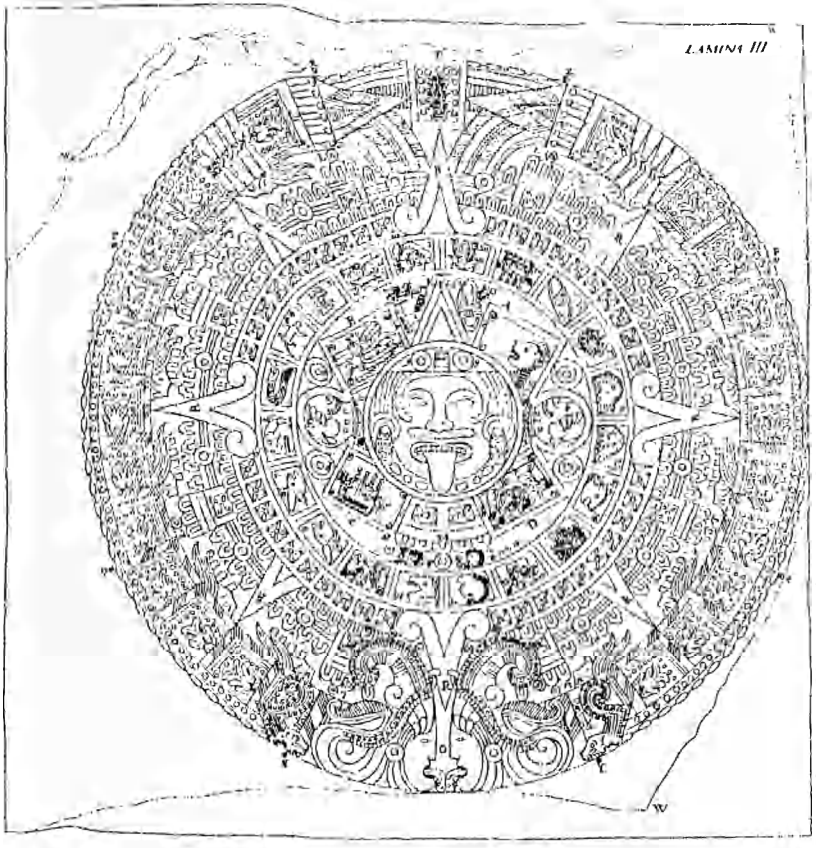

FIGURE 5.2. The Solar Stone found in Mexico City, which Antonio de León y Gama contended was a semi-annual calendar plotting the main festivals of the sun. The sockets in the perimeter (marked *xzpqysqp*) had once held the gnomons of a sundial that measured solstices and equinoxes, he argued. At the center of the wheel, he read the day sign Ollin Tonatiuh and the dates when the four solar ages ended. The first circle contained the twenty signs of the days of the month, which León y Gama assumed ran counterclockwise. The symbol for the Milky Way was in the outer circle of the wheel, topped by the sign of the year 13 Cane. From Antonio de León y Gama, *Descripción histórica de las dos piedras* (Mexico, 1792).

interpretative scholarship was ultimately geared to proving that foreigners who knew America only superficially could never decode Amerindian scripts. Alzate y Ramírez, for his part, refused to advance any interpretation of Mesoamerican hieroglyphs as part of his larger critique of theories and systems, provoked by the new histories and accounts of America and its peoples, but he articulated one of the most thorough and forceful critiques of the epistemological limitations of foreign travelers, going so far as to found periodicals to review and expose their writings.

In December 1790, in his capacity as editor of the *Gacetas de literatura*, Alzate y Ramírez announced the discovery of the two stones, which might, he said, have belonged to the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan. He suggested that the monstrous-looking figure might be a representation of Huitzilopochtli, the Mexica god of war and death. Alzate y Ramírez doubted whether the meaning of the carved hieroglyphs could ever be cracked, but he suggested that carved stones from Aztec temples that had been reused in other structures in the city be used for comparative purposes. In August 1791, in *Gaceta de México*, Ocelotl Tecuilhuitzintli dismissed Alzate y Ramírez's suggestion that the stones had once belonged to the Great Temple. For Tecuilhuitzintli, the wheel was a calendar that confirmed Clavijero's interpretations, and the monstrous-looking figure was a composite of three deities: Teotlacanexquimilli (the headless and limbless god of darkness), Tlazolteotl (a Venus-like goddess of pleasure), and Tlateuctli (the punisher of adultery). The calendar wheel might represent either a 52-year cycle or an annual cycle, or even be a record-keeping device that stored historical information dating back at least a millennium, Tecuilhuitzintli thought, but whichever it was, it proved that those who called ancient Mesoamericans savages were wrong. The calendar wheel would outlast and dwarf the followers of Newton and Descartes who speculated on vortices and gravitation while denying the glorious past of the American continent.[7] Alzate y Ramírez immediately replied in the pages of *Gaceta de México* to Tecuilhuitzintli's charge that he had confused the calendar wheel with the sacrificial stone. As for the monstrous-looking figure, Alzate y Ramírez refused to engage his critic and speculate further about its meaning, on the grounds that speculation "is not an occupation that suits my genius; I never set out to walk in darkness."[8]

Antonio de León y Gama's 'Descripción histórica'

But Ocelotl Tecuilhuitzintli and Alzate y Ramírez were not the only ones interested in the new discoveries. In January 1792 and again in May of that

year, *Gaceta de México* offered subscriptions to a forthcoming treatise that would set the record straight and would give the lie to European skeptics bent on denying the civilized status of the ancient Mexicans.[9] Sometime in June 1792, the much-announced treatise appeared: Antonio de León y Gama's *Descripción histórica y cronológica de las dos piedras*, an in-depth study of the two stones. *Descripción histórica* was a labor of love, the result of years of painstaking research and familiarity with indigenous sources. It is a text difficult to summarize, given its many argumentative lines and its extreme complexity. León y Gama, a poorly understood and largely overlooked figure of the Spanish American Enlightenment, yet one of its brightest luminaries, used the stones as a window through which to study Mesoamerican chronology, calendrics, and mythology.[10] Like Boturini and Mariano Fernández de Echeverría y Veytia, León y Gama aspired to correct all previous interpretations.

Given the numerous interpretations of Mesoamerican calendrics, León y Gama, like Boturini and Echeverría y Veytia, gave precedence to original indigenous documents. Whereas Echeverría y Veytia used reasoned hypothesis and colonial indigenous wheels as his ultimate reference, León y Gama privileged Nahuatl annals in Latin script by sixteenth-century Amerindian interpreters such as Fernando de Alvarado Tezozomoc, Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpain Cuauhtlehuanitzin, and Cristóbal del Castillo (1526–1606). León y Gama also privileged two indigenous sources written in Mesoamerican scripts: the Codex en Cruz ("crosslike annals" — hence the name — that recorded in traditional logograms and pictograms several 52-year cycles of central Mexican history, including events after the Conquest) and the Tonalamatl Aubin (a ritual calendar of early colonial provenance, part of Boturini's impounded collection, named after its nineteenth-century French owner, Aubin). The first four sources (Alvarado Tezozomoc's, Chimalpain Cuauhtlehuanitzin's, and Castillo's annals and the Codex en Cruz) contained entries on precolonial and colonial events that combined references to three indigenous calendars at once. They gave dates using three separate calendrical counts: in years (according to the 52-year cycle), in days (according to the 260-day ritual cycle), and in months (according to the 18-month annual cycle). Any worthy interpretation had to correlate each triple calendrical entry with the Gregorian calendar. Moreover, an interpretation had to correlate all sources with one another, a particular challenge given that Alvarado Tezozomoc, Chimalpain Cuauhtlehuanitzin, Castillo, and the author of the Codex en Cruz belonged to different ethnic groups with calendrical variations of their own. This multi-ethnic system led to confusion. For example,

the date of Cortés's arrival in Mexico, November 9, 1519, in the Julian calendar appeared recorded in Castillo's annals (Texcocan) as year "1 Cane" (in the 52-year "century" count), day "1 Cane" (in the 260-day ritual calendar), and the 13th of the month Quecholli (in the 18-month annual count). In Mexica annals such as Alvarado Tezozomoc's, however, the same date appeared as year "1 Cane," day "4 Eagle" (4 Cozcaquauhtli), the 16th of the month Quecholli. To make things more complicated, even within a single calendrical system there were contradictory references. Castillo, for example, had recorded the fall of Tenochtitlan (which according to the Julian calendar happened on August 12, 1521) in the year "3 House," day "1 Snake." Had Castillo been consistent and followed his own Texcocan calendar, the fall of the city should have corresponded to day "4 Snake," not "1 Snake." Such inconsistencies had bedeviled previous students of Mesoamerican chronology.

León y Gama showed that none of the available interpretations, including those advanced by Gemelli Careri, Echeverría y Veytia, Boturini, and Clavijero, could make sense of any of the dates in these Amerindian sources. Chimalpain Cuauhtlehuanitzin and Alvarado Tezozomoc, for example, maintained that Moctezuma Xocoyoltzin's ascension to the throne corresponded to year "10 Rabbit," day "9 Deer," and the seventh of the month Tozoztontli in the Amerindian counts (1502 C.E. in the Julian calendar). León y Gama showed that if one were to follow the different models of Clavijero, Gemelli Careri, Boturini, and Echeverría y Veytia, it was impossible to correlate year "10 Rabbit," day "9 Deer" with the seventh of the month Tozoztontli.[11] These models could not even reconcile a date within the same calendrical system, much less make different ethnic calendric variations correspond with one another. So, to clear the air, León y Gama first criticized all previous interpretations of the order of days (in a 260-day ritual count), months (in an annual count), and years (in a 52-year count). Drawing on Echeverría y Veytia, León y Gama argued that the origins of all the confusion lay in the efforts of Europeans to get orderly linear series out of wheels that did not have clear beginnings or ends.

The problem of all European interpreters, León y Gama suggested, stemmed from their inability to detect spurious colonial documents. For example, León y Gama maintained that the order of the months in Gemelli Careri's wheel was the most accurate (Fig. 5.3a), but that the colonial interpreters of the wheel had tinkered with the original, changing the direction in which the wheel had to be read (counterclockwise in the original) and substituting the sign of the month Tozoztontli (month of "the lesser vigil/fast") for the sign of month Quecholli ("Flier"). In Gemelli Careri's wheel,

Tozoztontli appeared represented by the hieroglyph of a pierced bird (instead of flayed human skins appropriate to identify a month of fasting and human sacrifice), and a flayed human skin (instead of a pierced bird) represented the month Quecholli. Clavijero had sought to make adjustments by changing the direction of Gemelli Careri's wheel but was unable to detect that the hieroglyphs of the two months had been switched (Fig. 5.3b). Not surprisingly, Clavijero remained puzzled by the gap between the etymologies of these two months and their respective hieroglyphs.[12] This inability to detect spurious colonial sources was one of the most important charges León y Gama leveled against Clavijero and others, including Echeverría y Veytia. Clavijero, León y Gama argued, copied the Franciscan Diego Valadés's wheel of the months in an annual cycle (Fig. 5.4a), changing only its direction but preserving symbols that were clearly of colonial provenance (Fig. 5.4b). The symbols of the months in Clavijero's wheel did not correspond at all with those on the recently discovered Solar Stone (Fig. 5.4c).[13]

Using Cristóbal del Castillo's sixteenth-century interpretation of the Tonalamatl Aubin and the ritual calendar itself (as well as the calendar stone), León y Gama set out to provide his own analysis of Mesoamerican calendars and annals. After having postulated an interpretation of the correct order of the series of days and months, León y Gama tackled the difficult issue of correlating the multiple ethnic versions of the calendar with European Julian and Gregorian chronologies. Citing obscure references in Torquemada and Acosta, he argued that the Mesoamerican 52-year cycle began with the winter solstice, at midnight on December 26, when the Pleiades were ascendant in the sky over Mexico City. León y Gama maintained that since the natives had only 365 days in their annual cycle, they had alternately added twelve or thirteen extra days at the end of every 52-year cycle to compensate for the day lost every four years. Thus every new cycle coincided again with the date of the winter solstice, and every 104 years the Amerindians caught up with the real duration of the tropical year.[14] All references in Amerindian sources therefore required the addition of as many days as needed to compensate for the years left unintercalated in a 52-year cycle. To do so, it was also necessary to identify the ethnic provenance of the Amerindian source with which an author was working. Moreover, European dates also needed corrections. All dates in the Julian calendar required nine extra days.

Using these techniques, León y Gama managed to correlate references in sources to the day of Moctezuma Xocoyoltzin's coronation and the day of the Spanish landing. The contradictory reference to *ce cohuatl* (day "1 Snake") as

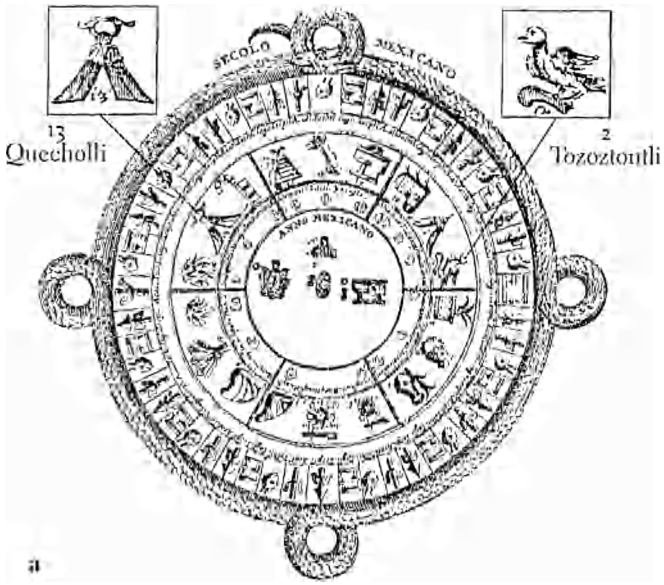

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FIGURE 5.3. (a) The order of the eighteen months of the Nahua annual cycle. According to Antonio de León y Gama, Clavijero modified the direction of the wheel but failed to switch the images of Quecholli, # 13 in (a) and Tozoztontli, #2 in (a). Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, *Giro del mondo* (Naples, 1699–1700). Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library, Brown University, Providence, R.I. (b) A modified version of Gemelli Careri's 18-month annual wheel from Francisco Clavijero's *Storia antica del Messico* (Cesena, 1780–81). Courtesy of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

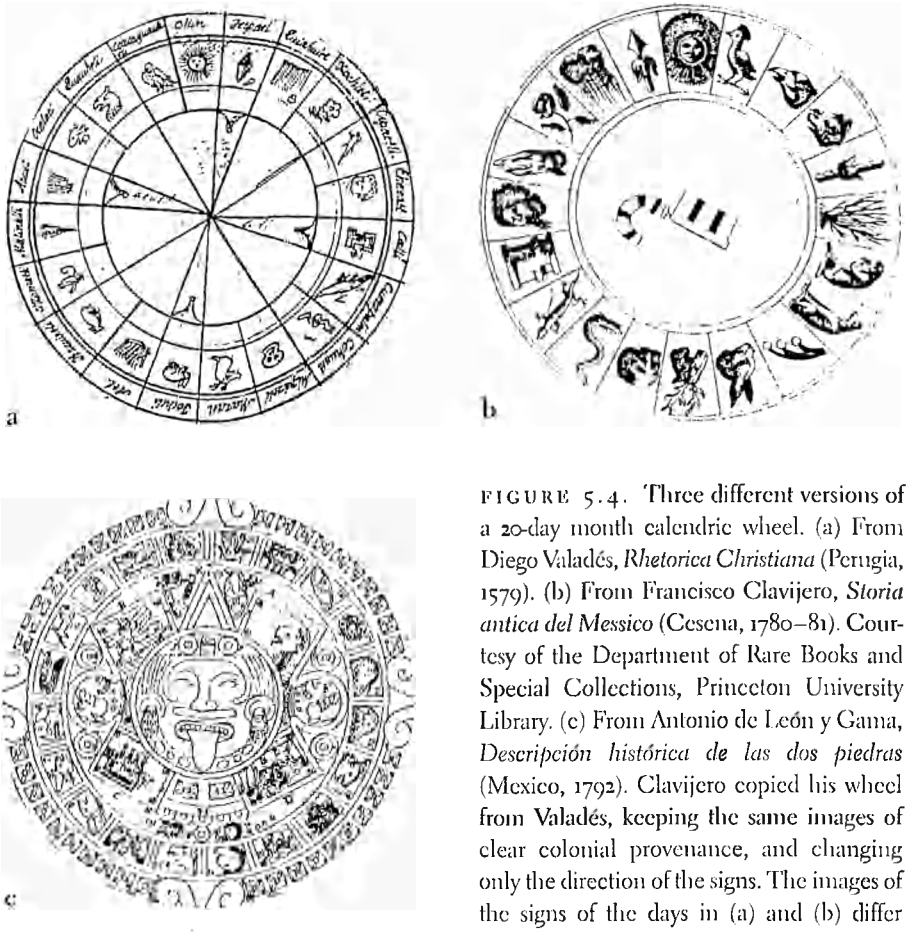


FIGURE 5.4. Three different versions of a 20-day month calendric wheel. (a) From Diego Valadés, *Rhetorica Christiana* (Perugia, 1579). (b) From Francisco Clavijero, *Storia antica del Messico* (Cesena, 1780–81). Courtesy of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. (c) From Antonio de León y Gama, *Descripción histórica de las dos piedras* (Mexico, 1792). Clavijero copied his wheel from Valadés, keeping the same images of clear colonial provenance, and changing only the direction of the signs. The images of the signs of the days in (a) and (b) differ markedly from those of the precolonial version found in the Solar Stone (c).

the day of the surrender of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan, however, proved more challenging. León y Gama had already demonstrated that in the 260-day ritual count of the Tonalamatl Aubin, all days were "accompanied" by other signs, corresponding to other counts in addition to the three already discussed (annual, ritual, and monthly). The nine signs of the "lords of the night" in the Tonalamatl Aubin (Fig. 5.5), for example, did not overlap with signs of a ritual cycle. In each new thirteen-day "week" of the ritual count, the same day sign was followed by a different accompanying sign or "lord of the night," making it possible for Amerindian annalists to give a date simply

by including the day sign and its accompanying lord of the night.[15] This was the case with references to the date of the final surrender of Tenochtitlan, which according to Amerindian sources occurred in the day "1 Snake" (*ce cohuatl*), with its accompanying lord of the night, "Water." No calendric model, including León y Gama's, however, could correlate day "1 Snake," lord of the night "Water," with the European date (August 12, 1521, in the Julian calendar, but August 21 in the corrected Gregorian count). To circumvent the problem, León y Gama argued that the reference to "1 Snake/Water" was metaphoric. The reference to "1 Snake," he maintained, alluded to the last of the five "idle" days (*nemontemi*) of the 365-day calendar, the most ominous of all, and therefore to a disastrous turning point in history, not an actual date. The reference to the lord of the night "Water" was also metaphorical. It sought to signify the rainy day when the capital of the Aztecs fell after a three-month siege.[16]

If most date references by Nahua annalists fit perfectly after León y Gama subjected them to adjustments and metaphoric interpretations, there were others that could not be so easily accommodated. To save his model in the face of such challenges, León y Gama argued that some Amerindian annalists were wrong. He used astronomy to prove it. Like Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, León y Gama sought to correlate dates in Amerindian annals with the Gregorian calendar using references to eclipses and other stellar phenomena in the indigenous sources. Many annals, for example, had identified two solar eclipses during the reign of the Mexica ruler Axayacatl ("Face of Water") (r. 1469–83 in the Codex Mendoza). One was a complete eclipse the day following Axayacatl's triumph over the Matlazinca; the other was partial and marked Axayacatl's death. The dates of the eclipses in indigenous sources were difficult to pinpoint. Three different annals to which León y Gama had access contradictorily asserted that the first eclipse took place in 1476, 1478, and 1479. Only one of the three sources identified the day as "1 Movement" (*ce Ollin*). As for the second eclipse, only one of the three annals referred to it at all, placing it in the year 1481. Using available tables that traced back the motions of the moon relative to the sun, León y Gama identified several eclipses that had in fact occurred in Mexico between 1476 and 1481. He then concluded that two eclipses, one in 1477 and the other in 1481, had been complete. It was the eclipse of 1481, not that of 1477, as one of the annals maintained, however, that had fallen on the day "1 Movement." León y Gama therefore assumed that the annalists, Domingo Hernández Ayotzin and two anonymous others, had switched the date of one eclipse and mistaken the year of the other. Of all the indigenous sources that dated eclipses

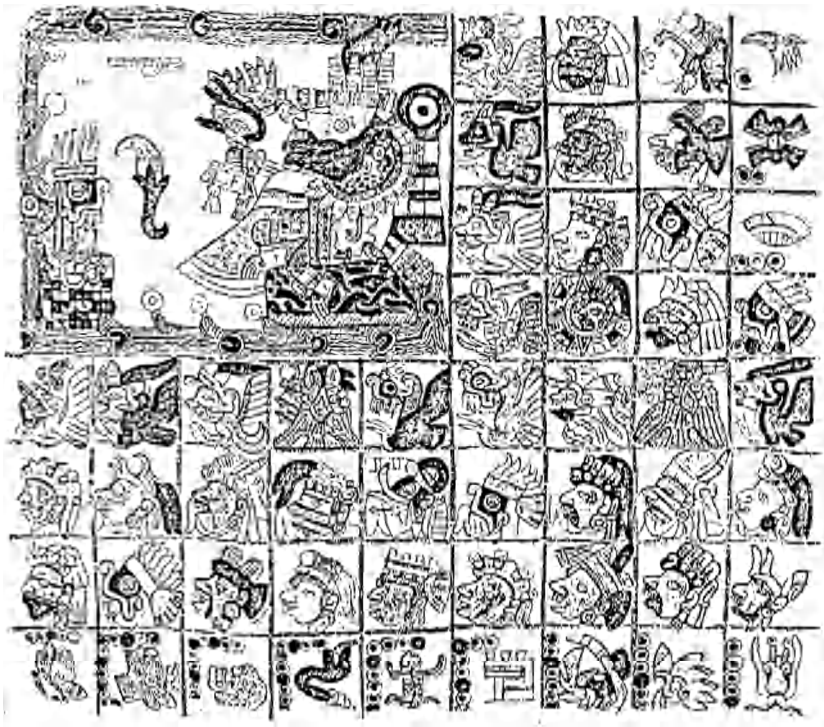


FIGURE 5.5. The dominant signs in the sixteenth week of the ritual calendar Tonalamatl Aubin. As in a typical ritual calendar, the dominant sign of the thirteen days of the "week" is in the upper left corner. The thirteen day signs are located in the bottom line and in the upper four squares of the outer right column. The lines and columns in between represent "accompanying" ritual cycles, including the cycle of the nine "lords of the night" immediately to the left of and above the squares that house the day signs. León y Gama used the Tonalamatl Aubin and Cristóbal del Castillo's interpretation extensively to recreate the many cycles of the calendar. León y Gama also used the image in the periphery of the upper left corner to argue that the sign Ollin Tonatiuh is frequently accompanied by the sign of the Milky Way, as in the case of the Solar Stone. It also supported his thesis that most images in Mesoamerican sources referred to simplified hieroglyphic attributes of deities, as is the case of the figure of Tlaloc in the upper left corner and in the images of the lords of the night.

during the reign of Axayacatl, only one was trustworthy: Chimalpain Cuauhtlehuanitzin's annals.[17] The point behind such an erudite exercise was that not all precolonial Amerindian sources were reliable. According to León y Gama, historians had to weigh the credibility of Amerindian documents, precolonial as well as colonial. This skeptical attitude toward precolonial and early colonial annals, despite their having been written by Amerindian nobles, was a new departure. Like the northern European authors that he himself despised, León y Gama did not credit sources simply because they had been written by upper-class native scribes. He subjected Amerindian annals to the test of internal logical analysis. It is in this more than any other sense that León y Gama can safely be classified as a figure of the Enlightenment.

Supplied with a wealth of information, and such a demonstrable command of most available precolonial and early colonial Nahuatl sources, León y Gama set out to study the stones, which he used to highlight the creativity of the Amerindians. By insisting that the natives had in fact lacked iron tools and sophisticated technologies, León y Gama transformed the stones into a cause for wonder.[18] Like Fábrega and Clavijero, he turned the tables on European critics by highlighting the Amerindians' accomplishments despite their limited technologies. The stones, León y Gama contended, demonstrated the exquisite ability of the Amerindians to work granite without iron tools. They also proved that they had known a great deal about mechanics (because pulleys had been required to move the boulders just a few meters), geometry (indicated by the perfect circular cuts of the Solar Stone), and astronomy.

Yet for all the accomplishments of the natives, the monstrous-looking stone (Fig. 5.1a) seemed to indicate that the Mexica had a poor command of aesthetic principles. León y Gama, however, maintained that the monolith was a composite of hieroglyphs of deities, not a distorted rendition of the human body. Citing an illustration of the deity Tlaloc published by Gemelli Careri, León y Gama argued that the natives had developed the ability to render the bodies of deities (Fig. 5.1b) exquisitely. It followed, therefore, that aesthetically repulsive representations were montages of many hieroglyphs of deities, the result of deliberate choice by natives well acquainted with the rules of fine art.[19]

Drawing on the Tonalamatl Aubin and on a careful reading of Torquemada's volume on Mesoamerican religions, León y Gama managed to identify the hieroglyphs of at least seven deities in the sculpture. Teoyaomaqui, a goddess charged with collecting the souls of warriors who died in sacred battles and of sacrificial victims to take them to the enchanting heavenly house of the

Sun, was represented in the sculpture by the breasts and the collar of hands around the neck. The "bags" of copal incense (in fact, representations of hearts), located in the collar next to the hands, stood for the ritual offering by warriors to the goddess before battle. Huitzilopochtli appeared as the "mask" on top of the figure, as well as being represented in the skulls on the belt. The snake-woven skirt, León y Gama argued, stood for Cohuatluye (Huitzilopochtli's mother) and the snake and feathers underneath the skirt represented Quetzalcoatl. On the base of the sculpture, there lay the hieroglyphic attributes of Miclanteuhtli, the lord of the netherworld, and Tlalxicco, the netherworld, to which the souls of those who did not die in battle were carried away.[20]

The second stone was equally problematic and difficult to understand (Fig. 5.2). León y Gama concluded that the monolith was a calendar that plotted several important dates associated with the cult of the sun in a 260-day ritual count. It recorded dates in three separate ways: through (1) large and (2) small gnomons stuck in the sockets around the outside of the wheel, identified in Figure 5.2 as *xzys* and *ppqq*, and (3) through dates carved on the wheel proper. The holes around the wheel, León y Gama argued, in one of the most speculative sections of the essay, were the sockets of gnomons, whose shadows had helped measure the path of the sun through the ecliptic between two solstices (*xzys*) and between two equinoxes (*ppqq*).[21] The carved wheel itself recorded important religious dates in a calendar corresponding to the year "13 Cane" (found at the top of the wheel) of a 52-year count. The symbols in the outer circle of the wheel, León y Gama maintained, represented the Milky Way and the image in the center of the wheel, a clawed sun with an open mouth, Ollin Tonatiuh (Solar Movements), a day-sign of the ritual count. That the symbols of the Milky Way and Ollin Tonatiuh were usually together, León y Gama asserted, was attested by the fact that they appeared joined in the same page of the Tonalamatl Aubin as the ruling "zodiacal" sign of the thirteenth "week" of the ritual count (Fig. 5.5).[22] Ollin Tonatiuh, in turn, Leon y Gama argued, was a representation of the four solar ages, for the dates of the end of each of these ages were located in the corners of the image. Dismissing Echeverría y Veytia's and Boturini's interpretations of the order of the solar ages, León y Gama maintained that the dates and the succession of ages in the stone coincided with those found in an anonymous document in Nahuatl in Alva Ixtlilxochitl's collection.[23] León y Gama also managed to find many other calendrical symbols allegedly representing dates in honor of the sun in a semi-annual ritual cycle.

José Antonio de Alzate y Ramírez's Misgivings

Despite its impressive rigor, this extraordinary text met with a chilly reception, and León y Gama failed to attract subscribers for a second volume, and it was thus left unpublished. Moreover, León y Gama's *Descripción histórica* soon came under attack by Alzate y Ramírez, the editor of *Gacetas de literatura*, who had pronounced himself unable to speculate on the meaning of the stones.

Before reviewing Alzate y Ramírez's critique, we need to turn briefly to the origins of the animosity between Alzate y Ramírez and León y Gama. Alzate y Ramírez, a secular priest, belonged to the same educated petit bourgeois class as León y Gama, but unlike León y Gama, he was a wealthy man and enjoyed international recognition. As the only child of a prosperous family of bakers, he had the resources to subsidize several periodicals over the course of his lifetime. The French Académie des sciences considered at least one of Alzate y Ramírez's works on the natural history of New Spain, and in 1771, the Académie granted him the title of corresponding member.[24] In contrast, León y Gama was a middling bureaucrat burdened by responsibilities and a large family. His efforts to gain a measure of international recognition ultimately failed, and this failure was the source of his lasting dislike of Alzate y Ramírez.

In 1772, sending the French astronomer Joseph-Jerôme Le François de Lalande (1732–1807) data on an eclipse to correct information previously sent by Alzate y Ramírez, León y Gama called Alzate y Ramírez's astronomical observations sloppy and shaming to the Creole nation — just the sort of thing, he said, that led some foreigners to see Mexicans "as irrational creatures, others as incapable, and the great majority as monsters [*faunos*] or savages."[25] Delighted by the unexpected arrival of valuable information, Lalande wrote back and asked León y Gama for information on the satellites of Jupiter seen from Mexico and on tides, as well as for an accurate map of New Spain.[26] León y Gama responded with information on tides at distant coastal sites, and Lalande replied requesting data on comets, promising to reward León y Gama's efforts with acknowledgment in his forthcoming treatises.[27] Lalande never fulfilled his end of the bargain to my knowledge, and León y Gama was saddled with Alzate y Ramírez's lasting enmity.

León y Gama and Alzate y Ramírez first clashed in public in 1789 and 1790 in a debate about the interpretation of a celestial light that appeared on the northern horizon of New Spain, the aurora borealis.[28] Because this debate got personal and nasty, it comes as something of a surprise that in June

1792 Alzate y Ramírez advanced only a lukewarm critique of León y Gama's description of the two stones. Alzate y Ramírez argued that León y Gama had failed to propose a general interpretation of Mexican hieroglyphs, and that another antiquarian was about to offer an alternative reading of the stones, a veiled reference to the work of José Ignacio Borunda. León y Gama's public response was also restrained and challenged Alzate y Ramírez's friend to publish.[29] Alzate y Ramírez replied this time with a lengthier critique of the shortcomings he found in Leon y Gama's treatise. To better understand Alzate y Ramírez's second critique we need to examine Alzate y Ramírez's career as a patriot and as an antiquarian.

More than any other scholar, Alzate y Ramírez pushed the anti-Eurocentric dimensions of the discourse of patriotic epistemology to its limits. He launched *Gacetas de literatura* in 1788 with the intention, among other things, of subjecting foreign accounts on New Spain to public scrutiny. The reviews in *Gacetas de literatura* sought to demonstrate the epistemological limitations of outsiders in comprehending the nature and history of the New World. Alzate y Ramírez's approach was typified by his criticism of the travel writings of Joseph La Porte and Lord Anson and of a treatise on gold and silver amalgams by Baron Ignaz von Born (1742–1791). In 1788, Alzate y Ramírez declared that in the compilation of travel narratives by La Porte, the French editor had treated New Spaniards worse than Eskimo "savages." In particular, Alzate y Ramírez zeroed in on those passages by La Porte that presented colonials in New Spain as lascivious, corrupt, ignorant, and superstitious. Alzate y Ramírez also condemned the Frenchman's many factual mistakes of natural history and geography.[30] Seeking to expose the lies of travelers to the Mexican public, Alzate y Ramírez also took on Lord George Anson, who had depicted Spanish Americans as cowards, so incapable of defending the colonies that in Anson's estimation the entire viceroyalty of Peru could be conquered by a 1,500-man naval force. Alzate y Ramírez introduced evidence from an unpublished memoir describing the siege of Manila by the English where a contingent of Mexican commoners (the Philippines were economically and politically linked to New Spain) had outsmarted the aggressors. Contrary to Lord Anson's assertions, this episode showed that even the rabble of New Spain, the "feces" (*heces*) of Mexico, was capable of routing the English, and that "even the rotten members of the Spanish nation maintained their noble lineage."[31] In 1790, Alzate y Ramírez blasted Baron Ignaz von Born's history of silver mining, which was even more outrageous than the books of La Porte and Anson. Although he appeared to be praising the Creole inventor in his account of the discovery of the technique of amalgamating

mercury with silver in Spanish America, Born depicted it as having occurred by mere chance and called for scientific study of the process so that it could be put to better use in European mines. Besides his numerous factual historical errors, including the name of the discoverer of amalgamation, Born described the colonists as rabidly opposed to the Spanish crown's introduction of rational reforms in mining.[32] Alzate y Ramírez took issue with each and every one of Born's points.[33]

In notes commissioned by the Spanish printer Antonio de Sancha for the failed Spanish edition of Clavijero's history, Alzate y Ramírez echoed the Jesuit's conclusion that foreign travelers tended to be ignorant of native languages, gullible, and easily manipulated by savvy locals.[34] Alzate y Ramírez's critique of foreign accounts was, however, also part of a larger critique of system builders. From this perspective, he critically scrutinized the natural and civil histories of the viceroyalty of New Granada written by the Italian Jesuit Filippo Gilii (1721–1789),[35] whom he cast as a follower of conjectural historians such as Buffon. Subordinating observation to their systems, such armchair philosophers concluded on the flimsiest of evidence that the New World had only recently emerged from the ocean, and that the Amerindians were thus newcomers. The facts showed, however, that Buffon was wrong. Amerindian monuments proved that the natives had ancient roots, and the higher mountain peaks of America showed that the New World had emerged much earlier than Europe. The many mistakes in Gilii's text, beginning with the title, *Saggio di storia americana; o sia, Storia naturale, civile e sacra de'regni, e delle provincie spagnuole di Terra-ferma nell'America meridionale,* suggested that he had never actually visited Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela, which he claimed to describe, and his generalizations about cowardly *castas* (mestizos or mulattos) and drunken Amerindians showed his predilection for system building. Not all Amerindians and mestizos were alike.[36]

Having read Clavijero's analysis of the contradictions and inconsistencies in the writings of the likes of de Pauw, Buffon, and Robertson, Alzate y Ramírez firmly linked his attack on system builders to his patriotism. By so doing, he created a discourse that presented New Spain as a land whose natural wealth showed the folly of all philosophical generalizations. Like the Jesuit Juan de Velasco (whose work he did not know), Alzate y Ramírez insisted that patriotic natural historians should identify the "curiosities" of the land to debunk European system builders. Alzate y Ramírez made a career out of discovering natural phenomena that contradicted the natural "laws" devised by European naturalists, particularly by taxonomists such as Linnaeus.[37]

Between 1788 and 1790, Alzate y Ramírez engaged Vicente Cervantes (1755–1829), a Spanish naturalist charged with teaching Linnaean taxonomy at the new Royal Botanical Garden, founded to challenge the clerical-Creole control of the faculty of medicine at the University of Mexico. In a debate conducted in the pages of rival Mexican periodicals, Alzate y Ramírez derided the Linnaean classifications propounded by the newcomer Cervantes for their inability to capture the uniqueness of Mexican species; their tendency to group fauna and flora not according to "virtues" but according to misleading, sometimes microscopic, resemblances; and, finally, their corrupting influence on youth because of their inordinate attention to the sexual characteristics of plants.[38] Alzate y Ramírez used the singularities of many of the fauna and flora of Mexico to throw in disarray the neat logic of Linnaeus and his Spanish disciple and to highlight the incompetence of foreigners ever to comprehend Mexican reality.[39]

Alzate y Ramírez on Xochicalco

Alzate y Ramírez's dislike of foreign "systems" also surfaced in his forays as an antiquarian. In the pages of *Gacetas de literatura*, he often introduced reports of ancient ruins. Among all these reports, *Descripción de las antigüedades de Xochicalco*, a study of the ruins found in Xochicalco (later used by the Jesuit Pedro José de Márquez), stood out. Although Alzate y Ramírez claimed that he had originally written the work around 1777 and that it had been translated into Italian, suggesting therefore that Clavijero might have derived his ideas from reading it (Alzate y Ramírez had no modesty), he published it in 1791 as a supplement of his *Gacetas de literatura* to commemorate the visit of Alejandro Malaspina's scientific expedition to Mexico.[40] Be that as it may, Alzate y Ramírez set out to expose foreign representations of ancient Mexicans as "innuendo" and "sinister views."[41] The entire treatise was framed as a polemic against foreign skeptics such as de Pauw, Raynal, and Robertson, whose "internal" readings of sources led them to suppose that reports of high population density and the military prowess of the Aztecs were refuted by the ease of the Conquest, that accounts of the grandeur of precolonial Mexican cities were undermined by the wretchedness of contemporary Amerindians, and that the reports of the courtly deportment of the Aztecs were called into question by the extent and barbarity of Aztec human sacrifices. Alzate y Ramírez also framed his work as a reply to comments made by naturalists such as Buffon and Jacques Christophe Valmont de Bomare (1731–1807) to the effect that the Mesoamericans were recent arrivals and that precolonial

Mexico had therefore been thinly populated. Finally, Alzate y Ramírez sought to contest Lalande's assertions that the precolonial Mexicans had known no astronomy.[42]

Alzate y Ramírez rejected as spurious the contradictions identified by the skeptics. The Conquest, he argued, had not been easy; the Spaniards had fought with hundreds of thousands of Amerindians as allies. As for the allegedly widespread practice of human sacrifice, Alzate y Ramírez maintained, it was simply an exaggeration by biased parties who did not understand that these practices were typical of all ancient societies. Taking on the northern European critics at their own game, Alzate y Ramírez — who, like the northern Europeans, had rejected Amerindian literary sources on the grounds that they were undecipherable — used precisely the alternative, nonliterary evidence (that is, material remains) proposed by the critics to refute them. On the charges leveled by Buffon, Valmont de Bomare, and Lalande, Alzate y Ramírez argued that the ruins of Xochicalco, a fortified castle with ditches, terraces, a pyramid, and subterranean pathways, proved them wrong (Fig. 4.11). The ruins demonstrated that the ancient inhabitants of Mesoamerica had known mechanics (only pulleys could have moved the boulders), military engineering (given the fortifications in the mound), subterranean geometry (in the arched tunnels and vaulted rooms inside the mountain), and astronomy (the castle was perfectly aligned relative to the four cardinal points). Like Clavijero, León y Gama, and Fábrega, Alzate y Ramírez also maintained that these accomplishments were all the more remarkable in that the Amerindians had enjoyed limited technologies and lacked iron tools.[43]

In his description of the "castle" of Xochicalco, Alzate y Ramírez addressed one of the contradictions identified by the European skeptics, namely, that the wretched, meek contemporary Amerindians gave the lie to reports of grandiose ancient societies. As a typical Creole patriot, Alzate y Ramírez argued that the behavior of contemporary Amerindian commoners, "negligible plebes" (*ínfima plebe*), should not be used to judge the accomplishments of the ancient Amerindian ruling elites.[44] Like many Creole patriots before him, Alzate y Ramírez carefully distinguished between the glorious stratified Amerindian societies of the past and the wretched, miserable communities of the present. This transformation, he maintained, was the result of the metamorphosis of Amerindian polities into homogeneous collectives of commoners. In his notes to Clavijero's history, Alzate y Ramírez set out to demonstrate that "contamination" by urban mestizos had led to the corruption and decline of Amerindian communities.[45]

The blurring of social distinctions in indigenous communities, according to Alzate y Ramírez, rendered the testimony of all contemporary Amerindians worthless. He himself, however, offered a hypothetical reconstruction of the pyramid that seemed to have existed on top of the castle mound based on the statements of anonymous witnesses, who may or may not have been Amerindians. Yet he also derided the value of the testimony of the Amerindian authorities of the town of Tetlama, who informed him that underneath the mountain of Xochicalco, there lay a network of tunnels that reached the capital, and that the ghost of an old Amerindian lived in them. Alzate y Ramírez dismissed the testimony of these "noble" Amerindian informants as "ridiculous fictions" (*patrañas*) and "popular errors," typical of "imaginations inhabited by phantasms."[46]

Alzate y Ramírez did not behave like a typical Creole antiquarian when judging Amerindian testimonies. He was prone to dismiss indigenous oral testimonies as well as the written evidence found in the monoliths and pyramids that he himself had contributed to discovering. His skepticism of systems kept him from advancing an interpretation of the hieroglyphs he found in Xochicalco, and at this level, he resembled the skeptical northern European critics of the Americas. But Alzate y Ramírez was a patriot and turned the tables on the Europeans by using these alternative, nonliterary forms of evidence (the ramparts, tunnels, and pyramids of Xochicalco) to prove the critics wrongs. It is at this point that we must return to an analysis of Alzate y Ramírez's critique of Antonio de León y Gama's study.

Alzate y Ramírez's Critique of León y Gama

In some ways, Alzate y Ramírez's criticism was petty. For example, he devoted a large part of his argument to challenging León y Gama's mineralogical classification and calculations of the weights of the two stones. But Alzate y Ramírez also raised points of greater significance. He first denounced León y Gama for having shown an exaggerated preoccupation with "systems," echoing the same criticism he had used against León y Gama during the debate over the nature of the aurora borealis. This time, Alzate y Ramírez cast León y Gama as a follower of philosophical historians and pedantic antiquarians. After poking fun, like Voltaire, at biblical scholars whose entire historical systems rested on a few etymologies, Alzate y Ramírez contended that etymologists like León y Gama were responsible for having created conjectural histories of the origins of human institutions that blurred the distinctions between humans and animals. In an indirect reference to Rousseau and

his followers, Alzate y Ramírez maintained that these conjectural historians-cum-etymologists derived the origins of humans from parrots, monkeys, or dogs based simply on the similarities of animal and human sounds. León y Gama's scholarship, Alzate y Ramírez argued, belonged in this speculative world. Claiming that no two past scholars, independent of their social standing and learning, had managed to agree on the interpretation of simple Nahuatl words, Alzate y Ramírez argued that any interpretation of Mesoamerican calendrics and scripts was hopeless, including those advanced in León y Gama's *Descripción histórica*. Alzate y Ramírez insisted that he was unable to interpret any of the hieroglyphs on the stones.[47]

Alzate y Ramírez's second criticism was also designed to expose León y Gama's alleged fondness for systems. Alzate y Ramírez argued that the only way to see whether the Solar Stone was a sundial was to conduct an experiment. Alzate y Ramírez urged León y Gama to put gnomons in the sockets of the Solar Stone to see whether the shadows marked solstices and equinoxes as he had predicted. Alzate y Ramírez's third criticism was of León y Gama's racial characterization of Cristóbal del Castillo, the Amerindian historian whose annals and calendric interpretations were the foundation upon which most of León y Gama's system rested. Alzate y Ramírez maintained that Castillo had not been an Amerindian but a mestizo. Thus he implicitly called into question the reliability of León y Gama's entire oeuvre, for mestizos enjoyed little or no credibility among the clerical elites of colonial Spanish America.[48] Alzate y Ramírez, the great critic of speculative theories, paradoxically closed his essay by demanding from León y Gama "a key," a system (!) for understanding Mesoamerican scripts, that is, "the rules by means of which all figures [hieroglyphs] should be interpreted."[49]

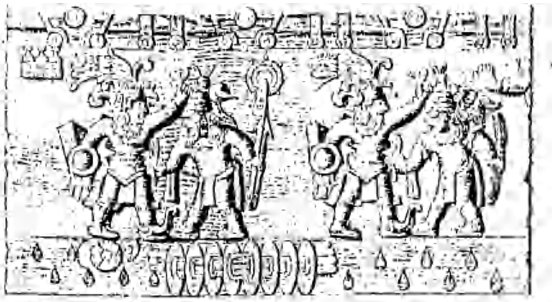
León y Gama's Reply

Alzate y Ramírez's tirade prompted León y Gama to respond with an even more remarkable second treatise on Mesoamerican antiquities, which, as noted, unfortunately failed to attract subscribers and was left unpublished. In the second installment of his *Descripción histórica*, León y Gama interpreted four other stones found in the plaza of Mexico between January 1791 and June 1792. One, León y Gama contended, was yet another solar calendar, whose 128 circles represented the days that intervened between the beginning of the year and the most important festival of the sun in the Mexica calendar, one that fell sometime in mid May (Fig. 5.6a). The figures carved on the walls of the cylinder signified the dancers of fifteen outlying towns, whose

names León y Gama made out by interpreting their logograms. Every year in mid May, León y Gama argued, dancers from nearby towns had worshipped the sun as a reminder of their subordination to the Mexica.[50] The other three stones, according to León y Gama were aesthetically repulsive montages of attributes of deities: Huitzilopochtli and Tlacahuepancuexcotzin (Fig. 5.6b); Quetzalcoatl (Fig. 5.6c); and Tlaloc, god of the rain. The second part of the *Descripción histórica* also included a survey of all the stones to be found in the capital (Fig. 5.7); an essay on Mesoamerican arithmetic and mathematics; and a paper in which he sought to prove geometrically (not experimentally as Alzate y Ramírez had demanded he do) that the gnomons of the first Solar Stone were, in fact, part of a sundial. It is, however, the introductory essay that I find significant for the purposes of this chapter. In it, León y Gama replied to each and every one of the charges leveled by Alzate y Ramírez.

León y Gama responded to Alzate y Ramírez's contention that Cristóbal del Castillo was a mestizo by contrasting the latter with contemporary *castas*. Mestizos, he argued, did not have the command of Nahuatl exhibited by Castillo. By and large, they sought to forget their indigenous roots, including their maternal language. Only a native, descendant of the great Nezahualcoyotl, legendary monarch of Texcoco, could have had both the command of classic Nahuatl, so full of metaphors, and the knowledge of astronomy and calendrics that Castillo displayed. Alzate y Ramírez, León y Gama concluded, had clearly lacked any contact with mestizos. Had Alzate y Ramírez rubbed shoulders with them, as León y Gama had during his thirty-six years working at the high court, he would have realized that mestizos did not work as interpreters in local tribunals. Moreover, had Alzate y Ramírez known his history better, he would have realized that it was perfectly normal for upper-class natives like Cristóbal del Castillo to adopt Hispanic names. Moreover, had Alzate y Ramírez done his calculations, he would have discovered that Castillo had most likely been born prior to the invasion of the Spaniards in 1519.[51] The fact that León y Gama spent several pages belaboring the point that Castillo was no mestizo speaks volumes about the fact that belonging to the lower racial estates in colonial Spanish America undermined the worth of one's historical testimony.

To the criticism that his work lacked a "general key" to interpreting Amerindian scripts, León y Gama responded with a remarkable essay in which he set out to demonstrate that only a limited few were capable of handling original Amerindian primary sources, because reading indigenous documents required an exquisite command of local natural history, Nahuatl, and



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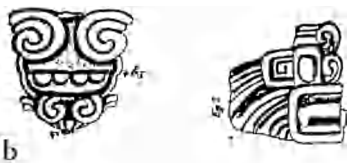

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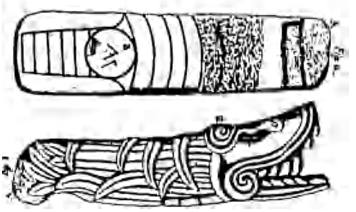

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FIGURE 5.6. Images from three other stones found in Mexico City between 1790 and 1792 and interpreted by León y Gama in the second, unpublished part of his *Descripción histórica*. (a) Semi-annual calendar plotting the dates of one of the most important festivals of the sun, in which "dancers" from fifteen subordinated towns were summoned to "worship" both the sun and the Mexica. (b) Symbolic attributes of Huitzilopochtli. (c) Symbolic attributes of Quetzalcoatl. Collection Goupil-Aubin, MS 97. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

FIGURE 5.7. Hitherto unpublished carvings from stones found scattered in Mexico City in diggings and in the foundation of buildings. According to Antonio de León y Gama they stood for: (a) the calendric day sign 8 Cane (the day the Great Temple was finished during the reign of Ahuitzotl); (b) the symbolic attributes of the deities *cipactli* (calendrical sign), Cohuatl, Ehecatl, and Mizquiztli; (c) Izquitecatl, god of wine; (d) Tezcatzoncatl, god of wine; (e) the calendric day sign 1 Snake; (f) Tezcatlipoca, god of providence; (g) the calendric day sign 2 Monkey; (h) Cihuateotl, a goddess who honored women who died in labor; (i) a frog (given by the authorities to the San Carlos Academy of Art); (j) an eclipse in which the sun is devoured by a creature called the *tequanes*; (k) a wolf (given by the authorities to the San Carlos Academy of Art); and (l) the calendric day sign 5 Crocodile (*cipactli*). Collection Goupil-Aubin, MS 97. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Mesoamerican calendrics. In making this point, he, like Alzate y Ramírez, launched an assault on the shallowness of the knowledge of foreign authors. But to appreciate this aspect of his epistemology, we need briefly to review another public debate in which León y Gama participated and in which he first articulated his views on the limited ability of "outsiders" to understand the past and the nature of the New World.

Lizards and Epistemology

In 1782, Dr. José Flores (1751–1824), the *protomédico* (first physician) of the Audiencia of Guatemala, published a treatise claiming to have discovered that the raw flesh of lizards of the Amatitlan region cured cancer, triggering a medical controversy in the capital of the viceroyalty of New Spain.[52] Dr. José Vicente García de la Vega, a distinguished professor of medicine at the University of Mexico, went Flores one better, asserting that not only cancer but other diseases, too, could be treated with the flesh of certain lizards found in the vicinity of Mexico City, which did not, moreover, need to be eaten raw but could be mixed into unguents or ingested in pill form.[53] In a confidential report to the city council, which was charged with regulating medical practice in the capital, Dr. Manuel Antonio Moreno and Dr. Alejo Ramón Sánchez recommended, however, that it outlaw the use of lizard flesh, the "acrid" particles of which had proven in many trials to be poisonous rather than miraculous, they said. At this point, León y Gama stepped in with his *Instrucción sobre el remedio de las lagartijas*, urging that the city council not forbid this cure. Contrary to García de la Vega's claim, however, León y Gama contended that since the curative power of lizards did not reside in any "subtle animal spirit" but in the organic attraction between the flesh of the lizard and the tumor, the lizard flesh did, indeed, have to be eaten raw. Citing Newton, he depicted the lizard as an animal "lodestone" that "attracted" splinters on the outside and tumors inside. As for Moreno and Sánchez's warning, he countered that the trials they had conducted were unreliable and flawed: they had either administered the wrong lizard to their patients or had mishandled those that were curative. Drawing on the works of Francisco Hernández, the sixteenth-century savant sent by Philip II to compile a natural history of the New World, León y Gama maintained that several distinct species of lizards, some of them indeed poisonous, existed in central Mexico. To identify them as well as their virtues, great care and great knowledge was needed. León y Gama conceded that the two physicians might have given their patients the curative species but mishandled it. For

the cure to work, he argued, many precautions needed to be taken. Once the right lizard was caught, it had to be fed only with the appropriate local insects; all female lizards, particularly pregnant ones, had to be discarded; finally, the lizard had to be treated gently, for if irritated it could become poisonous.[54] The amount of knowledge that these techniques demanded from physicians was extraordinary. Doctors needed to know the natural history of the area in order to identify, feed, and treat the curative lizards properly.

Flores, the physician who had first claimed that raw lizard flesh cured cancer, had not "discovered" anything, León y Gama said. He had simply rediscovered a remedy (*remedio nuevamente descubierto*) long known by the ancient Amerindians, confirming the wealth and complexity of ancient Amerindian herbal and medical lore.[55] The message of León y Gama's *Instrucción* was that only those who knew the local fauna and flora in all their exquisite detail and intricacy could be trusted to use the lizards.[56] The *Instrucción* gives us an outline of León y Gama's epistemology. First, he was a humanist engaged in the *rediscovery* of the insights, medical and otherwise, of the ancient Mesoamericans. Second, he thought that only a tiny learned elite was privy to those insights. When Alzate y Ramírez asked León y Gama to deliver a system to interpret Mesoamerican scripts, he responded just as he did in the debate over the curative power of the lizards. Those who lacked the linguistic skills and the appropriate understanding of the bewildering details of Amerindian lore were condemned to remain in the dark.

A *General Key to Mesoamerican Hieroglyphs?*

In the unpublished second installment of *Descripción histórica*, León y Gama ridiculed Alzate y Ramírez for seeking a ready-made set of rules for reading Mesoamerican scripts. Indigenous primary sources, León y Gama argued, ranged from widely accessible historical documents to arcane repositories of secret knowledge. He offered a few examples. Codex *Histoire mexicaine (1221–1594)*, on the one hand, indicated that the Tenochtitlan flood had occurred in the year "8 Flint" (1500 C.E.) (Fig 5.8a). Although it, too, in equally rough fashion, placed the Tenochtitlan flood in the year "8 flint," the Codex en Cruz (Fig. 5.8b), on the other hand, dated other events using a finer grid. For example, it recorded the *days* on which the legendary monarch of Texcoco, Nezahualcoyotl (1402 C.E.), his son Nezahualpilli (1464 C.E.), and the ruler Cuauhcaltzin (1502 C.E.) had been born. Moreover, the Codex en Cruz dated the death of Ahuitzotl and the ascension of Moctezuma Xocoyoltzin (1502 C.E.) providing not the sign of the day but of

its accompanying "lord of the night." Codex *Histoire mexicaine (1221–1594)*, León y Gama argued, assumed of the reader a very general working knowledge of annual calendrical cycles, whereas the Codex en Cruz demanded from its audience exquisite knowledge of several types of ritual counts. Besides differences of calendrical knowledge, the two codices included pictographic narratives with different degrees of detail that demanded equally different knowledge of reading scripts from the audience. Codex *Histoire mexicaine (1221–1594)*, for example, used the symbol of water to describe a flood in 1500 C.E., whereas the Codex en Cruz recorded not only the date but also the location of the flood, the city of Tenochtitlan, with precision. Moreover, the entry on the flood in the Codex en Cruz included information on the deity responsible for the flood (Chalchihuitlicue) and on the help the Mexica received from the subordinate towns of Texcoco and Tlacopan. The difference between references in documents of the likes of Codex *Histoire mexicaine (1221–1594)* and the Codex en Cruz, León y Gama argued, was not merely a matter of calendrical accuracy and narrative detail; the codices were intended for two different audiences. Sources such as Codex *Histoire mexicaine (1221–1594)* had been written for the masses, because they required only a superficial acquaintance with writing techniques and astronomical knowledge. Sources such as the Codex en Cruz, on the other hand, were addressed to more knowledgeable and sophisticated audiences, for they demanded familiarity with the hieroglyphs of deities and towns, as well as an exquisite command of multiple calendrical counts. The scale of accessibility in Amerindian primary sources, León y Gama maintained, did not stop with these two types of documents. A third type of source, such as the ritual calendar Tonalamatl Aubin, could only be read by highly trained religious specialists (Fig. 5.5). With hundreds of symbols and obscure references to celestial phenomena and deities, sources such as Tonalamatl Aubin demanded from their intended audience complete command of both theological subtleties and celestial physics.[57]

Complicating this system of different documents for different audiences, there was the additional problem of the nature of the logograms and pictograms used by the Amerindians to record their annals. According to León y Gama, logograms and pictograms often alluded to local objects accessible only to a privileged few. An extensive knowledge of local natural history, León y Gama argued, was needed to understand the logograms of town names. The names of towns in such documents as the Codex Cozcatzin and the Codex Azcatitlan could not be read without a vast knowledge of the natural history of central Mexico (Fig. 5.9a). The names of Cimatlan, Tollan,

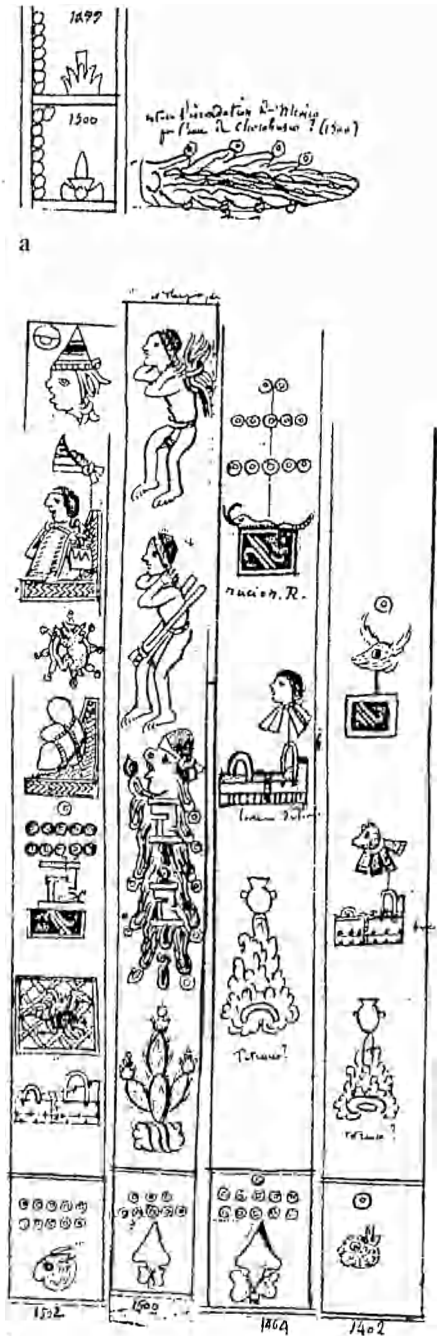


FIGURE 5.8. Entries recording events that took place in the Central Valley of Mexico around 1500 C.E.: (a) *Histoire mexicaine depuis 1221 jusqu'en 1594*; (b) Codex en Cruz. The copies belonged to León y Gama, who used these entries to exemplify the ascending scale of complexity and accessibility of indigenous sources. Differences in narrative complexity and calendrical accuracy between (a) and (b) are apparent, an indication that they were intended for two different audiences. The entries in the Codex en Cruz exemplify how Aztec script worked. In 1402 C.E. (1 Rabbit, signified by a rabbit's head and one circle), day 1 Deer (a day symbol linked to a deer's head and one circle), Nezahualcoytl ("Fasting Coyote" = a coyote's head and the symbol of a priest's fasting circle) was born (cradle) in the town of Texcoco ("Place of Pot/Alabaster Stone" = pot on top of a mountain). In 1464 (11 Flint) day 12 Snake, Nezahualpilli ("Fasting Lord" = head and fasting circle) was born (cradle) in Texcoco ("Place of Pot"). In 1500 (8 Flint), Tenochtitlan ("Nopal Cactus on Stone") was flooded (water running over houses; according to León y Gama Chalchihuitlicue is also represented) and received help (represented by two porters, whom León y Gama identified as help from Texcoco and Tlacopan). In 1502 (10 Rabbit) day 11 Rabbit, Cuauhcaltzin ("Caged Bird" according to León y Gama) was born. That same year on a day presided over by Xipe Totec (a lord of the night according to León y Gama), Ahuitzotl ("Water Beast/Otter?") died (mummy bundle) and Moctezuma Xocoyoltzin ("Angry Lord the Younger") took over. Collection Goupil-Aubin, [a] MS 89 (1–2), fol. 24 and [b] MS 88 (5), fols. 71, 74, 77. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

and Papatztaca, in the Codex Cozcatzin, and Huexotzinc, in the Codex Azcatitlan, were written with logograms and pictograms depicting local shrubs, trees, and flowers. According to León y Gama, some logograms were simply too idiosyncratic and undecipherable, as in the case of references in the Codex Cozcatzin to the town of "Teyahualco," whose rebus image León y Gama challenged anyone to explain (Fig 5.9b). Even more upsetting for those such as Alzate y Ramírez who sought a shortcut to the interpretation of Amerindian documents was the fact that some towns with somewhat similar Nahua names were identified with the same logograms in different documents. This, León y Gama argued, was the case with Atempa in the Codex Cozcatzin and Atenco in the *Matrícula de tributos* (Fig.5.9c).

But if to read the names of towns in Amerindian primary sources at times required knowledge beyond the reach of common mortals, the reading of the names of rulers presented even more challenges. According to León y Gama, the signs scribes used to refer to rulers did not merely allude to the sound of their names but also to some aspects of their moral character. The fact that the logogram of the ruler Cuauhcaltzin in Codex en Cruz was a caged eagle (Fig 5.8b), León y Gama argued, was of little consolation for those who knew that the logograms of the last Mexica monarch, Cuauhtemoc, the Aculhua lord Cuauhtletcohuatzin, and the lord of Coyuacan, Cuauhpopocatzin, in other sources were also eagles. The eagles that represented the names of all the above rulers, however, showed subtle differences; their beaks appeared either shut, open, or giving off smoke, and their eyes gazing up or down. According to León y Gama such subtle distinctions were allusions to some aspect of the moral character of these rulers that had been understood only by a handful of retainers. The logic behind these correlations, therefore, lay now beyond the grasp of any mortal, including late-colonial native scholars.[58]

In his response to Alzate y Ramírez, León y Gama suggested that foreigners were condemned to be unable to read indigenous sources. His analysis of the self-referential complexity of the Mesoamerican writing systems led León y Gama to deny subtly that "outsiders" would ever be able comprehend them. For example, he ridiculed the ideas of Athanasius Kircher on the nature of Mexican scripts. Kircher had declared that Mesoamerican hieroglyphs were completely transparent childish representations, unlike the mysterious symbols used by the Egyptians, which hid sophisticated arcane knowledge. To exemplify this, Kircher had used a page from the Codex Mendoza, edited by Samuel Purchas, representing the baptism of a four-day-old Indian child (Fig.5.10a). The age of the child was given by four circles, standing for days (Fig. 5.10b). According to León y Gama, Kircher had, how-

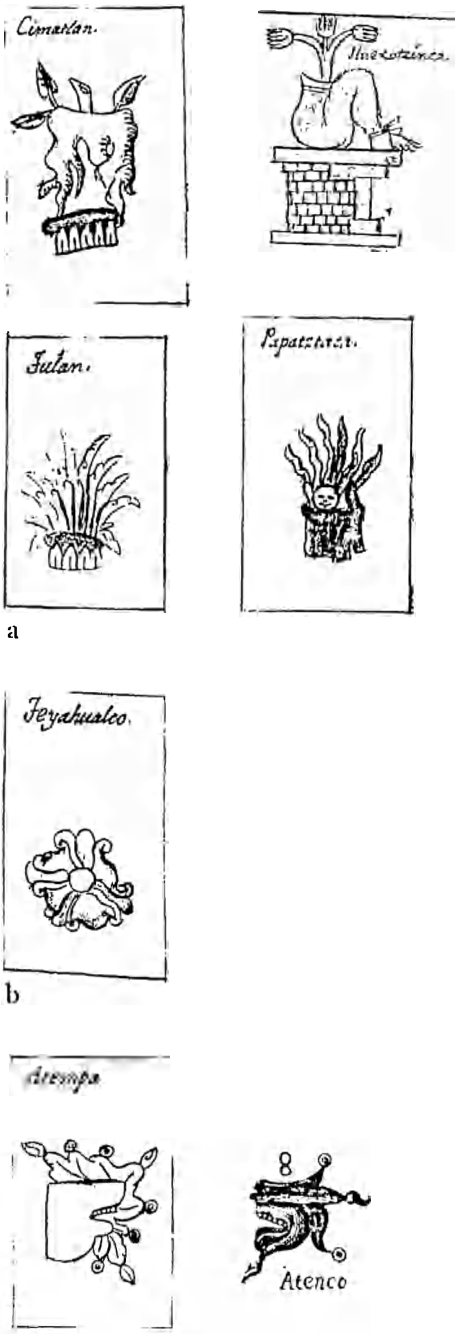


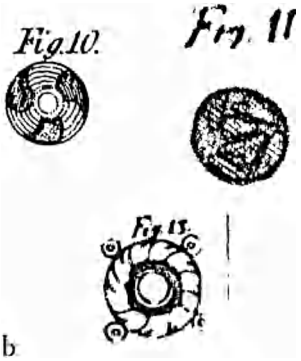
FIGURE 5.9. Pictograms for Mesoamerican towns in indigenous sources used by León y Gama to demonstrate the difficulty of establishing general rules for the reading of Mesoamerican scripts. (a) Ideograms of towns whose names in rebus refer to local plants. Codex Cozcatzin and Codex Azcatitlan. Collection Goupil-Aubin, MS 89 (3), fol. 34 (#4) and MS 89 (5), fol. 66, 68, 74. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. (b) Ideogram of Teyahualco whose logic León y Gama could not make out. Codex Cozcatzin. Collection Goupil-Aubin, MS 89 (5), fol. 69. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. (c) Two similar rebus signs standing for two completely different towns. Codex Cozcatzin. Collection Goupil-Aubin, MS 89 (5), fol. 64. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Some images show how phoneticism and pictography combined in Aztec script. The symbol for the Huexotzinco (Codex Azcatitlan) is made up of a rump [*tzin*], which stands for the adjective "little," and a tree = "Little Tree." The teeth in the images for Atempa and Atenco (Fig. 5.9c) stand for *tlan*, also an adverbial particle ("near"). The proper way of reading the images would therefore be "near Atempa/Atenco." Francisco Xavier Clavijero, *Storia antica del Messico* (Cesena, 1780–81). Clavijero took the image from Lorenzana's *Matrícula de tributos*.

ever, failed to understand the bewildering complexity of the signs. Behind the seeming simplicity of the round sign of the day (which León y Gama maintained was the sign for months), for example, there lay subtle philosophical principles that had allowed the natives to draw distinctions with other round signs used to represent days and years. The sign for the months (actually days), León y Gama argued, also hid a world of complex mathematical rules and operations. Moreover, the image of the river into which the baby was submerged was the glyph that represented the goddess Chalchihuitlicue.[59] Clearly, this page from the Codex Mendoza demonstrated that there was nothing "transparent" about Mesoamerican scripts, and that Kircher was a recklessly ignorant commentator on things American.

Alzate y Ramírez was never able to respond to the second installment of León y Gama's *Descripción histórica*, because it was never made public. But for all the differences between them in style and learning, however, Alzate y Ramírez and León y Gama were ideological twins. They occupied extremes in the spectrum of the Spanish American Enlightenment, but their views on epistemology turned out to be almost identical. When it came to assessing foreigners' understanding of the past and nature of the New World, León y Gama and Alzate y Ramírez were both patriots. Alzate y Ramírez cast León y Gama as a system builder enamored of philosophical speculations. Such criticism stemmed from Alzate y Ramírez's dislike of travel accounts and conjectural histories of the New World. Alzate y Ramírez disliked de Pauw, Buffon, and Linnaeus because their systems forced America into prefabricated molds. Alzate y Ramírez's visceral rejection of foreign systems framed the way he approached natural history, seeking at every turn to collect curiosities in order to prove that the laws of nature unearthed in Europe were narrowly provincial. This visceral rejection also framed his entire understanding of Mexican antiquities. Fearful of systems, Alzate y Ramírez consistently refused to advance any interpretation of the hieroglyphs found both in Xochicalco in 1777 and in the central plaza of Mexico City in 1791. León y Gama, on the other hand, did not cast his criticism of the knowledge of outsiders as a critique of philosophical systems. Unlike Alzate y Ramírez, he was willing to engage and to deploy theories. León y Gama's more philosophical turn of mind, however, did not make him less a patriot than Alzate y Ramírez. In the debates over the curative power of lizards' flesh and the interpretation of the stones, León y Gama insisted that Amerindian medical and historiographical knowledge was self-referential and contingent, and

res, forcipes, cultros, hamos, & similia suis literis signata, quibus puer vti debebit, cùm ad aptam illis ætatem peruenerit ; F G H tres pueri sunt fonti assidentes, & nomen infanti imponentes, placentis, fragis, oriza in.

a



b

FIGURE 5.10. León y Gama used these images to highlight the epistemological limitations of foreign interpreters such as the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher. (a) Copy of a page from the Codex Mendoza narrating the "baptism" of a four-day-old child, used by Kircher to highlight the transparency and simplicity of Mesoamerican scripts, very unlike Egyptian hieroglyphics. From Kircher, *Oedipus aegyptiacus* (Rome, 1653–54). (b) Symbolic attributes of annual, monthly, and daily cycles, according to León y Gama. Collection Goupil-Aubin, MS 97. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. In seeking to prove Kircher's ignorance, León y Gama mistook the ideogram for "day" (b, Fig. 13) for an ideogram for "month," arguing that the four little circles around the circumference signified the mathematical operation of multiplication. According to León y Gama, the colors and forms of the symbols corresponded to deep insights into the nature of time.

thus addressed to a tiny elite of learned individuals. In exposing the ignorance of foreigners such as Kircher, León y Gama highlighted the extraordinary competence required in Nahuatl linguistics and local natural history to read and understand Amerindian historical sources.

León y Gama and Alzate y Ramírez were ideological twins in another, less obvious way: they both deployed the new art of reading of the Enlightenment. As noted, this art of reading was characterized by a skeptical probing of the internal consistency of texts and the search for alternative, nonliterary forms of evidence. Unlike the northern European critics who did not care to interpret Amerindian scripts and who dismissed all Amerindian sources, León y Gama extended the new techniques of reading to Amerindian precolonial documents (which other patriotic epistemologists had read uncritically) in order to determine a core of authoritative, unimpeachable authors. His study of fifteenth-century eclipses in central Mexico, for example, showed that the entries in many Nahua annals were untrustworthy. Only the works of the Nahua annalist Cristóbal del Castillo emerged unscathed from this rigorous scrutiny. León y Gama, therefore, turned Castillo's works into the bedrock of his own history. Alzate y Ramírez, on the other hand, was somewhat more traditional. He judged Castillo's reliability on the basis of his racial and social standing, rather than on the internal consistency of his writings. Alzate y Ramírez sought to discredit León y Gama by suggesting that Castillo was a mestizo commoner. But Alzate y Ramírez was utterly familiar with the new art of reading of his age, and he deployed it against the northern European critics of the Americas. Like the skeptics of the age, Alzate y Ramírez refused to interpret Mesoamerican scripts and dismissed all precolonial written sources outright. Again, like his European foes, Alzate y Ramírez sought more reliable, alternative, nonliterary forms of evidence, which he found in Xochicalco. But by using Xochicalco's ramparts, tunnels, terraces, and pyramids, Alzate y Ramírez proved each and every one of the Europeans' views of the Amerindian past wrong.

The debate over the meaning of the stones typified the nature of the Enlightenment in Spanish America in general and in New Spain in particular. It was a debate conducted entirely in the public sphere. Like the debates over the curative power of lizards' flesh and over the merits of Linnaean taxonomy, the discussion in Mexican periodicals of the meaning of the stones was characterized by an all-consuming concern for assessing the power of outsiders to comprehend local realities. This debate had little or nothing to do with seeking new religious and political languages of legitimization. Historians have so far directed their attention to finding traces of ideas first

developed in Europe in order to characterize the Spanish American Enlightenment. Although valuable, these efforts have paradoxically rendered invisible one of the most richly creative aspects of the movement in a colonial setting, namely, the discourse of patriotic epistemology.

Why Did Boturini's Collection Never Reach Madrid?

Alzate y Ramírez and León y Gama turned their epistemological insights into political capital when they sought to dispute the monopoly that Europeans began to acquire over the new academic institutions that the Bourbon monarchy established in Spanish America. Dozens of botanical and cartographic expeditions visited the colonies in the second half of the eighteenth century. In Bogota, Mexico City, and Lima, some of these expeditions turned into institutional efforts that lasted many years. The Botanical Garden (1788); an academy to train painters and masons in the new neoclassical taste (Academia de la Nobles Artes de San Carlos, 1788); a hospital to train learned surgeons (Real Escuela de Cirugía, 1768); and a college to educate miners in subterranean geometry and mineralogy (Colegio de Minería, 1792) were some of the new royal establishments created in New Spain to challenge the monopoly of the Church over education.[60] Most of these institutions were staffed and led by Peninsulars. Both Alzate y Ramírez and León y Gama had harbored hopes of getting chairs in the new college of mining, but as soon as the Basque mineralogist Fausto de Elhuyar (1755–1833) arrived to direct the college, they were deliberately excluded from the lists of potential candidates, who unsurprisingly all turned to be Peninsulars.[61] Debates such as the one conducted by Alzate y Ramírez over the merits of Linnaean taxonomy formed part of a Creole organized resistance to the founding of new chair of botany for physicians at the recently opened Botanical Garden, which operated outside the purview of the clerically controlled University of Mexico.[62] I argue in the following pages that the failure of the Bourbon regime in the 1780s and 1790s to bring Boturini's collection to Spain was another manifestation of Creole resistance. Creoles like Alzate y Ramírez and León y Gama conspired to keep indigenous documents in Mexico.

Seeking to centralize colonial documentation, the Spanish crown sent several requests and even an expedition (Malaspina's) in the course of the 1780s and 1790s to bring to Madrid all available indigenous codices, particularly those impounded from Boturini in 1742. Had the requests of the crown and of the visiting expedition been heeded, the great collections of Meso-

american codices now in Mexico, Paris, Berkeley, New Orleans, and Texas would in all probability be housed today at the Royal Academy of History in Madrid. A Creole conspiracy, however, rendered the efforts of the crown futile, but it served to keep many of these Mesoamerican codices in Mexico for only a few more years By the early nineteenth century, an undertow of indigenous codices began to flow out of Mexico toward Europe and the United States. Significantly, the trickle started when the discourse of patriotic epistemology in historiography began to give way to liberal and republican ideologies.[63]

Some twenty years ago, John B. Glass reconstructed the many attempts of the Spanish crown, particularly in the 1780s and early 1790s, to recover all or parts of Boturini's collection. Many edicts ordering local authorities to assemble and send to Spain the many volumes that had once belonged to the Italian scholar were consistently met with silence or were simply poorly carried out. Glass has attributed the problems to errors committed by the person who drafted the official lists requesting specific documents, namely, the Royal Chronicler of the Indies, Juan Bautista Muñoz, and also to the state of complete disarray in which Boturini's collection was found in the 1780s. The collection had left the premises of the viceregal palace and moved around for years, losing several of its volumes in the process. It went first to the archbishopric, where Archbishop Lorenzana used it for his edition of the *Matrícula de tributos*. Later, it moved to the university, where it was kept with holdings that had belonged to the Jesuits before their expulsion. By the time the authorities sought to return the collection to the viceregal archives, Glass has argued, they had lost track of the whereabouts of many of the documents.[64]

In addition to the problems attending a traveling archive on which Glass has focused, confusion seems also to have originated in the profusion of copies of indigenous documents then circulating in Mexico. When antiquarians such as Echeverría y Veytia, Granados y Gálvez, and León y Gama gained access to the collection, they made copies of several documents, which later could not be distinguished from the originals. Of the annals by Alvarado Tezozomoc and Alva Ixtlilxochitl that finally made it to Spain, most were copies that had belonged to Echeverría y Veytia, not Boturini. In addition to Echeverría y Veytia, Granados y Gálvez, and León y Gama, the larger roster of late-eighteenth-century antiquarians devoted to copying indigenous sources included the Peninsular navy officer Diego García Panes (1730–1811), who used many of the codices assembled by Boturini to complete an illustrated version of Echeverría y Veytia's ancient history of Mexico. A tireless

collector, García Panes inter alia commissioned what is now known as the Lienzo de Tlaxcala, a copy of the pictograms decorating the chambers of the municipal building in Tlaxcala, narrating that city's participation in the Conquest. He was also responsible for bringing a copy of Sahagún's monumental Florentine Codex back to Mexico.[65]

This list of antiquarians should also include the mysterious figure of Juan Santelices Pablo, the most important broker of antiquities, curiosities, and books in late-eighteenth-century Mexico and the owner of the largest cabinet of curiosities-cum-library.[66] Then, by the turn of the nineteenth century, the leading antiquarian in Mexico was José Antonio Pichardo (1748–1812), a member of the order of San Felipe Neri, who inherited his collection of indigenous documents in part from León y Gama. Pichardo was Alexander von Humboldt's principal guide when the latter began to navigate the stormy waters of Mesoamerican historiography while visiting New Spain. The list could go on; suffice it to say that in 1790 a local periodical listed at least eleven large collections of antiquities and natural curiosities in the capital.[67] The number of indigenous codices (including originals, copies, and forgeries) circulating in late-eighteenth-century Mexico and Guatemala (more on this region later) was so large that it is plausible to argue that most holdings of colonial Mesoamerican codices in such institutions as the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the Bancroft Library in Berkeley, California, Tulane University in New Orleans, the Nettie Lee Benson Library in Austin, Texas, the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico, and the Royal Academy of History and the Library of the Royal Palace in Madrid can ultimately be traced to this period and to one or another of the antiquarians mentioned above.

Glass insists that those charged with collecting the documents were paralyzed by confusion and unclear requests from Spain, and that after many years of trying, the Council of the Indies and the Royal Academy of History managed to collect only a handful of indigenous sources; without exception, all were annals in Spanish either by Alvarado Tezozomoc or Alva Ixtlilxochitl. These annals were highly esteemed sources, but the crown in the end got only copies, not the originals. Glass does not seem surprised by the fact that Bourbon efforts to recover Boturini's collection finally retrieved some *thirty-two* volumes, most of which were filled with material unrelated to the original lists of requests. As Glass acknowledges, the entire process of collecting and selecting the documents remained throughout firmly under Creole control, first by a group at the university and later, owing to the faculty's utter "inefficiency," by a community of scribes at the Franciscan headquarters in the capital.

Pace Glass, there is, however, abundant evidence that the delays and inefficiencies were part of a vast Creole conspiracy to keep indigenous sources in Mexico. Whenever Muñoz drafted a list of documents in Madrid, the order was treated lightly. Take, for example, the case of Alzate y Ramírez, who was ordered to collect documents prior to the arrival of Alejandro Malaspina's expedition to Mexico, the largest scientific expedition ever assembled in Spain, which emulated and even dwarfed that of Captain Cook. As the expedition circumnavigated the world, visiting Spanish colonial outposts in both the Atlantic and the Pacific, local authorities and literati were asked to gather data on the economy, demography, politics, and history of the colonies.[68] Thus, prior to Malaspina's arrival in Mexico, an order was sent to reassemble Boturini's collection, something the crown had been ordering to no avail since 1784. This time, the crown hoped that the members of the expedition would get personally involved, speeding up the process. Alzate y Ramírez's reply to the official request is significant: he advised Malaspina to stop looking for Boturini's collection, on the grounds that it was "useless" outside Mexico. In an ironic gesture, Alzate y Ramírez suggested that the Italian Malaspina instead use the illustrations in Clavijero's history, then only available in an Italian edition.[69]

When nothing came of Malaspina's request, Arcadio Pineda, the member of the expedition charged with scouring and combing local archives, set out to visit cloisters and libraries once the expedition arrived. Pineda soon declared himself helpless and frustrated, however, for he had found no trace of indigenous documents in the archives. Moreover, all the documents that had once belonged to Boturini's collection, he maintained, seemed to have completely vanished.[70] In fact, while the expedition was visiting Mexico, the entire collection had been moved to the Franciscan headquarters, and the members of the cloister had made their own sweep of local repositories. Malaspina finally departed with thirty-two volumes of historical documents that the Franciscans put together between 1790 and 1792, the so-called Colección de Memorias de Nueva España. The collection included copies of some of the documents Muñoz had originally requested, particularly annals in Spanish by sixteenth-century Amerindian annalists such as Alvarado Tezozomoc and Alva Ixtlilxochitl. There were, however, no annals written in Nahuatl in Latin script and no sources in Mesoamerican scripts in the entire collection. Why?

The answer lies in the preface by the Franciscans charged with assembling and selecting the documents, Francisco García Figueroa and Manuel de la Vega, and in an evaluation of the indigenous historical paintings by the

interpreter of the local tribunals, Vicente de la Rosa y Saldivar. In the preface to the collection, García Figueroa and de la Vega maintained that no indigenous document (in Nahuatl in Latin script or logograms) was included because they were all worthless, "trivial, obscure, and dry [pieces]."[71] The Franciscans maintained that their decision was ultimately based on the expertise of the interpreter de la Rosa, who in fact wrote a lengthy essay assessing each and every one of the available codices, annals in both Latin and Mesoamerican scripts, in which he found garbled chronologies and utter confusion. De la Rosa advised the authorities to use Torquemada's history instead. Torquemada's work, he declared, was already a neat, chronologically organized summation of indigenous documents.[72]

García Figueroa and de la Vega's decision not to include any indigenous sources, except the writings in Spanish by Alvarado Tezozomoc and Alva Ixtlilxochitl, is puzzling because it was taken precisely at the time when León y Gama's *Descripción de las dos piedras* demonstrated their historiographical value. Moreover, it was a decision taken immediately after scores of copies of the Italian edition of Clavijero's history had arrived in Mexico. There are two plausible scenarios that help explain this puzzling editorial decision. One is that the editors and the interpreter really thought that the documents were worthless. I have been arguing in this chapter that the clerical-Creole discourse of patriotic epistemology looked with suspicion on indigenous sources of later colonial provenance, for such sources could have been produced by misinformed commoners. De la Rosa, the interpreter, seems to have followed this logic, because he praised Torquemada's history as a reliable compilation of ancient Amerindian sources, while identifying most documents in Boturini's collection as of colonial provenance. This logic, however, is nowhere made explicit in de la Rosa's essay.

The second plausible scenario is that the Franciscan editors and the interpreter deliberately misled the Spanish authorities. Such a scenario is confirmed by a letter sent by León y Gama to his Jesuit friend in Italy Andrés Cavo (1739–1803), who was then translating León y Gama's *Descripción* into Latin for publication in Italy, in August 1796. Apparently prompted by Cavo's continuous requests not to let Amerindian codices leave the country, León y Gama responded that a plot to keep the indigenous documents at home had already been set in motion. León y Gama noted how many Amerindian documents had left in 1792 (and in 1780), "[when] all the [holdings] of the university were taken to Spain," and how, in order to keep some at home, he and the university librarians had managed to declare many Amerindian sources useless as "things that could not be understood."[73] León y Gama's letter to

Cavo, Alzate y Ramírez's ironic response to Malaspina, the refusal of the Franciscan editors to include any indigenous source in Mesoamerican script in the thirty-two-volume collection that Malaspina took to Spain, and the constant delays with which orders to collect indigenous sources were greeted between 1784 and 1792 all suggest a Creole conspiracy to keep Mexican codices in New Spain.

Our Lady of Guadalupe as Neoplatonic Seal and Mesoamerican Glyph

Unlike Alzate y Ramírez and León y Gama, who, patriotic epistemology notwithstanding, evidently shared the mind-set of the late-eighteenth-century literati of northwestern Europe, there were many Spanish American antiquarians whose concerns and methodologies cannot adequately be captured under the rubric of the Enlightenment. In this section I study the work of José Ignacio Borunda, whom Alzate y Ramírez and Voltaire would have characterized as a "pedantic antiquarian," given to etymological flights of fancy. Operating within the discourse of patriotic epistemology, he penned texts that reveal a deeply influential aspect of colonial culture in Spanish America: the "baroque," a world dominated by images and occult sympathies and resemblances. Borunda was one of the many antiquarians who sought to interpret the stones found in the central plaza of Mexico between 1790 and 1792. Although his work proved at the time to be far more influential than anything either Alzate y Ramírez and León y Gama ever wrote, historians today dismiss Borunda as mad and incomprehensible.

In three of the stones, Borunda immediately found (Figs. 5.1, 5.2, and 5.6a) confirmation of many of the ideas he had been developing for more than thirty years while working for local tribunals. Like Boturini, Borunda thought that the history of the New World sorely needed a new narrative, and, more important, a new methodology, one based on the allegorical interpretation of terms. Borunda had come to realize that all previous colonial historians, whether of Amerindian or European descent, had distorted the history of Mesoamerica beyond recognition. Applying his radically new methodology to the three stones, Borunda produced a new history that sent the body politic reeling when it was made public in 1794 by one of Borunda's friends, the Dominican friar Servando Teresa de Mier (1765–1825), in a sermon commemorating the miraculous appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Using Borunda's ideas, Mier argued that the story of the miracle was false, rendering the secular and ecclesiastical authorities in his audience speechless. The

authorities, who were grappling with the spread of the French Revolution to the New World in Saint Domingue (Haiti), decided that enforcing religious traditions was more valuable than promoting skepticism. They initiated legal proceedings against both Borunda and Mier, which led to the silencing of Borunda for life and to Mier's expulsion and imprisonment in Spain. Mier fled Spain, however, to become one of the most picturesque and influential figures in Mexico during and after the wars of independence.[74]

Most historians have either ignored Borunda or have cast him as an incoherent lunatic.[75] David Brading, who has written by far the best study of Mier's particular brand of Catholic republicanism, and who has otherwise shown exquisite sensibility when dealing with Creole sources, has argued that "apart from a few wild etymologies," Borunda "brought nothing new . . . save his completely baseless assertions [about St. Thomas and Our Lady of Guadalupe]."[76] Edmundo O'Gorman, who published an annotated edition of primary sources on Mier's conviction, including Mier's sermon and documents impounded from Borunda by the prosecution, has characterized Borunda's views as an "indigestible bundle [*fárrago*] of disconnected ideas."[77] Why has Borunda been so easily dismissed? The answer lies in the complexity of Borunda's methodology, the obscurity of his chef d'oeuvre, the *Clave general de geroglíficos americanos* (General Key to American Hieroglyphs), which is the Mexican equivalent of Champollion's Egyptian work, and the complete lack of attention to the rest of his writings. In the following pages, I study Borunda's ideas and the culture that made them possible, with the ultimate purpose of identifying some cultural properties of the Spanish American baroque.

José Ignacio Borunda's 'Clave general de geroglíficos americanos'

When Boturini's collection was ordered sent to Spain in 1790, the crown also asked that a local expert assess the documents. A month after the first stones were found in the central plaza, Borunda introduced himself as the expert the authorities needed. In documents submitted with his application for the position, Borunda very coherently and very clearly (indicating that he was not mad) outlined a new historiographical proposal, in which he castigated all previous attempts at writing the precolonial history of New Spain.[78]

According to Borunda, all sixteenth-century indigenous and Spanish interpreters got the facts of the ancient history of Mesoamerica wrong owing to essential problems of cross-cultural communication. Amerindians, he argued, had sinned on the side of orthography and Spaniards on the side of

what he called "orthology." Newcomers to the art of putting down sounds in the Latin script, the natives had altered "the original voices" of Nahuatl terms when they moved away from their traditional scripts (orthographic miscommunication). The failure of the Spaniards, on the other hand, consisted in having changed the pronunciation of Amerindian voices as they grappled with the new alien languages ("orthological" miscommunication). Gaffes in "orthology" and orthography, Borunda argued, had come together to alter the original sounds of the names of places, rulers, and deities. The changes were significant, Borunda maintained, because Amerindian knowledge (historical and otherwise) was stored in words, veiled as verbal allusions and metaphors. An unacknowledged disciple of Boturini, and thus of Vico, Borunda argued that words were crucial "documents" for any historical reconstruction. Place-names in particular, he asserted, were allegorical references to historical events. By changing the original toponymy through orthological and orthographic mistakes, Amerindians and Spaniards alike had contributed to making impossible any etymological-cum-allegorical study of Nahuatl words.

Borunda identified yet another mechanism of historiographical distortion associated with the first colonial encounter. Individuals trained to read documents and names, he argued, had disappeared during the early phase of the Conquest. The Amerindian interpreters used by the first missionaries had not previously been exposed to the secrets stored in metaphors and veiled allegories, and their translations were merely literal allusions, not an exegesis of occult knowledge.

By highlighting the many processes of miscommunication and distortion of the original Amerindian sources, Borunda's skepticism outdid anything patriotic epistemologists had advanced before. As noted, Alzate y Ramírez had refused to advance any interpretations of Mesoamerican hieroglyphs, and had therefore dismissed all Amerindian pictographic and logographic sources. He had never argued, however, that the dozens of Nahuatl annals and writings in Latin script into which sixteenth-century Amerindian elites had poured their original sources in translation were not to be trusted. Even León y Gama, whose internal reading of indigenous documents exposed many annals as untrustworthy, would have considered it unthinkable to reject the vast corpus of early colonial Amerindian writings. Borunda, on the other hand, dismissed all these sources as though he were a faithful follower of Cornelius de Pauw.

Borunda was not, however, a thoroughgoing radical skeptic. He maintained that there were alternative mechanisms for reconstructing the original

sources. After working for twenty-seven years in the courts, he said, he had become familiar with one particular variety of sixteenth-century Amerindian documents, namely, land titles. Borunda claimed that these documents were so numerous that through careful collation it was possible to identify the original place-names and thus the logic behind the orthographic and orthological distortions introduced in the encounter.[79] Borunda also identified another mechanism to recover the original terms and their hidden historiographical meanings, namely, the behavior of "pure" Amerindian communities "unsoiled" by contact with mestizos. These communities retained the original place-names, and their elites still mindlessly practiced secret ceremonies that alluded to the original meaning of the allegories stored in names. Through what we Moderns call ethnography, and through the careful collation of land titles, Borunda claimed to have completed a "Geographical History," a dictionary of reconstructed original geographical terms, along with an analysis of their allegorical significance.

Borunda first used his method in another document, addressed to the viceregal authorities in 1788, in which he claimed that the location of mercury mines could be identified through reconstruction and etymological analysis of the toponymy of Mexico. Borunda wrote his proposal at a time when the authorities were facing the continuous military disruption of supplies of mercury (used for amalgamation of silver) from Almadén in Spain, and therefore were sponsoring surveys to locate local supplies. In the document Borunda insisted that place-names stored the history and "cause of everything."[80] Etymological analysis of place-names revealed that mercury mines were to be found in the north of New Spain. According to authors such as Echeverría y Veytia, the name of this place was Huehuetlapallan. Borunda, who assumed that "orthologic" and orthographic distortions had transformed the primitive name, reconstructed it as Huehuetlapa, which, in turn, he translated as "abundant in mercury."[81] Somewhere in the north of the viceroyalty, he thus concluded, there lay large mercury mines.

Such linguistic manipulations typified Borunda's methodology. There is also the example of Cuernavaca, a town near Mexico City. Borunda first restored the name "Cuernavaca" to its alleged original, "Cuaunauac." He then split the word into several root particles given the purported agglutinative character of Nahuatl. "Cuaunauac," he maintained, was the sum of the words *nau* (which he translated either as "fontanel," a boneless space in the forming skull, or as "cardinal point"); *atl* ("water"); and *cuautla* ("bushes"). It was also the sum of the words *nauac* (which according to most grammarians stood for the adverb "near," but that Borunda thought signified "fence"

or "wreath," or "wreath of spines" when associated with the word *uitztli*) and *cuautla* ("bushes"). At this point Borunda subjected each of the particles to an allegorical analysis. *Nau*, fontanel or cardinal point, and *atl*, water, he argued, signified the sinking of the earth. *Nauac*, on the other hand, stood for the wreath of spines that had tormented Christ. The name "Cuaunauac," Borunda concluded, had been used by the natives of Mexico to signify the geological catastrophe that had been visited on Mesoamerica in the wake of Christ's passion and crucifixion.[82]

Basing himself on such tortuous, painstaking analysis of hundreds of Nahuatl place-names, Borunda claimed that all previous histories of Mesoamerica and its peoples were in error. Dates and events, he argued, were wrongly attributed and recorded; so too were references to migrations and the rise and fall of nations. Groups that were assumed to have disappeared were still there; peoples who were thought to be ethnically distinct belonged in fact to the same nation.

Sometime before the stones were found in the central plaza of Mexico City, Borunda had established that the peoples of central Mexico used to live in mountains to the south; sierras, not lacustrine valleys, were the natural habitat of the Amerindians. To reach this conclusion Borunda argued that *alteptl*, the term that most Mesoamerican city-states used to define themselves as people, signified "mountains with water."[83] Giants, Borunda contended, had inhabited the ancient capital of the southern sierras before its destruction by a geological catastrophe that engulfed the earth at the time when Christ expired on the cross. In the wake of the catastrophe, St. Thomas had visited the survivors and taught them the mysteries of Christianity. Over time, they had turned their back on the apostle's original teachings, however, corrupting the rituals and dogmas of the Church. Eventually in 430 C.E., these apostates settled in the Central Valley of Mexico near the lakes and founded a new capital. Using hairsplitting etymologies characteristic of the baroque culture, Borunda at a single stroke cavalierly dismissed centuries of accumulated learning: a very modern gesture indeed.

Borunda on the Stones

To his own amazement Borunda discovered that the three stones found in Mexico City's central plaza confirmed and amplified much of the historical narrative he had already retrieved from the allegorical study of place-names. Borunda maintained that Mesoamerican writing was thoroughly logographic; every image in a source was a rebuslike transparent reference to a

term, which, in turn, was a veiled allusion to a historical episode. When the first missionaries destroyed Amerindian religious documents that contained images of animals on the assumption that they were idolatrous references to animal deities, they had in fact destroyed logograms that allegorically hid historical references. Such basic misunderstanding of Mesoamerican scripts, he contended, meant that the new codices produced under colonial patronage were unreliable and worthless. Moreover, according to Borunda, the natives had recorded their historical deeds on stone, not paper. Thus, when the conquistadors leveled the temples of Tenochtitlan, they destroyed the Mesoamerican archives. Anticipating this, however, the Mexica chose to bury their most precious historical documents during the siege of their capital. The three stones unearthed in Mexico in 1790 and 1791, Borunda argued, were those precious documents.[84]

Borunda concluded that the Solar Stone recorded crucial dates in universal history from the day of Creation to the year 5,280 (1,280 C.E.) (Fig. 5.2), and that the stone León y Gama had read as another calendar to commemorate the most important festival of the sun in mid May was in fact a monument that recorded the foundation of the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan (Fig. 5.6a). The impounded manuscript of Borunda's *Clave general* does not include the process by which he reached such conclusions.[85] The manuscript, however, contains his reading of the monstrous-looking stone that León y Gama had interpreted as a montage of the hieroglyphic attributes of several deities.

Borunda argued that this boulder (Fig. 5.1a) recorded in careful detail the events that had led to the destruction of the ancient capital in the sierras and to the foundation four hundred years later of the city among the lakes of the Central Valley of Mexico. The head of the monster was a "crab," or *tecusitli* in original Nahuatl reconstructed à la Borunda. The amphibian animal was itself a reference to the reestablishment of the ancient mountain capital in the lacustrine environment of the Central Valley. Moreover, the analysis of the root particles of crab, *sitli* (grandmother) and *tecutli* (master), stood allegorically for God's preordained destruction of the ancestral capital.[86] This reading of the elements of the stone as logograms combined with an allegorical interpretation of the historiographical significance of the reconstructed Nahuatl term allowed Borunda to gain insight into the details of the past. The base of the stone, for example, sported among other things a crouched female figure with skulls on her hands, elbows, and knees; a body that was a circle with a quartered square inside; and a necklace and a mouth with fangs. The crouched individual, Borunda argued, was known in Mexico as "frog,"

a clear reference to the amphibian character of the new capital. The skulls, *cuaxicalli* allegedly in reconstructed original Nahuatl, signified the original volcanic landscapes where the ancient capital had first been established. To reach this conclusion, Borunda split *cuaxicalli* into two root particles, *xicalle* ("container") and *cuaitl* ("mountain peak)." The circular body with a quartered square for its belly represented the quarters and canals of the new capital. The skulls of "coyotes" hanging from the limbs and hands of the individual stood for the mixed racial descent (Mexica and Otomí) of the inhabitants of the new capital, for *coyotl*, he argued, was used by the natives as an allegory of *mestizaje*. The necklace (*cuscatl*, or "ruby") and the mouth with the fangs of a serpent (*tlalpalli*) were references to the time in which the new capital was established. Borunda maintained that this occurred in the months between spring and winter, because the ruby necklace stood for the rubylike nature of the sun in the spring and the four fangs of a serpent stood for the four barren months of winter.[87]

Such extraordinarily convoluted methodology and unlikely historical narrative would, one might imagine, have failed to convince serious observers of Mesoamerican culture. Yet Borunda enjoyed a reputation as a leading linguist and antiquarian in Mexico. Although wrapped in the fanciful world of baroque scholarship, there was something very modern about Borunda's theses. With the stroke of a pen and the gusto of a radical skeptic, Borunda tore down the building of Spanish American historiography on the Aztecs. Such reckless disrespect for tradition, I suspect, made him attractive to new generations of innovative scholars. Even Alzate y Ramírez made veiled positive references to Borunda when he chastised León y Gama for having failed to produce a general key for reading and interpreting Mesoamerican scripts. The fact that the erudite Mier, charged with giving the commemorative sermon for the anniversary of the miracle of Our Lady of Guadalupe, approached Borunda for expert advice demonstrates that Borunda was not considered a crackpot.

So why did Borunda soon come to be seen as a deranged antiquarian? The answer lies in his interpretation of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which he "read" as he read the stones, namely, as a montage of logograms that stood for Nahuatl terms that hid past historical events. The reading of the image as a montage of symbols that could be read was nothing new in Mexico. Borunda's radicalism lay in the conclusions he reached. Detouring into the Spanish American Baroque, the following pages show how scholars read Christian icons as Mesoamerican scripts and vice versa.

Christian Icons and Nahua Glyphs

By the time Borunda applied his methodology to the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the reading of Nahua glyphs as Christian icons and of Christian images as Nahua glyphs had long exercised the imagination of the learned. For example, when in 1729 the Discalced Carmelites celebrated the canonization of their patron, the sixteenth-century Spanish ascetic St. John of the Cross, they commissioned the leading Creole scholar Cayetano de Cabrera y Quintero (d. 1775) to design the impresas, or emblems, for the triumphal arch.[88] Cabrera y Quintero chose eagles as the allegorical creatures to portray St. John. An eagle gliding to the sun stood for the mystical ascent of the saint's soul through the heavenly spheres. Cabrera y Quintero thus complemented the allegories available to pious Europeans with a Christianized version of a traditional Nahua glyph. The Mexica had traditionally complemented the logogram representing the name of their capital, Tenochtitlan, a nopal (cactus) on a stone, with an eagle perched on top of it to emphasize the prophetic nature of their settlement (Fig. 5.11a; Plate 12). During their migration south to the lakes of the Central Valley of Mexico, they had been told by an oracle to settle at the place where they found an eagle perched on a nopal. The glyph seems, however, to have undergone a change under Christian influence, for by the late sixteenth century, it included a snake (Fig. 5.11b).[89] The addition might have well been related to a demonological exegesis of the original glyph among circles of Nahua scribes brought up by the Franciscans in millenarian, patristic, and classical traditions. Be that as it may, Cabrera y Quintero determined that the eagle with its wings spread devouring a serpent had nothing to do with the life of St. John of the Cross. Rather, it pointed to a resemblance to the cross, which indicated that the glyph could be used as an impresa in the triumphal arch to shield the city against evil spirits (Fig. 5.11c).[90]

In 1750, at the metropolitan cathedral, the Dominican friar Antonio Claudio de Villegas (b. 1700), professor of theology and censor for the Inquisition, concluded that the same glyph was a prefiguration of the Church in New Spain. After quoting Pliny the Elder at length on eagles' habit of nesting on "ethites" ("eagle stones," common in lakes) and interpreting the appropriate prophecies and biblical passages, Villegas concluded that the Mexican Church was an eagle "nesting" on the ancient pagan temples of stone. Just as Pliny had shown in his *Natural History* that ethites enhanced the reproductive power of eagles and gave solid foundation to their nests, Villegas argued, the Mexican Church was fecund and anchored

a

b

c

FIGURE 5.11. The founding of Tenochtitlan by the Mexica. (a) A portrayal lacking Christian patristic influences. From the Codex Mendoza. Reproduced with permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Arch. Selden. A. 1, fol. 2r. (b) A portrayal revealing likely Christian patristic influences. From Diego Durán, *Atlas de la historia de las Indias y islas de tierra firme* (Mexico: Librería Antiquaria, 1963). (c) The coat of arms of the City of Mexico. The eagle with its wings unfurled was often read by Creole clerics as a Neoplatonic seal that could be deployed as a "fortification" to keep evil spirits away, because it looked like a cross. From Pedro José Márquez, *Due antichi monumenti* (Rome, 1804).

solidly in the midst of lakes.[91] Mariano Antonio de la Vega, the Jesuit dean of the College of San Pablo at Puebla, interpreted the glyph differently. In September 1752, he wrote that the eagle and the serpent stood for the archangel Michael slaying a dragon. De la Vega concluded that the Aztecs had prefigured the defeat of their own idolatrous practices in the hieroglyph. "The heavens gave [the natives of] Mexico another eagle," he reflected in convoluted prose, "as a clear symbol of the victory [of God] . . . over [their own] infernal and serpentine troops."[92] The exegesis of the symbol of Tenochtitlan that Villegas and de la Vega put forth shows that introducing the image of the snake to the eagle perched on the nopal cactus allowed the clergy of Mexico to advance a demonological interpretation of the Amerindian past.

It was the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, however, that exercised the minds of the learned seeking to assimilate Mesoamerican scripts to local colonial religious icons (Fig. 5.12). According to tradition, the Virgin had appeared several times in 1531 to a Nahua commoner, Juan Diego, on the small hill of Tepeyac. The Virgin told Juan Diego to request the archbishop to build her a chapel. The latter did not believe Juan Diego, however, who was thus twice obliged to return empty-handed to the Virgin. Finally, the Virgin ordered him to collect some flowers in his cape (*tilma*). When he visited the wary bishop for the third time, he unfolded his cape and, to everybody's surprise, the image of the Virgin appeared printed on it. According to tradition, after this miracle, the authorities built a chapel to house Juan Diego's cape and sponsored the cult of Our Lady of Guadalupe. A small chapel was built near the base of the hill Tepeyac, where an ancient Aztec goddess, Tonatzin, had long before been worshipped. At first, Franciscan missionaries, influenced by iconoclastic, Erasmian tendencies, did not promote the cult, but after the Council of Trent (1545–63), the local ecclesiastical authorities enthusiastically integrated veneration of the Virgin into Mexican devotional practice. When the Virgin successfully controlled the waters during a flood in Mexico City in 1629, the cult began to spread rapidly among Creoles. Yet it was only after 1648, when Miguel Sánchez (1594–1674) — a serious student of St. Augustine — explained the Neoplatonic meaning of the image, that the Creoles finally grasped its significance.[93]

In a sudden illumination, Sánchez realized that the description offered by St. John in chapter 12 of the Apocalypse (Rev. 12:1–9) was a prefiguration of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. St. John describes a pregnant woman crowned with stars who is threatened by a multiheaded red dragon, the devil, seeking to devour her child as soon as she gives birth to it. God, however,

FIGURE 5.12. Our Lady of Guadalupe protecting Mexico City as a "shield" against the plague. From Cayetano de Cabrera y Quintero, *El escudo de armas de México* (Mexico, 1746). Religious icons were deployed as Neoplatonic seals to keep evil spirits away; correct interpretation of them was therefore crucial. Many such icons were interpreted as Mesoamerican writing, particularly that of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which attracted much scholarly attention; intellectuals vied with one another to evoke the symbolic meaning of every detail of the image.

takes up the child to heaven, hides the woman in the desert, and sends an army of angels, headed by the archangel Michael to destroy the dragon. The parallels, according to Sánchez were obvious: The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, along with the angel supporting her, represented the defeat of the kingdom of darkness of the Aztecs. Sánchez thought that there were other prefigurations at work in the story of the miracle. The encounter of Moses with God in Sinai, for example, anticipated the encounter of the Virgin with (and her message of deliverance to) Juan Diego at Tepeyac. In fact, Sánchez thought, the image was a unique divine creation. Inasmuch as God had never painted an image himself until the day of the miracle, the portrait of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Juan Diego's cape was clearly the most important icon in Christendom, for all other religious images in the world were mere human creations.[94] Sánchez offered interpretations of every detail of the painting. The moon beneath the Virgin represented her power over the waters; the Virgin eclipsing the sun stood for the New World, whose torrid zone was temperate and inhabitable; the twelve rays of the sun surrounding her head signified Cortés and the conquistadors, who had defeated the dragon; and the stars on the Virgin's shawl were the forty-six good angels who had fought Satan's army (Sánchez used cabalistic means to calculate the number of good angels).[95] Sánchez's interpretation inaugurated a literature of exegesis that took on clear millenarian and messianic tones, a literature in which contemporary Mexicans appeared as God's new chosen people. In the imagination of Creole scholars, Mexico became the place to which the pope and the monarchy would eventually retreat after being ousted from Europe by the forces of evil.[96]

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Creole intellectuals sought to understand the "signatures" of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Since the Madonna appeared standing on the moon, and the moon had control over both the tides and the sphere of water, many thought that the Virgin had dominion over floods.[97] Every time the capital was flooded, which happened often, thousands of anguished citizens took to the streets to parade her image; to their relief, the waters always subsided.[98] The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe also acted as a "shield" during the devastating plague of 1736–37, saving hundreds.[99]

As the enthusiasm of Creoles for the historical significance of the image and its Neoplatonic protective virtues mounted, it soon became clear that the story was plagued with contradictions. The most formidable challenge facing the advocates of the historicity of the miracle was that not a single document recounting the episode dating back to 1531 could be found in the ecclesiasti-

cal archives. The clergy sought to mitigate this lack by interviewing the elderly and scouring local archives for indirect evidence that Juan Diego, for example, had truly existed. The learned also collected and investigated Amerindian sources in the hopes that indigenous codices contemporary to the events would confirm the story. Boturini, who assembled his famous collection while seeking to bolster the historical credibility of the miracle, typified this approach.

Another strategy was to claim that the image itself was the much-sought paper trail. In an introduction to a history of the miracle written in 1688 by the Jesuit Francisco Florencia, Gerónimo de Valladolid insisted that since the image was "writing printed on paper," there was no need of written testimonies of the miracle. "What need do we have of the much-missed documentary evidence," asked Valladolid rhetorically, "if we have the original scripture from the hand of God himself?" Valladolid contended the image had been "written" in a traditional Mesoamerican script because God had sought to communicate with the natives of Mexico. He was convinced that the image was a hieroglyph "in the form and style used in the ancient past by the natives for whom [God] wrote it in the first place."[100] In their struggle to defend the historicity of the miracle, Creole scholars presented the image as God's "document" and repeatedly used aesthetic and technical analyses to prove that the cloth could have been "written" only by God.

In 1755, Miguel Cabrera (1695–1768), the most prestigious contemporary painter of New Spain, was summoned by his patron, the archbishop, along with five other artists, to pass judgment on the nature of the miraculous image. After examining the quality and artistry of the materials and after deciphering the esoteric meaning of an eight on the robe of the virgin (it signified that the image of Guadalupe was the eighth wonder of the world), Cabrera concluded that the image itself was proof enough that the miracle had in fact occurred. Inasmuch as the image was aesthetically perfect, and the cloth had lasted for two centuries without showing any sign of deterioration, Cabrera contended that God himself had indeed painted it, and that contemporary observers had therefore felt no need to document the miracle. The history of the miracle, he argued, had been written in a sacred script. "The painting [of the Virgin]," José González del Pinal, a member of the recently created chapter of canons without cathedral, the Colegiata of Guadalupe, argued in the preface of Cabrera's treatise, "manifests at once what many pages of a book would have taken to explain."[101] Cabrera himself argued that God had here employed "the language of the Indians. . . . who did not know any script other than symbolic expressions or hieroglyphs."[102] In

a sermon delivered in 1756, Juan José de Eguiara y Eguren, who in his *Bibliotheca mexicana* denied that transient foreign observers would ever be able to comprehend American realities, argued that God had spoken to Juan Diego using images, the books "that the ignorant use to instruct themselves." "The image of Guadalupe," he explained, "is a book written in flowery, golden letters." The Virgin, Eguiara y Eguren continued, "wise, prudent and loving, [sought to accommodate herself] to the style of the country and of the Mexicans, and because the natives had used paintings, symbols and hieroglyphs, instead of letters, she likewise . . . painted her prodigious image [in] hieroglyphs and symbols."[103]

Like many other baroque Creole scholars who had previously sought to interpret the painting, Borunda set out to read the image as a Mesoamerican hieroglyph. But this time, he brought to bear his new critical techniques. Borunda argued, for example, that the crescent underneath the Virgin was the logogram of "moon," *meitzli* in Borunda's reconstituted original Nahuatl. Borunda then broke *meitzli* down into its alleged root components, *itzli* ("cutting edge") and *metl* ("maguey plant"), a somewhat veiled allusion to the use of the maguey as whip. The word *meitzli*, he argued, was an allegory for punishment, particularly the geological catastrophe with which God had punished the Giants. The grayish color of the moon in the painting, on the other hand, was a reference to the eclipse that had darkened the earth after the death of Christ. According to Borunda, the slightly darkened crescent on which the Madonna stood in the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe was a logogram-cum-allegory representing the geological catastrophe that occurred in Mexico the day Christ died.[104]

By means of such philological and allegorical techniques, Borunda reached conclusions that were to startle the public of the capital when the Dominican Mier later delivered them. Borunda argued, for example, that the robe of the Virgin that folded on top of the moon stood for a folded scroll similar to those on which the oriental patriarchs of the Christian Church had written the Bible.[105] Moreover, the eight on the robe (interpreted before as a sign indicating that the image was the eighth wonder of the world) was a Syrian-Chaldean letter, similar also to those used by the oriental patriarchs of the Church.[106] In light of this new evidence, Borunda concluded that the traditional narrative of the miracle was wrong. The Madonna had never appeared to Juan Diego, and her image had never been printed on the Indian's cape. Rather, St. Thomas had left the image in Mexico after having established the Oriental Church. The image was not a preternatural creation by God the scribe, he argued; it was merely a human document penned by St.

Thomas to teach the mysteries of Christianity to the Amerindians. Again, Borunda deployed typical baroque religious scholarship to advance modern views and to undermine the authority of tradition.

Paradoxically, Borunda deployed his new methodology on the image to defend the cult against the increasing number of skeptical attacks. The narrative of the miracle of Our Lady of Guadalupe had long been under close scrutiny by the "insolent criticism" of a few enlightened skeptics.[107] Critics pointed to many inconsistencies in the story, not least among them being that the cape on which the image was painted did not correspond in size or shape to the capes used by natives at the time of the Conquest. To make things worse, the Creole physician José Ignacio Bartolache (1739–1790), in a work published posthumously by his wife in 1790, unintentionally showed through microscopic and chemical analyses that the material of the cloth was not maguey, the plant used by commoners to make their capes, but *iczotl*, which was used exclusively by Aztec nobles. The findings of Bartolache thus undercut the account that the Virgin had appeared to an Amerindian commoner.[108] Borunda's solution to the dilemma was both elegant and bold: St. Thomas had brought the printed cape with him when he came from the Orient, he argued.

As we have seen, after Mier delivered the sermon inspired by Borunda, the religious authorities brought charges against both Mier and Borunda. The prosecution, led by the Creole cleric José Fernández de Uribe (1741?–1796), exonerated Borunda on grounds of insanity. Mier, however, was condemned to exile and prison in Spain.[109] Although the prosecutors argued that even the most outrageous scholarship was acceptable if it was pursued in silence, they recommended that Borunda's manuscripts be locked up. Mier's sermon had, however, caused a crisis among the pious, challenging a tradition that had already reached the status of "apostolic."[110] It was heretical and thus punishable.

Trial documents show that the prosecution charged Borunda with lack of patriotism, inasmuch as he had dismissed all previous Spanish American and native historiography, much like the "erudite but delirious" Buffon and de Pauw. Moreover, the prosecution claimed, Borunda had invented a special geological catastrophe for America that did nothing but confirm Buffon's and de Pauw's most negative views of the continent.[111] There is some evidence that León y Gama participated in the trial against Borunda. In an unfinished manuscript on the history of the cult of Our Lady of Guadalupe, León y Gama echoed the views of the prosecutor Uribe and denounced the revisionist history of Bartolache and Borunda as heretical.[112]

Borunda's scholarship has been unfairly haunted by the stigma of incoherence. His methodology and historiographical vision were part of the larger cultural tradition of the Spanish American Baroque, a world in which religious images were both read as hieroglyphs and interpreted as Neoplatonic seals with magical virtues. The world of Borunda coexisted uncomfortably with that of León y Gama and Alzate y Ramírez in late-eighteenth-century New Spain. The turmoil created by Borunda's radical historio-graphical conclusion opens a window on the aggressive modernity of the Spanish American Baroque and the profoundly conservative nature of the Spanish American Enlightenment. Unlike most other Creole historians, Borunda dismissed all previous historiography, including that of the sixteenth-century Amerindian interpreters. The enlightened León y Gama, on the other hand, cast Borunda as a heretic when the latter threatened to tarnish Mexico's most cherished religious traditions. It is perhaps characteristic of the Spanish American Enlightenment that Borunda, the baroque scholar, was ultimately portrayed as a follower of the northwestern European authors who offended national pride with their bold new historical speculation about the land and peoples of the New World. Borunda, his critics maintained, built on the conclusions reached, and the methodologies used, by conjectural historians such as Buffon and de Pauw. Like them, Borunda dismissed the value of *all* sixteenth-century colonial sources and contended that the New World had a separate geological history. As Borunda's case makes clear, the dominant preoccupation of the Spanish American Enlightenment was maintaining control over the creation and validation of historical and philosophical knowledge about the New World. At least in Mexico, criticism ended when threats to political stability began.

José Antonio Maravall has characterized baroque culture as the product of exuberant yet conservative imaginations.[113] The brief survey of the literature on the devotion of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe presented here would seem to prove Maravall right. But, can we really characterize baroque culture in Spanish America as "conservative," the manifestation of a traditional spirit? Borunda's fanciful etymologies that undercut centuries of accumulated learning on historiography and devotional practices prove otherwise. The literature about devotional practices reviewed here shows that with the stroke of a pen and a few daring interpretations of words and images, every writer advanced bold new theories that undermined tradition. The epistemology and methodologies of the Baroque sought to unsettle tradition but failed to study the Amerindian past. With the exception of Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora, who devoted much energy to the elucidation of Meso-

american calendars and chronologies, the seventeenth-century clergy had better things to do. In the intervening years between the publication of Torquemada's *Monarchía indiana* (1615) and Eguiara y Eguren's *Bibliotheca mexicana* (1756), the clerical elites of New Spain are remarkable for their silence concerning the study of the Amerindian past. Why? Kenneth Mills and William Taylor have recently suggested that baroque religiosity implied "something of an escape from history." Through a comparative study of altarpieces, Mills and Taylor have argued that sixteenth-century altars in Mexico had historical narratives as their organizing principle (paintings of Christ and statues of Church fathers and saints that point to intellectual and institutional genealogies), whereas seventeenth-century altars did away with history as they sought to dazzle and engage the emotions rather than the intellect.[114] Whether the seventeenth-century silence on Amerindian history is part of the Spanish American Baroque's escape from history is something that can only be elucidated by further research. What is clear, however, is that as soon as scholars such as Borunda began to apply baroque epistemologies to the study of the Mesoamerican past in the second half of the eighteenth century, radically new narratives began to surface.

The Ruins of Palenque

The antiquarian controversy surrounding the discovery of the Mayan ruins of Palenque provides a case study of the paradoxical encounter of the Baroque and Enlightenment in Spanish America. Ramón Ordóñez y Aguiar (d. ca. 1840) was the engine behind the European discovery of Palenque. Ordóñez y Aguiar's exaggerated claims about Palenque's significance for universal history and biblical chronology were largely responsible for an early flurry of official Spanish expeditions. But given the allegorical methods in his historiography, and the fact that the expeditions failed to find evidence for Ordóñez y Aguiar's claims, the Spanish authorities lost interest in the ruins. I study the debate over the significance of Palenque between the official responsible for the expeditions, the president of the high court of Guatemala, the magistrate José Estachería, and Ordóñez y Aguiar. It pitted a historiographical paradigm informed by philosophical and conjectural reconstructions of the past against the scholarship of the Baroque.

There is another controversy in the history of the European discovery of Palenque that merits our attention. Ordóñez y Aguiar confronted not only Estachería but also Pablo Félix Cabrera, an Italian resident in Guatemala. Cabrera and Ordóñez y Aguiar were members of an academy of literati in

Guatemala City devoted to the study of Palenque and Mayan texts. Although the acknowledged leader of the academy was Ordóñez y Aguiar, Cabrera departed slightly from the teachings of the master. The embattled Creole priest deployed the discourse of patriotic epistemology to crush and discredit the knowledge and techniques of the Italian. The bitter struggle between Cabrera and Ordóñez y Aguiar demonstrates that patriotic epistemology was an all-pervasive discourse that in the colonies cut across cultural divides.

Although much has been written on the discovery of Palenque, little is known of the world of ideas and the culture that made the discoveries possible. The reason for this historiographical vacuum has partly to do with the difficulty involved in understanding unfamiliar mental landscapes. Paz Cabello Carro, for example, has recently reproduced a cache of primary sources on the discovery in an anachronistic demonstration of the "modernity" of Spanish culture, using as evidence the Spanish authorities' commitment to the "archeological" study of Palenque in Chiapas and to that of Pompeii and Herculaneum near Naples. The historiographical vacuum also stems from the difficulty of getting at the relevant sources, which are housed in Berkeley, Paris, Chicago, New Orleans, Madrid, Seville, London, Guatemala City, and Mexico City.[115] This widely scattered distribution has not only contributed to keeping the wealth of eighteenth-century Spanish American intellectual debates hidden but also exemplifies the fate of the great collections of indigenous sources put together by most eighteenth-century Spanish American antiquarians. By mid nineteenth century, they had begun to be exported from the region.

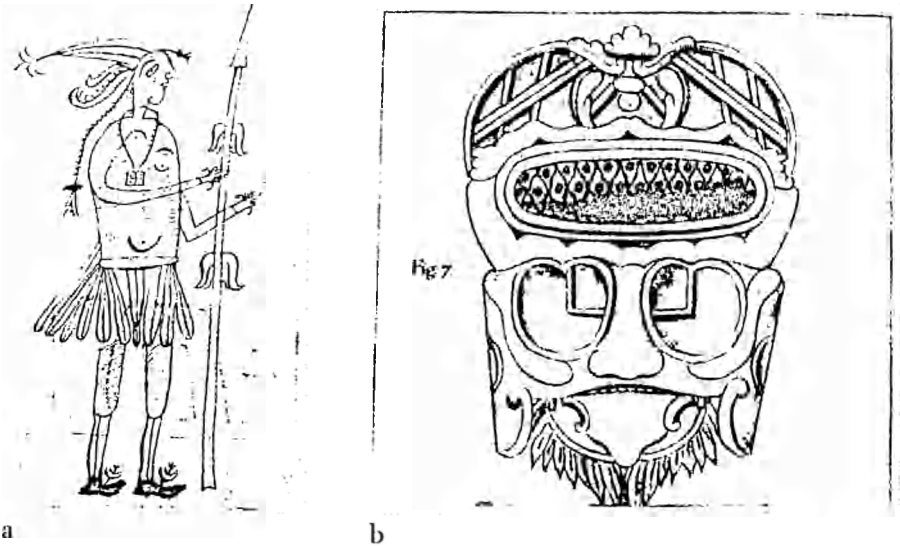
The Parish Priest and the Governor

In late 1784, José Ordóñez y Aguiar, brother of Ramón and vicar of a parish in Chamula, went to Guatemala City to visit his friend the Dominican provincial Tomás Luis de la Roca. Roca considered that the news brought by his friend had to be relayed to the president of the Audiencia of Guatemala, the magistrate José Estachería. When Estachería welcomed Roca and the vicar, he was left speechless, for Ordóñez y Aguiar had information regarding the discovery of an ancient city on the eastern slopes of the province of Chiapas that might rewrite the history of the Western Hemisphere. Drawing on information conveyed by his brother Ramón, a secular priest then residing in Ciudad Real, the capital of Chiapas, José maintained that there was a city in Chiapas that had once been a hub of a global economy linking exiled Romans, Hittites, and Carthaginians in America to the Old World. The city

had once presided over vast gold mines, endless supplies of spices, and a network of canals and ports. All evidence indicated that the city was Solomon's legendary Ophir and that it held the key to the origins of the Amerindians, as well as to many ancient texts, including the Bible. Ramón, who never visited the ruins himself, had long sought to attract the attention of the authorities in Chiapas. He partially succeeded, and a couple of local functionaries in Ciudad Real, Fernando Gómez de Andrade and Esteban Gutiérrez, visited the ruins in 1773, but they made little of them. This time, however, the powerful Estachería was willing to invest considerable resources in the study of Palenque.[116]

Estachería immediately ordered the functionary closest to the ruins, José Antonio Calderón, alcalde of the hamlet of Palenque, to quickly survey the "fragments" of this "most populous city" and to interview the neighboring natives on the traditions surrounding the ruins. In a letter dated November 1784, Estachería urged Calderón to act swiftly. Much was riding on compliance with the order, Estachería argued, because interpretation of the monuments "could shed light on the annals of ancient and modern history "and the discovery had the potential to bring untold honor to the Spanish nation.[117]

Whether the lowly bureaucrat was moved by the patriotic rhetoric of the powerful Estachería we do not know, but it took Calderón only two weeks to fulfill the order, a record of sorts in the labyrinthine world of the Spanish American colonial bureaucracy. The report of the expedition must have confirmed to Estachería that the Spanish nation was about to reap the glory of introducing the world to a momentous discovery, for Calderón described a city with great palaces, arched hallways, and multistory towers and with sprawling neighborhoods that extended for miles. After three days of conducting interviews in the rain and of opening trails in the jungle, Calderón declared that the ruins had once been the site of a great court that ruled over the entire province of Tabasco. Although the natives refused to tell him anything, inscriptions in the city palace, he argued, indicated the probable Roman origins of its first inhabitants, for a figure in one stucco relief wore shoes adorned with crescents similar to a motif used by the Roman elites as described by Plutarch (Fig. 5.13a). Calderón also suggested that the inhabitants might have been Spaniards who fled immediately after the Moorish invasion of the Iberian Peninsula or even ancient Carthaginians. In closing his report, Calderón reminded Estachería of his efficiency in the past in putting down rebellions by brutish Amerindians in the region. Clearly, he saw no contradiction between his glamorous portrayal of the past and his efforts to discipline the wretched Amerindians of the present.[118]



a b

c

FIGURE 5.13. Images used to argue the Roman origins of the original inhabitants of Palenque, drawn by Spanish expeditions sent to study the ruins in the 1780s: (a) Palenquians wearing "Roman" shoes adorned with crescents, according to José Antonio Calderón; (b) Jupiter, according to Antonio del Río; (c) Pegasus, according to del Río. From Paz Cabello Carro, *Política investigadora de la época de Carlos III en el área maya* (Ediciones de la Torre, Madrid, 1992).

Having obtained swift independent confirmation of Ordóñez y Aguiar's claim, Estachería was now almost ready to inform the authorities in Spain. However, he first sent an expeditionary party led by one of the most competent functionaries in the land, Antonio Bernasconi, member of a leading Italian family of architects. When the provincial authorities decided to leave Antigua after a devastating earthquake in 1773, they hired Bernasconi to build Guatemala City, the new capital, on neoclassical principles. Among other things, Bernasconi designed the cathedral, the central plaza, and the equestrian statute of Charles III in the new capital.[119] The choice of the eminent architect to lead the expedition shows that Estachería attached great importance to the discovery. Moreover, he personally assumed the task of drawing up the research program for the expedition.

Antonio Bernasconi's Expedition to Palenque

Estachería asked Bernasconi to focus attention on four distinct areas. The first was to collect iconographic information (including making casts of carved boulders) to help determine the antiquity of the original inhabitants by comparative means. Bernasconi was therefore prompted to study the architectural orders of Palenque with the ancient classical authors in mind. Estachería's second request of Bernasconi was to identify the nature of the economy that had supported the city. The Italian architect was asked to find buildings used by the Amerindians to store treasure, not food, for only a city with metal currency and a mint could be considered civilized. As part of the study of the past political economy of the city, Bernasconi was also asked to scour the land for traces of paved roads, for no great city in the rain forest could have thrived with only muddy trails. By the same token, Estachería requested Bernasconi to explore the rivers nearby to see whether they were navigable, and whether ports could be found on their shores. In the third guideline, Estachería ordered Bernasconi to identify the reasons that had led to the destruction of the city. Bernasconi was to look for caches of iron weapons that could indicate a great invasion by an armed force. Likewise, the Italian was asked to study the multistory tower of Palenque carefully. Should he find walled-up windows in the tower (as Calderón's report had suggested), it would be an indication that the locals had resisted an invasion. Traces of volcanic eruptions, on the other hand, might indicate that the city had come to a more violent end. Estachería prompted Bernasconi to dig into the mounds covered by the jungle to look for lava. In the fourth and final guideline, Estachería asked Bernasconi to come up with a detailed scale map of the

city, its buildings (baths, temple, jails, treasuries, and so forth), and the surrounding ditches and walls. Calderón had found a large round stone on the shore of the river dividing the city, and Estachería asked Bernasconi to determine whether it had simply been a millstone or was part of something more elaborate. He also asked Bernasconi to report on whether the foundations of the buildings in Palenque were adequate to their volume and weight, for only a civilized people would have known how to calculate this.[120]

When Bernasconi turned in the results of his survey in mid June, after spending some three months in the field, Estachería felt he had been misled by Ordóñez y Aguiar and Calderón. Claims that Palenque was the biblical Ophir and that the city might have once housed communities of hardy Romans and entrepreneurial Carthaginians were not borne out by the testimony of the more credible Bernasconi.[121] The Italian architect found the ruins of some twenty-two houses within a radius of some three miles (five miles to the west), indicating that the city had indeed been a sprawling community. Moreover, Bernasconi reported that the foundations of most extant buildings, particularly those of the tower and the palace, were sturdy; that the subterranean chambers of the palace had domes; and that there were arches to be found in an aqueduct, two stone bridges, and the surrounding houses. Such evidence of civilized existence, however, contrasted with the absence of most of the things Estachería had expected would be found in a great commercial hub. Bernasconi reported that he had failed to find paved roads in and out the city; treasury chambers in the palace; nearby ports for seaworthy vessels (the closest port was some twenty miles away, due north on the lake of Catazaja, which in turn drained into the sea on the coast of Campeche, and was only good for canoes with carrying capacities of up to about five hundred pounds); metal currency and gold mines (the area was only rich in cacao, vanilla, and dyes); complex machinery (the stone by the river described by Calderón had never been part of a mill, let alone part of some other more sophisticated mechanical device); traces of sudden destruction (there were no volcanic ashes in the mounds and no caches of iron weapons either; nor there were any fortifications in and around the city); and an orderly layout for the distribution of houses (there were no streets). Finally, an analysis of the collected iconography suggested that the inhabitants had been Amerindians.[122]

Estachería shared the mind-set of the enlightened European conjectural historians of the period. The research program he drew up for Bernasconi clearly derived from contemporary social science. For Estachería, a great civ-

ilization emerged only if certain conditions were met. Since Palenque did not satisfy most of the criteria associated with being a "commercial society," the pinnacle of progress, he simply wrote it off. Finally, Estachería privileged the testimony of Bernasconi, a learned Italian, over that of Calderón, a lowly local bureaucrat. Calderón's allegations seemed like exaggerations when contrasted with the skeptical tone of Bernasconi. Estachería would have no more of the ruins.

Estachería's conclusions and Calderón's and Bernasconi's reports reached Madrid in March 1786 and were sent to the Royal Chronicler of the Indies, Juan Bautista Muñoz, for review. Muñoz praised Estachería for his efforts and agreed with the magistrate's conclusions. The city was ancient but had been built by Amerindians who, unlike their contemporaries (or those at the time of the Conquest), had been somewhat civilized and knowledgeable of architecture. Muñoz, however, thought that more could be done to investigate the ruins. They clearly showed that the sixteenth-century Spanish witnesses had been accurate in their reports of urban life in Mesoamerica. In addition, the ruins also seemed to contain material evidence that contradicted traditional accounts of the origins of civilized life in Mesoamerica, for the legendary Toltecs, supposedly the mainspring of ancient civilized life in Mesoamerica, had left remains that did not correspond to those found in Palenque. Muñoz sifted through the reports of Calderón and Bernasconi identifying passages that clashed with what was known about Toltec, Mexica, and Inca architecture. Calderón and Bernasconi had described a spiral staircase in the tower and "windows" in the palace and surrounding houses. They had also made references to baked bricks and clays and some type of cement, as well as to heraldic seals, including one with a fleur-de-lys at the entrance to the subterranean chambers of the palace. But the most surprising reference in the reports, Muñoz argued, had been to the existence of arches and domes. Bernasconi had described the arches in the subterranean chambers as "Gothic." Were there truly spiral staircases, arches, windows, cement, bricks, and heraldic seals in Palenque as Calderón and Bernasconi contended? Muñoz recommended another expedition to check these facts. He also suggested that the expedition collect samples of building materials to be sent to Spain. From the answers to these questions, Muñoz argued, much could be learned about the internal history of Mesoamerica, but not about the history of the world, "as the enthusiasm of the first reports [mistakenly suggested]."[123] Muñoz's patron, the minister of the Indies, José de Gálvez, immediately ordered the skeptical Estachería to put together a third expedition.

Antonio del Río's Expedition to Palenque

After delaying for months, Estachería reluctantly complied with Gálvez's instructions, assigning the leadership of the expedition to Captain Antonio del Río (1745–1789?), an artilleryman, whose ability to carry out a successful mission was doubted by both Estachería and del Río himself.[124] The latter in any case set out with only a handful of queries posed by Muñoz and no master plan to guide his research.

Del Río arrived in early May and spent a month clearing the jungle with a team of Amerindians summoned by the local authorities. In the two weeks left to him, he then conducted "archeological" digs, thinking that jewelry and coins buried in the ground might throw some light on the place. In the course of his search, he knocked down every conceivable kind of structure, including ramparts, walls, niches, ceilings, floors, doors, and graves in the tower, houses, palace, and temples. After causing such havoc, he concluded that some walls were in fact made of "the hardest mix of plaster and small stones" (*cal y canto*).[125] To make sure that Muñoz got a good sampling of the stucco of wall and pillar ornaments, he tore heads, limbs, and hieroglyphs off several reliefs.[126] To his chagrin, he had to stop after opening a hole some eight feet deep in one of the walls of the tower, because he realized that the building might be coming apart, but he informed Muñoz that the hole revealed that the space between the central staircase of the tower and the outside wall was filled with sand and small stones.[127] Muñoz need not content himself merely with samples of stucco, stone, and clay, del Río noted. The buildings could easily and cheaply be taken apart and shipped to Spain, to the nation's lasting glory.[128]

Along this exquisitely detailed narrative of the damage he had done to Palenque, del Río included speculations as to the origins of the ancient inhabitants. Noting that a friend of his in the city of Merida knew of similar ruins in Yucatan that had been abandoned long before the Spaniards arrived, del Río concluded that Palenque belonged to a distinct architectural regional style. The tower supported the hypothesis that the place had been a Roman colony, he said, because the natives could have not built it on their own.[129] There was also some iconographic resemblance between images in the wall reliefs of the palace and Roman portraits of Jupiter and Pegasus (Figs. 5.13b and c).[130] Moreover, Palenque had been established in a bucolic landscape, rich in fruits and exotic fauna and flora but with no iron and metals nearby, a place conducive to a "quiet life, of more solid happiness than that available today in the concentrated luxury of the largest and most cultivated cen-

ters."[131] Del Río's Romans were republicans. Citing a 1638 manuscript by the Dominican Jacinto Garrido that concluded based on etymology that the Amerindians were descended from parties of stranded navigators of different European nations, and calling attention to the many wall reliefs in the palace sporting "Greek crosses," De Río also suggested that the Amerindians of Palenque might have once received Greek or even Phoenician visitors.[132]

In July 1788, thirteen months after del Río's return, Estachería sent five crates containing the spoils of his expedition to Spain, along with a report, which did not, however, answer any of Muñoz's questions about arches, vaults, spiral staircases, windows, and heraldic seals.[133] It is revealing that the events surrounding the discovery of Palenque have been firmly linked to the name of del Río to the complete exclusion of everything and everyone else. Estachería's finely reasoned program, Bernasconi's competent fieldwork, and Calderón's first survey were all superseded by del Río's report, a piece of bureaucratic incompetence. In 1822, in the first published edition of del Río's report, Henry Berthoud blamed the failure to make such a wonderful document public on the Spanish character. The failing, he argued, was demonstrative of "[the Spanish] peculiar apathy . . . as far relates to any vestiges of antiquity." In the same preface, Berthoud attributed the discovery of Palenque to del Río.[134]

After receiving del Río's report, the Spanish authorities decided to let the matter rest until some twenty years later, when they sent Guillermo Dupaix (ca. 1750–ca. 1818), a French officer in the Spanish army, to Palenque as part of a larger official study of extant Mesoamerican ruins. In the meantime, however. Ramón Ordóñez y Aguiar was not about to give up. Bernasconi's report notwithstanding, Ordóñez y Aguiar continued to press Estachería, this time with an indigenous source that allegedly identified Palenque as an ancient multinational city. Estachería summarily dismissed the document as incoherent and untrustworthy.[135] To escape "terrible persecution," Ordóñez y Aguiar left Ciudad Real (Chiapas) in 1788 and moved to Guatemala City, where he continued his philological studies and his campaign to put Palenque on the map.[136] It was here that he met Pablo Félix Cabrera, beginning a new chapter in the debate over Palenque's significance.

In Guatemala City, the spurned Ordóñez y Aguiar surrounded himself with a small circle of disciples. Along with José Miguel de San Juan, leader of the city council (*regidor*) and of the guild of merchants, and Pablo Félix Cabrera, Ordóñez y Aguiar created an "academy" that met periodically to discuss his philological findings. In 1792, through the powerful San Juan, Ordóñez y Aguiar sought unsuccessfully to gain access directly to the king. In

the process, he made public for the first time a study of the ruins of Palenque in light of a colonial-era Tzeltal Maya document known as the Provanza de Votán, which Ordóñez y Aguiar held told of the origin of the founders of the city in detail. The comity of the Guatemala City academy was shattered in 1794, however, when Cabrera drew on Ordóñez y Aguiar's ideas without proper acknowledgment in a study of an ancient Mayan medal dedicated to the king. Angered, Ordóñez y Aguiar began to spread rumors of plagiarism, leading Cabrera to bring criminal libel charges against him. As part of the ensuing trial, Ordóñez y Aguiar produced a second manuscript, this time an allegorical, etymological study of the Popol Vuh, in which he sought to prove that this "Indian bible" was a modified version of the Pentateuch.

In the following pages, I study the activities of the Guatemala City academy and the works of Cabrera and Ordóñez y Aguiar. The theories spawned at the academy and the manuscripts of Cabrera and Ordóñez y Aguiar are windows on the baroque world of Spanish America. Moreover, the debate between the two sheds light on the spread and cultural significance of the discourse of patriotic epistemology. To discredit his Italian rival, Ordóñez y Aguiar depicted Cabrera as an epistemologically naive foreigner whose knowledge of Native American languages was limited.

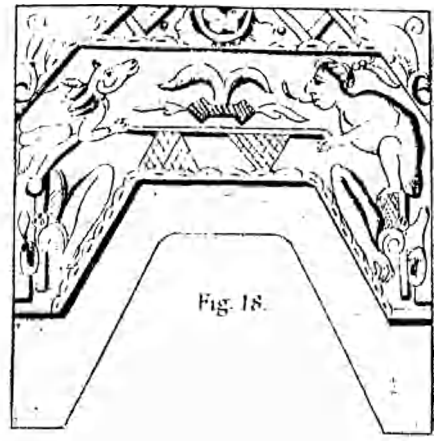
Interpreting Palenque

Sometime in November 1792, the three members of the Guatemala City academy began to put together a dossier on the significance of the discovery of Palenque to be sent to Spain. The *regidor* José Miguel de San Juan may have told the other two academicians that an acquaintance of his in Madrid could get the king himself to listen. For this purpose, Ordóñez y Aguiar dusted off a manuscript that he had written for Archbishop Cayetano Monroy y Franco, and Cabrera wrote a dissertation on a Mayan medal that had been delivered to the academy by two officers of the mint. Finally, San Juan attached to the dossier a cover letter describing the activities of the academy and summarizing the insights of Cabrera and Ordóñez y Aguiar.

In the document originally intended for the eyes of Archbishop Monroy y Franco, Ordóñez y Aguiar interpreted the significance of the ruins of Palenque using del Río's report.[137] After chastising del Río for the quick manner in which he had conducted the survey and criticizing him for having suggested that the Romans, Greeks, or Phoenicians had merely been visitors, whose technical knowledge of architecture had been partially understood by the Amerindians who built the city, Ordóñez y Aguiar set out to prove that

Palenque was nothing less than the legendary Ophir, described in the Bible, to which King Solomon had once sent his fleets for gold and spices. Throughout, Ordóñez y Aguiar emphasized the many influences evident in the ruins. Moorish traces were to be found in the rings of the walls of the subterranean chambers in the shape of torch holders typical of mosques. The Moors had also left their mark in the tower, which resembled a minaret. Roman influences were to be found everywhere, particularly in the so-called palace, which Ordóñez y Aguiar contended was a Roman temple, because it was both located on top of a mound, close to the sky, and had subterranean chambers. The Romans had celebrated Jupiter in high open spaces and worshipped Pluto underground, Ordóñez y Aguiar noted, so it stood to reason that the temple was Roman. Moreover, the carved stucco over the entrance to the underground rooms, he argued, represented two Roman deities, Proserpina and Ceres (Fig. 5.14a). The Romans had also left behind an aqueduct. The Hebrews had left their signature in the size of the stones used in the buildings: huge, to signify magnificence. The palace-temple also resembled the legendary temple of Jerusalem. Finally, Ordóñez y Aguiar argued that the Egyptian influence was overwhelming, found in the use of animal shapes as script; in portrayals of Osiris (Fig. 5.14b); in crosses, which since antiquity had signified "torment"; in images of deified serpents; in the word "Tzeltal" itself (the name of the ethnic group in the Lacandon forest, where Palenque was located), which in Egyptian reportedly stood for "good spirit." And the list went on.

Having proved the multiethnic character of the place, Ordóñez y Aguiar set out to demonstrate that the city had once been a commercial entrepôt. Palenque, he argued, had been visited by great fleets that traded using metal currency. Del Río and Bernasconi had reported neither gold mines nor treasure chambers in Palenque, but Ordóñez y Aguiar simply attributed this to the mendacity of the natives. His argument was typical of the Creole literati: when the local Amerindians told him that no mines existed in the area, del Río ought to have realized that they were afraid that they would be put to work if they revealed the truth.[138] Quite apart from gold mines, there was in any case evidence of the commercial character of the city, the size of which spoke for itself. By most counts, including del Río's, Palenque was several miles long and wide. Could a city this large have survived without a brisk international exchange of commodities?[139] Ordóñez y Aguiar complained, too, that del Río had failed to mention in his report that a port on the banks of the river Usumasinta was located only three miles from the center of Palenque. The Usumasinta drained into Lake Catazaja, twenty miles to the north,



a

b

FIGURE 5.14. Images from Palenque read by Ramón Ordóñez y Aguiar as evidence that the city had once been an ancient multinational entrepôt: (a) Proserpina and Ceres; (b) Osiris. In Greco-Roman mythology, Proserpina (Persephone), personifying the change of the seasons, spends half of the year on Olympus and the other half underground in Hades. Ordóñez y Aguiar contended that the cloth stamped with three hearts held by "Osiris" was a genealogical reference to Votán III, discussed in the Tzeltal Maya document known as the Provanza de Votán. From Paz Cabello Carro, *Política investigadora de la época de Carlos III en el área maya* (Ediciones de la Torre, Madrid, 1992).

which in turn drained into the Gulf of Mexico. Moreover, the painter attached to del Río's expedition, Ricardo Almendáriz, had found an intact cache of logwood, also called *palo de campeche* (the wood of Campeche), in the port on the banks of the Usumasinta. Logwood was both the main export of the area and the source of a dye, and it was well known to any student of the Bible that Solomon's fleets had obtained a dye called *thino* from Ophir, which the great French biblical scholar Dom Augustin Calmet (1672–1757) had shown was the dye called *sesthim*, or "incorruptible tree," by Moses in the Pentateuch. This "incorruptible tree," Ordóñez y Aguiar explained, was clearly logwood from Palenque.[140]

Interpreting the Provanza de Votán

To the wealth of material corroboration found in the city itself, Ordóñez y Aguiar added his pièce de résistance, the Tzeltal Maya codex known as the Provanza de Votán, which, he contended, indisputably identified Palenque with Ophir. Now lost, and only a few pages long, this document allegedly described the mixed ethnic origins of the inhabitants of this most ancient postdiluvian city, and its rise and fall, in exquisite detail, by means of veiled references.[141] Through allegorical interpretations of Tzeltal terms, Ordóñez y Aguiar determined that the Provanza was a first-person account by one Votán III, of the nation of the Chivin, or "Snakes," telling how he had left home in search of his ancestors, whom Ordóñez y Aguiar identified as the Hittites (Heveos or Hivites), because after Babel the Hittites had left Libya, and their name in ancient Phoenician signified "snake." Ordóñez y Aguiar identified this Votán ("heart" in Tzeltal), with Osiris, also depicted in plaster images in Palenque (Fig. 5.14b). In his search for the "roots of heaven," Votán visited the Chivin four times, on trips that took him to Spain, Rome, Jerusalem, and, finally, Babel, the "root of heaven." On his way back from Babel, he went first to check the "holes of the snakes," which, according to Ordóñez y Aguiar, metaphorically stood for all the places the Hittites had colonized on the African coast. Then he visited the "thirteen snakes," or thirteen Canary Islands, which had served the Hittites as outposts in their Atlantic expansion. Votán went on to tell of the arrival of seven Tzequile families after his return home, and of how they had taught the original Snakes/Hittites manners, including the use of utensils, dishes, tablecloths, and spittoons. The Tzequile, in turn, learned about monarchical rule and religion from the Snakes, Votán teaching them to worship the "Snake."

Ordóñez y Aguiar held that these Tzequile were Carthaginians, and that

the Aztecs — known in Chiapas as "Tzequile" — were the descendants of the Tzequile-Carthaginians. In Ordóñez y Aguiar's view, the Provanza de Votán clearly proved that the first inhabitants of America had been postdiluvian descendants of Noah's son Ham, who had arrived by sea from the east, not from Asia via the Bering Strait. Palenque, the great multiethnic metropolis ruled by Votán III, Ordóñez y Aguiar concluded, had thus been both the first city in America and the Ophir of the Bible.

Pablo Félix Cabrera's 'Theatro crítico americano'

Pablo Félix Cabrera might have had very little to add to Ordóñez y Aguiar's narrative had it not been for the discovery of two medals of obscure origin that allegedly told the story of the rise and fall of Palenque. The academicians assigned Cabrera to interpret one of the medals, and Ordóñez y Aguiar generously lent the Italian his manuscript. Cabrera worked diligently, and by the time San Juan wrote to his contact in Spain, the Italian had not only interpreted the medal but was on his way to finishing a larger work, the *Theatro crítico americano*.

Theatro critico sought to present a radically new history of the origins of the Amerindians and to defend the credibility of ancient sources, including Diodorus Siculus, Plato, Strabo, Aristotle, and the Bible, whose authority Cabrera perceived as under siege by pre-Adamites and *philosophes*. The work was also a thoroughgoing critique of sixteenth-century historiography on precolonial Mesoamerica and an assault on the propensity of Spaniards not to believe their most lucid informants. Finally, the *Theatro crítico* sought to put together a panoply of methodologies, including the comparative study of medals and images, a euhemerist study of Mexica and ancient deities, and an analysis of Mesoamerican calendrics and ancient chronologies.[142]

Building on Ordóñez y Aguiar's allegorical exegesis of the Provanza de Votán, Cabrera maintained that the first inhabitants of America had been Hittites, led by Hercules Tyrius, who had arrived on Hispaniola sometime in 380 B.C.E., 1,200 years after the Hittites had colonized the coast of Africa and the Canary Islands. According to Cabrera, Votán III, the founder of Palenque, was the third in the genealogy of the Hittites in Hispaniola, so Palenque must have been settled circa 290 B.C.E. A few years after the foundation of Palenque, which Cabrera argued corresponded to the Toltec city of Amaquemecan, Votán left for the Old World. While visiting Spain and Rome, he spread the news of the existence of Hittite colonies in the New World, and a stream of Roman and Carthaginian settlers began to arrive. This migration,

Cabrera contended, had ended with the defeat of the Carthaginians by the Romans in the First Punic War, which he dated to 256 B.C.E.. The defeated Carthaginians in the Old World thereupon demanded that the settlers in New World return. A few heeded the order, but most stayed. This refusal, he asserted, spelled the end of Palenque-Amaquemecan, which by 200 B.C.E. had begun to collapse as a result of internal feuding. Fearing that Carthage would send a punitive expedition, the Hittites began to plot to expel the Carthaginians from the city, and internal struggles ensued. In the aftermath of these wars, the surviving Tzequile-Carthaginians, the Toltecs, migrated north until 175 B.C.E., when Tollan was founded.

Cabrera's radical reinterpretation of Mesoamerican history ran into two significant chronological and historiographical hurdles. First, most sources, including Torquemada and Clavijero, maintained that the Toltecs (actually, the Chichimecs) had left Amaquemecan in the year "1 Flint," that is, sometime in 596 C.E. Second, all sources agreed that the Toltecs had come from the north, not the southeast. Cabrera discounted all previous European accounts of the origins of the Toltecs, for Moctezuma Xocoyoltzin himself had told Cortés that his ancestors came from the peninsula of Yucatan. After a careful exegesis of speeches by Moctezuma found in Cortés's *Cartas de relación*, Cabrera proved to his own satisfaction that neither Cortés nor any of the Spaniards who came after him had been paying attention, for Moctezuma had clearly said that his ancestors had come from the southeast, not the north.[143] As for when the Toltecs had left Amaquemecan, Cabrera drew up calendrical tables that showed that "1 Flint" also corresponded to the year 181 B.C.E., fitting perfectly into his chronology of the fall of Palenque.[144] References in Amerindian codices to maritime voyages, he argued, alluded to crossing, not the Gulf of California, as both Torquemada and Clavijero maintained, but the Atlantic Ocean. Moreover, the codex that Gemelli Careri had published in 1700 (also known as Mapa Sigüenza), which most scholars thought referred to the southward migrations of the Mexica from North America (Fig. 2.10), was a map that recorded the Hittite colonization of the western coast of Africa circa 1,500 B.C.E.[145] All this chronological tinkering, Cabrera argued, made sense if Toltec references to the visit of the legendary Quetzalcoatl-St. Thomas were to be believed.[146]

But for Cabrera's new historiographical model to work, more than chronological tinkering was needed. Solid proof from iconography was required. The analysis of one of the images in the palace of Palenque typified Cabrera's approach (Fig. 5.15a). According to Cabrera, the image depicted a human sacrifice, the punishment that Isis meted out to Typhoon for having

killed Osiris. Drawing on an age-old euhemerist tradition, Cabrera assumed that myth of Osiris recounted the story of two brothers, one, Osiris, who had spread civilization in the Mediterranean world and America through the use of force and persuasion, and the other, Typhoon, who, enraged by jealousy, murdered and cut Osiris into pieces, which he hid or scattered. Osiris's sister and wife, Isis, did not rest until she found all the parts of Osiris's body, with the exception of the penis. In despair, Isis paid homage to her brother-husband's missing part by inaugurating a cult of the phallus and sacrificing Typhoon to the gods. According to Cabrera, the image found in the palace of Palenque summarized the myth of Osiris in all its gory detail, depicting the sacrifice of Typhoon by Isis. Typhoon appeared sitting on a sacrificial altar, beneath which lay Osiris's missing penis.[147]

There was nothing new about such freewheeling iconographic analysis. With the possible exceptions of Bernasconi and Estachería, everyone involved in the study of Palenque, from Calderón (who thought that one of the shoes in an image in a stucco relief indicated the Roman origins of the city) to del Río (who drew on images in Palenque to determine the Roman, Greek, and/or Phoenician roots of its first inhabitants) to Ordóñez y Aguiar (who found Ceres and Proserpina guarding the entrance to the subterranean chambers of the palace), had speculated wildly. The truly new element introduced by Cabrera is his analysis of a mysterious medal given to the academicians sometime in 1791 by officials of the local mint.[148]

The medal was remarkable, for according to Cabrera it succinctly narrated the rise and fall of Palenque (Fig. 5.15b). One side of the coin sported in the foreground a snake coiled around a tree. Six other trees, including one of a different kind with a bird on top of it flanked the tree. On the other side of the coin, there were also seven trees, one of them a stunted bush, and a man kneeling and about to be devoured by two monsters. Cabrera found in the images on the coin confirmation of the story of the seven Snake-Hittite and seven Tzequile families alluded to in the Provanza de Votán. The snake on one side stood for the ethnic group of the Hittites and the trees for the seven families of Snakes and Tzequiles who migrated to the New World. The tree with a bird on top of it stood for the Toltec-Tzequile group that would eventually bring Palenque down. The stunted tree, or bush, in turn, was a reference to the surviving Toltecs. The monsters devouring the man stood for the factional feuding that had engulfed Palenque in the wake of the order from Carthage for the settlers to return home.[149]

San Juan summarized the speculations of Cabrera and Ordóñez y Aguiar in two letters to his courtier friend Sesma written in December 1792 and

a

b

FIGURE 5.15. Images used by Pablo Félix Cabrera to support of his thesis that Amerindians were of Hittite-Carthaginian origin. (a) Isis sacrificing Typhoon, with Osiris's penis lying beneath the sacrificial altar. From Paz Cabello Carro, *Política investigadora de la época de Carlos III en el área maya* (Ediciones de la Torre, Madrid, 1992). (b) The "Mayan" medal given by two officers of the mint to Ramón Ordóñez y Aguiar's academy of antiquarians in Guatemala City. Cabrera contended that this medal allegorically depicted the Hittite and Carthaginian families that had founded and then destroyed Palenque. From Pablo Félix Cabrera, *Teatro crítico americano* (London, 1822).

January 1793. After characterizing Guatemala as a purgatory where he had been sent to serve, the magistrate quickly went over the key arguments of Ordóñez y Aguiar's treatise and Cabrera's study of the medal. He presented each and every insight as the product of an academy working collectively.[150]

Nothing, it seems, came of the efforts to win support in Madrid. On June 2, 1794, however, Cabrera sent the medal itself to the king of Spain, along with two copies of his *Theatro crítico*.[151] Ordóñez y Aguiar immediately began spreading the rumor that the Italian had committed plagiarism. How Ordóñez y Aguiar managed to ruin the credibility and credit of Cabrera in only twenty days will forever remain a mystery, but on June 23, 1794, Cabrera stood in front of local magistrates claiming to be bankrupt and pressing criminal charges against Ordóñez y Aguiar for libel. The Italian asked the authorities get a copy of the manuscript that Ordóñez y Aguiar, alias "Cuenca," had addressed to Archbishop Monroy y Franco to demonstrate that he had never committed plagiarism.[152]

A Biblical Exegesis of the Popol Vuh

In the course of the trial, Ordóñez y Aguiar came up with a second manuscript, a work that Cabrera himself referred to once as a labor of love, which had taken the Creole priest some thirty years to produce.[153] It was his long-awaited "Historia de la creación del mundo conforme al sistema americano," an interpretation of ancient Mesoamerican history based on analysis of the ruins of Palenque and exegesis of two Amerindian documents, the Provanza de Votán and the Popol Vuh. "Historia de la creación" was originally a manuscript in two parts, each devoted to the analysis of one of the two indigenous texts.[154] Fortunately for the historian interested in the culture of the literate Spanish American elites of the late eighteenth century, the parts that are missing (the exegesis of Provanza de Votán) can be reconstructed through documentation found elsewhere. Volume 1, which survives in its entirety, however, introduced subjects that had not previously been discussed. In it, Ordóñez y Aguiar sought to prove that the Popol Vuh, a jewel of Mayan religious and historical thought, was a distorted copy of the Pentateuch.

There are many things remarkable about Ordóñez y Aguiar's "Historia de la creación." The analysis of the Popol Vuh itself is an important window on the religious culture of late-colonial Spanish American clerical elites. Also, the debate conducted in its pages against Cabrera reveals yet another example of patriotic epistemology in action. Yet the most significant aspect of the text is that in the process of writing, Ordóñez y Aguiar preserved the only ex-

tant version in Quiché of the Popol Vuh, copied in Chichicastenango between 1701 and 1703 by the Dominican Francisco Ximénez (ca. 1666–1722). It was through his endless labor as a collector of Mayan documents and through his contact with the Dominican provincial Roca that Ordóñez y Aguiar located Ximénez's manuscripts, calling attention to their significance. It is likely that the Popol Vuh, along with many other indigenous manuscripts, would have disappeared in the absence of Ordóñez y Aguiar and other patriotic antiquarians. It was the discourse of patriotic epistemology in historiography, I argue, that was largely responsible for the preservation and survival of most extant collections of indigenous colonial codices. When anticlericalism temporarily triumphed in Guatemala in 1830 and monasteries were closed, the Popol Vuh was taken to the university library, and in the 1850s, it was spirited away to France by the abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg (1814–1874). By then, the days of Creole-clerical conspiracies to keep indigenous sources at home seem to have been long gone. Many copies of the Popol Vuh can now be found in Chicago, Paris, and San Francisco, a testimony to the antiquarian efforts of Ordóñez y Aguiar.[155]

The surviving parts of Ordóñez y Aguiar's "Historia de la creación" are difficult, often convoluted, and therefore easy to reject as the product of a feverish mind. Like Borunda, Ordóñez y Aguiar has been quickly dismissed by historians as someone "moved by a nationalist spirit but who, bogged down by a scholastic uncritical vision of the world stood in direct contradiction to the age of Enlightenment."[156] Such facile characterizations have prevented historians from *reading* the text, which although published has remained to this day largely unexplored.

Ordóñez y Aguiar's overall intention in "Historia de la creación" was to present the main historiographical insights in Cabrera's *Theatro crítico* as derivative. To this end, he rehearsed each and every one of the arguments advanced by Cabrera: that the history of Mesoamerica had been completely misunderstood by previous historians; that the first Amerindians had come from across the Atlantic; that Palenque was the first settlement in continental America, colonized by Hittites from Hispaniola; that indigenous sources like the Provanza de Votán showed that after the Hittites, waves of Tzequil-Carthaginian settlers (among others) had arrived; that the Tzequil-Carthaginians were, in fact, the Toltecs, who, in turn, had led the destruction of Palenque before moving north to central Mexico; and that the Mexica traditions regarding the origins of their Toltec ancestors had been dismissed or misunderstood by all European observers, beginning with Cortés. To this paradigm, "Historia de la creación" added the Popol Vuh.

According to Ordóñez y Aguiar, the Popol Vuh proved that Palenque had once been a great global entrepôt. Although the text showed that the religious traditions handed down from Noah to Moses had also arrived in America through the Hittites and Carthaginians, these Mosaic traditions had undergone profound changes as a result of exposure to other Old World religious forces, including Zoroastrianism and Roman paganism. The distortions, Ordóñez y Aguiar argued, had to do with the nature of the scripts in which Noah handed down his knowledge. The secret arcane knowledge preserved in "mute hieroglyphs" by Noah slowly lost its symbolic dimension through repeated translation into articulate languages and scripts.

Yet there was still a way to reconstruct the kernel of Noah's arcane knowledge, which lay buried in texts such as the Popol Vuh. Ordóñez y Aguiar found the crucial methodological procedure for his argument that the Popol Vuh was a distorted variant of the Pentateuch in translating Maya-Quiché terms into the alleged original language of the Hittites, Maya-Tzeltal. Like his contemporary Borunda, Ordóñez y Aguiar first reconstituted each Quiché word into its alleged Tzeltal original, broke the word into its constituent parts, and then read each term allegorically. Like Boturini and Vico, Ordóñez y Aguiar thought that words and hieroglyphs concealed references to key historical events.

The multiple linguistic manipulation of terms allowed Ordóñez y Aguiar to prove among many other things that entire sections in the Popol Vuh were, in fact, passages lifted from the Bible. Some passages, for example, described several attempts by deities to invent human beings. After having first created humans out of mud, after having failed to obtain from them the appropriate pious behavior, and after having destroyed them, the gods convened again to create a male body out of wood and a female one out of *sibac*. The Dominican Francisco Ximénez, who first compiled and translated the Popol Vuh, had originally rendered the Quiché term *sibac* as the name of a local plant, *espadaña*. Ordóñez y Aguiar, however, disagreed. *Sibac*, he argued, was in fact *si-bac* in Tzeltal, a composite of two words: *si* for "wood" and *bac* for "bone." *Si-bac*, Ordóñez y Aguiar concluded, showed that this time the gods had made the female, Eve, out of the "bone" of the wooden male, Adam. Like the first humans, whom the gods destroyed through a hurricane, the wooden creatures were also wiped out and transformed into monkeys by a blaze of fire. According to Ordóñez y Aguiar, this section of the Popol Vuh indicated that the natives were privy to the ideas of the Pentateuch but had distorted them as a result of contact with age-old cosmopolitan religious traditions, including that of the Pre-Adamites (which preserved the the-

sis of multiple creations) and those of Pythagoreanism and Zoroastrianism (in which the doctrine of metempsychosis considered the transmutation of humans into animals to be plausible). The reference to destruction by fire because of lack of piety, on the other hand, was garbled history. It showed that the natives had once known about the punishment visited by God on Sodom and Gomorrah for their sins.[157]

It would be tiresome to go over the numerous examples in "Historia de la creación" that reconfigured the meaning of the Popol Vuh; suffice it to say that Ordóñez y Aguiar found evidence that long sections of the Quiché text recapitulated the narrative of the fall of Lucifer.[158] Ordóñez y Aguiar also found in the Popol Vuh multiple references to the mysteries of the Gospels, indicating that the natives had been exposed not merely to the Pentateuch but to Christianity as well.[159] Throughout the "Historia de la creación," it is assumed that St. Thomas the Apostle visited America and taught the natives Christianity.

The alleged references in the Popol Vuh to two distinct historical times, that of the Hittites and Carthaginians and that of St. Thomas, allowed Ordóñez y Aguiar to introduce one of the most radical and tantalizing elements of his work, namely, a missionary proposal. According to Ordóñez y Aguiar, the Amerindians remembered both their ancient Hittite and Carthaginian ancestors and the more recent visit of St. Thomas. Inasmuch as both the Carthaginians and St. Thomas had promised to return, when the Spaniards arrived, the Amerindians did not know whether to consider them the heirs of the vengeful Carthaginians or followers of the benign St. Thomas. The Spanish settlers had failed to notice this dual tradition, however, and had therefore failed to take advantage of it, instead adopting strategies of colonization that led to catastrophe. Had the first Spaniards known that there were two separate and distinct historical traditions, one that would provoke resistance and rebellion (against the returning Carthaginians and their punishing expeditions) and one that would encourage meek accommodation (in support of the returning missionaries of St. Thomas), the conquistadors and friars would have presented themselves as the heirs of St. Thomas. The conversion of the continent could have been characterized by the willing and sweeping rational acceptance of the Gospels.[160] Such calls for missionary accommodation and tolerance, however, jarred with other passages by Ordóñez y Aguiar justifying not only the destruction of all idols but also outright religious persecution.[161]

For all the novelty of his approach to age-old missionary controversies, the central thrust of Ordóñez y Aguiar lay somewhere else. "Historia de la

creación" was a treatise that sought to highlight the serious interpretative blunders of sixteenth-century Spanish and Amerindian historians. According to the Creole cleric, prior historians, including sixteenth-century Amerindian interpreters, had failed, in the first place, to identify the original language of the continent, namely, Maya-Tzeltal, which had ancient roots presumably in Phoenician, the language of the Hittites. Furthermore, they had failed to comprehend the symbolic allegorical references stored in the native languages. Like his contemporary Borunda, Ordóñez y Aguiar argued that those Amerindians who had held the key to the metaphors locked in the original terms had disappeared with the Conquest. Colonial Amerindians were ignorant and thus oblivious of the meaning of their historical traditions.[162]

According to Ordóñez y Aguiar, only a handful of Spanish American authors had glimpsed beneath the veil of allegories stored in the indigenous languages, including Francisco Ximénez, the Dominican who had compiled and translated the Popol Vuh. But Ordóñez y Aguiar thought that not even the learned Ximénez had been able to grasp the ultimate significance of the indigenous sources, because Ximénez failed to understand that Quiché terms had first to be translated into Maya-Tzeltal.[163]

But for all the criticisms he leveled against incompetent early colonial chroniclers and plebeian contemporary Amerindians, Ordóñez y Aguiar reserved his harshest comments for foreigners such as Cabrera. Perhaps simply because he was, like Cabrera, an Italian, Ordóñez y Aguiar piled scorn on Lorenzo Boturini, whose method he characterized as undisciplined speculation that had ultimately led to the utter corruption of historical facts. Ordóñez y Aguiar used Boturini to exemplify the perils of an imagination gone astray, the same imagination that had led Amerindians to distort the Pentateuch beyond recognition.[164] An upstart with limited linguistic credentials, Boturini had relied on commoners, rather than Amerindian aristocrats, for an understanding of local historical traditions.[165] Foreigners like Cabrera and Boturini traded in abstractions and lacked a practical knowledge of the natives. The Italians' ignorance was revealed in their condemnation of the bishop of Chiapas, Francisco Núñez de la Vega (1632–1706), for burning twenty ancient idols representing figures from the Mayan calendar after a pastoral visit to Soconusco in 1691. Had they been aware that the great Mayan-Tzeltal rebellion of 1713, which came within an inch of massacring or expelling all the Spaniards in Chiapas, might have been averted had the clergy taken away the Amerindians' idols, Cabrera and Boturini would have realized that Núñez de la Vega had been right to act as he did. It was this inability of the Italians to weigh the actions of missionaries such Núñez de la

Vega in the context of local developments that reflected their ignorance and misunderstanding of the real Amerindians.[166] There is much evidence that the "Historia de la creación" was intended to expose the naiveté and epistemological inability of foreigners ever to understand the Americas.[167]

Cabrera does not seem to have replied to Ordóñez y Aguiar's tirade. In November 1796, however, Ordóñez y Aguiar complained bitterly that Cabrera was seeking to hurt his reputation and credibility by raising doubts about his social and racial origins. He denied that he was a mestizo bastard who had fabricated a name to hide his lowly origins and replied in kind: according to documents he had unearthed in the archives, Cabrera was a swindler who had been expelled twice from the viceroyalty of Mexico. Worse, he was a lowly Italian commoner who hid his origins under a false Hispanic name and the title of "Don."[168]

The debates sparked by the discovery of Palenque captured in a nutshell the tensions and paradoxes of a colonial culture poised between Europe and the patriotic aspirations of its own disenfranchised literary elites. Estachería and Ordóñez y Aguiar came from two separate worlds, which failed to communicate. The president of the high court of Guatemala partook of the ideas and methodologies of the European Enlightenment, which privileged material evidence over literary sources. He interpreted the ruins of Palenque in the same way that the likes of William Robertson and the count of Campomanes would have done. A set of expectations about the behavior of "commercial" societies organized the research program he had Bernasconi pursue, but when he found that Palenque did not fit this mold, Estachería abandoned any further study of the ruins, Antonio del Río's expedition notwithstanding. Ordóñez y Aguiar, on the other hand, privileged philology and the study of indigenous literary sources. But unlike León y Gama and the Jesuits in Italian exile, Ordóñez y Aguiar dismissed all previous historiography entirely. As aggressively modern as Borunda, he insisted that Amerindian history was recorded in veiled verbal allegories that no one, native interpreters included, had correctly deciphered since the Conquest. His tortuous and painstaking etymological analyses assumed great familiarity with native languages, and he indulged in grandiose speculations about the history of Mesoamerican linguistic affiliations.

Ordóñez y Aguiar's portrayal of foreigners in general—and Boturini and Cabrera in particular—as epistemologically naive was grounded in his allegedly intimate knowledge, as a Mesoamerican savant himself, of Amerindian languages. In their efforts to rewrite the history of the New World on

principles other than those offered by the new conjectural historians of northwestern Europe, he and other Creole scholars of the various schools of thought described in this book found common cultural ground in such patriotic epistemology.

Ordóñez y Aguiar's epistemological and methodological world belonged, like Borunda's, to the culture of the Baroque. Their work was characterized by hairsplitting etymologies and allegorical interpretations of images and words. These are mental resources that scholars have readily associated with early modern attempts to bolster authority and tradition in a world threatened by rapid economic and political change. As a new breed of radical skeptics set out to undermine the Bible, the baroque clergy plunged into a world of allegorical exegeses, searching for certainty and relief. In Spanish America, it seems, these techniques did not serve the cause of tradition; rather, scholars like Borunda and Ordóñez y Aguiar used the allegorical method to question centuries of accumulated learning. True, Borunda and Ordóñez y Aguiar applied this baroque method to Mesoamerican sources to bolster the authority of the Bible, whose chronologies and accounts found confirmation, they believed, in Amerindian documents. Yet Borunda and Ordóñez y Aguiar proved remarkably daring when, with reckless modernity, they brushed aside all traditional colonial historiography. Whether their accounts were wrong is beside the point. It is their willingness to question authority that should preoccupy us. The intellectual and cultural histories of colonial Spanish America have more often than not been captured in shibboleths. Perhaps a second look at the radical modernity of the Spanish American Baroque could in the same critical spirit of the patriotic epistemologists reviewed in this book begin decentering the Euro- and Anglocentric models that dominate the field.

Ordóñez y Aguiar continued in his crusade to make Palenque known to the world. In 1808, he resurfaced as an informant to Guillermo Dupaix, a French-born officer in the Spanish army who between 1805 to 1808 conducted a survey of antiquities in the territory of New Spain, including Palenque. When he visited Ciudad Real, Dupaix was conducted to the cathedral chapter to talk to Ordóñez y Aguiar, who showed him his cabinet of antiquities and the copper medal that Cabrera had once sought to interpret. Guided by Ordóñez y Aguiar, Dupaix included the medal in his survey, agreeing that it told the story of the migration and settlement of "a nation."[169] The spirit of Ordóñez y Aguiar hovers over all the descriptions of the images and monuments of Palenque that Dupaix later offered.[170] Dupaix's expedi-

tion ended abruptly, however, when the citizens of Ciudad Real, led by representatives of their leading corporations (including, in all likelihood, Ordóñez y Aguiar and the other members of the cathedral chapter), chased the Frenchman away after news arrived in 1808 that Napoleon had invaded Spain.[171]

145. Ibid., 1: 339–40 (4.9.18); 1: 343 (4.9.25); 1: 349 (4.9.36); 1: 357 (4.10.13).

146. Ibid., 1: 224 (3.6.15).

147. Molina, ch. 1 (1: 46).

148. Ibid., Preface (1: xiv–xv). On this, see, e.g., Molina's use of travel accounts to support his claims about Chile's great agricultural productivity (ch. 1, 1: 45–46).

149. Frézier, *Relation*, 218–31, 240–47. On representations of Spanish America in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century travel narratives as a promiscuous and corrupting place, see Cañizares-Esguerra, "Travel Accounts."

150. Molina, Preface (1: x–xi).

151. Ibid., (1: xiv).

152. Ibid., (1: xv–xvii), ch. 1 (1: 73).

153. Ibid., Preface (1: xiii–xiv).

154. For a sense of the extraordinary volume of writings by Creole Jesuits in exile, see the bibliography compiled in Vargas Alquicira, 86–166.

155. Pedro José Márquez, *Delle case di cittá degli antichi romani secondo la dottrina di Vitruvio* (Rome: Presso il Salmoni, 1795); *Delle ville di Plinio il giovane, con un appendice su gli atrii della s. scrittura, e gli scamilli impari di Vitruvio* (Rome: Presso il Salomoni, 1796); *Sobre lo bello en general* (Madrid: Oficina del Diario, 1801); *Dell' ordine dorico, ricerche dedicate alla Reale accademia di S. Luigi di Saragoza Con appendice sopra un' antica tav. di Pozzuolo* (Rome: Presso il Salomoni, 1803).

156. León y Gama, *Saggio*. More on León y Gama's work in Chapter 5.

157. Márquez, "Apendix," 169–82.

158. Carrega, "Approvazione," in *Saggio dell' astronomia*, xii–xiii.

159. Márquez, *Due antichi monumenti*, i–ii.

160. More on José Antonio de Alzate y Ramírez in Chapter 5.

161. This statement was indeed daring, for since the Conquest the natives' alleged failure to have developed arches was used by the Spaniards as a colonialist discourse of legitimization. In a previous work, Márquez had already presented Mesoamerican saunas (*temexcalli*) as evidence that indicated the Indians' mastery of dome-building techniques; see Márquez, *Delle case di città degli antichi romani*, xiv–xv, 362–64. On the discourse of classical architecture to justify colonization in Spanish America, see Fraser.

162. Márquez, *Due antichi monumenti*, 19. On this topic, see also Márquez's notes in Leon y Gama, *Saggio dell' astronomia*, 71 (n. 1).

163. "I Messicani d'adesso sono destinati a fare nella gran commedia del mondo la rappresentanza della plebe" (Márquez, *Due antichi monumenti*, 24).

164. Fábrega.

165. Ibid., 71 (par. 11), 30–34 (pars. 52–61).

166. Ibid., 38–47 (pars. 67–85).

167. Ibid., 44 (par. 80).

168. Ibid., 38 (par. 67).

169. Ibid., 3 (dedication).

170. Ibid., 80–81 (par. 24).

171. Ibid., 39 (par. 69).

172. Ibid., 259–60 (par. 313).

173. Ibid., 11 (par. 15).

174. Ibid., 6 (par. 4) where Fábrega mistakenly identifies the Codex Mendoza as a precolonial source and therefore gives it too much credence. Both Boturini and Clavijero had already declared their skepticism of the accuracy of the historical annals in the codex published by Purchas.

175. Ibid., 12–13 (par. 17).

176. Ibid., 42 (pars. 75–76).

177. W. Taylor, "' . . . de corazón pequeño." See also Walker, "Patriotic Society."

178. On the debates over the abolition of the *repartimiento* and the nature of the Indian, see Brading, *Miners and Merchants*, 47–51, 84–86; MacLachlan and Rodríguez, 261–63. 268–70.

179. Malaspina, 155, 157.

180. Acosta, *Procuranda indorum salute*, bk. 1, ch. 7, 147; bk. 3, ch. 9, 443; bk. 3, ch. 13, 487; bk. 3, ch. 17, 513; Solórzano y Pereira, 1: 176–77. Solórzano y Pereira's work first appeared as *Disputationem de indiarum iure*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Francisco Martínez, 1629–39). It was later enlarged, translated, and published as *Política indiana* (Madrid: Diego Díaz de la Carrera, 1648).

181. Montesquieu, 1: 240, 226, 270.

182. Algarotti, 336.

183. AMN, Colección Malaspina, MS 119, "Caracter, usos y costumbres de los Indios, tributos que pagan al soberano, método de su cobranza y estado de ramo y reflexiones de los repartimientos antiguos y modernos," fols. 180–89.

184. AMN, Colección Malaspina, MS 562, Antonio Pineda, "Viaje de Antonio Pineda desde Acapulco a Méjico y de allí a Guanajuato," fols. 10v, 42v, 128r.

185. Cañizares-Esguerra, "Utopía de Hipólito Unanue."

CHAPTER 5: WHOSE ENLIGHTENMENT WAS IT ANYWAY?

1. Dorinda Outram builds on insights first developed by Jürgen Habermas. On recent studies of the rise and dynamics of the public sphere, see Calhoun. For "traditional" interpretations of the Enlightenment, see Cassirer; Gay.

2. Outram, 6. Outram's more generous vision draws on Venturi, *Settecento riformatore* (for Italy and eastern Europe) and Aldridge.

3. Outram, 17–18.

4. The contributors to *The Ibero-American Enlightenment*, ed. A. Owen Aldridge, continue to define the Enlightenment from a Eurocentric perspective. The volume makes serious efforts not to exclude "peripheral areas" such as Spain and Spanish America by highlighting the movement's utilitarian and critical dimensions. From this vantage point, the authors in the volume identify a Catholic Enlightenment, in general, and an Ibero-American one, in particular. In an earlier work, Arthur P. Whitaker, a contributor to Aldridge's collection, sought to characterize the Spanish-American Enlightenment in terms of the paradox of Spanish America's "dual role" in the eighteenth century, arguing that Spanish America was both an active participant in the critical utilitarian values of the movement and the movement's principal target of criticism. It exemplified all that had gone wrong with European colonialism. Whitaker does not recognize that in the tensions produced by this dual role lay the

seeds of alternative critical discourses that were not mere copies of northwestern European epistemologies. See Whitaker, "Dual Role."

5. Levine, *Dr. Woodward's Shield*; id., *Battle of the Books*.

6. For a history of the discovery and fate of seven different stones found in the central plaza, see León y Gama, *Descripción histórica*, 1: 8–13; 2: 46 (par. 120); 2: 73–74 (pars. 144–45); 2: 76 (par. 147); and 2: 79 (par. 149).

7. Ocelotl Tecuilhuitzintli, *Gaceta de México* 4, no. 40 (Aug. 12, 1791): 377–79.

8. Alzate y Ramírez, *Gaceta de México* 4, no. 42 (Sept. 1791): 396.

9. *Gaceta de México* 5, no. 2 (Jan. 1792): 14, and no. 9 (May 1792): 88.

10. I have used the 1832 edition by Bustamente. This edition also includes León y Gama's study of other stones found in Mexico City, but it was never published during the latter's lifetime. For a biographical study of León y Gama, see Moreno de los Arcos, "Ensayo biobibliográfico"; id., "*Historia antigua de México*."

11. León y Gama, *Descripción histórica*, 1: 59–61 (pars. 41–43).

12. Ibid., 1: 47–49 (n. 3).

13. Ibid., 1: 26 (nn. 1–4) and 1: 27 (n. 1).

14. Ibid., 1: 49–55 (pars. 34–39).

15. Ibid., 1: 29–33 (pars. 14–16).

16. Ibid., 1: 81–83 (pars. 49–50).

17. Ibid., 1: 84–89 (pars. 52–56).

18. Ibid., 1: 112–14 (par. 82).

19. Ibid., 1: 36 (par. 21) and 1: 40 (par. 23). León y Gama's views on Aztec aesthetics resemble those recently put forth by Inga Clendinnen. Like León y Gama, Clendinnen is struck by the realism that characterizes Aztec sculptures of vegetables and of small animals and the almost willful distortion of representations of bigger animals and of the human figure. Clendinnen has argued that Mexica selective realistic naturalism sought to capture the essence of small objects, which reportedly resided in their surface appearance. The essence of bigger animals such as leopards and eagles and of humans lay also in their skins (a reason why the Aztecs liked to both flay their victims and wear costumes of fur and feathers and of human skins). Humans and large animals, however, revealed their nature through their behavior rather than their surface appearance. Aztec aesthetic sensibilities, therefore, rejected mimetic representations of these larger objects. See Clendinnen, *Aztecs*, ch. 9.

20. Ibid., 1: 35–44 (pars. 20–29).

21. Ibid., 1: 104–8 (pars. 73–76).

22. Ibid., 1: 100 (par. 67).

23. Ibid., 1: 94–5 (par. 62).

24. Alzate y Ramírez is one of the most studied figures of the Mexican Enlightenment. See, e.g., Peset, pt. 1; Moreno de los Arcos, "Eclesiástico criollo." The papers Alzate y Ramírez sent to the French Académie des sciences were published in *Voyage en Californie* by the abbé Jean-Baptiste Chappe d'Auteroche, who led an expedition organized by the Académie to Mexico to measure the transit of Venus and the satellites of Jupiter in order to calculate longitudes. D'Auteroche received the collaboration of several Creole scholars while in Mexico, including Alzate y Ramírez, León y Gama, José Ignacio Bartolache, and Joaquín Velázquez de León.

25. BN-P (G-A), MS 331, León y Gama to Lalande, Apr. 26, 1772, 7v.

26. Ibid., Lalande to León y Gama, May 5, 1773, 5r.

27. Ibid., Lalande to León y Gama, Sept. 12, 1774, 4r.

28. León y Gama, "Discurso sobre la luz septentrional que se vio en esta ciudad el día 14 de noviembre de 1789, entre 8 y 9 de la noche," *Gaceta de México* 3, no. 44 (Dec. 1, 1789): 432–35, and no. 45 (Dec. 22, 1789): 444–47; Alzate y Ramírez, "Carta del autor de la Gaceta de literatura al discurso que publicó un anónimo en la [Gaceta] política sobre la aurora boreal," *Gacetas de literatura* 1 (Mar. 8, 1790): 301–10; León y Gama, *Disertación física*; Alzate y Ramírez, "Novedad literaria: Disertación (nombrada) física sobre la materia y formación de las auroras boreales," *Gacetas de literatura* 1 (Aug. 16, 1790): 423.

29. León y Gama, *Gaceta de México* 5, no. 13 (July 1793): 124.

30. Alzate y Ramírez," Historia de la Nueva España por el abate La Porte," *Gacetas de literatura* 1 (Jan. 31, 1788): 5–12.

31. Alzate y Ramírez, "Falsedades vertidas por Jorge Amon [*sic*] en la descripción de su viage al rededor del mundo," *Gacetas de literatura* 1 (May 10, 1788): 40 (my emphasis: Alzate y Ramírez described the Mexicans in Manila as commoners of Amerindian descent).

32. Ignaz von Born's treatise first appeared in Vienna in 1786 under the title *Über das Anquicken der Gold- und silberhaltigen Erze, Rohsteine, Schwarzkupfer und Hüttenspeise*. It was translated to English by R. E. Raspe under the title *Baron Inigo Born's New Process of Amalgamation of Gold and Silver Ores, and other Metallic Mixtures, as by his late Imperial Magesty's Command introduced in Hungary and Bohemia* (London: T. Cadell, 1791). The fact that Alzate y Ramírez reviewed it in 1790 indicates the dynamism of the public sphere and the book market in New Spain.

33. Alzate y Ramírez, "Traducción de algunos artículos del estracto del caballero Born acerca de la estracción de la plata y oro con su correctivo," *Gacetas de literatura* 2 (Dec. 30, 1790): 84–90. For a similar rejection of the modernity that Born represented, but this time in early republican Bolivia, see Platt.

34. Clavijero's critique of the epistemological limitations of European travelers is reiterated in Alzate y Ramírez's notes, e.g., bk. 7, n. 55 (BN-M, MS 1679). See Moreno de los Arcos, "Notas de Alzate." The notes are housed in two different repositories, those corresponding to Clavijero's bks. 1 and 2 are in AMNA, MS 176; those for bks. 6–10 are in BN-M, MS 1679; those for bks. 3–5 are missing.

35. Gilii.

36. Alzate y Ramírez, "Noticia del viage en la América por el Abate Gilli y repulsa de sus falsedades," *Gacetas de literatura* 1 (Jan. 10, 1790): 246–54.

37. His research program is laid out in "Ajolotl es muy eficaz su jarabe para la tisis," *Gacetas de literatura* 2 (Nov. 16, 1790): 52–53. On this aspect of Alzate y Ramírez's work and this dimension of Creole patriotism in general, see Cañizares-Esguerra, "Nation and Nature."

38. The many essays by Alzate y Ramírez and Cervantes that appeared between 1788 and 1790 in *Gacetas de literatura* and *Gaceta de México*, respectively, have been reproduced in Moreno de los Arcos, *Linneo en México*. For an interesting account of the controversy over the reception of Linnaean taxonomies in late-eighteenth-century Spain from the perspective of the resistance of the traditional corporate university to the opening of new alternative institutions, see Tanck de Estrada; Lozoya, ch. 2.

39. For examples of this aspect of Alzate y Ramírez's patriotic epistemology, see "Botánica," *Gacetas de literatura* 1 (Feb. 15–Apr. 8, 1788): 20–27. For an example that carries the paradigm into the law of physics, see "Continua la descripción topográfica de México," *Gacetas de literatura* 2 (Oct. 4–8, 1791): 274–75, 278.

40. Alzate y Ramírez, "Descripción de las antigüedades de Xochicalco," 1. There is a long quotation from Alzate y Ramírez's 1777 manuscript in Moreno de los Arcos, "Eclesiastico criollo," p. 12, which varies substantially from the same passage in the 1791 edition, suggesting that there was indeed an earlier manuscript, but I am unaware of its whereabouts.

41. Alzate y Ramírez, "Descripción de las antigüedades de Xochicalco," dedication (unpaginated).

42. Ibid., pp. 2–9 and nn. 8 and 10.

43. Ibid., p. 21.

44. Ibid., p. 3.

45. On the theme of Amerindian corruption induced by proximity to urban *castas* and on the blurring of hierarchies in Amerindian communities, see AMNA, MS 176, nn. 15, 136, and 139 to bk. 1; BN-M, MS 1679, nn. 24, 25, and 32 to bk. 7. Alzate y Ramírez penned an analysis of the "Indians" of central Mexico for Malaspina in which he went over the same tropes: the corrupting effects of urban commoners and *castas* over the original virginal Amerindian communities and the collapse of social differentiation in them. The document, however, has also positive things to say about the mestizos as forceful leaders in Amerindian communities. See AMN, MS 562, Alzate y Ramírez, "¿Cuáles son los caracteres morales y físicos del indio?" fols. 315–323v. This document has been reproduced twice, by Moreno de los Arcos, in Alzate y Ramírez, *Memorias y ensayos*, 154–65, and by González Claverán, "Notas a un documento."

46. Alzate y Ramírez, "Descripción de las antigüedades de Xochicalco," 16–18.

47. Alzate y Ramírez, "Carta del autor a D.N. sobre los caracteres mexicanos," *Gacetas de literatura* 2 (July 13–31 and Aug. 28, 1792): 416.

48. Ibid., 416–18.

49. Ibid., 424.

50. León y Gama, *Descripción histórica*, 2: 46–73 (pars. 121–143). None of the illustrations of León y Gama's second volume have ever been published before. Some have survived in BN-P (G-A), MS 97. Others, it seems, were never drawn. Through cross-references to indigenous codices in the text and the copies of those codices that belonged to León y Gama and that are part of the Goupil-Aubin collection, I have identified most of the remaining images. This reconstruction could be used one day to issue a new complete edition of Leon y Gama's second treatise.

51. León y Gama, *Descripción histórica*, 2: 11–16 (pars. 87–92). But Castillo appears in fact to have been born in 1526.

52. Flores, *Específico*.

53. García de la Vega.

54. León y Gama, *Instrucción*.

55. Ibid., 21, 30.

56. The debate, to be sure, continued. See Moreno and Sánchez, *Carta apologética*, and León y Gama in *Respuesta satisfactoria*. Moreno and Sánchez had

the last word with the public in *Observaciones crítico-apologéticas*. León y Gama did reply but his treatise was left unpublished. It can be read now in HBC-B, MS M-M 125, "Carta que sobre las Observaciones crítico-apologéticas escribía a un amigo D. Antonio de León y Gama." The debate still awaits a sympathetic historian.

57. León y Gama, *Descripción histórica*, 2: 29–32 (pars. 105–9). In the text, León y Gama never identifies the provenance of the examples he cites. After a painstaking survey of the copies of codices he and José Antonio Pichardo owned, I have identified those from which he drew most of his examples. See legend to Fig. 5.8 for detailed archival references.

58. Ibid., 2: 41–45 (pars. 117–19).

59. Ibid., 2: 37–41 (pars. 114–16) and 2: 142–44 (pars. 207–8).

60. For a synthesis and bibliography of these institutional and cultural changes, see Cañizares-Esguerra, "Spanish America."

61. On the substitution of Peninsular for Creole faculty at the Academy of San Carlos, see Brown. On Alzate y Ramírez's and León y Gama's failed bids to get positions as the Colegio de Minería, see Peset, *Ciencia*, 124, 176–89; Ramírez, 86–88.

62. Lozoya.

63. Susan Schroeder describes how Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpain Cuauhtlehuanitzin's manuscripts left Mexico in the early nineteenth century when the liberal ideologue José María Luis Mora exchanged them for a few Bibles from England to enhance literacy at home. Chimalpain Cuauhtlehuanitzin's works thus lay buried for almost two centuries in the London archives of the Foreign Biblical Society; see Schroeder, "Father José María Luis Mora." On Mora, see Hale.

64. Glass, *Boturini Collection*.

65. Although articles on him have been published by Díaz-Trechuelo and Carrera Stampa (see Bibliography), Diego García Panes still awaits comprehensive study. The manuscripts and drawings of his multivolume illustrated history of ancient Mexico, Theatro de Nueva España, are shelved as BN-M, MSS 1745 and 1876 to 1884. Some of the illustrations and captions have been published in García Panes, *Panorama de Anáhuac* and *La conquista*. García Panes typified the cadre of naval officers trained in the new sciences sent en masse from Spain in the wake of the Bourbon reforms to take over the colonial administration. He worked for many years in cartographic surveys and engineering along the Gulf coast of Mexico, where he also dabbled in archeology. The maps that resulted from his surveys have been published under the title *Diario particular del camino que sigue un Virrey de México*.

Most of the volumes of his Theatro de Nueva España are an illustrated version of Echeverría y Veytia's unpublished history based on drawings of indigenous documents in Boturini's collection. The drawings for the volume narrating the Conquest, however, are based on García Panes's own antiquarian research. For example, he drew some images from a document he commissioned from the indigenous authorities of Tlaxcala, the famous Lienzo de Tlaxcala. After repeated efforts to gain financial backing from the viceroy and local corporations in Mexico City, García Panes took his incomplete illustrated history to Spain to seek approval from Juan Bautista Muñoz and thus the imprimatur of the crown. Muñoz advised against publication on the grounds of the unreliability of the narrative, but he gave García Panes a copy of Sahagún's history of New Spain, from which he most likely drew scenes and images

of the battles of the Conquest for his Theatro de Nueva España. On the role of García Panes in the origins of the Lienzo de Tlaxcala, see the document written in 1779 by the ruler of Tlaxcala, Nicolas Faustino Mazihcatzin, a graduate in theology and jurisprudence, "Descripción del mapa historiógrapho que se guarda en el arca de privilegios del mui ilustre ayuntamiento de la ciudad e Tlaxcala," *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Históricos* 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1927): 63–90. Mazihcatzin refers to Diego García Panes as Diego Pérez. On the confusing genealogy of the illustrations in the Lienzo de Tlaxcala, see René Acuña, "Estudio Introductorio," in Diego Muñoz Camargo, *Descripción de la ciudad y provincia de Tlaxcala de las Indias y del mar océano para buen gobierno y ennoblecimiento dellas*, facsimile of the MS in Glasgow (Mexico: UNAM, 1981), 9–47. On some similarities between images in the Lienzo de Tlaxcala and García Panes's illustrations, see Jorge Gurría Lacroix, *Códice Entrada de los Españoles en Tlaxcala* (Mexico: UNAM, 1966), 18–19. On Muñoz's negative evaluation of Panes's Theatro de la Nueva España, see AGI, México, 1885, "Informe sobre la obra de Diego Panes, 18 de enero 1791" (thanks to Alison Sandman for getting a copy of this document for me).

66. As far as I know nothing has been written on Juan Santelices Pablo. He was the most important broker of antiquities and books at the time of Malaspina's expedition. On Santelices Pablo, see González Claverán, *Expedición*, 103–4; Pimentel, 245–47.

67. See, e.g., *Gaceta de México* 4 (Apr. 1790): 68–71, and (Aug. 1790): 152–54.

68. On the Mexican phase of the expedition, see González Claverán, *Expedición*. For a general account of the goals, ideas, and itinerary of the expedition, see Pimentel.

69. González Claverán, *Expedición*, 100–101.

70. AMN, Colección Malaspina, MS 562, "Descripción detallada de Nueva España con muchas noticias estadísticas e históricas por Antonio Pineda y de Arcadio Pineda, su hermano," fol. 159v (and fols. 150r and 156v) and MS 563 fols. 329r–v.

71. The original sentence says: "Algunas de estas piezas [en la colección Boturini] pueden servir dignamente a la historia universal [pero hay otras] triviales obscuras y secas, nada correspondientes a la abultada expresión con que se recomendaron en la lista." See AMN, Colección Malaspina, MS 570, "Plan, división y prospecto general de las Memorias de Nueva España que han de servir ala historia universal de esta septentrional América," fol. 7v–8r.

72. ARAH, Colección de Memorias de Nueva España, vol. 1, Vicente de la Rosa Saldivar, "Certificación . . . sobre los mapas del museo del caballero Boturini," and "Juicio que sobre los papeles escritos en ydioma mexicano que se hallan en el museo del caballero Boturini," fols. 87r–120. These documents have been reproduced by Manuel Ballesteros Gaibrois as an appendix in Boturini, *Historia general*, 275–302.

73. León y Gama to Andrés Cavo, Aug. 19, 1796, referring to the removal of part of Boturini's collection to Spain in 1780, reproduced in Burrus, 70–71. León y Gama says that he and the librarians of the university, then entrusted with the collection, sought to make copies of the documents before they left. This earlier transfer seems to be confirmed by a series of documents at AGN, Historia, vol. 35, in which the antiquarian José Ignacio Borunda argues (in 1795) that Diego García Panes took a collection of indigenous sources to Spain. García y Panes in fact went to Spain in search

of patronage for his illustrated Theatro de Nueva España in the early 1780s. The magistrates of the high court took Borunda's denunciation seriously and interrogated García Panes, but nothing seems to have come of it. For copies of these documents, see Torre Revello, 394–96, 399–400.

In his edition of Andrés Cavo's *Historia de México* (Mexico: Editorial Patria, 1949), Ernest J. Burrus mentions the correspondence between Cavo and León y Gama, alluding indirectly to the Colección Cuevas, vol. 30 (Burrus's Prologue, nn. 14, 20, 28, 30–32). The reference, however, corresponds to letters between the antiquarian José Antonio Pichardo and Cavo (also to be found in the Nettie Lee Benson Library, Austin, Texas), which Burrus locates in the same unspecified Roman depository as the correspondence between León y Gama and Cavo in his article "Clavigero and the Lost Sigüenza y Góngora Manuscripts" (1959), which also (n. 38 and p. 84) alludes to the impending publication of the complete correspondence, a collection of twenty letters. However, the only reference to the whereabouts of these letters is that "they are in Rome," and Burrus unfortunately never published them. In "Research Opportunities in Italian Archives and Manuscript Collections for Students of Hispanic History," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Aug. 1959, p. 446, Burrus refers again to the letters and to microfilmed copies of them at St. Louis University. Microfilmed copies of some (very few, as I discovered to my chagrin) documents on the history of the Jesuits in Mexico assembled (partly in Italy) by the Jesuit Mariano Cuevas in the early twentieth century are in fact at St. Louis University, and finding them there, I thought my detective work had finally paid off. Yet despite the kind help of Dr. Charles J. Ermatinger, the Vatican Film Librarian, and a detailed survey of the microfilm holdings of the Colección Cuevas, I have been unable to locate León y Gama's letters, which might shed further light on the Creole conspiracy.

74. On Mier, see Brading, *Origins*, pt. 2.

75. Keen, 304–5.

76. Brading, *Origins*, 27.

77. Mier, 1: 29 and 2: 65. In line with the prevailing views of Borunda's and Mier's ideas as strange fantasies, the Cuban author Reinaldo Arenas has written a novel on Mier suggestively entitled *Un mundo alucinante* [A Hallucinatory World]: *Una novela de aventura* (Mexico: Editorial Diógenes, 1969), which has been translated by Andrew Hurley under the title *The Ill-Fated Peregrinations of Fray Servando* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994).

78. The documents are in AGN, Historia, vol. 35, and have been reproduced in Torre Revello, 388–94. The next two paragraphs are based on them.

79. Borunda argued that most charters had been written in Gothic script (introduced between 1521 and 1527 by the Franciscan Peter of Ghent, or Pedro de Gante) and that they therefore had to be carefully transcribed according to an "alphabet" he had designed in 1768.

80. BN-M, MS 1387, José Ignacio Borunda and José Mariano Samper, "Descubrimiento legal, histórico y natural del mas célebre mineral de azogue del antiguo imperio mexicano" (1788), folio 446r. Similar arguments were being made in Peru approximately at the same time; see Joseph Manuel Bermúdez, "Discurso sobre la utilidad e importancia de la lengua general del Perú," *Mercurio Peruano* 9 (1793): 185–86.

81. BN-M, MS 1387, Borunda and Samper, "Descubrimiento legal," fols. 445r–447r.

82. Borunda, 236. The original manuscript can be found in the archives of the Basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Mexico City.

83. Borunda, 203–4, 227.

84. Ibid., 200, 202, 223–25.

85. Ibid., 198, 318.

86. Ibid., 204.

87. Ibid., 209–10.

88. As the chronicler of the festivities explained, St. John of the Cross was born in Castile in 1542 to poor hidalgo (lower nobility) parents. Twice saved from drowning by the Virgin when a boy, he had felt the call of God since childhood. He entered the order of the Carmelites but grew dissatisfied with the lax moral behavior of his confreres. To show them the way to moral regeneration, John dwelt in caves, with little to eat, often awakening under a blanket of snow. He routinely scourged himself and always wore chains and a vest studded with nails. To remind himself of the vanity of life, he slept with a skeleton, his only possession. The devil lured him many times into sexual desire, but every time he managed to convert the whore into a pious woman. He was so in touch with God that he levitated in his sleep. The Carmelites, tired of the rebel, sent him to jail, where he lived for about a year deprived of all light and movement. After escaping, he received the support of St. Teresa of Avila, his mentor and patron, and created an order of his own, the Discalced Carmelites. As leader of the order, John lived an exemplary life, which included reviving several deceased nuns. At the end of his days, he radiated a blinding light. After worms had consumed his body, he died without pain in 1591. See Ximénez de Bonilla et al., 1–40.

89. The first representation that I am aware of appears in the Codex Aubin (Codex 1576). See *Historia mexicana*, 48.

90. Cabrera y Quintero, "Aguila Mystica, exaltada en los ápices del Carmelo," in Ximénez de Bonilla et al., 222–24. On sixteenth-century Christian and classical influences introduced to the Nahua literary elite by the Franciscans that might help explain the iconographic change mentioned, see Fernández-Armesto.

91. Villegas.

92. Vega, 11.

93. The literature on Our Lady of Guadalupe is immense. See Maza; Brading, *First America*, ch. 16; Lafaye; Poole. Whether the flood of 1629 marked a turning point in the devotion and whether the devotion was first primarily Creole, as Poole has forcefully suggested, are things that still need further clarification (William Taylor, personal communication). The perception that there are distinct Creole and Amerindian histories of the devotion hinges on the conceit that the identities of these two groups can be sharply elucidated, which I seriously doubt — at least at the level of the elites (see, e.g., Ch. 4 above).

94. Sánchez, 204–9.

95. Ibid., 168 (on the crown of twelve stars); 219 (on the eclipsed sun); 223–4 (on the moon); 226–27 (on the forty-six stars).

96. See, e.g., Carranza; Elizalde Ita Parra, 18, 29–30.

97. Sánchez, 167.

98. Maza, 43–45, also 136 (intercedes in foreign wars), 177 (propitiates rain).

99. Cabrera y Quintero.

100. Gerónimo de Valladolid, "Advertencia," in Florencia, *Estrella del norte de México* (unpaginated).

101. M. Cabrera, 500.

102. Ibid., 521.

103. Eguiara y Eguren, *María santísima*, 484.

104. Borunda, 292.

105. Ibid., 293.

106. Ibid., 276–77; Mier, "El sermón predicado en la Colegiata," in *Obras completas*, 1: 249–50.

107. Complaint by José Fernández de Uribe, the prosecutor, in a sermon delivered in 1777; quoted in O'Gorman, "Estudio preliminar," in Mier, *Obras*, 1: 41.

108. Bartolache y Díaz de las Posadas, appendix. See also Joaquín Traggia, "Dictamen" [1799], in Mier, *Obras*, 2: 232.

109. Fernández de Uribe, "Dictamen," in Mier, *Obras*, 2: 166, 176.

110. Ibid., 2: 164, 169 (on Borunda); 2: 154–64 (on Mier).

111. Ibid., 2: 119, 123–24.

112. BN-P (G-A), MS 320, León y Gama, "Descripción de la sagrada imagen según las relaciones de los indios." See also BN-P (G-A), MS 322, León y Gama, "De la existencia de los gigantes." Creole scholars like Fernández de Uribe and León y Gama, as Edmundo O'Gorman has argued, represented a segment of the Creole intelligentsia that sought to discredit Mier to help prevent news of the French Revolution from undermining the traditions, and thus the authority, of the Mexican Church. See O'Gorman, "Estudio preliminar," in Mier, *Obras*, 1: 38–40.

113. Maravall, *Cultura del barroco*.

114. Mills and Taylor, 141–46, 25-52, and Taylor, personal communication.

115. The following is a list of the location of the documents for reconstructing the history of the discovery of Palenque: AGI, Guatemala 471, Guatemala 645, and Mapas y Planos Guatemala 256–60; BP, MS 2979; ARAH, Colección Muñoz, vol. 91; British Museum, MS 17571; LAL-TU, MS 1796; BN-P (G-A), MSS 216 and 278; EAC-NB, MS 1564; HBC-B, Mexican MS 177; AMNA, MS C.A./226, fols. 123–158r; and ACMG, no signature available.

116. I have reconstructed the chronology of events in this paragraph from different sources; see British Museum, MS 17571, Luis de Roca to Joseph Miguel de San Juan, Jan. 2, 1973, legajo 16, fols. 43–44 (reproduced in Ballesteros Gaibrois, 23–25); AGI, Guatemala 471, José Estachería to José de Gálvez, Guatemala, Feb. 13, 1785, fols. 1–3v (reproduced in Cabello Carro, 103); and AMNA, MS C.A./226, Ordóñez y Aguiar, "Fragmentos al Obispo [Cayetano Monroy y Franco] hacia el año de 1790 sobre el descubrimiento de las famosas ruinas de Palenque," fols. 123–158r (parts are reproduced in Castañeda Paganini, 17–20). Ordóñez y Aguiar offers yet another version of the events in the dedication of the Newberry Library's copy of his "Historia de la creación" (EAC-NB, MS 1564). The chronology is by no means clear. Ordóñez y Aguiar asserts throughout, however, that the original discoverer of the ruins was his granduncle Antonio de Solís, a parish priest, who did not live long enough to make his discovery known. While they were at grammar school together in Ciudad Real,

however, a member of Solís's extended family, Joseph de la Fuente Coronado, spoke of Palenque to Ordóñez y Aguiar, arousing his lasting fascination with the city. Whatever the facts of the matter, there is consensus in all the sources that Ramón Ordóñez y Aguiar played a key part in prompting the Spanish authorities to conduct research on the ruins.

117. AGI, Guatemala 471, Estachería a José Antonio Calderón, Nov. 28, 1784, fols. 1r–1v (reproduced in Cabello Carro, 78).

118. AGI Guatemala 471, José Antonio Calderón to José Estachería, Dec. 15, 1784, fols. 2–11v (reproduced in Cabello Carro, 80–89).

119. On Bernasconi, see Pailles Hernández and Nieto Calleja, 103–5.

120. AGI, Guatemala 471, Estachería to Antonio Bernasconi, "Instrucciones para el reconocimiento de las ruinas de Palenque," fols. 13–21v (reproduced in Cabello Carro, 90–99).

121. AGI, Guatemala 645, # 432, Estachería to José de Gálvez, Aug. 26, 1785 (reproduced in Cabello Carro, 109–10).

122. AGI, Guatemala 645, Bernasconi to Estachería, June 13, 1785 (reproduced in Cabello Carro, 112–15).

123. AGI, Guatemala 645, Juan Bautista Muñoz to marqués de Sonora on the ruins of Palenque, Mar. 7, 1786 (reproduced in Cabello Carro, 118–120, 119 [quotation]).

124. AGI, Guatemala 645, Estachería to marqués de Sonora (Gálvez), Aug. 12, 1786 (reproduced in Cabello Carro, 128–29).

125. ARAH, Colección Muñoz, vol. 91, Informe de Antonio del Río sobre Palenque, June 24, 1787, reproduced in Cabello Carro, 130–47. For examples of these procedures, see Cabello Carro, 131–32, 137, 144.

126. Cabello Carro, 138, 140, 141, 142.

127. Ibid., 139.

128. Ibid., 140–41.

129. Ibid., 133.

130. Ibid., 137–38, 139.

131. Ibid., 133.

132. Ibid., 137, 139–40, 145.

133. AGI, Guatemala 645, José Estachería to Antonio Valdés, July 9, 1788 (reproduced in Cabello Carro, 149–50).

134. Río, vii. This misleading tradition was later perpetuated by John Lloyd Stephens.

135. AGI, Guatemala 654, # 432, Estachería to José de Gálvez, Aug. 26, 1785 (reproduced in Cabello Carro, 110).

136. In EAC-NA, MS 1564 (copy of Ordóñez y Aguiar's "Historia de la creación del mundo conforme al sistema americano"), Ordóñez y Aguiar refers vaguely to the reasons why he left Ciudad Real in 1788. As the member of the cathedral chapter charged with defending the immunity of the secular clergy in the capital of the province of Chiapas, he had been forced by a case to move to the higher court of Guatemala City. Once in the capital of the Audiencia, he pursued yet another vague case for libel against the cathedral chapter of Ciudad Real. According to Ordóñez y Aguiar, in the process he not only had to put up with many "inflammatory broadsides" aimed at him and his reputation but was obliged to spend his fortune on his de-

fense. See EAC-NA, MS 1564, "Dedicatoria al caballero Joseph Miguel de San Juan," 4r–5r. The terms "terrible persecution" to describe the reasons for Ordóñez y Aguiar's forced exile come from a letter by the Dominican provincial De la Roca to San Juan, Nov. 27, 1792, British Museum, MS 17571, fols. 43–44 (reproduced in Ballesteros Gabrois, 25).

137. AMNA, MS C.A./226, Ordóñez y Aguiar, "Fragmentos al Obispo [Cayetano Monroy y Franco] hacia el año de 1790 sobre el descubrimiento de las famosas ruinas de Palenque," fols. 123r–158r. The original longer draft of this document can be found at LAL-TU, MS 1796, which has been wrongly identified as bk. 2 of Ordóñez y Aguiar's "Historia de la creación del cielo y de la tierra" and thus catalogued under the misleading title of "Descripción palencana: Libro II de la Historia del cielo y de la tierra." The manuscript at MNA has also been mislabeled. The erudite José F. Ramírez in 1867 correctly assumed that the document was a letter sent by Ordóñez y Aguiar to a prelate, but he could not identify the bishop's name. From the documentation at the Archivo Colonial de la Gobernación de Guatemala, reproduced in *Anales de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala* 7 (Mar. 1931): 354–56, we know that "Descripción palencana," was written in 1792 by Ordóñez y Aguiar for Monroy y Franco.

138. AMNA, MS C.A./226, Ordóñez y Aguiar, "Fragmentos al Obispo," 128v.

139. Ibid., 150v–151r.

140. Ibid., 131v–133v.

141. Ibid., 130v–131r, 144v, 155r–157v.

142. The manuscript of *Theatro crítico* is in the British Museum (MS 17571). I have used the English translation by Henry Berthoud published in 1822 along with del Río's report; see Cabrera.

143. Cabrera, 59–63.

144. Ibid., 90–91.

145. Ibid., 81, 89.

146. Ibid., 93–94.

147. Ibid., 39–44.

148. Toward the end of his *Theatro crítico*, Cabrera argued that many precious antiquities, including a silver chalice that might have belonged to St. Thomas, a Hebrew Bible preserved by the Indians in pictograms, and hundreds of ancient coins found in Guatemala, were circulating. Cabrera urged the authorities to collect these antiquities. The two medals in the hands of the academicians, Cabrera argued, were part of a larger cache in the hands of two officers of the royal mint, Juan de Letona and the engraver Pedro Garziaguirre. See Cabrera, 106–11.

149. Ibid., 53–55, 86, 99.

150. British Museum, MS 17571, San Juan to Phelipe de Sesma, Dec. 2, 1792, and Jan. 2, 1793, fols. 19–25 (reproduced in Ballesteros Gaibrois, 27–39).

151. Cabrera, 53.

152. Some of the documentation relating to the trial is in the Archivo Colonial de la Gobernación de Guatemala and has been reproduced in *Anales de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia* 7, no. 3 (Mar. 1931): 354–56.

153. Cabrera, 32–33.

154. There seem to be several extant copies of Ordóñez y Aguiar's "Historia de la creación." One was reproduced by Nicolás León in *Bibliografía mexicana*; another is at EAC-NB, MSS 1563 and 1564. The copy in the Newberry Library in Chicago is a photographic reproduction of originals in the BN-P (G-A), MS 216 and 278. There is a third copy that I have not consulted at HBC-B, MSS M-M 177. MS 1564 in the Newberry Library has passages not found in Nicolás León's edition, including a dedication to San Juan and a "note to the reader." Unless I refer to sections not found in León's edition, all my citations are to the latter. The full title of the manuscript is indicative, in and of itself, of Ordóñez y Aguiar's aims and methodology: "Historia de la creación del cielo y la tierra conforme al sistema de la gentilidad americana. Theología de los Culebras figurada en ingeniosos geroglíphicos, symbolos, emblemas y metáphoras. Diluvio Universal. Dispersión de las gentes. Verdadero origen de los indios [desde] su salida de Chaldea, su transmigración a estas partes septentrionales, su tránsito por el oceano, [hasta su] derrota que siguieron al llegar al seno mexicano. Principio de su imperio. Fundación y destrucción de su antigua y primera corte, poco há descubierta y conocida con el nombre de ciudad de Palenque. Superstiticioso culto con que los antiguos Palencanos adoraron al verdadero dios, figurado en aquellos symbolos o emblemas que colocados en las aras de sus templos, últimamente degeneraron en abominables ídolos. Libros todos de la mas benerable [*sic*] antigüedad, sacados del olvido unos, nuevamente descubiertos otros, e interpretados sus symbolos, emblemas y metáphoras conforme al genuino sentido del phrasismo americano." For an outline and contents of each of the two parts of the original manuscript, see Ordóñez y Aguiar, 5.

155. For an English translation of the Quiché version and the history of the text, see Popol Vuh. My characterization of nineteenth-century Guatemala as unconcerned with Amerindian history needs qualification. For a more nuanced interpretation of nineteenth-century highland Guatemala, see Grandin.

156. Cabello Carro, 26. Surprisingly, Tedlock omits Ordóñez y Aguiar completely in his history of the manuscript for the English edition of the Popol Vuh.

157. Ordóñez y Aguiar, 28–34.

158. Ibid., 34–46.

159. Ibid., 51, 93.

160. Ibid., 145–52.

161. Ibid., 15, 113.

162. Ibid., 16–17, 39, 64, 68, 75.

163. Ibid., 62, 94.

164. Ibid., 5–7.

165. Ibid., 125–32.

166. Ibid., 9–16. For Boturini's point of view, see his *Idea* 16.14, 19 (pp. 84, 87).

167. Ibid., 10, 27, 39, 101, 143, 181–82, 208.

168. EAC-NB, MS 1564, fols. 230r–31v.

169. Dupaix, 1: 186–88 (188 for quotation).

170. Ibid., 1: 194–261, and 2, figs. 92–125. On the origins of Indians from ancient westward migrations instead of Asian southward ones; and on the peninsula of Yucatan as the original cradle of Mesoamerican civilizations, see 1: 118–19. In 2, fig.

107, Dupaix finds iconographic evidence of Osiris and Mercury (1: 210–11), See also Dupaix's conclusions after his survey of Palenque, 1: 223–33.

171. José Alcina Franch, "Introducción," in Dupaix, 1: 22–25.

CONCLUSION

1. Pinkerton, 2: 299.

2. Cañizares-Esguerra, "Spanish America," 329–33.

3. Moxó, *Entretenimientos*, 1: 78 (Voltaire and cannibalism), 156 (biases of witnesses such as Las Casas), 214–23 (testimony of learned Spaniards versus that of Kircher and Walton over nature of Mesoamerican hieroglyphs), 2: 5 (against systems), 7, 42–43, 49, 94, 309–17 (the clergy, although flawed observers themselves, are better witnesses than travelers), 15–16 (casual observers unable to discover Amerindian lies and cunning), 127 (on Sepúlveda). Moxó, *Cartas mejicanas*, 22 (on witnesses as the most reliable observers), 23–34 (on de Pauw). *Entretenimientos* has been attributed to a relative of Moxó's, the baron of Juras Reales, who used Moxó's manuscript of *Cartas mejicanas* without proper attribution. Although *Entretenimientos* and *Cartas* share similar contents, I find *Entretenimientos* better structured than *Cartas*. It seems that Juras Reales did not limit himself simply to plagiarizing Moxó. He also improved the latter's text. On Moxó, see Vargas Ugarte.

4. Typical of this trend are the Brazilian José Alencar (1829–1877) and the Ecuadorian Juan León Mera (1832–1894), whose theoretical views crystallized in their novels *Iracema* (1865) and *Cumandá* (1879) respectively. For their views on national literature, see Alencar, "Letter to Dr. Jaguaribe," in Alencar, 131–38; and Mera. Although they are provocative, I find the views of Doris Sommer (1991) on nineteenth-century Latin American national novels too focused on gender to the exclusion of both epistemological themes and representations of nature.

5. Atamirano, 73 (quotation); see also 62–63.

6. Gerbi, *Dispute*, trans. Moyle, 201.

7. Ibid., 289.