

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE HISTORY OF IDOLATRY AND THE CODEX DURÁN PAINTINGS

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ABSTRACT

Between 1574 – 1581, the Dominican friar Diego Durán collaborated with multiple painters to produce an account of the Aztec past that comprised a catalogue of gods, a description of the ancient calendar, and a granular history of Aztec imperial politics. Ostensibly created as a guide for extirpating idolatry, the Durán paintings consistently placed Aztec image cults in historical time, narrating transformations to Aztec practices of image use over the long trajectory of the empire’s history. Their narrative of the idol’s historical emergence assimilated both the Aztec past and Aztec images to Old Testament models. At the same time, narrating the history of idolatry provided the Durán artists with a language for intervening into period debates surrounding the Christian potentiality of indigenous subjects, the proper relationship between mendicant orders and indigenous communities, and the humanity of the peoples of the Americas.

Building from the close observation of the Durán paintings, this dissertation argues for a vision of the Durán paintings as images alive to their moment, reconstructing the aspirations of these paintings to use the history of idols toward political ends. Attention to the Durán painters’ pictorial choices reveals that style played a major role in the construction of these histories, broadening the paintings’ argumentation by facilitating their resonance within their context. Reading the Durán paintings’ history of idolatry in light of period sources, this dissertation argues that the manuscript’s painters produced a view of the past that simultaneously functioned as a fervent argument on behalf of the inherent rationality of indigenous peoples and as a critique of contemporary abuses of royal power. These findings reveal the political entanglements that colored the history of ancient images as it could be constructed ‘on the ground’ in the context of Early Colonial New Spain.

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INTRODUCTION

THE HISTORY OF IDOLATRY AND THE CODEX DURÁN PAINTINGS

Writing his *History of the Indies of New Spain* (1574-1581), a sweeping account of Aztec politics, religion and calendar, the Dominican friar Diego Durán often evoked Aztec images and the way that natives related to them.¹ Woven into the fabric of the text are the memories of a monumental corpus: temples are erected, stones are sourced to be sculpted into gods, images of the sun placed upon sacrificial platforms. No less important are human engagements with religious images, as Durán recorded sacrificial rites, gestures of reverence toward nature and acts of deity impersonation. Accounting for these objects and practices – what today we might call ‘material religion’ – Durán could have described their production and worship as idolatry and with this single label homogenized the entire lot.² But this dissertation argues that Durán’s work exemplifies another form of engagement with Aztec image cults, for while Durán condemned pre-Hispanic idolatry and its survivals into the Colonial period, he also advanced polemical theories about how and why the Aztecs had begun to use images in their religious practices; furthermore, he tracked

¹ The English rendering of the title given here reflects the title used in the best English translation of Durán’s *Historia* by Doris Heyden (1994). We do not know what the original title of the manuscript was, if any. Folio 1 recto of the book reads, *Historia de las Indias de N.(ueva España) y Yslas y Tierra Firme*. However, this title may not be contemporary with the rest of the manuscript, as it is written in a different hand than all the other texts that appear in the book. Additionally, the title suggests a broader scope than the history that is actually addressed in the manuscript (since the Caribbean is absent in Durán’s history). Throughout the remainder of this dissertation, I will refer to the manuscript using the shorthand ‘Codex Durán.’ This manuscript is held in the Biblioteca Nacional de España (VITR/26/11).

² On the term ‘material religion,’ the editorial statement in first issue of the journal of the same name describes it encompassing “religion through the lens of its material forms and their use in religious practice.” “Editorial Statement,” *Material Religion* 1 (2005): 4–9.

changes in Aztec image engagement over time. For Durán, Aztec material religion was formed diachronically, and the path along which native religion developed was informed by broader political and social trends in the culture at large.

This is not Durán's story alone, for the Codex that bears the friar's name was in fact a thoroughly multivocal production. Somewhere inside of the Durán manuscript resonates an indigenous account of the pre-Hispanic past; indeed, one of the main literary conceits of the Durán text is that it was based upon one or more Nahuatl-language sources. But the best evidence of the manuscript's collaborative nature lies on its surface, where painters lavishly illuminated the manuscript with a program of some 127 paintings. There were many contributors to these images, and codicology tells us that the paintings were probably not made all at once (as we shall see, Codex Durán has a material composition that may be uniquely complicated among mendicant manuscripts from sixteenth-century Mexico). But although the book's paintings were created under complex circumstances, an interest in how religious images changed over time appears as an essential through line in the subject matter of Codex Durán's illuminations. Analyzing these paintings' iconography alongside period discourses on the historical development of the idol, this dissertation argues that the Durán painters created a visual history of Aztec images that reflected both widely held assumptions and the specificity of contemporary politics among mendicant friars in New Spain. Strategic in their conception, the Durán paintings could serve as a pointed discourse for navigating tense relations between the regular orders, the secular clergy, and the Spanish crown. As I argue in the chapters that follow, the Durán paintings show us that arguments about the history of idolatry could be deployed toward creative ends: More than rote recitations of ancient polemics, these paintings innovatively approach style and iconography to create incisive, layered critique.

That artists in the medieval and early modern worlds might have approached idols as historically contingent objects is not a new idea in art historical scholarship. Michael Camille's *The Gothic Idol* made precisely this case, demonstrating that painters in the Late Medieval period showed the idol in association with particular historical conditions in biblical illustrations. At the same time, when translated to the Americas, and more specifically to the context of Mexico between the 1570s and 1580s, both the stakes and the context of painting the history of idolatry were different. Visually, Codex Durán's indigenous painters had a vast repertoire of manuscript and monumental imagery with which to contend and from which they could draw, manipulating and reimagining the specificity of pre-Columbian forms. Intellectual and political forces further inflected what it meant to paint the history of the idol in this context. Two decades earlier, Durán's Dominican confrère Fray Bartolomé de las Casas had argued vehemently for the humanity of indigenous Americans, presenting theories of the history of native religion as key evidence on their behalf. Crucially too, the relationships between mendicants and indigenous peoples were a subject of significant dispute escalated to the level of imperial politics; as we shall see, period tensions between mendicants and the Crown also informed the Durán painters' visual history of the idol. Significantly, Nahua Christians themselves were likely major contributors in the representation of indigenous religious history, creating a distinctive condition for representing these narratives in the Americas. All of these circumstances meant that telling the history of idolatry in later sixteenth-century Mexico had rather different implications than it had elsewhere. One of the core arguments of this dissertation, then, is that while the manuscript's program of paintings resonates with European models, the visual, political, and intellectual context of the New World in the 1570s makes their adaptation distinctive.

Codex Durán is thus a good object for seeing what a globally circulating story with deep medieval roots might have meant in the particular place and moment of 1570s Mexico. Yet the implications of this study are broader still. While the Durán painters' questions about the origins of Aztec image-making were deeply informed by the context in which the manuscript's artists posed them, these same questions also bear an uncanny resemblance to historical inquiries pursued in other times and places. When the Durán painters argued for their vision of how image cults had changed over time, and when they theorized about the outside influences that might have prompted those changes, they engaged in a practice in which modern interpreters might hear echoes of the disciplinary methods of art history. In his work on the aesthetic appreciation of the art of the Americas, George Kubler observed that certain mendicant-authored documents seemed nearly art historical in their interests.³ Reconsidering Kubler's position, Tom Cummins later noted that framing mendicant texts as art histories risked extricating Colonial works from the contingencies in which they were produced.⁴

And yet the comparison between the historicism of the Durán painters and contemporary interpretations of the history of ancient monuments should give us pause. Over the course of this thesis, I argue that observing how the Durán painters approached objects and practices from the ancient past offers us a view of what possibilities for engaging ancient art were available to the imagination of the later sixteenth century. For contemporary interpreters, there is in part an ethical imperative in play: In the pre-Columbian subfield, we can say precious little about how, or whether, native-language speakers would have described changes to art over time in written or spoken language. The Durán paintings' consistent interest in this subject suggests that they might

³ George Kubler, *Esthetic Recognition of Ancient Amerindian Art* (New Haven: 1991), 49.

⁴ Thomas B.F. Cummins, "To Serve Man: Pre-Columbian Art, Western Discourses of Idolatry, and Cannibalism," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 59-60 (2002): 111 (n.6.).

be activated to understand how artists of probable indigenous background, shaped by the conditions of their colonial context, might have situated monuments historically – though they communicated in painting, not in language, and though their vision was profoundly informed by their embeddedness in a Western intellectual context. I thus argue that Codex Durán’s antiquarian approaches might productively be centralized within a broader trans-Atlantic culture of discursively situating ancient monuments – while at the same time arguing that the Durán painters’ engagement within this broader culture was always characterized by their particular needs in their place and moment.

Approaching Codex Durán as an Object

In material terms, the Codex Durán is a paradoxical object. In a certain light, the manuscript’s facture appears to have been highly regular: Its folios are evenly grouped into consistently sized gatherings, its scribal hand is mostly ‘clean’ with few errata or strikethroughs to mar its pages, and its paintings are executed confidently, suggesting strength of conception and execution. For these reasons, Juan José Batalla Rosado suggests that the Codex Durán was likely a manuscript prepared for presentation with a degree of polish appropriate for circulation.⁵ Yet as previous studies have also noted, Codex Durán’s codicology is also quite complex. Most notably, this is because paintings in certain parts of the manuscript were not created at the same time as the text but were instead pasted into the book. As I explain below, these material conditions imply methodological challenges for interpreting the intentions of the Durán painters. Careful consideration of the text-image relationship in each part of the manuscript has led me to develop a set of premises tailored to working with its discrete sections, which I explain and justify below.

⁵ Juan José Batalla Rosado, Personal Communication, 2017.

Three treatises make up the Codex Durán, and each treatise has a different material relationship to its paintings. The earliest of these treatises is known as the Book of Gods and Rites (1574-1576); as its name suggests, it tells the story of the Aztec deities and describes how they were honored in festivals.⁶ Here, the initial six paintings are pasted into the manuscript as collages of fragments from other paintings; afterward, single paintings were pasted into the manuscript. The next treatise was an explication of the ancient Calendar (1579), which similarly incorporated paintings that were pasted into the manuscript from an earlier version. In this case, many of the paste-overs were nearly entire pages from an earlier manuscript, with both images and texts on their surfaces modeling the count of time in the Aztec year. Finally, the longest treatise in the manuscript, the *Historia* (1581), tells how the Aztec empire developed in deep time from the earliest migrations of the Nahuas to the Valley of Mexico until the moment of Cuauhtemoc's death after the Conquest. In this treatise, there are no paste-over paintings; every image was integral to the manuscript's conception. However, overpainting on the last image of the manuscript suggests that it, too, has been changed substantially since the moment when it was conceived.⁷

Understandably, these aspects of Codex Durán's materiality have attracted significant scholarly attention. Donald Robertson was the first to note the presence of the paste-overs, writing

⁶ The years given here as the dates when each treatise was completed come from the text of the manuscript itself. In the Calendario, the note reads, "Acabose el año de 1579" (Codex Durán Folio 317 verso). The *Historia* ends with the note, "Acavasse la presente obra el año de mille quinientos ochenta y uno" (Codex Durán Folio 221 recto). The Book of Gods and Rites is not dated with a similar text, but instead, its date comes from a passage in the treatise where Durán writes, "We [the Spaniards] have been here 55 years," putting the date around 1574 (for the arrival of Spaniards off the Veracruz coast) or 1576 (if the date is based upon the year of the fall of Tenochtitlan). On this last point, see Heyden's introductory essay, *Historia de las Indias de la Nueva España* (1994), xxviii, n.3.

⁷ Christopher Couch considers the possibility that overpaint in the Durán *Historia* may have been intended to cover-up a scene of Spanish violence. Couch, "Another Garden of Eden: Natural Imagery in the Durán Illustrations," in *I Coloquio de Documentos Pictográficos de Tradición Nahuatl* (Mexico: 1989), 123-135.

that the quality of Codex Durán's lithographic reproductions made observation of this phenomenon impossible without direct access to the manuscript.⁸ By paying close attention to differences in paper between the paste-overs and the main body of the Durán manuscript, Elizabeth Hill Boone argued that the manuscript that originally included the paste-over paintings was created in quarto format; the Madrid Durán, meanwhile, is formatted in folios.⁹ For Christopher Couch, a key question regarding the paste-overs was whether they were from an earlier Durán manuscript or whether they might have come from another book altogether. By holding the pages up to the light in the Biblioteca Nacional, Couch was able to 'read' the texts on the back of the paste-overs; his findings confirmed that the content of the earlier and later texts was mostly aligned. Building upon Boone's argument about Codex Durán's change of format, Couch argued that the *Historia* was added to the other two treatises late in the project of writing the Durán, necessitating the re-writing of the entire project.¹⁰ Taken altogether, these studies testify that Codex Durán took its shape through processes of writing and rewriting, with the result that the paintings and texts in this book cannot be described as a single, unified program.

These circumstances surrounding the manuscript's production pose a challenge for a project like this one, where the text would seem to provide evidence that could significantly enrich the reading of the paintings. The paintings may not have been created with the texts in mind – and

⁸ Robertson made several key observations about the paste-overs: first, that they were concentrated in only two treatises of the manuscript; second, that they contained fragments of text on their backs; and, third, that very well might have come from a 'cannibalized' earlier version of the same book. Donald Robertson, "Paste-over Illustrations in the Durán Codex of Madrid," *Tlalocan* 5 (1968): 340-348.

⁹ Boone, "The Nature and Earlier Versions of Durán's *Historia de las Indias* in Madrid," in *Smoke and Mist: Mesoamerican Studies in Memory of Thelma D. Sullivan* (Oxford, 1988): 41-58.

¹⁰ N.C. Christopher Couch, "Style and ideology in the Durán illustrations: An interpretive study of three early colonial Mexican manuscripts," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1987, 59-79.

yet art historians often devise methodologies for better understanding images in the light of texts that an artist may not have known. It is worth noting that previous work on the Durán paintings has largely skirted this issue. There are excellent iconographic studies of individual paintings in the Durán manuscript, but only Couch has attempted to characterize these paintings more broadly (despite Durán's central place in Early Colonial historiography).¹¹ Yet close reading of paintings – informed by threads in the text – constitutes the primary methodology of this dissertation, as it reveals that many of the manuscript's painters shared interests characteristic of an

¹¹ In the Codex Durán literature, there are excellent studies that are based primarily on the reading of single images. To name only a selection of these: Cecelia Klein addresses a Durán painting in which Tlatetolcan women battle with Mexica aggressors by expressing their breastmilk; "Fighting with Femininity: Gender and War in Aztec Mexico," *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 24 (1994), 25. Barbara Mundy interprets a depiction of the dedication of the Acuecuexco aqueduct in light of period sources on Ahuizotl's engineering projects; *The Death of Aztec Tenochtitlan, the Life of Mexico City* (Austin: 2015), 64-67. Alessandra Russo has interpreted an image of Cortés arriving off the Veracruz coast in light of Cortés' Christo-mimesis; *El Realismo Circular: Tierras Espacios y paisajes de la cartografía indígena novohispana, siglos XVI y XVII* (Mexico: 2005), 29-34. Patrick Hajovsky writes of the creation of Motecuhzoma I's portrait at Chapultepec; "Without a Face: Voicing Moctezuma II's Image at Chapultepec, Mexico City," in *Seeing Across Cultures in the Early Modern World*, ed. Dana Leibsohn and Jeanette Favrot Peterson (Burlington, VT: 2012), 174-176. Emily Umberger has written about images of the *temalacatl* of Motecuhzoma I in light of archaeological examples, "Renaissance and Enlightenment Images of Aztec Sacrificial Stones," *Source Notes in the History of Art* XXIX (2010): 18-25. Following Couch, Pablo Escalante Gonzalbo has interpreted an image of Motecuhzoma I as exemplifying the Solomonic model of good kingship; Escalante Gonzalbo, "Pintar la historia tras la crisis de la Conquista," in *Los pinceles de la historia: El origen del reino de la Nueva España, 1680 – 1750* (Mexico: 1999). Thomas B.F. Cummins has written about a collaged image of Quetzalcoatl in order to consider how the manuscript's mediation of ostensible Mesoamerican images related to the manuscript's paintings as evidence; "From Lies to Truth: Colonial Ekphrasis and the Act of Crosscultural Translation," in *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450-1650*, ed. Claire Farago (New Haven: 1995), 152–174. Each of these studies achieved important inroads toward understanding individual Durán paintings. To my knowledge, the only study to address the entire body of Codex Durán illuminations programmatically has been the dissertation of Christopher Couch's dissertation. However, at least two other studies have treated select passages from the Durán images as a corpus. Doris Heyden synthetically treated all of the Durán texts and images related to the Templo Mayor, *El Templo Mayor de Tenochtitlan en la Obra de Fray Diego Durán* (Mexico, 2000); and Sylvie Peperstraete has studied the images of the Book of Gods and Rites in a series of publications (see bibliography).

underappreciated element of their context and gives us access to their investment in this issue. In formulating my arguments, I work from the following set of premises about the relationship between text and image, tailored to each treatise:

1) In readings of the paintings of the Book of Gods and Rites and the Calendar treatise, I will assume that the writer of the Durán text had access to the paintings, but I will not assume that the painters knew the content of the text.

I make this assumption because the paintings of these treatises were almost certainly created before the texts of the Madrid manuscript were written. The scribal hands of these treatises were intentional and measured in leaving space for the images to be pasted into the book, and the texts on the backs of the paste-overs, as discussed above, seem to agree with the text in the manuscript itself. Furthermore, and most importantly, the text itself includes deictics that direct the reader to the paintings. When the text describes a painting, the descriptions are always a plausible match for the content of the paintings.

2) Since the paintings of The Book of Gods and Rites and The Ancient Calendar could have been created without knowledge of the text, I do not use the text of these treatises as evidence of the intentionality of the painters.

Because the primary aim of this dissertation is to understand how painters in the sixteenth century narrativized the history of Aztec religion, this dissertation often makes arguments about the intentions of artists. However, in the two treatises of the Durán text with paste-

over paintings, I do not treat the text as a primary document with which the paintings were in conversation. Instead, out of an abundance of caution, I treat these paintings and text relatively independently of one another. When the text is used to interpret a painting, I attribute authorship of these passages to the ekphrasis of the Durán text's author rather than directly attributing the ideas to the painters themselves.

3) In the *Historia*, where there are no paste-over paintings, I assume that the Durán painters had access to the text, and I find that they engaged in creative interpretations of the content of that text.

Unlike in the earlier two treatises of the Durán manuscript, the *Historia* never directs the reader's attention to the content of the paintings. The paintings in this treatise, however, were integral to the manuscript. There are clear spaces allocated for illustrations in the writing of the text, and the spacing of the lines of the text was never compromised to allow space for a painting. I would argue, then, that the sequence of production for this manuscript was that the text was written first, and illuminations were added after. Arguments that the paintings creatively reinterpreted the text are articulated in this dissertation's chapters on the *Historia*, where I demonstrate that while the painters clearly had access to the narratives of the *Historia*, they often meaningfully diverged from the ideas that are expressed in the text itself.

4) Finally, I assume that the painters of the *Historia* had access to the Book of Gods and Rites and that they may also have had access to the Calendar treatise, and that the images in these earlier treatises were thus available to reinterpretation by the Durán painters.

As Couch identified, the *Historia* includes at least one painting that reproduces an image originally created for the Book of Gods and Rites.¹² Consequently, we might conclude that the *Historia* painters almost certainly saw the earlier treatises of the manuscript. An important aspect of the staggered creation of the Durán manuscript is that over time, the manuscript itself became a kind of corpus of imagery that subsequent painters could cite and manipulate.

These assumptions affect how interpretation might position images and textual artifacts in relation to one another, but in a very real sense, they also affect how we understand the artists and author behind these artifacts. In the section that follows, I fill in our picture of the players involved in Codex Durán's creation, basing my comments in part on previous scholarship and in part on new insights into the manuscript's production.

Authors, Authorship and Styles

With Codex Durán – as for other mendicant-compiled manuscripts in New Spain – there is a significant imbalance between what we know of the text's author and what we know of its painters.¹³ In part, this is a function of the kind of evidence that allows us to access these authors.

¹² Couch, "Style and Ideology in the Durán Illustrations," 69-70.

¹³ In the case of Codex Telleriano-Remensis, for example, we know that the author was the Dominican friar Pedro Ríos, but we do not know the name of any of Ríos' indigenous

We attribute the book to Durán based on textual evidence within the manuscript itself: Durán is named on folio 317 verso as the author of the manuscript.¹⁴ Though the evidentiary record is fragmentary, our knowledge of Durán’s activities in New Spain is thinly supplemented by other records: Durán appears briefly in the history of the Dominicans written by Agustín Dávila Padilla, and his name later crops up as a signatory to judicial proceedings. By contrast, we know the Durán painters by their hands: connoisseurship, the scrutiny of the painters’ pictorial behaviors, constitutes the sole mode of access to the artists and their positionality. Below, I sketch what is known about these agents in the book’s production and I address how significant gaps in the evidence inform the methodology of this study.

Nearly everything that we know about Durán comes from the text of Codex Durán itself. We know, for instance, that Durán lived nearly his entire life in New Spain: Where an Inquisition record informs us that Durán was born in Seville in 1537, we learn from Codex Durán that the author was living in Texcoco by the time of his young childhood.¹⁵ Given his background, Durán claims an extensive language of Nahuatl, and he critiques those of his fellow mendicants who are untrained in Mexico’s native languages. For Ángel María Garibay K., Durán’s history is distinctive

collaborators. Sahagún’s biography is much better known to us than those of the 32 *tlacuilos* who illustrated the Florentine Codex, let alone the *Primeros Memoriales*; this is the same in the case of Juan de Tovar, author of the Tovar manuscript.

¹⁴ This attribution, however, is perhaps not as straightforward as it initially might seem. Folio 317 is a transitional folio between the Book of Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar. On this folio, one hand wrote that the treatise was written “por el padre frai diego duran religioso de la orden de los predicadores,” but this was subsequently covered up with thick, heavy strikethroughs. For a theory as to the motive for this erasure, see Paloma Vargas Montes, “The Durán Codex: A Content Analysis,” in *Print Culture Through the Ages: Essays on Latin American Book History* (New York, 2016), 62-80.

¹⁵ For a discussion of this inquisition record, see F. Fernandez del Castillo, *Anales del Museo Nacional*, Epoca V, tomo I, n. 3, 223. A general account of Durán’s biography is offered in Doris Heyden and Fernando Horcasitas, “Fray Diego Durán: His Life and His Works,” *Book of the Gods and Rites and The Ancient Calendar* (Norman, OK: 1971): 4-5.

because his position is informed by love and sympathy with the country where he was raised. Garibay pointed to a profound ambivalence in Durán's writing on indigenous peoples, where he at once condemns their idolatry and also celebrates some aspects of Mexican culture.¹⁶ Indeed, Durán communicates with directness and immediacy on his observations of the Mexican past, frequently citing his own experience of native customs as evidence for his statements, a tendency described by Stephen Colston in a dissertation that analyzed Durán's ethnographic and ethnohistorical techniques.¹⁷

Looking beyond the binding of the manuscript, it is possible to fill in a biographical picture of Durán from scant textual references. Intertextuality provides one important clue: as George Kubler and Charles Gibson noted, and as Couch subsequently elaborated, Codex Durán was a major source for the history written in the 1580s by the Jesuit friar Juan de Tovar, who claimed to have gotten the source for his book from a cousin. Durán thus bears a family relationship to another major chronicler of New Spain. Inquisition documents further round out the picture, telling us that in the early 1580s, Durán was the vicar of Hueyapan in the modern-day state of Morelos.¹⁸ By 1588, Durán had died, and he and the manuscript largely vanish from the evidentiary record until the nineteenth century.¹⁹ It is worth pausing to note the curious polarity that emerges when we juxtapose Durán with Bernardino de Sahagún, the other major manuscript compiler of the Aztec world. Sahagún's influence touches innumerable documents, sites, and discourses in the Colonial

¹⁶ Ángel Ma. Garibay K., "Diego Durán y su obra," in *Historia de las Indias de la Nueva España e Islas de la Tierra Firme*, ed. Ángel Ma. Garibay K. (Mexico: 1967), xi.

¹⁷ Stephen Allyn Colston, "Fray Diego Durán's *Historia de Las Indias de Nueva España e Islas de la Tierra Firme*: A Historiographical Analysis," Ph.D. Diss., University of California, Los Angeles (1973).

¹⁸ Ángel Ma. Garibay K., "Diego Durán y su obra," in *Historia de las Indias de la Nueva España e Islas de la Tierra Firme*, ed. Ángel Ma. Garibay K. (Mexico: 1967), xii.

¹⁹ Garibay, "Diego Durán y su obra," xiii.

period – and yet, in the Florentine Codex, we only rarely hear his voice directly (with the exception of the prologues to each of his multi-authored books).²⁰ By contrast, Durán’s influence is felt only in his manuscript (and the copies it spawned), and yet his authorial presence in the text is constant and unabating.

Like Durán, the painters are known primarily – even exclusively – by the marks that they left within the manuscript, but unlike Durán, many basic biographic details evade interpretation. Connoisseurial studies shed partial light upon matters of the Durán manuscript’s illumination: Couch concluded that five artists’ hands created paintings for the *Historia*, a number confirmed by the research undertaken for this study;²¹ at least three more contributed to the remaining treatises. The artistic hands that illustrated the Durán favored different qualities of line, different approaches to figuration, and different relationships to ancient canons. A single hand seems to have undertaken the paste-overs in all of the paintings that appear in the Calendar treatise, but in the *Historia* one notes a multiplicity of pictorial tendencies suggestive of a more collaborative process of production.

While connoisseurship may give a fair idea of the number of painters who contributed to the manuscript, moving from identifying artists’ hands to questions of identity poses a much more significant problem. Should we accept that artists always painted in styles that might have matched social understandings of their ethnicity? In the historiography of sixteenth-century art in New Spain, we are no longer comfortable assuming that painters working in European styles were always of European descent: The discovery that at least some Nahua artists worked in European

²⁰ For a classic overview of Sahagún’s oeuvre, see Arthur J.O. Anderson, "Sahagún: Career and Character" in Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: The General History of the Things of New Spain, Introductions and Indices*, Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles Dibble, trans. (Salt Lake City: 1982).

²¹ Couch, "Style and Ideology in the Durán Illustrations," 295-315.

styles – and were called by European names in conventual documents – has slowed assumptions that Nahuas painted only in visibly hybrid styles.²² But scholarship has often concluded that ‘challenging’ figuration and spatiality are evidence of Colonial paintings’ production by Nahuas. Could Spaniards have painted the Durán paintings?

In short, I have decided that there is no easy move between painterly style and ethnicity in the Codex Durán images; in later sixteenth-century Mexico, many styles were available to many artists. And yet, the evidence overwhelmingly suggests that the painters were, in fact, indigenous. In part, the proof for this point is strongly comparative, as Sahagún’s Florentine Codex and every other manuscript treating indigenous history with illuminations has been found to have been painted by native artists. Like other scholars who have written about the Durán paintings,²³ I believe that there is a very high probability that the Durán artists were indigenous. But in methodological terms, the argument that I will advance over the course of this dissertation is not *contingent* on these artists’ indigeneity. In this study of how the Durán paintings represented the history of idolatry, I am arguing primarily that images build meaning through their relationship with other images, and that the relationships between new images and older ones have specific valences in the politics of the decades when the Durán was made. Knowing the ethnicity of the Durán painters is an incredibly important issue, for it could help to clarify the stakes of the paintings’ representations and would usefully inform the study of the Durán by placing it in relationship to other works of art produced by Nahuas. Nevertheless, while I believe that the

²² For the classic study in this vein, see Rosa Camelo, Jorge Gurría Lacroix, and Constantino Reyes-Valerio, *Juan Gerson: Tlacuilo de Tecamachalco* (Mexico: 1964).

²³ Among the publications listed in note 11 above, Mundy, Vargas Montes, Hajovksy, and Klein explicitly describe the Durán artists as indigenous.

painters were very likely Nahua elites, I will not pursue an argument that will depend on their identity for its resonances.

Indeed, identity has long vexed interpreters of the Codex Durán paintings. When Robertson wrote his field-establishing survey of Colonial-era manuscripts, he addressed the Durán paintings only to say that he believed they did not fit within the scope of the discussion.²⁴ Adopting a methodology derived from mid-century studies of Renaissance painting, Robertson's survey divided the manuscripts of Central Mexico into schools: there was a school for the arts of Texcoco, a school for the arts of Tlatelolco, and so on. One might infer that the Durán paintings could not be situated easily within the stylistic canons of any one of these schools and were left out of the discussion for this reason; indeed, in other publications, Robertson had referred in passing to the 'Renaissance flavor' of the paintings.²⁵

As a group, it may be difficult to place the Durán painters within any of Robertson's stylistic schools, but my research has found that iconographic choices lend insight into the milieu of at least one of the book's illuminators. A large-scale frontispiece graces the first opening of the Durán manuscript, where Chichimecs associated with caves appear dressed in hides and other regalia. The paired figures in the lower register of this painting each wear a device that consists of a bicolored circular base with two off-shooting vertical elements (Fig. 3.10). Jerome Offner argues that identical devices are solely attested in the Texcocan manuscript corpus and in the manuscripts

²⁴ The exclusion of the Durán manuscript from Robertson's study is addressed in the very first paragraph of this book's preface: "Some [manuscripts] like the Atlas of Duran and the Codex Cozcatzin, are excluded, because they raise complex problems not germane to the main theme of the book, problems that should be discussed later in another context." Donald Robertson, *Mexican Manuscript Painting of the Early Colonial Period* (Norman, OK: 1994 [1959]), xix.

²⁵ Robertson, "Paste-Over Illustrations," 346-347.

from the eastern edges of the Aztec empire.²⁶ Conservatively, we might argue on the basis of this device's presence in the Durán manuscript that one of the painters at least had access to images from the Texcocan region. More daringly – and recalling that Durán lived in Texcoco as a boy – we might ask whether one of the painters might even have been from Texcoco himself. As I elaborate in my chapter on the Calendar treatise, other paintings in the manuscript also evidence possible connections with the Texcocan pictorial tradition.

Much as the historiography of Colonial art has struggled to establish a consistent set of premises about the relationship between style and identity, it has also struggled to reach consensus about the terminology for describing styles that seem to incorporate both indigenous and European elements. The question is particularly germane to the Durán manuscript: To take just one example from the Book of Gods and Rites paintings, the presence of landscape in a painting is typically interpreted as evidence of contact with European styles, while the elements of costume, bodily proportions, and use of color are seen as fitting within indigenous canons (Figs. 1.1-1.3). In Colonial art history, much has been made of the question of how to describe what appear to be incongruous admixtures, with race brought to the forefront of analysis.²⁷ Some interpreters have preferred the metaphor of the 'hybrid,' a term borrowed from the biology of plants; objections to this term hold that it carries both biological connotations and built-in assumptions about Colonial

²⁶ Jerome Offner, "A Curious Commonality Among Some Eastern Basin of Mexico and Eastern Mexican Pictorial Manuscripts," *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 41 (2010): 259-279.

²⁷ For a now-classic essay critiquing Colonial art history's tendency to foreground race in the interpretation of works, see Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, "Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America," *Colonial Latin American Review* 12 (2003): 5-35. For a historiographic overview of race-based analysis in Colonial art history, see Charlene Villaseñor Black, "Race and the Historiography of Colonial Art," in *Envisioning Others: Race, Color and the Visual in Iberia and Latin America*, ed. Pamela Patton (Leiden: 2015), 303-322.

relations that may not appertain.²⁸ Prominent among some Mexican historians, the metaphor of *tequitqui*, or ‘tributary’ art, emphasizes power dynamics between indigenous artists and Spanish patrons.²⁹ However, in a manuscript like Codex Durán, we should not assume that such a ‘tributary’ or compulsory relationship existed between the mendicant friar and the painters, particularly given the recent turn toward a collaborative model of manuscript production that now predominates in readings of the Florentine Codex.³⁰ The metaphor of ‘mestizo’ images has also been used in influential publications, although it has similarly been undermined by the difficulty of moving between style and ethnic affiliation.³¹

In my study of the Durán paintings, I have not found justification for describing the paintings using any one of these metaphors. In their place, I adopt the position that the Durán paintings are best studied by examining how artists intentionally position themselves in relationship to style. Rather than asking what kind of admixture an image might represent, I instead adopt the theoretical position that artists do not only make images that reflect their identity. Instead, I work from the notion that style is a choice, and that the Durán painters were strategic in making decisions about all aspects of their images, in part to establish sympathies and affiliations with

²⁸ Dean and Leibsohn, “Hybridity and Its Discontents,” 6-7.

²⁹ For the theorization of ‘tequitqui’ as a metaphor for Colonial art, formulated in large part through comparison with the Spanish ‘mudejar,’ see José Moreno Villa, *La escultura colonial mexicana* (Mexico: [1941] 1986), 10.

³⁰ Furthermore, models for Aztec tribute have themselves evolved significantly since the term *tequitqui* was first introduced into the literature. See Michael Smith, “The Aztecs Paid Taxes, Not Tribute,” *Mexicon* 2014: 19-22.

³¹ Serge Gruzinski noted significant challenges surrounding the language of *mestizaje*, pointing to its use for such processes as “mixing, mingling, blending, crossbreeding, combining, superimposing, juxtaposing, interposing, imbricating, fusing, and merging.” Gruzinski further noted that *mestizo* sometimes invites false equivalencies between biological mixtures and cultural ones. Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization* (New York: 2002), 19-31. Dean and Leibsohn note that George Kubler held strong objections to the term; he referred to it as a ‘racial solecism.’ “Hybridity and its Discontents,” 7.

various positions and bodies of knowledge. My studies of each treatise in the Durán shows that its painters made conscious choices about style when they designed its pictorial program, and that these choices implied real consequences for the paintings' argumentation. In a world in which extensive pictorial material circulated in the mendicant context, the imagination of the Durán painters was supplied with a rich body of images on which they could draw – always with intention, and to observable, and sometimes polemical, ends.

Codex Durán in a Culture of Books

One of the surprises that results from centering images in the study of the Codex Durán is that one quickly realizes that this manuscript was at the crossroads of many others. After painting the sheets of the manuscript's unbound folios, the artists of the Codex Durán may well have rested their pens on tables where nearby one could find the Codex Magliabechiano (or a manuscript of the Magliabechiano group); a modestly painted edition of Motolinia's history of the Indians of Tlaxcala; a Nahuatl-language manuscript that scholars today call *Crónica X*; or one of the indigenous paintings that Durán claims to have consulted firsthand as evidence for his histories. Printed matter was in play as well, for European books were consulted for details about the events of the Conquest, as guides for illustrating the calendar, and as useful models for framing historical narratives – both Biblical and popular. Questions as to the availability of images and the circulation of knowledge in manuscripts in this ambit are relevant and intrinsic to this study, which argues that the Durán painters constructed their history of idolatry in large part by reinterpreting models. In this section, I will detail what we know about Codex Durán's place in a culture of book production, concluding with the implications of these findings for this dissertation.

One of the primary literary conceits of the text of the Durán *Historia* is that this manuscript was heavily based upon various kinds of indigenous sources. In a number of instances, Durán states outright that he has drawn his information about the Aztec past from a source that he calls the Historia. At other times, Durán reports on his visits to remote mountain villages to collect evidence from indigenous paintings; in his situation of these images, some are jealously guarded by local elites who hesitate to share their paintings with him. These meta-textual sources for Codex Durán seem to exist today only in the words of the manuscript's author; if they survive outside of the Durán manuscript itself, then they have not yet been identified in relation to the Codex.³²

On the other hand, there are sources for the Durán manuscript that survive only as scholarly reconstructions; one of these is known as the Crónica X. In an influential 1945 article, Robert Barlow argued on the basis of shared narrative emphasis that this single, lost chronicle influenced the writers of many manuscripts – the author of Codex Durán, but also the manuscripts of Tezozomoc, Tovar, Acosta, and others. There are indeed telling commonalities among these manuscripts: most notably, a senior Aztec official by the name of Tlacaelel plays a significant (and perhaps event outsized) role in each. Colonial Nahuatl scholarship has frequently reexamined the dimensions of the Crónica X problem, but the adage at the heart of Barlow's original argument –

³² Durán states that he relies upon his Nahuatl source even when he has reason to question its accuracy. For instance, when he writes about the death of Motecuhzoma II, a highly controversial issue in Colonial historiography, Durán writes that the Aztec king died by stabbing rather than by stoning, defying what some considered common knowledge. He then writes, “lo cual, si esta historia no me lo dijera, ni viera la pintura que lo certificara, me hiciera dificultoso de creer, pero como estoy obligado a poner lo que los autores por quien me rijo en esta historia me dicen y escriben y pintan, pongo lo que se halla escrito y pintado.” When Durán's Nahuatl Historia conflicts with accepted opinions, Durán consults with others: “lo torné a preguntar y satisfacerme, porfiando con los autores que los indios lo mataron de aquella pedrada. Dicen la pedrada no haber sido nada [...]” Codex Durán Folio 215 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, II: 556; Heyden, *History*, 545.

that if the Crónica X hadn't existed, someone would have had to invent it – mostly still rings true in current scholarship.³³

Evidence for Durán's contact with other book-making projects also comes from a mention that he had visited a workshop where a book was under production in Tlatelolco, where we know that the Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún and his indigenous collaborators were at work on the 12-volume Florentine Codex during the same years.³⁴ On this basis, it has frequently been argued that Durán had firsthand contact with the Florentine and may even have consulted the manuscript as a source. While this may indeed be the case, it is worth pausing to ask what kind of influence this contact might have had. There is little evidence to suggest that the Florentine had a lasting impact in the *Historia*, for example, since the Florentine's only historical content is found in its Conquest history. The Calendar treatise also seems unlikely to have drawn on the Florentine: Durán and Sahagún use two different sets of nomenclature when they name the months of the Aztec festival. Perhaps the textual content of the Book of Gods and Rites might have been influenced by some passages in the Florentine; the images however, show little affinity with Durán's paintings.

While the evidence for each of these sources survives in the text, the strongest evidence for Codex Durán's connections to other manuscripts comes from its paintings. In particular, the Book of the Gods and Rites demonstrates the significant influence of the manuscripts of the Codex

³³ Robert Barlow, "La Crónica X: Versiones Coloniales de la Historia de los Mexica Tenochca," *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Antropológicos* 7 (1945): 65-87. For recent takes on Barlow's Crónica X, see Sylvie Peperstraete, "La Chronique 'X': Reconstitution et analyse d'une source perdue fondamentale sur la civilisation Aztèque, d'après l'Historia de las Indias de Nueva España de D. Durán et la Crónica mexicana de F.A. Tezozomoc," BAR International Series 1630 (Oxford: 2007); Gabriel Kenrick Kruell, "Resucitando la Crónica X: Reconstrucción filológica de un fragmento inicial de la Crónica Mexicayotl de Hernando de Alvarado Tezozomoc," *Tlalocan* 19 (2013), 301-461.

³⁴ Heyden, *History of the Indies of New Spain*, 568.

Magliabechiano, an observation first made by Boone in her work on this manuscript. Boone notes that the compositions of some Gods and Rites paintings are in fact direct quotations or reworkings of the Magliabechiano images, with the major distinction that in Codex Durán, the paintings have landscapes.³⁵ The manuscript that originated the Magliabechiano group – whether the Tudela or the Magliabechiano itself – generated multiple copies that were dispersed among mendicants and perhaps others to create new manuscripts, including the Durán.³⁶ As I argue in chapter one, on the Gods and Rites paintings, the Durán painters were strategic in their approach to these sources; their reinterpretations are not uninspired quotations, but instead are best understood as carefully considered adaptations.

Another important part of the web of Durán’s intertextual relationships, thus far underappreciated, is the manuscript’s relationship to Motolinia, the earliest mendicant chronicler of New Spain and one of the original twelve Franciscans to arrive in the history of the evangelization of Mexico. Writings attributed to Motolinia concern indigenous traditions in Tlaxcala and the Christianization of the Tlaxcalan people after the Conquest. Reconstructing the movement of Motolinia’s texts in the ambit of New Spain proves a significant challenge: today, the manuscript survives in multiple sixteenth-century manuscript editions; beyond surviving examples, others have surely been lost. From among these now-lost manuscripts, a single page, reprinted in the first decade of the twentieth-century, shows the god Camaxtli inside of a capital that appears on its frontispiece; though uncolored, in body, costume and iconography, the god is

³⁵ Elizabeth Hill Boone, *Codex Magliabechiano and the Lost Prototype of the Magliabechiano Group* (Berkeley: 1983), 154-159.

³⁶ On the question of which manuscript originated the Magliabechiano group, in addition to Boone (1983) see Juan José Batalla Rosado, *El Códice Tudela y el Grupo Magliabechiano: la tradición medieval de copia de codices en América* (Madrid, 2002). Beyond the Magliabechiano group’s role as a pictorial source for the Book of Gods and Rites paintings, it is also the likely source for the nomenclature of the festivals in the Durán, a topic explored further in Chapter Two.

an exact match for the image of the same deity in the Durán (Fig. 1.4). Knowing that Motolinia was a source for Durán is useful for understanding the Durán manuscript itself: beyond explaining the source for an otherwise unaccounted painting, it also suggests where Durán could have sourced certain ideas that might otherwise be difficult to explain, like a narrative about giants that appears in the opening of the Historia. For the broader picture of the culture of the book in New Spain, identifying Durán's turn toward Motolinia is also helpful for rounding out a picture of manuscripts traveling between mendicant orders, from Franciscan to Dominican contexts.³⁷

While this dissertation focuses primarily on the ideas and images that the Durán painters adapted in their work, the Codex Durán was not just a recipient of influence; its impact was also felt in other bookmaking projects. Since the early work of Kubler and Gibson, scholars have known that at least two illustrated manuscripts were abridged versions of the Durán. One, the Codex Ramírez, is a shortened version of the Durán text with black-and-white pen and ink drawings done in a sketched-in, unsteady hand. The other, more technically sophisticated in its illustrations, is the aforementioned Tovar Manuscript, where a historical section includes many images directly based on the Durán manuscript (though its calendar diverges from the Durán model significantly).³⁸ Looking at the relationship between the three manuscripts, Couch concluded that the Ramírez was a kind of intermediary manuscript created after the Durán and before the Tovar, and that the Tovar

³⁷ For information about surviving examples of the Motolinia manuscripts, see the Prose Sources section of the *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, vols. 14 and 15: Guide to Ethnohistoric Sources. The handbook notes the similarity with Durán's Camaxtli and suggests that the image might have been derived from Durán; the handbook goes so far as to suggest that this title page may be a modern forgery. This manuscript is lost and thus cannot be consulted in person to evaluate these claims.

³⁸ George Kubler and Charles Gibson, *The Tovar Calendar: An Illustrated Mexican Manuscript ca. 1585* (New Haven: 1951).

manuscript intentionally emulated an indigenous style in order to erase or obscure Codex Durán's European influence (much like Techialoyan manuscripts did nearly two centuries later).³⁹

My own research into the afterlife of the Durán finds that at least one more codex may have been created after its influence. The *Kalendario Mexicano*, bound in among the pages of the *Cantares Mexicanos*, has long been attributed to Sahagún (and for good reason, given that its text repeats many Sahagúntine passages).⁴⁰ However, the fragmentary image program associated with this manuscript does not use the Sahagúntine nomenclature. Instead, it adopts multiple features that are unique to Durán: nomenclature for the months, identical glyphic elements, and an interlocking count of the two Mesoamerican calendars that *only* appears in the Durán paintings. On this basis, I propose that the creator of the *Kalendario Mexicano* had access to texts created after both of New Spain's major chroniclers – or, otherwise, that the images and texts in this calendar ended up together by historical accident, and only seem to be related because they were bound together at some later moment. The *Kalendario Mexicano* is a major problem for Nahua scholarship, and begs further study at a later date.

With the creation of these manuscripts, the Codex Durán paintings generated their literary afterlife. By 1637, the manuscript was under royal care in the Alcazar of Madrid; no mention of the work appears to surface again until the nineteenth century. How the manuscript came to Madrid is unclear. Perhaps, as Paloma Vargas Montes has argued, the manuscript was intended for print, and its journey to Madrid began with the search for an amenable publisher;⁴¹ we are only able to

³⁹ Couch, "Style and Ideology in the Durán Illustrations," 380-395.

⁴⁰ The significant areas of overlap between the text of the *Kalendario Mexicano* and book two of the Florentine Codex is discussed in Betty Ann Brown, "European Influences in Early Colonial Descriptions and Illustrations of the Mexica Monthly Calendar," Ph.D. diss., The University of New Mexico, 1977: 99-105.

⁴¹ Paloma Vargas Montes, "The Durán Codex: A Content Analysis," in *Print Culture through the Ages: Essays on Latin American Book History*, 62-79.

speculate on the particulars of its itinerary. But though this chapter of the Durán's history is necessarily obscure, the detailed movement of knowledge between manuscripts highlighted in this section shows that we have a remarkably clear view of Durán's place in a network of images and ideas. As each chapter of this dissertation will demonstrate, tracing this network serves as a powerful methodological tool, for we can often observe the precise argumentation of the Durán paintings best by measuring by the distance between the positions that they adopted and the models that they adapted. The books in the Durán's immediate ambit are particularly helpful in that they are especially strong tools for comparison: Looking at the Durán paintings alongside the images from which they were sourced, an artist's intentionality emerges, found in the difference that they staked from the sources with which they worked.

The History of Idolatry Circulates, and the Stakes of the Question

The network of manuscript production attested in the immediate ambit of Codex Durán of course represented only a miniscule fraction of the books and ideas circulating in New Spain. In terms of historical writing in mendicant contexts, later sixteenth-century historians throughout the broader Catholic world engaged in earnest in the writing of *historia sacra* – the history of a local site's relationship to Christian rites. As a Catholic genre, *historia sacra* in Counter-Reformation contexts was conceived as a means to argue for the nearly ahistorical character of Catholic religious practices: in other words, it was important to show that a town's particular set of Christian practices in the sixteenth century was virtually identical to its practice in the deeper past. As this dissertation argues, the Codex Durán images had their own interest in tracing back a religion to the deep past: Aztec rites had their own underpinnings, and the painters postulated that those rites had changed over time. In this light, Codex Durán may fit into the Counter-Reformation category

of *historia sacra* – although in this case, the visual argument pivoted around the notion that Aztec religion had indeed changed in deep history, falling into decadent corruption.

Simon Ditchfield has illuminated the emergence of the *historia sacra* in Italy between 1550-1700; these books, relatively unattested before the Council of Trent, represented a new kind of hyper-local history that emerged in significant numbers throughout the Catholic world. These histories were designed as arguments on behalf of the historical precedent for local religion: As Rome sought to regularize liturgical practices and cults that had diverged in the medieval period, continuity with historical precedent could serve as a powerful argument for endorsing local versions of religious practice. In *Historia after Historia*, authors philologically tracked evidence for the actual existence and rightful canonization of local saints; argued that their liturgical practices had been sanctioned by papal councils held centuries prior; and found authority for local practices in the history of the early church. The Catholic ideal embraced by these histories was the notion that religion in fact had never changed. Succinctly, Ditchfield writes that “the theme of continuity may be said to constitute the guiding principle behind all liturgical, hagiographical, and historiographical research.”⁴²

As we shall see, the Codex Durán paintings provided their own visual history of a local religious tradition – although its thesis about the course of native religion was, of course, entirely the opposite of those of local Catholic sacred histories. Like other post-Tridentine mendicants, Durán and the Durán painters also asked what deep historical trends lay beneath practices that had existed only a few decades before (and many, too, that persisted in their present). And yet the stories that they told involved significant changes over history’s course. To take one example, the

⁴² Simon Ditchfield, *Liturgy, Sanctity and History in Tridentine Italy: Pietro Maria Campi and the Preservation of the Particular* (Cambridge, 1995), 35.

narrative of the later paintings of the Historia, explored in depth in Chapter Four, holds that Aztec religion initially involved only the worship of nature and later was corrupted toward image worship under the influence of tyrant kings. Continuity may have been the primary thesis in favor of arguing for Catholic religion's holy origins; the Durán paintings, in the same vein, show us that historical change could itself be a powerful thesis for idolatry.

Yet how to interpret those changes – specifically in the context of the Americas – had been a topic of some debate in the context of the sixteenth century. Changes in the history of native religion were centered in the debates surrounding the Valladolid controversy (1550-1551), in which the Dominican Bartolomé de las Casas argued fervently on behalf of the humanity of indigenous peoples (and against the thesis of their natural slavery, proposed by Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda). As Sabine MacCormack has considered at length, the indigenous capacity for Christianization figured centrally in Las Casas' thought surrounding the humanity of indigenous peoples, and the religious history of indigenous peoples served as evidence of that capacity. As Las Casas imagined native religious history, it began with the worship of nature and evolved toward human sacrifice. For the Dominican, the initial error was only one of mistaking the Creation for the Creator, while the latter error was evidence of the strength of native devotion given their willingness to offer precious human life. Over the course of this historical trajectory, Las Casas saw evidence for the increasing piety of natives, and this in turn served to consolidate the notion of the indigenous capacity for Christianization – and of their status as natural men.⁴³

Las Casas shows us the prominent discursive role accorded to the history of idolatry in the Americas in the mid-sixteenth century; indeed, that this debate was staged for Charles V shows

⁴³ Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* (Princeton: 1991); Patricia Seed, "'Are these not also men?' The Indians' Humanity and Capacity for Spanish Civilisation," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 25 (1993): 629-652.

that the question of the religious evolution of the natives had a grip on the intellectual imagination at the very center of imperial power. At the same time, Las Casas' voice was not the only one to narrativize changes in indigenous religion, as writers in the Americas participated in their own right. For some, as in the case of Sahagún, the history of idolatry in the Old Testament could be a form of direct evidence about the history of indigenous peoples before the Conquest, for Old Testament events believed to have affected all of humanity at once should of rights have affected indigenous peoples in the Americas as well. On this point, an area of particular interest was the question of the Great Flood in the Book of Genesis. For many mendicants, including Sahagún, this event both linked history in the Old World and in the New and marked a major point in the history of idolatry, for Christian doctrine taught that idol worship may have been introduced into the world just after the Flood.⁴⁴ For the Dominican friar who directed the creation of the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, the question weighed heavily: scribes in this manuscript annotated many of the images of gods in that manuscript with the note that they had originated 'before' or 'after the Diluvium' (Figs. 1.13–1.14).

In fact, the Telleriano-Remensis is a helpful point of comparison for the Durán paintings, for the scribal annotations in that manuscript often take images of the gods and religious practices and attempt to place them into diachronic history. Alongside the question of whether the Gods originated before or after the great Flood, the scribes also argued that the rites themselves had a

⁴⁴ Louise Burkhart notes that Sahagún gives the Flood significant attention in the *Coloquios* and *Apéndice* as a major event in the formation of such sins as idolatry and lust (sins intimately associated with one another since antiquity). However, Burkhart also notes that in these pre-Tridentine texts, there is significant internal contradiction: "Did idolatry begin with Lucifer, with Cain, or with the dividing of the languages?" Burkhart, "Doctrinal Aspects of Sahagun's Colloquios," in *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún: Pioneer Ethnographer of Sixteenth Century Aztec Mexico*, ed. J. Jorge Klor de Alva, H. B. Nicholson and Eloise Quiñones Keber (Albany: 1988), 81.

history: One scribe annotates an image of autosacrifice, saying that this is how religion was practiced before the Flood, while later, an image of one man sacrificing another is marked as a post-Dilluvian innovation. As I have argued at length elsewhere, these kinds of annotations introduce linear, historical time into images that could, visually, be interpreted as ahistorical (since the almanac where they appear is presented in a non-narrative format).⁴⁵

When the Durán painters situated Aztec monuments and practices within the history of idolatry, they were thus providing a take on a commonly shared problematic – although, as we shall see, these scribes adapted their story about idolatry’s history to speak to period tensions characteristic of mendicant contexts in their moment. In Codex Durán, the fundamental relationship animating the creation of the text is a kind of intimacy between a Dominican friar and indigenous Christians, an intimacy born as much through Durán’s immersion in native languages and indigenous takes on Christian rites as it is through his collaborators’ adoption of Christian theology and rites. But that relationship, which in effect made Codex Durán possible, was also under threat in the 1570s and 1580s, when royal decrees by Philip II sought to divest mendicants of the authority to work among natives and limit bookmaking projects about indigenous history, privileging the secular priests.⁴⁶ In this environment, the Codex Durán’s particular interest in tyrannical kingship as the cause of idolatry may well reflect poignantly upon contemporary politics, suggesting one particular resonance of the painters’ look to the history of idolatry in their moment.

⁴⁵ Kristopher Driggers, “La historia de la religión en los calendarios mesoamericanos,” in *XLI Coloquio Internacional de la Historia de Arte: Entre Imágen y Texto* (Mexico: Forthcoming).

⁴⁶ Robert Padden, “The Ordenanza del Patronazgo, 1574: An Interpretive Essay,” *The Americas* 12 (1956): 333-354. John Schwaller, “The Ordenanza del Patronazgo in New Spain, 1574-1600.” *The Americas* 42 (1986): 253-274. Stafford Poole, *Pedro Moya de Contreras: Catholic Reform and Royal Power in New Spain, 1571-1591* (Norman, OK: 1987).

At the same time, I would argue that recognizing Codex Durán's engagement with the history of idolatry does more than show us that the manuscript was in touch with global issues. In a very different sense, it also shows us that there were greater possibilities for engaging with Aztec art than what we might initially expect. I argue that Codex Durán offers us an example of Early Modern patterns of approach to indigenous images that have thus far gone underappreciated in Early Colonial historiography. In Colonial art history, we are accustomed to thinking of Colonial agents destroying Aztec art; or absconding with it so that it would not be destroyed; or sublimating it into a Christian worldview; or misremembering it; or assimilating it to the art of Romans or Greeks; or elevating it as the heritage of a new Christian city; or presenting it as evidence in court. As we shall see, to mixed degrees, the Durán indexes or participates in many of these trends. But the Durán paintings help us to see that periodizing Aztec art – and theorizing how and why Aztec art changed in response to social and political conditions – were approaches that existed alongside these others. In this way, this dissertation does not merely tell the story of a single take on a globally debated problem. Instead, it addresses a mode of creative historicizing in images of ancient images that has largely gone unremarked in the corpus of New Spain. That a fulsome, systematic undertaking of this particular mode of engagement with ancient objects happens in images themselves adds a layer of complexity to this puzzle, though as the Conclusion to this dissertation argues, Codex Durán itself offers a theory of manuscript painting that makes this choice of medium both comprehensible and resonant.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ On the question of images interrogating their own historical contingency in relationship to idols, I follow Alexander Nagel's suggestion that images in the first half of the sixteenth century became newly invested in excavating their own pasts. Particularly in Chapters 3 and 4, I point to areas in which the Durán paintings seem to exhibit their own awareness of their engagement with historical material. See Alexander Nagel, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art* (Chicago: 2011).

Overview of Chapters

The remainder of this dissertation is divided into five parts. Each treatise of the Durán is addressed separately, as the chronological distance between treatises and the difference in their sources creates the conditions for a largely individual treatment. The chapters will be presented in chronological sequence. Primarily, this is because I find that the earliest treatise, *The Book of Gods and Rites*, is characterized by a disjunctive presentation of idolatry's history that is later resolved by stylistic experimentation in the *Calendar* and the *Historia*. Because of the richness of the visual material in the *Historia*, discussion of this treatise's paintings is divided into two chapters.

In Chapter One, I examine the Gods and Rites paintings, which bear the closest relationship to the images typical of the Mesoamerican canon (as it can be reconstructed in Nahua manuscripts of the sixteenth century). While the texts of this treatise frequently describe Mesoamerican deity images and religious practices as historically differentiated materials, the canonically Nahua images in this part of the manuscript do not reflect the assumption of diachronic differentiation. On this basis, I argue that the Durán's argument was fundamentally incompatible with paintings rendered to follow the Mesoamerican canon. As I argue, this problem could only be resolved by adopting European styles – a path pursued by the painters of the latter two treatises.

Chapter Two treats the Calendar treatise, a book where the Durán painters chose to reimagine the indigenous calendar in conversation with the conventions of calendrical images from European printed books known as *Reportorios*. Through close reading of the paintings, I find that the Calendar develops a social theory of Aztec religion, differentiating the 'primitive,' aniconic rites of commoners with the state-level, image-rich rites practiced by elites. Drawing on key pieces of evidence from the treatise's text, I show that Durán perceived class-based differentiation of

image use as a historically emergent phenomenon, authorizing the possibility of a diachronic reading of the calendar paintings.

The pre-imperial sections of the *Historia* occupy Chapter Three, where I argue that the Durán painters developed complex theories regarding the relationship between ‘primitive’ Chichimecs and systems of signification. In the Durán’s periodization of the history of Aztec religion, the earliest Nahuas practiced their religion without the use of images; illustrating this period, the Durán painters narrativized Nahuas’ growth toward a capacity to worship using signs. This ability, I argue, was conceived within sixteenth-century New Spain and elsewhere in the Early Modern world as intrinsic to the development of a capacity for piety and for Christianization. The story told in this chapter is thus the story of a people coming into literacy, and into the possibility for true faith.

The corruption of this incipient faith is the subject of Chapter Four, which treats the decadence of Aztec religion under the rule of the Aztec kings. Works of monumental Aztec sculpture – idols – abound in the paintings of the *Historia*’s later sections. Building from visual analysis, I argue that the tyranny of Aztec kings was targeted by the painters as the origin of Aztec idolatry, and show that over the course of Aztec history, kings become increasingly interrelated with idols through the moments just before the Conquest of Mexico. Given tensions in this period between mendicant friars and the Spanish crown, I argue that this particular history of the trajectory of the idol would have pointed political resonance in the moment in which these illuminations were created.

Finally, a concluding chapter examines this discussion in paintings and texts treating the Conquest, showing how the arrival of Spaniards marked a teleological conclusion to the *Historia*’s narrative of religious change – even as other models intervened. Furthermore, from the position of

the Conquest narrative, these concluding remarks ask why painting should have played such a central role in relaying Aztec religious history, giving insight into period views of manuscript illumination.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICISM AND MESOAMERICAN TRADITION: THE BOOK OF GODS AND RITES

A single kind of composition predominates in the paintings of Codex Durán's Book of Gods and Rites. In most of these paintings, we are offered a composite view of a deity figure that combines views of that deity's face, shown in profile, as well as their body, turned to allow us to see the costume elements and paraphernalia that they wear and use (Fig. 1.1). When the figures depicted in a Gods and Rites painting are not the deities, then they are often priests – and we are similarly shown how they dressed, with their bodies positioned to allude to their ritual action (Fig. 1.2). Sometimes, a bowl rests on the ground before a god, a suggestion that these deities receive devotional offerings (Fig. 1.3). In bodies, raiment and ritual implements, these figures suggest continuity with the visuality of Central Mexican codices – and indeed, we now know that many of the Gods and Rites images were sourced from manuscripts with indigenous imagery that were created in Early Colonial Mexico, like the Codex Magliabechiano.¹ The clearest departure in these paintings from extant codices may be the inclusion of green landscape behind each of the figures – although even with these washes, echoing the forms of mountains, the spaces of these paintings still feel remarkably shallow, as if it were important that the visuality of the codex remain always observable at the surface.

¹ Elizabeth Hill Boone, *The Codex Magliabechiano and the Lost Prototype of the Magliabechiano Group* (Berkeley: 1983), 154-159. Boone's attribution is based in part on shared iconography between Durán's paintings and images in the Magliabechiano group, but Boone also notes that "the names and dates of the eighteen monthly feasts, certain other texts, and some illustrations correspond to data in the Magliabechiano Prototype or in the Codex Tudela."

There is little in the treatise's paintings of gods and priests to suggest the incursion of historical time. In the first place, the Book of Gods and Rites paintings are nearly all non-narrative: there is no timeline in play to suggest that any aspect of the paintings historically preceded any other. Instead, their presentation seems to imply their timelessness, as if the gods and priests had always existed as they are shown in this treatise. Indeed, one of the functions of the format adopted in these paintings seems to be to homogenize the gods, making them appear as if they were much more of a unified pantheon than they might have been in actual fact. Lost in this homogenization is any sense that any of the gods are either old or new; that any of the rituals performed might have been later innovations, that any event in a scene depicted deep time, or that any priests were motivated by any particular drives.

Yet if historical narration is missing from these paintings, we can hardly describe it as absent in Durán's text. Where the paintings effectuate the homogenization of Aztec deities, priests and rituals, the text re-inscribes these images with history's granular particularity. Often pointing to a painting in a deictic aside, Durán explicates the Aztec gods, detailing where they were worshipped and by whom, how their cults were affected by the outcomes of war, how regional and ethnic alliances led to the formation of cult practices, and many other topics besides.² In this treatise of Codex Durán, then, there is a rather abrupt difference between what the friar's texts say about the images and what the images say about themselves.

Taking the long view of the manuscript's production, we find that in Codex Durán's later treatises, paintings would increasingly turn to describe how the gods depicted in the Book of Gods and Rites came into being; as I will argue, later paintings often took on a discursive character

² For passages in the *Book of Gods and Rites* in which the Durán text explicitly points to the paintings, see Garibay, *Historia*, I: 24; 26; 28; 52; 62; 86; 129; and 145.

closer to that of the text. The subsequent Calendar treatise adopted a differentiating iconography to show Aztec religion as diachronic and polemically motivated, and by the time when the *Historia* was painted, the Durán painters were engaged in an all-out narrativization of the development of idolatry from deep history to the moment of the Conquest. Like the later paintings, the text consistently exhibits a marked interest in the history of idolatry, a topic addressed in each treatise of the manuscript. But in this first treatise, the only one in which paintings so thoroughly replicate images from the Mesoamerican canon, the paintings offer relatively little to the viewer in the way of historical traction. In this chapter, I argue that the Mesoamerican character of the Gods and Rites paintings implied a scenario in which texts did the work of explicating the history of the deity images, a disjunction that was later resolved in the subsequent treatises as the painters strategically adopted an increasingly eclectic visual language.

To be clear from the outset, I am by no means arguing that there is anything inherently ahistorical in the character of Mesoamerican images. Today, archaeologists and art historians appreciate that traditions like Aztec sculpture in the metropolitan style were deeply engaged with earlier times and traditions. We know that Aztec sculpture references and recreates Toltec precedents, for instance, so that some works celebrate the inheritance of deep antiquity within imperial spaces (Fig. 4.23). Aztec architecture, too, shows deep engagement with styles that emerged in the distant past, with structures strategically deploying references to ancient buildings within the walls of Tenochtitlan's sacred city.³ The god-images in Durán's Book of Gods and Rites

³ On the archaizing capacity of Aztec art, see Emily Umberger, "Antiques, Revivals, and References to the Past in Aztec Art," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 13 (1987): 62-99; Leonardo López Luján, "Echoes of a Glorious Past: Mexica Antiquarianism," in *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Alain Schnapp (Los Angeles: 2014), 273-289; Bertina Olmedo Vera, *Los Templos Rojos del recinto sagrado de Tenochtitlan* (Mexico: 2002).

may well have had similar qualities, but it remains nearly impossible to speak to these aspects of the paintings today.

Rather, in this chapter I will argue that the relatively ahistorical character of the seemingly Mesoamerican-style images of the Book of Gods and Rites is in fact a product of the Durán paintings' engagement specifically with the manuscript tradition as it was created and articulated in New Spain at mid-century. By 1574-1576, something of a canon of Mesoamerican-style deity images had already proliferated in mendicant contexts.⁴ Since the 1550s, these images had been copied over and over again, with manuscripts like the Codex Tudela (or Codex Magliabechiano) and the Codex Telleriano-Remensis serving as models whose Mesoamerican-style images were replicated in mendicant scriptoria that were New Spain's major intellectual centers.⁵ In their very forms, these manuscripts show us that there was an expectation that the images would be extensively glossed, with texts providing detail that would be useful for mendicant projects of extirpating idolatry. Historical information often finds its way into these marginalia. Adapting this particular kind of manuscript to the form of an illuminated historical codex, the Durán creates a scenario in which illustrations serve as relatively mute representations of the deities, explicated at

⁴ On the canonical character of the Mesoamerican manuscript corpus by the time of the late sixteenth century, Couch writes that "The illustrations of treatise 2 [the Book of Gods and Rites] comprise a collection of all the most popular images of the natives then current [...] these are professional illustrations, an end result of two generations of copying images for friars curious about native culture. They have [...] 'been worn smooth as a river pebble by repeated copying' (1980)." N.C. Christopher Couch, "Style and Ideology in the Durán Illustrations: An interpretative study of three early colonial Mexican manuscripts," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1987, 334-336.

⁵ On the copying of Mesoamerican codices, see Juan José Batalla Rosado, *El Códice Tudela y el Grupo Magliabechiano: la tradición medieval de copia de códices en América* (Madrid, 2002). Donald Robertson notes that each of the manuscripts that survive in today's collections likely results from copies of multiple models; Robertson, *Mexican Manuscript Painting in the Early Colonial Period: The Metropolitan Schools* (Norman, OK: 1994 [1959]), 68-69.

length in texts – a scenario resolved in later treatises with the increasing independence and discursive character of the images.

In this particular treatise, it should perhaps come as little surprise that the images and texts constitute disjunctive knowledge. The paintings in the Book of Gods and Rites are all paste-overs, including a few collages (which I address at length in Chapter Three, due to fundamental differences between these paintings and all the other of works in this treatise; see Figs. 3.17–3.19 for examples). Because of this, the makers of the paintings may never have known the content of the text, but certainly the writer of the text knew about the images. Space was always allocated for the paste-overs, and the author of the text frequently points accurately to the content of the paintings. The intentionality of the painters cannot be read in any relationship to the text. However, I will argue that in this earliest treatise we see a compiler create a scenario in which texts situated images historically – a role that images themselves would take up more aggressively in the treatises that followed.

Texts

But just what did those texts actually say about the images of the Aztec deities? The anecdotes that most reveal Durán’s interest in the history of native images are embedded in longer passages of the treatise that addressed Aztec deities and their rites more generally. God by god, the text develops individual portraits that, when viewed cumulatively, make up a fictive pantheon that in fact originated in distinct geographic and cultural contexts, hanging together only through Durán’s will toward comprehensive treatment of pre-Hispanic religion.⁶ Painting may lend more

⁶ John M. D. Pohl and Claire L. Lyons, *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire* (Los Angeles: 2010), 31-39.

uniformity to the group than we find when we attend carefully to the text: Looking at the images of the gods in the *Book of Gods and Rites*, one soon observes the homogenizing treatment of these deities, nearly all rendered in composite views where the gods share orientation, posture and modeling, their bodies nearly identical supports for the costume elements that were their only real differentiating features.⁷ The bodies of the gods are not the only elements of these paintings that appear nearly interchangeable, for landscape, too, seems at once specific enough to locate the gods somewhere in the valleys of Central Mexico, but still too generic to be identifiable as any specific locale.

The text does much of the work of conveying the granular historical detail that seemingly eludes the images. In some of these texts, Durán sketches an explanation as to how a god came to prominence; elsewhere he writes about how its influence was inflected by broader patterns of political history, or how it was really seen in experiential encounters with Aztec architectural space. Idols understood through study of their origins, politics, and experiential dimensions: Even in a brief list like this one, we feel the friar's interests uncannily elide with those of today's art history. But much as the field's scholarly literature is shaped by the distinctive notions of its practitioners, so too does a closer look at Durán's writing on the idol in history reveal his assumptions about the relationship between images and their time.

One major premise of Durán's thinking about the idol in history involves the spatial orientation of Aztec image cults, for much of idolatry's microhistory here is predicated upon the notion that each town within the territory of New Spain was governed by its own patron deity. In

⁷ Donald Robertson initiated granular study of the spatial disposition of god bodies in Central Mexican manuscripts. Though he excluded Codex Durán from his survey, we can infer from his description of other manuscripts that Robertson might have seen greater variation in the god bodies (perhaps attributable to different artists) than I have attributed to them here. Such fine distinctions notwithstanding, the overall treatment of the deities is nearly identical in each portrait.

this treatise, Durán referred to these patron deities as *abogados* of the towns, and we are informed not only of the *abogados* of central regions but also of those further afield, learning, for instance, about the particular devotions celebrated by the Huexotzincas and Tlaxcaleucas, as well as the Tepanecas, Texcocans, and even the natives of Cuauhtitlan.⁸ From our own perspective, such an assumption seems like a commonplace: current scholarship accepts that certain deities achieved greater prominence in certain cities or regions (for example, Huitzilopochtli is considered a patron deity of the Mexica of Tenochtitlan).⁹ But such a contemporary perspective might well obscure a basic evidentiary problem in the Durán text: just how did Durán come to know about the idols of so many regions? Biographically, we know that the friar had been vicar at Hueyapan, Morelos for some time, and that he was born in Texcoco and demonstrates an intimate knowledge of the urban landscape in Mexico City.¹⁰ But textually, we find that the *Gods and Rites* treatise bears debts to Motolinia, the Franciscan whose work was widely copied in manuscript editions in the sixteenth century, and from whom Durán likely learned about the history of the gods East of Popocatepetl; an image in *The Book of Gods and Rites* appears at first glance even to be a copy of an image that

⁸ According to William Christian, the term “abogado” or “advocate” was used in Spain to describe the role of the saints, who advocated for people before God; it implied a judicial metaphor for Spanish religion. William A. Christian, Jr., *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, 1981), 55–58. The term occurs in the following passage from Durán: “En todas las ciudades, villas y lugares de esta Nueva España en su infidelidad tenían los indios un dios particular, y aunque los tenían todos y los adoraban y reverenciaban y celebraban sus fiestas, empero, uno en particular señalado, a quien como abogado del pueblo, con mayores ceremonias y sacrificios honraban, como hacen agora, que, aunque solemnizan las fiestas de los santos todos, empero la fiesta del pueblo y advocación de él celebranla con toda la solemnidad possible, y así era antiguamente en las fiestas de los ídolos, que teniendo cada pueblo su ídolo por abogado, en su día hacían excesiva fiesta y gasto.” Codex Durán Folio 251 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 61; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of Gods and Rites*, 128.

⁹ Elizabeth Hill Boone, “Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural: The Image of Huitzilopochtli in Mexico and Europe,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 79 (1989), 1-4.

¹⁰ Doris Heyden and Fernando Horcasitas, “Fray Diego Durán: His Life and Works,” in Doris Heyden and Fernando Horcasitas eds., *The Book of Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar* (Norman, OK: 1973), 15–20.

had appeared on a frontispiece of a sixteenth-century Motolinia manuscript that is now lost (Fig. 1.4).¹¹ From Motolinia's influence on Durán, we see a snapshot of a larger cultural pattern in which knowledge circulated among the mendicants of New Spain, transmitted in books and other media. Durán's knowledge of the regionality of the gods was likely contingent on both experience and his access to the written accounts of other friars.

With the spatial orientation of the gods in play, history could unfold – and indeed, some of Durán's most vivid writing in this treatise on the history of the idol involves the degree to which the idols are enmeshed in local politics. The narrative drama of a later treatise – the *Historia* – centered upon struggles for power in the pre-Hispanic period, but similar concerns found their way into asides in the *Book of Gods and Rites*, where Durán shows that the influence of the gods shifted in relationship to an irregular political landscape. Power's concentration in the great cities of Tenochtitlan and Texcoco, for instance, accompanied the advent of greater religious sophistication in those cities, so that their particular practice of the rites was more thoroughly characterized by the *orden y concierto* befitting a powerful urban center:

En la gran ciudad de México y en la de Tezcoco, que eran las dos más insignes de la tierra y donde había y florecía toda la policía y buen orden y concierto, así en las cosas de gobierno, como en el cumplimiento de los ritos y ceremonias de los dioses [...] ¹²

In the large cities of Mexico and Texcoco, which were the two most illustrious of the land and where was found and where flowered all of the *policía* and good order, both in governance and in the performances of the rites and ceremonies for the gods [...]

¹¹ The Motolinia manuscript referred to here is the earliest known Motolinia; the image of this frontispiece comes from a reproduction in García Icazbalceta. The manuscript was at one time owned by García Icazbalceta himself and subsequently by A. Ortiz Mena; it has since been lost. This Motolinia manuscript is mentioned in Mercedes Serna Arnaiz y Bernat Castany Prado in their 2014 edition of the Motolinia *Historia*, published by the Real Academia Española; the manuscript is also discussed in Vol. 15 of the *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, 348-350.

¹² Codex Durán Folio 245 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 47; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 109-110.

Well-organized religion could only appertain in the space of a great city, where order in government predicted order in the practice of the rites. In the New Spanish context, this idea might register a particularly Dominican worldview – we are far here, perhaps, from the asceticism of Franciscans seeking out the isolation of the provinces to achieve the perfection of the faith.¹³ Importantly, Durán’s history of the idol had worked out a historical explanation for the transmission of the cosmopolitan religion to the provinces as well:

Es de saber que en México y en Tezcoco, como digo, a quien las demás villas y ciudades seguían en costumbres y ritos, leyes y ordenanzas [...]¹⁴

It is known that the other towns and cities followed Mexico and Texcoco in the customs and rites, laws and orders [...]

In this terse aside, Durán imagines religion trickling down from the capitals to the provinces along the same channels through which imperial power itself flowed. Subordinate Central Mexican polities looked to major centers as models for their local religious practices, seeking to emulate the exemplary religion of the capitals.

It was not only in Central Mexico where Durán explicitly conceives a power-based model as the structure for religious history; the same theoretical undercurrents surface, too, in his treatment of the Puebla-Tlaxcala region. This is the case, for instance, in an aside that describes the history of the god Camaxtli, the deity of the hunt who Durán reports was among the principal

¹³ Expressing just such a conviction about the relationship of urbanism to good faith, Durán writes, “y remítome a lo que cada día por momentos vemos y hallamos y describimos, y no solamente en los pueblos muy apartados de México y donde tendrían una excusa, con falta de la doctrina, que no la alcanzan muy de ordinario, pero en los muy cercanos a México y en el mismo México hay tantos males y supersticiones e indios tan idólatras, como en su Antigua ley (...)” Codex Durán Folio 259 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 78; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 150.

¹⁴ Codex Durán Folio 245 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 47; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 109.

devotions of the town of Huexotzinco (Fig. 1.4, left). Such a deity was appropriate to a people who cherished hours spent hunting in the woods, but

en México y en Tezcucó no tenían este ídolo, ni le celebraban fiesta, lo uno por ser tan moderno como era, y lo otro, por tener como tenían guerra perpetua con Huexotzinco los mexicanos y tezcucanos. No se lo habían querido dar, ni ellos por armas ganar.¹⁵

In Mexico and Texcoco they didn't have this idol, nor did they celebrate it in festivals. For one this was because of how modern they were, and for another, because the Mexicans and Texcocans made perpetual war with Huexotzinco. They didn't want to give it to them, nor did the Mexicans win it by arms.

Durán's paired explanations for the absence of a cult to Camaxtli in Tenochtitlan are perhaps equally illuminating (even if somewhat incongruous). Military campaigns had failed to yield the capture of Camaxtli to the people of the Valley of Mexico: They had tried to win the idol but proved unable to take it by force. Yet on the other hand, the sophisticated cities of Mexico and Texcoco were simply too 'modern' to have a god like Camaxtli, a notion that introduces the possibility of a diachrony in Mesoamerican religion, as if the gods of the Mexica were new and the gods of the provinces older. In a separate – though likely related – vein, Durán later addresses the topic of religious difference in the pre-Columbian period by remarking on Aztec conceptions of the religions of the empire's Others. He writes that Nahuas considered the people of the Huasteca to be their gentiles and idolaters, just as the Canaanites were considered idolaters by the Jews.¹⁶

¹⁵ Codex Durán Folio 256 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 71-72; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 141.

¹⁶ “Toda la gente de la tierra, excepto los guastecos, que era la gente que éstos tenían por gentiles e idólatras que no guardaban la ley, como los cananeos entre los judíos, toda la demás comían este día pan cenceño, como acá decimos pan sin levadura.” Codex Durán Folio 254 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 66; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 136.

Here, Durán effectively displaces onto the Mesoamerican world the notion – now something of a commonplace in the scholarly literature – that the idolater is always the Other.¹⁷

The god of Huexotzinco may not have been celebrated in Tenochtitlan or Texcoco, but another aside in Durán suggests that a political structure forged in the deepest past may have led others in Huexotzinco's ambit to worship the god Camaxtli on their own.

Celebrábase la fiesta de este ídolo en solas dos partes: la una y principal era en la ciudad de Huexotzinco y Tlaxcala; la otra, en Coatepec, un pueblo que parte términos con el mismo Huexotzinco, a quien antiquísimamente los coatepecas fueron sujetos y muy amigos, y por aquella vía les fue dado este dios, y también por preciarse del mismo oficio de cazadores y chichimecas.¹⁸

The festival of this idol was celebrated in two parts. The first and principal part was in the cities of Huexotzinco and Tlaxcala; the other was in Coatepec, a town that shares (parte términos) with Huexotzinco, where in deep antiquity the Coatepecas were subjected and close friends, and through that means they were given this god, and also because they shared the same office as hunters and Chichimecs.

The subject status of Coatepec to Huexotzinco long, long ago – the choice of the word *antiquísimamente* registers such a deep displacement into the past – meant that Coatepec continued to worship an idol particular to a more powerful polity in its region. But interestingly, too, Coatepec's ancient subject status to Huexotzinco not only determined that it would worship Camaxtli; it also affected the kind of materials with which devotion to Camaxtli could be directed. The Camaxtli images that the people of Coatepec had were not 'the body' of the god (*el cuerpo*); rather, what they had were 'relics' (*reliquias*) given to them by the Huexotzincas, so that the more powerful town had immediate access to the body of the idol while a subject town made do with

¹⁷ Looking broadly, W. J. T. Mitchell describes a tendency in scholarly literature to ascribe otherness to the 'magical thinking' around images engaged by supposed idolaters, a thread that he notes in the scholarship, for instance, of Lévi-Strauss, Freedberg, and Belting; Mitchell, *What do Pictures Want?* (Chicago: 2005), Ch. 1.

¹⁸ Codex Durán Folio 256 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 72; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 142.

some less-esteemed fragment.¹⁹ Altogether, the various historical threads in Durán's portrait of Camaxtli collectively betray a number of notions about the history of the idol – that the god was particular to a historical locale, that his associations made him a better fit for the worship of primitive peoples than that of a sophisticated city, that military conflicts determined the extent to which he received devotion, and – importantly – that politics affected the material realization of the objects with which he was worshipped.

While power and politics affected the degree of influence of various deities' cults in the region, such an emphasis on the processual dimensions of propagating these cults was similarly explicated in Durán's recurring passages on the priestly class that sustained Aztec ritual. Many chapters on the gods tell us microdetails about the priests who tended to the idols – what they wore, what they ate, and the severity of their abstinence and the self-discipline they imposed. The images, interestingly, were quite specific in describing the appearance and behavior of pre-Hispanic priests.²⁰ One painting represents priests blackened with pitch drawing blood in an auto-sacrifice scene, with a sacrificial ball (*zacatlpayolli*) at a corner of the frame serving as a mnemonic for the ritual action displayed below; yet another shows priests wearing garlands of popcorn and expressively gesturing, as if engaged in dance (Fig. 1.5–1.6). Considering Durán's own priestly status may go part of the way toward explaining his fixation on the gods' attendants in this treatise, though it is perhaps just as likely that Durán had in mind the idea of a devil's church, a parallel and foil to the Catholic church and its organizational structure in the pre-Hispanic world.²¹

¹⁹ Codex Durán Folio 256 verso – 257 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 72; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 142.

²⁰ S. Pepestraete, "Los ritos aztecas en imagenes. Textos y representaciones de las fiestas en la obra de Fray Diego Durán," in *Image and Ritual in the Aztec World*, ed. Sylvie Pepestraete (Oxford: 2009), 100-112.

²¹ Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven: 1994), 25.

Similarly, lest we think that priests were only accessory to the history of the idol, we need only remember that a commonplace explication of the origin of sin after the Reformation – advanced, unsurprisingly, primarily by Reformers – held that idolatry originated in antiquity because of the corruption of clerics.²² One wonders whether, in a style typical of counter-Reformation encounters with non-Western peoples, ‘the real idolaters,’ Durán might only have displaced a powerful historical criticism of Catholic idolater clerics onto a priestly class more deserving of such critique.²³ Indeed, Durán attributes the origins of worship of certain false gods – including the maguey plant – to the influence of priests who instituted these cults after false deities appeared to them in dreams (a mark of the influence of the devil).²⁴

Returning to the question of the material realization of the idols, we learn that the idols look a bit different depending on where they were made. Tezcatlipoca – the god whose name roughly translates to ‘obsidian mirror, its smoke’ – is discussed in the treatise as a deity formed from different materials in different towns, with the people of Tenochtitlán creating their Tezcatlipoca from obsidian itself while all others crafted him from wood.²⁵ Unlike in the distinction drawn between Camaxtli’s body and his relics, it is not wholly clear whether Durán

²² Gaudio writes that “early speculators on the origins of idolatry, such as English deist Charles Blount, transformed a central element of seventeenth-century Calvinist thought, anti-clericalism, into a full-fledged historical theory about the birth of idolatry. The result was the imposture theory, which held that an elite ‘Sacerdotal Order’ was responsible for imposing, out of its own self-interest, ‘absurd and impious tenets concerning God and Religion [...]’” Michael Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* (Minneapolis: 2008), 113-114.

²³ Carina Johnson, “Stone Gods and Counter-Reformation Knowledges,” in Pamela H. Smith and Benjamin Schmidt, eds., *Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe: Practices, Objects, and Texts, 1400- 1800* (Chicago, 2008).

²⁴ Codex Durán Folio 282 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 132; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 218-219.

²⁵ Codex Durán Folio 241 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 37; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 98.

perceives a hierarchical dimension to the difference in materials explored in this passage, though given Mexico's dominance in the Valley we might assume that the jet-black idol (with its material echoing the name of Tezcatlipoca himself) was perceived as better than similar gods carved in wood. As for how the painters illustrated a god with multifarious material manifestations, we might note that in theory, the painters could have chosen which Tezcatlipoca they would represent: Were the paintings to depict the Tezcatlipoca of Mexico, or the Tezcatlipoca of everyone else? In actual fact, the painting that illustrates the chapter frustrates any attempt at interpretation in this vein (Fig. 1.7), for the dark color of the skin of Tezcatlipoca in his painting is as likely to refer to the pitch worn on the bodies of living priests as it is to refer to the material from which the idol was formed. Again, we return to the realization of a fundamental asymmetry between text and image in the *Gods and Rites* treatise, where images simply are not tasked with reporting the kinds of information conveyed in the text.

Alongside regional variations in Aztec image cults, we are also given insights into other forms of differentiation. Social rank, for instance, might determine which idol one chose to worship. In Cholula, the god of choice among the wealthy had been Quetzalcoatl, intimately tied in his associations to long-distance trade in luxury goods. The Cholulans who directed their worship to Quetzalcoatl were traders and merchants themselves, a fact that explained the relative wealth of their town in comparison to neighboring villages. Much as the more sophisticated cities of Tenochtitlan and Texcoco could never worship a primitive hunting god like Camaxtli, a congruence was also proposed between the trading Cholulans and their devotion to Quetzalcoatl, as the god himself had been, in the story of his origins, the richest merchant of his time. Those who worshipped him were those who could increase their estates in order to acquire enslaved

sacrificial victims.²⁶ In a similar vein, Durán commented that the rain god Tlaloc was worshipped by both rich and poor – that is, “se ocupaba toda la tierra generalmente, así los señores y principales como la gente común y popular.”²⁷

The shape of image cults, then, was the consequence of such factors as Mexico’s internecine political struggles, the efforts of a priestly class that propagated them, and the ranked social hierarchies that supported them. But alongside each of these explanations, too, circulated the classic, diabolical explanation for the origins of idol worship, a process whereby ‘counterfeit’ Christian gods were produced by an active, agentive devil. To capture the diabolic semblances created in imitation of Christian models, Durán used the term *contrahechos* to describe scenarios, for instance, such as the resemblance between native festivals and Easter.²⁸ Elsewhere in the literature on New Spain, the term *contrahecho* was used with a larger semantic field: for Motolinia, for instance, representations of virtually all sorts were described using the term, which appears frequently in the Franciscan’s discussion of indigenous ritual. Durán’s *contrahechos*, however, are the much more sinister work of the devil. Direct contact, as Todorov noted, was Durán’s preferred explanation for any parallels between Christian religion and the faith of natives,²⁹ so that the friar

²⁶ Codex Durán Folio 255 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 68-69; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 139.

²⁷ Codex Durán Folio 261 recto; Garibay I: 81; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 154-155. Not every festival was for the entire populace; the festival of Xocotl Huetzi, for instance, was considered a festival for the rich. Garibay I: 22.

²⁸ In a lengthy passage to this effect, describing sacrificial ritual, Durán writes, “está contrahecha esta cerimonia endemoniada la de nuestra iglesia Sagrada que nos manda recibir el verdadero cuerpo y sangre de nuestro señor Jesucristo. Donde notaremos otra cosa: que la fiesta de este ídolo se celebraba por Pascua florida, digo a diez de abri, que por al mayor parte suele caer en el mesmo tiempo y mes [...]” Garibay I: 35. The term *contrahecha* is used similarly on Garibay I: 158. Another use of *contrahecho* seems to refer to a human body’s physical imperfection or disability; see Garibay I: 63; 165.

²⁹ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (New York: 1984), 208-209.

assumed the diffusion of the devil's simulacra where he might otherwise have seen pseudomorphosis, the independent convergence of forms.

If the deep past of the idol concerned many of the asides of the Durán text, then its main emphasis was a much more recent past, the idol in the lived experience of Late Postclassic Mexico. Part of this recent history included Durán's texts describing the experiential dimension of encountering idols. Much is said about the architectural contexts of Aztec images: Over and again, we are told the number of stairs one must climb to approach the space occupied by a work of sculpture and given the dimensions of the architectural spaces where the works were held. Intriguingly, our god-by-god catalog often includes allusions to the veiling of the Aztec deities, a practice little attested outside of this treatise; inside of the temples, we are told that there were once lengths of cloth that blocked an image from view and curtains over the doors that kept the images hidden from outside the temples. Though we know little about this veiling as a Mesoamerican practice – or even whether it really was an Aztec cultural feature – it is not particularly difficult to imagine that Durán's ideas about this issue might have evoked Renaissance practices of image veiling, a gesture that, in general terms, might have been understood to imbue images with aura or authority. Veiling might have conveyed the power of Huitzilopochtli, for instance, of whom Durán wrote that the dressed idol was always covered with a curtain for greater reverence and veneration;³⁰ much as Tezcatlipoca similarly remained hidden from view with a 'veil or *antepuerta*' which kept him 'occult and enclosed' until he would emerge to be seen in public spectacle.³¹ Sometimes, religious interest in the architecture of the idol even surpassed interest in

³⁰ Codex Durán Folio 232 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 19; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 74.

³¹ Codex Durán Folio 241 verso – 242 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 38 – 39; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 99 – 100.

the idols themselves: At the temple of Camaxtli, “a *vasera* or *petaca* (upon which the idol was situated) was so revered, covered up with its curtains, that it was almost like the way in which the Jews had the arc of the covenant, where the Tables of the Law and the staff of Aaron were, along with the glass of mana;”³² the implication being that the veil might surpass the idol as an object of religious attention itself.

From the deep history of the idol – and its history in a more recent past – Durán occasionally turned to describe works of art in their Colonial afterlives. Destruction, of course, looms large in this narrative: idols and temples are remembered in part by the places where they were once visible before Spanish iconoclasm, as with the temple to Tezcatlipoca now supplanted (even today) by the House of the Archbishop.³³ Many objects, though, remained visible, like the stones that Durán called *cuauhxicalli* and which he himself had seen near a ditch close to the *plaza grande*, where, in the Early Colonial period, Africans gathered to ‘play and commit atrocious crimes, killing one another.’³⁴ Durán’s descriptions of monuments often gestured to the locations where Durán knew that many of these objects could be found, like the Calendar Stone’s displacement in the Colonial period onto the Puerta de La Misericordia in Mexico City’s

³² Codex Durán Folio 257 recto – 257 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 73; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 143 – 144.

³³ Codex Durán Folio 246 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 48; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 110. In terms of temples still visible at the time of Durán’s writing, Durán also refers his readers to the temple of Huitzilopochtli, whose snake sculpture ornamentation could still be seen: “Tenía una cerca muy grande de su patio particular, que toda ella era de piedras grandes, asidas las unas de las otras. Las culaes piedras el que las quisiese ver, vaya a la iglesia maor de México, y allí las verá server de pedestals y asientos de los pilares de ella. Estas piedras que agora allí sirven de basas sirvieron de cerca en el templo de Huitzilopochtli y llamábanla a esta cerca *coatepantli*, que quiere decir ‘cerca de culebras.’” Codex Durán Folio 233 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 21; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 76.

³⁴ Codex Durán 269 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 100; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 180 – 181.

Cathedral.³⁵ Before the arrival of Spaniards, god images captured by the Mexica in battle were stored in a place known as the *tlilancalqui*, the house of darkness; in the Colonial period, Spanish children would play there at the house of the old, destroyed idols.³⁶ The *tlilancalqui* aside contains numerous threads of Durán's interest in the idol as historical object: a political dimension for the idol, its experiential context, and finally its long biography and Colonial afterlife.

A long trajectory for idolatry, from its deep origins to its lived reality and finally the destruction of the idol, thus occupied Durán in the *Gods and Rites* treatise. What I have aimed to demonstrate in this section is that historical questions formed an integral part of the fabric of a book whose images might seem, at first, to be rather ahistorical. In fact, Durán's text seemingly gestures to the disjuncture between the function of images and text in his writing. As he describes the temple of Hutzilopochtli, Durán comments that "because there is so much to know about the particularities of this temple, having shown it painted, I now wish to mention each part in particular, for the ceaseless pleasure and recreation of hearing it and reading it, and to see the curious manner in which they built the temples of their gods and adorned them."³⁷ Even in this indulgent aside on the pleasure of learning about Aztec monuments, Durán sets up a dichotomy between painting and text: The paintings showed history's outcome, but one needed the friar's verbal explanation to satisfy one's historical curiosities.

³⁵ Codex Durán Folio 234 verso; Garibay I: 24; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 76. It is possible, however, that Durán might not have seen this stone directly, but instead knew about it from annotations in the Codex Tudela. Boone notes that Durán and Codex Tudela both mention a sacrificial stone "on view in the main plaza of Mexico City;" it is possible that he knows the stone secondhand, through this manuscript, rather than via direct observation. Boone, *The Codex Magliabechiano*, 157.

³⁶ Codex Durán Folio 282 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 131; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 217.

³⁷ Codex Durán Folio 232 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 20; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 78.

Frames, Framelessness, and Theatricality

The tension in this particular aside – between paintings that represent image cults outside the flows of history, and a text that describes the historical processes that produced those cults – ably encapsulates the text-image relationship in the *Gods and Rites* treatise. But that is not to say that the text holds all the real interest in these paintings – on the contrary, the particular way in which the paintings stake out their role entailed visual choices quite different from those that shaped the paintings made thereafter. A *Gods and Rites* painting is distinctive in part because of the iconicity of its figures: No painting in the later *Historia* treatise features a single figure suspended in the performance of some undefined action, the most common type of painting in the *Gods and Rites* treatise, nor does any painting in the *Historia* labor so diligently to describe the deities' diagnostic costumes, a feature that suggests some kinship between the paintings of this treatise and contemporary *Trachtenbücher* that circulated in European courts (Fig. 1.8).³⁸ For the most part, these paintings seem to live outside of narrative action, though moving through the book one finds a fair number of exceptions to this rule. In a lively market scene, some enslaved vendors spin thread while others sell precious jewels and feathers, with all of the action ultimately encapsulated within the iconic frame of a monumental glyph that signified 'market,' *tianquiz* (Fig. 1.9).³⁹ A scene, too, showing the goddess Toci multiplies images of the deity – we see her once upon a hill, and then again atop her scaffold, her mouth blackened in both cases to connote her

³⁸ Elizabeth Hill Boone has argued that Codex Tudela – a manuscript associated with Codex Durán – opens with a number of typological costume images that were likely directly influenced by the European *trachtenbuch*. Elizabeth Hill Boone, "Who They Are and What They Wear: Aztec Costumes for European Eyes," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 67-68 (2016/2017): 316-334.

³⁹ Noting that the figures inside of this *tianquiz* glyph are arranged in a circular composition that echoes the form of the glyph itself, Alessandra Russo argues that this image functions as a microcosm of a Nahua universe embodied in the circular space of the market. Russo, *El realismo circular: tierras, espacios, y paisajes de la cartografía novohispana, siglos VVI y XVII* (Mexico: 2005), 74-75.

identity as the ‘eater of excrement’ (Fig. 1.10). In a painting like this one, there is a great deal of narrative complexity: the scene compresses multiple temporalities from the Ochpaniztli festival into a single frame, so that this particular *Gods and Rites* painting could, potentially, be read as a sequence. Alongside the static images of iconic deities, in other words, the *Gods and Rites* images engage in some narrative experimentation, so that on the margins, the building blocks of visual history were in play in this part of the treatise.

But there is nevertheless a wide gulf between the kind of narratives that played out in a *Gods and Rites* painting and the narrativity of the images in the *Historia*. In this section, I will argue that the images in this treatise operated differently because they were both visually and conceptually excluded from the rhetoric of theatricality, a key mode of experience for Early Modern images in a number of media and contexts. We need this term in order to understand the *Gods and Rites* paintings as contextually embedded cultural products: These paintings were, in all likelihood, created in conventual spaces that visually invited their occupants to see them as ‘theaters of conversion’ – to borrow an expression from Samuel Edgerton, whose work has made theatricality a key term for understanding religious art in Early Colonial New Spain.⁴⁰ While many *Historia* paintings would embrace theatricality, the *Gods and Rites* paintings resist this register, producing representations instead that operated in a distinct rhetoric.

One of the key aspects separating a *Gods and Rites* painting from a painting in the *Historia* treatise is the differentiation in their use of framing devices. In the *Gods and Rites* treatise, paintings are delimited from the space of the text by thick black outline, sometimes filled with a red wash (Fig. 1.11). In one case, diagonal hatching elaborates the frame, but usually the artists

⁴⁰ Samuel Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico* (Albuquerque: 2001).

forego even this minimal level of elaboration, choosing instead to keep the borders of the Gods and Rites paintings spare. If the frames in this treatise are in any way referential, then perhaps the connection that they draw could be with the borders of Mesoamerican manuscript painting, where red orthogonal lines delimit the spaces where narrative unfolds.⁴¹ This kind of framing is rather different from what appears in the later *Historia*. The framing devices that condition viewing of paintings in that treatise are much more inventive, even verging on the bombastic. Frames in the *Historia* vary widely from page to page: sometimes, there are classicizing motifs or architectural elements to be found in their designs; in other cases, frames are bordered by wild men; in other paintings still, loose geometric patterning, irregular but vivid, creeps along the edges of an image (see, for example, Figs. 4.14; 4.16–4.17). One hardly needs to note that the reference here is not to the Mesoamerican tradition; moreover, the particular valences of such framing illuminate the conceptualization of the *Historia* and make visible its narrative drive.

The references at work in the frames of the *Historia* paintings are, in the first place, highly intermedial. Elaborately decorated printed books featured similar frames around their engravings; Robertson noted that many of these frames could have been sourced from nearly contemporary Northern European design-books, an observation echoed by Couch.⁴² Strapwork frame designs appeared, too, in contemporary manuscript paintings in French and Flemish contexts; similar motifs proliferated on the frontispieces of books printed on both sides of the Atlantic in the sixteenth century.⁴³ Nor was this mode of frame design exclusive to book arts. In the context of

⁴¹ Robertson, *Mexican Manuscript Painting*, 15.

⁴² Robertson, “Paste-Over Illustrations in the Durán Codex of Madrid,” *Tlalocan* 4 (1968): 347. Couch, “Style and Ideology in the Duran Illustrations: An Interpretative study of the three early Colonial manuscripts,” 210-211.

⁴³ Myra D. Orth, “What Goes Around: Borders and Frames in French Manuscripts,” *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 54 (1996): 189-201.

New Spain, similar frames appeared on the walls of the *conventos*, framing painted scenes – primarily with Biblical subject matter – in the lived space occupied by Durán’s fellow mendicant friars (Fig. 1.12). Such a wide attestation of comparable framing devices would suggest that the *Historia*’s frames are not citations or evocations of any particular medium’s conventions, but instead referred broadly to a pervasive mode of imaging that circulated throughout the Early Modern world.

Yet by carefully reconstructing their visual history, Edgerton has argued that frames of these types in each medium where they appeared collectively referred to both the spaces and the theorization of Early Modern theater. Frames quite similar to those of Durán’s illustrations accompanied images that made clear references to narrative presentations on a proscenium; indeed, Edgerton argues that narrative painting in Western Christendom had, at least since the time of Giotto, experimented with the optical models of theater as prescriptions for the representation of religious subjects.⁴⁴ In New Spain, the frescoes painted upon the walls of *conventos* were framed by ornamental proscenia, and the figures and objects in the scenes were comparable to period stage costume and props. All of this lent the paintings that so fundamentally defined mendicant visual experience with the visual connotations of the stage, where native celebrants performed ritual action in an embodied echo of the dramatic action pictured just behind them.⁴⁵ The theaters in these scenarios were almost literal, with the bodies of newly converted Nahua Christians dramatically engaged by convent walls.

A Codex illumination is not a mural: the *Historia*’s illustrations could never be the backdrop for actions performed by living actors. But thematically, the *Historia* paintings

⁴⁴ Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 175–205.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 209 – 217.

narrativized the same kinds of stories that appertained in much of the theater of the medieval *autos* and the Nahua Christian productions that were their descendants. Many of the performances staged in Nahua Christian theater were dedicated to the representation of epic dramas in which good battled evil; topics included biblical history in the Old Testament and even some battles of much more recent historical cast, like Spanish tensions with the Ottomans or the Reconquista.⁴⁶ Logically, then, it is rather congruous that the *Historia* paintings make use of the visual conventions of the theater. The subject matter of these paintings was easily assimilated to subjects that played out on Nahua Christian stages in mendicant conventual space.⁴⁷

By contrast, the *Gods and Rites* paintings operated outside of theatricality, and it was not just because they lacked highly decorative frames that they resisted the category. Theatricality in Early Modern painting subtended a theory of optical realism: Edgerton writes that metaphorically understanding the space of painting as a theatrical space spurred on Renaissance experiments in perspectival imaging. Few such considerations seem to have concerned the Durán painters in the *Gods and Rites* treatise, where the relationship between figures and grounds often feels arbitrary or gratuitous – lacking, in other words, the experiments in foreshortening and scalar modeling that characterized the *Historia* paintings. More to the point, though, is the fact that the *Gods and Rites* paintings thematically did not build narratives around a great battle between good and evil – in fact, there is nothing of narrative tension in these paintings except, perhaps, for the inference of the will of the friar-compiler to classify the Aztec pantheon comprehensively. We know of course

⁴⁶ Ibid, 167-171.

⁴⁷ In at least some cases, the overlap between the content of the Durán *Historia* and known Nahua-Christian theatrical spectacles is quite explicit. Durán analogically describes Aztec kings by referring to the Ottoman Suleymann; from Motolonía, we learn that a mock battle between Spaniards and Ottomans occupied a fantastical theatrical performance in the 1530s.

that these paintings were embedded in a missionizing project, but their representational function is not to represent that project, but instead to be utilized as a tool while undertaking it.

In centering the term ‘theatricality’ in a discussion of the paintings of the *Book of Gods and Rites*, my goal is not to define these paintings negatively, characterizing them only by what they lack. Rather, what I wish to propose is that the narrative engaged in the *Historia* paintings in its theatrical terms – a narrative about the growth and defeat of idolatry – was integral to the *Book of Gods and Rites* as well but was worked out pictorially in a rather different way. The many asides on idolatry’s history treated in the previous section shows that Durán was working with a sophisticated set of assumptions in this treatise about how the idol had evolved in time. The images, I argue, came out of a separate tradition – one no less interested in idolatry’s history – but one in which pictures were made to be textually explicated in written language. This tradition, I argue, was the Mesoamerican tradition as it was available to be adapted and appropriated by the Durán painters in the mid-1570s – a tradition where relationships between text and image had settled into rather fixed roles. A clearer understanding of this tradition, I argue, helps us to better see the historical situatedness of the *Gods and Rites* paintings – and to understand their inequity with the treatise’s text in a historically grounded way.

Marginalia

If not theatricality, then what exactly did the Durán paintings take from their engagement with the Mesoamerican visual tradition? Within this question is actually another problem altogether: What would the painters have even considered Mesoamerican at the time when the *Book of Gods and Rites* was painted? Having considered each of these problems, I have decided that the second of these questions is actually critical for answering the first, for while the

‘Mesoamerican-ness’ of the treatise’s paintings at first appears their most salient quality, in fact what is at stake is instead the relationship of the *Gods and Rites* images to a much more specific subgenre of manuscripts set off from Mesoamerican tradition by the Colonial conventions – and indeed the Colonial intentions – in which that corpus was embedded.

The manuscripts created at mid-century – like the codices of the Magliabechiano group or the Huitzilopochtli group – represent many Aztec images in styles that likely resemble their depiction in pre-Conquest screenfold codices. However, while scholarship has tended to give ample attention to the images, it has been more reticent to comment upon the fact that these manuscripts were made explicitly under conditions in which written texts were always meant to gloss and annotate Mesoamerican images. In terms of the sequence that led to their facture, we know that images were created first and annotations were added afterward. Perhaps this partly explains why the glosses have so often been treated as if they were intrusive in these manuscripts, the kind of thing that one might reasonably relegate to the appendix of a study rather than foreground in its body. But even a casual inspection of these manuscripts’ pages also demonstrates that the annotations were central to the programs of these books from their very inception, with wide swaths of blank space deliberately planned so as to accommodate the annotations of the scribes (Fig. 1.13).⁴⁸ That the *mise en page* of these books was so carefully designed to effectively minimize the space occupied by the painted image while allowing ample room for friars’ commentary may well belie an important point perhaps not sufficiently considered: Ekphrasis, the

⁴⁸ Boone, *The Codex Magliabechiano*, 28. Eloise Quiñones Keber, *Codex Telleriano-Remensis: History, Divination and Ritual in a Colonial Mexican Manuscript* (Austin: 1995), 121-127.

practice of translating image into language, may have motivated the creation of Early Colonial books far more than we tend to appreciate.⁴⁹

When the friar-compilers who created these manuscripts sought language to explicate indigenous images, they in fact frequently turned to historical questioning as a means of bridging the divide. For some, explaining how an image had come into being – that is, what relationship the image had to its own history – was evidently a natural outcome of an image’s description. Perhaps most focused upon questions regarding the history of idolatry were the annotations in the manuscripts of the Huitzilopochtli group, of which Codex Telleriano-Remensis is the best-known manuscript. Like Codex Durán, the Huitzilopochtli group manuscripts were created by a Dominican friar compiler – in this case, Fray Pedro de los Ríos – and internal evidence has long led scholars to conclude that (also like Codex Durán) these manuscripts were created somewhere near Texcoco, though other provenances have also been strongly argued.⁵⁰ One of the overarching tendencies of the annotators of the Codex Telleriano-Remensis is their proclivity for historicizing the subject matter of Aztec paintings. Rather than placing sole emphasis on the idolatrous content

⁴⁹ On Colonial ekphrasis, Tom Cummins has argued powerfully that Early Colonial images were understood to authorize their textual explication; the pre-existence of the image before its description was taken as evidence of the ‘truth’ of its translation into the word. “Even as images were increasingly brought forward in texts only through their written descriptions, their existence was presumed to be nonetheless real in terms of their capacity for authentication and truth because they preexisted the text [...] This always-presumed existence suggested that, when and if needed, they could be called forth, at least by name, as the originating source for the written words.” Thomas Cummins, “From Lies to Truth: Colonial Ekphrasis and the Act of Crosscultural Translation,” Claire Farago, ed., *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450-1650* (New Haven: 1995), 153.

⁵⁰ Eloise Quiñones Keber, *Codex Telleriano-Remensis: History and Divination in a Pictorial Aztec Manuscript* (Austin, 1995), 127. Quiñones Keber argues for a Tlatelolca provenience for Codex Telleriano-Remensis based on the inclusion of details specific to the Tlatelolca context in the manuscript’s history section. Summarizing scholarship on the manuscript’s provenience, Quiñones Keber notes that other attributions have included Howard Cline’s argument for a Cholula provenience for the manuscript, as well as a long-running tradition beginning with Paso y Troncoso that locates the manuscript’s origins in the Texcocan realm.

of these images, the Telleriano-Remensis annotations seek to answer questions about the images' history. Particularly interesting to this group were questions about origins: They sought to account for the moments in which the images that they annotated had emerged in the historical record, and under what conditions they had survived.

Predictably, it was world history as articulated in the Old Testament to which the Huitzilopochtli Group annotators turned to explicate the origination of indigenous paintings. In the annotations, we sense a familiar rhetoric of assimilation at work: An image of the goddess Xochiquetzal – Ixnextli, for instance, was accompanied by a gloss that specified that she was *lo mesmo q eva*, 'the same as Eve,' much like Huehuecoyotl, who appeared across from her in the same opening, was *el engañado, o el q se dejo engañar, tanto co ada*, 'the deceived, or he who let himself be deceived, the same as Adam' (Fig. 1.13).⁵¹ Revealing their concern with the Aztec idol in deepest time, it was to the Book of Genesis that annotators most frequently turned. Many annotations in the almanacs of the Huitzilopochtli group manuscripts sought to define the relationship between the Aztec gods and the great Flood, where they seemingly worked under the premise that the Flood had wrought major changes in the history of Aztec religion. The goddess Chalchiuhtlicue *salvóse del diluvio*, or was saved in the Flood, as had a number of other deities to whom the annotators attributed antediluvian origins, so that the Flood became a central point for ascribing a relative chronology to the gods in antiquity.

The particularity of the Flood as an event common to human history regardless of geography made it useful as a measure for the antiquity of the gods. As Sabine MacCormack has noted, European attempts to assimilate New World history often looked first to Genesis, since the

⁵¹ On the assimilation of New World history into canonical histories of the Old World – including the Bible – see Pablo Escalante Gonzalbo, "Pintar la historia tras la crisis de la Conquista," in *Los pinceles de la historia: El origen del reino de la Nueva España, 1680 – 1750* (Mexico: 1999).

events it described were supposed to have been experienced similarly by all of humankind. Paranoid friars asked whether some memory of this ancient history, even if perverted by forgetfulness or error, survived still in native lore.⁵² But perhaps equally important was the fact that the historical horizon at Genesis was also key to the history of idolatry: Eden, Babel, and the Flood were all points at which new eras of sinfulness were initiated into the world, and friars believed that these moments were those in which idolatrous religions underwent major change.⁵³ In asking whether a god had come into the world before or after the Flood, perhaps the friars were, in fact, inquiring as to where those gods fit among campaigns of major change presumed to have occurred throughout the history of indigenous religion.

To argue that Ríos and his collaborators were thinking in such terms might seem like an overreach, were it not for a few otherwise inconspicuous annotations suggesting at least one manuscript in the group was especially concerned with how native religion had changed as a consequence of events in Genesis. On Folio 9r of the Telleriano-Remensis, we find a depiction of a native man nearly naked except for a loincloth; he is shown engaged in an act of bloodletting, drawing precious blood from his tongue with a perforator (Fig. 1.14). Captioning the image, the scribe has written that *despues del dilubio mucho tienpo se sacrificava desta manera y no matataban honbres*, ‘after the flood for a long time they sacrificed this way and they did not kill men.’ Here there is the suggestion that self-sacrifice was a practice undertaken in a particular moment, not pursued through all of history but proper only to the religion just after the great Flood. The question is taken up again in another image, which shows a richly dressed god holding a naked

⁵² Sabine MacCormack, “Limits of Understanding: Perceptions of Greco-Roman and Amerindian Paganism in Early Modern Europe,” in K. Kupperman, ed., *America in European Consciousness 1493-1750* (Chapel Hill: 1995), 96.

⁵³ Louise Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico*, 77.

youth who has been captured, who he holds by his hair (Fig. 1.15). Explicating this scene, the same annotator seemingly considered the practice depicted here to represent a later turn in the history of native religion: he says that it shows *como despues q ceso el dilubio enpeco a sacrificar*, ‘how they began to sacrifice once the flood had ended.’ Admittedly, the language in these captions is imperfect for capturing the sequence in which these events were thought to have occurred: we cannot be certain on the basis of these captions whether the annotator thought that self-sacrifice had really come before the sacrifice of another person (as Las Casas, for instance, had believed), or whether the process that he imagined was inverted. Such ambiguities of sequence notwithstanding, we nevertheless find that in these annotations, the scribe betrays an interest in the Flood particularly because it might anchor an incipient chronology for broader changes in ritual practice in Amerindian religion.⁵⁴

What the annotations of the Telleriano-Remensis show us is that the makers of indigenous-style manuscripts had designated a place for this kind of historicizing treatment in their codices. That space was the space of the text. Looking at the images, one cannot be sure whether Ríos saw something latent in them that prompted a historicizing form of response, though one surmises that his readings more likely reflect his own theoretical assumptions than they do anything inherent in the paintings themselves. That is to say, even if the images we see in the *tonalamatl* of the Telleriano-Remensis were historicizing, the annotators who attempted to assimilate them into Old Testament tradition may not have been fluent enough in the conventions of Mesoamerican art to understand how they might have been visually differentiated as historical objects. It fell, then, to the space of the textual annotation to account for the history of the religious image, so that the

⁵⁴ The idea that new forms of ritual practice had initiated after the flood was expressed by no less a Dominican authority than Bartolomé de Las Casas himself; see Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru*, 222-223.

word was charged with articulating history while the image became the centripetal anchor around which those historicizing claims pivoted.

Closer to the context of Codex Durán's creation, the annotations of Codex Magliabechiano provide their own ekphrastic treatment of indigenous images, albeit in a somewhat different vein. Accompanying some of the imagery, annotators inscribed descriptions akin to folk etymologies that explain why an image appears as it does (in the month of Xilomaniliztli, a human figure holds corn because its grain is called 'xilotl;,' similarly, in Miccailhuitl, the god is painted in diverse colors much as he is also called by diverse names). In other cases, the annotator hints at parallels with Christian ritual, and we hear a faint echo of the Duránian obsession with pre-Columbian religion's diabolical imitations of pious rites (as in the painting of Etzalcualiztli, where the feasts surrounding child sacrifice seemingly recalled, for the annotator, the celebration of Christian baptism). Here, too, we perhaps hear echoes of Durán himself, including resonances with his diffusionist theory of the resemblances between Catholicism and indigenous religion.⁵⁵ Historical engagement in the Magliabechiano text proves a more minor interest than in the Telleriano-Remensis glosses. But in each case, we note that it is description that produces historicism, with texts alluding to historical processes for which images were only treated as outcomes.

Conclusions

What I have argued in this chapter is that the Early Colonial manuscript tradition manifests a fundamental inequity in the kinds of information conveyed by texts and images, insofar as texts performed explicative functions for images that exceeded description to encompass various other gestures – including historicizing. This was the intellectual inheritance of the *Book of Gods and*

⁵⁵ Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, 50.

Rites and its paintings: a situation in which images might describe the appearances of gods, but in which text did the work of historically situating these images. As we saw early in this chapter, the historical concerns of the *Gods and Rites* text demonstrates the extent to which historical questions fundamentally underwrote Durán's writing on images and their construction – and indeed, how sensitively Durán sought to differentiate image histories according to regional variation and the specific contexts of a diverse pantheon. In the images, though, such variation can feel somewhat neglected, as a homogenizing format undermined visual distinction among a pantheon of gods richly adorned in divine costume but otherwise virtually identical. Standardization of format in these paintings obscures historical variance so that the overall effect of the Book of Gods and Rites is something like a flattened view of what would more properly appear as a truly diachronic, dynamically emerging pantheon.

This, at least, is the story of the first treatise that Durán and the manuscript's painters created. But in the next two treatises, images themselves began to advance vibrant, inventive arguments about the history of Aztec image cults, visually taking up and expanding upon the kind of knowledge already encoded in the *Gods and Rites* text. In the following three chapters of this dissertation, I will argue that the concerns so vigorously addressed by the *Gods and Rites* text subsequently migrated into the later treatises' paintings, so that painting, in effect, became a discursive text in its own right, metapictorially situating images in ways that explored their own historical foundations. As we shall see, it was not quite the case that in subsequent treatises, images and texts became perfect matches or equivalents – rather, the *Calendar* and *Historia* paintings were just as likely to illustrate the text as to deviate from its premises, or even to complicate the ideas laid out in a treatise with pictorial references that shifted or expanded upon a text's meaning.

All of this is to say that later paintings in the Durán manuscript became increasingly interpretive, taking on an almost editorial dimension less obviously attested in the *Gods and Rites* imagery.

Concurrent with the adoption of a newly interpretive position, the images of the Durán manuscript also began to dialogue more openly with European iconographies and stylistic conventions. In part, this is a question of degree: The images in the *Gods and Rites* manuscript had already adopted a number of European formal traits, from the contrapposto of the gods to the inclusion of landscape backgrounds behind them. In subsequent treatises, however, the Durán painters became increasingly strategic in adopting elements of European style as objects of creative interpretation. In the later treatises, it is possible to see that imported iconographic and stylistic conventions were chosen for their argumentative power; as we shall see, the manuscript's painters used these iconographies to solve visual problems that necessitated a wider-reaching toolkit than the Mesoamerican tradition alone could provide. Stylistic variety strengthened the argumentation of later Durán paintings, adding pictorial resources to the painters' inventory that allowed an expansive approximation of Aztec image history in terms legible to the erudite audience that would likely have consumed these paintings. We turn, first, to the paintings of Durán's Calendar treatise to see how a European format both shaped the presentation of indigenous knowledge and invited creative reinterpretations of that knowledge, all with profound implications for the deep history of Aztec religion.

CHAPTER TWO

RELIGIOUS HISTORY AND THE VEINTENAS: PRODUCTIVE MISREADINGS AND PRIMITIVE SURVIVALS IN THE CALENDAR PAINTINGS

In terms of format, the paintings of Durán's Calendar treatise visually convey a familiar fiction: the cyclicity of the Mesoamerican year. Structured as a guide to the Aztec calendar's function and its 18 monthly festivals (*veintenas*), the form of the Calendar treatise suggests that its paintings represent the calendar and its rites unrooted from historical time. A painting of the month Panquetzaliztli (Fig. 2.1), for instance, reassures us that during this period, a meal should always be taken in the patio of the home; similarly, the painting of Xocotl Huetzi suggests that this period would always be the time for the rite of ascending the Xocotl pole (Fig. 2.2), and the Ochpaniztli painting shows the goddess always set upon her scaffold in the tenth month of the year (Fig. 2.3). Like other Mesoamerican calendars, the Durán Calendar compresses linear time into an ahistorical package that emphasizes regularity and recurrence.¹

And yet to end the story there, I argue, would be to leave it incomplete. This chapter will show that the Calendar paintings of Codex Durán addressed not only the cyclical nature of the year, but that they also conveyed a message about the calendar's historical production, telling us how the year's cycle came into being over time. Studying the iconographic and textual details that differentiate Durán's calendar from others in the corpus, I argue that the paintings offer a vision of the calendar as the product of the evolution of native religion in the *longue durée*. Close looking

¹ For the major work on the cyclicity of the Mesoamerican calendar (though with a particular emphasis on the divinatory calendar, *tonalpohualli*), see Elizabeth Hill Boone, *Cycles of Time and Meaning in the Mexican Books of Fate* (Austin, 2007).

and close reading lead me to argue that in these paintings, some elements of imperial Aztec religion were treated as survivals from a Chichimec (pre-Aztec) past, while other elements of the calendar were treated as more recent, imperial innovations. With this view, the Calendar paintings speak to questions with crucial implications for the mendicants' evangelization project: They ask what survives of earlier religions in later periods, creating an argument for how the imperial calendar both preserved and altered the religions of pre-Aztec ancestors.

In constructing a story about the history of the calendar, the Durán paintings worked with visual motifs and conventions that were already circulating in Early Colonial New Spain; at the same time, however, the text occasionally treats this iconography differently than it had been deployed in the past. As I explore below, Durán had rather unusual ideas about what the graphic signs that appeared in the calendar actually *were*; by extension, he also had rather distinctive ideas about what activities took place during the festivals practiced throughout the year. In this treatise, we find that ideas expressed in the text subtly shift the meaning of the paintings' visual motifs until Codex Durán's vision of the calendar becomes virtually unrecognizable among the broader corpus of Mesoamerican documents. Misreading the paintings of other manuscripts, I argue, allowed the treatise to better communicate its broader ideas about how Chichimec religious practices had survived late in the evolution of Aztec religion.

In 1570s New Spain, the idea that calendars owed their shape to events in religious history was no abstract reflection: It was lived in experience. Durán's writing of the Calendar fell between two important events in the history of the Church. Reforms in the Council of Trent standardized and systematized the liturgical calendar into orthodoxy for the wider church, and in 1582, the calendar was adjusted on Pope Gregory's order to account for the drift of the year from its

astronomical basis.² Reform and correction affected the Aztec calendar, too; common parlance in Mesoamerican studies refers to a “Sahagúnian correction” that fixed certain inexactitudes between the solar year and the Aztec calendar, which subsequently reverberated in later documents.³ In Durán’s moment, both the politics of the church and proto-ethnographic discourse thus affirmed the essential lesson that calendars and the festivals that they marked looked as they did because of religious history.⁴

To reconstruct Codex Durán’s vision of the Calendar as an object constructed in history, we will first survey the Calendar broadly, examining the range of formats and subject matters attested in the paintings and texts with an eye to their European and indigenous precedents. In the section that follows, I read the Calendar’s paintings in light of its text, arguing that Durán associated his month glyphs with forms of primitive worship. A few Durán paintings have no month glyphs; I then turn to these, arguing that the glyph-less months were associated with imperial corruptions of primitive faith. I then end with a reflection on the Calendar paintings’ engagement with the theme of continuity and change in the history of native cult. To see how the

² On the reception of the Gregorian calendrical adjustment in Colonial Mexico, see Anthony Aveni, “Circling the Square: How the Conquest Altered the Shape of Time in Mesoamerica,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 102 (2012): 16.

³ The Sahagúnian calendar adjustment involves manipulating the distribution of the *nemontemi* (or the five unlucky days at the end of the solar year) throughout the calendar in order to keep the 365-day calendar from drifting from the actual length of a solar year. For a classic article on the issue of the Mesoamerican calendar’s adjustment as addressed in a variety of primary texts, see Zelia Nuttall, “The Periodic Adjustments of the Mexican Calendar,” *American Anthropologist* VI (1904): 486-500. Sahagún’s ‘correction’ resonates in the *Kalendario Mexicano* (sometimes attributed to him); major texts that incorporate his adjustments include the writing of Acosta and Martín de León’s *Camino del Cielo*.

⁴ In fact, the aftermath of the Gregorian calendrical reforms would only reaffirm this notion. In the Catholic world, the Gregorian calendar would be widely adopted, but in some Protestant contexts the Gregorian calendar was rejected until late in the 18th century. This example makes clear the potential links between the politics of religious history and the tracking of time. See Byron Hamann, “How to chronologize with a hammer, Or, The myth of homogenous, empty time,” *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 6: 272.

painters transformed existing calendrical motifs in order to communicate their historical argument, we must track Codex Durán's particularities within an admittedly large corpus of calendrical manuscripts, but what begins to emerge from this comparative view is the sense of a broader impulse in the culture to treat calendar illustration as a window onto the view of the native religious tradition's deep past.

Surveying the Calendar Treatise

In studying how the calendar constructed a vision of native religious history, one of the problems with which we are immediately confronted is the treatise's complex relationship between text and image. As I discuss in the Introduction to this dissertation, the paintings in the Calendar treatise have all been pasted into the manuscript from one of its previous versions, so that the text that now appears in the Calendar and its paintings were not made in the same moment, or even as part of the same campaign. Visually, the manuscript's materiality calls attention to the disjuncture: The paintings have been incorporated oddly into the new book, pasted in sideways, in some cases, with the effect of making clear that the new text and old paintings do not correspond (Fig. 2.4). Yet at the same time, the text of the treatise is quite explicit about referring directly to the paintings just as they are illustrated in the book, giving an overall sense that the maker of the new manuscript has been intentional about having text and image operate in tandem.⁵ For the most part, even though the images and text were made in different moments, they agree – though in at least one place, as we shall see, they disagree in a way that may be revealing.

⁵ On the tendency of the Durán text to explicitly direct readers to consult the pasted-in illustrations, see Sylvie Peperstraete, "Los ritos aztecas en imágenes. Textos y representaciones de los dioses y fiestas en la obra de Fray Diego Durán," in *Image and Ritual in the Aztec World*, BAR International Series (Oxford: 2009), 100-112.

Looking at the paintings, we find that certain portions of the illustrations' format were more open to experiments with representation than others (Fig. 2.5). Mesoamerican calendars consist of two intersecting cycles, but curiously, one of these cycles has a much more fixed graphic tradition than the other. The 260-day calendar (*tonalpohualli*), used for divination, is the more rigidly depicted of the two cycles. In the Durán calendar, this cycle appears much as it does elsewhere: A red dot numeral, 1 through 13, is paired with one of twenty glyphic signs that follow a standard sequence, with these dates appearing in red columns that frame the illustration. By contrast, the calendar's other cycle, the 365-day solar year (*xiuhpohualli*), is represented by a much more open graphic tradition. The solar year was divided into 18 months (*veintenas*); in all cases, each month features its own illustration. In the colonial period, paintings representing the months deployed radically different formats, including theomorphic presentations (where a god's body stood in as a symbol for the month), hieroglyphs, and genre scenes.⁶ In Codex Durán's calendar paste-overs, the cycles of the two Mesoamerican calendars are shown interlocking, giving viewers an idea of how they worked in tandem.⁷ While the Durán Calendar largely followed convention in its

⁶ The first study to offer a full typology of all possible *veintena* illustrations was Kubler and Gibson, *The Tovar Calendar: An Illustrated Mexican Manuscript Ca. 1585* (New Haven: 1951). Subsequent studies of *veintena* illustration have elaborated upon this perceptible European influence in each image type within this typology: See, for instance, Betty Ann Brown, "European Influences in Early Colonial Descriptions and Illustrations of the Mexica Monthly Calendar," Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of New Mexico, 1977; Susan Spitler, "Nahua intellectual responses to the Spanish: The incorporation of European ideas into the Central Mexican calendar."

⁷ It should be noted that the format chosen for these paintings – one in which the *tonalpohualli* appears in bars straddling the *xiuhpohualli* – is highly unusual, since exceedingly few other sixteenth-century calendars illustrate how the two cycles interact in one of 52 years of an even longer cyclical period (the illustrations of the *Kalendario Mexicano* are one example). Dates in the two cycles only intersected once every 52 years; accordingly, it is possible to argue that the calendar treatise represents a specific year in history – 1507 A.D., plus or minus any multiple of 52 years (given that the year represented is a year of 'New Fire'). However, the motivation for that choice may simply be didactic; it is most likely that the first year of the cycle was chosen in order to give readers an example of how the two cycles intersect from the time of their mutual first date (starting with the date 1 Cipactli 1 Xilomaniztli).

representation of the divinatory calendar, the much more open tradition of solar calendar illustration afforded the painters greater opportunity to experiment with the calendar's representation.

Accordingly, the *veintena* cartouches contain the richest pictorial variation in the Calendar treatise. These 18 images purport to offer us a window onto Aztec festival practices, showing religious activities set within natural environments. The gods (or humans dressed as them) march across verdant landscapes, humbly dressed natives take hold of maize in the fields, and peasant women unwrap tamales upon a reed mat set against the green (Fig. 2.6–2.8). The compositions within these small cartouches are simply drawn, showing little of the complication of the paintings of the later *Historia*. Penned in quickly, then rounded out with a little wash, the Calendar paintings offered a vision of the *xiuhpohualli* calendar as a festival round articulated with a single emblematic rite for each of its months.⁸

Importantly, though the paintings of the months share a general interest in representing ritual, they can nevertheless be divided into two types. In the first, more complex type of painting, the ritual on the ground line is paired with an additional graphic element in the sky (Fig. 2.7). Set off among clouds, most of these elements are recognizable as versions of the 'month glyphs' that Colonial documents use to name the twenty-day periods of the *xiuhpohualli*. This type accounts for the majority in the Durán calendar: 12 out of the 18 paintings showed month glyphs in the sky. The second type of painting did not accompany its ritual scene with a month glyph; instead, the skies in these scenes are undifferentiated (Fig. 2.6). 4 out of the 18 paintings were definitely paintings of this type. Additionally, there are 2 paintings that were badly damaged in one of Codex

⁸ One exception is the 13th month, Huey Pachtli / Coailhuatl, which did not feature a religious activity, but instead showed a massive snake set along the ground line. Otherwise, the remaining 17 paintings of the calendar all show some kind of religious rite underway.

Durán's rebinding campaigns; because the sky in these paintings was cut from the composition, it is now impossible to definitively sort them into either type (Fig. 2.9). While the distinction between months with and without glyphs may at first appear arbitrary, I argue in the sections that follow that recognizing the distinction made by this typology is crucial for understanding how the Calendar treatise communicated ideas about native religious history and the survival of Chichimec rites in the imperial calendar.

Looking across the corpus of Early Colonial calendars, we find that the pairing of a month glyph with a ritual scene appears to be a novel format used only by Durán. At the same time, though, the Durán painters cannot quite be described as its originators. As a number of scholars have noted, the Calendar's combination of a month glyph with a genre scene appears to have been adapted from European traditions for calendrical illustration.⁹ In Medieval Books of Hours, paintings illustrating the calendar always paired the signs of the zodiac with scenes depicting the "labors of the months," which showed common people engaged in the work typical for the given season (Fig. 2.10).¹⁰ European printed books contemporary with Codex Durán's production perpetuated these medieval calendars' format; Couch argued that Durán may have been attracted to the standardization of the format of these post-Tridentine books and commissioned a

⁹ Kubler and Gibson, *The Tovar Calendar*; Brown, "European Influences in Early Colonial Descriptions and Illustrations of the Mexica Monthly Calendar;" Couch, "Style and Ideology in the Durán Illustrations: An Interpretive Study of Three Early Colonial Mexican Manuscripts," Ph.D. Diss, Columbia University, 1987.

¹⁰ Books of Hours were the most widely produced manuscripts on the Late Medieval market, with international demand among the laity particularly strong between 1250-1500. Such books were never produced in great numbers in Spanish or German workshops, but Spain did import Flemish examples in large numbers during the period (though the major center of production was in France). Not all Books of Hours featured illustrated calendars; Wieck reports that Calendars in these books were illustrated less than half of the time. The sixteenth century, however, was the major period for large-scale cycles of calendar paintings in these manuscripts. See Roger S. Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York, 2001).

Mesoamerican version of such a work from his painters.¹¹ To Couch's point, I would add that calendars like these were also produced in early Mexican presses in books like the *Manuale Sacramentorum* of 1560, a book destined specifically for use by the Church in New Spain.¹² In the *Manuale*, the illustration of September shows the labor of producing wine (Fig. 2.11); paired with this scene is the sign of Libra set off in the top left corner. It is at least possible that Durán's painters drew upon this model, a Christian calendar printed in Mexico for the Mexican church, while making their own Mesoamerican adaptation of a European calendar. Whatever their actual source, Codex Durán's Calendar paintings structured their compositions according to European conventions, replacing the signs of the zodiac with the glyphs used to name the Mesoamerican months.

While the Calendar paintings certainly adapted the compositions of their European sources, a closer look suggests that they may well have adopted some of the European calendars' pastoral tone as well. As Roger Wieck noted, European calendars tend to represent the 'labors' performed by peasant agriculturalists, probably a nostalgic subject for the mercantilist consumers of the

¹¹ Couch, "Style and Ideology in the Durán Illustrations," 329-334. Couch proposes these books as the source because they visually convey codification and standardization. It is interesting to consider whether these are qualities that would have attracted Durán (not to mention his painters), given that as a finished product, the Calendar is not actually well codified. The data on the calendar found throughout the Codex is, in fact, a mess: Ignacio Bernal noted that Codex Durán employs two entirely different systems of nomenclature and measurement, a Tlacaxipehualiztli system and an Atlcahualo (Xilomaniztli) system, creating significant confusion in his calendrical data. If it was, indeed, the appearance of standardization that attracted the Durán painters, it would suggest that the images represent an aspirational vision of Durán's calendar as a document with an internal consistency that it never achieves in actual fact. Bernal, "Los calendarios de Durán: Más confusion alrededor de la Crónica X," *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Antropológicos* 9 (1947): 125-134.

¹² Though little known, the *Manuale Sacramentorum* of 1560 has an important place in the history of the book in the Americas, given that it was printed by Juan Pablos, who is believed to be the first printer to establish a press anywhere on the continent. For a history of woodblock illustration in Juan Pablos' press, see María Isabel Grañen Porrúa, *Los grabados en la obra de Juan Pablos: Primer impresor en la Nueva España, 1539* (Mexico, 2010).

Books of Hours.¹³ In Durán's Calendar, too, we find that many of the rituals represented are humble, quietly executed activities, mostly of the sort performed by peasants in the home and the field. Ritual in many Calendar scenes appears to connote a highly individual experience, one seemingly outside of the state's control; indeed, the Aztec kings are utterly absent in the Calendar illustrations. There are, nevertheless, a few gods pictured, their elaborate costumes thrown into sharp relief by their appearance among so many plainly dressed commoners.¹⁴ As I explore in the sections that follow, the painters' choices in differentiating between state and commoner ritual were likely motivated by their narrative about the historical development of idolatry. For now, however, it is important merely to note the images' interest in differentiating between these social contexts in the paintings.

While the pictorial elements of Durán's calendar appear to have come out of the Book of Hours or its Early Modern permutations, the text of the calendar was conceived in analogy with another literary genre, the Reportorio.¹⁵ Widely attested in New Spain's libraries, Reportorios

¹³ Wieck says that this is, in fact, a fairly common feature in Medieval art, where a lordly and aristocratic ideal was held by the elite urban patrons with the resources to finance the creation of works of art. Wieck, *Time Sanctified*, 37.

¹⁴ Such a split between the home and the state likely tracks well with ethnographic reality: Aztec state ritual was never identical to the ritual of the household, and as Elizabeth Brumfiel noted, it was even in the state's interest to use its spectacular ritual to produce difference within its territory. Elizabeth Brumfiel, "Aztec Hearts and Minds: Religion and the State in the Aztec Empire," 283-310, in Susan E. Alcock, Terence N. D'Altroy, Kathleen D. Morrison and Carla M. Sinopoli, eds, *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History* (Cambridge, 2001).

¹⁵ Durán is explicit about comparing his Calendar treatise to a Reportorio; the comparison comes in the Calendar treatise, chapter 2, where Durán writes to condemn native prognostication, saying "la causa de esto era por tener estas figuras, a unas por buenas, a otras por malas, a otras por indiferentes, así como nosotros lo hallamos en nuestros repertorios escrito de los signos del zodiaco, que unos en sus influencias son buenos y otros malos y otros indiferentes para los frutos de la tierra y aun para los cuerpos, pues los médicos doctos y experimentados aguardan y miran y conocen cuando al sangría será provechosa o nociva, o la purga." The connection here appears to be between the calendars' uses for prognostication, given that he presents European uses of the calendar for medicine and agriculture as a foil for Native divination. The difference is that while

treated the description of time, astronomy, and astrology, and were printed in Spanish by Spanish and Dutch presses.¹⁶ Inventories of the library at the Colegio de Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco give us hints of which Reportorios circulated in New Spain by the 1570s when the Calendar treatise was drafted.¹⁷ What's more, we know that Reportorios were both used and highly valued within native communities.¹⁸ Some Reportorios were illustrated, and the broader indigenous manuscript corpus attests that native painters in diverse regions engaged with Reportorio images (Fig. 2.12),¹⁹ but Codex Durán appears to engage most with this genre in its texts.

Christian uses of astrology ultimately privilege God above all, native forms, according to Durán, are only superstitious.

¹⁶ My understanding of the Spanish Reportorio depends largely on the volumes that I was able to read in the Biblioteca Nacional de España. There, I consulted the 1554, 1566, 1572, 1576, 1580, 1581, 1584, and 1588 editions of the Jerónimo Chaves *Chronographia o Repertorio de los Tiempos: el mas copioso y preciso que hasta ahora ha salido a la luz*. I also studied Andrés de Li's *Repertorio de los Tiempos* in editions dated 1492, 1495, 1510, 1513, and 1542. Additionally, I studied Rodrigo Zamorano's *Cronologia y reportorio de la razon de los tiempos: el mas copioso que hasta oi se a visto*, in editions of 1585 and 1594. Finally, my survey of the genre included a 1563 edition, finely illustrated, by Bernardo Pérez de Vargas, *Aqui comienza la segunda parte de la Fabrica del universo llamada Repertorio perpetuo*.

¹⁷ García Icazbalceta (1892) published a series of library inventories from Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, and the Chaves Reportorio appears in that census by 1572, with later reappearances in 1574 and 1584. Cited in Aveni, "Circling the Square," 44.

¹⁸ In a masterful edition of one of the most important colonial Mayan texts, Victoria Bricker and Helga-Maria Miram demonstrate that Mayan scribes translated entire portions of the Chaves Reportorio when writing the Chilam Balam of Kaua; the Chilam Balam of Ixil, meanwhile, has been identified by Laura Caso Barrera as dialoguing with the reportorios of Chaves and of Andrés de Li. In other examples, natives wrote documents in keeping with the reportorio's general interests, but did not translate them directly, as in a Nahuatl "Reportorio de los Tiempos" published by Alfredo López Austin, which was written hand in the back of a copy of fray Pedro de Gante's 1553 *Doctrina christiana en lengua mexicana* (a book printed by Juan Pablos in Mexico City). Though it was quite common for friars to translate Spanish texts into Nahuatl, López Austin convincingly demonstrates that this Nahuatl Reportorio was translated by a Nahua, based on patterns in the writer's orthography.

¹⁹ In Reportorio illustrations, woodblock images included diagrams of the skies (including a popular image with the levels of the "cielo" that separated earth from God), or images of sibyls pulled on chariots decorated with the zodiac, or diagrams of the winds. Elsewhere in New Spain, some Reportorio illustrations were copied into books concerning native calendars, as was the case with the Chilam Balam of Ixil, which clearly reworks some illustrations of the Chaves Reportorio. Caso Barrera, *Chilam Balam de Ixil* (Mexico, 2011), 36-47.

In the Reportorios upon which Durán based his treatise, time was studied not merely as an astrological or theological question; rather, it was also treated as a fundamentally historical problem. The Chaves Reportorio – among the most influential in New Spain at the end of the sixteenth century²⁰ – proposed that all time in human history could be divided into discrete periods; tables graphically attest that Chaves’ periodization of historical time aligned with key moments of conversion in the Bible, a form of periodization with significant resonance in the thought of the mendicants of New Spain (Fig. 2.13).²¹ In its description of the calendar, the Chaves Reportorio was similarly concerned with how the measure of time had been undertaken by non-Christian communities; in part, his calendar is an etymological project that traces back the conception of the calendar and its units into earlier periods.²² Durán shares Chaves’ interest in the etymologies of calendrical terminology, impulsively translating the names of the Aztec months as if, in so doing, to offer an explanation for how the calendar came to have its shape. Like Chaves, too, Durán attempts to offer ethnographic explanations for the origins of the rites, proposing that forms of habitual practice were instituted within the form of the calendar. When looking to the Reportorios as a model for the Calendar text, Durán encountered a document that treated time’s study as if it could reveal the past of human religious experience, an affinity shared among his manuscript’s three treatises.

²⁰ In addition to its appearance in the Tlaltelolco inventory, evidence for this manuscript’s circulation comes from its echoes in indigenous documents. See notes 16-18.

²¹ On the periodization of history within New World mendicant contexts, see Jaime Lara, *City, Temple, Stage: Eschatological Architecture and Liturgical Theatrics in New Spain* (Notre Dame: 2004).

²² Serge Gruzinski noted that the *Reportorio* of Henrich Martin, written in Mexico City and published in the first decade of the seventeenth century, combined both a treatment of non-Western modes of counting and measuring time and major events in religious history (from this Iberian perspective, major events included the Reconquista and the Protestant Reformation). Gruzinski, *What Time is it There? America and Islam at the Dawn of Modern Times* (Cambridge, 2010), 82-85.

In sum, we find that in pictures and in text, the format of the Calendar treatise closely followed two European models, the Book of Hours and the Reportorio. Yet, as we have already begun to see, while the format of the Calendar paintings may have been conceived through European models, much of the content of the paintings (the month glyphs and ritual scenes) had roots in the Mesoamerican tradition. Many of these indigenous motifs were fundamentally reinterpreted as they were incorporated into Durán's calendar. In the section that follows, I turn to the month glyphs, showing how Durán's version of these graphic elements changed their meaning. As I demonstrate below, Durán reinterprets the month glyphs in service of a narrative and vision about religious change that is uniquely his own, transforming their meaning in service of a new narrative about the idolatry's past.

The Heavenly Glyphs

1. The Worshipped Glyphs

Because the month glyphs have the look of indigenous writing – each of them resembles the ‘notationally compact’ signs written in Colonial Nahua art – Nahua specialists might see them in the Calendar and assume that they function much as Nahua writing works elsewhere.²³ Nahua glyphs were largely used only for proper names, with writing deployed to identify Aztec rulers and the towns they conquered, but little more. Intuition would suggest that in the Calendar paintings, the glyphs would work much the same: We might look to a painting like the illustration of the month of Tozoztontli (Fig. 2.14) and assume that the little bird pierced by a bone is meant only to communicate the name of the month (‘bird’ is *tototl* in Nahuatl). In part, this interpretation

²³ I have adopted the descriptor ‘notationally compact’ from Kubler and Gibson, who argued for the Colonial origins of the month glyphs in their book *The Tovar Calendar*, 51-52.

is surely correct: Durán himself suggested in his text that the glyph was translatable as the festival's name.²⁴ Indeed, the glyphs partly do serve to name the months represented by each *veintena* painting, just as glyphs performed similar naming functions elsewhere in the corpus.

And yet, when Durán's text described the month glyph for Tozoztontli, it went just a bit further. Immediately after Durán offered his interpretation of the glyph as language, he added to it an anthropological dimension. With some hesitancy, Durán suggested that the glyph was not merely a written grapheme, but that it was also, and perhaps foremost, a constellation that the Nahuas identified in the sky. Reflecting first upon the untranslatability of this notion gathered from his informants, Durán writes,

Para declaración de esta barbaridad, aunque confieso que yo no hallo bocablos para podello explicar en español, es de saver que, aunque confusamente, entendí ser unas estrellas que en el cielo se mostravan como pájaro atrabessado con un guesso. A cuia imaginación acude la de los poetas y astrólogos que ymaginaron el signo de tauros, conpuesto de tantas estrellas, así estos ymaginavan en el cielo este signo.²⁵

To speak of this barbarity – although I confess that I don't find words to describe it in Spanish – we need to know that, although confusedly, as I understand it there are stars in the sky that appeared as a bird pierced with a bone. Imagining it one's mind goes to the poets and astrologers who imagined the sign of Taurus, composed of so many stars. In this way, these people imagined in the sky this sign.

Initial hedging of his claim aside, Durán's comparison between the Tozoztontli glyph and the constellation of Taurus as seen by astrologers in Western antiquity both clarifies his claim and

²⁴ Durán's own translation, however, suggests that he believed the term *tozoztontli* referred primarily to the act of piercing. Of the glyph, he initially writes, "hera un pajaro galano con un guesso atravesado a la qual figura llaman (tozoztontly) que quiere decir por este vocablo diminutivo la puncadurrilla pequeña que hablando a nro modo quiere decir cosilla pasada con alguna cossa de una parte a otra y la mesma figura lo demuestra." Codex Durán Folio 328 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 247; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 418.

²⁵ Codex Durán Folio 328 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 247; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 418-419.

gives it context: Natives saw the little bird depicted as a glyph in the painting as a constellation in the sky, just as the ancients in the Mediterranean world saw constellations of their own.

This statement is not unique; in fact, Durán is quite consistent in making the claim that the month glyphs were constellations, planets, or stars. For the festival of Huey Tecuilhuitl, Durán writes that the month's glyph, a royal insignia, appeared as a constellation in the sky during the *veintena* period (Fig. 2.15). Similar claims appear over and over again in his description of the month glyphs. The mortuary bundle that was the glyph of Miccailhuitontli was also a “figura en el cielo” (Fig. 2.16). The moss plant that served as the glyph of Pachtontli (Fig. 2.17) could be found “entre las nubes, o en el cielo, o en las estrellas,” and in the sky during Atemoztli, a little boy said to represent water was figured descending (Fig. 2.18). Similarly, for the festival of Tecuilhuitontli, Durán referred to the first day of the festival as coinciding with a “planeta” (Fig. 2.19). In short, the text's descriptions of the so-called month glyphs as constellations are both consistent and unambiguous, so that despite Durán's initial equivocations about translation, his treatise ultimately commits to the idea that the month glyphs painted in the illustrations were actually constellations that the natives identified among the stars.

What's more, in many cases, Durán wrote that the natives not only saw the glyphs as constellations in the sky but also worshipped them in the festivals. In Tozoztontli, the little bird punctured by the bone was, according to the text, the object of veneration: “la efigie que reverenciaban [ese día] era un pájaro galano, con un hueso atravesado; a la cual figura llamaban tozoztontli.”²⁶ Tecuilhuitontli, the small festival of the lords, was not celebrated because the “efigie y planeta” was diminutive and not yet “cosa grande;”²⁷ meanwhile, during the festival of Huey

²⁶ Codex Durán Folio 328 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 247; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 418.

²⁷ “... la efigie y planeta de este día no denotaba cosa grande.”

Tecuilhuitl in the following month, the ‘idol’ worshipped was a seated king, with royal insignia like that imagined in the sky.²⁸ In Miccailhuitontli, the glyphic constellation was said to be the object of reverence; similarly, during Atemoztli, the “figura” painted in the sky of the small boy descending as water was worshipped in petition for rain. Pachtontli’s glyph too, was a constellation venerated in a festival: “hacían y fundaban su solemnidad, fingiendo entre las nubes [...] este signo.” In these texts, the month glyph constellations themselves are regularly treated as objects of worship, receiving veneration during the calendar’s periods. Not every month glyph constellation was explicitly mentioned as an object of worship;²⁹ even so, in a significant number of cases, Durán describes natives as giving “reverencia” to the constellations during their festivals, making star worship a major undercurrent in Durán’s Calendar treatise alongside the worship of the gods.

In the paintings with month glyphs, then, Durán argues for a scenario in which the glyphs pictured in the sky were both seen and worshipped by natives. Because these glyphs appear in nearly two thirds of the festival paintings, we conclude that for Durán, the worship of astral bodies was a major motivation for natives in the religious practice of the solar calendar. His consistency in referencing the constellations suggests that his vision of the calendar as given over to astral worship was systematic; his idea, in other words, accounted for most of the religious practice in the solar calendar. And yet the idea was rather unusual among the chroniclers who treated the Mesoamerican calendar. We are thus left to ask: Where did Durán get the idea that the month glyphs were venerated as constellations, and what larger discursive agenda did it serve?

²⁸ Codex Durán Folios 333 verso – 334 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 265; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 436.

²⁹ One exception is the month of Huey Pachtli. While Durán says that the month’s glyph – a moss ball – was a constellation in the sky, he makes no mention of it as an object of worship, writing instead that the festival was devoted to Tlaloc and the mountains.

2. The month glyphs before the Durán Calendar

In the extant corpus of Colonial Central Mexican sources, there is no other document that shares Durán's belief that the month glyphs were constellations seen and worshipped by natives. The only other manuscript that depicts constellations is Sahagún's *Primeros Memoriales* (Fig. 2.20), but none of the constellations painted in that codex match the month glyphs that appear in Codex Durán. Archaeoastronomers, additionally, have not yet determined whether the Aztecs even recognized constellations, let alone what forms those constellations might have had.³⁰ The documentary base for Aztec constellations, in other words, is quite thin, with no sources to substantiate Durán's idea that the month glyphs were venerated forms of constellations found elsewhere in the corpus.³¹ What we do find, however, is an unusual pattern in the use of the month glyphs in documents that securely pre-date Codex Durán. Looking for early evidence of the month glyphs, we find a marked tendency to use them in histories that address native religious conversions.

The month glyphs, we find, were a slippery set of objects even before Durán argued that they were celestial signs. The significant historiographic problem with these glyphs is that they tend to appear where least expected; what's more, they are so thinly attested in early documents

³⁰ Anthony Aveni, *Skywatchers: A Revised and Updated Version of Skywatchers of Ancient Mexico* (Austin, 2001), 29–40.

³¹ While no other manuscript before the Durán says that the month glyphs were actually constellations, there are calendrical data (including month glyphs) in the Codex Mexicanus that are presented immediately before astrological information in a European mode. Diel identifies the month glyphs for Tecuilhuitontli and Ochpaniztli in the opening pages of the Mexicanus; there may have been even more month glyphs in these passages but several pages of calendar information are missing from the manuscript and much of the writing is effaced. Lori Boornazian Diel, *The Codex Mexicanus: A Guide to Life in Late Sixteenth-Century New Spain* (Austin, 2018), 37–45.

that it is hard to make any definitive assertions about where they originated, or in what contexts they were most often used. Despite Eduard Seler's conviction that he had found a full set of the *veintena* glyphs carved at the Aztec hilltop site of El Tepozteco in the state of Morelos, only one month glyph has ever been securely identified in the archaeological corpus.³² In colonial documents, a few month glyphs appear most securely in documents that registered tribute, suggesting that a small portion of the 18 glyphs may have been developed to mark the periods when conquered towns should pay their taxes to Aztec centers.³³ But aside from these workmanlike tribute documents, there are only a few places where the month glyphs were ever used before the painting of the Durán Calendar, and even then, their uses show evidence of association with a rather unexpected context.³⁴

The curious pairing of the month glyphs with conversion histories can be found in three major documents that almost certainly pre-date Durán: Codex Vaticanus A, the Codex Aubin, and

³² Eduard Seler, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Amerikanischen Sprach- und Alterthumskunde* (5 vols and index, Berlin, 1902-1923), III, 497-513. Seler believed that he had found the month glyphs because the number of carvings identified was 18, the same number as the number of months. This argument is considered Kubler and Gibson, *The Tovar Calendar*, 62-63; the authors ultimately refute Seler, as “none of these or other assimilations to Mexican signs carries conviction, and their sequence is scrambled, even when an effort is made to read them in various alternating or reciprocal orders” (63). Only one month glyph (Panquetzaliztli) has been securely identified in the monumental corpus of Aztec sculpture, a recent discovery by Ana Díaz. See Díaz, “Nombrar las veintenas en los códices. Estrategias coloniales de reconfiguración gráfica del año entre los nahuas,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 40 (2018): 147-195.

³³ Part of the evidence, here, is that the same four month glyphs appear on all of the tribute registers: Tlacaxipehualiztli, Etzalcualiztli, Ochpaniztli, and Panquetzaliztli. The initial argument for the tribute register context of the month glyphs appears, again, in Kubler and Gibson, *The Tovar Calendar*, pages 62-63. Betty Ann Brown's dissertation concurs with the notion of glyphs for four periods of tribute collection.

³⁴ My initial research into primary sources on the solar year relies heavily upon the handlist that appears as an appendix to Kubler and Gibson, *The Tovar Calendar*. This list includes all known sources on the *veintenas* at the time of publication. Though nearly comprehensive, I have also identified a few sources on the *veintenas* not included in the handlist; these include a wheel insert into Muñoz Camargo's *Historia de Tlaxcala* that approximates Veytia Wheel 5 and a number of probable forgeries in Harvard's Peabody Museum.

the Boban Wheel. In the Codex Vaticanus A, a manuscript compiled by the Dominican Friar Pedro de los Ríos, an extensive list of month glyphs appears immediately below a historical scene in which the Conquistadores first appear in Mexican history, shown on horseback brandishing a sword and bearing a cross (Fig. 2.21). Scholars have struggled to explain why a list of month glyphs appears at just this place in Aztec the recounting of Aztec history, but in fact, this is not the only place in which the month glyphs were painted in association with the Conquest. In Codex Aubin, the month glyphs are utterly absent from pre-Hispanic history, but appear, oddly, in the history of the Conquest; additionally, the solar calendar is explained in an alphabetic text on the reverse side of a major painting representing the Conquest (Fig. 2.22). Perhaps it is a matter of coincidence, but these early uses of the month glyphs are both associated with scenes of Conquest and conversion.

What's more, in the most significant example of the month glyphs before Durán, the association between the solar calendar and native religious evolution was even more explicit. On the Boban Wheel (ca. 1545-1546), a full sequence of month glyphs appear on the Wheel's outermost ring, naming the 18 festivals in both hieroglyphic and alphabetic scripts (Fig. 2.23).³⁵ At the wheel's center, a genealogical register of Texcocan rulers traces their history from Chichimecs to Aztecs and finally to Colonial political elites, a history told along the manuscript's vertical axis. First, at the bottom, we see the Chichimec phase, where paired ancestral figures sit before a smoking fire, the left figure nestled within a cave-like outcrop of rock. Just above them, near the Wheel's center, we find the kings Nezahualcoyotl and Itzcoatl pictured seated upon *icpalli* reed thrones, engaged in conversation; they are identifiable by the later gloss below them. At the

³⁵ A small series of footprints just below this outermost ring recalls a larger, pan-Mesoamerican metaphor of the solar year as a traveled road. Victoria Bricker, "The Mayan Uinal and Garden of Eden," *Latin American Indian Literatures Journal* 18 (2010): 1-20.

top register, the Texcocan *alcalde* Don Hernando de Chávez faces his half-brother, Don Antonio, both named with Spanish titles. The Boban Wheel, in other words, pairs the glyphs for the *veintena* festivals with a long history of the Texcocan ruling dynasty.³⁶

Later, a secondary intervention into the Boban Wheel transformed the document's history into one that addressed the evolution of native religion, so that the manuscript came to pair the month glyphs with a story about conversion (Fig. 2.24). To each level depicting Texcoco's political elites, this second artist added drawings addressing native forms of religion. A simple drawing of the sun was added above the image of the Chichimecs, recalling Motolinia's – and later Duran's – idea of the centrality of sun cult among the early Mexicans.³⁷ Above the Chichimec scene, a strange pair of temples, one recalling the Templo Mayor, and the other its Texcocan counterpart, invokes the religious architecture of a complex, imperial state. Finally, at the top level, a church on the right with an arched portal invokes the Christianization of the Texcocan elites. With these additions, the Boban Wheel came to interrelate the month glyphs with native politics and forms of worship.

The Codex Vaticanus A, Codex Aubin, and the Boban Wheel are the only documents with the month glyphs that can be reasonably assumed to pre-date the Durán Calendar, and in all of them, we find the glyphs associated with histories of native religious conversion. These glyphs may once have had a much wider distribution and pattern of use, but the current evidence would

³⁶ Recent work on the Boban Wheel by Patricia Lopes Don has concluded that the original document was likely created for a land tenure case involving the Texcocan elites; on the basis of this context, she has dated the wheel to 1545-1546. Earlier, Charles Dibble translated the Nahuatl text of the wheel, and noted that the images were created by two different hands. Patricia Lopes Don, *Bonfires of Culture: Franciscans, Indigenous Leaders, and the Inquisition in Early Mexico, 1524-1540* (Norman, 2012), Appendix. Charles Dibble, "The Boban Calendar Wheel," *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 20 (1990), 173-182.

³⁷ This sun was probably added at the same time, too, as the Nahuatl text that surrounds the sun, given that the text leaves a space for the sun rather than having the sun imposed atop it.

suggest that when the Durán painters adopted the month glyphs to serve as their constellations, they used a form of calendrical inscription that was associated with the history of native religion. In fact, even if they did not draw generally on some wider association of month glyphs with religious history, I think there is a good case to be made that they used the Boban Wheel *specifically* as their source, drawing their calendrical data from a document clearly invested in understanding native religious change.

My argument for the Calendar painters' use of the Boban Wheel as a source is based on three lines of evidence. First, both documents share a Texcocan context: As I explain in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, Codex Durán uses certain regionally specific motifs unique to the Texcocan region, where the Boban Wheel was both made and used.³⁸ Second, the Calendar and Boban Wheel share an odd iconographic quirk, which they deploy in similar places. The Boban Wheel depicts a crudely drawn temple with smaller buildings on top of a lower building on alignment with its illustration of the month glyph of Toxcatl; surprisingly, Durán's Toxcatl painting features the same building, drawn even more haphazardly, in its own illustration (Fig. 2.25). Finally, and most persuasively, there is one instance in which Durán describes one of the month glyphs in his text (Huey Tecuilhuitl) not as it appears in the Codex illustration, but rather as it appears on the Boban Wheel. Durán says that a kingly throne should appear as part of his Huey Tecuilhuitl glyph, but instead, Durán's glyph shows only the royal diadem headband. The throne *does* appear, however, as part of the Huey Tecuilhuitl glyph on the Boban Wheel – the only document in the entire corpus to include a throne as part of the glyph (Fig. 2.26). On the basis of

³⁸ As I explain at length in the introductory chapter, I point particularly to the frontispiece painters' illustration of a headdress that only appears in the manuscripts of the Texcoco region, a motif discussed in Jerome A. Offner, "A Curious Commonality Among Some Eastern Basin of Mexico and Eastern Mexican Pictorial Manuscripts."

this evidence, I feel that there is a strong possibility that the Durán painters were sourcing their images and thinking with the Boban Wheel as they painted the constellation glyphs.

If the Durán painters did, in fact, source their heavenly month glyphs from the Boban Wheel, then it would suggest that they thought about these graphemes as signs with some visible relationship to the history of religion. The longer trajectory of the month glyphs in New Spain – albeit a trajectory only thinly attested – suggests that the month glyphs tended to be used primarily in historical documents related to conversion. Perhaps either this wider pattern of use, or the specific use of the month glyphs in the Boban Wheel, attracted the interest of the Durán painters precisely because they addressed questions about the history of native religion. The concerns at the heart of Codex Durán’s larger project, in other words, were shared by the manuscripts in which the month glyphs appeared. In describing the month glyphs as worshipped constellations, Codex Durán transforms these signs from the way in which they signified in earlier documents, adding an astral connotation where none existed before. At the same time, however, when we see how Codex Durán depicts these signs, we find that it nevertheless retains the earlier manuscripts’ interest in using the month glyphs to illuminate the deep history of native religion.

3. The Heavenly Glyphs and the Chichimecs

Adopting the month glyphs from manuscripts invested in the history of religion, the Durán paintings set them off among the clouds, transforming them into venerated astral signs. As I noted in the beginning of this chapter, however, only a certain number of paintings ever had month glyphs. Looking only at the paintings of this type, we find that the month glyphs were associated predominantly with one kind of ritual practice, a religiosity not of the state but of the household. These images created a tight association between astral veneration and the ritual of the home and

the field, suggesting that they may have been conceived as holdovers from early, pre-Aztec religion.

Looking at the paintings that purported to illustrate constellation worship, we recognize that none of them included deity images, and most of them tended instead to represent those forms of practice that were less associated with the state than with the household (Fig. 2.27). Nearly all of the men and women who practice these rituals are, in the first place, dressed quite simply, wearing only humble white mantles trimmed with a bit of red. The rituals that they perform consist overwhelmingly of plantwork. In these scenes, men grasp at stalks of maize, both young and ripe, or clutch the stems of flowering herbs, while women hold bunches of plants upward in the direction of the astral bodies. Feasting, too, appears central in the scenes associated with constellation worship. In four scenes, commoners pull a variety of foods – differently shaped and colored – from bowls, baskets, and leaves upon the ground, eating in the patios of their homes or in the fields, the venerated constellation glyphs seen overhead. Most of the ritual scenes associated with Durán’s constellations involve rituals at precisely this level, executed with minimal spectacle, at far remove from the images of the gods. The religion pictured here, in other words, is an entirely different kind of religion than that of the Book of Gods and Rites, with its complex of elaborately dressed gods and a hierarchy of priests and priestesses to attend them.

Indeed, the distinction with the illustration of the state’s religion is important, for this type of painting seems to gesture most clearly not toward the religion of the Aztecs, but rather to resonate best with Durán’s ideas about pre-Aztec faiths. As Chapter 4 argues, Durán believed that native religions in the pre-Aztec period were largely aniconic, an idea that he shared with other chroniclers, but which flew in the face of a significant corpus of paintings showing pre-Aztec ancestors worshipping and obeying the orders of deities wrapped in sacred bundles. Durán’s idea,

instead, was that Aztec gods and the sculptures and humans that represented them only entered native history under the conditions of the later empire. For Durán, the pre-Aztec period was a time in which religion was primarily concerned with the worship of the sun, carried out in the absence of monumental images and imperial rites.³⁹

Misreading the signs of the month glyphs, Durán created a view in which many of the rituals of the calendar were carried out in reverence for astral bodies recognized as signs, a Chichimec form of religious veneration. Further contributing to this vision, Durán's text misread yet another glyphic sign in Nahua art, bolstering his claim that the calendar systematized a largely aniconic solar cult. Durán's first *veintena* painting, which illustrates the month of Xilomaniztli, looks a bit different from all of the other *veintenas*: In this case, there was no glyph in the sky, but the text did interpret another glyphic sign, *ollin*, that was collaged later onto the bottom of the frame (Fig. 2.28). In manuscript art, the *ollin* glyph is typically associated with earthquakes, conveying something like the vibrating motions of the trembling earth.⁴⁰ Durán, however, offers a significant modification of the 'movement' theme when interpreting the sign: He says, instead, that the term *ollin* signifies "curso" – specifically the course of movement of the sun across the sky throughout the solar year;⁴¹ similarly, he elsewhere interprets *ollin* as meaning "cosa que anda

³⁹ As Chapter Three of this dissertation further elaborates, many of Codex Durán's ideas about early Aztec religion resonate, also, with contemporary ideas about the religions of the living Chichimecs with whom the Spanish were at war in northern Mexico. Period accounts describe the living Chichimecs as warriors who wore hides, lived in caves, and ate no cooked food; as for their religion, the prevailing notion was that Chichimecs worshipped the sun and stars with proclamations made directly toward the sky, unmediated by images, architecture, or a priestly class.

⁴⁰ In the manuscript corpus, one iconographic proof for the translation of *ollin* as "earthquakes" comes from the historical annals of Codex Telleriano-Remensis, where the *ollin* sign is consistently glossed in Spanish as "temblor;" see, for example, Folios 38 recto; 42 verso.

⁴¹ Codex Durán Folio 326 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 240; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 414.

o se menea.”⁴² Durán includes this *ollin* sign to make visual reference to the festival of Nahui Ollin, which he says fell during the first month of the year, a festival when the “caballeros del sol” worshipped the *ollin* glyph, the movement of the sun, itself.⁴³ Alongside the constellations, then, the festival year included a celebration of the figure for the sun in its movement, another astral commemoration, one directly related to the religious history that underwrote the deployment of the month glyphs.⁴⁴

With both the month glyphs and the sign for *ollin*, Codex Durán reimagines the meaning of glyphic signs available in the Colonial corpus. In both cases, we get a sense of just how productive Durán’s misreading of Nahua art has been, allowing the text to create a narrative about the survival of primitive Chichimec astral worship into the calendar of the mature empire. The extant Nahua visual inventory would not have communicated Durán’s sense of the Chichimecness of the calendar without the text’s resignification of the glyphs; after all, Durán was making an argument that inherently contradicted many depictions of ancestral Nahuas as they already existed. As a solution to the problem of the novelty of the text’s argument, the painters produced

⁴² Codex Durán Folio 323 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 231; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 403.

⁴³ “La figura que reverenciaban era la que a diecisiete días de aqueste mes de que vamos tratando queda señalada a la manera de una mariposa.”

⁴⁴ This off-kilter interpretation may, in fact, solve another puzzle in the Durán paintings: In the *Book of Gods and Rites*, Durán shows a “solar knight” standing upon a *temalacatl* upon which the *ollin* sign has replaced the solar symbol (Fig. 2.29); he thus creates an ersatz version of a sun stone that, by his own account, emphasizes the sun’s movement through the year as key to the sun cult. In both the Gods and Rites painting and the Xilomaniztli *veintena* image, Codex Durán’s texts and paintings repurpose the *ollin* sign from native iconography in order to create a novel graphic argument for the centrality of solar movement to the Aztec rites in the *veintena* festival. Interestingly, this version of a *temalacatl* could be read to bolster one of the most important theories about the identity of the figure at the center of the Sun Stone. In a classic article, Cecelia Klein proposed that the figure at the center of the stone was the Sun on its passage through night; Durán’s unusual sun stone uses different iconography but ultimately conveys a similar idea by emphasizing that the center of the *temalacatl* represents the sun in movement. Cecelia F. Klein, “The Identity of the Central Deity on the Aztec Calendar Stone,” *Art Bulletin* 58 (1976): 1-12.

what they needed on the basis of what already existed, taking signs for the months and reworking them into material that could communicate a polemic about Chichimec survivals in the Aztec calendar. Misreading Nahua art makes this visual argument possible.

In fact, these glyphs were not the only elements of Nahua art that the Durán painters misread in order to argue for the Calendar's relationship to history. In the section that follows, we will look to a few paintings from the *veintena* festivals with identifiable sources in the manuscripts of the Magliabechiano Group. Analyzing these earlier paintings and their transformation in the Calendar treatise, I show that the Durán painters engaged in a related, but rather different, form of misreading in order to further explore the notion of the *xiuhpohualli* as a cycle with a relationship to astral worship. Tracing how the painters manipulate source images, we see that while the native corpus may not have offered the painters a readymade set of images to make their visual argument, the painters selectively re-appropriated extant signs in order to show how some images of the gods were themselves evolved from earlier forms of worship.

The Starry Gods

Turning now to the paintings that never had month glyphs, we observe that they are of an entirely different character than the paintings that did have them. Unlike the group with the month glyphs as constellations, which tended to be paired with images of household ritual, the religious imagery paired with the months that did not constellation glyphs is wholly the imagery of state rites. Without the venerated constellations pictured in the sky, the rituals represented begin to include elaborate god images, as if the Aztec institution of the pantheon had replaced the Chichimec forms of worship represented with the constellations. And yet, I will argue, the texts that accompany these paintings also encourage us to see the gods themselves as part of the larger

complex of astral worship, with the deities not supplanting Chichimec practices, but instead representing the evolution of those Chichimec rites into imperial form.

There are four paintings that never had a month glyph in their frames; in these glyphless paintings, we appreciate their marked difference in character from the more ‘Chichimec’ paintings described above. In one of the constellation-less paintings, for the month of Etzalcualiztli (Fig. 2.30), we see an elaborately dressed ritualist who wears a precious jade bracelet and a costume used in battle in the later *Historia* paintings, adorned with a flouncing, plumed backrack and standing in a whirlpool. The Ochpaniztli painting shows a goddess, Toci (or her impersonator), upon her scaffold in Tocititlan (an imperial ritual also described in the *Historia*) (Fig. 2.31). Similarly constellation-less, the Quecholli painting represents the god Camaxtli tramping across an open field, accompanied by a deer that recalls his patronage of hunting (Fig. 2.32). Only the fourth of the glyph-less months, alternatively called Xilomaniztli or Cuauhitlehua, showed a ritual scene more Chichimec than imperial, with a man holding a plant in the field; but this month is, at any rate, an oddity, given both that it includes the discussion of the solar *ollin* glyph (discussed in the section above) and that Durán appears unsure about the month and its nomenclature (Fig. 2.28).

Additionally, I argue, it seems likely that the two damaged paintings, both of which represent imperial rituals, never had any month glyphs (Fig. 2.9). My measurements of these fragmentary images suggest that the portion of the painting where we would typically see the cloud imagery still survives in the damaged paintings; if the constellations had been there, in other words, I would expect to see them in the part of the painting that remains. Instead, I believe that the constellations were never part of these paintings. In these (probably) glyphless paintings, we observe what remains of scenes of Aztec deities. The Tlacaxipeualiztli painting includes the bottom portion of the god Xipe Totec’s diagnostic costume (Fig. 2.33), while the Toxcatl painting

represents Tezcatlipoca and religious architecture (Fig. 2.34). Adding these paintings to the four that definitely had no month glyphs, we see that the paintings without constellations included the Calendar's only images of deities dressed in complex costume. Where month glyph constellations are absent, images of the Aztec gods come to abound.

At the same time, however, the astral connotations of the feasts had not fully been evacuated in these festivals shown without glyphs. To see this in the paintings, we will look both to the text's interpretation of these images and to the way in which they transformed the pictorial sources for the Calendar's images of the gods. As I will argue, the texts and images together give us the sense that Durán understood imperial ritual as a transformation of Chichimec practices of astral worship into a form that recognized a pantheon, as both texts and images in these paintings made continued reference to the stars in their illustrations of the calendar festivals.

Reading the texts in light of the images, we find that at least some of the gods pictured walking along the ground line of the paintings were themselves considered constellations, even though they are not recognizable as month glyphs offset by clouds. The hunting god, Camaxtli, was counted among these: In the painting for the month of Quecholli, Camaxtli is dressed in an elaborate deity costume, painted with the black eye mask, feathers, and net bag diagnostic of the god (Fig. 2.32). Yet reading Durán's text, it becomes clear that Camaxtli was, foremost, a star.

Durán writes,

Llamaban al primer día de este catorceno mes Quecholli, que romanceado este vocablo, quiere decir 'flecha arrojadiza,' y así, veremos en la figura y signo que de este día imaginaban un hombre, con un arco y flechas en la mano, y en la otra, una esportilla, y un venado junto a los pies, la cual figura imaginaban ellos en el cielo, por signo de este mes.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Codex Durán Folio 340 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, 281; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 455-456.

They called the first day of this fourteenth month Quecholli, which in Spanish means ‘projectile arrow,’ and in this way, we shall see that they depicted the sign and figure for this month as a man, with a bow and arrows in one hand, and in the other, a basket, with a deer at his feet. They imagined this figure in the sky, as the sign for this month.

The text clearly describes Camaxtli as he appears in the scene, and unambiguously states that the god himself was a constellation visible in the night sky. At the same time, it also describes the body of Camaxtli as if that body were writing, proposing that the image of the god is nearly hieroglyphic in its potential to be deciphered as the name of the Quecholli feast. In this way, the god Camaxtli’s image is quite a lot like the month glyphs: It is at once a decipherable linguistic unit and also a sign visible within the night sky.

For the month of Etzalcualiztli, similarly, we see that the elite figure in that month’s painting is described with much of the same semiotic language that had already been used for the constellations (Fig. 2.30). Much as the text had described Camaxtli, Durán says that the festival of Etzalcualiztli was given over to the veneration of a *figura* and *signo* – in this case, one whose name meant ‘day for eating corn and cooked beans.’⁴⁶ Durán even describes the figure with his corn and his clay vessel painted in the illustration as the “signo de este día,” creating a semiotic continuity between the deity illustration and the constellations. Even though he never calls the elite figure that appears in the Etzalcualiztli painting a constellation, planet, or star, as he had with Camaxtli, he does insist on describing the god of the painting as being more like written language than like an anthropomorphic deity. There is a kind of continuity, in other words, in the language of signification used for the Etzalcualiztli figure and the language used for the month glyphs that were the constellations.

⁴⁶ “Llamaban a la figura que en principio y día primero de él se celebraba *etzalcualiztli*, que quiere decir día de comer maíz y frijol cocido.” Codex Durán Folio 331 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 259.

Furthermore, Durán's description of Etzalcualiztli is quite interesting for our purposes here, in that the text is clear to differentiate between the way the festival was celebrated by elites and by commoners. Dramatizing the difference in social complexity, Durán writes that in the *barrios*, common people ("la gente baja") celebrated Etzalcualiztli by feasting. Their version of the celebration did not involve simulating the *figura*; instead, they bathed and ate a maize and bean gruel, *etzalli*, forms of ritual that recall the humbler, Chichimec religions displayed in the constellation paintings. More puzzling, though, is Durán's description of the elite practice at the heart of Etzalcualiztli. In the festival, the figure depicted may well have been a written sign – and perhaps even a constellation – but Durán describes this figure as if he additionally served as a model for the behaviors of elites. Wealthy señores dressed up as if they were the *signos*, costumed "a la misma manera que vimos la figura que en la pintura del principio de este mes pusimos." Attired like glyphs, these señores went to the patios of the temples to dance.⁴⁷ People of elite status, in short, behaved like the gods during the Etzalcualiztli festival, making themselves into images that may have first originated as constellation signs.

The same process, in fact, appears in Durán's description of Quecholli, where elites imitate the constellations as part of a spectacular rite. As we have already seen, the god Camaxtli was considered by Durán to be a constellation (Fig. 2.32). During Quecholli, elites would dress up as if they were themselves the constellation god. Once attired, they would carry out a simulated hunt; if successful, they might win new titles of status and recognition.⁴⁸ In following Durán's description of the rites of Quecholli, what may be most striking is the chain of identity established

⁴⁷ Codex Durán Folio 332 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 261; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 431-433.

⁴⁸ These titles are described as "*amiztlatoque y amiztequihuaque*, que quiere decir 'preósitos y señores de la caza y capitanes de ella.'" Codex Durán Folio 340 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 281-282; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 456.

among the images and behaviors associated with the festival. The painting shows the god Camaxtli on the ground; Camaxtli was also a constellation; and during the festival, elites dressed as if they were him and behaved like him in an effort to amplify their status. As with the Etzalcualiztli festival described above, Quecholli, too, was a rite with a distinct ritual practice for elites. It was a feast when they dressed like the gods seen in the stars, an activity at significant remove from commoner forms of worship.

To briefly sum what we have seen so far, the Durán text offers a scenario in which the gods pictured in the paintings without constellations were, in at least some cases, the constellations themselves. Sometimes the text stated this implicitly, but in other cases, we get this sense because the gods are described with the same linguistic terms (*figura* and *signo*) used for the month glyph constellations described in the previous section. Texts describe the constellation gods as objects of worship – particularly for elites, who imitated these gods in ritual activities designated for high status. In at least one case, we are told that the constellation gods were *not* the concern of commoners, whose ritual practice focused, instead, upon feasting.

There is, moreover, an important visual component to this story, more clearly perceived when we attend to the pictorial sources that the Calendar painters used for their imagery. As Elizabeth Hill Boone first argued, the painters of Codex Durán made use of a group of Early Colonial Central Mexican codices, the Magliabechiano group, when designing some of the images of the Book of Gods and Rites. Boone noted the similarity, for instance, between Durán's Etzalcualiztli figure and the same figure in the Magliabechiano: they are oriented in the same direction, grasp flowering maize plants in the same way, and are pictured with vessels of similar

morphology (Fig. 2.35).⁴⁹ At the same time, close inspection reveals that the Durán painting has significantly transformed the original figure. Whereas before, the god had the face mask and headdress of the rain deity Tlaloc, the Durán painting has replaced Tlaloc with an altogether more human figure, repressing much of Tlaloc's diagnostic costume in this later version.

Looking closer at this process of transmission, we see that when the Durán painters reworked Tlaloc's image into the image of an elaborately dressed warrior, part of what they suppressed was a headdress known as the *amacuexpalli*. Made of folded paper, this head adornment typically appears folded into an accordion-like fan and spattered with drips of rubber. In the codices, rubber was depicted with a few different conventions, but one typical depiction of rubber attested both before and after the Conquest appeared as splatters that took the shape of black stars upon a white ground.⁵⁰ Tlaloc was often depicted with such a starry paper headdress, both in codices and in works of sculpture, so that star-shaped rubber was a fairly integral part of the Etzalcualiztli god's representation.

In other cases, too, we find that the Calendar gods are adapted from paintings that originally showed the deities wearing similarly rubber-covered garments. Toci, from the Ochpaniztli painting (Fig. 2.31), was originally shown wearing rubber-spattered garments. In the Magliabechiano group painting for the festival, the goddess is shown elevated above two attendants (Fig. 2.36); she is dressed in white garments dripped in rubber, though they do not take the starry form that we see on the Etzalcualiztli *amacuexpalli*. However, the Tudela *veintena* cycle's other image of Toci (Fig.

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Hill Boone, *The Codex Magliabechiano and the Lost Prototype of the Magliabechiano Group* (Berkeley, 1983), 155-159.

⁵⁰ On the iconography and archaeological attestations of rubber in postclassic and Early Colonial Central Mexico, see Emilie Carreón Blaine, *El olli en la plástica mexicana: el uso del hule en el siglo XVI* (Mexico City: 2006), 105-164.

2.37) shows the same goddess absolutely covered in the starry rubber drips, a spectacular addition that utterly dominates the design of her costume.

A third glyph-less *veintena*, the multiply-named first month in Durán's Calendar, shows evidence of a similar transformation, where a god who once wore rubber is rendered human in a Durán painting. In Durán's image (Fig. 2.28), the figure sits upon a box and grasps at plants; in the first month of the Magliabechiano calendar, a seated figure also pictured upon a box holds corn (Fig. 2.38). It may seem dubious that Durán has actually sourced this image from the Magliabechiano group, but the similarities are partly proven by etymology. Durán gives an alternate explanation for the name of the festival represented, *Xilomaniztli*: whereas the Magliabechiano derives the *xilo-* in the festival's name from corn, "xilotes," Durán instead derives it from a more generic term for plants, "xihuitl." Like the similarly glyph-less *Etzalcualiztli* festival, the figure that represents *Xilomaniztli* in the Magliabechiano wears a rubber-spattered *amacuexpalli*. Following the pattern of the months we have studied thus far, both the headdress and its rubber spatters are repressed in the Durán painting, which, as always, re-emphasizes the anthropomorphism of the figure.

On the basis of these examples, we may note that for at least some of the Calendar paintings that represented imperial ritual, the painters have chosen to adapt their images from pictures of the gods that once showed them covered in star-shaped rubber. Given the Calendar's interest in the gods as constellations, it is at least possible, I would argue, that the painters looked to the codices of the Magliabechiano group and saw god images covered in stars, and, finding these pseudo-astral deities there, reworked these source images into their own Calendar deity drawings. That the garments of these gods were actually covered in rubber, and in reality made no reference to the astral bodies, was in some sense beside the point. After all, the month glyphs, originally, had no

clear relationship to the stars; they were misread and transformed into the stars because this misunderstanding of Nahua art better served Codex Durán's narrative about primitive religion's practices of astral worship. It is quite likely, I argue, that the deity images sourced from the Magliabechiano codices were treated in much the same way. What was once rubber may have come to be interpreted, by the Durán painters, as a set of starry costumes. As they transformed the Magliabechiano images in order to include them in the Calendar treatise's paintings, the artists anthropomorphized the deities, repressing much of the starry deity costume that had attracted their initial interest in their source paintings.

Two additional examples – both rather unusual – help to solidify this case for the painter's misreading of rubber as the images of the stars. The Calendar's Huey Pachtli painting (Fig. 2.39) includes the *pachtli* constellation glyph along with a large snake in the foreground, a reference to an alternate name for the festival, 'Coailhuitl' (coatl means 'snake'). In the Magliabechiano's Huey Pachtli painting, an otherwise busy composition features a snake wearing banners of rubber-splattered paper. The painters chose only this rubber-splattered snake to serve as the image for the alternate name of this festival, leaving the rest of the month's busy scene out, and violating all previous compositional choices by using the emblematic animal as the entirety of the ritual scene. The painters had extensive visual material to choose from, in other words, but ultimately only chose a snake adorned with rubbery paper as their source. Then, in a rather different scenario, the Magliabechiano's *atemoztli* image figures Tlaloc covered in rubber splattered paper along with descending rain (Fig. 2.40). Visually, we see only the barest resonance with the painting of Durán, which retains only the theme of descent, but Durán's textual description of the glyph *does* describe the Magliabechiano scene, for he describes the constellation as a boy representing the rain descending from the heavens. Adding these examples to those discussed previously, we find that

the Durán painters engaged with virtually every example of rubber illustration in the Magliabechiano group *veintena* paintings, so that where the painters saw star-shaped rubber in the Magliabechiano books, they imported the bodies of gods into their paintings without need for the constellations.⁵¹

If the painters believed that the gods they depicted were constellations, and even chose to paint starry gods from the Magliabechiano codices in support of this point, then it suggests that the imperial festivals of the calendar represented both a continuity and an evolution of the other paintings' primitive forms of religion. Both sets of images in this scenario would depict venerated starry figures, despite the fact that the paintings took different formats. But while the month glyph constellations appeared alongside images of primitive rites, the glyph-less pictures showed constellation gods in the landscape, images of state-level religious activities in the history of native cult. Durán's Calendar paintings thus make a claim about the way that the ideology of the state was built upon the basis of primitive cults, showing a kind of progression in which all Aztec rites were based in astral worship, but some rites had ultimately evolved so that there was a pantheon of starry gods who were imitated in the behaviors of elites. While many of the paintings attest to survivals in the mature calendar of the early forms of native religion, the state-level paintings attest to the transformation of the stars into astral deity bodies in the shift towards the religion of a mature empire.

⁵¹ There are two small exceptions, but both may prove the rule. The Xocotl Huetzi painting in the Tudela has a figure wearing a bit of rubber – and in fact, the Durán paintings *do* include a Xocotl Huetzi scene with similar iconography. There is also a small amount of rubber on a red amacuepalli on a figure in the Huey Tecuilhuitl painting of Codex Tudela who is pictured with corn; in Durán's image, we have a human figure holding corn. These images may have been based on the Magliabechiano images as well, in other words, but the observed rhetoric of repressing elite costume makes it difficult to say for sure whether or not the transmission from the Tudela to Durán has occurred.

The Heterogeneous Calendar

In this chapter, I have shown how the history of native religion – a linear history leading from an aniconic sun cult to a state pantheon – found expression within the painted images of the cycle of the solar year. In its illustrations of the state’s rites, and in its text’s astral interpretations of the calendar’s signs, Codex Durán created a vision of the calendar as the artefact of accretive processes: Whereas some household-level rites for the constellations survived in primitive form in the native calendar year, in other months the rites had been re-elaborated to honor gods visible both in the stars and in bodies of human actors on earth. Accordingly, the Durán paintings make an argument for a fundamental coherence in the calendar: All Aztec religion recognized the stars, but some rites – especially as practiced among elites – had traveled further along an imagined trajectory toward the state’s elaborate pantheon and spectacular ritual.

Within the context of sixteenth-century New Spain, Durán was not the only thinker to suspect that the Calendar contained within it the traces of a historical Nahua religion. Sahagún’s works offer an example of such an inquiry: By his account, the calendar’s existence could be attributed to the authorship of Quetzalcoatl. Mendieta included a full mythic presentation of the calendar’s invention, set prior to the creation of humanity, in which Cipactonal, Oxomoco, and Quetzalcoatl alternately drew the first signs in the calendar round.⁵² Quetzalcoatl’s role in these scenes of the calendar’s creation resonates interestingly with the Duránian narrative, in which

⁵² Sahagún only briefly addresses the question of the calendar’s origin in a passage following an illustration of a wheel presenting the count of the years. He writes, “Esta tabla arriba puesta es la cuenta de los años, y es cosa antiquissima. Dizen, que el inventor della, fue Quetzalcoatl” (Florentine Codex, Book 7, Folio 22 recto). Mendieta’s attribution of the calendar’s invention comes in a much longer passage and is presented as part of a mythological scene; the full passage is cited in Alfredo López Austin, Leonardo López Luján, and Saburo Sugiyama, “El Templo de Quetzalcóatl en Teotihuacan: Su posible significado ideológico,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 16 (1991): 43-44. See also Mendieta 1945: I, 106

Quetzalcoatl was a persecuted (and defeated) missionary of the Christian message; although Durán did not consider Quetzalcoatl the calendar's creator, he nevertheless did ask questions like those of his Franciscan contemporaries about the calendar's origins. In the answers he offered, Durán differed insofar as his Calendar continues to testify to its roots in early faith practices.

Durán was not wholly unique, either, in his interest in the way that native religion might have begun by attributing divinity to the stars. Like Durán, Sahagún compared Aztec astrology to astrology elsewhere in the ancient world. Sahagún's Prologue to Book 7 of the Florentine Codex builds the case that the ancients mistakenly attributed divinity to the stars because of the blindness, *ceguedad*, into which they fell after Original Sin; the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden thus becomes the cause of star worship in Western antiquity. The natives suffered their own blindness – again, Sahagún uses the word *cegueras*, rhyming their errors with those of original sin – and so, logically to Sahagún, they invented *fábulas* of their own to describe the stars. Astral worship is thus the result of a cause-and-effect relationship in Sahagún's thought. Natives fit into the same history of mankind, so they were not merely comparable to the Mediterranean ancients in their worship of the stars; rather, both the ancients and the Nahuas demonstrated idolatrous errors that originated in the same cause: the blindness inflicted by the fall.⁵³

But though other writers in Colonial New Spain shared interests in the calendar's origins and in the worship of the stars, none was quite so sensitive as Durán to the stratigraphic buildup of the calendar as an artefact testifying to the transformation of ritual activity in the *longue durée*. With this vision, Durán's closest parallel might be found in the writing of the Cusqueño priest Cristóbal de Molina (1574), who believed that the Inka calendar was itself a heterogeneous product that contained within it both older and newer rites. As MacCormack writes, Molina “understood

⁵³ Bernadino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 7, Prologue.

the festivals of the Inka calendar to have evolved in the course of a historical process, and this process in turn was reflected in the festivals themselves.” MacCormack argues that Molina could distinguish between early forms of the Calendar and its later systematization by Inka Pachacuti. With peculiar resonance to the Duránian case, Molina’s calendar is seen as having its shape because of the Inka kings, although pre-Inka practices survive in their calendar just the same.⁵⁴ Durán may not have known Molina, but their writing on the calendar ultimately reflects resonating concerns, with an interrogation into the way rites survive and transform in deep time.

Closer to home, the glosses of the Mexican Telleriano-Remensis calendars show their commentators’ own interest in distinguishing between early and later forms of cult practice. Particularly resonant with this concern are the manuscript’s glosses accompanying illustrations of sacrifice (Fig. 2.41). In these scenes, the commentators differentiate between relatively early forms of autosacrifice (practiced just after the universal flood in Genesis) and later forms involving the sacrifice of others (practiced later in history).⁵⁵ The Telleriano-Remensis glosses show their authors’ interest in treating the calendar as if the document could be picked apart to identify both earlier and later forms of ritual practice; these commentators came to the calendar with the expectation that its components could be differentiated by their varying degrees of antiquity. As I’ve argued in this chapter, the Durán Calendar paintings demonstrate a similar interest in discriminating among seemingly presentist calendar images in order to determine what gods and rites were new and which had originated long before within the history of native religion.

⁵⁴ MacCormack, “Time, Space, and Ritual Action: The Inka and Christian Calendars in Early Colonial Peru,” 301-304, in Elizabeth Hill Boone and Tom Cummins, eds, *Native Traditions in the Postconquest World* (Washington, D.C., 1998).

⁵⁵ MacCormack points out that Bartolomé de las Casas was particularly attentive to the evolution of forms of native sacrifice across history; the Telleriano-Remensis, compiled by a Dominican confrere of Las Casas, seemingly echoes his interest. MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes*, 222-223.

Considering the context motivating the crafting of Durán's Calendar, it seems intuitive that the paintings and text of the treatise should emphasize dynamics of continuity and survival in the calendar's history. The great anxiety fueling the writing of the Calendar treatise is, after all, about whether observances that were Christian on their surface were, in fact, underwritten by the survival of native calendrical observances, a frustrating persistence that Durán notes, for instance, when he describes a *barrio* that selected its patron of Saint Luke based on the pre-Hispanic calendar.⁵⁶ Indeed, the representation of Chichimec survivals in imperial religion had consequences, too, for the Christian conversion project, particularly when we consider that the kinds of idolatry pictured in the images – plantwork and feasting – were precisely those practices most likely to survive the initial extirpation campaigns of the Early Colonial period.

To represent this continuity, though, made demands upon the visual language of Nahua art for which that extant corpus of images was not initially suited. Couch has described the Gods and Rites paintings as an “album” of Early Colonial art, observing that many of the images repeated iconographies and compositions already testified elsewhere;⁵⁷ as we have seen, the Calendar, too, deployed motifs and compositions from important manuscript projects in the Early Colonial corpus. But beyond merely collecting and reassembling a body of images, the Calendar treatise changed the meaning of the iconographies the painters encountered. To make the Calendar treatise required the fundamental transformation of elements of Nahua art, as month glyphs became constellations, a sign for earthquakes was transformed into a glyph for the sun's movement, and rubber-wearing gods became humans who impersonated star-bodied deities. The Durán paintings tell a story about the calendar's evolution, but to make this narrative work, the images had to be

⁵⁶ Codex Durán Folio 325 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 236; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 409-410.

⁵⁷ Couch, “Style and Ideology in the Codex Durán Illustrations,” 334-336.

fundamentally re-made along the way, their signification changed to serve the text's polemical narrative about what calendar images represented and what histories they reflected. Perhaps the story underlying the Durán calendar, in this view, is the story about how significantly texts can alter the meaning of motifs that illustrate them. At the same time, it is also the story of the degree to which the Durán painters looked to the Nahua tradition as an open tradition, a tradition flexible enough to be put to uses that its originators had themselves never imagined.

CHAPTER THREE

TOWARD SIGNIFICATION: NARRATIVES OF CHICHIMEC RELIGION IN THE OPENING PAINTINGS OF THE HISTORIA TREATISE

The paintings of Durán's longest treatise, the *Historia* (1581), can be divided into three groups addressing distinct phases of Aztec history. The first group of paintings treats the period before the rise of the Aztec empire, when migrating pre-Aztec peoples known in the scholarship as Chichimecs move toward the valley of Mexico in search of a new homeland at Tenochtitlan.¹ This was a time before kings – and, in the paintings of the *Historia*, a time before gods. With the establishment of their settled community at Tenochtitlan, a second group of paintings depicts the imperial phase of Aztec history, a time of complex political machinations and the rise of religious images. The fall of these complex organizations is tracked through a third group of *Historia* paintings, in which eight images address the Conquest of Mexico, closing Durán's history.

In this dissertation chapter, I train my focus upon the first group of the *Historia* paintings, examining how the Codex Durán painters represented the history of religion in the Chichimec phase of the Aztec past. On the one hand, this may appear to be a paradoxical brief: There are no images of gods or ritual in the *Historia*'s paintings of the Chichimec past. Yet even though religious imagery might seem to be absent in the *Historia*'s paintings of Chichimecs, there are

¹ Among the problems associated with the term 'Chichimec' is its inconsistent deployment in alphabetic texts since the Conquest. In some cases, Chichimec has appeared to refer to a specific ethnic group, while in others, the term is used more generally to describe nomadic peoples associated with the north. Chichimec has also been used in the literature to describe the 'Chichimec' wars, the long-running military campaigns associated with Spanish expansion into Northern mining regions. For an overview of the term Chichimec in historical context, see Charlotte M. Gradie, "Discovering the Chichimecas," *The Americas* 51 (1994): 67-88.

nonetheless a number of visual cues in the paintings that communicate ideas about the Chichimec capacity for religious devotion. Foregrounding the paintings' representations of the Chichimecs' relationship to materials and their capacity for recognizing signs – with both issues reverberating far beyond their immediate implications – I argue that the paintings work to characterize Chichimec religion even in the absence of deity iconography. As we shall see, the early *Historia* paintings posit that Chichimec religion emerged as Chichimecs increasingly came to see and recognize written signs. Close looking at these paintings reveals that they present a narrative arc that imagines significant changes to Chichimec religion – a trajectory that, as we shall see in the following dissertation chapter, culminates in the flourishing of idolatrous image cults under imperial rule.

While visual analysis yields a suggestive narrative for how the Durán painters imagined changes to Chichimec religion over time, a look at the broader culture in which the manuscript was created shows how the paintings' narrative might have responded and intervened into broader discourse in the Counter-Reformation world. As we saw in the previous chapter on religious history in the Calendar treatise, earlier Durán paintings testify to their creators' concern with differentiating state-level rites practiced by elites from rites practiced by non-elites in the home; their images intrinsically tied spectacular religion to complex political organization. During the sixteenth century, ideas surrounding the religious capacity of pre-imperial societies were a significant preoccupation of the mendicant orders. As missionary coverage expanded in New Spain beyond the limits of the former Aztec empire, questions about the potential for Christianization among peoples who had had little exposure to religious imagery before the Conquest became

increasingly pressing.² The Durán paintings offer a narrative for how such people were brought into the capacity for religion in pre-Columbian antiquity, even as that capacity would ultimately be corrupted by the avarice of kings in the later imperial phase of Aztec history.

Over the course of this chapter, I will argue that the *Historia* painters programmatically represented the emergence of the religious capacity of Chichimecs; at the same time, the materiality of the manuscript implies a complicated set of circumstances for studying the expressions of this theme. In the *Historia* treatise, every illumination was painted directly on the manuscript's folios (unlike in the other two treatises, where paste-overs proliferate). However, as we shall see, there are instances where the *Historia*'s paintings of Chichimecs adapted similar imagery that had already been collaged into the *Book of Gods and Rites* (1574-1576), the manuscript's first treatise (Fig. 3.1). The collages all seem to speak to the Chichimec past, a condition noted by Couch, who offered a theory as to why paintings about Chichimecs might have been the images that were most thoroughly reworked.³ As I argue below, comparisons of the *Historia*'s paintings of Chichimecs with related paintings in the *Gods and Rites* treatise throws the

² Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (New York: 1987), chapters 3-4. Jeanette Favrot Peterson, "Wild Man, Chichimec, Noble Aztec: The Indian in the Cult of Guadalupe," in *Orientes / Occidentales: el arte y la Mirada del otro*, ed. Gustavo Curiel (Mexico: 2007), 341-374. Gradie, "Discovering the Chichimecas," *The Americas* 51 (1994): 71.

³ One of Couch's more ambitious theories proposed that a significant reworking of the Durán project necessitated moving Chichimec material from the *Book of Gods and Rites* to the *Historia* treatise. Couch proposes that in its original conception, Codex Durán was conceived only with the *Book of Gods and Rites* and *Ancient Calendar*; in this early version of the manuscript, extensive coverage of Chichimec history appeared in the *Book of Gods and Rites*. However, when access to new sources (including, perhaps, the indigenous-language *Historia* that Durán cites as a source) allowed for the expansion of the project to include the *Historia*, Durán reorganized the manuscript so that Chichimec history was mostly relocated from the *Gods and Rites* treatise. For the full account of this theory, see N.C. Christopher Couch, "Style and Ideology in the Durán Illustrations: An Interpretive Study of Three Early Colonial Mexican Manuscripts," Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1987.

particularity of the *Historia* painters' choices into relief. Furthermore, as I argue at the end of this chapter, approaching the collages through the lens of religious history helps to make sense of their complicated messaging.

The Religion of Chichimecs

Most sixteenth-century sources agree that before the rise of the Aztec empire, a migratory people of ancient Central Mexico lived in caves and hunted and fought with the bow and arrow. There is less agreement, however, about how these Chichimec peoples worshipped, or whether in fact they had religion of any sort. Within Colonial indigenous corpora, painted manuscripts created by indigenous artists suggest that some Chichimecs practiced forms of sacrifice that are otherwise thinly attested in the documentary corpus and remain poorly understood. The Nahuatl-language text of the Florentine Codex testifies to a multiplicity of native Chichimec groups, each distinguished in part by a distinctive religious practice. European authors had their own ideas about the religions of non-sedentary peoples, many of them informed by the persisting medieval concept of the Wild Man. This section will address what ideas circulated broadly about the religion of Chichimecs in the sixteenth century, a discussion that will subsequently serve as a backdrop for understanding the particularity of the representations of Chichimec religion that appear in Durán's *Historia* paintings.

The earliest images of Chichimecs appear in the Aztec archaeological record, where monumental representations suggest that Aztec art trafficked in binaries of civilization and barbarism. On the Stone of Tizoc (Fig. 3.2), a monumental solar disk from the mid-15th century, we find images of Aztec warriors subjugating foreign enemies in a series of vignettes set against a cosmic backdrop. In these scenes of military conquest, the Aztec victors are modeled after the

Aztecs' Toltec predecessors.⁴ Sources (including Codex Durán) tell us that these Toltecs were settled peoples who were skilled craftsmen and agriculturalists. Their enemies were the barbarous Chichimecs, who spoke ineloquently, dressed plainly, and lived as primitive hunter-gatherers. As Rudolph Van Zantwijk argued, Aztec imperial ideology seemingly conceived the empire's values as a synthesis of Toltec and Chichimec influences.⁵ Indigenous notions of a barbarous other may even have validated the ideology of Aztec imperial conquests, a notion that may have informed the iconography of images produced into the Colonial period.⁶ While the Aztec monumental corpus affirms that the concept of the 'Chichimec' has its roots in the pre-Columbian world, these monuments offer limited traction on Chichimec cultural traits, providing few insights (if any) into Chichimec religion.

Within the post-Conquest image corpus, however, a few manuscripts *do* provide data that fill out our picture of Chichimec religion. A plurality of painted manuscripts associate Chichimec migrants with sacred bundles, a key form of religious object in Nahua culture.⁷ The Codex Boturini, for example, tells the story of pre-imperial Aztec history from the perspective of a manuscript created in the Early Colonial period (Fig. 3.3). The protagonists in this manuscript are

⁴ On the expression of Toltec-Chichimec binaries on the Stone of Tizoc, see Emily Umberger, "New Blood from an Old Stone," *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 28 (1998): 243.

⁵ Rudolph Van Zantwijk, *The Aztec Arrangement: The Social History of Pre-Spanish Mexico* (Norman, OK: 1985). Among Van Zantwijk's most important contributions to the Aztecs literature, he proposes that concepts of Toltec and Chichimec represent pan-Mesoamerican, inter-ethnic categories, rather than referring to specific cultural groups.

⁶ Ursula Thiemer-Sachse's work includes an inventory of architectural programs in New Spain that included Wild Man imagery; this article also highlights an interesting contrast between Aztec notions of the barbarian and those that inhered among the Inkas, writing that the Aztecs' Andean contemporaries believed that the barbarians in their realm were holdovers from an earlier generation. Thiemer-Sachse, "Hombre Bárbaro versus Hombre Silvestre en la Nueva España," *Anthropos* 104 (2009): 81-92.

⁷ For a recent take on the Aztec sacred bundle – or *tlaquimilolli* – see Molly H. Bassett, *The Fate of Earthly Things: Aztec Gods and God-Bodies* (Austin, 2015), 162-191.

migrating Chichimecs who carry bundles on their backs – including a bundle that holds the Aztec patron god, Huitzilopochtli, who seemingly orders the migrants forward. The same painting also testifies to the importance of a hunting god among the Chichimecs: María Castañeda de la Paz has argued that the paintings represent a temple to Camaxtli at the center of Aztlan, the mythical island from which the Chichimec god-bearers depart (Fig. 3.4).⁸ The Boturini’s depiction of the importance of sacred bundles to Chichimec religion is echoed in the images of the Chichimec migrants in Codex Azcatitlan (Fig. 3.5). Deities carried upon their backs distinguish these migrating leaders: Recognizable among the loads they bear are the hummingbird headdress of the god Huitzilopochtli, a snake accompanied by the numeral 7, smoking copal, an abstracted bundle resembling a mortuary bundle, and so forth.⁹ A third testimony to the importance of divine bundles in Chichimec religion is very likely found in the Codex Mexicanus, but since the painting does not show the attributes of a deity peeking out from beneath the cloth, it is impossible to say for certain (Fig 3.6).¹⁰

While multiple painted sources attest to the importance of sacred bundles in Chichimec religion, other sources suggest that Chichimecs may have practiced lesser-known forms of devotion, especially the sacrifice of animals. The outcome of one such rite is depicted in the *Tira de Tepechpan*, where migrant Chichimecs (depicted nearly nude) arrive at a minor Acolhua town, having been dispersed by war. The scene is set after an act of animal sacrifice has already occurred: just above a pyramidal structure, blood runs from the necks of a bird and a snake, while a butterfly

⁸ María Castañeda de la Paz, “La *Tira de la Peregrinación* y la ascendencia Chichimeca de los Tenochca,” *Estudios de Cultura Nahuatl* 38 (2007): 186-190.

⁹ These manuscripts are treated at length in Angela Herren Rajagoapalan, *Portraying the Aztec Past: The Codices Boturini, Azcatitlan, and Aubin* (Austin: 2018).

¹⁰ Lori Boornazian Diel, *The Codex Mexicanus: A Guide to Life in Late Sixteenth-Century New Spain* (Austin: 2018), 100.

appears to have been decapitated (Fig. 3.7). Lori Diel proposes that this ritual may have been associated with the foundations of a new town (*altepetl*), and argues that such imagery may have served a Colonial function of distinguishing communities like that of Tepechpan from the Mexica, who sacrificed humans.¹¹

Moving beyond the immediate ambit of Tenochtitlan, manuscripts from further afield depict a rich range of religious practices among Chichimecs. In the Cuauhtinchan maps, for example, we find images of both gods and of rites: Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2 includes scenes representing the histories of heroic deity figures, as with the goddesses who leave a Chicomoztoc-like cave at the earliest period in Cuauhtinchan's history; this manuscript also represents the use of sacred bundles as an integral part of the early migration of Nahua peoples toward a new homeland near Cholula. Animal sacrifice again recurs in the illustration of Chichimec rites: In this case, migrant peoples are depicted shooting a white eagle on two separate occasions, a practice that seemingly echoes the animal sacrifices depicted on the Tira de Tepechpan (Fig. 3.8).¹²

In these indigenous pictorial manuscripts we find that pre-imperial peoples are variously attributed with the worship of a hunting deity, the sacrifice of butterflies and other animals, and the practice of carrying sacred bundles on their backs as they embarked on migratory journeys. Other kinds of sources, however, provided different views of the Aztecs' Chichimec past. Book

¹¹ Here, Diel follows Jongsoo Lee in noting that the *Relación Geográfica* of Tepechpan claimed that the subordinate city only practiced human sacrifice because it was introduced by the Mexica; this had the effect of making Tepechpan appear relatively civilized and of making the Mexica look relatively barbaric. Lori Boornazian Diel, *The Tira de Tepechpan: Negotiating Place Under Aztec and Spanish Rule* (Austin: 2008), 36.

¹² For an analysis of the important data about the religion of Chichimecs in the Mapa de Cuauhtinchan codices, see Guilhem Olivier, "Sacred Bundles, Arrows, and New Fire: Foundation and Power in the Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2," in David Carrasco and Scott Sessions, eds., *Cave, City, and Eagle's Nest: An Interpretive Journey through the Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2* (Albuquerque: 2007), 281-313.

10 of Sahagún's Florentine Codex addresses 'the virtues and vices of the Indian people;' and this text concludes with a revealing appendix in which Chichimecs are described among a number of different ethnic groups. Sahagún's text differentiates among Chichimecs by their religious practices, and strongly correlates their forms of worship with differences in material culture.

In Sahagún, Chichimecs are not a monolithic group: Instead, the Nahuatl-language text of the manuscript provides a typology of different Chichimec peoples. All of Sahagún's Chichimecs had political stratification, lived in caves, and used the bow and arrow, but their religions differed – as did their relationship to material culture. The poorest of the Chichimecs, a people that Sahagún calls *temimes* – or the people of the arrow – went about dressed in tattered cloth and old rags. Their pantheon was similarly impoverished: The *temimes* worshipped a deer-serpent hybrid beast (*mazacoatl*) but did not give observance to other deities. The religion of another group, the Teochichimecas, was more complex: members of this group practiced a rite of hallucinogenic ritual ingestion. Over the course of one day, members of this Teochichimeca group hallucinated while taking a psychotropic mushroom (*nanacatl*) and then spent the following day crying so heavily that they utterly washed their eyes and their faces with their own tears.¹³ The increasing religious complexity of this group is matched by distinctions in their material culture: Teochichimecas crafted fine materials, practicing lapidary arts and featherwork.

The most religious of the Chichimecs described in Sahagún, however, was the group that the text refers to as the Nahuas, a term that has only a roundabout relationship to the term's meaning in current scholarship. The Nahuas in Book 10 are people who were left behind when the Toltecs abandoned their cities in an earlier period; they were thus imagined as the living memory

¹³ Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 10, folios 119r-123r. Accessed online via World Digital Library.

of a people from the past. True to their Toltec inheritance, this group of Nahua Chichimecs polished precious stones, spun raw fibers into fine thread, and practiced the art of featherwork. At the apex of religiosity in this Sahagúntine model, the Nahua Chichimecs practiced a religion that nearly reached the levels of Aztec imperial religion in all of its complexity; they offered prayers to a god of the night and to a god of the air, an invisible spirit; they practiced sacrifice with specialized perforators, and they held the festivals every twenty days, ensuring that the gods in their temples were given offerings of smoking incense.

The typology that ends Book 10 of the Florentine Codex allows us to imagine, then, that the visible characteristics of Chichimecs did not inherently imply a monolithic form of religiosity. “Chichimec” in the Florentine Codex is a wide umbrella, a term that did not imply any singular history of migration nor of religion. But even as Sahagún prompts us to disintegrate a monolithic notion of Aztec imperial alterity, we see that at least one correlation inheres, a closely articulated relationship between craft and religion. The kinds of Chichimecs who make things are the kinds who have religions, so that the Toltec-descended Chichimecs, characterized by the greatest degree of craft, are also the people who are believed to worship an actual deity.

Indigenous sources like the native pictorials and the Florentine Codex may express some of the ideas about the religion of Chichimecs that were available to the Durán’s painters, but of course they were not the only notions to circulate in the later sixteenth century. A rich literature testifies that Chichimecs and other peoples in the Americas who lived outside of imperial societies were sometimes assimilated to European notions of the Wild Man, an idea inherited from the Western medieval world and testified in Early Modern Spanish architecture and New World contexts. Anthony Pagden and Roger Bartra have both studied the origination of Western images of barbarians and Wild Men in Greek thought; Pagden especially emphasizes that Aristotelian

ideas about the natural slave – a state synonymous for barbarity – weighed heavily in Spanish legal justifications for the Conquest. In terms of religion, Pagden notes that scholastic interpretations of Aristotle tended to foreclose the possibility for the natural slave’s understanding of truth – reinterpreted in Christian contexts as the inability of barbarians to attain true religion. In early phases, this shortcoming was attributed to a psychological deficiency among barbarians. But later in the sixteenth century, the nature of the Indians was reinterpreted in an ethnographic mode to demonstrate that they were indeed capable of conversion. For Pagden, this late sixteenth-century moment – a pivot between psychological and ethnographic modes of explication, each with its implications for the religion of natives – accounts for major shifts in understandings of the religious capacity of Wild Men, and therefore major shifts in European encounters with their Others overall.¹⁴

As for Codex Durán itself, the text of this manuscript conveys problematic and internally conflicting information about the religion of Chichimecs. In different parts of the manuscript, the Durán text seems to maintain different ideas about the forms of religion that existed before the rise of the Aztec empire. In one of the manuscript’s texts, Durán tells a story akin to the narrative we see represented on indigenous pictorial manuscripts, where migrating Chichimecs act under the orders of Huitzilopochtli, their patron god.¹⁵ In another part of the manuscript, Durán tells a diffusionist story, writing that an apostle had preached true Christian religion in Central Mexico before the rise of the Aztec empire; thus, pre-Aztec religious history involved knowledge of true

¹⁴ Bartra notes that the question of spirituality outside of the cities produced disagreement among Christians: While some would say that the natural world is the best testament to God, others (especially those formed in a Thomist tradition) would say that Wild Men were inexplicable ruptures along a path to spiritual truth. Roger Bartra, *Salvaje en el Espejo* (Mexico: 1992), 110.

¹⁵ For a recent synthetic work describing painted histories of the Aztec migrations, see Elizabeth Hill Boone, *Stories in Red and Black* (Austin: 2000), 162–196.

faith that had been perverted under the conditions of empire.¹⁶ Also in play was a third story, where Chichimecs had no religion at all (an idea shared by Motolinia and the northern explorer Gonzalo de Las Casas that echoes early modern Aristotelian readings of the Wild Man).¹⁷ There is no single way to reconcile the Durán text's disparate theories of Chichimec religion; no unitary theory bridges the gap between narratives in which the Chichimecs acted under Huitzilopochtli's orders, heard the word of Christ in deep antiquity, and at the same time had no religion at all.

Yet while different sections of the text of Codex Durán may internally disagree about the nature of Chichimec religion, I argue that we see a remarkably unified program and message for characterizing Chichimec worship in the opening images of the *Historia*. These paintings show us a clear set of associations between Chichimecs, their material contexts, and complex signifying regimes. What's more, as I argue in the following two sections of this chapter, the opening *Historia* paintings are programmatic in their approach to narrativizing the story of Chichimec religion, charting a path between naïve ignorance and the recognition of signs. Pursuing these themes, we will now turn decidedly to the paintings, examining the opening images of the *Historia* closely to understand how they characterize the Chichimecs' relationship to material culture.

¹⁶ On Durán's diffusionist thought, see Heyden and Horcasitas' introduction to the translation of the Book of Gods and Rites, as well as Couch (1986); Todorov (1999). An extensive literature treats interpretations of the Hebraic origins of the Aztecs; for selected works, see John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World: A Study of the Writings of Gerónimo de Mendieta (1525-1564)* (Berkeley: 1956); Louise Burkhart, "Doctrinal Aspects of Sahagún's *Colloquios*," in Jorge Klor de Alva, H.B. Nicholson, and Eloise Quinñones Keber, eds., *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún: Pioneer Ethnographer of Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Albany: 1988), 65-82; Akemi Luisa Herráez Vossbrink, "Francisco de Zurbarán and the Viceroyalty of Perú," in *Jacob and His Twelve Sons: Paintings from Auckland Castle* (New York: 2017).

¹⁷ Gonzalo de Las Casas, "Noticia de los Chichimecas," 156-157, cited in Charlotte Gradie, "Discovering the Chichimecas," *The Americas* 51 (1994): 71.

Costumes and Weapons

In both indigenous and European contexts, visualizing an empire's primitive Other often connoted rather tight associations between religion and the elaboration of materials. To be a Chichimec was to be pictured in consistent association with certain kinds of objects and spaces, and to be excluded from association with others. Comparing Nahua and European understandings of primitive materiality suggests that ideas around them may, in fact, converge: In both contexts, the materials associated with Chichimecs would have visually attributed a liminal or otherwise indeterminate state to Chichimec culture. In these paintings, we find that the elaboration of materials, in other words, motivates ontological reflection, and may lead us to inquire as to the states between which the liminal Chichimecs pictured in these images vacillate.

We find a reflection on such material distinctions, for instance, in a painting that illustrates one of the most dramatic scenes from pre-Imperial Aztec history (Fig. 3.9). During the Battle at Chapultepec, the Mexicas, newly arrived in the region of the Valley, confronted the armies of more established polities in war, an event that sets the stage for future battles that define Mexica history in the *Historia*. Encamped at a site on the hill of Chapultepec, the armies of virtually all of the major players in Early Central Mexico's political structure swarmed the Mexica at their new settlement, seeking vengeance for an offense that the Mexica had committed in even deeper antiquity. Durán tells that enemies like the Chalcas and the Tepanecas had expected to make easy work of the small Mexica armies; in actual fact, the Mexica overpower them, a central victory that paves their path toward later dominance in the valley.¹⁸

In the painting that represents this battle, the opposition between the Mexicas and their rivals is articulated through distinctions in material culture. This composition is densely populated,

¹⁸ Codex Durán folios 11r – 14v; Garibay, *Historia*, II: 39–45; Heyden, *History*, 33-41.

and perhaps even claustrophobic: The painting palpably conveys the scale of the opposing armies, with enemy bodies filling nearly every corner of the frame. The weaponry of these enemies is rich and varied; they carry clubs inset with sharp obsidian, long spears with shafts ornamented in red, and on their bodies they wear multiple forms of high-status costume colored with rich green and red pigment. By contrast, the Mexica armies are much smaller, with only a few figures huddled near the center of the frame. They are dressed and outfitted with far more humble clothing; both their leader and their armies wear tied mantles made from lengths of plain white fabric, and they lack the spectacular, more richly pigmented garments and weapons of their enemy neighbors.

In this painting, the elaboration of materials functions as a kind of shorthand that the painters use to characterize the Mexica in the period before empire. Throughout the paintings that represent the period up to Tenochtitlan's foundation, a culture of things – natural and man-made; worn, manipulated, and eaten – comes to operate as an index of civilization and development. The *Historia* painters see elaborate weapons and costumes as the mark of longer-established peoples, while plain white cloth and animal hides were considered the garments of the newcomers. Within the context of this scene – about the unexpected victory of the Mexicas over their neighbors – it may be the case that the costume elements instill the painting with a rhetoric of dramatic irony, making the victory of the Mexicas perhaps seem more improbable given their visible distance from the material sophistication of their rivals.

If the Battle of Chapultepec painting dramatizes distinctions in visual culture as part of its narrative strategy, then the chapter text emphasizes an evolution in visual culture as part of the narrative of Mexica ascension. Just after the battle – and immediately before another important confrontation on the path toward Mexica ascendancy – Durán recounts that the Mexica develop an entirely new weapon for their arsenal, a spear that he recognizes as similar to a weapon known

in Spanish as a *figa*.¹⁹ Though little more is said about this object (it was probably like a harpoon used in the sixteenth century for fishing), it seems significant that Durán proposes that this new kind of object was introduced into Aztec visual culture at precisely the moment in which the Mexica were increasingly moving toward settlement.²⁰ The offhand mention of the newly invented *figa* bespeaks Durán's expectation that there should be a coincidence between the invention of new object forms and the movement toward civilization. The context of the creation of these paintings was one in which the innovation of new forms in material culture was understood to have a relationship with development of new forms in the history of civilization, with social form and material form evolving in tandem.

That a tight association existed between one's material culture and one's place in a hierarchy of civilization was, after all, an idea closely associated with images of Chichimecs more broadly. We see this idea in play, for instance, in the painting that serves as the manuscript's frontispiece (Fig. 3.10), a page likely cribbed originally from the *Gods and Rites* treatise and reused to open the *Historia*.²¹ A few features suggest iconographic ties with a universalizing visuality for the primitive. The figures wear hides rather than woven cloth, a form of dress that visually associates its wearers with the skin of beasts rather than associating them with the fine work of

¹⁹ "Los mexicanos se repararon y reforzaron de armas, inventando aquel modo de armas y varas arrojadas que llamamos figas." Codex Durán folio 12 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, II: 39; Heyden, *History*, 34.

²⁰ The *Minsheu Dictionarie*, a Spanish-English dictionary of 1599 (London), defines *figa* as "an instrument to kill fish withal, a troutspeare or such like. Also a jest, a floute." A *figador* is "one that killeth fish with a troutespeare, or with some such like instrument. Also a mocker or taunter." Accessed online via Research at King's College London, Early Modern Spain, Anglo-Spanish Literary Relations.

²¹ With thanks to Juan José Batalla Rosado for pointing out to me that the watermark on the page that supports this painting is similar to the watermarks on the pages of the *Book of Gods and Rites* treatise, which are not the same watermarks found on the paper of the *Historia*. Juan José Batalla Rosado, Personal Communication 2017.

craft.²² The space that they occupy is a cave rather than an architecturally constructed space, and brightly colored animals are pictured around its entrance, emphasizing the improvisational character of this dwelling.²³ Weaponry, here, is the bow and arrow, ubiquitous in illustrations of Chichimecs, a more primitive form of arms than the weapons held by the Mexica's enemies in the Chapultepec battle painting. Food, too, is as much a part of this story of material culture as objects of costume and tools: Because most of the people described as Chichimecs lacked agriculture, they tended to be associated with eating whatever they could find through gathering, and these foods were always eaten without having been cooked. In this painting, the two fruits in a dish appear to be the tuna fruits of the nopal cactus, the kind of foods one might expect to find in the expansive reaches of the desert North; the choice to represent Chichimec food with the tuna may have been significant given a constellation of sources associating food and civilization in the ethnographic literature.²⁴

²² In a recent study of Medieval French culture, Peggy McCracken has noted that human figures sometimes wear animal skins in a range of literary texts dealing with questions of sovereignty, allegorized through man's domination over beast. Peggy McCracken, *In the Skin of a Beast: Sovereignty and Animality in Medieval France* (Chicago, 2017).

²³ I have drawn this characterization of the cave as an 'improvisational' dwelling from the descriptive passages in the appendix of Book 10 of the Florentine Codex, where Sahagún writes that Chichimecs took up inhabitation wherever they were when night fell.

²⁴ The fruits of the tuna cactus may also have had an association with another form of primitivism: the social experience of Aztec children. Folio 58r of Codex Mendoza, part of the manuscript's sequence on childrearing, includes an image of a six year-old child eating a tuna fruit in association with the glyphic sign for the Aztec market, *tianquiztli*. In a classic article discussed at greater length below, Louise Burkhart has argued that the education of children in these passages of the Mendoza is conceived in analogy with the disciplining of material and domestic space in order to achieve cosmic order. Given the rather pointed visual messaging of these passages from the Mendoza, it seems possible that the child's association with the tuna may be meant to be convey their shared 'rawness' in Mexica thought. In addition to the ethnographic sources described in the exposition that opened this chapter, another native painting that treat the food of Chichimecs is the Boban Wheel, of which Charles Dibble has proposed that the bottom, Chichimec stage on the manuscript may include a scene in which Chichimecs consume cooked meat for the first time in their history. Dibble, "The Boban Calendar Wheel," *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 20 (1990): 177–179.

Given certain confluences of iconography, it might be possible to read these characterizations of Chichimec materiality as largely in step with a much more universal imaging of the primitive. Though elements of iconography and of style may give the frontispiece painting a greater sense of local flavor, the person who inhabited a cave, ate raw foods, and covered his body with hides could have been easily assimilated with European ideas about Wild Men.²⁵ Still, we should note that the figures are set off with at least a few elaborate headdresses that interrupt too easy an assimilation of the Chichimec with the Wild Man. These headdresses, called *cozoyahualli*, consist of a colored ring with two tufts of feathers and they are found associated with Chichimecs in documents from the Texcocan realm;²⁶ Diel suggests that this feather device may traditionally have served as a marker of Chichimec rule.²⁷ The appearance of this feathered device suggests that while the Chichimec images in this manuscript may have resonated deeply with more universal forms of representation, Central Mexican particularities were still invoked to characterize Codex Durán's Wild Man, and perhaps even modulated their connotations.

At the same time, ideas about unworked material expressed in the Early Colonial sources resonate as distinctly Nahua in character. From a classic argument made by Louise Burkhart, we learn that the state of unworked materials associated with Chichimecs would have been understood by nearly all Nahua peoples at any level of social stratification as objects that stood outside of cosmic order. In Nahua thought, the discipline of material is a civilizing process: Working unspun

²⁵ For an iconographic treatment of European Wild Men imagery through the sixteenth century, see Husband, *The Wild Man: Medieval Myth and Symbolism* (New York: 1980); see also Felipe Pereda, "The Shelter of the Savage: From Valladolid to the New World," *Medieval Encounters* 16 (2010): 268–359.

²⁶ Jerome Offner, "A curious commonality among some eastern Basin of Mexico and eastern Mexican pictorial manuscripts," *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 41 (2011): 255-279.

²⁷ Diel, *The Tira de Tepechpan*, 25. Xavier Noguez, *Tira de Tepechpan: Códice colonial precedente del valle de México*, 2 vols., (Mexico, 1978), 1:34.

cotton into thread, for example, transforms a material that could be understood as ‘chaotic’ into one that occupied a known place in the ordered world. In the Nahua home, we are meant to understand, the potentiality of material represented a state of chaos; such materials demanded craft interventions in order to introduce them into discipline.²⁸ Given the association of Chichimecs with similar kinds of unworked material, we might propose that the iconographic characterization applies to Chichimec people as well: Like material not yet worked through craft interventions, Chichimecs themselves may await their induction into the social order of the cosmos.

Even in this regard, the Nahua conception of the imperial Aztecs’ primitive Other may have converged to some degree with European ideas about the Wild Man. In an essay exploring the Wild Man as a model for European description of Indians living outside of empires, Jeanette Peterson notes that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, areas outside of the cities of the Spanish crown – both American and European – were treated as highly liminal spaces, where categories lacked clear definition and distinction. In Peterson’s interpretation, Early Modern Hispanic visual culture related to the Wild Man found creative ways for structuring visual display along a kind of gradient between such indeterminacy and the greater degree of definition characteristic of urban spaces; major processions staged in sixteenth-century Mexico, for instance, were saturated with elements distinguishing the indeterminacy of the woods, home of the Wild Man, from the determinacy of the city.²⁹ The sense of the primitive other as not yet fully inducted

²⁸ Louise Burkhart, “Mexica Women on the Home Front: Housework and Religion in Aztec Mexico,” in Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Stephen Haskett, *Indian Women of Early Mexico* (Norman, OK, 1999), 25-86. Burkhart’s observations about the disciplining of material are best understood as part of a larger project arguing for the reintegration of domestic and public space in scholarly approximations of Nahua space.

²⁹ Peterson writes that “In Europe, the wilderness-forest was a liminal zone, fraught with temptations and dangers which walled and gated cities could keep at bay. Even after the Wild Man was partially rehabilitated in the fifteenth century as a symbol of uncorrupted humanity, his

into a rationale of categorical definition perhaps converges with the Nahuatl notion of the Wild Man's association with material as yet unworked. Both sets of ideas suggest associations more with potentiality than with realization, giving a shared sense that the materiality of the primitive Other was a materiality of the liminal.

To say that Chichimec associations with materials characterized them as liminal may well raise the question: In-between what states? In the section that follows, I propose that the paintings give us insight into this question. A close reading of the Chichimec paintings in sequence suggests that the painters illustrated pre-Aztec peoples as they developed a relationship to language and written signs. To see this process at work, we look to the place of hieroglyphic writing in the early *Historia* paintings, for these paintings allow us to visualize the extent to which the Durán painters interrelated the imagery of the process of civilization with ideas surrounding signification itself.

Toponyms

Looking closely at the opening paintings of the *Historia*, I argue that the painters visualize Chichimecs undergoing significant transformations in their relationship to signs and signification. In these initial paintings, Chichimec peoples are surrounded by hieroglyphic signs that appear within the pictorial space of the illuminations, but the Chichimecs are depicted in ways that make it clear that they are unaware of these signs. By the end of the sequence, however, a new situation has emerged: Some Chichimecs are depicted observing and interacting with these signs, as if they had been inducted into literacy over the course of the painted sequence. As we shall see, the transformation of the Chichimec relationship with written signs was accompanied by a concurrent

domain continued to remain outside domesticated places.” In “Wild Man, Chichimec, Noble Aztec.”

shift in the style in which the painters depicted the Chichimecs; as they increasingly recognized and related to written signs, the bodies of Chichimecs were increasingly figured in emulation of Classical models.

Looking across these paintings, we find an enduring preoccupation with hieroglyphic writing in the *Historia*'s images of pre-Aztec history. The painters repeatedly invoke the rather terse graphemes that contextualize narrative action in the migration sequence; often, they invoke these signs in quite surprising ways. Glyphs appear in all three sections of Codex Durán's *Historia*, but they have a special valence in the Chichimec paintings, where they are consistently deployed as if they were not just name-tags but were actually figured elements of the pictorial space.³⁰ These glyphs, for the most part, are toponyms, signs naming the places where important events from pre-Aztec history occurred.³¹ As part of the pictorial space of these paintings, however, these glyphs tangibly involve the figures who are depicted participating in a scene. Human figures inhabit place glyphs, or abandon them, or – most crucially to questions of conversion – see and recognize these signs as part of the dynamic of their progress towards civilization.

In indigenous pictorial traditions, many Central Mexican manuscripts made use of place glyphs, including all known migration histories, where information about place performed the essential function of giving sequence to the long wanderings of the Mexica as they departed from their island homeland for the Valley. While an emphasis on place was a constant in such histories of migration, the dynamics of its expression differed to reflect distinct rhetorical emphases: The

³⁰ For a discussion of Nahuatl image semiotics with specific reference to manuscript painting, see Patrick Johannson, "La imagen en los codices Nahuas: consideraciones semiológicas," *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 32 (2001).

³¹ Walter Mignolo, "Signs and their Transmissions: The Question of the Book in the New World," in *Writing Without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes* (Durham, N.C., 1994).

Mapa Sigüenza, a cartographic history, showed these toponyms arranged in a plan that resembled an itinerary through mapped space (Fig. 3.11), while Codex Boturini emphasized the sequence of glyphs without reference to their spatial arrangement (Fig. 3.3).³² The Durán paintings do not quite conform to either of these models – even if a viewer of these images were to mentally divorce the illustrations from the text that they accompany, imagining away the landscape paintings in the ground and other intrusive elements so that these paintings better resembled those of the Nahuatl tradition, the images that open the *Historia* would still not register as straightforward narrations of the migrations in sequence.

The distinction between the Durán paintings and these Mesoamerican antecedents, I believe, has much to do with the dynamics of looking and reading that animate Chichimec history in these images. What we see play out in these passages is a drama that hinges upon an education in the recognition and the reading of place glyphs. The Durán painters take the pictorial situation of the toponyms as an opportunity to visually express how primitive peoples come to engage with glyphic material. On this count, the paintings show that it matters when a toponym becomes part of a pictorial scene, insofar as this situation allows for the human actors in the scene to behave in relation to these written images. Pictorializing writing creates opportunities, so that the pictures are able to make a visual case for the relationship between figure and sign, a relationship with crucial implications, we shall see, for the history of native religion.

Beginning with the first opening of the *Historia*, we see a kind of development in the language of signification play out: from the image that serves as the frontispiece for the Durán manuscript to the painting that heads the first chapter, we can observe the deployment of two rather

³² Boone compares these distinctive approaches in representing the migrations to the dynamics of the itinerary and tableau in *Stories in Red and Black*, 162–196.

different kind of images of caves (Fig. 3.12). On the frontispiece, none of the features of the landscape can be described as a ‘toponym’ – nothing here bears any visual relationship to glyphic writing, nor were the landscape features likely conceived as legible written text. Instead, we are shown a cave where gradient colors give the illusion of the textures of rocks, where the formations of the stone are allowed delightful irregularity, where wild plants seemingly sprout from the creviced fissures along the living rock. This cave, I think, may best be interpreted as the landscape analogy for the Chichimecs’ own undeveloped raw material – that is to say, it is landscape represented as if it were outside of human work and human acts of representation.

By the next painting in the manuscript, however, we observe a rather different kind of cave, one that registers visually as hieroglyphic writing (Fig. 3.13). The painting that heads the first chapter of the *Historia* is meant to illustrate the place of seven caves; textual analysis says that each of the caves housed a distinct ethnic group from among the various groups that ultimately migrated into the Valley of Mexico.³³ There is a nearly diagrammatic effect in the way that the caves have been rendered in this painting: Part of the effect of the distribution of the glyphs in this image is to give the viewer a kind of simultaneous accounting of the *dramatis personae* whose internecine conflicts in the Valley region will occupy much of the drama of the rest of the *Historia*. A rather different effect, though, may characterize the experience of the caves for those who inhabit them in this painting: The coupled figures who languish within the spaces of each of these caves live inside of hieroglyphic writing, but pictorially, the painting gives us little indication that they see the caves at all. The attention of the figures is directed inward in nearly every case, with

³³ This, in fact, is the interpretation expressed most explicitly in the drawings of Codex Ramírez, a manuscript whose images are derived from the Codex Durán paintings. In the Codex Ramírez interpretation of these seven caves, each cave was labeled with the name of the distinct ethnic group – *género* – thought to inhabit one of them.

the figures building a kind of visual interaction among the dwellers of their caves in all cases – except, perhaps for one, at the bottom right, who appears to look directly out, as if nearly making eye contact with the viewer.

In the following painting, yet another presentation of the cave shape modifies the visual language once again, presenting a cave that combines elements of the indigenous *tepetl* glyph with Christian iconography for the hell mouth (Fig. 3.14). Likely transmitted through Northern prints, the monstrous opening into the Earth's surface is sometimes described as the image of Leviathan; most popularly, the iconography is often associated with scenes of Christ's harrowing of hell, in which Christ draws figures outward from one of these hell mouths, visibly redeeming sinners.³⁴ There is, at the same time, a striking inclusion of elements of the *tepetl* glyph still in this image of the hell mouth: Typical of the hieroglyphic caves, there are cloud-like formations of rock near the ground line and above Leviathan's brow, united by the red 'lip' typical of many versions of the hieroglyph.

It is worth pausing on this painting for a moment, as it makes clear some of the important dynamics between the relationship of visualization and signification that I see as being among the most important at work in this section of the manuscript. Even though these figures have departed from the ancestral place of seven caves, the painting is nevertheless careful to make clear that they remain 'uncivilized.' These figures remain nearly naked; the female figure wears hides, and all carry their bows and arrows. Here, the aesthetic of the diagram has been absented from the picture,

³⁴ Hell mouth imagery appears to have been a major interest for indigenous painters in New Spain. Canonical examples are found at Actopan, Hidalgo; Santa Maria Xoxoteco, Hidalgo; Tecamachalco, Puebla; and the migration sequence of Codex Azcatitlan. Hell mouth iconography was widespread in European print culture, with antecedents in medieval painting. For an interpretation that relates this painting with images of Leviathan, see Diana Magaloni Kerpel, *Los albores de la Conquista* (Mexico: 2017), 49; 85-86.

for unlike the caves of the earlier chapter, this painting purports to represent a lived landscape in which pictorial narrative is prioritized over a totalizing view of an ancestral people. As the defining feature of that lived landscape, the hieroglyphic hell mouth suggests a landscape that has been inscribed with writing.³⁵

If the landscape inhabited by the Chichimecs in this painting *is* a text, though, then what is perhaps most striking about the way this text functions within the image is that the Chichimec figures seem completely unaware of the glyph. Emerging out from this hell mouth, each of them faces away from the cave that they have departed. None looks back into the cross-hatched darkness that they leave behind; to take this feature of the painting quite literally, we might say that they appear visually unaware of the signifying terrain. Further underscoring the Chichimecs' lack of awareness of the signifying elements of their landscape, the narrative of the picture moves in a rightward dynamic away from the cave, with the female figure pointing in the direction of their movement, guiding the eye out from their written cave and towards the strange mound pictured at right. There, our gaze meets an undefined landscape feature that has been rendered with neither significant geological relief nor with hieroglyphic demarcation. Yellow and cross-hatched, this bizarre landscape element does the work of visually offsetting the hell mouth directly opposite it in the frame, but its lack of definition makes it the hieroglyphic hell mouth's foil. These Chichimecs, in other words, direct their vision towards the undefined, rather than towards the hieroglyphically inscribed.

³⁵ For Aztec specialists, the characterization I offer here of the Durán paintings populated by a written landscape may recall the Nahua metaphor that describes the visible universe as a painted book, recorded in Nahuatl poetry from the *Cantares Mexicanos*. For an argument that proposes that understanding this metaphor proves essential to understanding Nahua aesthetics, see Inga Clendinning, *Aztecs: An Interpretation* (London: 1991), 213-235.

A significant departure marks the next painting in the sequence (Fig. 3.15). At the center of the frame of this image is yet another massive toponym – combined with a snake, *coatl*, the *tepetl* glyph here denotes the occurrence of this scene at a place known as Coatepec, a place included in a number of migration narratives. At the bottom of the Coatepec toponym is the image – at once hieroglyphic and not – of a lake abundant with wildlife, with turgid glyphic water teeming with frogs, fish, and shellfish. The entire configuration seems almost to float, presenting a complicated planar arrangement in which a highly frontal *tepetl* rests upon the diagonally projected plane of the lake. Taken altogether, we find ourselves again facing an image of a landscape that is written, a geography inscribed.

In this painting, the figures depart significantly from the appearance of the figures that appeared in the previous paintings. In the Coatepec image, the figures are highly modeled - not in itself so different from the way they appeared in the previous painting – but they now wear costumes of woven cloth. In particular, the figure at right wears a *tilma* that has been tied around his body in a style atypical in Nahua art; in fact, given the way the *tilma* falls under the arm and articulates significant attention to drapery, combined with the presentation in a three-quarters posture, the figure looks as if he has been rendered nearly in a style that is intended to evoke the appearance of Classical drapery. The figure at right, who wears the gray *tilma*, wears cloth that moves with altogether less verve than that of the pendant figure. His guise appears less Classical, so that the analogy with the Old World seems confined to one part of the picture and less realized in the other.

The analogical characterization of these figures, I argue, gives us a frame for understanding the dynamics of viewership at work in this painting. The figure with the more Classical appearance is the one who appears to visually recognize the hieroglyphic sign in the painting; he is the one

who looks upward toward the snake in the Coatepetl glyph. By contrast, the figure on the right side of the frame, who lacks the Classical cast of his counterpart, directs his gaze downward, as if he does not recognize the written landscape before him. This is the first time, we should note, that the figures in the paintings appear to be visibly aware of one of the toponyms in these paintings, and the figure who has this moment of recognition is analogized with a form associated with high civilization in Early Modern antiquarian culture. Such a dynamic will become crucial later, as it is amplified in the painting that represents Tenochtitlan's foundation.³⁶

The Battle of Chapultepec painting follows the image of Coatepec (Fig. 3.9). We saw earlier in this chapter that the Mexica represented in this illumination are set off by their material bareness: They wear the plain tilmas of the poor while the neighboring warriors who approach them wear much more complicated costume, including feathered headdresses, backrack ornaments, and so on. The toponym again appears as an integral part of the pictorial space of the painting, where an assembled group of impoverished Mexicas sits on one side of a *tepetl* glyph with a grasshopper at its top, a hieroglyphic visualization of Chapultepec's name. Further named is a king, Huitzilihuitl (curiously, these events are not attributed to him in the text). The kingly figure, still in a plain mantle but crowned with the *xiuhhuitzolli* diadem, points backwards toward the Chapultepec glyph, with an exaggeratedly enlarged arm drawing our attention leftwards. At this stage, when the Mexicas are again shown in comparatively simple garb, most do not notice the toponym, but one figure looks backward in order to observe it, dramatically breaking the visual

³⁶ Classical analogies for the description of the history of New Spain have been a major research focus in recent work on Colonial history. Studies in this vein include David A. Lupher, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America* (Ann Arbor: 2006); John M.D. Pohl and Claire L. Lyons, eds., *Altera Roma: Art and Empire from Mérida to México* (Los Angeles: 2016); John M.D. Pohl and Claire L. Lyons, *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire* (Los Angeles: 2010); Penny C. Morrill, *The Casa del Deán: New World Imagery in a Sixteenth-Century Mexican Mural Cycle* (Austin: 2014).

order of the painting with his gaze. This is the first painting in the manuscript to suggest Mexica political stratification; it may well be important that it is a king who seems to be the only one who notices the Chapultepec toponym, and also that the king is at work influencing a subject to participate in the same visual regime, an idea explored in greater depth in the following chapter of this dissertation.

The relationship between vision, writing, and civilization becomes particularly pronounced in the painting that marks Tenochtitlan's foundation (Fig. 3.16). For many viewers, the iconography of this painting will be immediately legible: at the center of another brackish, hieroglyphic lake, artists have painted the toponym of the city of Tenochtitlan, an eagle perched upon a cactus sprouting from a glyphic rock. Surrounding the glyph are five figures, nearly all of whom wear royal garments finer than any seen in the paintings thus far, lengths of fabric bordered with ornamental design recalling the kinds of decoration one might find printed in Western book illustration. The two most richly dressed of these figures incline bodily toward this Tenochtitlan toponym, their arms reciprocally suggesting their interaction across it; the other figures make intense eye contact with one another, engaged in a nearly performative, gestural conversation that may typify period ideas about civilization and urban life.³⁷ The bodies of these figures, furthermore, bend and shift weight, they gesticulate with their hands and their draperies flutter, suggesting that a distinctively classicizing impulse may be at work in this painting. It appears that stylistic analogy with Old World antiquity is used strategically in this painting, deployed to visually characterize figures in an image in which the central theme is the recognition of an

³⁷ On sixteenth-century constructions of the relationship between the social behavior of indigenous peoples and their status as natural men or natural slaves (following Aristotelian models), see Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, 43–46.

important hieroglyph as the sign of the Mexica's divinely ordained settlement in their new island home.

By emphasizing the relationship between writing and civilization, the Durán paintings show their place within an Early Modern culture in which one of the features of uncivilized cultures was what Michael Gaudio has described as a lack of instruments of perspective. In *Engraving the Savage*, Gaudio argues that according to period thought, what distinguished natives from the European consumers of ethnographic imagery was the ability to assume a subject position from which to view the other; the absence of such a subject position distinguishes the savage.³⁸ In the Durán paintings, we find that the path towards civilization is a path toward greater degrees of literacy, one among those instruments of perspective that allows for an outward-facing view onto the world. Naïve Chichimec Mexicas become Aztecs as they travel along a path toward increasingly recognizing signs.³⁹

Part of what is most striking is the way in which Classical analogy is strategically deployed in these paintings, so that the figures are only cast as particularly close to Old World models when they are engaged in the greatest degree of literacy. To be Greek or Roman is, in these paintings, to

³⁸ Michael Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* (Minneapolis: 2008), xi-xxi.

³⁹ Accounts of the relationship between indigenous people and signs have a conflicted history in the literature; Tzvetan Todorov argued that the relationship between the Aztecs and signs created the conditions for the Conquest of Mexico. In Todorov's version of the Aztec world, the Aztecs believed that events were only possible when foretold by signs; this inflexibility meant that "Indians are the masters in the art of ritual discourse, but they are inadequate in a situation requiring improvisation" (87). According to Todorov, Spaniards by contrast were suited to conquest because of their literacy, which endowed them with an ability to better perceive their enemies and manipulate them. Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (New York, 1982), 63-97. Lockhart shows that this narrative of the Conquest is based on a mischaracterization of Nahua language; communication was more adaptable and improvisatory than Todorov sees. Lockhart, "Sightings: Initial Nahua reactions to Spanish culture," in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (New York, 1994), 229-248.

be literate – to have access to a visual regime of signs. So consistently associated are the acts of sign observation and Classical figuration that it appears that the Durán painters likely considered this link to be particularly important to their visual characterization of the figures. Looking at, seeing, and recognizing signs are the features that most consistently distinguish the figures by casting them in a classical mold, separating Romans and Greeks from Wild Men on the pages of this migration history.

That the paintings should create a narrative in which civilization and literacy grow incrementally in conjunction with one another may reflect mendicant ideas about the relationship between the interpretation of signs and religious conversion. To be a good Christian required fluency in the highly regimented semiotics of the liturgy, for example: natives had to understand the significant issue of the referentiality of the eucharist and the transubstantiation in order to be effectively converted. Indeed, friars discussed the necessity of teaching indigenous peoples to distinguish between materials and their signifiers, since such discernment was key to learning and understanding the Christian mysteries.⁴⁰ Development toward the ability to traffic in signficatory regimes was, in short, a stage in the development of a religious history; the Chichimec paintings dramatize this development, using forms of Classical analogy to make even more visible the realization of this moment of discernment and visualization, and to characterize the capacity for Christianization of pre-Aztec peoples.

⁴⁰ Roughly contemporary with the creation of Codex Durán, Gerónimo de Mendieta's history of the Franciscan Order in New Spain included concerns about the taking of the eucharist by natives who did not understand the transubstantiation; see García Icazbalceta, *Códice Franciscano*, 103. I thank Savannah Esquivel for drawing my attention to this source.

Collages

The *Historia* paintings' concerns with the emergence of literacy and the origins of civilization give us a set of concepts with which to approach the rather more complicated collage paintings that open the Book of Gods and Rites. The collage paintings contain significant Chichimec subject matter, which functions in the text as a prelude to the catalogue of gods that appears later in the treatise. There is significant thematic continuity between these Chichimec sections and the later images of the gods, as the Chichimec sections of the treatise deal with the role of the pre-Aztec culture hero Quetzalcoatl in establishing the origins of Aztec image cults. This concern surrounding the foundations of religion is articulated in the very first lines of the Book of Gods and Rites, where Durán purports that the narrative will explain "how the Mexicans, having received notice of a great man [Quetzalcoatl], began to create ceremonies and cults, to adore idols, to build altars and temples, and to offer sacrifice."⁴¹ As we shall see, the *Historia* paintings' ideas regarding the emergence of signification and the 'reading' of the landscape were strongly in play in the Book of Gods and Rites collage paintings as well. These ideas give us purchase on the otherwise difficult juxtapositions of images that are collaged together in this part of the book.

The opening painting of the Book of Gods and Rites is a collaged image that depicts Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl alongside Chichimec figures (Fig. 3.1). Many of the terms of this juxtaposition are familiar from the *Historia* treatise: Topiltzin, looming large on the left, wears elite fabrics and a featherwork crown, and his body rests upon a carved litter that terminates in

⁴¹ "[...] de donde los mexicanos, teniendo noticia de él, se incitaron a componer ceremonias y cultos, a adorar ídolos, edificar altares y templos, y a ofrecer sacrificios." Codex Durán folio 228 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 9; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 57.\

carved snakes, so that he is surrounded by the products of fine craft interventions.⁴² On the right side of the image are paste-over fragments of a painting that earlier represented the Seven Caves (the seventh cave is now collaged onto the painting that follows). This collage was almost certainly the model for the similar image that appears in the *Historia* – Couch’s reconstruction of the collaged fragments suggests that the two images were nearly identical.⁴³ At the same time, juxtaposing the Chichimecs in their caves with the image of Topiltzin significantly shifts the meaning of the original Seven Caves imagery.

In the text, Durán describes Topiltzin as the inventor of various techniques for working images and an expert in craft. Followers of Topiltzin, Durán tells us, were Toltecs, ‘oficiales o sabios en algún arte,’ and these Toltecs imitated Topiltzin in their practices as makers. Before being adopted by his followers, Topiltzin had lived a cloistered life not so different from that of a mendicant priest; he spent his time in solitude within his cell, where he would pray and abstain from earthly pleasures. When not praying, Topiltzin busied himself with the creation of images: He constructed altars and shrines in the *barrios*, and he adorned their walls with pictures. Honoring these images was the major component of his religious practice. What’s more, Topiltzin was an innovator in the craft of sculpture; with a strange technique, he sculpted stones and decorated them most curiously.

⁴² On Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl in the sixteenth-century literature, see Alfredo López-Austin, *The Myth of Quetzalcoatl: Religion, rulership and history in the Nahua world* (Boulder, CO: 2015); H.B. Nicholson, *Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl: The Once and Future Lord of the Toltecs* (Boulder, CO: 2001); Enrique Florescano, *The Myth of Quetzalcoatl* (Baltimore: 1999); Werner Stenzel, *Quetzalcoatl de Tula: Mitogénesis de una leyenda postcortesiana* (San Nicolás de los Garza, 1991); Jacques Lafaye, *Quetzalcóatl and Guadalupe: The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness, 1531-1813* (Chicago: 1987); David Carrasco, *Quetzalcoatl and the irony of empire: Myths and prophecies in the Aztec tradition* (Boulder, CO: 2000).

⁴³ Couch, “Style and Ideology in the Durán Illustrations,” 67 – 69.

No less importantly, the role of Topiltzin was not limited to the creation of images, but also included giving names to places that did not have them. Late in the Topiltzin narrative, he is persecuted by his enemy and detractor Tezcatlipoca; fleeing his abuse, he begins a long march toward the sea, where he will part the waters and disappear into the ocean. Along the route he takes toward the ocean, Topiltzin gives a name to each place where he stops, bringing the raw material of the landscape into the signifying regime of language.⁴⁴ Here we may see a kind of foil at work for the Chichimecs as they appear in the *Historia* paintings: If the Chichimecs are figures who must learn to understand the signification of an inscribed landscape, then what they are excluded from in their illiteracy is the linguistic organization of landscape that Topiltzin produces through his practice of nominalization.

The notion of an inscribed landscape was so important to Durán's reconstruction of Topiltzin that the Dominican turned in a rather personal way to his lived experience in Mexico for evidence of the great man's existence. Durán writes that as Topiltzin made his long path towards the sea, he carved images of the cross on living rock all throughout the valley. Seeking this evidence of Topiltzin's interventions for himself, Durán asks his informants where one might find these crosses. When Durán learns, for instance, that they could still be found in the Zapoteca, he then checked among his acquaintances to see whether anyone might have seen one of Topiltzin's petroglyphs. With his inquiries, he found that such signs could, in fact, still be found in arid landscapes far south of Mexico City. In giving these details, Durán is particularly revealing of the stakes for his ideas about Topiltzin's acts of naming and inscribing into the landscape; Topiltzin

⁴⁴ Codex Durán Folio 229 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 12; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 62.

is archaeologically sensible because of a facility for nominalization and inscription that leave his written trace upon the land.⁴⁵

Returning to the collage painting, we find that Topiltzin is pictured in association with a painted sign carved from rocks, recalling his associations with the signification of landscape. Below the litter on which Topiltzin sits is a diminutive, serpent-like mask colored in a green-grey wash, a work of sculpture flanked on either side by piles of unworked stone, set as if to emphasize the act of craft that produced it from raw material. In Nahuatl, this mask is known as either *coaxayacatl* or *xiuhxayacatl*, a turquoise snake mask, and indigenous sources suggest that it may have been associated with both Mexica kingship and with Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl himself.⁴⁶ Within the context of this particular painting, however, the mask represents a rather distinctive visual language from other elements in the painting, with a bearing that situates it much closer to the graphic regime of hieroglyphic writing than to the naturalistic curvature and modeling of Topiltzin's body and the other elements of his depiction. In part, this appears to be an effect produced by the sign's frontality and its terse visual expression, both aspects that lend the mask the appearance of hieroglyphic writing. The inclusion of this mask reinforces the association of Topiltzin with craft interventions and the manipulation of written signs, a pictorial emphasis of some of the features most closely associated with the Toltecs in the written passage of the chapter.

A hieroglyphic landscape, of course, characterizes the Chichimecs in their cave dwellings as well, but following upon the findings of the previous section, the difference seems to be that the Chichimecs are not considered authors of their inscribed landscape, nor are they its readers.

⁴⁵ "Pasando Topiltzin por todos estos pueblos que he dicho, dicen que iba entallando en las peñas cruces e imágenes. Y preguntándoles donde se podrían ver, para satisfacerme, nombráronme ciertos lugares, donde lo podría ver, y uno en la Zapoteca." Codex Durán Folio 228 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 12; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 63.

⁴⁶ Allison Caplan, personal communication 2018.

Instead, they are instead figures who inhabit written signs while remaining simultaneously unaware of them. Looking at the indigenous people who occupy the *tepetl*-glyph caves in these paintings, we sense the stylistic distance traveled between this earlier version of the caves and that attempted later: If, in the *Historia*, the figures became Classical through a process of increased engagement with texts and signs, then in this *Gods and Rites* painting, the figures were Classical from the beginning, their bodies already modeled as if in three-dimensional space, their poses loosely expressive like the bodies of Greco-Romans. Nevertheless, while these Classicizing figures gesture expressively as if in greater dialogue with one another than in the later painting, they are still better described as spatially dominated by forms of writing, rather than manipulators of this system.

What I am suggesting, in other words, is that the collage painting of Topiltzin and the Seven Caves has been designed to illustrate a binary relationship distinguishing between the creators of writing and craft objects and those who live with them but do not see them. This same binary, we are told by the text, animated a religious conversion that long preceded the conversion championed by Durán and his mendicant contemporaries, and indeed one that preceded the Aztec empire itself: Topiltzin and his disciples were themselves like proto-missionaries among the natives, diffusing the Christian message in the Americas in deepest pre-Aztec antiquity. Collaging these figures together does not afford us a view of the conversion process itself, but I argue that it does set the stage for imagining the relationship between these figures, including details surrounding practices of image-making and written signs that allow us to imagine a conversion scenario animated by a relationship between manipulators of writing and those without language.

Other collaged paintings seem to represent binary relationships that are related but not identical. One of these images, from the same chapter but set in the middle of the text, represents

four of the Toltec disciples of Topiltzin flanking the figures of the seventh of the Chicomoztoc caves (Fig. 3.17). Here, the emphasis seems to be on distinctions in costume: The Toltec figures appear in dress far more extravagant than that of the Chichimecs, set off by their rather bombastic hats shaped like seashells. The text describes these Toltecs as the disciples of Topiltzin, who preached among the Chichimecs like those pictured in the fragment at the center of the collage. Among the binaries established by the painting, we might identify a distinction in material elaboration, alongside a distinction drawn by the text between the subjects and objects of religious conversion. In other paintings, pre-Hispanic priests and priestesses from the Aztec period are set at the center of the images, while Chichimecs are reset as if they formed part of the frame itself; this particular collage configuration perhaps best recalls widespread sixteenth-century conventions for using Wild Men imagery as part of the framing devices for various kinds of media, including architectural facades, printed frontispieces, maps, and book illustrations (Fig. 3.19).⁴⁷

Admittedly, the relationship between the collaged elements in the final of the paintings may be somewhat different (Fig. 3.19). The figure on the left is meant to represent Huitzilopochtli, here appearing in the form that Durán describes as a wood statue. Comparison with other texts – including the text of the *Historia* – affirms that Huitzilopochtli played a major role in the Mexica migrations, perhaps explaining his inclusion in this particular group with relations to pre-Aztec history. Positioned across from Huitzilopochtli, however, is a rather different image from any other in the *Book of Gods and Rites*, the image of an Aztec king, seated upon an *icpalli*, or woven-reed seat that conveys authority. Certainly, we know that Aztec ideology interrelated Huitzilopochtli and the Aztec kings, as Aztec monuments suggest identity between rulers and this Mexica patron deity. In this particular painting, the relationship meant to be conveyed by the paintings is not clear

⁴⁷ Juan José Batalla Rosado, personal communication 2017.

– although, as we shall see in the chapter that follows, the painters of the *Historia* were highly invested in a historical narrative in which idols and kings followed interrelated trajectories in Aztec religious history.

Conclusions

In the argument that I have advanced here, I have proposed that the painters who represented the pre-Aztec period sustained concerns about signification as central to the characterization of Chichimec peoples. While the paintings do insist on some of the same characteristics of the Chichimecs that would characterize other accounts – namely, their perceived primitivism – the paintings appear to have been particularly preoccupied by the notion that to be Chichimec was, in a sense, to be outside of any traffic in signs, and that civilization was a process of learning to recognize representations like toponyms, in the case of the *Historia* paintings, and works of sculpture, in the case of the *Book of Gods and Rites*. If there is any special surprise in these paintings, it is perhaps the degree of consistency with which the Durán painters approached this subject matter, for the *Historia* paintings approach the move towards literacy as if it were a drama of signification whose climax arrives with the visionary perception of Tenochtitlan’s toponym incarnate. Civilization happens as Chichimecs increasingly come to recognize these signs on their path toward becoming readers in their own right.

While this visual argument perhaps resonates with broader Early Modern discourse on the relationship between reading and civilization, there seems to be a particularity for the Durán paintings in the fact that this drama plays out in relationship to landscape. That toponyms should be the vehicle for an argument about indigenous understandings of signification feels particularly conspicuous once one takes into account the notion of Topiltzin’s acts of naming and inscribing

landscape, practices that leave a discernible mark on the Mexican terrain and allow him to remain recoverable in what we might call an archaeological record. This confluence of concerns surrounding the signification of landscape seems to beg explication: Why should the question of whether natives could recognize an inscribed earth so concern the Durán painters? To my mind, no answer readily offers itself to this inquiry – but I am given some pause by the fact that in the Durán paintings that seem to rely most heavily on indigenous manuscript painting traditions, like the images of the Book of Gods and Rites, it is landscape painting that perhaps most distinguishes the Duránian versions from the indigenous sources. It is at least possible that in these images, marking out a landscape in a European style implied a proper degree of distance from a represented subject, and learning to impose distance between an image and the natural world through acts of marking was part of an education towards civilization.

As we have seen in this chapter, stylistic choices might have had yet other valences in the Durán paintings as well. In the argument presented here, models in Classical styles were utilized by the painters strategically in moments when these styles would allow them to more richly contextualize the process of civilization, thinking creatively through analogy. In deploying style as part of a strategic program, the Durán painters demonstrate their fluency in this aspect of visual language, showing a degree of authorial control over style perhaps not typically expected of painters in this milieu. So integral was style to the toolkit of the Codex Durán painters that we often find style among the elements of form most creatively engaged by the painters, proving every bit as important as iconography to the manuscript's painterly expression.

Finally, I propose that what style indexes for us here are major changes in native religiosity, the enduring concern of the Durán painters in their images of the pre-Conquest period. As the Topiltzin case makes clear, what was at stake in discourses on representation and the manipulation

of signs was a history of pre-Hispanic conversions, changes to faith that perhaps anticipated the Christianization campaigns of the sixteenth century. Religious change itself had a long history; for the Durán painters, this history had everything to do with representations, like the *coaxayacatl* beneath Topiltzin's litter. The religion represented in these paintings does not involve the gods, the anthropomorphic deities of other passages in the manuscript, but the text makes it clear that regimes of signification implied a kind of religiosity of their own, providing the essential conditions necessary to true conversion. There is, perhaps, a kind of optimism in these passages on pre-Aztec religious history, a sense of possibility for true faith, even as such a potentiality would be soon perverted in the passages that follow in detailing the corruptibility of religion in the mature empire.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE IDOLATER KINGS: RULERS AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY IN THE LATER HISTORIA PAINTINGS

In the *Historia* paintings, the emergence of the idol late in Aztec history was treated as a fact that demanded explanation. There were, after all, no idols in pre-Aztec religion: The paintings that represented the Chichimec past were devoid of references to image cults, embracing instead the chroniclers' widespread notion that pre-Aztec religion was aniconic, involving only the direct veneration of the sun and the stars. Only later in Aztec history, following the establishment of Tenochtitlan and the reigns of the first Aztec kings, did the paintings finally begin to represent idols. From then on, the idol became a near-constant preoccupation of the Durán painters, and the manuscript's illuminations turned time and again to representing sculpted monuments, deity images, and sacrificial rites as an integral part of Aztec history. *Historia* paintings frequently made the case for how an idol looked, how it was used, and what effect it had on those around it. In some cases, though, the paintings went even further: They presented an argument for why idolatry had emerged in Aztec history in the first place.

In this chapter, I will argue that the later *Historia* paintings identified Aztec kings as responsible for native religion's fall into idolatry. Analyzing the paintings that feature idols in the *Historia*, I find that images of kings and idols are intimately tied and mutually contingent in the paintings. In a number of scenes, kings act upon the idols, commissioning their production, inaugurating them for religious use, and performing sacrificial rituals to them. In other cases, idols are represented acting upon kings, compelling their ritual acts and reciprocating their performances. Kings and idols are interrelated agents in the Durán paintings, and the illuminations

devised pictorial programs that made the case for the relationship between them. In the most innovative among these paintings, the Durán painters even found ways to express that it was kingship itself that was to blame for the emergence of idol worship in Aztec religious history.

In attributing native idolatry to the errors of Aztec kings, the Durán painters intervened into a global intellectual debate with far-reaching consequences in period discourse. Encounters with non-Western peoples prompted historians and ethnographers to test their ideas about how idolatry came into existence over the course of history. For some, like Bartolomé de las Casas and Torquemada, even idolatrous religions originated in a universal human impulse to worship God; the history of idolatry was, in effect, the story of the rather simple error of directing worship to the creation rather than to the Creator.¹ Others, like Acosta, blamed the active intervention of a devil eager to imitate god, a *simia dei*; native religious history in his account was a history of diabolical mimesis that left otherwise laudable indigenous societies in darkness.² Diverse explications for the origin of idolatry in the New World implied different strategies for missionizing among the Indians; they also promised to impact period discourses on the exploitation of Indians for labor, the millenarian theology of the mendicants, and the structure and periodization attributed to universal history.

¹ As Sergio Botta notes, this explication of the history of idolatry has the effect of fitting native religious history inside of the universal history of Christianity as told in scripture; in effect, it removes from native history any sense of a barbaric past. Botta, “Towards a Missionary Theory of Polytheism: The Franciscans in the Face of the Indigenous Religions of New Spain,” 11-36, *Manufacturing Otherness: Missions and Indigenous Cultures in Latin America* (Cambridge, 2013).

² Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven, 1994), 22-54. Cervantes notes that the idea of a devil who could act in the world was a relatively new idea in the sixteenth century; Thomas Aquinas, for instance, wrote that the devil “had no ontological existence,” meaning that he was limited in his capacity to exert his will (Cervantes 1994: 16).

Arguing that Aztec kings were the cause of idolatry, the *Historia* paintings offer a politically charged argument about native religion's origins. Their case for the culpability of the Aztec kings echoes throughout the culture of the period: As David Tavárez noted, Inquisition practices earlier in the century tended to focus almost exclusively upon indigenous officeholders, disciplining these colonial inheritors of Aztec rulership in spectacular, Foucauldian displays of punishment. Andrés de Olmos, renowned sixteenth-century Nahuatl list, even reported that the devil had shown himself in an apparition in the guise of an Aztec king, exemplifying a wider association in New Spain between native rulers with sin.³ Interestingly, these ideas about the pre-Hispanic kings' role in religious history seem to strike a marked contrast with the chronicles of the sixteenth-century Andes. In Colonial Perú, authors like Cieza de León and Garcilaso also proposed that Inka kings were personally responsible for changing native religion, but in their accounts, the native king Manco Capac brought the Inkas closer to god, organizing villages from out of disorder, instituting agriculture, leading fearlessly in battle, and reorienting worship toward the divinely created sun all as part of a single program of reform.⁴ Like Durán's history of the Aztecs, Cieza's history of the Inkas reflects the belief that empires grow and religions change hand-in-hand, but Durán offers an altogether darker picture of the effect of kings upon native worship.

This chapter will offer a close reading of the *Historia* paintings in which idols appear, attending particularly to the iconographic and stylistic choices by which the Durán painters made their argument for the kings' culpability for the Aztec cults of images. In the section that follows, I offer a survey of the later *Historia* paintings, where I propose that representing idols constituted a major problem for the painters, requiring them at once to show idols as a significant part of their

³ David Tavárez, *The Invisible War: Indigenous Devotions, Discipline, and Dissent in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: 2011), 38-40.

⁴ Pedro Cieza de León, *Primera Parte de la Crónica del Perú* (Antwerp: 1554), 77r-77v.

historical narrative but also to limit or repress their outright figuration. I next turn to the two earliest paintings representing idolatry, both in the reign of Motecuhzoma I, and note that the painters devised visual strategies that would serve to insulate the king from affiliation with idolatry. By contrast, the following section treats the image of the king Tizoc with his predecessor's mummy bundle; here, I show that the painters manipulated native and European iconography to offer a powerful condemnation of Tizoc's tyranny as the cause for the idolatry represented. Finally, I turn to paintings of the reign of Motecuhzoma II, which cast Motecuhzoma as an idolater and tyrant, but also personally locate the impending iconoclasm of Spaniards as a correction to the king's personal failures.

The message of these paintings indicting Aztec kings for idolatry might fairly be described as dogmatic. Exported from scripture and from Classical studies to the context of the Americas, the notion that kings were responsible for idolatry recasts Aztec rulership in a mold nearly unrecognizable in Nahua thought. In the narrative that I offer here, the Durán paintings give relatively little insight into Nahua cultural ideals of rulership, culturally rooted ideas elegantly expressed in surviving pre-Conquest monuments and Colonial texts. Recent studies have ably explored these Nahua concepts. We have long known that the Nahuatl term for king, *tlatoni*, approximates the appellative "he who speaks," but Patrick Hajovsky's recent work adds the indigenous concept of *tenyotl*, "lip-ness" or "fame," to our understanding of indigenous ideals of kingship.⁵ Barbara Mundy's recent book on urbanism at Tenochtitlan studies how the later *tlahtoque* made themselves visible within Tenochtitlan's urban space, and emphasizes the intimacy

⁵ Patrick Hajovsky, *On The Lips of Others: Moteuczoma's Fame in Aztec Monuments and Rituals* (Austin: 2015).

between kings and cities described in Nahua documents.⁶ And Andy Barnes' work on pre-Hispanic monuments suggests that native royal accoutrements emphasized the divine authority of rulers, a quality later de-emphasized by Early Colonial Nahua painters.⁷ These studies offer insight into an indigenous Nahua worldview that conceived kingship in relation to cities, subjects, and forms of divine presentation, a perspective only partially glimpsed in the polemically motivated Durán paintings.

But even though these paintings offer relatively little insight into indigenous concepts of kingship, they nevertheless reveal how painters engaged with theological and historical questions in a creative endeavor of their own. As we shall see, the Durán paintings' condemnation of Aztec kingship pushed the painters toward experimentation, challenging them to find forms adequate to their theory of native religious history. Each image of an idol in Codex Durán required its own unique composition, setting this corpus apart from the *Historia's* images of wars and kingly ascensions, which often resorted to the same formulas over and over again. Bold experiments with iconography, style, and temporality armed the painters with a visual inventory that enabled them to intervene into a global intellectual debate about the origins of idolatrous image cults. Specially conceived, pictorially dense, and alive to their moment, the *Historia's* paintings of idols offer us a unique opportunity to delve deep into the pictorial dynamics of individual paintings, showing us the inventive character of the manuscript's Colonial painters along the way.

⁶ Barbara Mundy, *The Death of Aztec Tenochtitlan, The Life of Mexico City* (Austin: 2015), 52-71. Thinking comparatively with Marin's idea that 'the king is his image,' Mundy studies the indigenous corpus to argue that for the Aztec kings, "it was through being seen, both by members of the elite and then by a larger public, that the ruler and his associated authority was made tangible within specific urban spaces" (52-53).

⁷ William Barnes, "Secularizing for Survival: Changing Depictions of Central Mexican Native Rule in the Early Colonial Period," in *Painted Books and Indigenous Knowledge in Mesoamerica: Manuscript Studies in Honor of Mary Elizabeth Smith*, Middle American Research Institute 69 (New Orleans: 2005), 319-344.

Evacuated Gods: Surveying the Corpus

A paradox lies at the heart of idol representation in the *Historia*: In this book's paintings, idols are both ubiquitous and also oddly absent. Idolatry is one of the major themes of the treatise: Nearly one-third (14 out of 46) of this section's paintings feature pre-Hispanic cult images within their compositions, a fact mirrored in the text, where entire chapters are devoted to the commission and inauguration of new temples and monuments. Yet at the same time, in these paintings the idols were almost never figured outright. Unlike in the manuscript's treatises on the Gods and Rites and the Calendar, where deity images and impersonators appear anthropomorphically, complete with illusionistic detailing, the *Historia* paintings are exceedingly hesitant to render the bodies of the gods. When they represented idols, the painters found ways – often unique in the manuscript – to critique, neutralize, or otherwise absent the gods from the paintings. Often, this meant that the paintings suggested the gods without showing them directly.

Compared with the *Historia* paintings' other subjects, painting idols demanded a wider range of visual solutions of the Durán painters. The later *Historia* paintings – defined here as paintings that follow the establishment of Tenochtitlan – can be sorted into three subject matters: throne scenes, battles, and religion. The basic formula for the throne scenes remained largely unchanged across the manuscript, featuring a king, a seat, and in most cases a group of supplicant subjects or foreign delegates (Fig. 4.1).⁸ The royal iconography in these throne scenes might change over the course of the *Historia* – as we shall see below, the throne itself changes in one pivotal moment in Aztec history – but the compositional formula for these courtly scenes remained

⁸ Writing about these scenes featuring enthroned kings, Mónica Domínguez Torres noted that they followed conventions of courtly portraiture that were 'deeply indebted to classical sources.' Domínguez Torres, *Military Ethos and Visual Culture in Post-Conquest Mexico* (Burlington: 2013), 172-174.

largely the same. Battle paintings, too, shared a basic structure at their heart, with peripheral iconography modified to meet the demands of the text. On first glance, the battle scenes appear to exhibit stunning variation – most impressive, perhaps, is the scene of the battle of Tlatelolco, where bare-breasted women under siege ‘fight with femininity’ by expressing their breastmilk as if it were a weapon of war (Fig. 4.2).⁹ Similarly, the battle of Metztitlan particularizes its fight by showing its warriors fighting in a surging river along the painting’s vertical axis (Fig. 4.3). But these two scenes – and many other battle scenes besides – share a single iconographic formula: One warrior, dressed in a netted mantle and exuberant feathered headdress, fights alongside another warrior, who wears a jaguar costume and a headdress of balls of down. Pictorially, the Durán painters represented battles and ascensions using an internally consistent formula, adding details around a few core elements to suit the iconographic demands of the text.

By contrast, the paintings of idols largely eschewed such standardization; their individual conception may point to the painters’ higher degree of interest in this subject. At the same time, however, one senses that these paintings may have been so different because the artists had to work in each case to solve an overarching problem: Consistently, we find that the painters sought at once to represent the idols and suppress their figuration. A single image most efficiently demonstrates how a painting might at once visualize an idol and obscure it from view. The Chapter XLIX illustration (Fig. 4.4) represents the rites of inauguration for the new *acuecuexco* aqueduct, constructed by the ninth *tlatoani* Ahuitzotl. In the image, three priests, their bodies smeared with black pitch, are shown performing ritual near rushing water; one offers incense from a pan, another plays music on a conch shell, and the third sacrifices a quail to cast into a turgid, rushing stream.

⁹ For a classic argument regarding the War of Tlatelolco painting, see Cecelia Klein, “Fighting with Femininity: Gender and War in Aztec Mexico,” *Estudios de Cultura Nahuatl* 24 (1994): 236-239.

Barbara Mundy has pointed out that this stream in fact resembles the stream that, in pre-Hispanic painting, emerges from beneath the dress of Chalchiuhtlicue, goddess of rushing water; she argues that the moving whirlpool thus captures the *teotl* or divine energy associated with the aquatic goddess as she appears in manuscripts like the Codex Borbonicus, a manuscript painted shortly after the Conquest (Fig. 4.5).¹⁰ In this painting, the goddess is not quite figured, as her body has been absented from the image, and yet she is still recognizable in the rushing stream left behind.¹¹

This image of the evacuated goddess Chalchiuhtlicue is not the only case of deity obfuscation in the paintings; like innuendo, the images are fairly consistent in suggesting but not quite realizing the deities' figuration outright.¹² In another of the paintings from Ahuitzotl's reign, a series of paintings of Tenochtitlan architecture alludes to idols without showing the gods in human form, denying them the morphology that they have elsewhere in the manuscript (Fig. 4.6-4.8). These paintings, which function serially, serve as headings of chapters near one another in

¹⁰ Barbara Mundy, *The Death of Aztec Tenochtitlan, The Life of Mexico City*, 64-65. Animacy is the quality most at stake in Mundy's comparison of the Durán stream with that of Chalchiuhtlicue in the Borbonicus: "That the Acuecuexco aqueduct in Durán's text shares the vital qualities that were taken as evidence of the presence of Chalchiuhtlicue and that it receives the same offerings as the deity suggest that they possessed the same animate quality, and were both thought to share in the *teotl* of Chalchiuhtlicue."

¹¹ A contrasting reading of this painting would argue that Chalchiuhtlicue is represented in this painting by *pars pro toto*, a fairly common feature of Nahuatl representational systems (for instance, Nahuatl writing). In this case, however, I would argue that the absence of the goddess was precisely the intention of the artists, given that almost no other figural images of the gods appear in the *Historia* paintings.

¹² Using the term 'innuendo' to describe the way the paintings suggest the idols without figuring them outright recalls sixteenth century ideas about the excessive sexuality of the idols, discussed, for instance, in Nagel's reading of Savonarola, who called the idols whores. The idea of the excessive sexuality of idols is, in fact, expressed in one Codex Durán painting, where a diabolical version of the god Tezcatlipoca is represented with his erect penis directed toward the open chest cavity of a sacrificial victim. Alexander Nagel, *The Controversy of the Renaissance* (Chicago, 2011), 23-31.

the manuscript. Across the group, we find scenes of idolatry that formally circumscribed deity bodies in order to both inherently critique the gods and limit their visibility.

In the first of these paintings, we are offered a view of the Templo Mayor with its twin houses unoccupied, a vacant religious structure set against a mountainous landscape (Fig. 4.6). Empty, high-backed seats crafted from woven reeds sit within the structures; the only gesture toward figuration, here, appears in little decorative faces at the base of the columns flanking the temples' portals, but there is none of the deity sculpture described in the text present yet in the paintings. There is, nevertheless, a reasonable textual explanation for the emptiness of the temple: The chapter treats a period in which the structure is still under construction, not yet dedicated for sacred use.

In the painting that heads the next chapter, the twin temple iconography repeats, but in this case the temples have now been inaugurated and the space filled with monstrous images of the gods (Fig. 4.7). The four devils now occupying the top of the pyramid have bodies adapted from medieval and early modern visual languages of diabolism. Two idols, figured as apes, float ethereally near the temples' roofs; their simian bodies suggest that the artists were less concerned with describing the appearance of the Aztec gods (the only gestures toward indigenous visuality are inset red stones at their torsos) and much more interested in using their figuration to offer an inherent critique of Aztec images. Bringing to mind Cervantes' discussion of the sixteenth-century devil as *simia dei*, a mere apelike imitator of God, their simian bodies were likely chosen as the form of figuring these gods in order to suggest that the Aztec gods performed only a corrupt

mimesis of divinity rather than embodying godliness itself, a trope that had significant precedent in medieval illustration of pagan gods as well.¹³

Problems of figuration further complicate this painting as we look inside of the twin temples. Here, the gods are not so easily recognizable, though we know who the figures should be: The god on the left ought to be Tlaloc, the pan-Mesoamerican god of water, and the god on the right Huitzilopochtli, the Mexica patron deity associated with war and the dry season. Indeed, the Tlaloc-oid figure wears a mask whose curves vaguely suggest his iconography, even as the body begins to disintegrate the resemblance. But a much more complicated figural game plays out with the god on the right, a devil figure with the smoking shield and serpent foot of Tezcatlipoca. Strangely, the god's body and iconography are both visualized and obscured, disappearing into a ritual scene that appears overlaid upon him. On this side of the complex, human figures perform heart sacrifice, and blood runs in a stream that pools at the bottom of the steps, but the actions of pinning down the victim to remove his heart in this composition obscure the body of the god. The painters have made it deliberately difficult to see Tezcatlipoca's body, as the lines that should delineate his form overlap and disappear into the sacrificial scene that is laminated on top of him, so that it is hard to know where his body ends and the sacrificial scene begins. Staging the god's

¹³ On the devil as *simia dei* in Early Colonial New Spain, see Cervantes, *Devil in the New World*, Chapter One. The medieval precedents of this idea, including the illustration of idols and the devil as an ape, are discussed in Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: 1991), 15. Camille notes that Christians had long believed that Egyptians had worshipped apes, and discusses an image in which a female figure, Idolatry, cradles a baby ape in her arms, "in what appears almost like a perverse parody of a Virgin and Child composition." Camille notes a long history of thinking with ape metaphors in the general discourse around image worship, citing a bishop's comments circa 391 AD: "Those who keep apes are always amazed that these animals are never deceived by clay or wax figurines (i.e do not mistake them for living things). Now if you cling to those statues and paintings you will be even lower than apes."

body so that it is both visualized and also dissolves into the sacrificial scene around it, the painters at once vigorously invoke the Aztec deity image and also insulate it from outright view.

The painters' unusual choices in representing the gods of the Templo Mayor are all the more striking given that they already had a well-defined model for the same subject in the Book of Gods and Rites, a treatise that had already been completed when the *Historia* was painted (Fig. 4.9). In the earlier paintings, the Aztec gods are more obviously based upon human bodies; their diagnostic costume is unambiguous in identifying the figures, and we see none of the painters' hesitation to make the gods fully visible. The painters have, in other words, made a deliberate choice to opt away from the native model already given in the manuscript in order to borrow from polemical medieval and Renaissance models, and to create paintings that would obscure the gods from view. When the artists returned to the theme of Ahuitzotl's construction of religious architecture to paint the third image in the series, on the dedication of the *coatepanlli* structure, the images of the idols did not reappear (Fig. 4.8). Instead, they were replaced with the curious image of a priestess who pours blood from the top of the temple into a vessel. Importantly for our story here, that blood lands on the body of a diadem-wearing king, who, surrounded by priests, dances in the flow.

For the most part, the Durán painters chose to use the figuration of the idols either as an inherent critique of their status as images, or otherwise to obscure them from view, but there is a single exception. Near the end of pre-Hispanic history, the goddess Toci appears in full-figure form at the top of a scaffold, her hair adorned with unspun cotton and her body kneeling in feminine pose, much as she appears in the manuscripts of the Magliabechiano group (Figs. 4.10-4.11). This painting of Toci constitutes the first and only case in which a fully figured goddess appears in an approximation of indigenous style in Durán's *Historia*, but this is also the exception

that proves the rule, for in this painting she is pictured upon a ritual scaffold that is on the very brink of being consumed by flames. Her figuration here, in other words, is a precarious figuration: It is unclear whether Toci is meant to represent a wood sculpture or a human body in this scene, but in either case, Toci is shown at the verge of being disfigured. In these paintings of the later portions of the *Historia*, we see a deeply iconoclastic impulse at play, where representation of the Aztec idols had to be neutralized. Chalchiuhtlicue's body was absented from her image, diabolic gods were rendered difficult to make out against sacrificial scenes, and Toci was shown just as she is about to be burned out of existence.

The idol that most often appeared in the *Historia* paintings, though, was not a figural idol at all. Across the reigns of the later kings, the Durán illustrations turned over and over again to stones that it called *cuauhxicalli*, or eagle vessels (Fig. 4.12). In the paintings, these are shown as massive round stones with sculpted solar imagery on their tops, a morphology more commonly referred to in current scholarship as *temalacatl*.¹⁴ The *temalacatl* are sacrificial stones: The paintings show us how they were used as altars for heart sacrifice, with victims laid upon them or anchored to them with rope for gladiatorial ritual. The paintings in the *Book of Gods and Rites* would likely not prepare readers to see these massive stones as idols, given that the *temalacatl* are not anthropomorphic, but the text nevertheless insists that they are more than ritual furniture. Durán refers to the glyphic sun atop the stones as a *figura*, a term he typically deploys when describing objects of veneration, and he is unambiguous in describing the *figura* as a sun thirsting for offerings

¹⁴ Current usage defines *cuauhxicalli* as “a series of semi-spherical stone bowls used as receptacles for sacrificial hearts, with images of the sun carved in the interior and portrayals of the earth deity on the base.” Karl Taube, “The Womb of the World: The *cuauhxicalli* and Other Offering Bowls of Ancient and Contemporary Mesoamerica,” in *Maya Archaeology I*, Charles Golden, Stephen Houston, and Joel Skidmore, eds. (San Francisco, 2009), 86-106. Nelly Gutiérrez Solana Rickards, *Objetos ceremoniales en piedra de la cultura Mexica* (Mexico City: 1983), 115.

of blood.¹⁵ Though the text makes it clear that these images are idols, the paintings do little to visually neutralize the massive stones, perhaps because they saw less inherent risk for veneration of the lifeless mass of a nearly aniconic stone sculpture.

The recurrence of the *temalacatl* as the most-represented idol in the *Historia* may demand some explanation. To my mind, the stone may have been interesting to the Durán painters precisely because it shed light on how idolatry emerged in history. The *temalacatl* was foremost a solar monument, and in Codex Durán, Aztec religion began with the worship of the sun (a topic explored in Chapter Two of this dissertation). The difference between early and late astral veneration, though, was that early sun worship was practiced without the use of cult images. There is, in other words, a kind of gesture with the *temalacatl* to Aztec religion's past: By the time of the monuments' appearance in Aztec history, the worship that was once accomplished without the use of images or sacrifices had become a bloody, spectacular display with the sun stones in the heart of urban Tenochtitlan.¹⁶ Painting the *temalacatl* may have allowed the painters to represent the fate of early Aztec cult, tracing a trajectory of religious change across the paintings.¹⁷

¹⁵ Tracking Durán's use of the term *figura* shows that he nearly always uses this term to describe objects of veneration. A preponderance of uses of this term occurs in the Calendar treatise, where the *figuras* described are the month glyphs and constellation that Durán believes to sit at the center of worship in the solar calendar; see Chapter Two of this dissertation.

¹⁶ The use of sacrificial rites to accomplish what was once done without them recalls Bartolomé de las Casas' idea that early religions did not involve sacrifice, but that sacrifices had become increasingly complex, with the use of additional monumental images, over time. See MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Perú* (Princeton, 1991), 212.

¹⁷ One other possibility might explain Durán's interest in the *temalacatl*: It resembled a millstone, and sixteenth-century thought related millstones with the death of idolaters. Donald McColl's article "Iconoclasm by Water" notes that in the Book of Revelations, an apocalyptic punishment for idolaters was that they might be tied to a millstone and drowned; this biblical text was even illustrated in some sixteenth-century prints. A number of major studies in Colonial history have treated the influence of the Book of Revelations upon the mendicants' framing of their missionizing in the Americas (i.e. Phelan 1956; Ricard 1974; Lara 2004; Magaloni 2017). What's

But this trajectory in the history of Aztec religion nevertheless required some explanation. Hiding, condemning, and setting the idols aflame, the painters were unambiguous in their appraisal of imperial Aztec deity images; still, the paintings also sought to explain why a primitive cult venerating Creation had evolved (or devolved) into the decadence of idolatry. Studying individual paintings in detail, we sense that the paintings were particularly concerned about the relationship between the Aztec kings and cult images, and sometimes even indicted them personally with responsibility for their emergence.

Idols at a Distance: Motecuhzoma I

By the paintings' account, the history of idolatry began among the Mexica under the reign of Motecuhzoma I, the fifth *tlatoani* of Tenochtitlan. From Motecuhzoma's ascension onward, sacrificial rituals, sacred images, and the commission of monuments became frequently treated subjects in the paintings, interests that would sustain the painters as they represented all later periods in Aztec history. Curiously, though, even though representations of idol worship began under Motecuhzoma I, the paintings reveal a marked interest in insulating the king from associations with the idol. A closer look at the paintings of religion under Motecuhzoma I reveals the ways in which the artists visualized distance between idolatrous religion and the king under whom it was initiated and suggests a possible motive for the separation between king and the image that they created.

The first scene of idolatry in the *Historia* paintings illustrates a story in which a living idol is destroyed through the goodness of an Aztec king (Fig. 4.13). According to the story in the text,

more, many works of Aztec deity sculpture were remade into the shape of millstones in the 16th century, with examples in site museum collections at Tenayuca and Toluca (Solís 2002).

a group of Mexica warriors has been captured by their enemies from the nearby polity of Chalco; among those captives was a young noble named Ezhuahuacatl, the brother of the Aztec king Motecuhzoma I. When the Chalcas realize that they have a member of the Mexica royal line among their captives, they conspire to elect him their new king, but Ezhuahuacatl, declaring loyalty in a speech delivered before his Mexica brethren, expresses reluctance to ascend to the rival town's throne. Nevertheless, the Chalcas lead Ezhuahuacatl through a series of coronation ceremonies, including a moment in which Ezhuahuacatl performs a ritual dance atop a ceremonial pole. At the conclusion of his dance, however, Ezhuahuacatl throws himself to the ground, choosing to die rather than to become king of the rival polity.

When illustrating this scene, the Durán painters elected to visualize the ritual suicide of Ezhuahuacatl using an iconography for idols and iconoclasm. The painting shows the narrative related in the chapter as it unfolded in sequence. Near the center of the image, Ezhuahuacatl is first shown captured in war; next, he is depicted being unbound by his captors; later, at the top of the frame, he dances upon the ceremonial *xocotl* pole holding a spray of green feathers; finally, he is shown utterly broken at the pole's base, his body shattered in a pinwheel splay.¹⁸ Picturing Ezhuahuacatl's dance upon the *xocotl* pole, the painters deploy a European iconography for the idol; situated like an image positioned atop a column, Ezhuahuacatl's ritual dance reads as an idolatrous performance in which the king himself momentarily becomes an idol. Within

¹⁸ Ezhuahuacatl may be identified by a name glyph that appears in this painting. The repeated figure always shown with the feathered ornament, who I here interpret to represent Ezhuahuacatl, is glossed in his first appearance with a compressed scene of one figure taking a captive bound at the feet. Ezhuahuacatl's name can probably be translated as something like 'shedder of blood.' The gloss, connected with ligature, may be working as some kind ideographic representation naming the figure, but because part of Ezhuahuacatl's name is not currently translatable (the verb 'huahuaca' is not attested elsewhere (Allison Caplan, personal communication 2017)), it is difficult to determine how legible this name glyph would have been to a wider body of Nahuatl viewers.

indigenous Nahua thought, kings indeed took on the identity of deity images when undergoing rituals of coronation; in this sense, the use of an iconography for idolatry to represent the ascendant king captures some shadow of an indigenous concept of rulership.¹⁹ At the same time, the use of this formula introduces a moral dimension into the visual narrative. Ezhuahuacatl's act of self-destruction – his auto-iconoclasm, through the unmaking of his own deity image – marks him as a good king, portraying him as laudable insofar as he resists conscription into an improper relationship of identity with an idolatrous image. Ezhuahuacatl is good, in other words, because he maintains distance from the idol he might otherwise have become.

By the next image in the *Historia*, though, the Mexica king is utterly involved in sacrificial ritual. A bloody scene confronts the viewer: Set in Tenochtitlan's urban core, a new *temalacatl* stone is inaugurated by the Mexicas with the sacrifice of foreign victims (Fig. 4.14). Intense and involving, with deeply saturated color and a robust buildup of lines, the painting seems to withhold little in its association of the king with the death of the captive. But when we look closely at the image, we discover that even though the painting overtly associates Aztec kingship with idol worship, it nevertheless finds ways to distance Motecuhzoma I from associations with the idol.

As with the previous painting, the image of the *temalacatl* of Motecuhzoma I makes use of a narrative technique that allows us to observe the ritual in process; in this case, the device has the effect of creating a sense of intimacy and interplay between the king and the stone. On the left is the sun stone, a massive, densely delineated object that visually organizes the space and the human actors around it. In this scene, the Aztec king appears twice: First, as the rightmost figure in the frame, he speaks with another figure dressed in lavish blue garments while placing his

¹⁹ Richard Townsend, "Coronation at Tenochtitlan," *The Aztec Templo Mayor: A Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks* (Washington: 1987), 393-407.

turquoise diadem upon the crown of his head, dressing in preparation for the ritual. Then, he appears a second time; now transformed into the sacrificer, he personally extracts the heart of a sacrificial victim, his blue cape stained red with blood. We can tell that the king has become the sacrificer because the decorative pattern on their garments is identical, and because he wears the same nose ornament in each part of the scene. By repeating the figure within the frame, the painting emphasizes the interaction between the king and the stone: The *temalacatl* pulls the king across the frame, drawing him toward it with a kind of gravitational pull, and the king responds by acting upon the stone, feeding it with blood. In a show of reciprocity, the king and idol act upon one another, so that the painted narrative visualizes the intimacy of their bond.

And yet, while the painting emphasizes closeness between the Aztec king and the idol, it is nevertheless quite careful to suggest that the king in question was not necessarily Motecuhzoma I. In the figure group at right, each of the Mexica nobles is named with a hieroglyph. The glyph for the king's companion is unambiguous: near his head floats a script combining a snake (*coatl*) with the head of a woman (*cihuatl*), joined to create the name of the office for the royal advisor, or *cihuacoatl*,²⁰ For the king himself, though, the name given is unexpected: Rather than representing the name of Motecuhzoma I, the painting gives a glyph combining a stream of water

²⁰ In indigenous thought, the officeholder who served as *cihuacoatl* may have been considered the double of the Aztec king, producing what Susan Gillespie has described as a “merging of the two men in the documents” (132); she also describes the king Motecuhzoma and the *cihuacoatl* Tlacaellal as ‘twins’ (133). Something of the ‘twin’ or ‘double’ reading may be found in this painting, as the king and *cihuacoatl* are both dressed in blue garments and diadems, shown at similar scale (larger than all others), and approximately mirror one another in stance. Gillespie further notes the gender dynamics of the ‘woman-snake’ office: “The office of *cihuacoatl* was second only to the *tlatoani*, and its incumbent was his counterpart, in keeping with the identification of the rulers with gods who had both male and female aspects. Despite the feminine name, the *cihuacoatl* title was held by men, and in fact the goddess Cihuacoatl has elsewhere been translated as ‘a woman with a penis’” (62-63). Susan Gillespie, *The Aztec Kings: The Construction of Rulership in Mexica History* (Tucson: 1989).

(*atl*) with the face of a man (*yacatl*), for *Axayacatl*, the name of Motecuhzoma's successor (Fig. 4.15). Assuming that the glyph was marked on the page at the same time as the rest of the painting – and my study of the manuscript original suggests that it was – then the painters have introduced an anachronism into the painting, contradicting the text to suggest that the king who performed the sanguinary ritual was not Motecuhzoma I at all, but rather Axayacatl, his successor to the throne.²¹

With this change in the name glyph of the king in the painting, the historical identity of Motecuhzoma I is maintained at a distance from associations with the idol. An ideological motive may be detected in the misnomer: In the Durán text, Motecuhzoma is associated with good laws and good governance, both explicitly related to the question of good religion in sixteenth-century New Spain. An entire chapter – though brief and, sadly, unillustrated – describes the 17 laws that Motecuhzoma I was said to have established, ranging from sumptuary laws restricting the dress of commoners to laws surrounding interactions with foreigners.²² Garibay argued that these laws were actually Spanish legal tenets;²³ indeed it is difficult to know whether they reflect any

²¹ Milne also noted the hieroglyphic misnomer in his 1984 dissertation, describing it only as a “curious detail” (244) without suggesting a possible motivation for the change in the king's name. Primarily concerned with whether the painting accurately portrayed the pre-Columbian past, Milne argues that the *temalacatl* painting shows us that Durán had a good grasp of native ethnography but knew only minimal details about indigenous history. Michael G. Milne, “Diego Duran: Historia de las Indias de Nueva España,” Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 1984.

²² In fact, it appears that there was a more widespread idea in New Spain that historically, a king named Motecuhzoma had been responsible for establishing laws in the pre-Columbian period. In Codex Mendoza, this Motecuhzoma is Motecuhzoma II; on the page across the opening from a famous illustration of Motecuhzoma II seen in three-quarter view, the Mendoza's text says that ‘prior to the reign of Motecuhzoma, there was no such order in the government. When Motecuhzoma later succeeded to the lordship, being wise and of good disposition, of his free will he imposed order and a form of good government and ordered them to maintain and carry it out, on pain of severe punishments.’ Silent as ever on matters of idolatry, the Codex Mendoza does not go so far as to interrelate law and native religion as other period sources do. Berdan and Anawalt, *The Essential Codex Mendoza*, 35.

²³ Garibay, *Historia*, II: 579 n. xxxvi – I.

historical reality in the pre-Hispanic world.²⁴ But within Durán’s vision for the history of idolatry, good laws could push the society as a whole – including native cult – closer to just faith. Using a health metaphor that was common among missionaries in New Spain, Durán wrote of Motecuhzoma I’s ordinances that good law was like a medicine that, when properly administered, could heal the common sickness of a people.²⁵ The perception of Motecuhzoma I as a figure of justice thus carried with it high stakes for the history of native cult; if Motecuhzoma I was just, then he might have brought the history of indigenous religion closer to true faith.²⁶

Perhaps because of Motecuhzoma’s associations with good governance, the paintings following the *temalacatl* scene seem to have associated the *tlatoani* with King Solomon of the Old

²⁴ By contrast, another document – the *Histoire du Mechique*, purportedly based upon a Nahuatl-language document – tells a story in which the first kings to practice human sacrifice were also the first to institute new laws. This was the case in Texcoco, where law and sacrifice mutually originate in a key moment in the long history of the polity. See Ángel María Garibay K., *Teogonía e Historia de los mexicanos: Tres opúsculos del siglo xvi* (Mexico: 1965), 99-100.

²⁵ Sahagún deployed his own medical metaphor for good faith as ‘healing a people’ in his prologue to Book II (on calendar rites) of the Florentine Codex. Durán’s metaphor proposes law as society’s medicine, writing that “Pues luego se pregonó aquel edicto y mandato por todas las provincias y ciudades y villas y lugares, para que se guardasen y cumpliesen sin ninguna violación, como cosas maravillosas y necesarias a la conservación de todas las repúblicas, como centellas salidas del divino fuego que el gran rey Motecuhzoma (tenía) sembradas en su pecho, para la entera salud de su reino, como las medicinas, que, dadas en tiempo y sazón, hacen gran provecho a los cuerpos humanos y son causa de su salud por entero, como lo son las leyes bien ordenadas para la conservación de las repúblicas.” Codex Durán Folio 79 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, II: 213-214; Heyden, *History*, 211.

²⁶ Kellogg, *Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture* (Norman, 1995); Borah, *Justice By Insurance: The General Court of Colonial Mexico and the Legal Aides of the Half-Real* (Berkeley: 1983); Pardo, “How to Punish Indians: Law and Cultural Change in Early Colonial Mexico,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48 (2006): 79-109. A Nahuatl-language document in the Bancroft collection gives insight into the ways in which laws were propagated among and by natives as a strategy of idolatry’s extirpation. Translated (and significantly transformed) from a royal *Ordenanza*, this sixteenth-century view on native laws addresses both lay and religious concerns. Susan Kellogg notes that as missionary documents, decrees of law were understood by Spaniards as “a tool of education and rule.” The Nahuatl translation of Philip II’s *ordenanzas* suggests that they were a gift of love for the natives, given to remove them from wickedness. Barry D. Sell and Susan Kellogg, “We Want to Give Them Laws: Royal Ordinances in a Mid-Sixteenth Century Nahuatl Text,” *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 27 (1997): 325-367.

Testament. In a painting that represents sculptors carving a portrait of Motecuhzoma I on a Chapultepec hillside (Fig. 4.16), Couch discovered that Motecuhzoma was rendered with postures and gesture mirroring Solomon in French Bible illustration, an observation later echoed by Pablo Escalante Gonzalbo.²⁷ For Couch, this was evidence that the painters wished to represent Motecuhzoma as a New World analogue to Solomon, an idea resonating with his larger assertion that the *Historia* was modeled after the Bible, a proposition also advanced by Milne.

Following up on Couch's observation of Motecuhzoma's Solomonic representation, I have found that the painters may have drawn parallels between Motecuhzoma I and Solomon in yet another major scene from Motecuhzoma I's reign. Chapter XXX describes a three-year famine that devastated Tenochtitlan; Motecuhzoma, in order to save his starving subjects, decides to permit them to desert the city and pledge allegiance to foreign kings. In a painting that shows Motecuhzoma bidding farewell to his subjects, the king has emptied the royal storehouses in order to feed and clothe the famished Mexicas, giving them their final meal before they abandon Tenochtitlan (Fig. 4.17). In the painting, young children are pictured receiving the king's judicious mercy, nibbling on tamales pulled from baskets and tripod vessels at the foot of Motecuhzoma's throne. King Solomon appeared in a similar visual formula in illustrations based on the Old Testament book of Kings: A child is frequently shown at the foot of Solomon's throne as he adjudicates justice, a reminder of the scriptural passage in which he devises a test to determine which of two women is the true mother of a young boy (Fig. 4.18).²⁸ For Motecuhzoma, the text

²⁷ Couch, "Style and Ideology in the Durán Illustrations," 336-344; Pablo Escalante Gonzalbo, "Pintar la historia tras la crisis de la Conquista," 24-49, in *Pinceles de la Historia* (Mexico City: 1999), The Bible illustration noted by Couch was produced circa 1563. Because the reproduction was not of sufficient quality, I have not been able to independently confirm Couch's attribution of this painting as a source.

²⁸ The image used for comparison here is drawn from the Nuremburg Chronicle, a known source for multiple indigenous manuscript paintings in Early Colonial New Spain and found in library

tells us that the succor and freeing of the departing Mexicas was a question of ‘justice,’²⁹ it was, perhaps, this quality that prompted the painters to associate him with Solomon.

As the author of just laws, the medicine that could heal Aztec society, Motecuhzoma’s reputation was likely understood by the painters as fundamentally incongruous with his representation as a ritualist sacrificing to an idol.³⁰ In the *temalacatl* painting, the painters have thus seemingly chosen to avoid any sense of moral ambiguity: The identity of Motecuhzoma was removed from the painting, and Axayacatl was instead placed in the role of idolater, so that the rite was performed by a king without Motecuhzoma’s redeeming associations with the good law and governance that could lead to good faith. In changing out the kings, the painters show they were more comfortable with one kind of ambiguity – a chronological ambiguity, given that they destabilize the historical sequence of the paintings – than they were with an ambiguity about the character of an otherwise just king.

Taking Motecuhzoma’s place, Axayacatl’s sacrifice vividly cements his associations with the idol, visualizing the bond between an Aztec king and a monumental stone that act one upon the other. In the end, though, that vivid act of idol worship still had to be neutralized; this time, the Durán manuscript accomplishes its suppression in part with strategies in the text. There is a distinctive *mise-en-page* in this *temalacatl* painting: Occupying a wide berth in the middle of the

inventories in mendicant contexts. On the Nuremberg Chronicle as a pictorial source among indigenous artists, see Magaloni 2017; Mundy 1997.

²⁹ Codex Durán Folio 90 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, II: 242; Heyden, *History*, 239.

³⁰ At the same time, it is worth noting that depicting Motecuhzoma as the judicious king Solomon would not necessarily preclude his representation as an idolater. In fact, a broadly attested visual tradition takes up Solomon’s idolatry as a central iconographic theme. I thank Aden Kumler for conversations surrounding Solomon’s visual representation as idolater, and for a related conversation about typological history.

page, the painting is immediately followed by a vivid description of the sacrificial rite, a passage that, like the scene above it, spares no gory detail (Fig. 4.19).

But upon turning the page, looking to the verso side where the sacrifice painting can no longer be seen, the mode of description changes. In these lines, the sun stone has now become an aesthetic object, a masterwork of technical intervention upon a beautiful raw material:

[...] buscaron una piedra gruesa y hermosa y en ella esculpieron la semejanca del sol pintaron en ella las guerras que habían vencido [...] muy curiosamente labrado y para no tener mazos de hierro como los canteros de nuestra nacion ussa sino con otras piedras sacar las figuras pequeñas tan al natural hera cossa de amiracion y aun de poner en ystoria la curiosidad de los canteros antiguos y particular virtud que con otras piedrecuelas labrasen las piedras grandes y hiciesen figuras chicas y grandes tan al natural como un pintor con un delicado pincel o como un curioso platero podría con un cincel sacar una figura al natural [...]³¹

[...] they sought a large and beautiful Stone, and on it they sculpted the semblance of the sun, painting on it the wars that they had won [...] it was very curiously worked, for not having tools of iron like the sculptors of our nation use, but rather only other stones with which to sculpt figures so naturalistic. It was something to admire, and to put in history, the curious way of the ancient sculptures and the particular virtue with which with other little stones they worked the larger stones and made figures large and small, so naturalistic (*al natural*) like a painter with a delicate pencil or like a curious silverworker could, with a tool, render a figure *al natural* [...]

Marveling at native materials and technique, this passage initially seems odd, given that it follows a serious condemnation of the uses of this stone. Like the other idol representations in the manuscript, though, I believe this is ultimately a case of description in the service of neutralization. As Camille noted, following Clifford Geertz, the aesthetic appreciation of idols allows commentators to consider them in a mode that divorces them from context, as if holding the object

³¹ Codex Durán Folio 70 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, II: 191; Heyden, *History*, 188.

up and away from the imagined viewer, insulating the viewer from the object's religious connotations.³²

In making the *temalacatl* a beautiful thing, in other words, the Durán text partially prevents it from being a diabolical thing. Accordingly, in this early of image of Aztec religion, it is not only the king Motecuhzoma I that is kept at a distance from the idol; it is also the reader who is kept from getting overly involved with the stone. Later paintings would continue to track the fate of the relationship between idols and kings. In the section that follows, we will see that Tizoc represents a marked pivot in the paintings' history of religion, a moment in which distance between rulers and idolatrous images would no longer be possible.

Causing Idolatry: Tizoc

If Mexica idolatry began during the reign of Motecuhzoma I, then it is under Tizoc, the seventh *tlatoani*, in which its iconography fundamentally changed. Among Aztec specialists, Tizoc's reign is sometimes considered an anomaly: Relatively short in duration, and without much in the way of military distinction, the historiography tends to treat Tizoc's time upon the throne as something of a 'blip' in an otherwise glorious succession of rulers. In the Durán paintings, though, Tizoc's reign takes on a rather different meaning: It is the pivot point at which new visual elements were introduced into scenes of royal presentation, initiating patterns that would be sustained

³² Camille writes, "the aesthetic anesthetizes. It annihilates function, taking the object of interest out of the realm of necessity into the disinterested contemplation of the subjective viewer's consciousness [...] As opposed to religious modes of apprehension that attempt to penetrate 'reality' in ritual action and symbolic codification, the aesthetic framework takes things out of their context, stabilizes them on the surface. What better way might the power of ancient pagan deities be neutralized than by viewing them through the ideology of the aesthetic, as 'art.'" Camille, *The Gothic Idol*, 79. Later, he reiterates, "The aesthetic appropriation of the classical image, as with the classical text, was really a phenomenon of distancing, a taking out of context" (81).

through the rest of Aztec history. Some of this new visual iconography, I contend, was directly related to Tizoc's status as an idolater; moreover, it not only associated Tizoc with idolatry, but in fact suggested that Tizoc and the Aztec kings were the *cause* of idol worship.

The painting on folio 111r represents two state rites that are occurring simultaneously (Fig. 4.20). At center, we find Tizoc seated upon a massive, strapwork throne, a seat framed by two columns similar to those found on the frontispieces of printed books and in the mural paintings of *conventos*. Like his predecessors, Tizoc wears the turquoise diadem and blue mantle; additionally, he is identified by his name glyph, a 'chalk leg' script drawn near his crown. One of the events described in the text's chapter is Tizoc's ascension; this, presumably, is the intended subject of this throne scene. Somewhat removed from the scene, at far left we find a mummy bundle separated from the other figures by a brick wall; another hieroglyph tells us that this is the bundle of Tizoc's deceased predecessor, Axayacatl. Assembled at right, delegations of foreign kings arrive for the deceased ruler's funeral, delivering bound, enslaved natives – the text describes them as a dwarf and a hunchback – to serve the dead king as tribute.

According to the Durán text, the mummy bundle is a polemical object, one in which the body of the defunct king is transformed into a divine image by virtue of sacred costume. Axayacatl was at the center of the bundle, but the costumes of four gods were layered upon him, their masks stacked one upon the other and finally wrapped in a white mantle. Though not visible under the outermost cloth wrapping, the contents of the bundle enact a buildup upon the body of the king, accreting upon Axayacatl's image the image of the gods. In fact, the mummy bundle's logic of transforming the kingly body into a deity image motivated its inclusion in coronation scenes: As Guilhem Olivier has argued, sacred bundles featured prominently in kingly ascensions at

Tenochtitlan, where Nahuatl texts suggest that living kings were symbolically transformed into divine images like the sacred bundles that surrounded them.³³

The painters, however, represent a bundle that is rather different than those found elsewhere in the Mesoamerican manuscript corpus, as the *Historia* example visually emphasized the idolatry of a king dressed as a god. Most bundles in painted manuscripts are highly abstracted, visually similar to hieroglyphic writing; we find such examples in manuscripts like the Codex Tudela and Codex Magliabechiano, both of which were known sources for the Durán painters (Fig. 4.21). By contrast, the style of the Durán bundle veers toward a much more modeled version of the bundle, with shading that draws our attention to the buildup of body and costume beneath the mantle covering. Most shockingly, we even see the face of the defunct king – or perhaps one of the many deity costumes that covered him – draped by the mantle, inviting viewers to think carefully about the buildup of the bundle, with the king’s image inside covered with its polytheistic paraphernalia. Uniquely draping the cloth around the bundle’s contents, the painting calls our attention to what is inside the bundle: a native king attired as if he were a god.³⁴

³³ Guilhem Olivier, “The Sacred Bundles and the Coronation of the Aztec King in Mexico-Tenochtitlan,” 199-225, in *Sacred Bundles: Ritual Acts of Wrapping and Binding in Mesoamerica*, Julia Guernsey and F. Kent Reilly III, eds., Boundary End Archaeology Research Center (Barnardville, North Carolina: 2006). Olivier notes that various forms of identification linked the bundle with the ascendant Aztec king: Foremost among them, deity bundles and rulers featured a similar, distinctive cloth patterned with skull and bones iconography for ascension rituals.

³⁴ The facelessness of deity bundles is an issue addressed in Molly Bassett’s study of Aztec sacred images in both Nahuatl language and material culture. For Bassett, the addition of a face to raw material is crucial to the definition of *teixiptla*, a term for Aztec sacred images with etymological relationships to eyes and opticality. The facelessness of sacred bundles (*tlaquimilolli*) is important to Bassett in that it seemingly contradicts her narrative about presence in Aztec images; however, Bassett maintains that it is important not to elide differences between *teixiptla* (images generally) and *tlaquimilolli* (a separate class of divine material embodiment). Bassett, *The Fate of Earthly Things: Aztec Gods and God Bodies* (Austin: 2015), 190.

In fact, the notion of a king aspiring to be glorified as a god figures as a central theme in this painting, communicated in the very body of the king at the center of the frame. Upon his throne, Tizoc is seated unusually. Unlike every Aztec king pictured before him, Tizoc is the first of several kings to be shown seated with his legs crossed, his knee visibly popping beneath his mantle. At first, this pose may appear an innocuous detail, but in fact the artists show Tizoc with crossed legs in order to suggest a rather targeted message about him, a message related to the history of idolatry. As Meyer Schapiro argued, in medieval manuscripts, kings appear with crossed legs upon thrones in scenes where they are understood to be tyrants, a feature that might cause them to lead their people into idolatry by supplanting worship of god with worship of themselves.³⁵ Michael Camille demonstrated that idols themselves were sometimes even represented in medieval manuscripts with crossed legs, as in a painting of Caligula, where the leg suggests the vanity of the idol in competition with god for devotion (Fig. 4.22).³⁶ Crossed-leg iconography circulated within Hispanic visual culture;³⁷ for the Durán painters, it seemingly offered an efficient means to explain the cause of idolatry using the very body of Tizoc, at once criticizing him as vain and suggesting that his vanity caused him to lead native religion astray.

Curiously, there is an archaeological parallel that at least partially substantiates Codex Durán's characterization of Tizoc as obsessed with self-glorification. In Aztec monuments, Tizoc was the first king whose name glyph appears on any extant work of sculpture. On the Tizoc Stone,

³⁵ Meyer Schapiro, "An Illuminated English Psalter of the Early Thirteenth Century," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* (1960): 182.

³⁶ Camille, *The Gothic Idol*, 54-57.

³⁷ The crossed-leg iconography was widespread in Late Medieval Spanish painting, and could be seen, too, in portable objects, suggesting its potential circulation within New Spain. I have identified the tyrannical associations of the crossed leg, for instance, in Old Testament scenes in Late Medieval churches in Salamanca, Toledo, and Segovia; additionally, it appears, for instance, in ivory objects collected within the Felipe II cabinet at El Escorial.

dated to the mid-fifteenth century, Tizoc is named with the ‘chalk leg’ glyph in a scene where, dressed in the guises of the gods Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipoca, he takes a foreign captive (Fig. 4.23). As Andy Barnes has argued, the carvers working under Tizoc pushed toward artistic innovation with the use of hieroglyphic writing in order to personally glorify Tizoc and his military prowess.³⁸ Curiously, then, even as the Durán painters used European ideas about idolatry to characterize Tizoc as excessively prideful, and even though the visual language for that characterization came out of the medieval European world, the overall critique squares with one possible interpretation of the archaeological record.³⁹

With a European visual language, the painters attributed idolatry to kingly pride, a problem that they observed at the heart of Aztec kingship from Tizoc’s reign onward. Tizoc’s reign pivots Aztec history into the full decadence of idolatry, so that all kings after Tizoc are shown with the condemning crossed leg that implicitly critiques their excessive vanity. We find this medieval crossed-leg iconography, for instance, in a chapter on Motecuhzoma II’s paranoid murder of his entire cabinet of advisors (Fig. 4.24); it appears as well in a chapter about Ahuitzotl’s enslavement of foreign victims for later sacrifice (Fig. 4.25). Tizoc was the first, emblematic example of a wider problem that the Durán paintings observe at the heart of late Aztec kingship. The paintings thus tell a history of idolatry that blames errors of faith on the tyranny of the Aztec kings.

While the new, crossed-leg iconography represents one important addition to the representation of the Aztec kings in the era of Tizoc, there was yet another, concurrent change in

³⁸ William Barnes, “Icons of empire: The art and history of Aztec royal presentation,” Ph.D. diss., Tulane University, 2009, 131-258.

³⁹ One possible interpretation of this coincidence would hold that antiquarian culture prepared some sixteenth-century viewers to ‘accurately’ perceive elements of indigenous culture that might otherwise go unremarked. On this subject, see Christopher Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction: Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: 2008).

the signifiers of royal power. When Tizoc takes the throne, he uses an altogether different seat than the throne used by the previous Aztec kings. Based on a European strapwork motif, the new throne is an abrupt change from the seat that came before it. This change is particularly significant given that the old throne may have been designed specifically to connote the ancient sources of Aztec kingly authority.

In the *Historia*, the thrones of the kings are not only part of an iconography of kingship, rather, they also convey messages about the ethnic identity of the ruling line. Before Tizoc's reign, every Aztec king was shown with only with one kind of throne, a high-backed woven reed seat resembling the Aztec lordly chair known as an *icpalli*, a seat that indigenous discourse referred to as the "home of the gods."⁴⁰ The Durán painters may or may not have understood the divine associations of the seat, but they do seem have considered the decoration of this chair as carrying an ethnically specific marker. On nearly all of the *icpalli* shown before Tizoc's reign, the seats are decorated with step-fret motifs; these may first appear innocuous, but in fact they are specific, in that they represent the place glyph for Culhuacan, a town whose name means 'curly hill' (Fig. 4.26). The first Aztec king was descended from Culhuacan's ruling line, and the town was associated with a noble, Toltec heritage that the Aztecs claimed as their own.⁴¹ By abstracting this ancestral town's glyph into a decorative motif, the thrones of the early kings connote an ethnic identity and cultural heritage from which the Aztecs drew their authority to rule in the Valley of Mexico. Interestingly, this was not the only instance in which the Culhuacan glyph was abstracted

⁴⁰ Barnes, "Secularizing for Survival," 325, in *Painted Books and Indigenous Knowledge in Mesoamerica: Manuscript Studies in Honor of Mary Elizabeth Smith* (New Orleans, 2005).

⁴¹ Rudolph Van Zantwijk, *The Aztec Arrangement: The Social History of Pre-Spanish Mexico* (Norman: 1985).

into a step-fret during the sixteenth century, for a similar motif appears on a door still *in situ* at the Augustinian *convento* at Culhuacan today (Fig. 4.27).

With the ascension of Tizoc, there is an abrupt change in throne iconography. Whereas all previous kings used a throne that emphasized the Toltec heritage of the Aztecs, Tizoc is the first to use a strapwork seat that recurs in paintings of later indigenous rulers. The strapwork upon which Tizoc sits has both a chronological and contextual specificity: Strapwork emerges in the second half of the sixteenth century in European (and especially French) decoration, and is particularly associated with courtly contexts.⁴² Underscoring that Tizoc himself is the pivot point for this new throne, the ascension painting dramatizes the shift between thrones: At the left, we see the previous king's mummy bundle upon an *icpalli* seat more like those of the previous kings, while Tizoc's throne blooms as bombastic ornament, a trend followed, too, in the paintings of the later kings.

Curiously, then, the paintings began to use two European iconographies – the medieval crossed-leg motif and the sixteenth-century strapwork throne – at precisely the moment in which Aztec kingship becomes most tyrannical, with kings aspiring to be glorified as gods. It is difficult to know precisely what might have motivated this change, but given the European character of the new iconography, it is worth noting that the *Historia* paintings were created in the context of particularly high tensions between mendicants and the Spanish crown, a political situation perhaps reflected in the iconographic shift.

In 1574 – just a few years before Codex Durán was painted – Philip II had issued a new order that severely limited the privileges of the mendicant orders. At the time of the *ordenanza del*

⁴² On the courtly contexts of strapwork, see Rebecca Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold: Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance* (Chicago: 2005). I thank Larry Silver for comments related to Tizoc's strapwork seat.

patronazgo, a long-simmering rivalry had developed between the mendicants and the secular clergy; in earlier periods, mendicants had enjoyed a high degree of independence from royal oversight, and were permitted nearly the same rights as a bishop when missionizing among natives in remote territory. But as Padden as shown, in the early 1570s, Philip was becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the mendicants' independence, and accordingly sought legal recourse to bring the orders under his control and oversight. The *ordenanza* accomplished these aims, dramatically reducing mendicant jurisdiction, privileging secular priests, and installing viceregal and gubernatorial oversight on the orders, all of which brought an end to the mendicants' golden age of evangelization in New Spain. For the friars, these changes were understood as direct affronts to their ability to convert natives, so that royal power kept them from saving souls.⁴³

Painted in the immediate aftermath of this devastating royal order, the *Historia* paintings turn to a courtly European visual language to express the idolatry of kings. Tizoc and the Aztec rulers, of course, were the paintings' primary targets; in telling the story of Aztec religion's past, they remain most responsible for native cult's errors of faith. But there is the possibility, too, that an implicit critique of the Spanish crown trafficked alongside. The iconography chosen for this painting may well have been attractive precisely because it could accommodate this range of readings, making visible – but not quite explicit – a critique of European kings in the paintings' much clearer condemnation of Tizoc.⁴⁴

⁴³ Classic studies of the Ordenanza de Patronazgo and its reception among mendicants include: Robert Padden, "The Ordenanza del Patronazgo, 1574: An Interpretive Essay," *The Americas* 12 (1956): 333-354. John Schwaller, "The Ordenanza del Patronazgo in New Spain, 1574-1600." *The Americas* 42 (1986): 253-274. Stafford Poole, *Pedro Moya de Contreras: Catholic Reform and Royal Power in New Spain, 1571-1591* (Norman, OK: 1987).

⁴⁴ This reading differs from a proposal by Serge Gruzinski, who suggested that the effect of the ornament was to make the Aztec palaces appear lavish to European eyes, with European ornament acting as a "go-between" interceding between European and indigenous traditions. Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization*, 136.

The paintings attest that after Tizoc, Aztec religion remained in a decadent phase through the remainder of pre-Conquest history. But with the ascension of Motecuhzoma II, the paintings adopt a new interest in predicting Spanish iconoclasm. As Cortes' arrival nears, the images of the idols begin to show them leaning forward in time, with paintings newly explicit about the vulnerabilities of the idols as an indication of their future destruction. As we shall see, this era in the history of the Aztec idol, too, has an intrinsic relationship with native kingship. Working in concert, both paintings and text communicate the interrelated destiny of the kings and the images, showing their mutual future in a fall to come.

Idols as Omens of the Fall of Kings: Motecuhzoma II

Under the reign of Motecuhzoma II, the last of the Aztec kings before the Conquest, two final paintings of idols attest to the relationship between the kings and the gods. In both cases, the deity images are represented as part of the omens of Conquest, the series of signs that foretold the fall of Tenochtitlan, and that Motecuhzoma reportedly observed and interpreted with trepidation. In each of these paintings, Motecuhzoma's fate is intimately related with the fate of the idols, a message visually communicated in strikingly distinct forms in each case.

One of the most common tropes in the historiography of New Spain is the notion that indigenous people retroactively interpreted the Conquest as an event they had foreseen. In Codex Durán, the arrival of Cortés was treated as an event best understood in nothing less than Christomimetic terms: As Alessandra Russo first noted, the scene of Cortés docking off the shores of the Veracruz coast includes a native figure in the branches of a tree; he points to the Spaniard, an iconographic alignment with Zacchaeus who announces the entry of Christ in Jerusalem (Fig.

4.28).⁴⁵ In Colonial texts, a series of omens foretold the Spaniards' arrival. If the Colonial period represents the ascension of Christ – making Colonial history something like New Testament history – then events near the end of the pre-Columbian period were imagined to predict this new era, as if late pre-Columbian history had an analogical relationship with what came later. In the Durán paintings, part of this early set-up for a later fall includes describing idols that predict their own iconoclasm.

Surveying the sixteenth-century sources, the omens can be divided into two large groups: one group of omens appears in Sahagún, while the other group appears in Durán. There is some overlap between the groups, but one of the principal differences between them is that the Duránian group includes works of Aztec sculpture and deity images at the heart of several of its omens, whereas the Sahagún group consists primarily of various apparitions.⁴⁶ Magaloni points out that within the vast literature on the Conquest, omens only appear in sources known to have a basis in native documents; in sources that primarily give a Spanish view of events, the omens are absent.⁴⁷ Additionally, Magaloni argues that the omens painted in the Sahagúntine corpus are based largely on the Book of Revelation, suggesting that Nahua artists found in that book the material to convey

⁴⁵ Alessandra Russo, “Les formes de l’art indigène au Mexique sous la domination espagnole au XVI^e siècle.” Ph.D. thesis, EHESS, 1997, 75. Diana Magaloni, *Albores de la Conquista* (Mexico City: 2016), 96-98.

⁴⁶ The eight omens of Sahagún appear in Muñoz Camargo, Tovar, Acosta, and Torquemada. Durán’s omens appear in Tezozomoc, Torquemada, and Acosta (Torquemada includes both sets). Gillespie notes a qualitative difference between the omens, and notes, also, that unlike Sahagún, Durán does not treat the omens as one kind of thing; instead, they are interspersed among non-omen events as part of a longer sequence of historical narration. “Blaming Moteuczoma: Anthropomorphizing the Aztec Conquest,” 22-55, in Rebecca Parker Brienen and Margaret Jackson, eds, *Invasion and Transformation* (Niwtot: 2008).

⁴⁷ Magaloni, *Albores de la Conquista* (México: 2017), 111.

both their apocalyptic sense of the effects of Conquest and its effect of creating a new era in world history.⁴⁸

The Aztec king Motecuhzoma II was directly implicated by the omens. As Susan Gillespie has pointed out, chronicles tend to use the omens to ascribe culpability to Motecuhzoma II, casting him as cowardly in his reaction to them. Because they are presented to him personally, and because he shows such fear in the face of these omens, Gillespie suggests that the omens have the effect of rendering Motecuhzoma as ‘conquest anthropomorphized.’ This logic permeated through the literature of the period, but Gillespie notes, too, that twentieth century literature on the Conquest still bears the marks of influence of these chronicles’ biases.⁴⁹ In the *Historia* paintings, the two painted omens that involve idols make visual reference to Motecuhzoma II as they predict the empire’s fall.

In Chapter LXVI, Motecuhzoma II orders the creation of a new *temalacatl* monument, another round stone image of the sun to be carved from rock quarried southeast of Tenochtitlan, near Chalco. Crews of workmen are assembled from among Tenochtitlan’s subject cities, tasked with bringing the massive stone to the capital, but despite the many efforts of the enormous work team, none can force the quarried stone to yield. In the text on this omen, the rock is treated as an agent with its own desires: It concedes the workers permission to move it short distances, but when pushed further, it refuses to budge. As the story progresses, the anthropomorphism of the rock is

⁴⁸ This argument is further substantiated by the importance of the Book of Revelation to the millenarian thought of New Spain’s Franciscans (and shared by other mendicant orders). Classic studies on this topic include John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World* (Berkeley, 1970); Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An Essay on the Apostolate and the Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain, 1523-1572* (Berkeley, 1974); Jaime Lara, *City, Temple, Stage: Eschatological Architecture and Liturgical Theatrics in New Spain* (Notre Dame: 2005).

⁴⁹ Gillespie, “Conquest Anthropomorphized,” 22-55.

ramped up, and eventually it even speaks: It warns the workers that it will never arrive at Tenochtitlan, because it does not wish to go. Still, it yields for a time, permitting itself to be moved, accompanied by a group of dancing celebrants, until soon thereafter it becomes immovable again, refusing to budge.

More troubling still is the stone's second oration. Halting at Tlapitzahuayan, the stone tells the struggling work crew that it is pointless for them to go any further, because a dark event on the horizon – the Conquest to come – means that it will only be cast down anyway. It says,

Pobre desventurados, ¿para que trabajáis en vano? No os he dicho que no he de llegar a México? Andad, id a decidle a Motecuhzoma que ya no es tiempo [...] Que, para qué me lleva. Para que mañana esté caída y menospreciada por ahí? Y así dejadme, porque si paso adelante, será por vuestro mal.⁵⁰

Poor wretches, why do you labor in vain? Haven't I told you that I won't be arriving in Mexico? Go, and tell Motecuhzoma that it's no longer the moment [...] Why does he take me – so that tomorrow I will be fallen and scorned there? Just leave me, because if I go any further, it will be for your own ill.

The stone, in other words, speaks to foretell its own destruction, an idol predicting its iconoclasm. At Motecuhzoma's order, the team presses on, struggling to bring the stone back to the capital. Ultimately, they are thwarted: As they cross over a deep canal, the stone willfully destroys a bridge and tumbles downward; skilled divers seek it out but afterward cannot find it. To Motecuhzoma's horror, the stone is at last located – back at the quarry where it was first excavated in Chalco, where it was still bound in ropes.

In the painting that illustrates this chapter (Fig. 4.29), a crew of some forty workers dressed in plain mantles and loincloths pulls on ropes to heave an anachronistic cart (wheels for porting cargo were unknown in the pre-Columbian period). Though these figures are mostly identical, the composition in which they appear emphasizes their movement. Their bodies strain, legs twist, and

⁵⁰ Codex Durán Folio 190 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, 487-488; Heyden, *History*, 479.

torsos push outward. Behind the frontmost group, the crowns of workers' heads, colored with black wash, suggest a mass of bodies pushing backward in space.

Contrasting with the work crew's contortions, another figure appears in the composition at left, where the stone is set rigidly upon its cart. Faithful to the text, the would-be *temalacatl* sun stone is here shown uncarved, still a prismatic cube washed in grey. But upon the stone stands a man wearing another plain white mantle tied at the shoulder. Carrying flowers and a feathered staff, this figure may represent a dancer, since figures carrying similar objects enlivened native markets with their dances in the *tianquiz* scene in the *Book of Gods and Rites* (Fig. 4.30).⁵¹ In part, the text confirms this identification, given that dancers were said to accompany the work crew in celebration as they brought the stone to Tenochtitlan.

Even so, the figure on top of the stone exceeds this reading based on the text. If this figure is a dancer, then he is an exceptionally rigid one. Unlike the contorted muscles of the work crew, this dancer appears frozen, his body locked in space. What's more, his pose is particularly Classical: He stands at *contrapposto*, and his mantle, draped under the arm and articulated with folds, evokes Classical drapery. His body, in effect, begins to look somewhat like ancient sculpture, so that the dancing figure becomes a statue carved in the round and situated upon an altar.

With the inclusion of this dancer, this painting appears to be playing with a widely attested European model, an iconographic formula in which the combination of a base with a sculpture in

⁵¹ Durán may have based his representation of the market on the *mitote* (dance) scene of Codex Tudela, which may be the earliest manuscript in the so-called Magliabechiano group (Batalla Rosado, Ph.D. thesis). Boone has argued that Durán almost certainly used the Codex Magliabechiano as a source (Boone 1983: 155-159); his use of the Tudela *mitote* as a source shows us that he may well have consulted other manuscripts in this group as well.

the round yielded an idol (Fig. 4.31).⁵² But this transformation of the *temalacatl* raises questions of motivation. What advantage did this visual formula offer to the painters? To my mind, the motivation for rendering the dancer as if he were sculpture, in part, can be ascribed to the figure's ability to communicate the agency of the stone, a crucial part of the narrative, in a way that the unworked raw material might not have. Adding a figure atop the stone, and turning the *temalacatl* into a combination of statue and base, gave a visual plausibility to the stone's declaration of its own destruction.

But more importantly still, the added pseudo-sculpture atop the unworked *temalacatl* better communicated the impending iconoclasm of the object than the stone alone might have done. There was already an iconography in place for iconoclasm with wide distribution and deep historical roots: In medieval art, for instance, we see iconoclasts batting down the idols, their destruction visualized as they fall from atop their bases. The sculptural dancer, in a sense, sets the stage for its future destruction, conveying the potential for the *temalacatl*'s iconoclasm where otherwise it could not have been seen so clearly.

Textually, the chapter makes clear the relationship between this scene and the identity of Motecuhzoma II, noting his fear in seeing the portent realized. But the particulars of the scenario suggest that the connections between Motecuhzoma and the idol run even deeper. A rich symmetry ties this chapter to the reign of Motecuhzoma's namesake. There is, first, the importance of the setting of Chalco as the tribute state for the quarried stone; this recalls the elder Motecuhzoma's victory over the Chalcas, and the scene of Ezhuahuacatl (a prisoner of Chalco) leaping to his death from the Xocotl pole. Then, there is the fact of commissioning a new *temalacatl* at all; in ordering

⁵² On sixteenth-century experiments with this visual formula, see Nagel, *The Controversy of the Renaissance*, Chapter 5.

the creation of this monument, Motecuhzoma repeats the actions of his grandfather, suggesting that the episode maps centrally onto his identity. That these paintings of the stones of the Motecuhzomas should mirror one another fits appropriately within the painters' conception of the Motecuhzomas in the *Historia*. As Hajovsky noted, the illustration of the coronation scene of the younger Motecuhzoma was figured as an approximate copy of the coronation scene of his namesake grandfather.⁵³ Accordingly, the scene of the younger Motecuhzoma's *temalacatl* was evidently designed to echo the reign of his predecessor as well.

Between the first *temalacatl* studied here and the second, we can track an evolution in the idea of the idol. In the first image, the artists showed a stone whose agency was entangled with that of the Aztec king – it compels him to act, drawing him closer, and then then the king acts on the stone to perform sacrifice. By the time that we arrive at the painting of the *temalacatl* of Motecuhzoma II, the stone acts wholly outside of the agency of the king, defying Motecuhzoma's order to have the work commissioned. In pictorial terms, the resistance of the rock is a more prominent feature of the text than it is in the illustration. But by adding a figure standing on top of the stone, the agency of the idol is made newly recognizable, even as the addition of this figure also asserts that the stone is vulnerable and breakable, with an agency beyond Motecuhzoma II's control.

And yet no idol is more vulnerable than the goddess of Toci upon her scaffold, the other idol-centric painting of the omen sequence (Fig. 4.10). In my discussion of this painting at the beginning of the chapter, I noted that Toci was the single case in which the *Historia* painters represented an Aztec deity anthropomorphically, arguing that her figuration was nevertheless limited by the fire beneath her that brought her to the brink of destruction. Like the speech and

⁵³ Hajovsky, *On the Lips of Others*, 7.

absconding of the unworked stone, the burning of Toci was taken by Motecuhzoma as a sign of the empire's impending collapse.

Toci, in this painting, appears according to codex conventions that may derive from the Magliabecchiano group, one of Durán's apparent sources. Before the *Historia* painting was made, the representation of Toci on a scaffold during Ochpaniztli had already been worked out in *The Ancient Calendar* (Fig. 2.31). The *Historia* painting may have relied upon the earlier images as a guide, but with the inclusion of flames, the painting shifts a ritual scene representing a recurring festival into a historical register. The text tells us that the Huexotzincas – Mexica enemies who would later conspire with the Spaniards to overthrow the empire – had been the ones to set the shrine aflame, so that the omen would quite literally anticipate the iconoclasm to come. As ever, the text reports that Motecuhzoma felt dread at the sight of the omen, emphasizing his cowardliness.

Motecuhzoma himself is not figured in this painting – after all, it depicts a scene that occurred outside of his view, and beyond his influence. But he and the Mexica kings are nevertheless visually implied in the picture. Looking at the frame, we observe a pinkish band decorated with white half-rings offset with black lines. This is not just pattern; it is the edge of the royal garment of Motecuhzoma II, worn both in his coronation scene and that of his grandfather. In fact, it is a garment worn by many of the Aztec rulers: The same mantle was worn in earlier paintings showing Acamapichtli, Chimalpopoca, Itzcoatl, Motecuhzoma I, Ahuitzotl, Tizoc, and Axayacatl, each of their garments edged with the same pattern. Aside from the *xiuhhuitzolli* diadem, no other costume element was so fully identified in the *Historia* with the institution of Aztec monarchy.

In the literature, Motecuhzoma II may be the personification of Conquest. This painting, however, tells a somewhat different story. As we look through the royal *tilma* frame onto the scene of Toci engulfed upon her pyre, no single individual is asked to account for the existence of the idol, nor for the oncoming fall of idolatry. Instead, the frame urges us to read the painting as the denunciation of both a religion and a political institution: With arresting pictorial flair, we are shown that the dark end of the history of the idol is intrinsically tied with the fate of Aztec kingship itself.

Conclusions

In the text of the later part of Durán's *Historia*, kings protagonize history, with the narration of the Aztec past largely organized by their reigns and told with an eye to their actions. Like Nahua historical annals, which largely arranged history according to the exploits of native rulers, Durán's narration of the native past privileges kings as agents of historical change.⁵⁴ It should perhaps come as no surprise, then, that kings are also attributed with determining the historical development of native idolatry, cast in the paintings as the figures most responsible for native cult's slide into idolatrous decadence. The history of native religion, in this view, seems much like all other aspects of the Aztec past: It gets its shape from rulers whose actions defined the Aztec past, privileged actors cast with the authorship of idolatrous cult.

Decrying Aztec kingship as the cause for the idols was, of course, a politically charged history, one that likely aimed to justify the defeat of the deposed Aztec kings. As we have seen, the Durán paintings largely stayed 'on message' with this critique: Over and again, the idols and

⁵⁴ Comparable historical annals organized by kingly reign include, for instance, the Codices Telleriano-Remensis, Ríos, Aubin, *Histoire Mexicain*, Mendoza, and Boturini, among others.

the kings who created them were implicitly critiqued by the forms chosen to represent them. On the one hand, the idols were critiqued as images lacking divinity, as mere imitators of godliness, or as mute, dumb things; on the other hand, the kings were critiqued as tyrants. The paintings that treated these subjects may be fairly described as dogmatic; there is little reason to suspect that there was ever any effort on the part of the painters to resist Codex Durán's overall program of defaming native images and kings.

And yet, as we have seen, Aztec kingship was not the only form of tyrannical power to come in for critique in the later part of the *Historia*. Tizoc's image shows us that European forms serve as the visual language that situates Aztec abuses in the period of idolatry's rise. Given that these paintings were created in the late 1570s and early 1580s, when tensions in New Spain escalated between the mendicant friars, the secular orders and the crown, the choice of a contemporary European language of excess for the Aztec idolater kings registers as a potentially meaningful association. For mendicants, the effects of royal privilege granted to the secular priests went to the heart of the missionary project; they affected how mendicants and indigenous peoples related, and furthermore potentially threatened the possibility that natives would be converted at all. In this light, it is understandable that the Durán painters subtly tied European styles to the accoutrements of Aztec idolaters. The Durán painters' capacious approach to style made these associations possible. We find again, then, that the history of idolatry was not a remote or esoteric issue; it was a form of discourse that could be productively activated to speak directly to the challenges that faced the Durán painters in their own ambit.

CONCLUSION

PICTURING THE HISTORY OF IDOLATRY: FOUR READINGS

Over the course of this dissertation, I have argued that the Durán painters found ways of visually placing Aztec images into historical time. In the Book of Gods and Rites, historical information provided in the treatise's text grounded Mesoamerican-style images in a diachronic flow; in the Calendar Treatise, the adoption of European style allowed painters to differentiate between religious practices that had originated in deep time and practices of more recent vintage; and in the *Historia*, the painters drew upon a wide-ranging iconography to narrativize changes to Aztec image cults in sequence. Close visual scrutiny of the Durán paintings has revealed the importance of the history of idolatry to the programs of Durán's Calendar and *Historia*, and comparison of texts and images in the Book of Gods and Rites makes clear that the preoccupation was integral to the program of the manuscript all along.

Having interpreted the Codex Durán paintings in extended analysis borne out by close looking, I now turn to offer a set of proposals synthesizing how the Durán painters' narration of the history of idolatry might have read in their moment. Departing from the visuality of the paintings, I argue that there are at least four possible avenues for reading the history of idolatry in the Durán paintings. In one reading, one might see these paintings as essentially assimilationist; in this view, the Durán painters tell the story of the history of idolatry in order to assimilate Aztec image cults to practices attested in Old World antiquity. In a second reading, one might treat the content of these paintings as a fervent argument on behalf of the humanity of indigenous peoples – a pictorial version of quintessentially Dominican concerns articulated throughout the sixteenth

century to advocate for both indigenous peoples and for the mendicants themselves who proselytized among them. A third reading holds that the history of idolatry in these paintings is shaped in political response to the 1574 *Ordenanza del Patroazgo*, a royal order that put mendicants in conflict with the crown over the jurisdiction to missionize among indigenous peoples. A fourth reading holds that these painted histories of the idol are one among many religious histories that were created after the Council of Trent in order to ascertain the deep roots of local religious practices. Though these four readings suggest rather different resonances for the Durán painters' history of idolatry, they are by no means mutually exclusive. In fact, I argue that all are likely in play, and that the relationship of the history of idolatry to this particular crossroads of politics, history and identity explains why it was such an important subject for the painters of this manuscript.

Each of the four readings that I propose lends insight into how the Durán paintings might have resonated within the particularity of the context of later sixteenth-century Mexico. And yet one might argue that the Codex Durán could have intervened in each of these ways just as effectively without being painted at all. After all, Codex Durán did not *have* to be illuminated; many historical manuscripts written by mendicants in the later sixteenth century did not have images. Accordingly, my final comments consider why painting might have been privileged as an effective vehicle for conveying arguments about the history of idolatry in the Durán manuscript, turning to internal evidence within the Durán text alongside a sixteenth-century history of the Conquest and the evidence offered by the Durán paintings themselves. From this perspective, I argue that we better understand both the reasons why the history of idolatry was an important discourse in which the Durán painters sought to intervene, as well as the motives that made painting an efficacious mode for their interventions.

Four Readings of Durán's History of Idolatry

1. The assimilationist reading

Confronted with copious information about the history of the Americas, mendicant historians often made sense of the past by fitting New World forms into Old World models.¹ In histories of the New World, this meant finding ways to reconcile what was known of antiquity before the European encounter with the Americas and what was subsequently learned.² Durán participates in a similar framing of Aztec history; often, the text turns to scriptural models to make sense of the Aztec past. The first chapter of the *Historia* opens with Durán's lengthy explication of his reasons for suspecting that the Aztecs were descended from one of the lost tribes of Israel, and comparisons between Jewish history and Aztec history and practices permeate the text (i.e., in discussions of Aztec migrations).³ Occasionally, Durán is ambiguous about whether the Old Testament comparison functions as a model for the manuscript's history or whether he always perceives the connection as one of direct historical influence; indeed, the logic of medieval

¹ An expansive literature underlies this claim. For a selection of secondary texts that address the assimilation of elements of indigenous history to Old World models, see John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World* (Berkeley: 1970), 93-110; David A. Lupton, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America* (Ann Arbor, 2003); John M.D. Pohl and Claire L. Lyons, *Altera Roma: Art and Empire from Mérida to Mexico* (Los Angeles, 2016); Sabine MacCormack, *On the Wings of Time: Rome, the Incas, Spain, and Peru* (Princeton, 2007); Louise Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahuatl-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson, 1989); Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico* (Albuquerque, 2001); Eleanor Wake, *Framing the Sacred: The Indian Churches of Early Colonial Mexico* (Norman, OK: 2010); Sergio Botta, "De la tierra al territorio: Límites interpretativos del naturismo y aspectos políticos del culto a Tláloc," *Estudios de cultura Náhuatl* 40 (2009): 175-199.

² In Pagden's formulation, "The discovery of America intersected with another powerful tradition in European thought. This was the dependence of all knowledge upon textual interpretation and exegesis. In this tradition all that could be known had to be made compatible with all that had once been said by a recognized canon of sacred and ancient authors." Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven: 1993), 12.

³ Codex Durán folio 2 recto; Garibay, *Historia*, II: 13-19; Heyden, *History of the Indies of New Spain*, 3-11.

typology may have invited this kind of ambiguity. For scholars working on the Codex Durán, the observation of Codex Durán's debt to Old Testament models has been central to its interpretation: Milne characterized the *Historia* as a retelling of the stories of Old Testament kings, and for Couch, the images in the *Historia* owed their appearance to the image programs in French Bibles.⁴

In many ways, the discussion presented in this dissertation bears out the notion that Codex Durán's history of idolatry effectuates the assimilation of Aztec image cults into Old World models. Chapter Four argued extensively that European models like the motif of the idol upon the column were central to the way that the Durán painters visualized the history of Aztec images; similarly, Chapter Two argued that European formats for visualizing time led to a complete reworking of the history of Aztec images to imply a relationship between the gods and the constellations. Assimilations like these distorted Aztec images; they make it difficult to glean reliable information about Aztec art from these paintings. But the assimilationist frame was itself a powerful means of narrativizing a history according to models that would have resonated in the context of a world of manuscript users who shared them as a point of reference.

One finding of this dissertation has been that while assimilation might seem on its surface to imply a dogmatic merging of models (i.e., indigenous to European), the Durán painters treated assimilation as an opportunity for pictorial innovation. In discussion of the painting of Ezhuahuacatl (Fig. 4.13), for example, I found that the meaning of the rites of the Xocotl Huetzi ritual were transformed during an ascendant king's performance of a coronation ritual, as an indigenous festival was reworked into European modes for depicting iconoclasm. In this case,

⁴ Milne emphasized that Durán drew from Old Testament models as a means of establishing authority in his history; Milne, "Diego Duran: Historia de las Indias de Nueva España," 83-94. For Couch, discussion of Old Testament models in the conception of the Durán centered upon comparison of the format for printed Bibles and the Durán; "Style and Ideology in the Durán Illustrations," 336-348.

assimilating an Aztec rite to a European iconography allowed the painting to make an argument that both supports and also exceeds the argument in the text: The pictorial assimilation affirmed the lord Ezhuahuacatl's goodness precisely because he refused to become an idol in the European mold. This meaning is not explicitly articulated in the text, but the attention of the artist in expressing this notion becomes clear when we look to broader trends in the program of this treatise and the manuscript at large.

Approaching the Durán paintings' history of idolatry through an assimilationist lens, we find that the Durán participates in a trend well-attested in other objects from sixteenth-century New Spain. To stay within the manuscript corpus, the Durán's assimilationist tendency appears related to the kind of rhetoric we find in the Florentine Codex's annotations of the images of Aztec deities at the opening of Book 1 (Fig. C.1) (where, for example, the Mexica patron god Huitzilopochtli is described as 'otro hercules'); it is similar, too, to Cortés' references to Aztec temples as 'mezquitas,' which produced the effect of contextualizing unfamiliar architectural spaces. In programmatic fashion, the Durán painters fit the history of Aztec religion within historical models imported from Europe and in so doing transformed it – even as many of these transformations allowed them to produce new meanings about Aztec images beyond those articulated in the manuscript's text.

2. The indigenist reading

The Durán paintings are unambiguous in their condemnation of Aztec idolatry. Thinking of their critiques, one can hardly forget the diminutive painting in which an Aztec king dances in a stream of blood poured from the top landing of a temple by a priestess, or the violence of heart sacrifice performed upon the *temalacatl* stone (Figs. 4.8; 4.14). But even accounting for these

kinds of representations, it is also possible to read passages of the Durán paintings regarding the history of idolatry as a powerful argument on behalf of the potential Christianization of natives. These kinds of arguments emerged in a world in which the humanity of indigenous peoples was in question, and in which Spaniards both inside and outside of the church spoke for and against the humanity of natives as a way to establish their dominion in diverse contexts.

Long before Durán penned his Codex, at least two generations of Dominicans in the Americas had already become outspoken proponents for the humanity of peoples of the Americas. Writing from Hispaniola at the early date of 1511, the Dominican friar Antonio de Montesinos condemned Spaniards for tyrannically overworking native peoples so that they were prevented from receiving Christian conversion. At mid-century, Las Casas would similarly condemn Spanish violence against natives as an affront to indigenous humanity, an account that circulated widely in the Atlantic world through the 1580s. As Patricia Seed has pointed out, in each of these cases, the humanity of indigenous peoples was defined as contingent upon their capacity for Christian conversion, an argument that was couched in the language of “rational souls” originated by yet another Dominican, Thomas Aquinas.⁵ Concerns about the humanity of natives were especially pronounced within the history of this order’s trajectory in the Americas, and the capacity for Christian conversion was considered definitional of that humanity.

Furthermore, within this Dominican context, the history of idolatry serves as a discourse that could be mobilized to produce arguments regarding that capacity for conversion. In the

⁵ Seed further argues that while these arguments by Dominicans have often been treated as if they were disinterested statements on behalf of native humanity, in fact they were driven by the Dominicans’ interest in increasing the population of indigenous peoples open to conversion – and in so doing, to establish a stronger foothold for their order in the Americas. Seed, “Are these not also men?,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 25 (1993): 642. See also Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, 30–32.

approach of Las Casas, a sophisticated historical model was developed to speak precisely to that history. Las Casas proposed a scenario in which indigenous religion began with the worship of nature in its earliest stages, an early error that already spoke well for the humanity of native peoples insofar as it suggested that the only mistake made by indigenous peoples was to confuse the Creation for the Creator. In the case of an elaborate state cult like that of the Aztecs, Las Casas treated the presence of a priestly class of specialists in religion as laudable for its sophistication and its solemnity. Sabine MacCormack notes that there is a teleological model at play in Las Casas' history of idolatry; Las Casas believed that true religion would be a natural outcome of the history of the idol, and that eventually indigenous political structures and religious life would develop hand-in-hand toward their greater mutual perfection.⁶ Elsewhere, MacCormack has noted that this narrative conveys a distinctly Dominican take on the evolution of religions, as it mingles Aristotelian convictions about the evolution of societies with Las Casas' vision of religion's own evolution.⁷

The close readings of the paintings of the Durán manuscript presented in this thesis substantiate the proposal that the painters adhered to Las Casas' narrative about the evolution of indigenous religion. Examination of the Calendar paintings shows that the Durán artists sympathized with the idea that primitive religions centered on the worship of the natural world, and that imperial religion developed rites carried out by priests and spectacular display; similarly, the development of indigenous religion in the *Historia* substantiates an overall correlation between social complexity and interaction with images. Given the centrality of arguments about the

⁶ MacCormack, "Gods, Demons, and Idols in the Andes," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67 (2006): 639.

⁷ MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* (Princeton: 1991), 206 – 237.

historical dimension of religion to Las Casas' argument on behalf of the capacity of indigenous peoples for Christianization, it is possible to read the Durán paintings in a similar light. Perhaps the implicit message of the paintings was that indigenous peoples indeed had a capacity to become Christians, given that historical narratives like those in Durán were used to make precisely that point in the arguments of a famous Dominican of the previous generation.⁸

As I argued in Chapter Three, which treated how the *Historia* paintings narrativized the capacity of Chichimecs for recognizing signs, the Codex Durán painters were intentional in developing a narrative that showed deep Aztec history as a movement toward the capacity for Christian conversion. Furthermore, I propose that the likelihood that the Durán paintings might have been painted by indigenous artists makes for a particularly interesting take on this problematic. As Seed noted, arguments about the humanity of indigenous peoples were most often articulated by interested Spaniards without the participation or input of indigenous peoples themselves.⁹ We cannot be certain that the Codex Durán paintings were made by indigenous artists – but if they were then it would suggest the possibility that indigenous *tlacuilos* found language and concepts in the Dominican discourse that could be used to argue fervently on behalf of their own humanity by claiming their capacity to become good Christians.

⁸ It is worth noting, however, that not all sixteenth-century writers on indigenous religion differentiated between religious forms on the basis of their historical origination. In the history written by the Jesuit José de Acosta, the author differentiates forms of idolatry into four different classes, but he does not claim that any of these originated before any other in time. MacCormack, “Gods, Demons, and idols in the Andes,” 640.

⁹ Seed, ““Are these not also men?": The Indians' Humanity and Capacity for Spanish Civilization,” 631.

3. The contemporary political reading

Montesinos' and Las Casas' arguments on behalf of the humanity of indigenous peoples were inherently political, insofar as they were strategically deployed in their respective moments to assure greater political power and influence for the Dominican order. Nevertheless, the political challenges that Dominicans faced in 1581 were not the same as those of 1511 or 1551. While earlier generations of Dominicans waged their battles against the exploitation of Indians for labor – which deprived mendicants of the opportunity to missionize (and thereby establish their dominion over other orders) – the common turf war of mendicants in 1581 was instead precipitated by the actions of the Spanish Crown. Close reading of the Durán paintings suggests the possibility that the history of idolatry may have been a way to addressing this key issue in the mendicant ambit.

In 1574, as the *Historia* was just being written, Philip II and his advisors conceived a royal decree known in the literature as the *Ordenanza del Patronazgo*. Prior to this decree, the mendicant orders had significant parochial responsibilities among indigenous communities; mendicant friars had been able to perform many of the essential rites for indigenous peoples in areas where secular priests and other clergy had limited influence. With the *Ordenanza*, the hierarchy among New Spain's religious was reconfigured so that the mendicants were subsumed beneath the power of the secular clergy – which was itself, not coincidentally, subordinate to Philip's authority. As a result of the Crown's favoring of the seculars, the mendicants' ability to missionize among indigenous communities was drastically reduced, with friars effectively ordered to confine their activities to the space of the monasteries.¹⁰

¹⁰ Robert Padden, "The Ordenanza del Patronazgo, 1574: An Interpretive Essay," *The Americas* 12 (1956): 333-354. John Schwaller, "The Ordenanza del Patronazgo in New Spain, 1574-1600,"

In the close readings of the Durán paintings undertaken in this dissertation, one of the findings that has emerged is that the Durán painters expressed significant concerns about the ways in which religion was corrupted under the influence of royal power. The discussion of the Calendar paintings undertaken here demonstrated the tendency of the Durán artists to blame elites for idolatrous practices: Only the wealthy practiced the most complex rites in the paintings of that treatise, and when they did so, they cast themselves as human stand-ins for the gods that were figured in the skies. Similarly, the later *Historia* paintings made the case that from the time of Tizoc onward, idols were created in New Spain precisely in order to glorify tyrannical kings. Taken altogether, these paintings seemingly work in tandem to convey the message that the abuses of a powerful sovereign and his courts were at the heart of idolatry. This message resonates with particular trenchancy in the context of mendicant New Spain after 1574.

It is possible, in fact, that the Durán paintings were even more direct in critiquing injustices committed on behalf of the Spanish crown than we now appreciate. The final painting of the *Historia* addresses a period late in the history of the Conquest, when Cortés led his armies southward to Las Hibueras, Honduras (Fig. C.2). Today, there is heavy overpainting along the ground line on this image obscuring the central figures; a figure on the ground is now completely missing, suggested only by the Spanish attacker who looms over him. The text of the chapter suggests that the painting may in fact represent the assassination of the *tlahtoani* Cuauhtemoc, a controversial event in the history of the Conquest insofar as multiple period sources argued that this assassination may have been carried out unjustly.¹¹ Given these circumstances, it is possible that the Durán paintings once acted as both direct and indirect critique of the Spanish empire in

The Americas 42 (1986): 253-274. Stafford Poole, *Pedro Moya de Contreras: Catholic Reform and Royal Power in New Spain, 1571–1591* (Norman, OK: 1987).

¹¹ Jorge Gurría Lacroix, *Historiografía sobre la muerte de Cuauhtemoc* (Mexico: 1976).

the Americas and that, in the case of this last painting, the critique was later covered up in order to blunt its force.¹²

Political speech criticizing the actions of the crown, then, was one of possible effects produced by the Codex Durán paintings. What the discussion of the previous three chapters has shown is that references to and retellings of the history of idolatry could serve as an argumentative tool in political speech. Reading the Durán paintings in this vein shows us that the painters used the history of idolatry as a way of addressing key issues in their moment by implicitly critiquing rulers who abused royal power – without, perhaps, voicing those critiques outright.

4. The Counter-Reformation history reading

The history of idolatry in the Durán paintings may be read as one among many histories of religion that were produced in the sixteenth century in order to explore the deep roots of later religious practices. In the Counter-Reformation world, writing the history of religion had a very specific connotation: It meant proving that Christian rites had their basis in antique models. For Catholic historians, one of the major anxieties produced by the Reformation was a fear that Catholic Christianity might have slipped from the perfect model of the Church as it existed at the moment when it was established by Christ and his apostles themselves. This anxiety over the perversion of Christian antiquity came as the Reformation claimed to restore Christianity to the ancient forms with which Catholicism had lost touch – a form of progress via perceived conservatism. Catholic historians sought to confront this claim by proving that in fact the Church's ancient precedents persisted into their own moment. Simon Ditchfield has argued that new

¹² N.C. Christopher Couch, "Another Garden of Eden: Natural Imagery in the Durán Illustrations," *Primer Coloquio de Documentos Pictográficos de Tradición Nahuatl*, ed. Carlos Martínez Marín (Mexico: 1989).

histories of religion (*historiae sacrae*) were written throughout the Catholic world that were created explicitly to prove that local Christian practices were equivalent to or continuous with the rites that were practiced in the past. Studying these histories, Ditchfield argues that continuity with ancient Christianity was the most important principle they conveyed, as they sought to characterize the Church as utterly universal.¹³

As I have argued over the course of this dissertation, the Codex Durán paintings tell a nearly inverse story about the history of Aztec religion from the ideal imagined for Catholic religious history. Rather than making the case for absolute continuity in the history of indigenous religion, the paintings forcefully posit that Aztec religion had experienced a profound sequence of changes in the period before the Conquest. In the *Historia*, for example, we saw that Chichimec peoples who had no religion later became accustomed over time to recognizing and reading signs, a move closer to true religion in that this kind of literacy was considered necessary for understanding principles like the transubstantiation. With the rise of the Aztec empire, however, religion was corrupted so that tyrannical rulers instituted idols whose worship would lead to the further glorification of kings. The *Historia* painters told the story of Aztec religion as a story of rupture. Indeed, only idolatry could *have* a history of this sort, for a history of good Christian religion could only tell a story of complete continuity between the Early Modern and the Late Antique. Giving Aztec religion a dynamic history was a form of condemning it, and perhaps a way of displacing a Reformation critique onto the ‘real’ idolatry of Aztec religion.¹⁴

¹³ Simon Ditchfield, *Liturgy, Sanctity and History in Tridentine Italy: Pietro Maria Campi and the Preservation of the Particular* (Cambridge, 1995), 35.

¹⁴ Carina Johnson, “Stone Gods and Counter-Reformation Knowledges,” in Pamela H. Smith and Benjamin Schmidt, eds., *Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe: Practices, Objects, and Texts, 1400- 1800* (Chicago, 2008).

Again, the Codex Durán paintings offer forceful evidence that the painters were thinking in precisely these terms, as the paintings depict Mexican Christianity in such a way that they posit its utter continuity with the models of the ancient church. In a painting from Durán's sequence on the Conquest, we find Cortés' ship arriving off the Veracruz coast, a scene that is visually analogized to Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. A single indigenous figure wearing a tilma appears in this painting: Situated atop a tree, he points to the Spaniards, heralding their arrival. Alessandra Russo has noted that the inclusion of this figure situates the scene within a Christological iconography; from his tree, this indigenous figure recalls the tax collector Zacchaeus, who climbs a sycamore to see Christ enter Jerusalem and later welcomes him into his home (Luke 19: 1–10).¹⁵ A similar image appears in the Florentine Codex, suggesting that the notion that the arrival of Spaniards to Mexico was utterly continuous with the establishment of the ancient Church was widespread.¹⁶ Indeed, images like these follow a broader pattern noted by Phelan in his writing on Mendieta: The founding of the Church in Mexico was often couched as a return to apostolic models for the Church.¹⁷

The Durán painters were thus interested in doing the same work as the writers of the religious histories of Counter-Reformation Italy: In both contexts, local Christianities were legitimized by reference to the founding of the Primitive Church, and the deep roots of traditions

¹⁵ Alessandra Russo, *El Realismo Circular: Tierras Espacios y paisajes de la cartografía indígena novohispana, siglos XVI y XVII* (Mexico: 2005), 29-34.

¹⁶ Diana Magaloni, *Albores de la Conquista* (Mexico: 2016), 96-98.

¹⁷ Reading the Franciscan Mendieta, Phelan notes that the arrival of twelve evangelizing Franciscans to Mexico in 1524, celebrated with gestures of deference by Cortés, typologically realized the arrival of Christ into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Analogizing the conversion of the Americas with the conversion of Rome assimilated the discovery of the New World into a universalizing framework and provided moral justification for the Conquest (even when legal precedents showed that specific military acts in the Conquest were themselves unjust). John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*, 47.

were investigated or otherwise posited in relationship to that ancient Christian past. Yet whereas the writers of an *historia sacra* in sixteenth-century Italy might turn to texts for philological evidence regarding Christianity's deep history, Durán constructed his history of Aztec religion's past in a world in which alphabetic writing was absent and images proliferated. It is little wonder, then, that Durán turns so often to indigenous pictorial manuscripts – the closest analogue to books in the Central Mexican context – for information about idolatry's history. In the text of the manuscript, asides frequently tell us that Durán has turned to a manuscript to better understand an aspect of native religion's ancient history. These occur, for example, in the narrative of Quetzalcoatl, where Durán seeks an image of the Toltec Quetzalcoatl, who he believed preached in pre-Aztec Mexico as an apostle (see Chapter Three of this dissertation).¹⁸

Painting, then, was Durán's preferred form of evidence for performing the philological proofs that were necessary for narrating the history of idolatry. In a culture in which images were considered a viable form of evidence, Durán investigates paintings as testimonies to the past that live into the present. Here we begin to see an answer as to why Codex Durán was illustrated: Within the logic of this manuscript, paintings are the kind of evidence that could be dispatched toward tracing how religion changed over time.

The problem, of course, is that the paintings in Codex Durán were almost certainly not the kind of paintings that Durán was investigating as he formulated his arguments about the deep history of Aztec religion. In stylistic terms, these paintings mark a clear difference from ancient models. Yet as we have seen, this is part of what makes them efficacious as arguments about the

¹⁸ Codex Durán folio 230 recto – 230 verso; Garibay, *Historia*, I: 12–14; Heyden and Horcasitas, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 62–64.

past. Perhaps internal evidence in the Durán manuscript affirms, too, that painting in styles that were markedly different from ancient styles could be a source of pictorial power.¹⁹

Why Painting?

Late in the *Historia*, Durán tells a story about the first painting made by an indigenous person after the arrival of Spaniards. The story of this first Colonial painting had been told before, enshrined in the history of the Conquest written by the Cortés sympathizer López de Gómara (a version that Durán was very likely to have known) and repeated in the manuscript of the conquistador Bernal Díaz del Castillo (of which Durán was likely unaware). In López de Gómara's version, an indigenous governor allied with Motecuhzoma II meets Cortés as he moves inland toward Tenochtitlan, and his men marvel at the dress, comportment, and arms of the Spaniards. He dispatches men to Mexico to relate everything that he has seen and heard, along with a painting that depicts the scene:

Y llevaron pintado la hechura de los caballos y del caballo y ombre encima, la manera de las armas, que, y quantos eran los tiros de fuego, y que numero avia de ombre baruudos. De los navíos ya aviso assi como los vio, diciendo, que tantos, y

¹⁹ Cummins raises the issue of the Durán paintings' distance from ancient models in a discussion surrounding the collage painting of Quetzalcoatl. For Cummins, the essential dynamic in play is one in which Durán "compresses [...] two acts of seeing": Durán has observed an ancient painting, and then presents a new painting in his manuscript for the reader to observe. The images are the "simulacra of a prior oral dialogue between Durán and the native informants, and they function now solely within a written dialogue between the writer and the reader." While this characterization might aptly describe how Durán understood the images, I have argued in this dissertation that the paintings themselves pursue discursive goals that are independent of those articulated by the text. Durán may well have intended the paintings as supports for the narrative in his text, but as I have argued in the previous chapters, in actual fact they often exceeded the content of the text. Cummins, "From Lies to Truth," 168.

que tan grandes eran. Todo esto hizo Teudilli pintar al natural en algodón texido para que Muteccuma lo viesse.²⁰

And they took with them the painting showing the shape of the horses and the horse with a man atop, the form of the weapons and the kind and quantity of guns, and the number of bearded men that were there; of the boats that they saw as they saw them, saying how many and how large they were. All of this Teudilli painted naturalistically (*al natural*) on woven cotton so that Muteccuma could see it.

Supplied with a painting that imitates life – an image *al natural* – Teudilli and his men use painting to communicate what they have directly observed in order to report it to a king far away. That this painting was made in a naturalistic style imitating life could be construed as a claim for the authenticity of the painters' vision.²¹

In the Durán account, this story looks markedly different; his version sets the act of painting in the Aztec palace. In Durán's version, the emissary Tlilancalqui brings Motecuhzoma news of the arrival of Spaniards, and the king becomes increasingly anxious as he learns about the sighting of the strangers. To better understand the Spaniards, Motecuhzoma orders that a great artist – the best in the land – be brought to his court to make a painting showing how they looked. Tlilancalqui describes the scene to the artist, who paints the Spaniards based on the spoken report, giving care to details like the ship, the faces of the Spaniards, their clothes and their weapons. In the end, the artist shows the painting to the emissary and he confirms that this painting was exactly like the scene as he saw it on the coast.

²⁰ Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia de las indias y conquista de Mexico* (Zaragoza: 1552), 16 verso.

²¹ Michael Schreffler uses this episode, along with Bernal Díaz del Castillo's account, as a fulcrum for examining how Spanish concepts of representation grappled with Aztec styles; "Their Cortés and Our Cortés: Spanish Colonialism and Aztec Representation," *Art Bulletin* XCI (2009): 407-425.

Already, Durán's story of the painting differs from López de Gómara's in significant ways. In Durán, the moment when the painting is created is displaced into the space of the court, so that the painting makes none of the eyewitness claims that are made in López' painting. In the same vein, this version of the narrative also introduces the possibility that the painted images could be erroneous: The image has to be checked by an authority who can verify that what it represents is true to the reality seen on the beach. But at the same time, what is most remarkable is that even though the painting is made at a distance from the actual event, it is nevertheless an apt representation, as Tlillancalqui reports that the painting is true to his experience of the appearance of Spaniards on the coast.

What happens next in the story complicates the picture further still. After seeing the painting made at his court, Motecuhzoma decides that he must know whether any other painting foretold the arrival of the Spaniards, and so he sends for all of the artists of the empire to bring their ancient paintings in and consult with him. One by one, painters are brought from remote regions to Tenochtitlan, but none has seen any painting predicting the arrival of Spaniards, until finally, an old artist from Xochimilco is brought to the palace. This elder shows Motecuhzoma paintings that depict the Spaniards on their ships, with their horses and their weapons. The Durán text is careful to note that things in this painting are represented in the same way – *a la manera* – as in the new painting made for Motecuhzoma. The paintings are not utterly identical – there are details in the old painting that do not appear in the new one, like men who ride on flying eagles – but the resemblance confirms for Motecuhzoma that what was shown in the new painting had indeed been foretold in an ancient work.

There are many ways to interpret the shifts that created Durán's version of this anecdote out of the raw material for the story that appeared in López de Gómara. Motecuhzoma's search for

an ancient codex to confirm his emissaries' vision, for example, reflects Durán's own fascination with paintings – especially old paintings – as sources of authority. One might also argue that the symmetry established between the ancient painting and the new one positions the temporality of the Conquest as an inevitability; the Durán narrative seemingly posits that the Conquest existed as a fact both before and after contact with the Spaniards.²² Both of these dynamics – ancient paintings as authorities and ancient paintings shifting the temporality of the Conquest – mark important shifts in the Duránian version of the narrative. Yet I would argue that there is more to take from this narrative still. While the discovery of the ancient painting acts as the narrative climax in the Durán version of this story, the narrative also functions as a wholehearted vindication of the new painting as well.

The new painting in Durán's story is its own kind of triumph. It is correct without being based on eyewitness accounts; it imparts fundamental truths that can be confirmed by research; it is accurate in its reportage even though it differs from ancient models. It is an emphatically secondary work, made after the event it depicts by an artist whose only information comes from the whispers of someone in the know. The very existence of this painting admits the possibility of its errancy. And yet the great payoff of the Durán story is that despite the painting's displacement from both firsthand observation and from ancient authority, the painting is nevertheless right.

²² The fact that Durán represented the Conquest as an inevitability, however, should not be construed as evidence that in fact it was. Todorov's book on the Conquest of the Americas posited that the Aztec reliance on omens and foretelling made the Aztecs inadequate in war with the Spaniards. Among other deficiencies in Todorov's argument, he relies upon a reading that takes Durán too much at his word on matters related to the history of the Conquest. Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (New York, 1982), 63-97; Lockhart, "Sightings," 229-248.

It is undoubtedly beyond the scope of this evidence to read the Durán paintings in light of this anecdote, and yet I cannot help but hear Durán's retelling of this pivotal story resonate within the manuscript's paintings themselves. Like the artist who created the narrative's archetypal Colonial painting, the Durán painters described the history of the Aztec world from an emphatically secondary position. They, too, created paintings that were both like and unlike ancient models. The remove of their work from the objects it described was obvious at the work's surface – bold adaptations make the Durán's images visibly distant from the events that they described.

That distance was key to the strength of the Durán paintings; it was from the perspective of such distance that the paintings attained their discursive power. Over the course of this dissertation, I have argued that the Durán painters adopted perspectives of remove as a rhetorical strategy. These are paintings that are evidently constructed; their creators sourced widely in their search for iconography and styles, finding forms that created the possibility for argumentation and polemic about religion in the Aztec past. Stylistic diversity made these paintings stronger; it made them clever, limber, and sometimes biting. The history of idolatry mattered deeply to these artists, as it provided a way of talking about the very nature and potentiality of indigenous subjects, as well as a way to speak politically in objection to a king. Only the adoption of a stylistically capacious approach could satisfy the particular needs of the Durán painters to use history to speak forcefully to these key issues at the heart of mendicant projects in the Americas.

If the eclecticism of the Durán paintings was the key to their force, then it also implied the risk that these paintings would alienate some viewers. One might fairly critique the Durán paintings by saying that their stylistic diversity makes their arguments difficult to follow; their

patterns of reference and evocation might mean that no viewer would be able to immediately understand them. What I have often found, though, is that Codex Durán rarely fails to supply its viewers with the terms that we need to understand the paintings. As I've demonstrated throughout this dissertation, I have tended to find that the visual puzzles in any one image are most often solved by looking at a painting in another chapter or in another treatise. Sometimes, this has meant studying the paintings in sequence; at other times, it has meant tracking how a single composition was reworked over time; at other moments still, it has meant seeking commonalities in the way a motif is deployed across the book. Part of the particular brilliance of this manuscript, then, is that its paintings seemingly make themselves available to the kind of iconographic reading that I've undertaken here. When the solution for one of the Durán's visual puzzles lies outside of the manuscript – necessitating a turn to late medieval painting, for instance – I have often found that while the iconographic reference that the painters deployed may be obscure to me, it was so widespread in the sixteenth century that it probably would have registered easily for an elite, contemporary viewer.

Like many histories of sixteenth-century art, this dissertation ends with the virtuosity of painters. Ambitiously, the Durán artists used the ample pictorial resources within their reach to tell a history of the idol that was deliberately crafted to argue for their place in their world. Where these artists innovated in rethinking traditional styles, they show that a history painted with the benefit of distance could be powerfully shaped to make history reverberate in the present. They made images that were conducive to close looking; careful observation rewards viewers with access to their vision of the past. The open visual language that these painters embraced makes these paintings endure as a testimony to the efficaciousness of history as form of engaging the idol in the Early Modern world.

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APPENDIX: FIGURES



Figure 1.1. Image of the goddess Chicomecoatl. Codex Durán folio 283 recto.



Figure 1.2. Priests. Codex Durán folio 273 recto.

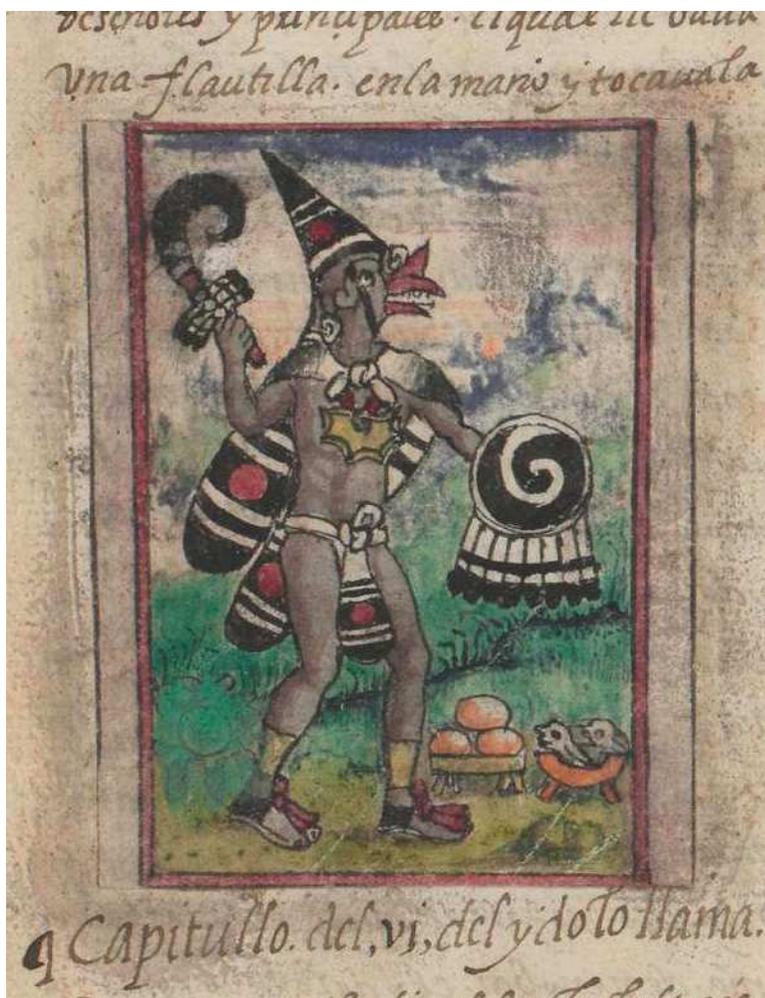


Figure 1.3. Quetzalcoatl with devotional offerings. Codex Durán folio 257 verso.

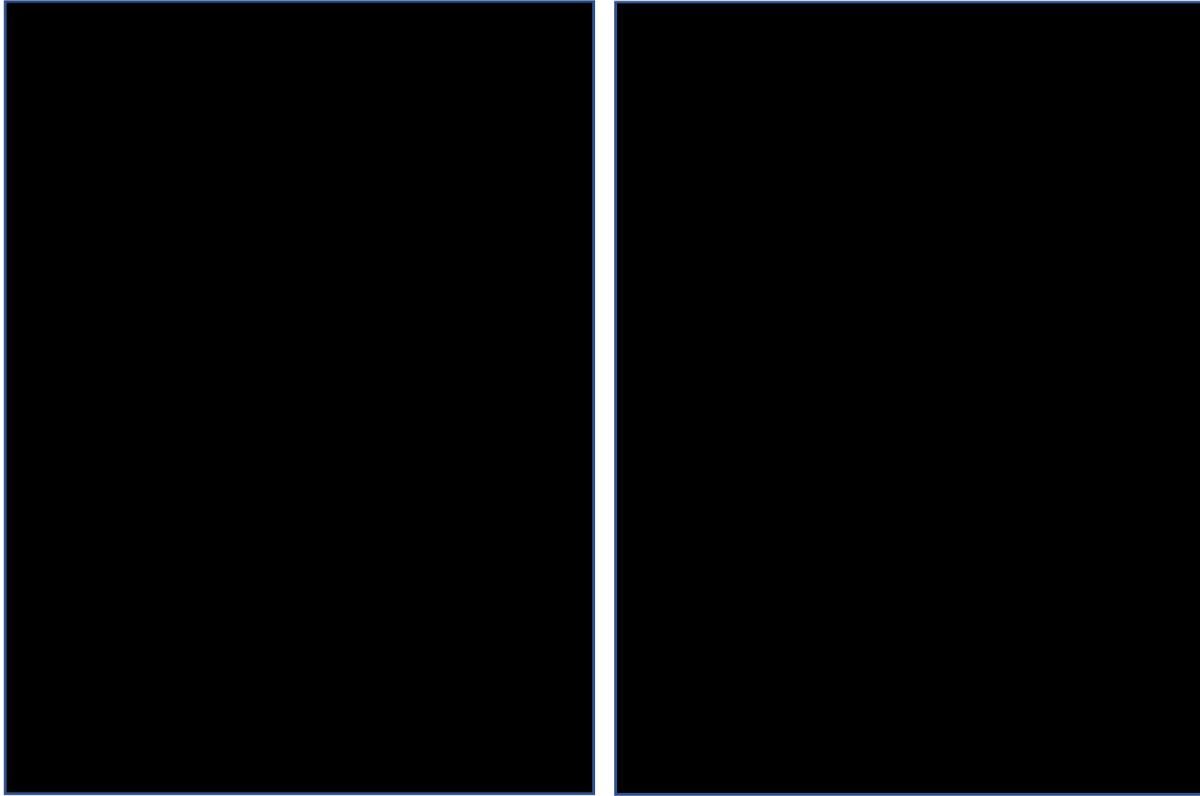


Figure 1.4. Comparison of Codex Durán image of Camaxtli with front of Motolinia manuscript.
(Image not included here)



Figure 1.5. Priests drawing blood with a *zacatlpayolli* in the corner. Codex Durán folio 248 verso.



Figure 1.6. Priests wearing garlands and expressively gesturing. Codex Durán folio 246 recto.

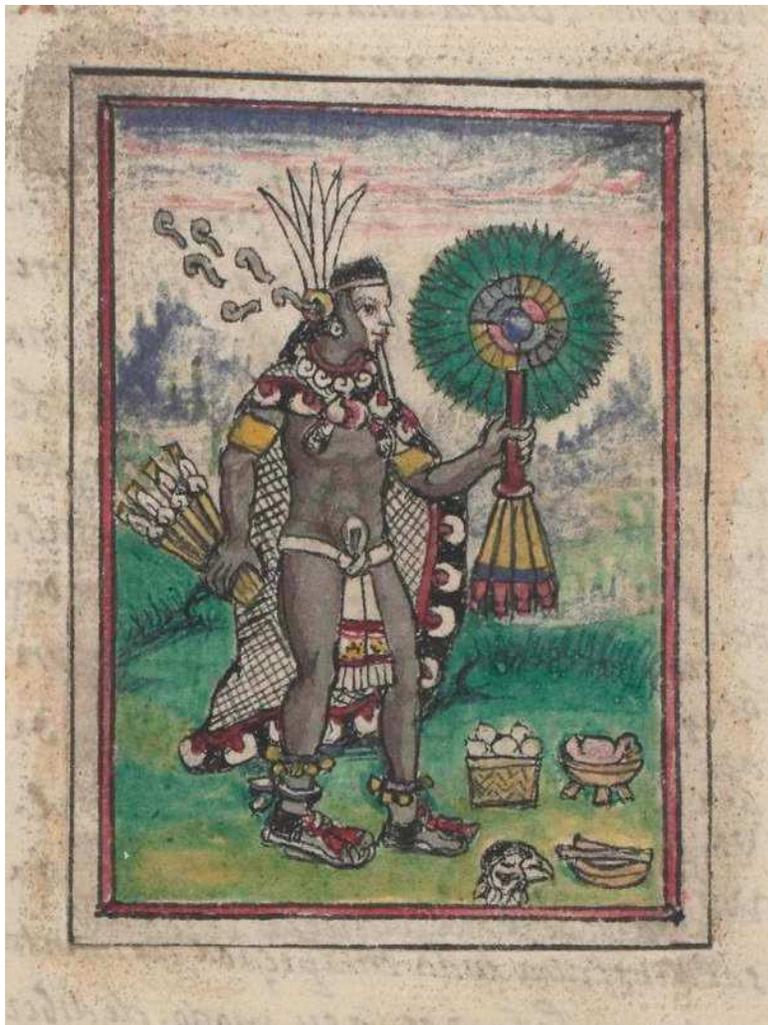


Figure 1.7. Tezcatlipoca. Codex Durán folio 241 recto

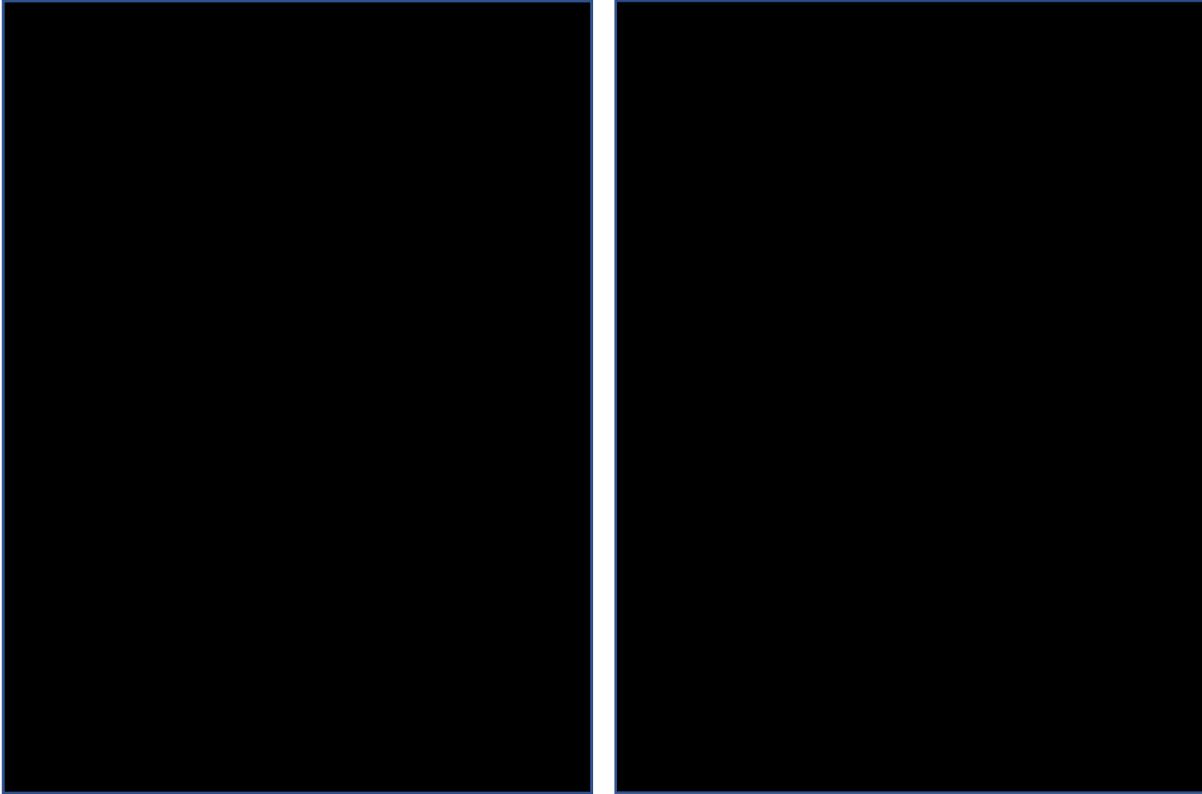


Figure 1.8. Image from Trachtenbuch, Christoph Weiditz, pp. 2-3. Germanische Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Hs. 22474.4. After Boone (2017) Fig. 5.
(Image not included here)

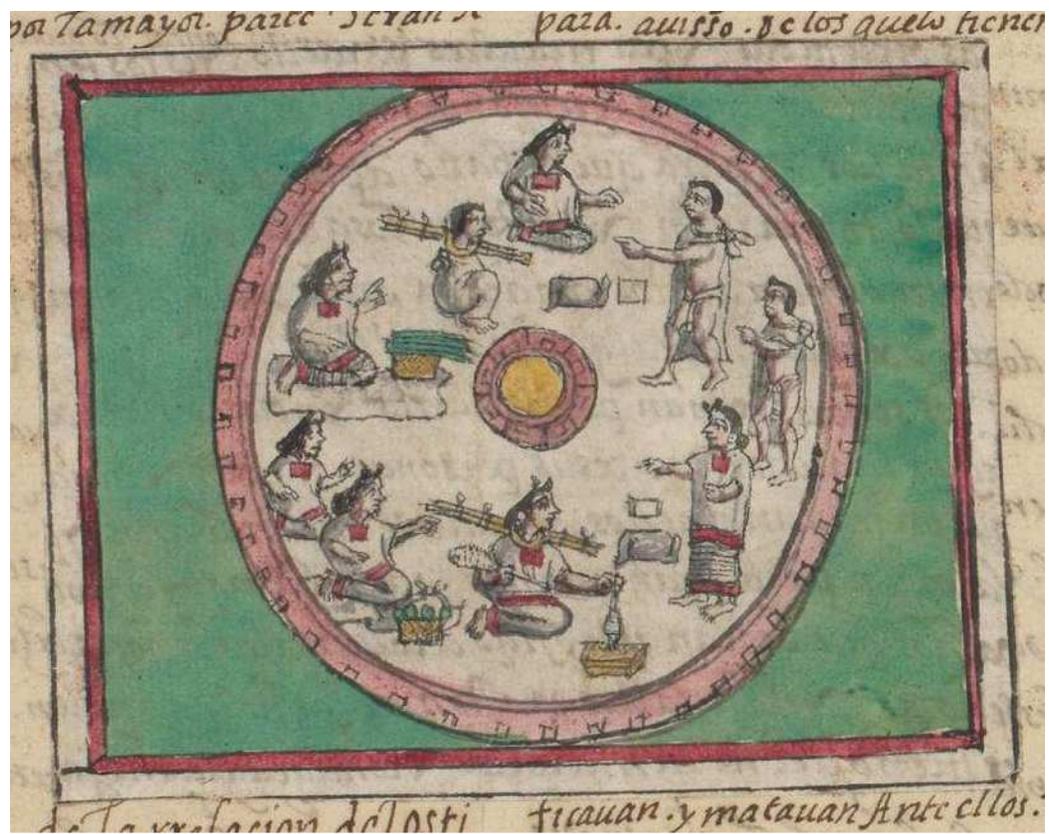


Figure 1.9. Market scene (*tianquiz*). Codex Durán folio 300 verso



Figure 1.10. Toci. Codex Durán folio 286 recto.



Figure 1.11. Goddesses with red frames. Codex Durán folio 292 verso.



Figure 1.12. Proscenium with Dominican fathers, late sixteenth century. Ex-Convento Tepoztlán, Morelos, Mexico. Photograph by the author. Scene with the Magi, late sixteenth century. Ex-Convento Culhuacan, Mexico City, Mexico. Photography by the author.
(Image not included here)

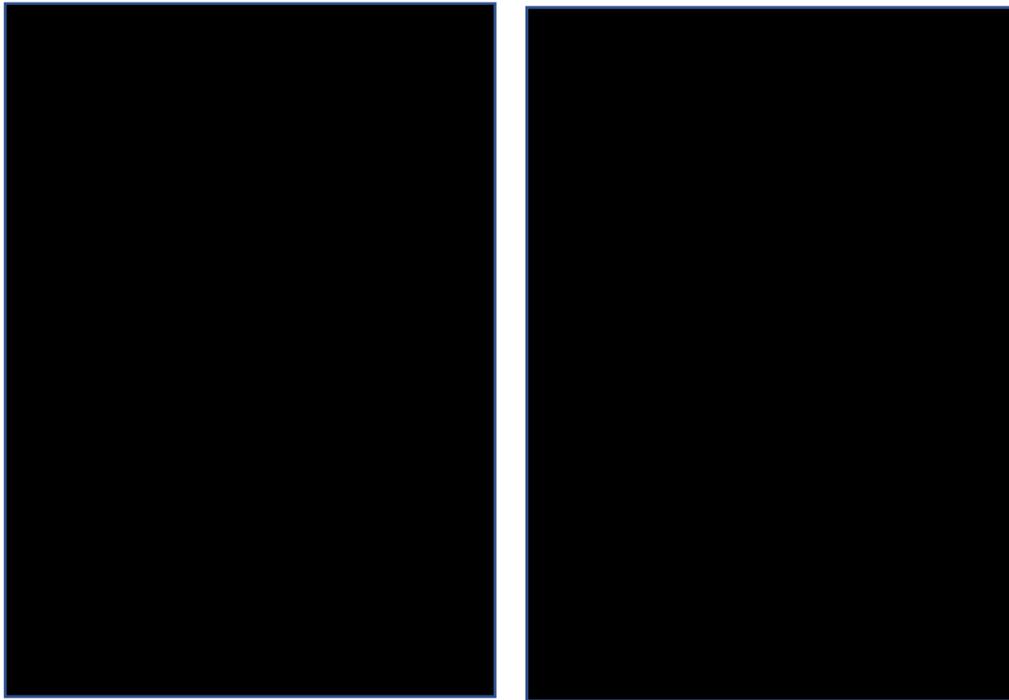


Figure 1.13. Mesoamerican images with annotations identifying the gods as Adam and Eve. Codex Telleriano-Remensis folios 10 verso and 11 recto.
(Image not included here)

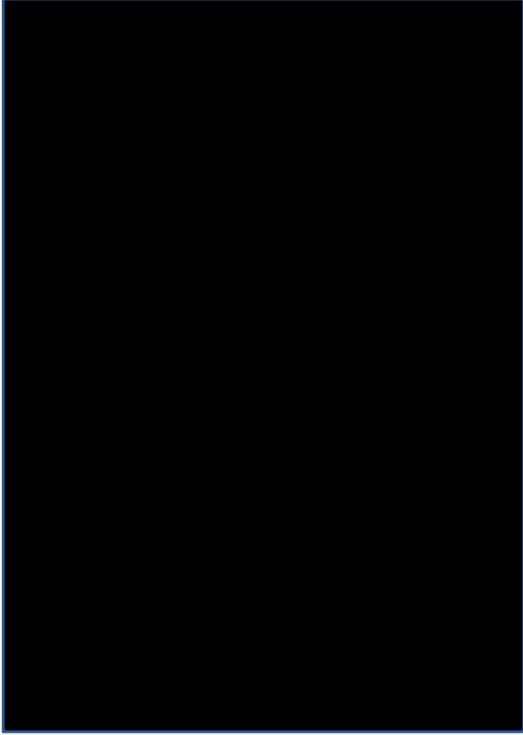


Figure 1.14. Bloodletting figure with annotation “After the Flood for a long time they sacrificed in this way and didn’t kill men.” Codex Telleriano-Remensis folio 9 recto.
(Image not included here)

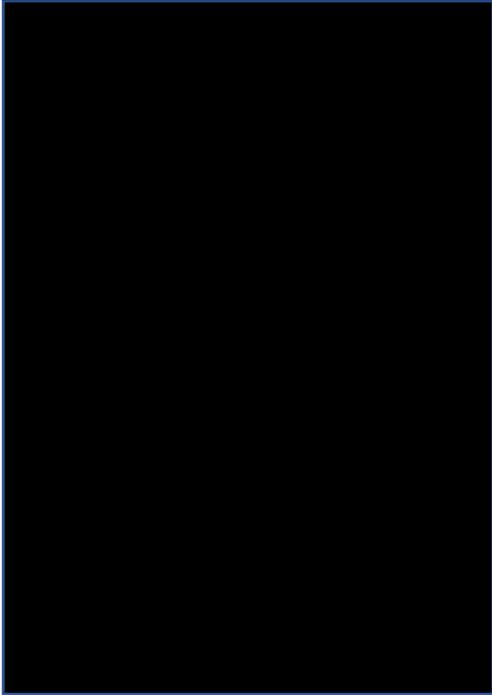


Figure 1.15. Sacrifice scene with the gloss “How they started to sacrifice after the Flood.” Codex Telleriano-Remensis folio 10 recto.
(Image not included here)



Figure 2.1. Panquetzaliztli, Codex Durán folio 340 verso.



Figure 2.2. Xocotl Huetzi. Codex Durán folio 336 recto.

El un decimo mes de
 Uano que estos nahuales cele
 bra uan fema uenite dias
 llama uase el prime,
 xodia' o'ohpaniz
 tli' que q
 ere xix dia de barrer, Inel qual,
 dia celebra uan la sole ne fiesta de
 to q' que era la madre de los,
 dioses y coraço de la tierra
 auia un sacrificio,
 es p' los dos,
 }

Figure 2.3. Ochpaniztli. Codex Durán folio 337 recto.



Figure 2.4. Opening from the calendar treatise showing quarto page pasted-in sideways. Codex Durán folios 335 verso and 335 recto.

Xiuhpohualli
Solar Calendar
365-day cycle

Description of
solar calendar
period

Tonalpohualli
Divinatory calendar
260-day cycle



Figure 2.5. Parts of a calendar painting, modeled with the Ochpaniztli painting. Codex Durán folio 337 recto.



Figure 2.6. Detail of Quecholli. Codex Durán folio 340 recto.



Figure 2.7. Detail of Huey Tozoztli. Codex Durán folio 329 recto.



Figure 2.8. Detail of Atemoztli. Codex Durán folio 342 recto.

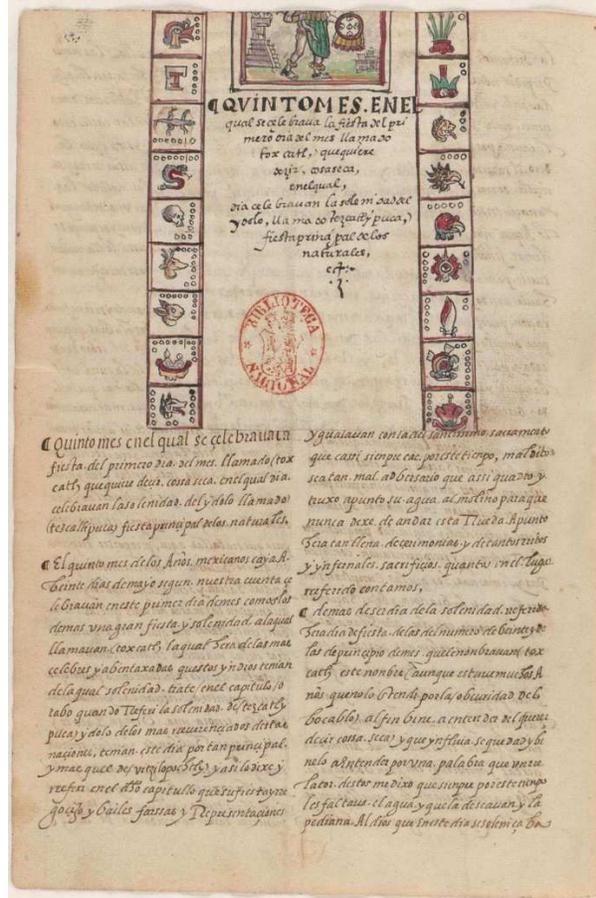


Figure 2.9. Damaged paintings depicting the months of Tlacaxipehualiztli and Toxcatl. Codex Durán folios 327 recto and 330 verso.

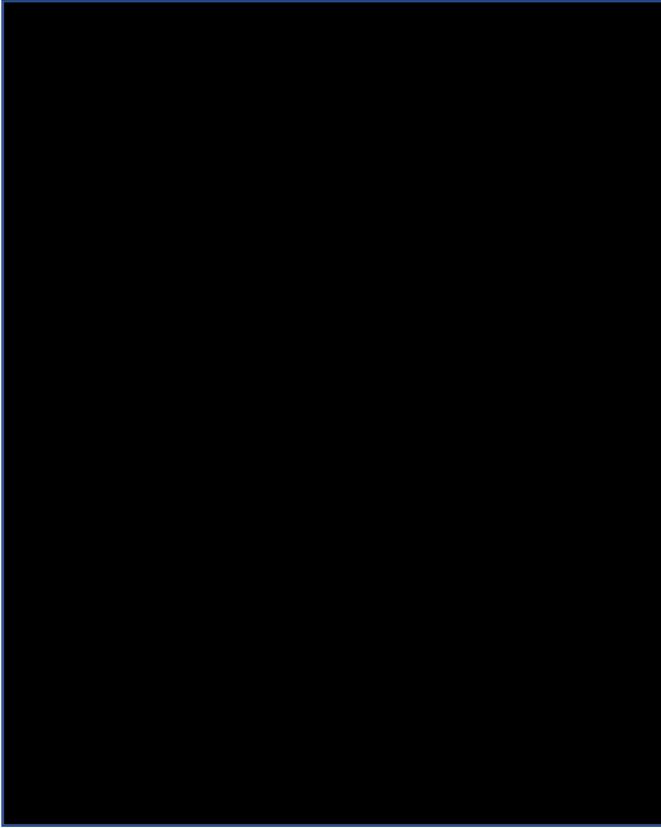


Figure 2.10. Calendar from a Book of Hours, 15th century, France. Libro d'Ore folio 9 recto. Royal Library of Turin.

https://www.wdl.org/en/item/19476/#additional_subjects=Books+of+hours

(Image not included here)



Figure 2.11. *Manuale Sacramentorum*, 1560, Mexico City. Detail of September, page 14.
http://primeroslibros.org/page_view.php?id=pl_bla_022&lang=en&page=1
(Image not included here)

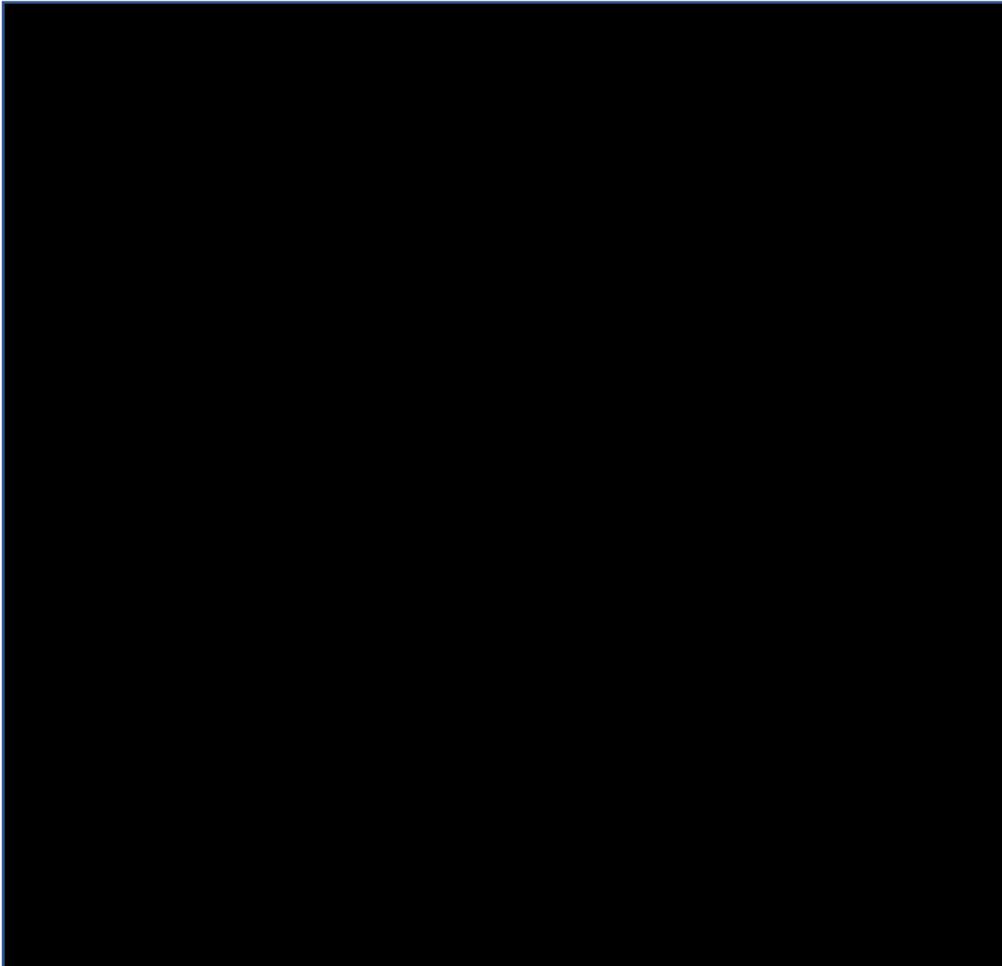


Figure 2.12. Image of the *cielos* based on the Chaves Reportorio. Chilam Balam of Ixil, folio 35 recto
(Image not included here)



Figure 2.13 Detail of the Fifth era, from tables showing the eras. Chaves Reportorio page 41, printed in Seville: Juan Gutierrez, 1561. Biblioteca Nacional de España.
(Image not included here)



Figure 2.14. Tozoztontli. Codex Durán folio 328 recto.



Figure 2.15. Huey Tecuilhuitl. Codex Durán folio 333 verso.



Figure 2.16. Miccaihuitontli. Codex Durán folio 335 recto.



Figure 2.17. Paxtontli. Codex Durán folio 338 recto.



Figure 2.18. Atemoztli. Codex Durán folio 342 recto

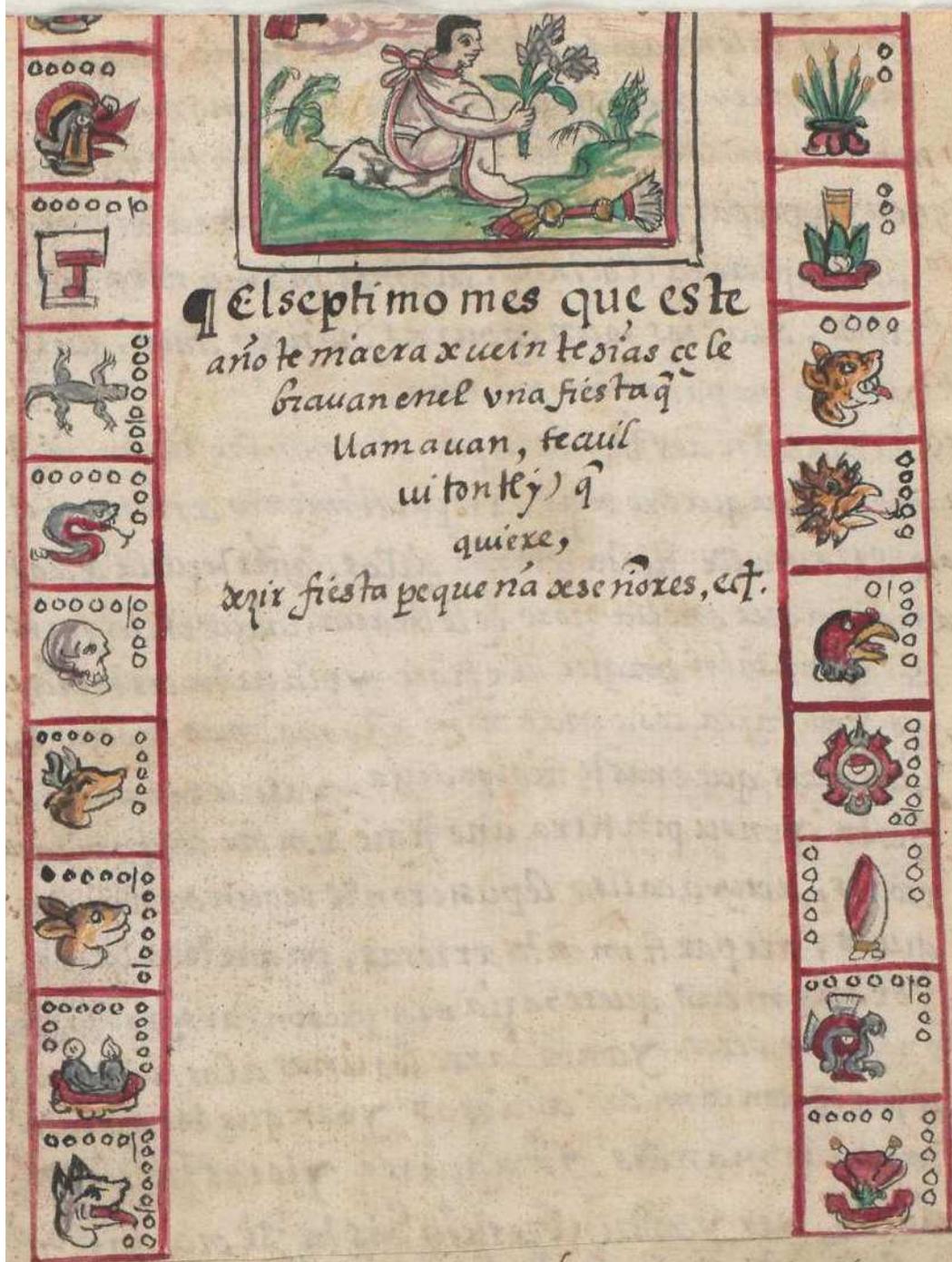


Figure 2.19. Tecuilhuitontli. Codex Durán folio 333 recto.

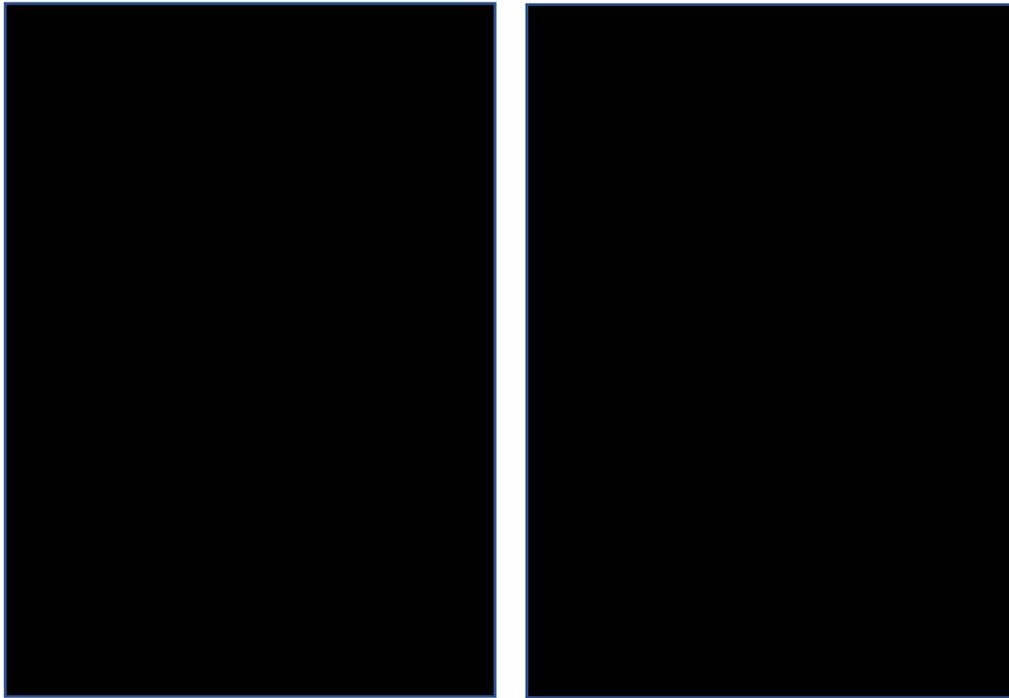


Figure 2.20. Images of the constellations. Bernardino de Sahagún, *Primeros Memoriales* folios 282 recto and 282 verso.
(Image not included here)



Figure 2.21. Month glyph below a scene of the Conquest. Codex Vaticanus A, folio 78 recto.
(Image not included here)



Figure 2.22. Conquest painting with calendar glyphs on the reverse. Codex Aubin folios 42 recto and 42 verso.
(Image not included here)

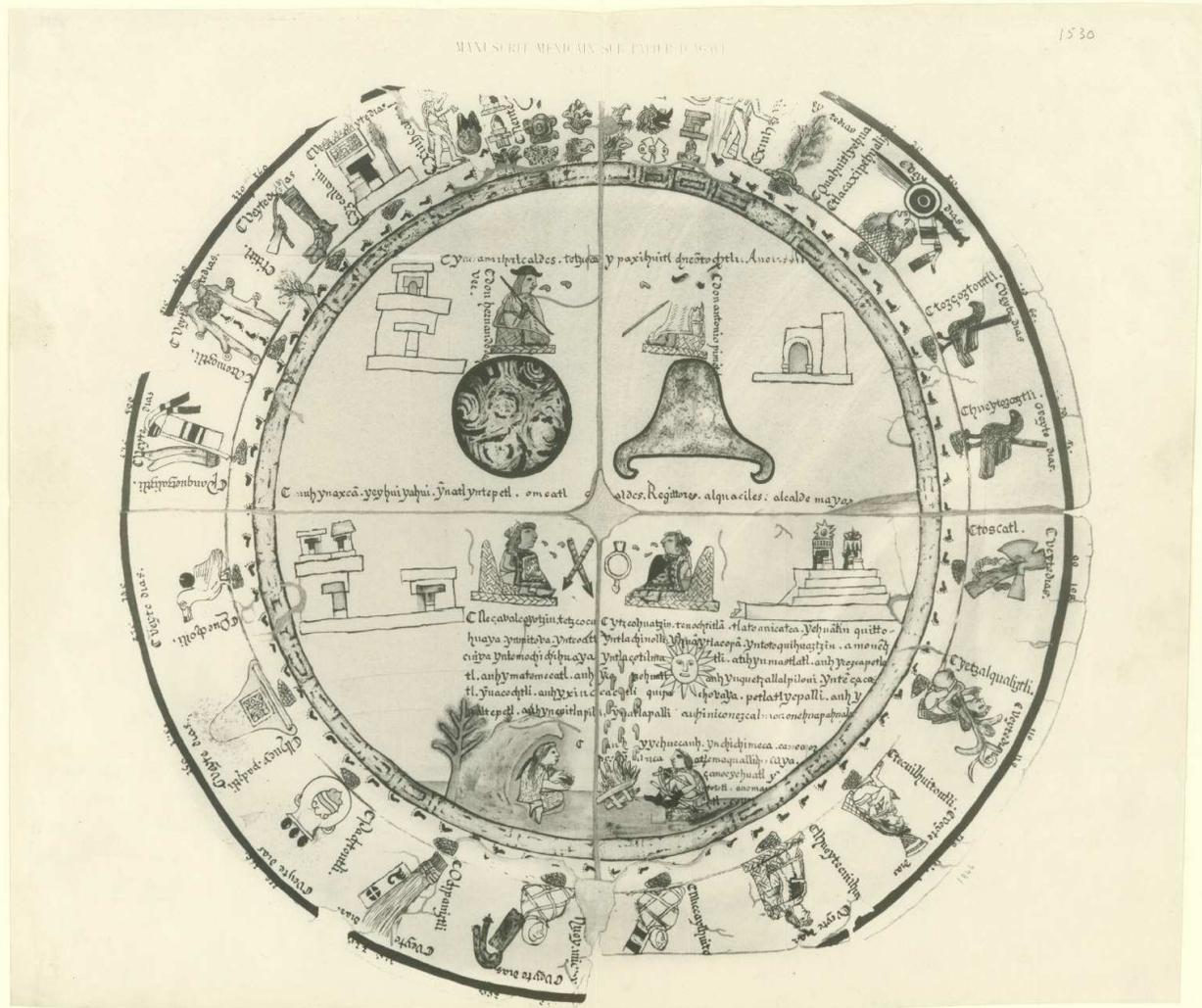


Figure 2.23. Boban Wheel. John Carter Brown Library. Lithograph by Douletraine.

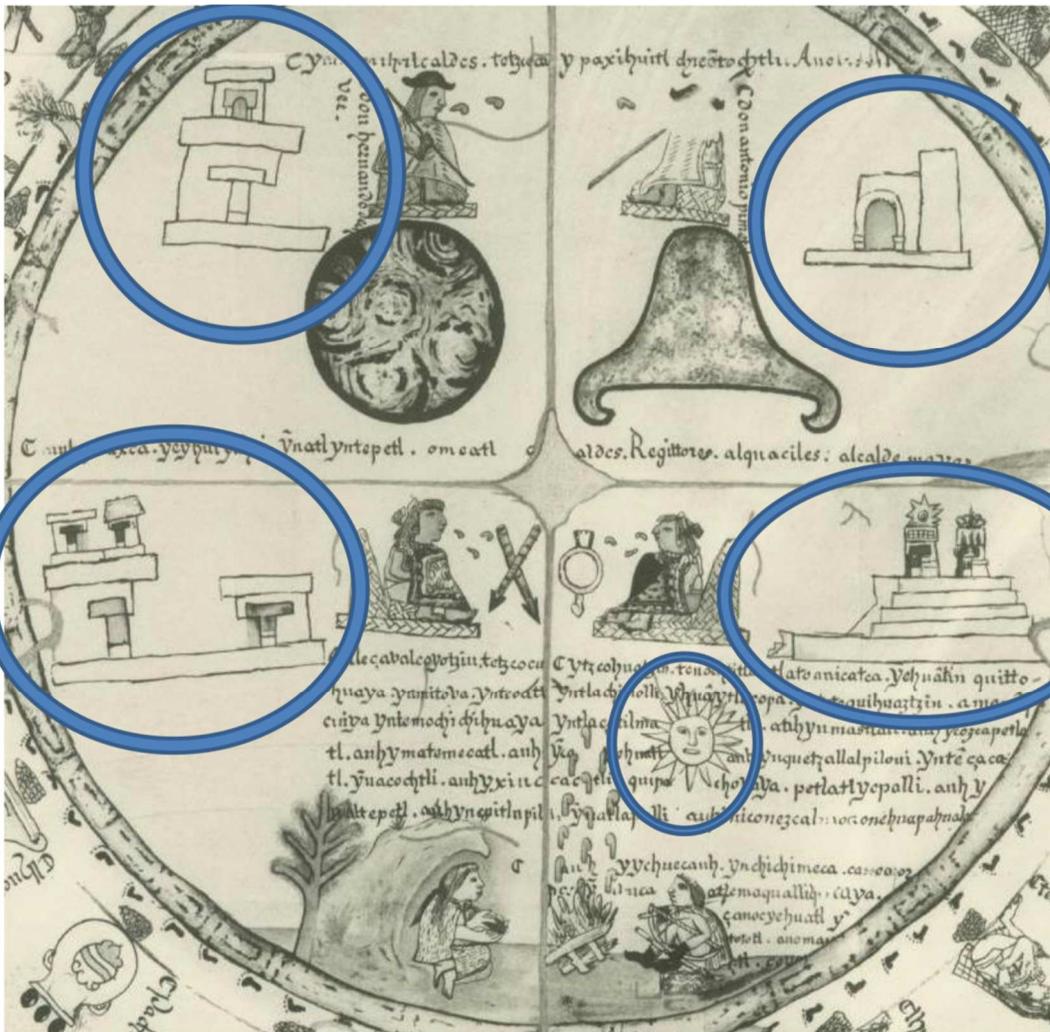


Figure 2.24. Boban Wheel, graphic indicating secondary interventions

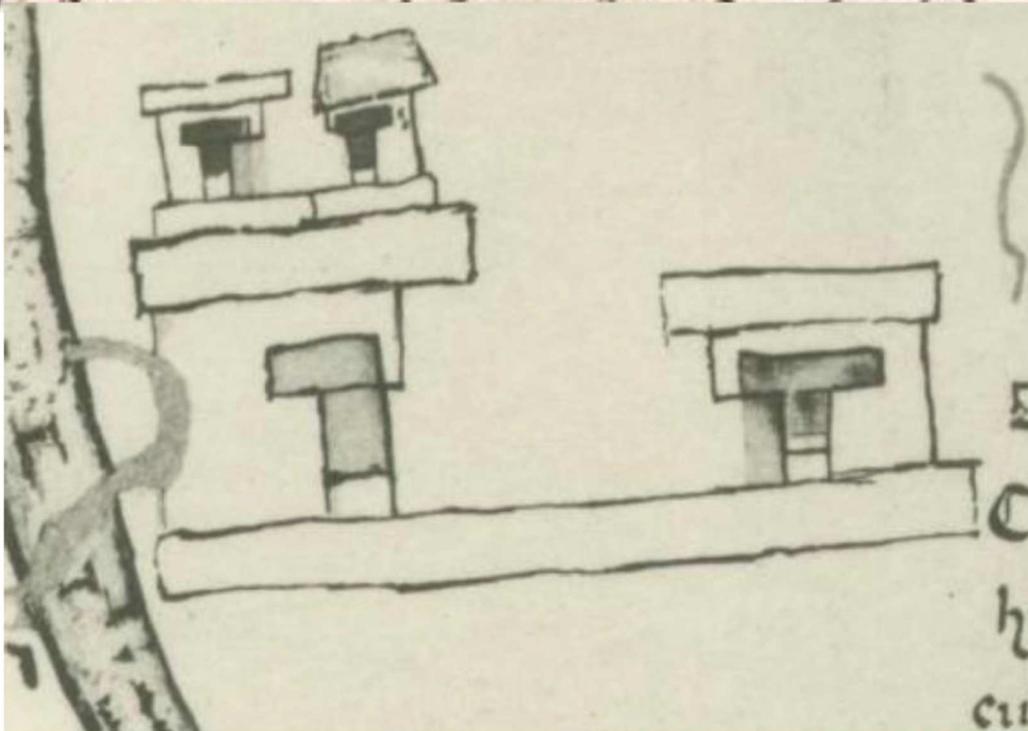


Figure 2.25. Comparison of Durán temple detail with temple on Boban Wheel



Figure 2.26. Huey Tecuilhutil glyph on the Boban Wheel matching Durán textual description

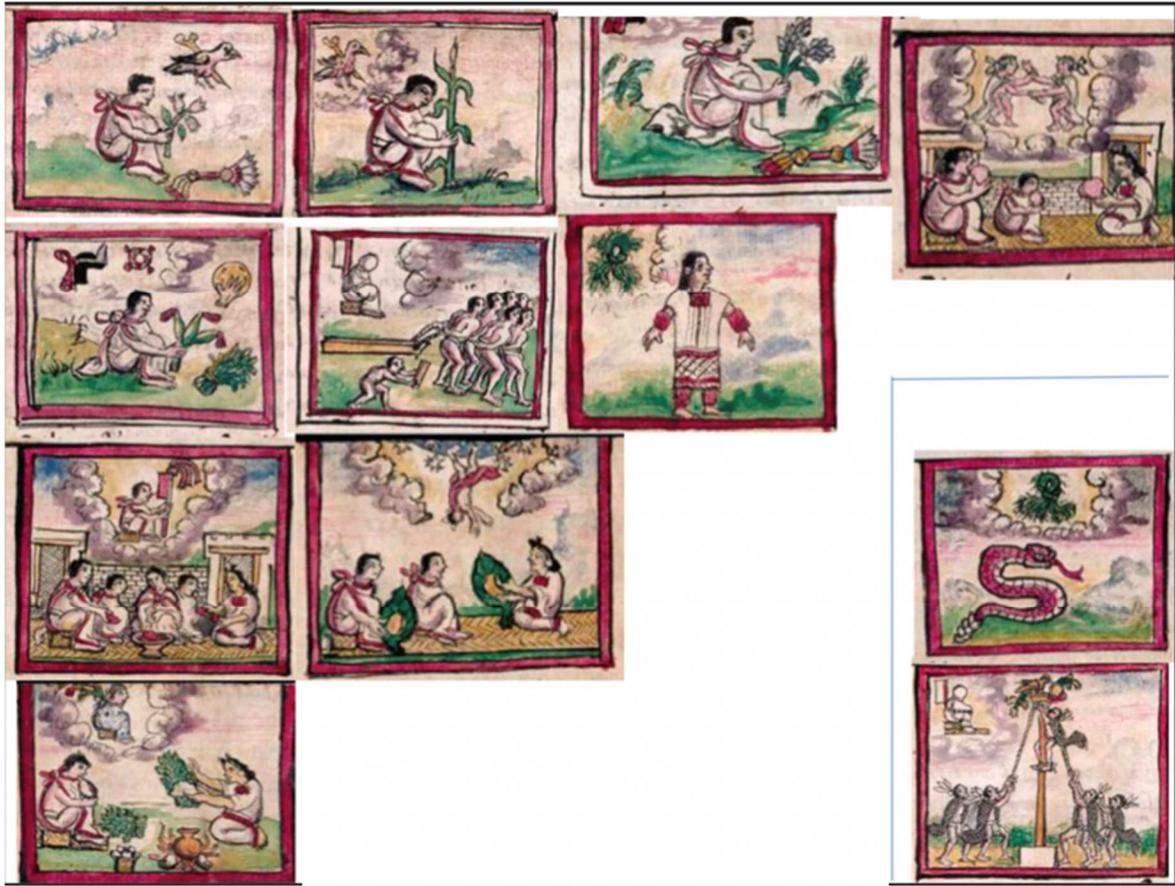


Figure 2.27. Comparison of all Durán paintings with month glyphs.



Figure 2.28. Xilomaniztli. Codex Durán folio 325 verso.



Figure 2.29. Solar Knights from the Book of Gods and Rites. Codex Durán folio 271 recto.



Figure 2.30. Etzalcualiztli. Codex Durán folio 331 verso.



Figure 2.31. Ochpaniztli. Codex Durán folio 337 recto.

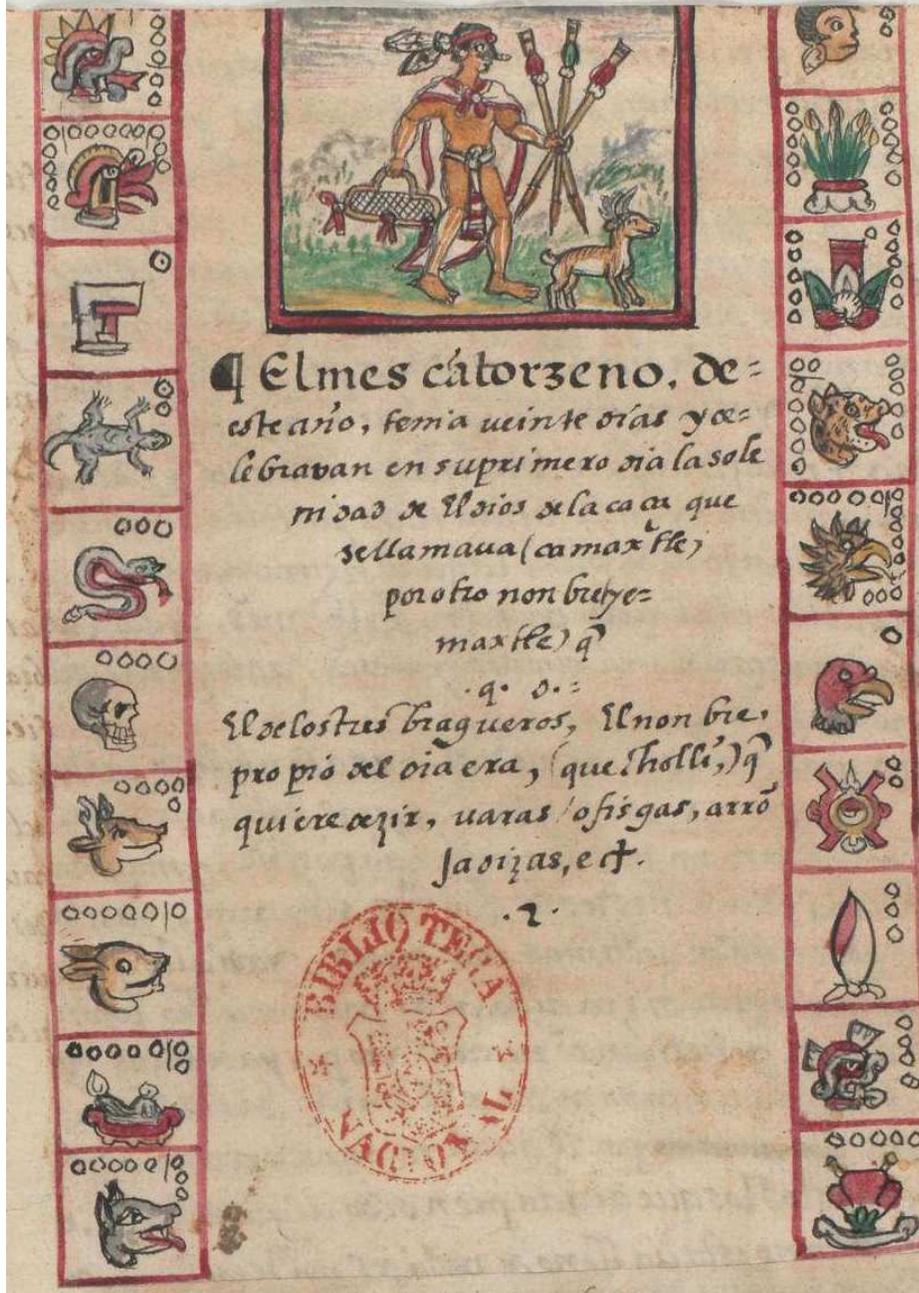


Figure 2.32. Quecholli. Codex Durán folio 340 recto.



Figure 2.33. Tlacaxipehualiztli. Codex Durán folio 327 recto.

QVINTOMES. ENEL
 qual se celebra la fiesta del pri
 mero día del mes llamado
 (fox catl,) que quiere
 decir, osaseca,
 enelqual,
 día se celebra la solemni dad del
 yoslo, llamado tezcatly'pueca,
 fiesta prima pal oelos
 naturales,
 etc.

BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL

Figure 2.34. Toxcatl. Codex Durán folio 330 verso.



Figure 2.35. Comparison of Etzalcualiztli images in Codex Durán, Codex Tudela, and Codex Magliabechiano
(Image not included here)



Figure 2.36. Comparison of Ochpaniztli images in Codex Durán, Codex Tudela, and Codex Magliabechiano
(Image not included here)

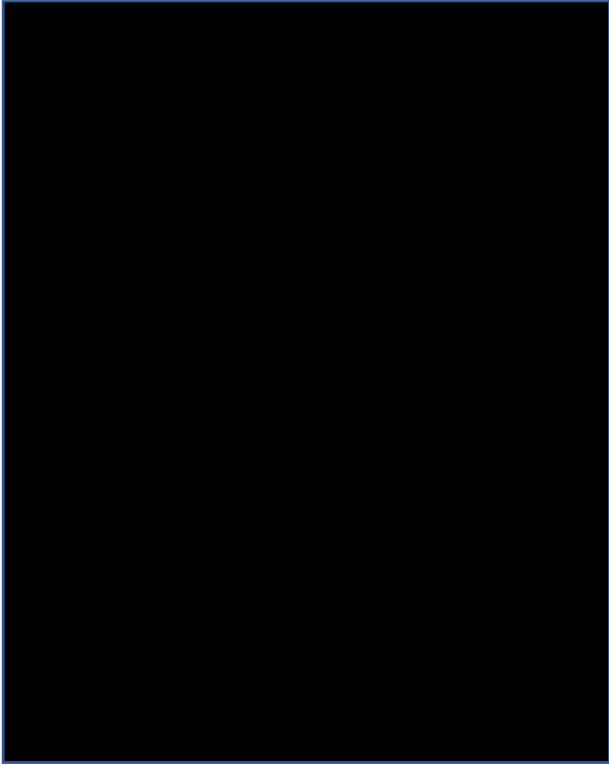


Figure 2.37. Tozoz Pipil Tontli. Codex Tudela.
(Image not included here)



Figure 2.38. Comparison of Xilomaniztli images in Codex Durán, Codex Tudela, and Codex Magliabechiano
(Image not included here)



Figure 2.39. Comparison of Huey Pachtli images in Codex Durán and Codex Magliabechiano. (Image not included here)



Figure 2.40. Comparison of Atemoztli images in Codex Durán, Codex Tudela, and Codex Magliabechiano
(Image not included here)

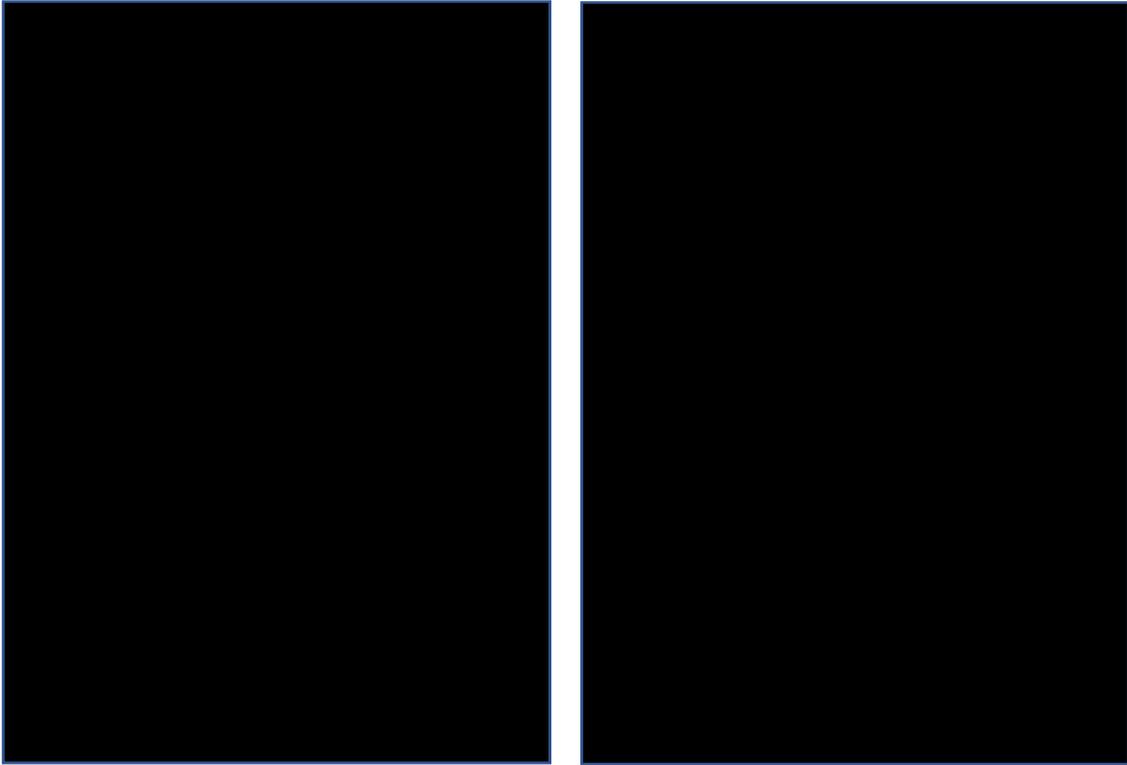


Figure 2.41. Comparison of sacrifice imagery. Codex Telleriano-Remensis folios 9 recto and 10 recto.
(Image not included here)



Figure 3.1. Collage representing Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl and the Chichimecs. Codex Durán folio 228 recto.



Figure 3.2. Stone of Tizoc. 1486. Mexico City. Museo Nacional de Antropología.
(Image not included here)



Figure 3.3. Image of god-bearing Chichimecs. Codex Boturini pages 4 and 5.
(Image not included here)



Figure 3.4. Departure from Aztlan. Codex Boturini page 1.
(Image not included here)



Figure 3.5. Chichimec migrants carrying sacred bundles. Codex Azcatitlan folios 2 verso and 3 recto.
(Image not included here)



Figure 3.6. Historic events from 7 House (1213) through 5 Flint (1224). Codex Mexicanus pages 26 and 27.
(Image not included here)



Figure 3.7. Chichimec animal sacrifice. Tira de Tepechpan page 4.
(Image not included here)



Figure 3.8. Scene of Chichimecs shooting a white eagle. Detail, Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2
(Image not included here)



Figure 3.9. Battle of Chapultepec. Codex Durán folio 11 recto.



Figure 3.10. Frontispiece with Chichimec subject matter. Codex Durán folio 1 verso.



Figure 3.11. Sigüenza Map, sixteenth century
(Image not included here)



Figure 3.12. First opening of Codex Durán, folios 1 verso and 2 recto.



Figure 3.13. Caves of Chicomoztoc (The Seven Caves). Codex Durán folio 2 recto.



Figures 3.14. Chichimecs departing Chicomoztoc depicted in the form of a hell mouth. Codex Durán folio 4 verso.



Figure 3.15. Mexica at Coatepec. Codex Durán folio 7 verso.



Figure 3.16. Tenochtitlan foundation scene. Codex Durán folio 14 verso.



Figure 3.17. Collage of Toltecs and one of the Seven Caves. Codex Durán folio 14 verso.



Figure 3.18. Collage with Chichimec figures framing Aztec priests. Codex Durán folio 235 recto.

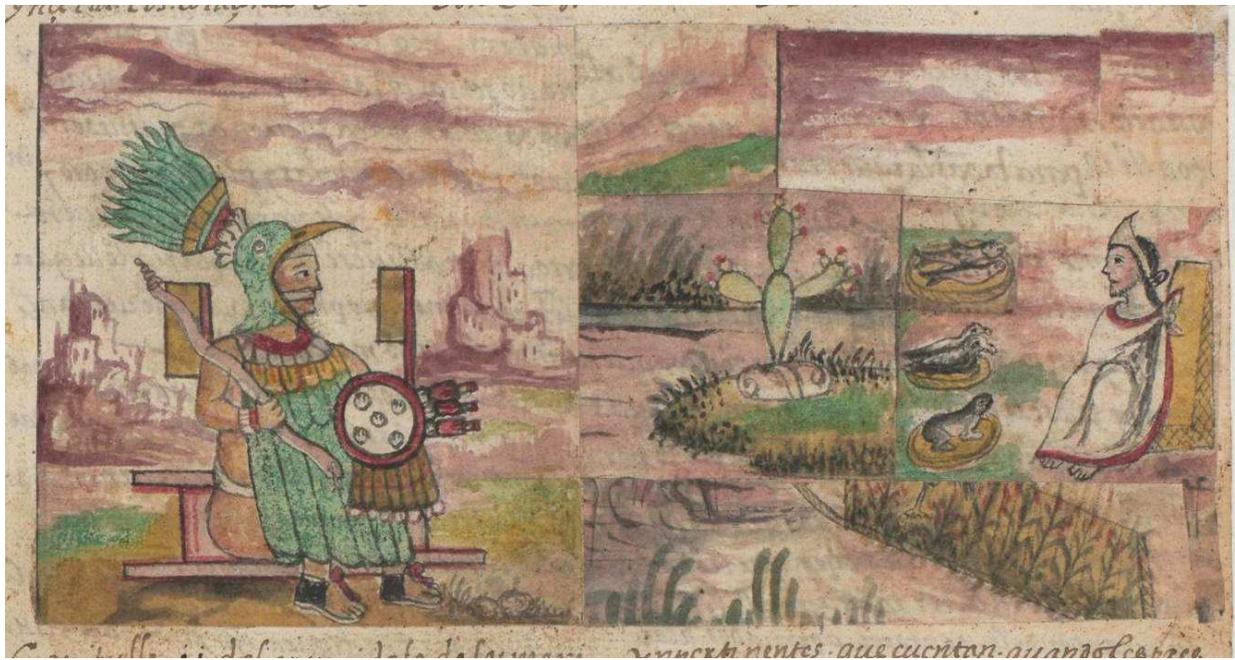


Figure 3.19. Collage of Huitzilopochtli and an Aztec king. Codex Durán folio 231 recto.



Figure 4.1. Throne scene, ascension of the *tlahtoani* Huitzilihuitl. Codex Durán folio 19 verso.



Figure 4.2. War with Tlatelolco. Codex Durán folio 98 recto.



Figure 4.3. Battle with Metztilan. Codex Durán folio 114 verso.

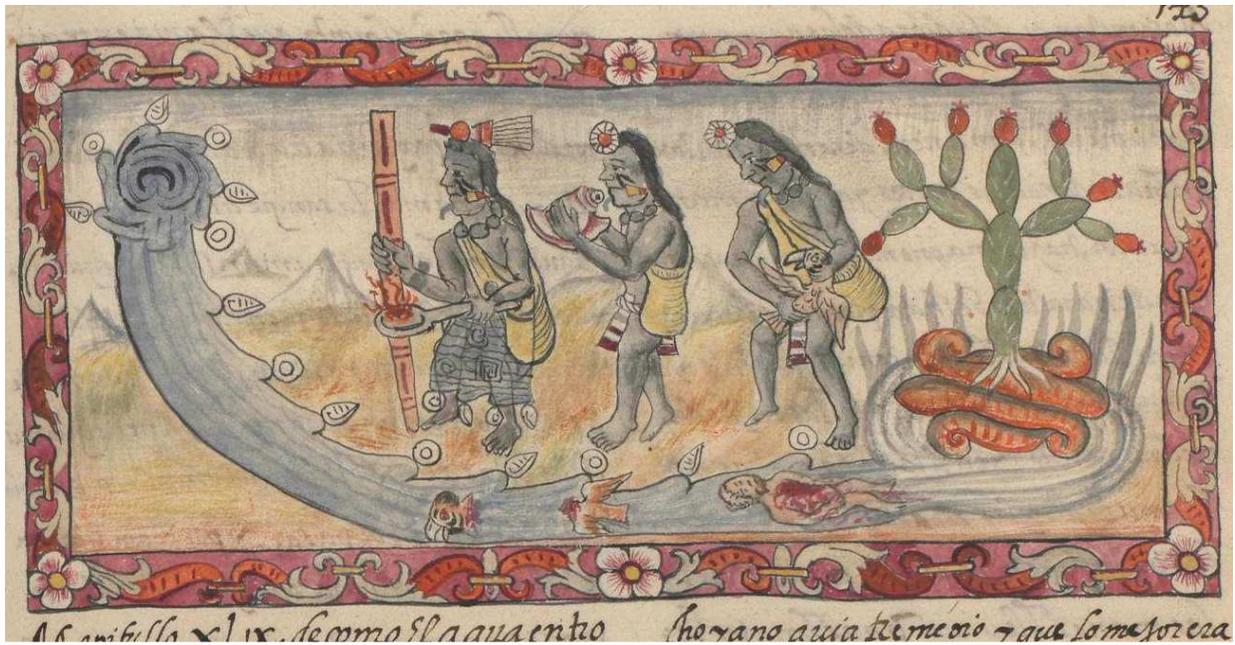


Figure 4.4. Inauguration of the Acuecuexco aqueduct. Codex Durán folio 143 recto.

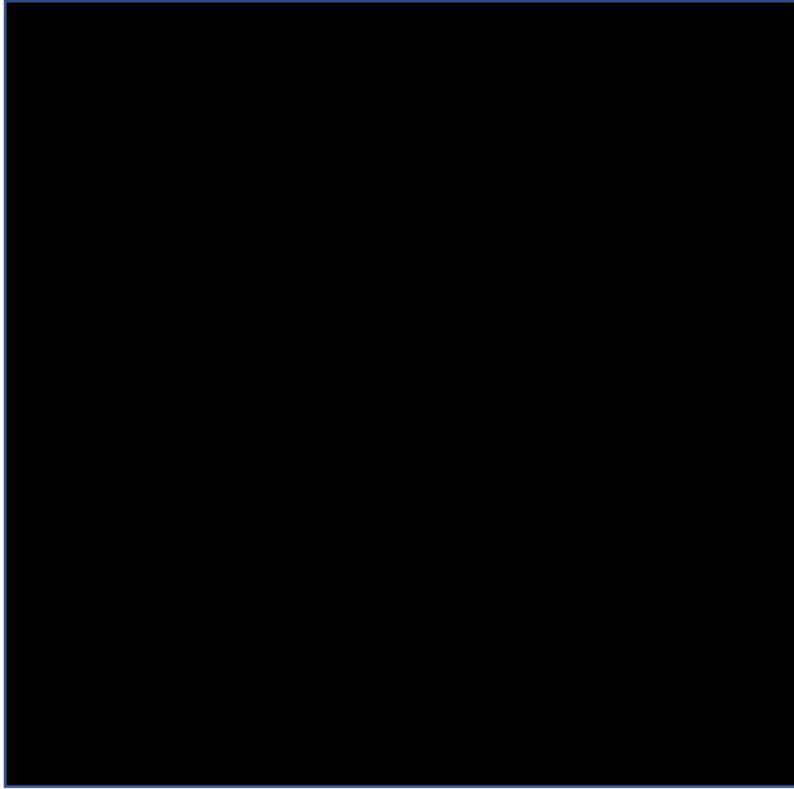


Figure 4.5. Water goddess Chalchiuhtlicue on a *tonalamatl* calendar. Codex Borbonicus page 2.
(Image not included here)

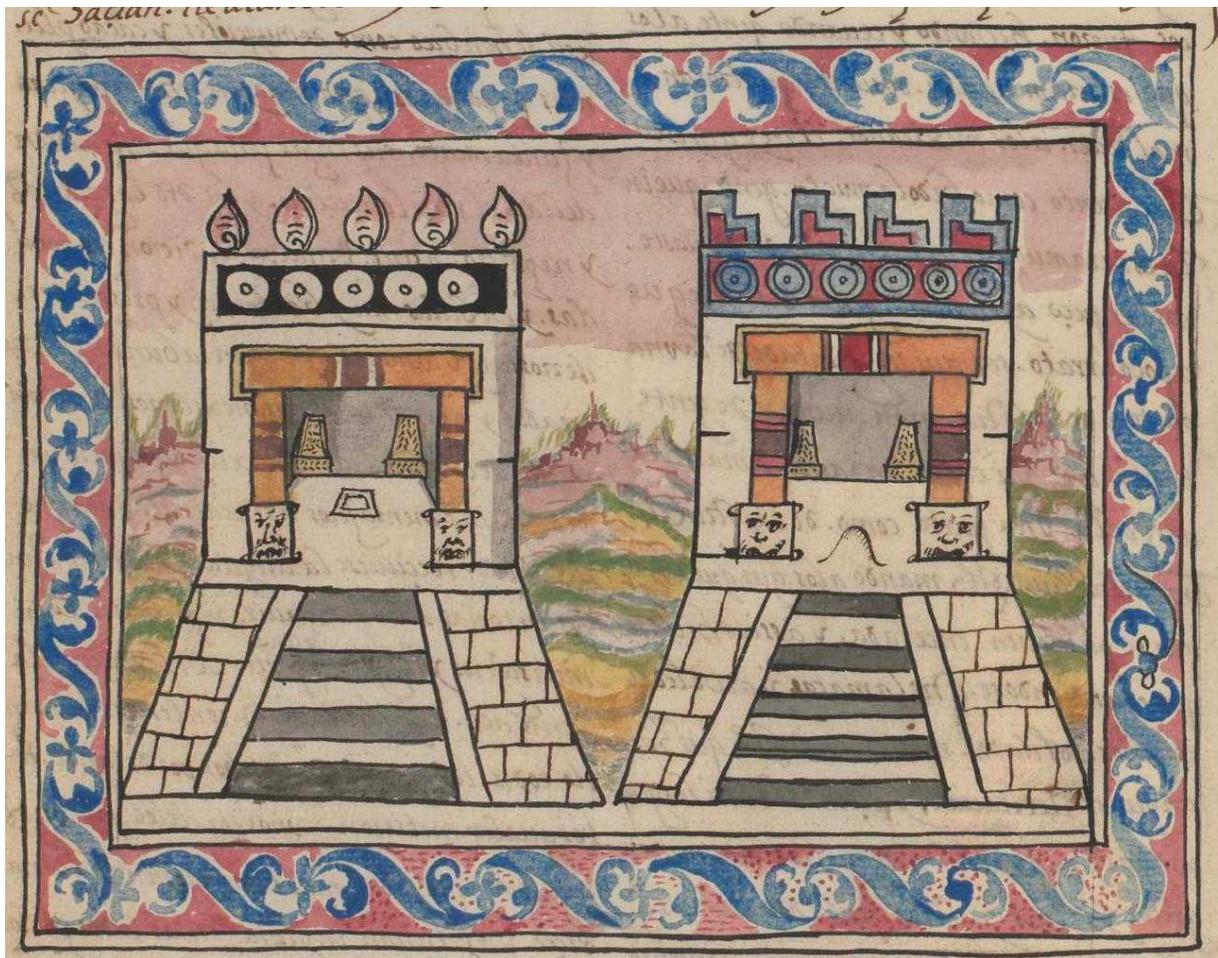


Figure 4.6. The perfection of the Templo Mayor under the reign of Ahuitzotl. Codex Durán folio 126 verso.

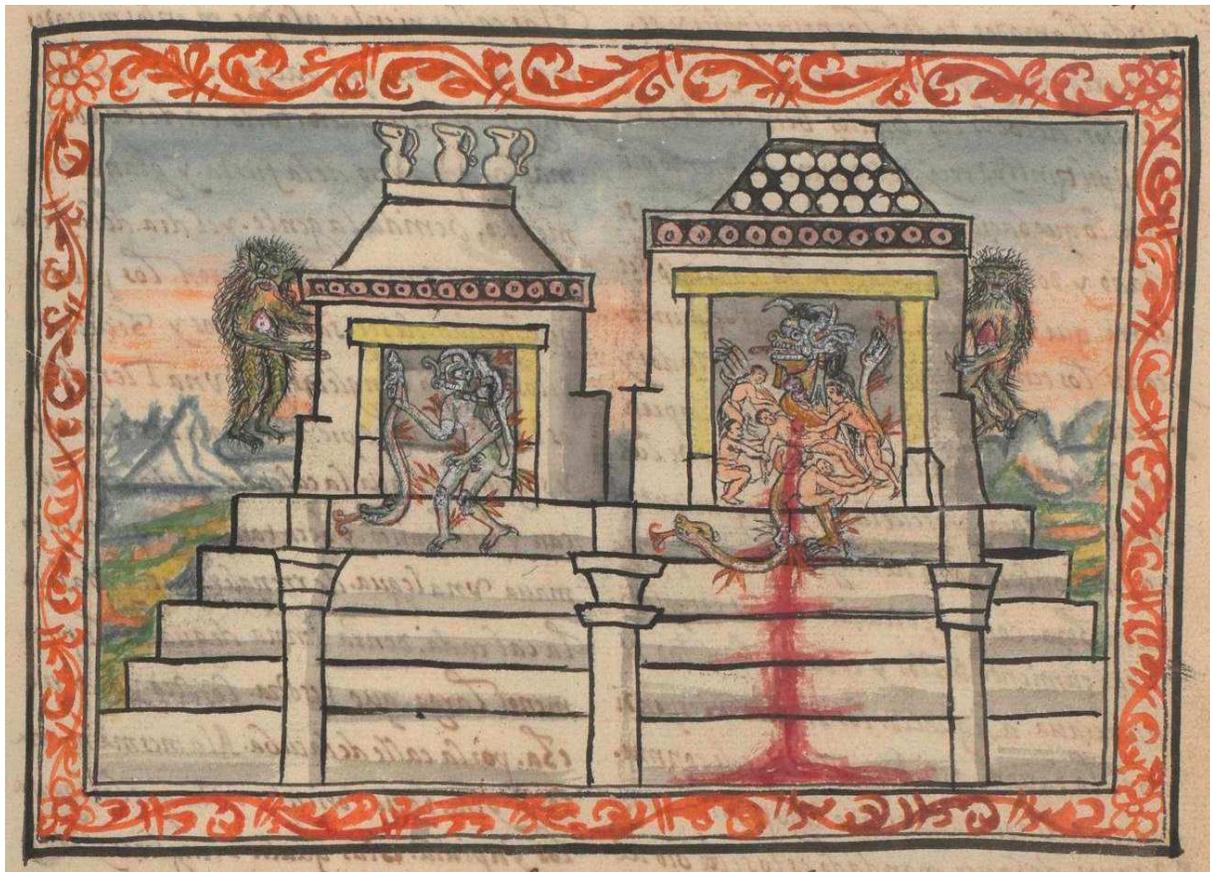


Figure 4.7. Inauguration of the Templo Mayor. Codex Durán folio 131 recto.



Figure 4.8. Dedication of the serpent wall *coatepantli*. Codex Durán folio 138 recto.

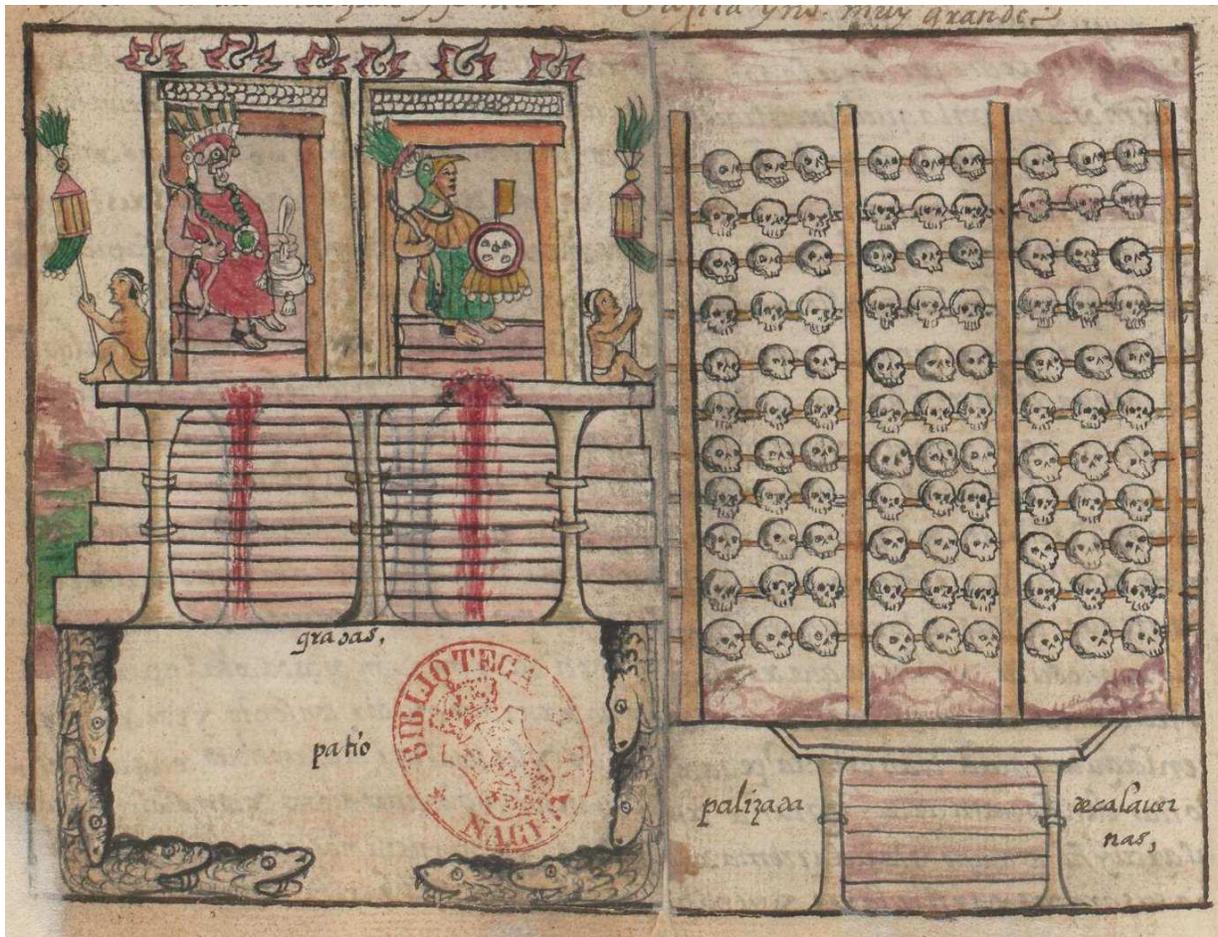


Figure 4.9. Templo Mayor pasteover from the Book of Gods and Rites. Codex Durán folio 232 verso.



Figure 4.10. Goddess Toci upon her scaffold at Tocititlan. Codex Durán folio 181 recto.

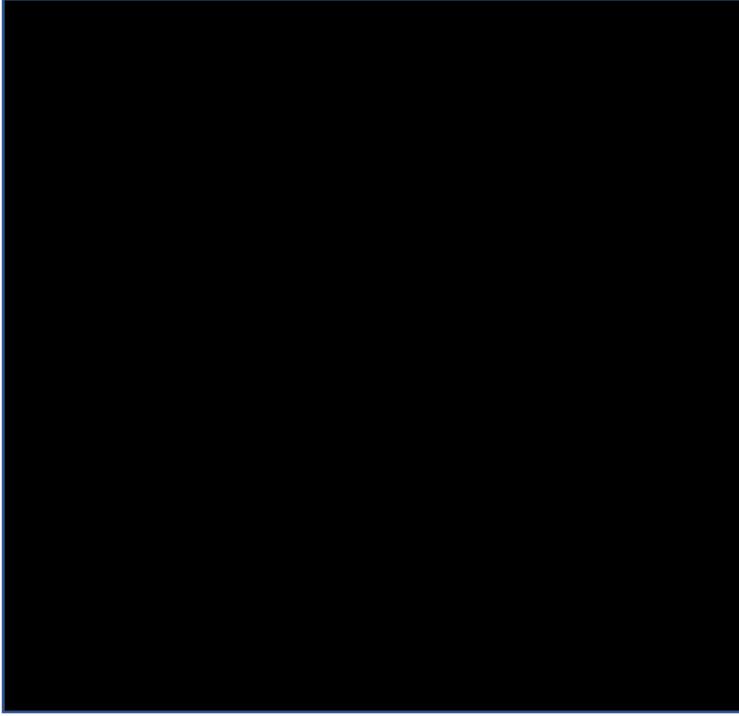


Figure 4.11. The goddess Toci in pre-Hispanic style. Codex Tudela folio 21 recto.
(Image not included here)



Figure 4.12. Captive shown in sacrifice, tied to a cuauhxicalli / temalacatl stone. Codex Durán folio 103 verso.



Figure 4.13. The auto-iconoclasm of Ezhuahuacatl during the Battle of Chalco. Codex Durán folio 52 recto.



Figure 4.14. Inauguration of the *temalacatl* of Motecuhzoma I. Codex Durán folio 70 recto.

1.	Acamapichtli (d. 1395)
2.	Huitzilihuitl (r. 1395-1417)
3.	Chimalpopoca (r. 1417-1427)
4.	Itzcoatl (r. 1427-1440)
5.	Motecuhozma I (r. 1440-1469)
6.	Axayacatl (r. 1469-1481)
7.	Tizoc (r. 1481-1486)
8.	Ahuitzotl (r. 1486-1502)
9.	Motecuhzoma II (r. 1502-1520)

Figure 4.15. Reigns of the Aztec kings.

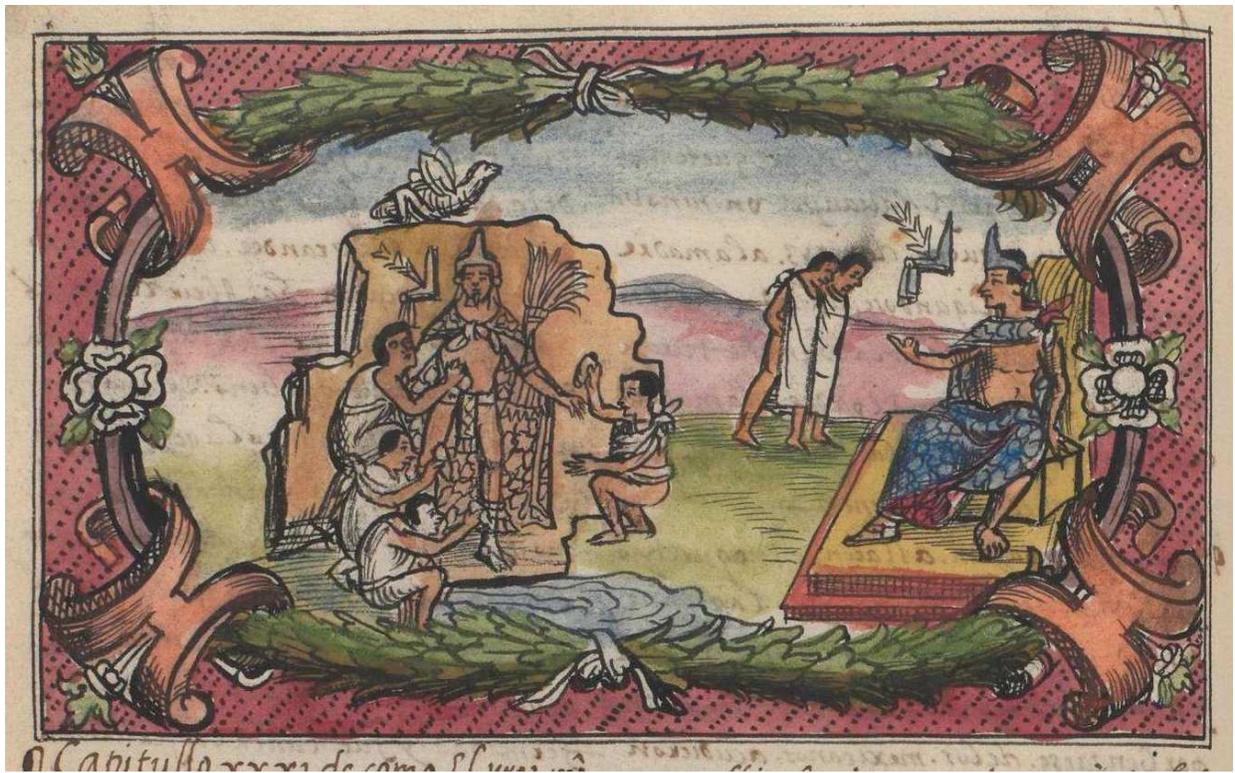


Figure 4.16. Carving of the portrait of Motecuhzoma I. Codex Durán folio 91 verso.



Figure 4.17. Motecuhzoma I gives a feast for the Mexica during famine. Codex Durán folio 89 verso.



Figure 4.18. *Judicium Salomonis*. Nuremberg Chronicle folio 97 verso.
(Image not included here)

Para hacer de la Vna dia del Quinto tanto, que se se impla. esta piedra envenenada de un lado, y que la que fue pila de sangre Sumaria, sacrificada. Al demorio sea agria pila del. espíritu santo don de se el imperio. Co. ammas de los Escriba dos y reuquan. El agua del Batismo para que contenga lo que. así capic hua. pedera se. y a esta solemnidad fue va. nece. p. a. d. i. p. i. t. e. El capitulo.

Quedó los caballeros. de la agria. que sea Vna. or. den. de. ca. u. l. l. e. r. e. n. que en. mo. x. i. s. S. a. u. i. a. E. s. q. u. a. l. e. e. a. E. s. t. a. u. n. c. e. t. a. p. i. e. t. r. a. a. u. n. q. u. e. e. n. el. C. i. e. l. o. T. e. f. e. r. e. n. d. o. l. o. s. r. e. i. f. i. q. u. e. s. u. l. e. t. e. r. p. u. e. s. t. o. d. a. v. i. a. s. e. a. n. e. c. e. s. a. r. i. o. T. e. f. e. r. e. n. d. o. a. g. u. i. a. u. n. q. u. e. n. o. p. o. d. e. p. a. r. e. p. a. r. a. q. u. e. m. a. s. o. b. e. a. z. y. s. e. f. u. e. r. a. n. o. q. u. e. d. e. c. o. n. f. u. s. i. a. y. m. a. n. e. a. q. u. e. o. p. o. r. t. e. n. o. g. e. a. l. c. a. p. i. t. u. l. o. p. r. e. s. e. n. t. e.



Capitulo xxxy de la solemnidad se una gran piedra y bu cada se mira de enella una figura del sol. redonda y que en medio della. figuran Vna pila. redonda y que del. C. i. e. l. o. de. Capitulo. sal. e. s. e. r. i. V. n. o. e. l. a. y. e. p. a. r. a. que en aquella pila. se venia. s. i. e. n. t. e. la. sangre. de. l. o. s. sacrificados para que la. s. e. m. p. a. n. c. e. d. e. l. e. t. g. o. c. a. r. e. t. a. l. l. a. y. q. u. e. de. la. p. i. l. a. se. l. i. e. r. e. v. n. c. o. s. t. o. p. a. d. o. n. de. se. d. e. c. a. m. a. r. a. q. u. e. l. l. a. c. a. n. e. r. e. y. m. a. n. D. i. o. n. q. u. e. a. l. r. e. d. o. r. d. e. l. c. i. e. l. o. p. a. r. e. l. a.

Oganfa pintaren todas las guerras que aha ontunco. S. a. u. i. a. n. t. e. n. d. o. q. u. e. d. e. l. s. e. S. a. u. i. a. a. n. e. s. d. i. d. o. d. e. q. u. e. l. a. C. o. n. c. i. e. n. c. i. a. n. s. u. f. a. b. r. a. y. a. y. u. d. a. t. o. m. a. d. a. C. i. e. l. o. s. b. u. n. A. c. a. y. o. l. o. s. c. a. n. t. e. r. o. s. C. i. e. l. o. s. u. n. a. p. i. e. d. r. a. q. u. e. s. e. n. a. m. o. s. y. e. n. l. a. c. i. e. l. u. p. i. e. d. r. a. T. a. s. e. n. u. n. s. a. n. c. a. d. e. l. s. e. p. i. n. t. a. n. o. n. m. e. l. l. a. T. a. s. q. u. e. r. a. s. q. u. e. S. a. u. i. a. n. C. o. n. c. i. e. n. c. i. a. d. e. t. e. p. e. a. c. a. d. e. t. u. s. p. a. n. d. e. l. a. q. u. e. s. e. f. e. r. a. d. e. c. u. e. t. e. r. a. t. e. n. d. e. c. o. n. x. e. t. l. a. u. a. c. t. o. d. o. m. u. y. c. u. i. d. a. m. a. r. e. C. a. b. r. a. d. o. y. p. a. r. a. n. s. t. e. r. e. n. m. a. s. e. n. e. c. e. s. a. r. i. o. d. e. f. i. e. r. o. s. e. o. m. l. o. s. c. a. n. t. e. r. o. s. d. e. n. t. e. m. i. s. m. o. n. c. i. e. n. t. a. s. i. n. o. c. o. n. s. i. e. n. t. e. p. i. e. d. r. a. s. s. a. c. i. e. l. a. s. q. u. e. S. a. u. i. a. n. g. e. q. u. e. r. a. s. t. a. n. a. t. r. a. T. a. s. e. n. u. n. c. i. e. n. t. a. d. e. a. d. m. i. n. i. s. t. r. a. c. i. o. n. y. a. n. d. e. p. a. r. a. e. n. v. i. s. t. o. r. i. a. C. a. c. u. s. i. d. a. d. d. e. l. o. s. c. a. n. t. e. r. o. s. a. n. t. i. g. u. o. s. y. p. a. r. t. i. c. u. l. a. r. O. r. e. n. d. o. q. u. e. c. o. n. s. i. e. n. t. e. p. i. e. d. r. a. q. u. e. l. a. S. a. u. i. a. n. C. i. e. l. o. s. p. i. e. d. r. a. s. q. u. e. n. o. d. o. s. y. f. i. g. u. r. a. s. s. i. e. n. t. e. s. y. q. u. e. n. o. t. a. n. a. l. n. a. t. u. r. a. l. c. o. m. o. V. i. r. g. i. n. i. a. c. o. n. v. n. d. e. l. i. c. a. d. o. p. i. n. c. e. l. o. c. o. m. o. v. n. c. a. u. s. e. p. l. a. c. e. s. p. o. d. r. a. c. o. n. v. n. c. i. e. l. S. a. c. a. n. a. v. n. a. f. i. g. u. r. a. A. l. n. a. t. u. r. a. l. s. e. f. e. r. a. q. u. e. a. c. a. u. a. d. a. l. a. p. i. e. d. r. a. f. u. e. d. a. d. a. n. o. b. r. a. a. l. r. e. y. y. b. i. s. t. a. p. a. r. e. l. m. a. n. d. o. s. e. c. e. S. a. u. i. a. n. v. n. a. s. i. e. n. t. e. a. l. t. r. o. d. e. l. a. a. t. a. p. a. r. a. d. e. v. n. h. o. n. r. e. y. q. u. e. t. r. i. b. u. e. s. y. q. u. e. n. t. o. c. e. c. a. l. e. h. u. p. a. d. o. n. d. e. s. e. n. b. u. d. e. h. e. l. l. a. p. a. t. o. d. o. s. q. u. a. t. r. o. p. a. r. t. e. s. a. g. i. e. E. n. t. e. a. g. i. e. l. s. u. S. a. u. i. a. n. o. r. i. e. n. t. e. y. p. o. r. t. i. e. n. t. e. s. e. g. u. n. s. u. e. l. a. n. s. i. d. e. c. a. n. i. s. n. o. s. s. u. s. T. e. l. o. c. a. c. i. o. n. e. s. y. d. i. a. n. o. s. d. e. l. P. e. n. a. n. i. o. p. u. e. s. t. r. o. y. y. a. d. e. n. t. e. d. e. l. a. p. i. e. d. r. a. c. o. n. l. a. T. e. c. u. e. n. c. i. a. y. o. s. i. b. l. e. m. a. n. d. o. E. l. r. e. y. v. e. n. a. m. o. n. t. e. q. u. e. m. e. q. u. e. f. u. e. s. c. o. n. b. i. d. a. d. o. t. o. d. o. l. o. s. s. e. n. o. r. e. d. e. l. a. y. o. s. i. n. i. e. n. t. e. R. e. d. e. r. e. n. d. o.

y el de la casa y los senos de Salay los de sus millas. marquerato y seculan con. aynta uac yira queo por. se allaron ala solemnidad y fiesta de la sem gan a die del. luego fueron yubias. de men e ajenas. a todos los. senos. titos y de parte del rey llamados para la solemnidad y fiesta. las quales aceptaron. el con. t. i. e. con. s. a. g. i. m. e. n. t. o. d. e. g. r. a. c. i. a. s. y. n. b. i. a. n. d. o. g. r. a. n. d. e. s. o. f. a. c. t. o. s. a. l. r. e. y. m. o. n. t. e. c. u. m. p. a. r. a. l. a. m. o. d. o. q. u. e. l. e. S. a. u. i. a. n. v. a. p. o. r. e. s. a. n. t. o. s. e. f. e. r. o. s. b. i. n. e. n. el. d. i. a. s. s. e. n. a. l. a. d. o. s. l. o. s. q. u. a. l. e. s. l. l. e. g. a. r. o. n. a. l. a. c. i. u. d. a. d. d. e. m. e. x. i. c. o. f. i. e. r. o. n. m. u. y. b. o. n. r. e. a. d. o. n. t. e. T. u. e. q. u. e. d. o. s. y. a. p. o. r. e. n. t. a. t. o. s. e. n. i. a. c. a. n. o. s. r. e. a. l. e. s. d. a. n. d. o. t. o. d. o. l. o. n. e. c. e. s. a. r. i. o. s. y. f. i. e. r. o. s. e. n. d. o. l. o. s. c. o. n. t. r. o. l. o. s. l. o. s. m. o. d. o. d. e. C. a. b. l. l. e. s. y. c. a. n. t. o. s. q. u. e. l. o. s. v. i. s. t. a. n. y. c. o. n. q. u. e. s. e. n. e. c. e. r. a. n. a. n. d. e. p. a. r. a. d. e. S. a. u. i. a. n. d. e. c. a. n. t. e. r. o. s. d. e. l. r. e. y. y. l. a. c. a. c. e. l. l. a. c. o. n. t. r. o. l. o. s. l. l. e. s. s. e. n. a. d. a. d. e. l. a. c. a. s. e. l. l. e. n. e. a. n. a. c. t. u. s. s. e. n. a. d. a. t. o. d. o. h. m. o. s. t. a. l. l. e. s. l. a. p. i. e. d. r. a. y. l. a. c. u. r. i. o. s. i. d. a. d. c. o. n. q. u. e. e. s. t. i. u. a. l. a. c. a. d. a. y. a. s. e. n. t. a. d. a. y. b. i. n. t. e. p. o. r. e. l. l. o. s. q. u. e. d. a. n. m. u. y. c. o. n. t. e. n. t. o. y. a. d. m. i. n. i. s. t. r. a. d. o. d. e. l. e. s. u. f. i. g. u. r. a. y. p. i. n. t. u. r. a. y. l. a. f. a. g. i. l. i. d. a. d. c. o. n. q. u. e. l. o. s. m. e. x. i. c. a. n. o. s. s. a. q. u. i. a. n. t. o. d. i. a. l. o. q. u. e. q. u. e. r. i. a. n. y. d. i. e. r. e. l. l. e. c. l. e. r. i. c. o. s. y. b. i. s. a. q. u. e. l. a. s. e. m. e. j. a. n. c. a. d. e. l. s. o. l. y. l. a. f. i. g. u. r. a. d. a. q. u. e. c. e. c. a. l. i. t. e. n. c. o. n. s. u. e. l. a. y. f. u. e. g. o. s. m. u. y. S. e. x. c. e. l. e. n. t. e. d. e. l. o. c. i. u. d. o. p. a. r. a. l. a. s. e. l. e. m. e. n. t. o. y. s. a. n. t. e. r. a. d. e. s. t. a. f. i. g. u. r. a. s. o. n. i. n. q. u. e. b. e. n. i. d. o. y. p. a. r. a. e. s. t. o. q. u. e. l. l. a. m. a. d. o. e. l. l. o. s. s. e. m. i. l. l. a. n. d. o. s. e. a. r. t. a. m. d. d. i. c. e. n. o. n. s. e. n. o. p. o. d. e. r. i. s. s. e. a. m. u. y. s. o. d. e. r. a. r. a. Q. u. e. n. a. m. u. y. s. e. d. e. d. e. l. a. c. i. u. d. a. d. d. e. m. e. x. i. c. o. p. u. e. s. t. e. a. n. p. i. e. d. r. a. c. o. n. t. a. n. t. a. s. y. n. o. s. i. g. n. i. a. s. y. m. a. r. q. u. e. l. l. a. s. q. u. e. m. o. s. n. a. a. b. u. e. n. a. d. e. l. a. g. e. a. n. d. o. d. e. l. a.

Figure 4.19. Codex Durán folio 70, recto and verso sides.



Figure 4.20. Coronation of Tizoc and the funeral of his predecessor Axayacatl. Codex Durán folio 111 recto.



Figure 4.21. Comparison of mummy bundle imagery. Codex Magliabechiano folio 69; Codex Tudela folio 60; Codex Durán folio 111 recto.
(Image not included here)

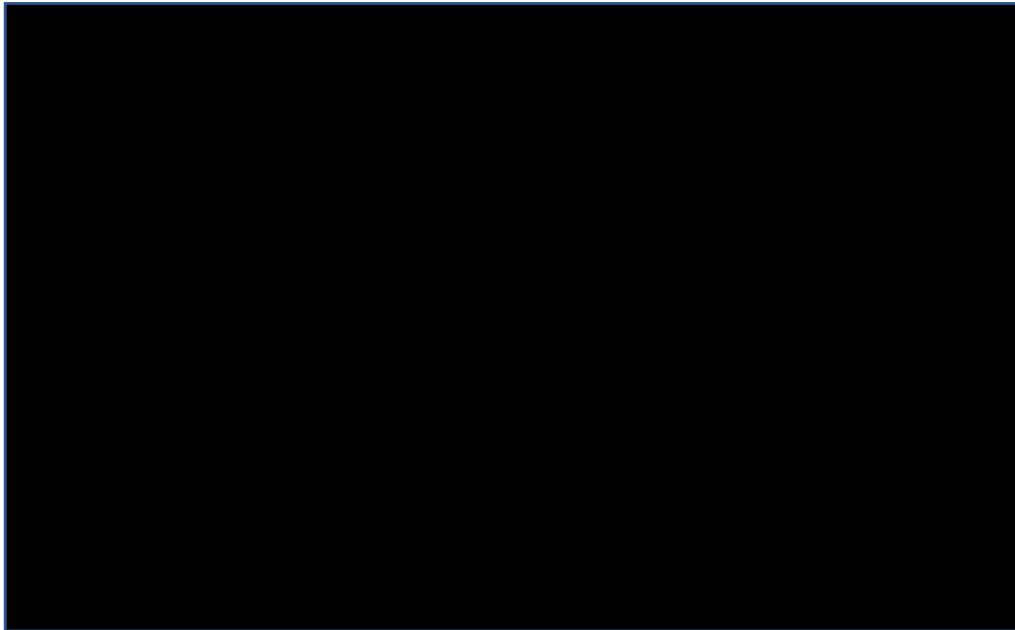


Figure 4.22. How the emperor Caligula wanted to become like a god. Vincent of Beauvais, *Miroir Historial*, detail of folio 89 verso. 1370-1380. BNF MS. N.a. fr. 15940
(Image not included here)



Figure 4.23. Tizoc named with his hieroglyph on the Stone of Tizoc, 1486. Aztec stone sculpture. Museo Nacional de Antropología.
(Image not included here)



Figure. 4.24. Motecuhzoma II shown with the crossed leg in a scene about his murder of his advisors. Codex Durán folio 155 recto.



Figure 4.25. Ahuizotl with crossed leg in throne scene. Codex Durán folio 118 verso.

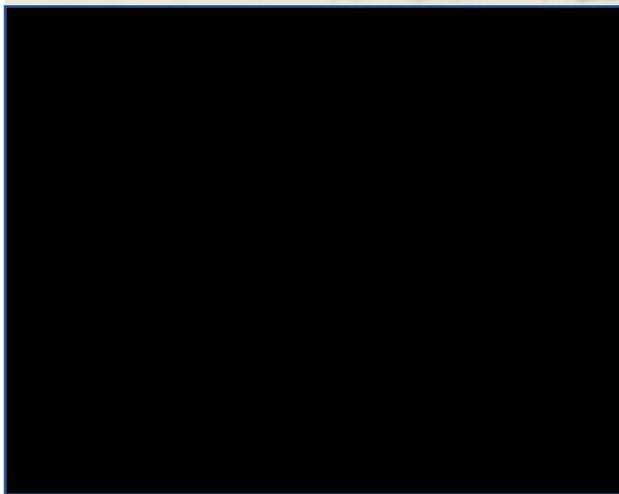


Figure 4.26. Comparison of glyphic form on Huitzilihuitl's throne with Culhuacan glyph on Relación Geográfica de Culhuacan. 1580. Benson Library, University of Texas Austin. (Image not included here)



Figure 4.27. Culhuacan glyph reworked as a step fret, Carved door from the *convent* at Culhuacan, Sixteenth century. Photograph by the author.
(Image not included here)

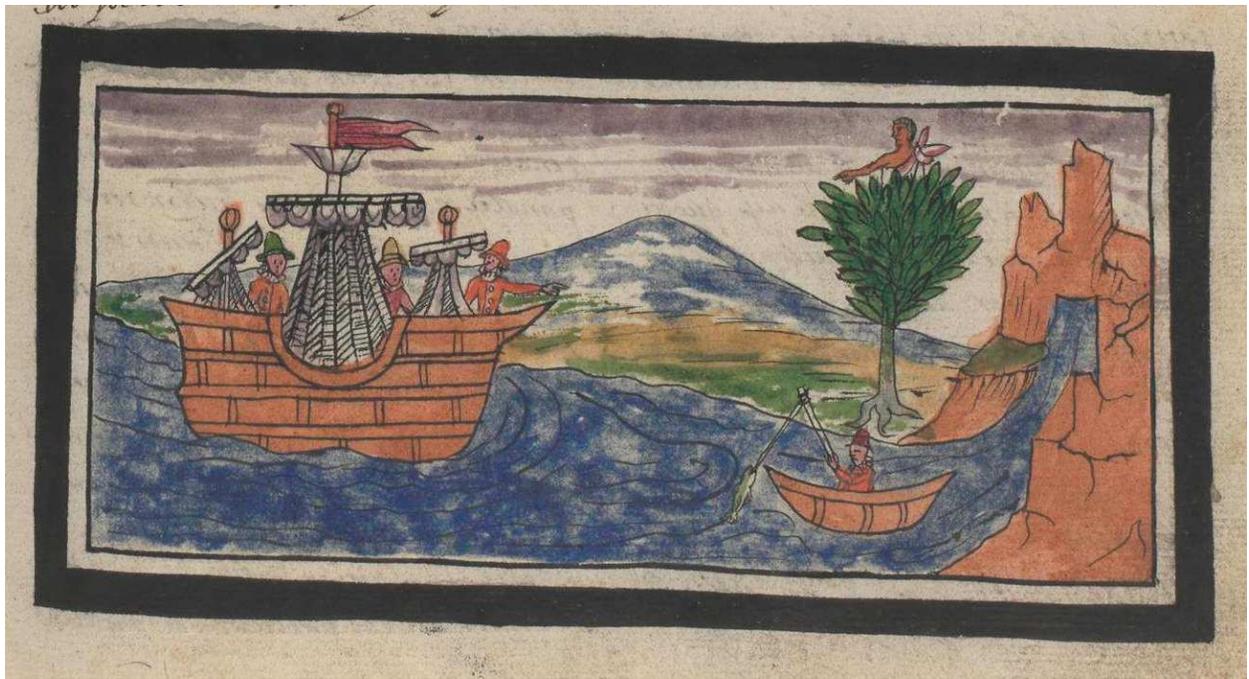


Figure 4.28 Arrival of Cortés off the Coast of Veracruz. Codex Durán folio 197 recto.



Figure 4.29. Omen of the *temalacatl* that predicts its own iconoclasm. Codex Durán folio 189 verso.



Figure 4.30. Dance scene from the Book of Gods and Rites, Codex Durán folio 305 recto.



Figure 4.31. Idol upon an altar, Book of Hours, Morgan Library MS H.5 France, 1500. Folio 99 verso.
(Image not included here)



Figure C.1. Deity images including Huitzilopochtli as ‘Otro Hercules.’ Florentine Codex Vol. I folio 10 recto.

<https://www.wdl.org/en/item/10096/view/1/31/>

(Image not included here)



Figure C.2. Excursion to Las Hibueras, Codex Durán folio 219 verso.