

From Lies to Truth: Colonial Ekphrasis and the Act of Crosscultural Translation

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Somos Informado que en las Indias hay muchos testigos falsos, que por muy poco interés se perjuran en los pleytos, y negocios . . . Mandamos . . . que con muy particular atencion procuren averiguar los que cometen este delito, castigando con todo rigor . . .

Charles V at Toledo, August 24, 1579
(from *Recopilación de Leyes de las Indias*,
Vol. II, Book 7, Chapter 8, law 3.
Madrid: Ivian de Paredes, 1681, 296)

An anxious subtext cuts through all genres of early writings and rewritings produced in or about the New World: that the author in producing his text is producing the truth for his reader, that what the author says he knows can be verified and/or that what has been claimed by others is false.¹ Certainly for the European reader of the early travel and conquest histories, the experiential presence of the narrator as witness puts the teller in possession of the truth.²

But the establishment of truth in the sixteenth-century New World is something altogether different when it involves the act of communication between Europeans and natives and the retelling of that communication. Here, truth is something that must be negotiated through difference in language, difference in society, difference in culture. All this brings into question the possibility of any communication between Europeans and natives as it unfolds within a contestation of power in which deceit, distrust, and lying constitute some of the principal characteristics that define this contestation. Where, then, could the differences of language and ethnicity find an accepted mutual place of representation through which the truth of ideas, religion, and history could be believed to pass securely from one "other" to the "other"? For the telling of narratives across cultures, there needs to be invented/found a mutually recognized cultural space that forms a permeable and transparent referent through which the words of the other can pass through translation into one's own culture in order to be used as the bearers of truth as evidence, as historical fact, or as religious dogma to be adjudicated, marveled upon, discussed, debated, or ridiculed.³

I will argue that pictorial images formed just such a site for crosscultural translation in the New World. Of course, Spaniards learned native languages, transcribing and/or translating them into written form, and elite natives quickly learned to use alphabetic writing to produce documents in their own language or in Spanish. Pictorial images, however, had a different role than the recording and disseminating of information and ideas; they established and authenticated them. After all, the invention of writing was one of the key cultural differentiations that Europeans made between themselves and the peoples of the New World, whereas pictorial images were something they held in common.⁴ And this, I would say, is one of the crucial implications of the term "colonial" as it is used to qualify art produced in the New World during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Its often hybrid appearance appeals to a new set of cultural expectations.⁵ The images that were produced in both New Spain and Peru are not mirrors of passive assimilation and acculturation, registers of change. They constitute the location to which the act of looking by Europeans and natives could be mutually and simultaneously directed in order to establish agreement. One cannot talk, then, about a simple evolution from the pictorial to the alphabetic in this century as if it were a natural and logical process.⁶ Rather, 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 and continued to exist in a myriad of other contexts. 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.⁷

The production of images in relation to oral and/or glyphic texts already had many forms in prehispanic America, but the necessity of the production of images in relation to alphabetic texts in the New World is perforce a colonial strategy initiated by Spaniards. It permits, in the midst of charges of lies, distrust, and reticence, a "neutral" site for the correlation of the two cultural texts in order to establish a semblance of truth by which decisions could be made, metaphysics discussed, and histories recorded. This strategy moves throughout various crosscultural narratives as they occur in law, Christian doctrine, history, and ultimately fiction. This strategy, however, is not based upon any articulated or consistent theory about images, rather it is based upon the contingency of the context of and the participants in the narrative. And what I would like to show within the structure of this paper in terms of the order of the evidence presented is that as one moves through the colonial production of truth content in law, in religion, in history, and even in the novel, this strategy of establishing truth through images unravels so as to be seen as absurd within the fiction of crosscultural translation. I begin with the narrative of law in New Spain because it is literally within that narrative that the performance of translation through image as referent is judged absolutely to be acceptable or not as a legitimate presentation to establish truth.

Law

In 1531, a lawsuit was brought by Hernando Cortés in Mexico City against the members of the first Audiencia of Mexico, Nuño de Guzmán, Juan Ortiz de Matienzo, and Diego

Delgadillo who had taken advantage of Cortés's return to Spain in 1528 to take control of lands and resources, particularly in the native town of Huejotzingo, that had been granted to Cortés. In the course of preparing the brief, Cortés's lawyer asked for an extension of time to prepare his case because, as he states:

it has come to my notice that in this city [Huejotzingo] there are certain leading men [natives] of the said town who have paintings of what the said town gave to the said licentiates. I beseech Your Majesty that you command and compel them to give them [the paintings] to the secretary because from them I make [my] presentation; and I ask that their statements be taken by means of the paintings and by the questionnaire which I have presented in the case and for this I ask an extension of time if necessary . . .⁸

The extension was granted and the paintings, eight in all, were brought to Mexico City along with three witnesses from Huejotzingo. It is thus the existence of the indigenous paintings that draws native participation into the drama of a litigation between Spaniards. The native witnesses are sworn to tell the truth,⁹ and then the words of the men from Huejotzingo are translated by an interpreter and transcribed by a notary into the written case. Yet the paintings stand prior to their oath and testimony, and therefore the content of the testimony is not substantiated just by the written transcription of the verbal translation. It is the presence of the paintings placed literally before the view of the witness as he speaks, the interpreter as he translates, and the notary as he writes that forms/creates a common cultural space through which native speech moves (crossculturally) to arrive in a Spanish context as an acceptable form of evidence that will then be evaluated by the court. For example, the response of Esteban, the third witness from Huejotzingo, to a question concerning the forced tribute of corn was recorded as follows:

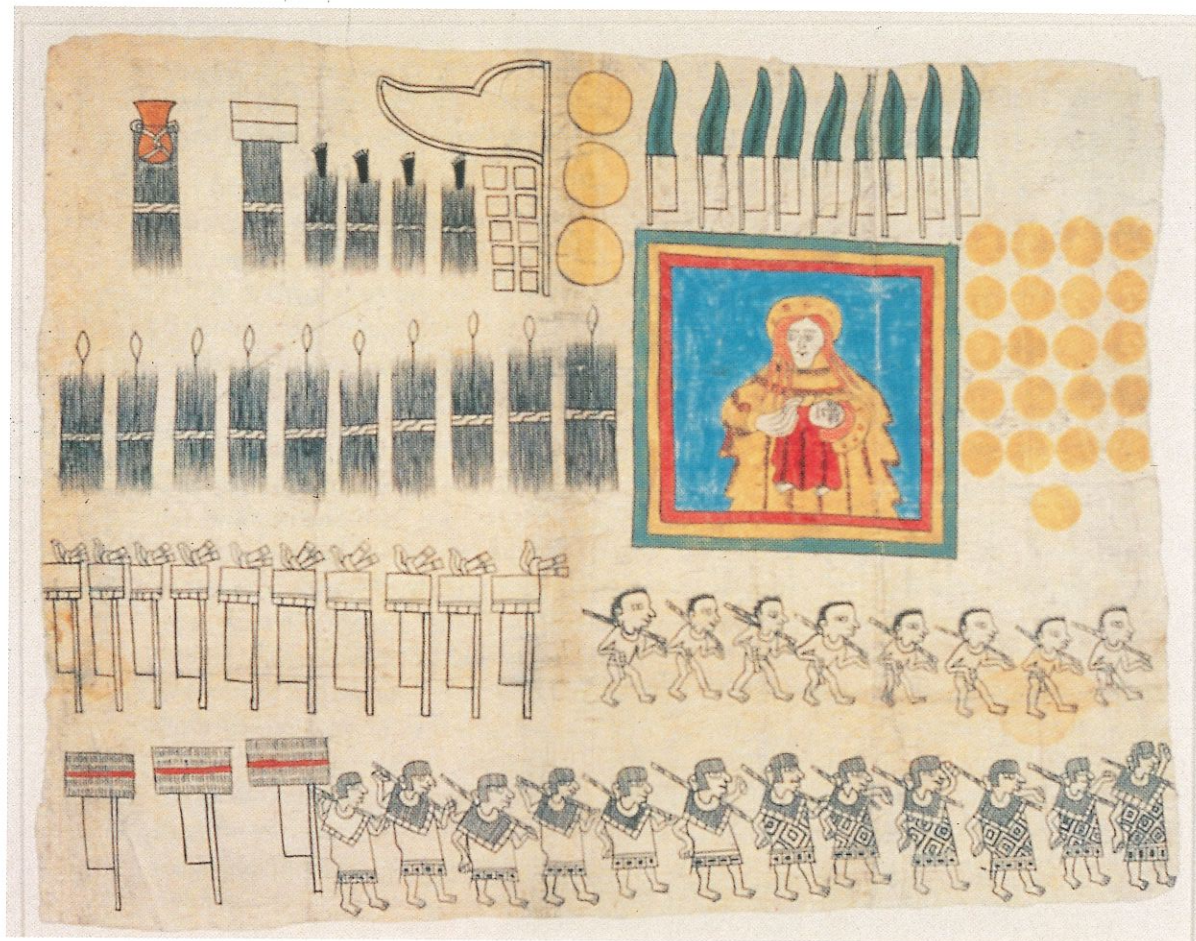
And as to the [amount] of maize they have given to the said factor [in 1529], they have it painted in a painting which he asked to be shown [Figure 8.1]. And when he saw it, he said through the said translator, regarding the black images, painted like the combs of the Indians, that each picture represents four hundred loads of maize and the other seventeen black bands, in the manner of outstretched banners of the Indians, each one of them is twenty loads . . . And concerning the tribute of the year 1530, they sent them all maize which amounts to nine red bands, after the fashion of Indian red combs, and each one of the said bands is four hundred, and of the other red band, painted after the fashion of an outstretched banner, he says that they are twenty loads. All of this said maize he says that they had taken from a granary, which they have depicted there in the said painting . . . And this is what he knows about this question. The said painted paper is signed by me, the said notary and secretary.¹⁰

In this passage, as emphasized above, the notary takes the reader through a remarkable transformational narrative that charts the crosscultural movement of the witness's testimony from oral Nahuatl words through the painting into a Spanish frame of reference. The transformation can be said to occur in seven acts: 1) the priority of the painting as separate from the individual testimony, "they have it painted in a painting"; 2) the placing of the collective image in the context of the individual witness before he speaks,



8.1 Anonymous, Mexican. Painting Number 7. Paint on amatl paper, Huejotzingo Codex, c.1530. Washington D.C., Library of Congress. (Photo: library.)

"he asked to be shown"; 3) the viewing of the painting by Esteban, identifying the image to which he will refer his words, "and when he saw it"; 4) the speech of what he sees, "he said"; 5) the oral translation of that speech, "through the said translator"; 6) the transcription of the image into word/text, "regarding the black images"; and 7) the notary's own description of what the image looks like for a Spanish audience, "painted like the combs of the Indians." Only then does Esteban's evidence become apparent in



8.2 Anonymous, Mexican. Painting Number 5. Paint on amatl paper, Huejotzingo Codex, c.1530. Washington D.C., Library of Congress. (Photo: library.)

terms of what the paintings represent in relation to the interests of the case: "four hundred loads of maize." By naming the referent of the words as they occur in the painting (the black images) and by describing their form by analogy so as to be recognizable to any viewer (like Indian combs) the presentation of the paintings becomes intelligible through translation, both visual and verbal; their validity as evidence, however, is predicated upon their existence prior to the immediacy of the oral testimony itself.

Like Spanish witnesses, all three native witnesses do offer their own experiential presence at the events as validation of their testimony. But it is through the paintings, not their experience, that their words are taken, as García de Llerena's original request to have the paintings presented makes clear: "I beseech Your Majesty that you command and compel them to give them [the paintings] to the secretary because. . . I ask that their statements be taken by means of the paintings." The validity of the narrative of what they had personally seen and heard is predicated upon the existence of the paintings and the

agreement of what can be said/written to be seen in them. Thus the transcript of the court case not only contains a description of the image, but a description of the act of seeing the image.

The locus of that agreement within the document is through the notary himself, Alonso Valverde, that supposedly passive agent of transcription, who interjects his own presence in terms of what he sees and hears. So, for example, in transcribing an earlier part of Esteban's testimony, he writes: "All that has been stated is painted on the said paper on which is depicted the said image of Our Lady and which is signed with my rubric."¹¹ Yet what he actually saw and signed was a painting on bark cloth consisting only of a series of glyphs that stand for objects and numbers and an oddly placed image of the Virgin and Child (Figure 8.2). The image of the Madonna and Child, however, is crucial to the notary's viewing because it is the only figure that allows a completely unmediated recognition that cannot be questioned by a Spanish viewer. To the notary, it is his own pre-possessed sacred cultural icon: "ymagen de Nuestra Señora."¹² This unproblematic viewing anchors the notary's viewing of all the other figures as depicting what is said by the Indian witness.¹³ Thus the written words of the Spanish notary stand to (re)confirm the truth of the witnesses' oral testimony, not through hearing but through seeing a "truth" to which all the participants in the production of the testimony – witness, court scribe, and official translator – had already sworn to give before the sign of the cross.

However, before truth is finally established in a court of law, the evidence by which truth is decided can be contested, and the defense was given the chance to rebut the evidence presented by Cortés's lawyer. In regard to the witnesses from Huejotzingo and the paintings, the defense charged that:

The Indians presented by the contrary party lack credibility, and they should not be given credence because they are Indian vassals of the said Marqués and *all Indians in general* are bad Christians, drunks, *liars*, idolaters, eaters of human flesh, vile persons who for anything whatsoever will perjure themselves, and in regard to the paintings that the contrary party presents, even less faith should be paid to them because they are made by the same infidel and barbarous Indians and for it my parties were not consulted and thus they could have painted whatever they wished.¹⁴

As in any good defense, the character of the witnesses is attacked. But the attack on the credibility of the witnesses from Huejotzingo is not based on individual character, as it is in the case of a Spanish witness, rather it is based on their identity as Indians who by their nature are many evil things but, most important of all, within a court of law, they are liars and perjurers. The paintings, while not to be believed, are not discredited because they are in and of themselves paintings, but because they are made by the Indians. Yet it is the paintings that were called to court as evidence and not the Indians of Huejotzingo as witnesses. The defense thus reverses the order of priority, hoping that by discrediting first the Indians, the paintings and the evidence presented through them will also be discredited. After all, how could any Spaniard in 1531 deny that Indians did eat human flesh, practiced idolatry, were liars? It would appear to be a shrewd defense, playing upon commonly held opinions about the nature of Indians, essential to the very justification of the Spanish presence in New Spain.

Yet the defense failed, and the four judges declared in open court before the two opposing lawyers that: "We find . . . that the party of the said Marqués proved his intention and demand . . . We grant and pronounce it as well proven; and the said licentiate *did not prove their defense pleas nor anything that would be of any use to them.*"¹⁵

Now, of course, other evidence was presented in the case by both sides, but the court accepted all that was presented by Cortés's lawyer as true. What is crucial here within a colonial context of law is that a forum for the presentation of non-European evidence could be constructed so as for it to be judged as "true" despite the character of the native. The establishment of truth is found to exist in the suspension of distance between words and images: "All that has been stated is painted." Thus the spoken testimony in Nahuatl that is absent in the record appears within the Spanish text through the written reference to the presence of the images at the time of the testimony and the continued presence of the images which are kept with the court case. It is not just that the paintings are authentic, it is that they authenticate what is said and written, not by analogy but by correspondence. And the recognition of a correspondence or correlation between what is seen and said/written establishes sufficiently the conveyance of a "truth" originating in one culture so as for it to be accepted within the parameters of "truth" in the other.

Christian Doctrine

To convey truth across cultures was not just a contingency of the practice of law within a colonial situation. It was fundamental to the rationale for the European presence in the New World, but in this case truth had to be believed to move from European to native. The teaching of Christian truth to the native population was paramount in order to replace the idolatry of a false religion which the natives had been led to practice by Satanic deceit.¹⁶ Here, in contrast to what obtains in a court case, truth preexists man and does not need to be established; however, in the New World it had yet to be perceived by the natives.

Many interrelated strategies were developed by the early missionaries to convey this universal, divine truth.¹⁷ Yet only one means of conveyance, the use of images in sermons and instructional practices to illustrate various aspects of Church doctrine, was claimed to be newly invented in the New World. This claim was based upon divine inspiration – that is, that there is an unparalleled ontological proximity between sacred Biblical truth and the means of its conveyance by pictures because they are equally produced through the agency of a pre-existing God.

Although the use of paintings to teach Christian doctrine has a long history in Christian practice, the Franciscan, Diego Valadés, insists on its Franciscan invention in one of the most detailed descriptions of the practice in both the text and engravings of his *Rhetorica Christiana*, 1579 (Figure 8.3).¹⁸ What then does Valadés mean by this claim? In part, as Pauline Watts discusses gesture elsewhere in this volume (Chapter 7), it refers to the technical use of images as mnemonic aids (within the classical tradition of artificial memory) as a means to instruct the newly converted Indians.¹⁹ But the claim to Franciscan invention is not merely to be seen within the rhetorical production of memory through images. It is the discovery (realization/divine inspiration) that, through images, natives had the capacity to apprehend the truth of the content of what they were

being taught to memorize despite their barbarous character. The Franciscan "discovery" resides in the awareness that images produce a site of correlation for a crosscultural transmission of Christian truth. Because the words of one pass to the other through images, Valadés can write: ". . . this art for spreading the Divine Word was so fruitful and so compelling that as soon as the sermon was finished, the Indians themselves began to discuss among themselves the figures that had been explained to them."²⁰ The authority to speak of the Word of God moves here from the Franciscan voice through the painting to the native voice.

For Valadés, a *mestizo* and fluent in three Indian languages, his own experience validates what he believes to occur; still, he writes in Latin to his European audience. And in order to establish that natives, in viewing these divinely inspired images, were "attracted and led to the knowledge of the true God creator of heaven and earth,"²¹ Valadés needs to establish for his reader that the natives, even though they might be as stupid as he says, were capable of producing and therefore perceiving truth. Here stands his dilemma: how can it be demonstrated that the natives not only memorized but perceived the truth through the images shown to them by the Franciscans when before they had only perceived the lies of their many picture books and idols? It is here that Valadés must demonstrate the existence of a mutual cultural space in which comparable truths can be shown to be held by both cultures and for which an image of correspondence can be produced.

Thus Valadés prefaces his discussion concerning the Franciscan use of paintings by leading his Latin readers through a series of examples of the native use of images. He writes in detail about how Mexican merchants kept accurate track of accounts using their paintings, and he compares the pictographic images of Mexican royalty with the hieroglyphs of Egypt. All of this discussion is kept within the secular use of native images so as to present them as being non-idolatrous and hence not false. But Valadés does not rely only on his own written description as proof. Immediately before commencing his discussion of the Franciscan use of images, he invites the reader to contemplate an engraving that illustrates the Mexican calendrical system (Figure 8.4).²²

The invitation is not innocent. The reader is asked to stop reading and to look at the engraving provided by Valadés before moving on to his description of Franciscan invention. The engraving thus occupies a visual transitional place between Valadés's textual descriptions of native images and European images and it becomes for the reader, now viewer, the site for his or her own act of recognition of a mutual space of cultural agreement that then permits Valadés to imply, but not openly state, a homologous relationship between native and European uses of imagery to convey truth.

But what exactly is the reader asked to see? It is a diagrammatic chart of concentric circles divided so as to show the division of the Mexican year into 18 months of 20 days each. Yet, although the diagram is a European construct, it is not a "pure" European image in the sense that Valadés uses Mexican pictographic images for the 20 day names and 52 year names. This is the only place in all of Valadés's engravings that prehispanic images refer to their prehispanic referent, so it is his only "*mestizo*" image in which European and Mexican forms of representation have equal valiance. The placement of Mexican forms here is not arbitrary. Neither does it serve simply to demonstrate the Mexican way of recording time. It provides the reader with an image in which European and native forms of knowledge have equal and corresponding truth value; Valadés's

8.3 (right) Diego Valadés. *Franciscan Teaching in Mexico*. Engraving, page 211 [sic], *Rhetorica Christiana*, Perugia, 1579. Providence, The John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. (Photo: library.)

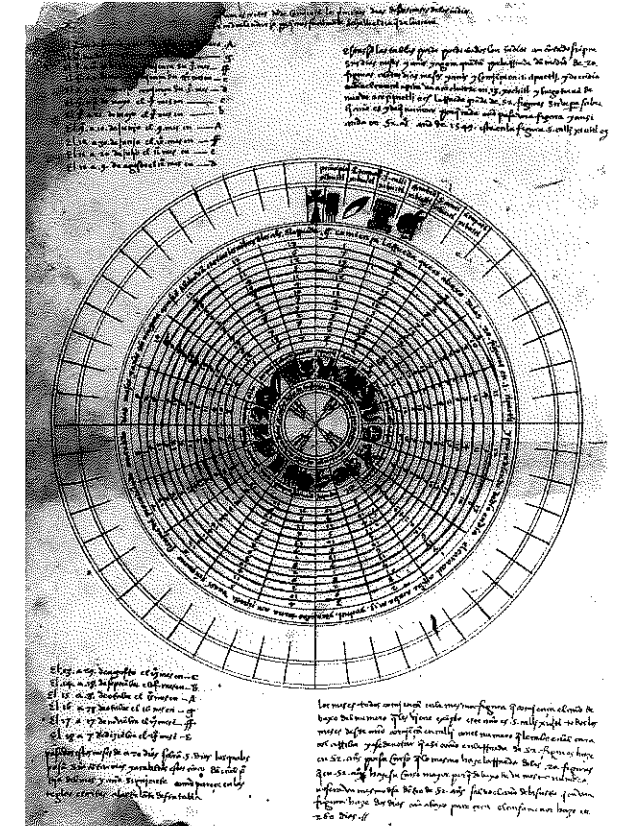
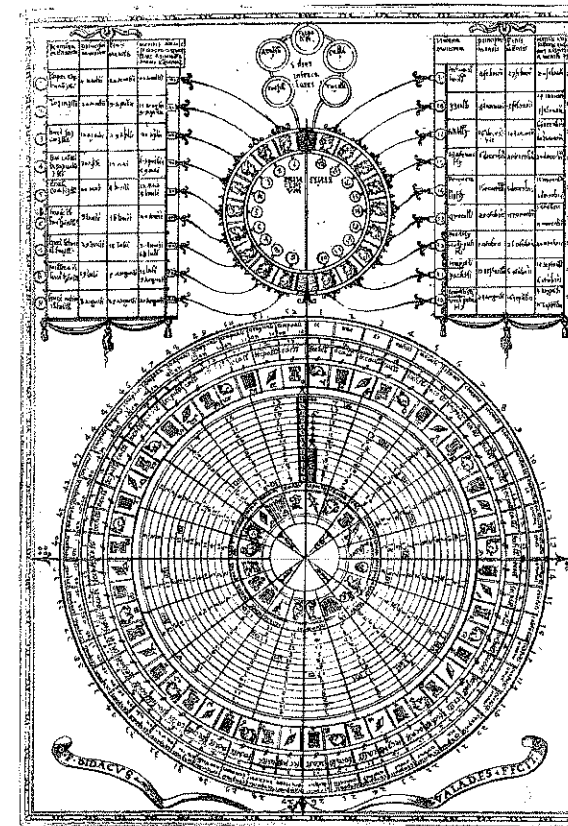


8.4 (opposite page, left) Diego Valadés. Mexican Calendar. Engraving, page 100, *Rhetorica Christiana*, Perugia, 1579. Providence, The John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. (Photo: library.)

8.5 (opposite page, right) Mexican Calendar. Paint on European paper, dated 1549. Inserted into Fray Motolinía, *Memoriales*, MS., 1541. Austin, Library of the University of Texas, Benson Collection. (Photo: library.)

engraving provides an image of the Mexican calendar correlated with the European calendar. And although it is correlated with the Julian calendar, Diego Valadés understood very well that the Christian calendar and its correct calibration was a monumental issue in the 1570s in Rome where he wrote and published the first part of his book. Whether or not he discussed the Mexican calendar with Pope Gregory, to whom he dedicates the *Rhetorica Christiana*, is unclear, but calling attention to it in a publication appearing only three years before the institution of the Gregorian calendar is no minor act. Such a correlation demonstrates the independent and thus pre-existing ability of Mexicans to produce images through which truth could at once be perceived by them and be recognized by a European.²³

It is no accident that Valadés asks his reader to contemplate this engraving before reading about the miraculous invention of the Franciscans. His tactic of first visually presenting the calendar and its correlation with the European calendar establishes that a place of truth exists within the corpus of native images. This tactic demonstrates to the reader that Mexicans can receive/perceive the Christian truth through the images that the Franciscans present to them. But why does he choose the calendar as the site of his correlation rather than his illustration of the very act of Christian dialogue through image between Franciscan and native (Figure 8.3)? This decision seems especially odd because Valadés tells the reader that he will not offer an explanation of the native calendar



because it ought to be done in the Mexican language.²⁴ By stating the impossibility of translation and hence explanation for this image while providing an elaborate textual explanation for his illustration of the Franciscan sermon,²⁵ the calendar image seems to be a place of non-communication.²⁶ Yet the choice of the calendar image is as tactical as its placement because the calendar had already been privileged by an earlier Franciscan, Motolinía, as the site for recognizing the capacity of certain Mexican images to represent truth through which knowledge of Mexicans could be perceived by the European.²⁷

Valadés's source for his engraving is found in Motolinía's 1541 *Memoriales*,²⁸ into which had been inserted both a description and a drawing, made perhaps by Francisco de las Navas, of the Mexican calendar dated 1549 (Figure 8.5); this drawing also includes a correlation of sorts with the Christian calendar. Its insertion into Motolinía's *Memoriales* as the only visual information in that manuscript for the European reader provides the precedent for Valadés's own placement of his calendar engraving in the *Rhetorica Christiana*.

The drawing of the calendar in Motolinía's manuscript is inserted into Chapter 16 in which Motolinía describes the Mexican calendar, but this, in itself, is not critical to Valadés's choice of the calendar as a sign of the capacity of truth.²⁹ It is, rather, Motolinía's reference to Chapter 16 in the "Epístola Proemial del Autor . . .," a dedicatory letter that begins the manuscript, that suggests why Valadés places such crucial



8.6 Diego Valadés. *Crucifixion*. Engraving, between pages 220 and 221, *Rhetorica Christiana*, Perugia, 1579. Providence, The John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. (Photo: library.)

truth value in his own engraving. Motolinía writes in his preamble that he will give the reader the most truthful account of what he has been able to learn.³⁰ He then lists, as possible sources for this knowledge, five types of Mexican painted books. He writes, however, that four of the books are not to be believed in the way in which one believes the Gospels because they were neither written by John, Mark, Matthew, nor Luke but were invented by the devil. Motolinía thus creates a kind of medieval typology in which the four books of the Gospel stand for God's truth in distinction to the four books of the Mexicans which stand for the devil's deceit. But then Motolinía mentions the fifth book which stands outside this numerical typology, and it alone is categorized as capable of conveying truth through its images. This book is the Mexican pictorial account of days and years or *xihuatonalamatl* as Motolinía calls it. And it is precisely at this place in his prologue that Motolinía refers the reader to Chapter 16 ("something of this appears in . . . chapter sixteen") into which has been inserted the drawing of the calendar, the very source of Valadés's engraving.³¹

Valadés's invitation to his readers to view his engraving clearly plays upon Motolinía's own reference to the reader to see his Chapter 16. However, Valadés's appeal reverses the cultural direction of information through image. Motolinía, as narrator, refers to this single Mexican source as validating the truthfulness of what he is about to tell his readers about Mexicans. Valadés seizes upon this image, now already established as standing outside the typological dichotomy of Christian truth and pagan lies, to demonstrate that

natives were not only capable of producing historical truth through their own pictorial images but, because of that, were capable of perceiving divine truth through Christian images. That is, for Valadés, the image is not a site for the explanation of the native to the European – in fact he rejects that completely. The image is the site that authenticates his claim to his readers, and perhaps himself, of the truthfulness of what the natives say among themselves as they stand speaking in Nahuatl or some other Indian language before the Franciscan paintings.³²

Here, with Valadés, one moves from the matter-of-fact necessity of a specific crosscultural communication to establish truth in a court of law to the desire to communicate the true faith across culture. Judgment here does not rest in the final opinion of a judge, but in the Final Judgment. Yet just as the *escribano* can believe that he could see in the Huejotzingo paintings all that has been said, so too Valadés can believe that natives could see in the Franciscan images all that has been said to them and that they could now speak among themselves as if they too had experienced and understood the teachings of the Gospels.³³

Thus, in one remarkable engraving, Valadés presents to the viewer/reader an allegorical image that asserts this claim by creating a pictorial space that collapses differences of time and space (Figure 8.6). Beginning with a print of the Crucifixion, perhaps by Dürer,³⁴ Valadés moves with his community of native Christians out of the contemporary place of preaching into the space of sacred history. First he displaces the narrative action of the biblical event to the middle ground but without reducing the scale of the figures or altering the style in which they were originally created. In the foreground, he now places a group of figures handled in a different style and scale than those in the middle ground. Here a group of seated natives look into the picture plane and at various parts of the Christian narrative, while a standing Franciscan, perhaps Valadés himself, points to the principal event. This is the same didactic gesture taken by the figure preaching in the pulpit to a congregation of natives seated within the architecture of a colonial church (Figure 8.3). In that engraving, however, no one enters into the illustrations of the Gospel. The paintings of Christ's life do not define the space of action but are merely depicted hanging on the wall of a contemporary church in New Spain. They illustrate the mundane didactic function of images as the pictorial screen for the discourse of a sermon by the gesturing priest. That is, as paintings they still function merely as aids for the illiterate or as what the Jesuit missionary, José de Acosta, calls "*libro(s) para los idiotas que no saben leer.*"³⁵

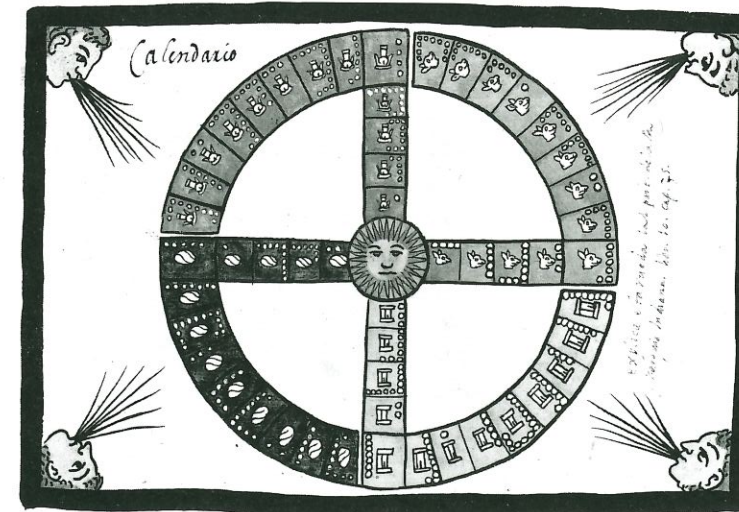
In the engraving of the Crucifixion, however, Franciscan and native have been joined together with the subject of the Gospel image.³⁶ Valadés thus invents a singular image, marked by two sets of figures and styles such that they all occupy the same space and time. The Latin text in the legend below the image refers to the salvation of mankind through Christ's blood and presumably this is the lesson being articulated by the standing and gesturing Franciscan. But by being in the same space as the crucifixion, Valadés proposes to his European viewer/reader that the Franciscan and the audience in New Spain share the same messianic truth of the Gospel through their common experience such that its sacred meaning can be embraced as re-enacted in the ritual of the Mass. This, then, is not the Baroque theatre of imagery as later produced by someone like Bernini in his sculpture of Santa Teresa. This is a distinctly colonial Renaissance image in which is posited by a *mestizo* the utopian belief in the shared pictorial space of truth.

History: Tovar, Acosta, and Durán

Images proliferated in the New World in order to establish many kinds of truth to varying audiences and contexts. One area that continued to hold fascination for Europeans was knowledge about the native past, both its history and religion. But knowledge of history had to cross through the mediation of the author, and how could the author prove to his reader that what he wrote was true? The textual form of the experiential authority of the author was not always enough and doubts persisted as to *how* the author knew that the histories he recorded were true. Even the Jesuit scholar, José de Acosta, who had spent so many years in Peru studying the history of the Inca, once outside the domain of his own experience had doubts about the truth of historical accounts in Mexico. He expressed these doubts in 1586 in a letter to his Jesuit colleague, Juan de Tovar: "I have enjoyed seeing and studying the Mexican history that you have written and I think that people in Europe will enjoy it also . . . But I wish you would satisfy certain doubts that have occurred to me. In the first place what certainty or authority does this relation or history possess?" He then goes on to ask how such quantities and varieties of information could be remembered over such a long period of time by a people who lacked writing. He ends by asking Tovar: "If you could relieve me of these doubts, the pleasure afforded by this history would not be liable to the suspicion that it may not be true and certain as a history should be?"³⁷

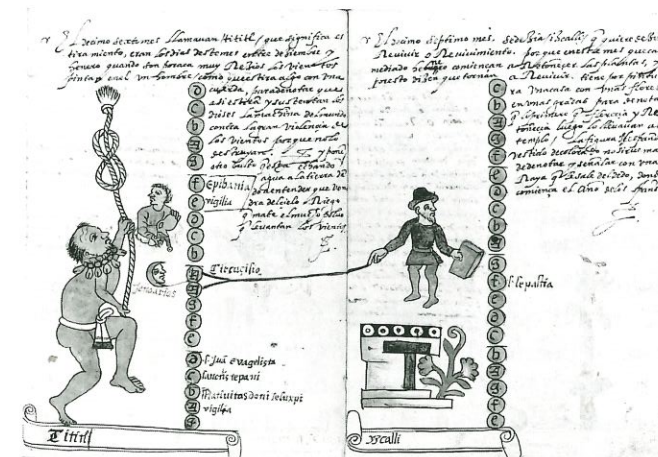
Tovar understood the doubts and responded, writing that he could have answered immediately but, as he wanted to ensure that his history would find favor with Acosta, he had gone back to check his sources. He describes how he consulted with the old Indian leaders and how he discussed their history with them through their paintings. Like Motolinía and Valadés, he privileges the calendar as the site for establishing the truth of what he knows and writes. Tovar first describes the image of a calendar wheel that was depicted in the history he had already sent Acosta (Figure 8.7), but he also sends a new calendar composed of text and illustrations of the months and days and native feasts, and which is equated with the ecclesiastical calendar as well as the zodiac (Figure 8.8).³⁸ Both forms of the calendar are asked visually to confirm the temporal structure upon which Mexican history is authenticated ("In these wheels all the events and memorable occurrences that they had in their histories were indicated, *as you will see* in the wheel at the end of the calendar that goes with this [letter].") Tovar notes, however, that the Mexican figures and characters only convey concepts as opposed to "our writing [which] refers to what is written by each word itself without referring to anything else."³⁹ But the Mexican images became precise through memory so that "many orations were preserved without varying a word from generation to generation until the Spaniards came," when they began to write it down.

That is, historical knowledge is possible in both cultures so that what Tovar has written is true even though the cultural relationship between symbols and their meaning may be different. In the new calendar that Tovar sends to Acosta, this equation is made pictorial so as not to miss the point. An indexical figure literally connects the Mexican system to the European system (Figure 8.9). The figure of a Spaniard is drawn on the page dedicated to a depiction and description of the 17th Mexican month. His placement, however, is outside Tovar's construction of Mexican temporal space, and the



8.7 (left) Juan de Tovar. Mexican Calendar Wheel. Ink and color on European paper, *Historia*, MS., 1585. Providence, The John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. (Photo: library.)

8.8 (right) Juan de Tovar. Third and Fourth Months. Ink and color on European paper, *Tovar Calendar*, MS., 1586. Providence, The John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. (Photo: library.)



8.9 (left) Juan de Tovar. Sixteenth and Seventeenth Months. Ink and color on European paper, *Tovar Calendar*, MS., 1586. Providence, The John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. (Photo: library.)

figure gestures across the page and time. His index finger points and is connected by a line that emanates from that finger to the row of 20 day signs on the opposite page which belongs to the sixteenth Mexican month. The line bifurcates to indicate the days in the Mexican month that also mark the end and beginning of the Christian year. The gloss clearly explains that the figure is denotative not illustrative: "the figure of the Spaniard dressed in red serves no more than to denote and signal with a line that comes from the finger where begins the year of the Spaniards."

Yet this figure does more than signal the Christian year. It is the only figure that engages through pictorial gesture with the alphabetic text. His gaze is not turned towards the act described in the gloss, rather the head is turned backward with the eyes looking upward in the direction of the gloss itself, as if in the act of reading it. That is, the figure seemingly becomes the image of its text through its decoding of it. The multidirectional body of the Spaniard, as agent, becomes the contorted transformational gesture of text into image that leads to the intersection of western and Mexican sign systems and their mutual ability to produce comparable meaning. Moreover, what the gloss does not mention is that the figure holds a book in his other hand, the sign of European written knowledge. The denotative image of the Spaniard thus does more than point forward while it looks backward; it collapses the gulf between European written words and Mexican images by holding on to and connecting these two forms of knowledge, just as Tovar himself has done for Acosta.

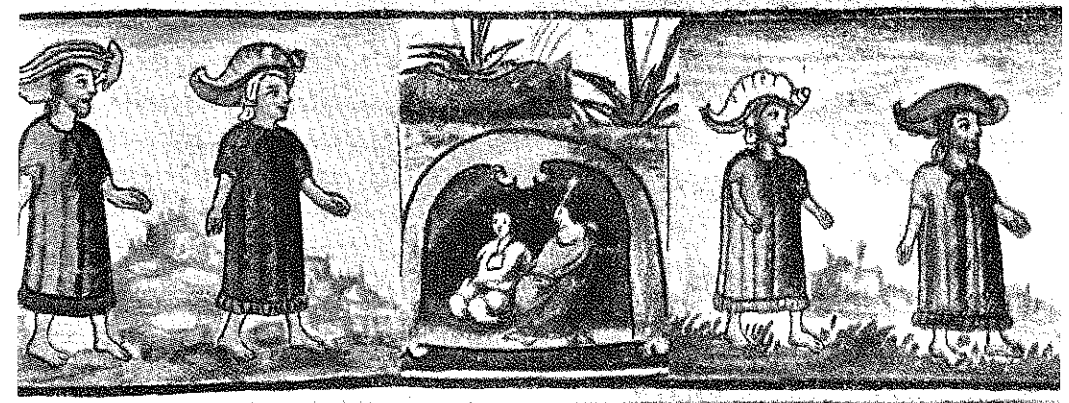
For Tovar, Mexican images are capable of revealing the truth "as every history should be" and he sends this calendar as part of his reply to Acosta's doubts. But what is problematic in Tovar's defense through an appeal to Mexican images as authenticating the history that Acosta had read and doubted is that Tovar's images (which illustrate his history) are not copies of "true" Mexican images. Rather, they are copies made after copies found in a manuscript made by the Dominican friar, Diego Durán. In fact, Tovar refers to Durán in his letter to Acosta: "In addition [to consulting with native lords to explain their images that came from their libraries], I saw a book made by a Dominican friar, a relative of mine, which was very similar to the ancient library that I had seen and which helped me refresh my memory in making the history that you [Acosta] have now read." Tovar's reference to Durán and his copying of Durán's images and text therefore attribute an authority to Durán's work that is equal to that of native oral and pictorial sources. Yet they are not the same thing because Durán's work already mediates the native sources, so that Tovar is placing as much faith on the mediated illustrations of native sources as on the native sources themselves. How is it then that Durán's version of Mexican history and religion is so authentic for Tovar?⁴⁰ Clearly, Tovar is aware that Durán's text and illustrations are based on images taken from Aztec sources, but Tovar also can see clearly that Durán's copyist has transformed the mnemonic Mexican pictographs into Renaissance-style illustrations by placing them in landscapes, within frames, and at the heading of chapters (Figures 8.10 and 8.11).

Yet Tovar accepts their presence in this quasi-emblematic form as the proof of the accuracy of Durán's methods of inquiry because Durán asserts that his illustrations can stand for his original dialogue with natives in which his translation of the mnemonic act of discourse across culture is authenticated by the aura of the antiquity of the native image to which his illustration, as a copy, refers. In his *Libro de los Ritos y Ceremonias*



8.10 (left) Diego Durán. Topiltzin. First illustration, *Libro de los Ritos y Ceremonias*, MS., c.1579. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional. (Photo: library.)

8.11 (below) Diego Durán. Topiltzin. Second illustration, *Libro de los Ritos y Ceremonias*, MS., c.1579. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional. (Photo: library.)



composed in c. 1579, he begins with a description of Topiltzin, "a great man who once came to this land," saying that "the information that exists about him is great, I saw him painted in the way that he appears above (Figure 8.10), on very old and ancient paper in Mexico City, with a venerable representation. It showed [Topiltzin] to be an old man with a long red beard turning white."⁴¹ Further on in the same first chapter Durán introduces another of his copyist's images:

I found the painting as you will see it painted on this page next to the painting of Topiltzin no less old and ancient as the other [Figure 8.11], which in order to lend it to me, the Indian from Chiauhitla who had it, made me first swear that I would return it to him. When I had given him my word that when I had copied it I would return it, he loaned it to me . . . He did not leave the side of the painter until he had finished it . . .

Durán then returns to the first image, writing:

Wanting to confirm if this were true I asked an old Indian from Coatepec . . . to tell me whether what was written and painted there was true and as the Indians find it difficult to give explanations unless they can consult the book of their village, he went home and brought back a painting . . . This native narrated the life of Topiltzin to me like the other or better such that I was more than a little contented. He showed me the picture of Topiltzin celebrating feasts, wearing a feathered crown we saw in the painting. It looked very much like the miter that bishops wear on their heads when they say Mass. The painting is this.⁴²

Durán compresses, in these passages, the two acts of seeing into a single sentence so that the reader participates, through the illustration, in Durán's own viewing of the original painting ("el cual vi pintado a la manera que arriba aparece"). Durán then describes textually what is seen in the painting, but one is not sure if the description pertains to the original one that Durán saw or to the illustration he provides.⁴³ That is, he vacillates in his reading of the picture into words in which temporal phenomena, in this case the history of Topiltzin, is presented through the verbal description of the static object. Durán's description pertains both to the absent ancient original and to the present illustration.

Durán's stratagem is important because he has already told the reader in the prologue that ". . . they [Mexicans] distrust us, do not believe us. They will not tell us things they know about the lives of their ancestors."⁴⁴ Yet despite this assertion, he must convince his readers that what he is telling them is the truth because the truth was told to him, and this is done by including reproductions of the images through which the natives narrated their history. That the images are said to agree in detail with the oral narratives of the Indians means that what Durán has written, as translated text, is true. The image appears both physically and textually as the sign of Durán's task and method of transferring information crossculturally. But here, unlike the court case of Huejotzingo, 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 author and the reader. Their presence does not authenticate the text by their own authenticity. They do not stand prior to the text, rather they illustrate the text that describes them. The correspondence between text and image is not now a movement across culture, but is circular within European discourse in which the image reifies the textual authenticity of Durán's own visual and auratic experience. Durán now boldly writes that his copy is the image of what he had seen as it is described in the text.

The presence of images is not, however, necessary to establish the authority of Durán's text and, when Acosta incorporates the texts of both Durán and Tovar into his own work, he simply refers to the images and does not reproduce them.⁴⁵ Yet Acosta, by accepting the veracity of these authors, accepts unquestioningly their images as truthful. Tovar's and Durán's images may be copies but as copies they have as their object of imitation the native images through which the originary dialogue across culture took place. Hence they function as natural signs that confirm the texts that Acosta reproduces. They appease by their presence, either as copies or textual reference, the doubts concerning historical knowledge which in Europe was possible because "writing refers to what is written by each word itself without referring to anything else," while in the

Americas that knowledge was possible because of native images and memory which through description and translation could then be conveyed in European alphabetic text.

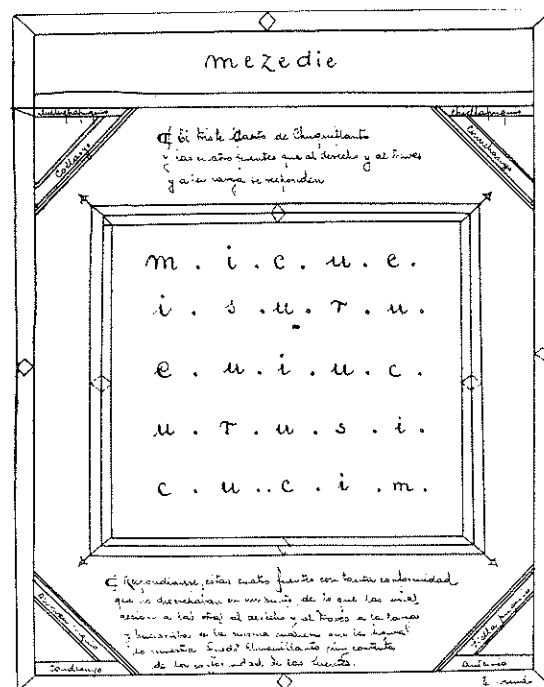
History and Fiction

As one moves from Durán through Tovar to Acosta there is an ever-increasing distance from the original site of crosscultural discourse through image as it is imagined to occur in the Huejotzingo trial and Franciscan teaching. Yet in all cases, the image and its description stand to displace doubts about the credulity of the speaker/author. The image becomes as much the production of the author, either by finding or copying of the original, as is his text. Its presence plays upon the ambiguity of the image's referent as image. That is, by its nature the image refers by imitation to the thing it reproduces and hence its unmediated immediacy seemingly corroborates independently the textual reproduction of that phenomenon which has been extracted through linguistic and cultural differences.

The fiction of independence is maintained by the presence of authenticity, either as an original or as a copy of the original. The fiction, however, becomes more difficult to sustain in the absence of an original image, as in Peru where there was no comparable prior native pictorial tradition as there was in Mexico. Thus, in one of the few Peruvian pictorial manuscripts, Martín de Murúa's *Historia del Origen y Genealogía Real de los Reyes Incas del Perú*, the reference of most images is not to an independent original source but to the text itself. Here, there is no claim to their status as anything other than as illustrations. For example, Murúa recounts the dream of one of the *akllakuna* (cloistered young women dedicated to the service of the Inca sun god) who sits in the middle of the cloister and listens to the four springs repeat her prayer back to her. He provides two images of this account, the first of which is like many of his other illustrations and pictorially depicts the sleeping *aklla* placed between four fountains (Figure 8.12). But the second image is altogether different and indicates a sensitivity towards the difference between the image as illustration of text and image as conveyance of truth. That is, the second image is presented as an unmediated visualization of proof of what he has written about the wondrous nature of the dream (Figure 8.13). It is a diagram of the cloister filled with the four Quechua words of the *aklla*'s prayer, arranged in a grid pattern of 25 letters such that the first word of the prayer forms the four borders and reads in all four different directions. The letters of the diagonal, central horizontal and central vertical columns also form a pattern in which the words can be read the same way in either direction. Murúa's motive in this case is not illustrative but demonstrative and he writes that "in order to see if it were true about which these Indians tell, I wanted to place here on the other side of the page the four fountains and the names and the sad song of Chiquillanto [the *aklla*], in order to see by the figure if [the words] were communicated the same in either direction, and I saw it to be something marvelous, as the figure shows."⁴⁶ Here Murúa invites the Spanish reader to discover with him, through his own image, the truth of what has been told to him and that which he is now telling. Together, Murúa and the reader visually enter into the mytho-history of Inca dreams in which the fantasy of the unconscious becomes configured and confirmed by a fantastic image. The image that



8.12 Martín de Murúa. Drawing of Aklla's Dream. *Historia del Perú*, 1590. Formerly Loyola, Jesuit Archive; location now unknown (illustration taken from *Historia del Perú*, ed. Constantino Bayle).



8.14 (above) Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, Madrid: Juan de la Cuesta, 1605, pages 32–33. (Photo: author.)

8.13 (left) Martín de Murúa. Diagram of Aklla's Dream. *Historia del Perú*, 1590.

Murúa provides here is completely fabricated, as he acknowledges, based upon his transcription of the oral prayer into the European alphabet, but unlike his other illustrations, it is presented as direct proof. Thus what becomes the authenticating source is not a prior native image (there is none); instead it is the oral text itself which becomes fixed not in a textual narrative transcription with illustration, but in a patterned form of a magical text/image.⁴⁷ It is neither one nor the other. What must be suspended here for belief, and in fact is not acknowledged by Murúa, is that the crosscultural act of conveying the miraculous orality of the other's dream becomes visible only by assigning to Quechua words which existed previously in a spoken state, western alphabetic values within a spatial matrix. Their representation as an anagram and a palindrome is thus not a literal translation of Quechua into Spanish, nor words into image in the sense of illustration, rather it is the transfiguration of spoken Quechua into a form of knowledge in which written Quechua words can be shown to reproduce (and therefore show/prove) the almost indescribable movement of sound in a dream.

Martín de Murúa's image begins as proof to himself and then is offered to the reader as the truth of what Murúa has been told as history, but the fantasy of dreams moves his history perilously close to fiction. Thus the visual gymnastics through which an image is given to the translation of a Quechua word/dream seems, today perhaps, ludicrous and false. Yet Murúa, at one level of crosscultural communication, performs no different an act than Cortés's lawyer, Valadés, Motolinía, Tovar, or Durán. They are all similar attempts to find an acceptable, neutral site upon which the doubts to truth can be put to rest by means of visual confirmation. That all but Murúa's image have been used almost exclusively by modern scholars as the site of iconographic exegesis on Precolumbian symbolic systems demonstrates how powerful this tactic remains.

Yet the credulity that an image engenders for the viewer as the site of crosscultural truth was long ago given the lie, but not in a court of law, nor history (how many history books are still illustrated?), nor philosophy, but in fiction. In Chapter IX, Part I of *Don Quijote*, Cervantes recounts the discovery of the Arabic manuscript that allowed him to continue the narrative "de nuestro famoso Español D. Quijote de la Mancha." However, the imagined discovered manuscript, Cide Hamete Benengeli's *Historia de Don Quijote de la Mancha*, is written in Arabic and Cervantes tells how, in a frenzy of desire, he had it immediately translated for him by a *ladino*, a bilingual Arab.⁴⁸ At the same time, Cervantes describes very carefully what is "pintada muy al natural" on the first page of the manuscript. Cervantes performs this act of ekphrasis because he notes that the translator is an Arab and therefore by his very nature cannot be trusted; however, the painting confirms the identification of the manuscript and its translation as true because the image agrees in almost every detail with the verbal description from the manuscript of the Arab.⁴⁹ That is, the Arab, although by nature a liar, has his translation confirmed as being true by an image that pre-exists the translation and thus it must first refer to the original Arabic text but then, because it also faithfully illustrates the translation as well, it forms the neutral site/sight of confirmation. But, of course, Cervantes provides no image for his reader (Figure 8.14). There is no site of confirmation of the truthfulness of the translation other than the author who is at once other (Arab) and self (Spaniard), but the reader is beguiled by the promise of the truth said to exist in a painting that is somewhere else.

One has not moved so very far from the *escribano* in the Huejotzingo case in the sense that he could see in a Mexican painting all that had been said. But for the reader of *Don Quijote* there is no image to see, there never was one, but one readily plays the game of fiction. But in the New World, a place to which Cervantes wanted to travel and to which Don Quixote did,⁵³ truth and reality were not just a clever word game. It was a place where truth was a lie, captured most eloquently in the famous phrase, "I obey but I do not comply," and used in earnest by Spaniards with brutal consequences for the native population. So then, one also can believe Guaman Poma, the native Andean author and illustrator, who, although he produced some 400 drawings in his 1000-page manuscript addressed to the king of Spain, writes about colonial Peru and by extension all of the Americas that "todo aca es mentira (everything here is a lie)."⁵⁴ That longed-for place of mutual recognition across cultures is thus held up to us by both Cervantes and Guaman Poma to be a fiction and a lie even as Guaman Poma compulsively drew pictures of it in order to denounce it. Here, in the New World, there is no justice and for this absence to become real, it too must become an image occupied by Spaniard and native.⁵⁵

PART 3

Early Collecting Practices

Historia de la Literatura Náhuatl, Vol. 2, 97. The English translation is from Ravicz, *Colonial Religious Drama*, 40-41.

46 Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, The Corn Mothers Went Away*, 123.

47 Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 296. It is worth noting that vestiges of sixteenth-century dances and ritual dramas survived into the modern period, embedded in the popular forms of the so-called "dances of conquest." A number of nineteenth-century scripts for such dances and their sources are introduced by Carmen Val Julian in a brief essay titled "Danses de la Conquête: une Mémoire Indienne de l'Histoire?" This piece also includes a very useful bibliography.

8 COLONIAL EKPHRASIS

All translations are by the author.

1 Charges and counter-charges of lying and/or purposeful misrepresentation abound as part of the very formation of the discourse of the Americas. One can think, for example, of Bernal Díaz del Castillo's justification for writing his version of the history of the conquest of Mexico. Yet none is perhaps more direct than Mendieta's 1569 letter to Philip II advocating the position of the Mendicants' evangelical policy towards the native population. In it he cautions the king that he is like a blind man in regard to the Indies and that he needs the reports of eyewitnesses in order to be informed: however, not all are to be believed, "for in no part of the world did avarice and lying reign more supreme..." (cited in Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 84-84.)

2 Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 117-151.

3 This is what de Certeau implies in his description of the heterological tradition "in which the discourse about the other is a means of constructing a discourse authorized by the other"; de Certeau, *Heterologies*, 68. Like Greenblatt (*Marvelous Possessions*), de Certeau's understanding of this discourse is situated within the parameters of a dialogue between Europeans within Europe and any dialogue that takes place within the Americas is absent in terms of its being meaningful there. Instead, it is always about the taking back to the center (Europe), to reconstruct the periphery (the other) as if the center has not expanded to the periphery in which the need for a multiplicity of discourses between "others" is generated.

4 "casi... todo el mundo se ha usado (la pintura)... ninguna nación de indios que se ha descubierto en nuestros tiempos usa de

letras ni escritura," Acosta, *Historia*, Book VI, Chapter iv.

5 I use the word hybrid purposely to replace the unfortunate term syncretism which, as Henrique Urbano ("Syncretismo y Sentimiento Religioso en los Andes") has discussed, implies an alliance of equals against a common threatening enemy. My use of hybrid derives from Bhabha's use of the term in relation to colonial and postcolonial cultural production; see Bhabha, *Location of Culture*.

6 For the theory of an evolutionary replacement of images by writing based upon a model of competition between writing and images see Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest*, 326-373, especially 331. For a much less mechanistic and more socially fluid discussion of the relation between writing and image production, see Gruzinski, *The Conquest of Mexico*, 7-97.

7 For example, in New Spain the *Historia de los Mexicanos por sus pinturas* is a written text that is based upon the information recorded in the preexisting pictorial sources. In Peru it is the transcription of the information recorded by *quipus* (colored knotted strings) in *Relación de la descendencia, gobierno y conquista de los Incas*.

8 Kahler, *The Huejotzingo Codex*, 85.

9 "por la dicha lengua fue rescibido su juramento en forma devida de derecho so cargo del qual prometio decir e declarar la verdad," Kahler, *The Huejotzingo Codex*, 114.

10 "quel mayz que al dicho fador an dado lo tienen pintado en una pyntura que pidido le fuese mostrado e vista por el dijo por la dicha lengua que diez e seys pinturas negras de manera de peynas de indios cada pintura es quatrocientos cargas de mayz e ortos diez e seyte Rayas negras a manera de vanderyllas de yndios derechas quecada vna de dellas es viente cargas... E que del tributo del año de quinientos e trienta les enbyaron todo el maiz que se montan nueve Rayas coloradas... e otra Raya colorada pintada de manera de vander derecha dize que son veinte cargas todo el qual dicho mayz dixo que abian sacado de una trox que allí en la dicha pintura trayan pintada... e questo sabe desta pregunta el qual dicho papel de pyntura va señalado de mi el dicho escribano e Receptor," Kahler, *The Huejotzingo Codex*, 122-123; emphasis mine.

11 "lo qual todo que dicho es esta pintado en el dicho papel En que esta figurada la dicha ymagen de Nuestra Señora e señalada de my señal," Warren, *The Huejotzingo Codex*, 119.

12 For an understanding of this image within the context of a native reading see Cummins, "The Madonna and the Horse." My discussion here of the Huejotzingo images represents the opposite or European side of the possible read-

ing of these paintings in a bicultural context. My two studies should be read as companion pieces that attempt to articulate separately two simultaneous viewings within the context of the production of the court document.

13 This does not mean that all that is said by the witness is all that is represented to the view of the witness. Thus the use of the colors black and red as mnemonics for distinguishing years which is recorded in the written text is also the unacknowledged inscription of the presence of the original Huejotzingo scribe, not unlike the presence of the Spanish notary through his rubric.

14 "los yndios presentados por la parte contraria no hazen fee ni se les deven de dar credito porque son yndios vasallos del dicho Marques y todos los yndios generalmente son malos xptianos borrachos mentirosos ydolatras comen carne vmana personas viles que por qualquier cosa se perjuran y a las pinturas que presenta la parte contraria mucho menos se les debe de dar fee porque son hechas por los mesmos yndios infieles y barbaros y para ellos no fueron citados por mis partes y asy pudiern pintar todo lo que mas quisieran," Kahler, *The Huejotzingo Codex*, 164; emphasis mine.

15 "Fallamos... que la parte del dicho Marques provo su yntención e demanda... damos la e pronunciamos la por bien prouada e los dichos licenciados no prouaron sus excepciones ni cosa alguna que les aproveche damos las e pronunciamos por no prouadas," Kahler, *The Huejotzingo Codex*, 174-176.

16 From Mexico to Peru, native religion is claimed to be the result of Satan's deceit practiced on the Indians; see, for example, Sahagún, *Códice Florentino*.

17 Such strategies included learning native languages and teaching reading, writing, Spanish, Greek, and Latin to the children of the native elite; see Gruzinski, *Conquest of Mexico*.

18 See, for example, Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in 15th Century Italy*, 40-46. Baxandall's citation from the *Zardino de Oration*, 1454, elucidates the same mechanisms for memorizing church teachings according to *imágenes* and *locati*.

19 Palomera, *Fray Diego Valadés*; Taylor, "El Arte de Memoria" and Watts, "Hieroglyphs of Conversion."

20 Valadés, *Rhetorica Christiana*, 96.

21 Valadés, *Rhetorica Christiana*, 95.

22 Valadés, *Rhetorica Christiana*, 94.

23 My discussion of this aspect of Valadés's image has benefited from Pauline Watts's analysis in "Hieroglyphs of Conversion"; see especially 419-424.

24 Valadés, *Rhetorica Christiana*, 100.

25 As in other of his images, Valadés keys his textual explanation of specific pictorial elements in the engraving by using corresponding letters in the image that refer to the section in the text that explains them.

26 For example, Maza ("Fray Diego Valadés," 124) writes: "No trae Valadés ninguna explicación de este grabado, por lo que creo es puramente ilustrativo"; emphasis mine.

27 The calendar as a representation of time in relation to human activity seems in general to have been privileged by Europeans as a means of calibration and coordination between European and native American cultures. Even Guaman Poma, the Andean author and artist of the *Nueva Corónica u buen gobierno* (c. 1615), creates only one exact equivalence between prehispanic Andean culture and colonial Andean culture and that is in his series of drawings of the two calendars. Certain aspects of archaeo-astronomy and art history in which computer simulations of ancient skies are used to interpret prehispanic iconography still assume an unproblematic relationship between the two forms of representation. For a general discussion of the western representations of nonwestern concepts of time and space, see Fabian, *Time and the Other*, 105-142.

28 Kubler and Gibson, *The Tovar Calendar*, 69; and Maza, "Fray Diego Valadés," 124.

29 I have avoided a discussion of which version of Motolinía's manuscript Valadés actually used, whether it was the lost book of Motolinía or the sixteenth-century copy by another hand of the *Memoriales* now in the Latin American collection of the library of the University of Texas, Austin. If it were the lost manuscript that Valadés used, I would suggest that it too included a drawing of the calendar similar to what is inserted in the *Memoriales*. Valadés's use of both Motolinía's textual description and the calendar wheel image demonstrate that he has collapsed these two discrete parts into his engraving. For a discussion of the versions of Motolinía's manuscripts, see E. O'Gorman, "Estudio," XXI-LII.

30 "diré aquí lo por más verdadero he podido averiguar," Motolinía, *Memoriales*, 3-4.

31 "Había entre estos naturales cinco libros... de figuras y caracteres... Los quatro de estos libros no los ha de creer... como los Evangelios, porque ni los escribieron Juanes, ni Lucas, ni Marcos, ni Mateos, mas fueron inventados por los demonios. El uno, que es de los años y tiempos, de este se puede tomar crédito, que es el primero, porque en la verdad aunque bárbaros y sin escrituras de letras, mucha orden y manera tenían de contar los mesmos tiempos y años, fiestas y días, como algo

- de esto parece en la primera parte del tratado y (décimo) sexto capítulo," Motolinía, *Memoriales*, 5. Motolinía's qualifying phrase "aunque bárbaros y sin escrituras de letras" finds resonance in Valadés's qualifying statement just before he asks his reader to view the engraving of the calendar "cum adeo sint stupidi tamquam in crasso aere nati." That is, truth occurs here despite the *topos* of Indian character just as it does in the court case of Huejotzingo.
- 32 There is the underlying notion here that the transmission of Christian dogma across culture is something more easily done by seeing than saying. Direct verbal translation leads to misperception; see Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*, 15-45.
- 33 Valadés is almost utopian here in that he posits a kind of reciprocity between native representation and European representation so that, just as the Mexican glyphic system can be used in confessional dialogue in which the native act passes through native representation to become a moral transgression in the Christian universe of the Spaniard in order to be absolved, so too the Franciscan images are given over to the Mexicans and now become the center of a native Christian discourse. But as Greenblatt suggests (*Marvelous Possessions*, 121-122 and n. 2, 186), this gift allows for almost no authentic reciprocity in the exchange of representation between Europeans and the peoples of the New World because "Christian universalism - the conviction that its principal symbols and narratives are suitable for the entire population of the world - commits it to the unconstrained circulation of its mimetic capital."
- 34 Palomera, "Introducción," XVII.
- 35 "Book(s) for idiots who don't know how to read," Acosta, *Historia*, Book 6, Chapter. vi.
- 36 This image of the viewer being in the same space as that in which Christ is crucified seems to be in line with Ignatius de Loyola's injunction in his *Spiritual Exercises* to be present as Christ is crucified. What, if any, relation Valadés had with Jesuits while in Rome is unclear. However, there is a temporal overlap with the presence of the Jesuit, Matteo Ricci. Ricci sailed in 1578 to China to begin his evangelical work which included creating a memory system very much like the one described by Valadés; see Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, 1-24. In fact, the so-called "memory palace" of Matteo Ricci is similar to the description and engraving by Valadés of the atrium and its four *posas* that serves as his example of a kind of "memory palace" in New Spain. The Jesuits adapted a number of other missionary practices instituted by the Franciscans. For example the *Colloquios*, or

- dialogues between Catholic and Aztec priests written by Bernardino de Sahagún, made use of a dialogic form also used by Jesuits in Brazil and China.
- 37 Emphasis mine. I have based my translation on a study of the letters which are in the John Carter Brown Library, Providence, R.I. A translation - at times loose - of the exchange between Acosta and Tovar appears in Kubler and Gibson, *The Tovar Calendar*, 77-78.
- 38 The doubt expressed by Acosta to Tovar about the truthfulness of Aztec history is discussed by Mignolo, "On the Colonialization of Amerindian Languages," 309-323. I have greatly benefited from this discussion; however, Mignolo is concerned with the exchange of alphabetic writing between the two Jesuits whereas Tovar's response is prefaced by a letter but is substantiated by images. It is the exchange of images, therefore, that I feel is crucial. In the letter of response by Tovar he asks Acosta to look at the calendar where "vera en la rueda que va alado de ese calendario que va con esta donde ponen un español con un sombrero y sayo colorado poniendolo por señal del tiempo en que los españoles entraron en esta tierra." Acosta surely looked at the figure because in his chapter, "Del Modo de letras y escritura que usaron los mexicanos," he writes, "conforme al año en que sucedían cosas memorables, las iban pintando, con las figuras y caracteres que he dicho, como poner un hombre pintado con un sombrero y sayo colorado en el signo de Caña, que corría entonces, señalaron el año que entraron los españoles en su tierra...," Acosta, *Historia Natural*, Book 6, Chapter. vii; emphasis mine.
- 39 "Pero es de advertir que aunque tenían diversas figuras y caracteres con que escribieron las cosas no era tan suficientemente como nuestra escritura que sin discrepar por las mismas palabras refiriese cada una lo que estaba escrito solo concordaban en los conceptos," Kubler and Gibson, *The Tovar Calendar*, 77.
- 40 The complexity of Durán's position, in which the gathering of knowledge about Indians creates an ambiguity, is explored by Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, 202-218.
- 41 Durán, *Historia... de Nueva España*, vol. 1, 9. My translations are slightly different in places to give a more exact rendition than found in the standard translated edition of Durán, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, translated by F. Horcasitas and D. Heyden.
- 42 Durán, *Historia de... Nueva España*, 13-14.
- 43 This issue is complicated further by the fact that many of Durán's illustrations are cut from an older manuscript and pasted on to the existing codex. Durán, *Book of the Gods*, xxi-xxii.
- 44 Durán, *Historia de... Nueva España*, 5.

- 45 Acosta's first chapter (*Historia* 389-390) of Book Six that begins the social and political history of the Inca and Aztec is entitled: "Que es falsa la opinión de los que tienen a los indios por hombres faltos de entendimiento." He begins his demonstration of native abilities in the next chapter (391-392) writing: "comenzando pues, por el repartimiento de los tiempos y computo que los indios usaban, que es una de las más notorias muestras de su ingenio y habilidad..." He then describes precisely the calendar wheel sent to him by Tovar and writes: "Y así vi yo en el calendario que he dicho, señalado el año que entraron los españoles en México, con una pintura de un hombre vestido a nuestro talle de colorado que fué el hábito del primer español que envió Hernando Cortés." He again refers to this figure in Chapter vii on writing; see n. 38 above.
- 46 "para ver si era verdad lo que acerca desto cuentan estos indios, quise poner aquí a las espaldas las cuatro fuentes y los nombres, y canto trizte de Chiquillanto, para ver por la figura si se comunicaban unas a otras, y vi ser cosa maravillosa, como la figura lo muestra," Murúa, *Historia*, 425-426.
- 47 Where Murúa derived his inspiration from for this kind of image is unclear and, although there is a superficial affinity with Ramon Llull's work, no relationship has been established. Parallel images are found in a later text written in Lima celebrating the dedication of the new church of San Francisco. "Las gracias de Roma, que oy goza esta casa, la Caridad, que en ella se professa en la oracion de su perpetua coro fundado, se dignifica en un laberinto de letras: leído al modo de la eternidad, de arriba, abajo, directa ó retrogradamente. Raro, Amor, Roma Ora
- R.A.R.O.
A.M.O.R.
R.O.M.A.
O R. A R"
- This is then followed by an anagram within a picture of a sailboat both of which are based on the surname of the Franciscan priest, Luis Cervela ("ser vela"); see Miguel Suárez de Figueroa's *Templo de N. grande patriarca San Francisco*, 1675, folios 17v-18v.
- 48 Cervantes, *Don Quijote*, 38-41.
- 49 Bergmann, *Art Inscribed*, 126-127.
- 50 See Krieger, *Ekphrasis*, 11-12.
- 51 Krieger, *Ekphrasis*, xiii-xvii. I employ Krieger's discussion of "ekphrasis" in place of any specific Renaissance definition of the term because I want to move away from the boundaries of meaning set by sixteenth-century academic and artistic discourse. The employment of concepts such as "ekphrasis" were not fixed by such

boundaries. They were deployed rather than theorized as the boundaries of Renaissance Europe moved to the Americas and the abyss of Modernity.

- 52 Bernardino de Sahagún is one of the great European minds of the sixteenth century and the scholarly literature on his various writings is vast. His innovative techniques for investigating culture place the intellectual and spiritual development of the Renaissance within the colonial expansionism of early modern Europe; see, for example, Jorge Klor de Alva, "Sahagún and the Birth of Modern Ethnography," in *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún*, 31-52.
- 53 The first copies of *Don Quijote* were shipped to Peru in 1606, less than a year after they were printed, and by 1607, the characters of Don Quijote and Sancho Panza were mimicked in a pageant staged in the backwaters of a mining town in colonial Peru; see Leonard, *Books of the Brave*, 300-312.
- 54 Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Nueva crónica*, 1114.
- 55 See Adorno, *Guaman Poma*.

9 THE NATURAL, THE ARTIFICIAL, THE EXOTIC, AND THE SCIENTIFIC

The preparation of this essay was greatly facilitated by the work of Lila Yawn-Bonghi, who acted as my research assistant during my semester as Dorothy Ford Wiley Visiting Professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

- 1 Wenley, "Robert Paston"; and Hayward, *Virtuoso Goldsmiths*, no. 688. Wenley convincingly argues that the painting should be dated to between 1676 and 1679. He suggests that it was painted by Pieter Geritsz. van Rosestraten, a Dutch artist who worked in Britain.
- 2 The strombus shell cup beside the youth's left shoulder, lying with its mouth towards the spectator, is in the Castle Museum, Norwich; the silver-gilt flagon which he holds, dated 1597-98, is one of a pair in the Untermeyer Collection, Metropolitan Museum, New York; the silver nautilus cup supported by a seated figure is in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; the nautilus cup of 1592 with a stem of two satyrs is in the Prinsenhof Museum, Delft; and the mother-of-pearl bottle is in a private collection in London (Hayward, *Virtuoso Goldsmiths*, no. 690). The engraved cup mounted on a claw foot is recognizable in the inventory as "a shell engraven with the story of Atalanta standing on an eagle's foot of silver" (Wenley, "Robert Paston", 130).