

ENCONCHADOS: POLITICAL, CULTURAL, AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF A
NEW ART IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY NEW SPAIN

by

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ABSTRACT

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by

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Advisor: Professor Eloise Quiñones-Keber

Seventeenth-century New Spain (Mexico) saw the rise of an art form that melded traditions from pre-Hispanic, Asian, and European styles. *Enconchado* paintings, so called because mother-of-pearl is inlaid mostly on canvas stretched on a panel, were produced in workshops in Mexico City and sent to the metropolis as gifts to the Spanish monarch or to noblemen. Around 300 of these unique works exist in museums in Europe and in the Americas today. Not surprisingly, the most common subject matter is religious; however, about one hundred of them depict the historical events that lead to the conquest of Mexico by Hernando Cortés.

Most scholarship has centered on the Asian and European influences on these works. This project investigates the three-pronged influences in a more egalitarian way, positing as much weight on the indigenous aspects as on the others. Furthermore, it contextualizes the production of these ideological works with the literature, histories, treatises, and other works of art produced in the viceroyalty of New Spain during this century when the rise of the Creole class (people born in Mexico of Spanish-born parents) was beginning to make its imprint in the economic, social, and cultural spheres.

By tracing the different threads that make up these works, their ideological impact, as well as their 300-plus year old histories, this dissertation aims for a better understanding of these works and the forces that made their production possible.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIIE	Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas
BANAMEX	Banco Nacional de México
CONACULTA	Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes
HMex	<i>Historia Mexicana</i>
IIE	Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas
INAH	Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia
INBA	Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes
MNAH	Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia
UNAM	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

INTRODUCTION

Definition of *Enconchado* Painting and Rationale for Dissertation

The term “enconchado” describes Mexican oil paintings inlaid with iridescent mother-of-pearl,¹ an Asian-derived medium that emerged in viceregal (colonial) New Spain (Mexico) in the seventeenth century.² The modern term derives from the Spanish word for seashell (*concha*), a material characteristic of these paintings, although that is not the various names inscribed in inventories or descriptions in previous centuries.³ The mother-of-pearl (*nácar*) tesserae are inlaid on either a treated wooden panel, or on a canvas-covered one, after which the tempera or oil paint is applied. A yellowish color results from different glazes and varnishes that produce, together with the mother-of-pearl, a distinctive luminosity.

Enconchado painting was a unique art form that blended features from different artistic traditions. Like other inlaid decorative objects imported into New Spain, such as Japanese and Indo-Portuguese furniture or boxes from Gujarat, India, the technique echoed age-old Asian forms, as well as earlier pre-Hispanic practices. But their subject

¹ “...the lustrous material in the interior of such mollusks as the sea-ear, nautilus, and green snail, found in warm waters, both fresh and marine, in many parts of the world.” Denise Patry Leidy, *Mother of Pearl, A Tradition in Asian Lacquer* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006), 9.

² María Concepción García Saiz, *La pintura colonial en el Museo de América: Los enconchados* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1980), 5.

³ Manuel Romero de Terreros, refers to them as panels “with a varnish produced by the incrustation on the panel of pieces of mother-of-pearl which gave the painted surface a brilliance and transparency.” Translation mine. Manuel Romero de Terreros, *Las artes industriales en la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Pedro Robledo, 1923), 21-25. Manuel Toussaint lists a number of inventories from 1692 through 1752 where the words “láminas embutidas, tableros de concha, embutidas de concha” are used to describe these paintings. Manuel Toussaint, “La pintura con incrustaciones de nácar en la Nueva España,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 20 (1952): 8-9.

matter, sometimes secular, sometimes religious, expressed a curious amalgam of spiritual devotion, historical or local pride, and imperial propaganda.

In this dissertation, I argue that the idiosyncratic art form called *enconchado* painting represents a truly original manifestation of art in New Spain, melding artistic threads from three continents, Europe, Asia, and the Americas. The exuberant result was a product of cosmopolitanism and artistic creativity in Baroque New Spain, in tandem with other artistic and literary expressions of the age.

Most *enconchados* were commissioned by the Mexican elite as gifts and shipped to Spain. They have been found in former Spanish royal collections, the households of the nobility, and churches before being sold or bequeathed to museums later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries or purchased for private collections. Of nearly three-hundred surviving examples today, most are in collections in Madrid, Spain (Museo de América, Convento de las Descalzas Reales); Mexico City (Museo Franz Mayer, Museo Soumaya, and Banco de México (Banamex) among others) and nearby Tepotzotlán (Museo Nacional del Virreinato); Buenos Aires, Argentina (Museo de Bellas Artes); New York City (Hispanic Society of America); Budapest (Museum of Fine Arts); as well as diverse institutions, such as the Museo Casa Natal de Jovellanos in Gijón, Spain, and in several antiquarian and private collections, principally in Spain and Mexico.

My dissertation explores the origins, development, possible artists and patrons of *enconchado* paintings. I also assess the opposing views of scholars investigating the social and political contexts in which they were produced. Basing my theoretical assumptions on the work of the Mexican artist Edmundo O’Gorman, who proposed that the culture being forged during the seventeenth century harked back to a pre-Hispanic past, I argue that the

Creole championing of the pre-Hispanic component of Mexican identity was a determining factor in making the *enconchados*. I also propose that the utilization of mother-of-pearl, along with pre-Hispanic shellwork, constitute an unrecognized part of the Creole agenda.⁴ The American scholar Michael Schreffler aptly puts into perspective what many historians have generally assumed, namely, that the inequities between *peninsulares* (residents of New Spain born in Spain) and *criollos* (their American-born descendants), “contributed to the consolidation of the Creole identity in the Viceroyalty, which distinguished itself from its peninsular counterpart, and which ultimately brought about the rejection of peninsular rule in New Spain and the formation in the nineteenth century of the autonomous nation of Mexico.”⁵ I agree with this assumption in spite of Schreffler’s eventual disavowal of Creole aims on the production of ideological artistic works boosting the Spanish monarchy.

Expanding beyond earlier partial inventories and limited studies, my research in Spain, Latin America, and the United States has added to the number of surviving *enconchado* paintings in various collections.⁶ This has enabled me to more closely

⁴ Edmundo O’Gorman, *Meditaciones sobre el criollismo* (Mexico City: Centro de Estudios de Historia de México, 1970). For other studies that reference the emergence of a *creole* class and identity in New Spain, see Solange Alberro, *El águila y la cruz, orígenes religiosos de la conciencia criolla*, México siglos XVI-XVII (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1999) and *Del gachupín al criollo, o de cómo los españoles de México dejaron de serlo* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1992); David A. Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State, 1492-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Jacques Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe: The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness, 1531-1813*, trans. Benjamin Keen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); Antonio Lorente Medina, *La prosa de Sigüenza y Góngora y la formación de la conciencia criolla mexicana* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 1996).

⁵ Michael Schreffler, *The Art of Allegiance: Visual Culture and Imperial Power in Baroque New Spain* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 3.

⁶ Even though the collections of *enconchado* paintings in museums have been amply documented and published, individual works often surface in auction houses from private collectors avid to cash in on their newly acquired importance. Such is the case of a panel never before published representing the education of the Virgin that will be auctioned at Christie’s, New York, May 2012.

scrutinize the relation of *enconchados* to contemporaneous sources and historical events in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, producing a clearer picture of their reception and import in New Spain and in Spain, to which *enconchados* were exported. I also explore the response or commentary about *enconchado* painting from this period to the present. My contention that a work of art acquires meaning that different ages bestow upon it has motivated me to trace the *enconchado*'s historiographic trajectory, from early references of their existence to the present. By looking at the ways successive generations have read these works, we can come closer to a fuller understanding of their overall significance and impact.

An axiom of Spanish colonial art history has been “to recognize and find significance in cultural mixing.”⁷ Since the conventional fusion of pre-Hispanic and European does not fit the study of *enconchados*, however, my study thus undermines the hierarchy in which colonial art works have been traditionally regarded. I view Asian and indigenous input as a means to link the singular appearance of *enconchados* to the issue of Creole cultural identity, as its interests would best be served by associating them within a larger world context.

Outline of Dissertation

Aside from an Introduction and Conclusion, my dissertation consists of five major chapters. Chapter 1, “Enconchados: New Spain and the Global Artistic Economy,” contextualizes the commercial links (trans-Pacific as well as trans-Atlantic) that brought

⁷ Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, “Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, no. 1, (June 2003): 13.

together the different techniques that resulted in the unique art form of *enconchados*. I review past scholarship to put the study of *enconchados* in perspective. Chapter 2, “Materials and History,” traces the development of inlaid mother-of-pearl in Asia and the Americas, including the specificities of the medium and the techniques employed; explores questions surrounding the process of transference; and discusses possible artists and patrons. Chapter 3, “*Enconchado* Paintings of Religious and Secular Subject Matter,” analyzes the iconography of the Virgin of Guadalupe, biblical apocryphal scenes representing the Life of the Virgin, the Life of Christ, as well as episodes from the lives of various saints, which I view as part of a concerted program to bring native devotional themes to the foreground. I also analyze paintings depicting European secular scenes aside from the Conquest of Mexico in the sixteenth century, namely the Battles of Alessandro Farnesio, the general who fought for the Spanish Crown in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, or the Battle of Vienna, a conflict that pitted the Hapsburg dynasty against the Ottoman Turk in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Chapter 4, “*Enconchado* Paintings of the Conquest of Mexico.” tackles the development of visual imagery of the popular subject of the Conquest of Mexico and compares it with the literature of the conquest in colonial chronicles, epic and lyric poetry, and drama in both the Old and the New World.

I am especially concerned with arguments championing the role of *enconchado* paintings as either expressions of Spain’s imperial power or purveyors of the *creole* view, and will expand my arguments supporting the latter interpretation. Chapter 5, “Three-Hundred Years of *Enconchados*,” traces the historiographic trajectory of the *enconchados*, examining the artistic, historical, political, and social implications that their journey over

time entailed during the centuries of their production in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, and beyond.

Chapter 1

Enconchados: New Spain and Global Artistic Economy

First Notice of *Enconchado* Paintings

Following Europe's first encounter with the Americas in 1492, the arts of Viceregal New Spain (1535-1810) integrated world-views and aesthetic concerns that vied with older forms of representation that clung to different sets of conceptions of space and of time. The grafts that Mexican or Peruvian artists implemented in their newly-imposed imagery produced new forms, often described as "hybrid" or "mestizo," that elicited fresh interpretations and original solutions to aesthetic problems brought about by the encounter of Old and New World art traditions. Beyond the Americas, the expansion of the Spanish and Portuguese empires to encompass Africa, Asia, as well as the entire hitherto unknown American continents, provided unprecedented opportunities for the introduction or exchange of new goods and art forms.

The first notice about *enconchados*, as the eminent Spanish scholar María Concepción García Saiz has tracked down, appears in Antonio Ponz's (1725-1792), *Viage de España* (1785), which mentions their existence as part of the Duque del Infantado's possessions in Spain.⁸ The Jesuit-educated Ponz, an administrator in Spain's Bourbon monarchy, was commissioned by the Crown to inventory its artworks and monuments. His

⁸ María Concepción García Saiz, *La pintura colonial en el Museo de América II: Los enconchados* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1980), 6.

appraisal of *enconchado* painting in the resulting 18-volume travel guide allows a glimpse into that era's artistic taste and criteria.⁹ In the Prologue, the author clearly states his rationale:

The main purpose of this book has always been to persuade every reader, and particularly those who lack information about the fine arts, so that they can inform themselves about what is good, or at least esteem that which the truly intelligent regard as such, ignoring what others say, and dismissing the great number of monstrosities that with unspeakable bad taste and dishonor have been executed in Spain for over a century to our own day. The quickest path to achieve this was, doubtless, to liberally point out and in earnest those works that people who know little or nothing about.¹⁰

Thus, Ponz's intention was not only to inventory but also to evaluate the most important artistic achievements of Spain. In that spirit it is apt to quote the context in which the mention of *enconchados* first appears:

In the home of the Duke of Infantado there are some fabulous works executed by Rubens. On the living room table, several small figures in bronze are good, meritorious works that represent the labors of Hercules. Among them is a figure of David in the act of shooting the sling, perhaps modeled after Bernini's original marble statue, now in the Borghese in Rome. A cabinet worth seeing, filled with medium-sized paintings inlaid in mother-of-pearl and enhanced with colors, represents the wars in Flanders under the command of Alexandro Farnese, and those in Mexico under Cortés.¹¹

⁹ Antonio Ponz, *Viage de España* 18 v. (Madrid: Viuda de Ibarra, 1793).

¹⁰ El principal fin de esta obra siempre ha sido persuadir a todos, y particularmente a los que carecen de luces en material de bellas artes, que se dediquen a conocer lo que es bueno, o por lo menos a estimar lo que los verdaderos inteligentes reconocen por tal, no haciendo caso de lo demás, y despreciando altamente el sinnúmero de monstruosidades, que con indecible gasto, y deshonor han sido ejecutadas en España de más de un siglo a esta parte. El camino más breve para conseguirlo, era sin duda señalar con libertad, y buen celo las tales obras a los que poco, o nada saben. *Ibid.*, vii.

¹¹ En casa del Duque del Infantado hay algunos asuntos fabulosos ejecutados por Rubens. Son buenas varias figuras pequeñas de bronce sobre las mesas de una sala, que representan las fuerzas de Hércules, obras de mérito; y entre ellas una figura de David en acto de disparar la Honda, formada acaso por el modelo original que hizo el Bernino para la estatua en mármol, que posee la casa Borghese en Roma. Merece verse un gabinete lleno de cuadros medianos, embutidos de madre perla, y ayudados con colores, que representan las guerras de Flandes, bajo el mando de Alejandro Farnes, y las de México por Hernando Cortés. *Ibid.*, 325-331.

Enconchados were thus juxtaposed with Rubens' paintings and fine sculptures reminiscent of Bernini, a comparison that sheds light on the esteem in which these Mexican works were viewed late in the eighteenth century. However, García Saiz later pointed out that an inventory made after the death in 1700 of Charles II (1661-1700), the last of the Hapsburg kings of Spain, already mentioned these works almost a century earlier. This earlier mention of works in the royal palaces catalogues them as "Things seemingly made in the Indies."¹² The first allusions to *enconchados* in the royal quarters denominated in the inventory as "Alhajas del Quarto de su Majestad" appear alongside paintings by such European masters as Zuccaro, Rubens, Veronese, Dürer, Tintoretto, and Ribera.¹³ The trajectory and collection of these works are discussed in Chapter 5, in the section on Royal Inventories.

The Manila Galleon: Manila-Acapulco-Mexico City-Veracruz-Havana-Sevilla

Although the use of mother-of-pearl was known in pre-Hispanic society,¹⁴ the new surge that took place in the seventeenth century for luxury objects that utilized its lustrous accents on the surface of painted panels had much to do with Asian influence and to New Spain's strategic location in Spain's world-wide trade routes (fig. 1.1). Spain's and

¹² García Saíz, "La conquista militar y los *enconchados*: Las peculiaridades de un patrocinio indiano," in *Los pinceles de la historia: El origen del reino de la Nueva España*, ed. Jaime Soler Frost (Mexico City: Museo Nacional de Arte, 1999), 109.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁴ On the use of mother-of-pearl prior to the Spanish conquest, see Adrián Velázquez Castro, *El simbolismo de los objetos de concha encontrados en las ofrendas del Templo Mayor de Tenochtitlán* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología, 2000); Velázquez Castro, "La concha nácar en la época prehispánica," in *La Concha Nácar en México*, ed. Virginia Armella de Aspe (Mexico City: Grupo Gutsa, 1990).

Portugal's acquisition of vast overseas empires in the sixteenth century ushered in an era of global exchange that truly revolutionized the economic, social, cultural, and artistic spheres of Asia, Africa, and the Americas, not to mention Europe itself. Thus, the Iberian peninsula's entry onto the world political stage after centuries of internecine wars catapulted newly-formed Portugal and Spain into a network that spanned not only the Atlantic Ocean, but the Pacific and Indian Oceans as well. Between 1580 and 1640 Spain and Portugal would become one monarchy under the Hapsburgs and their exploration of new trade routes led, unexpectedly, to a larger world hitherto unknown to the Europeans.

By 1556, when Charles I of Spain (1500-1558, Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire) abdicated and Phillip II (1527-1598), the second Hapsburg monarch, ascended the Spanish throne, Madrid had become the capital of an empire and Seville the port of entry for the wealth of the Americas (fig. 1.2). More importantly, the Viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru, created in 1535 and 1542 respectively, would become sources of unimaginable economic exploitation, with the Philippines (named after Phillip II), the outermost post in these far-flung colonial territories. Spanish merchant ships laden with goods to and from the four corners of the world would become the conduit for the newly established global economy and the convergence of ideas and artistic styles.

Imports from Asia, arriving in the harbor of Acapulco in New Spain, introduced objects from centuries-old traditions in China, Japan, and India, as well as elsewhere in Asia. They enriched the households of the viceroyalty and in time were copied and imitated in New Spain, thus producing a new hybrid version of these Asian arts. Furniture, such as desks inlaid with mother-of-pearl, folding screens (*biombos*), Chinese blue and white ceramics, Indian and Chinese textiles, porcelains, and ivory sculptures, were some

of the items that were brought to Mexico by the Manila Galleon on its way to Europe. A large number of them, however, remained in the New World, some becoming models for the industries (fig. 1.3).¹⁵ Known in Spanish as the *Nao de China*, between 1565 and 1815 this yearly trading fleet provided an unrelenting passage of goods from Asia to Europe by way of the New World, creating an economic activity of unparalleled proportions.¹⁶ “The longest and most dangerous mercantile route in history,” according to the scholar Etsuko Miyaka Rodríguez,¹⁷ it is a perfect example of the widespread economic mantle the countries of the Iberian Peninsula managed to spread during the first two centuries after the conquest of the Americas in the sixteenth century. As mentioned above, this commerce fostered the confluences of cultures as far afield as Asia, the Americas, and Europe and the resulting hybridity of the material goods manufactured in Baroque New Spain. In the catalogue to an exhibition that took place in 2000 in Sevilla (Hospital de los Venerables), Mexico City (Museo Franz Mayer), and Acapulco (Museo Histórico de Acapulco Fuerte de San Diego) about the Manila Galleon trade and its consequences, the curators summarize this cultural and commercial exchange very clearly in terms of the benefits and gains derived by the Spanish Crown: “The axis Sevilla-Veracruz-Mexico-Acapulco-Manila served as a permanent way for a communication that would include men and women, precious metals and exotic products, and finally, intellectual, religious, and

¹⁵ Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America* (London and New York: Phaidon Press, 2005), 159-160. Still the most comprehensive account of the Manila Galleon’s importance in the trans-Pacific trade route is William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: E.D.P. Dutton, 1939).

¹⁶ The San Pablo, the first galleon to make the trans-Pacific journey in 1565, had a cargo of cinammon in its first voyage, although “the principal object of her voyage was the discovery of a practicable return route to the Mexican coast,” according to Schurz, *The Manila Galleon*, 24.

¹⁷ Etsuko Miyaka Rodríguez, “The Early Manila Galleon Trade: Merchant’s Networks and Markets in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Mexico,” in *Asia and Spanish America: Trans Pacific Artistic & Cultural Exchange, 1500-1850*, ed. Donna Pierce and Ronald Otsuka (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2009), 39.

artistic currents, throughout the entire modern era.”¹⁸ Important entries in Antonio de Robles’ *Diary*, a great source of seventeenth-century information on the events of the day, such as earthquakes, obituaries, ecclesiastical feasts, and so on, records not only the departure or arrival of these ships, but also the prayers and anticipation that their imminent arrival caused among the population, as shown in this entry from Friday, December 2, 1695: “News arrived of the Nao de China through the port of Navidad and bells were tolled calling to prayer at noon.”¹⁹

Europeans traveling to the New World were astonished to see the myriad objects that could be found in the markets of these (to them) foreign lands. Such is the case of the Italian traveler Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri (1651-1725) whose *Voyage to the New Spain* records, in the very first chapter, the advantages for European traders selling their wares in the West Indies:

It is very convenient to sell in the West Indies all the silk brocades that have been brought from China, and the fabrics, white and colored, from the coast of Coromandel and Bengal; and even more, the porcelains and the fans, also from China, the former because they are things that are too fragile to take to Europe, and the latter because they easily break; although one should keep a small portion to give as presents to our friends here [in Europe].²⁰

¹⁸ “...el eje Sevilla-Veracruz-México-Acapulco-Manila sirvió de vía permanente para una comunicación que sera de hombres y mujeres, de metales preciosos y productos exóticos, y finalmente, de Corrientes intelectuales, religiosas y artísticas, a todo lo largo de los tiempos modernos.” Marino Alfonso Mola and Carlos Martínez Shaw, *El Galeón de Manila* (Madrid: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2000), 23.

¹⁹ “Viernes 2, entró nueva de nao de China por el Puerto de la Navidad, y se tocó plegaria a las doce del día....” Antonio de Robles, *Diario de Sucesos Notables (1665-1703)*, vol. III (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1972), 33. Robles and Gregorio Martín de Guijo, two priests resident in Mexico City, wrote copiously about life in the capital, news that came from abroad, municipal, social, and religious news, entrances of viceroys, as well as deaths and public punishments.

²⁰ “Conviene, pues, vender en las Indias Occidentales todos los brocados de seda que se hayan llevado acaso de China, y las telas, tanto blancas como de colores, de la costa de Coromandel y de Bengala; y aún más la porcelana y los abanicos también de China: las primeras por ser cosas de muy gran estorbo para llevarlas a Europa, y las segundas porque fácilmente se rompen; aunque convenga conservar una pequeña parte para

The *Enconchado* Technique and the Manila Galleon

As paintings in mother-of-pearl, or *enconchados* became popular among the elite in Mexico City, the artists of the colony could have learned the technique for its manufacture from Asian immigrants arriving in Mexico on the Manila Galleon. Some of them may have been fleeing religious persecution in Asia, especially after Japan closed its doors to Christian missionaries.²¹ As noted, the use of mother-of-pearl, however, was not unknown to the indigenous populations of the New World. The production of *enconchados* in Mexico during a specific time period –about a century and a half—attests to a demand from New Spanish patrons who also saw fit to send them on to the metropolis, as gifts perhaps, as curiosities, or as representatives of a new and distinctive art form unknown in the Old World. The Mexican scholar Sonia Ocaña Ruiz observes that even though many of these works seemed to have been sent from New Spain to Spain, they may not have responded to any particular commission made from the Peninsula.²²

Although monographic studies have documented the collections of many of the painted *enconchado* panels in private hands and museums mainly in Madrid, León, Gijón, Sevilla, Mexico City, Monterrey, Topotzotlán, Buenos Aires, Budapest, and New York

regalar después aquí a los amigos.” Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, *Viaje a la Nueva España* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2002), 3.

²¹ According to Deborah Oropeza Keresey, around 7,200 “Orientals,” known in New Spain as “chinos” or “indios chinos” had arrived at the port of Acapulco between 1565-1700, of which, perhaps, 4,500 to 5,000 actually stayed. Their origin, ethnic component, social status, skills, and cultural contribution to the viceroyalty is harder to ascertain. See Deborah Oropeza Keresey, “Los “indios chinos” en la Nueva España: la inmigración de la nao de China, 1564-1700” (PhD diss., El Colegio de México, 2007), 188.

²² Sonia Ocaña Ruiz, “Marcos ‘enconchados’: Autonomía y apropiación de formas japonesas en la pintura novohispana,” *AIEE* 92 (2008): 133.

City,²³ scholars are still debating the manner and time of their introduction into colonial Mexico, the techniques employed, the artists who executed them, and the reason for the uniformity of themes displayed in them. According to Gauvin Alexander Bailey, the art of the *enconchado* flourished in Mexico because the *criollos* (Spaniards born in the New World) identified the exoticism of Asian material culture with the pre-Hispanic past the Spanish rulers were so bent on erasing or reinterpreting. In this way, “Asian objects played a role in their reclamation of the pre-Hispanic Aztec and Inca worlds.”²⁴ For Bailey, this fact evidences a desire to see a connection between Asian and pre-Hispanic cultures.²⁵ The association of the *enconchados* with the self-identity of the *criollos* in the century prior to independence, namely the period between the middle of the seventeenth century and the middle of the eighteenth, suggests a political agenda reflecting the *criollos*’ ascent to influence. By commissioning hybrid forms, the *criollos* were at the same time asserting their own taste, imbuing it with the prestige of the exotic and of the unique.²⁶ It gave vent to their concept of cosmopolitanism, gained from living in a society of multiple ethnic and cultural characteristics. That these panels depicted scenes of the

²³ There are also *enconchados* in churches and museums in Gijón, León and Sevilla, among other cities in Spain; in private collections and churches in Oaxaca, Puebla, and Monterrey, among other cities in Mexico; and new panels are resurfacing yearly in auction houses in the United States and elsewhere.

²⁴ Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America*, 351.

²⁵ Gauvin Alexander Bailey, in “Asia in the Arts of Colonial Latin America,” *The Arts in Latin America 1492-1820*, ed. Joseph J. Rishel and Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 64.

²⁶ Gustavo Curiel’s observation about the term “exotic” is a warning to those scholars who posit too much importance on the idea that the foreign character of borrowed techniques was mere reminiscence of their originals. Instead, the author asserts that “the producers never regarded these pieces as exotic,” referring to Asian derived ornamentation, and that, in fact, they were referred to as “precious, rare, unusual, strange, exquisite, curious, beautiful, gorgeous (adjectives that influenced the prices of the goods), but never as exotic, this epithet being the product of a romantic appreciation originating in the nineteenth century when Europe turned the gaze once more upon Asia and slaked its thirst with Asia’s myriad artistic expressions.” Gustavo Curiel, “Perception of the Other and the Language of ‘Chinese Mimicry’ in the Decorative Arts of New Spain,” *Asia and Spanish America: Trans-Pacific Artistic & Cultural Exchange, 1500-1850*, ed. Donna Pierce and Ronald Otsuka (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2009), 20.

conquest of Mexico, the battles of Alessandro Farnese, the Siege of Vienna, or scenes from the life of Christ, the life of the Virgin Mary, the Virgin of Guadalupe, the Virgin of Valvanera, Saint Francis Xavier, or other religious stories, legitimized their consumption. Even though some scholars do not support the view of the Mesoamerican link in the production of *enconchados*, the general effect or impact that these works may have had on the contemporary viewer cannot be dismissed as completely unrelated to the pre-Hispanic artistic traditions.²⁷

In any event, the history of the conquest was ripe for revision at the end of the seventeenth century. It served as a means, especially for *criollos*, to come to terms with Mexico's own history, the role Cortés played, and the world that the descendants of that epochal event inherited. Even the erudite Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora more than once expressed his admiration for the conquistador.²⁸ In the opinion of García Sáiz, the view of history in the *biombos* and *enconchados*:

can be read as one more instrument asserting *criollismo*, in a very specific aspect supported by providentialism, which considers the conquest as one of its basic pillars, fundamentally because it responded to a divine decision, which turned Mexico into a chosen land and because the country could have only been in the hands of pious men, Hernando Cortés the first among them.²⁹

²⁷ Even if the notion of only Asian influence is accepted, as Sonia Ocaña does in her indispensable study of *enconchado* frames, the association with this pre-Hispanic form will not be dismissed in this study, if not always as a direct influence, then certainly as a reminiscence of the vestigial form.

²⁸ María Concepción García Sáiz recalls the text by Sigüenza y Góngora, "Piedad Heroyca de D. Fernando Cortés," to attest to his inclination in favor of Cortés, in "La conquista militar y los enconchados," 118.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 120: "tiene su lectura como un instrumento más de afirmación del criollismo, en una vertiente muy específica apoyada en el providencialismo, lo que considera a la conquista como uno de sus pilares básicos, fundamentalmente porque respondió a una decisión divina, lo que convirtió a México en una tierra elegida, y porque ésta sólo pudo estar en manos de hombres piadosos, don Hernando Cortés el primero entre ellos."

A different view has been espoused by Michael J. Schreffler, who does not see the images of the conquest depicted in the *enconchados* as purveyors of a *criollo* ideology. Rather, he states that they “constitute an intervention into the seventeenth-century conquest historiography –one that validates the efficacy of imperial ritual practice, and that emphasizes the idea that Spain’s victory in Middle America was so complete that conquered peoples voluntarily and ritually swore their obedience to their new sovereign.”³⁰ I will review these opposing views of the *enconchado* panels of the Conquest in Chapter 4.

Past Scholarship on Enconchado Painting

Interest in *enconchado* paintings evolved rather slowly in Mexico and in Spain. The only contemporary mentions seem to have been in wills and royal inventories. By the time Antonio Ponz wrote his *Viaje a España* in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the entire production of *enconchados* had basically ceased. Instead of referring to the panels the writer saw at the Duque del Infantado’s Spanish palace as curiosities, Ponz was struck by their splendid manufacture, and he was not surprised to see them next to Rubens or Bernini-like sculptures. Maria Concepción García Saiz’s impeccable research, followed by Elisa Vargaslugo’s 1990 essay,³¹ and more recently, Sonia I. Ocaña Ruiz’s studies of

³⁰ Michael Schreffler, *The Art of Allegiance: Visual Culture and Imperial Power in Baroque New Spain* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 89.

³¹ Elisa Vargaslugo, “La pintura de *enconchados*,” in *México en el mundo de las colecciones de arte, Nueva España*, vol 1, ed. María Luisa Sabau (Mexico City: Grupo Azabache, 1994), 118-155.

frames inlaid with mother-of-pearl are good starting points to trace the scholarship that has developed from the nineteenth century to the present as these works gained attention.

According to García Saiz, who initiated the most comprehensive examination of these works in the 1980s, Louis Viardot (1800-1883), in *Les Musées d'Espagne* of 1860,³² noticed six panels of the life of the Virgin in the Museo del Prado in Madrid, the first mention of the works after Ponz's. It was Viardot, according to José Bernardo Couto, the eminent nineteenth-century Mexican art historian, who first associated their Mexican origin with Asian techniques.³³ Not only did Viardot connect the paintings with Asian techniques, but he was the only scholar who at such an early state of scholarship attributed a Mexican style as well to its composition, even though he compares the six panels to the work of the Sevillian artist Francisco Antolinez:

I think that it can be reported at this time a series of six panels without autograph, representing the Life of the Virgin. Their composition resembles a series produced by Francisco Antolinez from Seville in later years. However, these are paintings that are inlaid with mother-of-pearl on the canvas. This strange technique is reminiscent of Chinese panels, and even more, Mexican ones. Perhaps they are the work of a certain Ramírez, a Spanish artist who settled in Mexico.³⁴

³² Louis Viardot, *Le Musées d'Espagne*, (Paris: Hachette, 1860), 159-160. A connoisseur of Spanish culture, Viardot's other tomes, *Espagne et Beaux Arts* and *Estudio sobre la historia de las instituciones, literatura, teatro y Bellas Artes en España*, do not mention *enconchados*.

³³ José Bernardo Couto, *Diálogo sobre la historia de la pintura en México* (Mexico City: CONACULTA, 1995), 98.

³⁴ Viardot, 159-160. "Je crois qu'on peut rapporter à cette époque une série de six pendants sans nom d'auteur, représentant l'Histoire de la Vierge. Ils ressemblent, par la composition, aux séries de même nature que fit plus tard Francisco Antolinez, de Seville. Mais ils sont peints sur des panneaux de bois, avec des incrustations de nacre qui se mêlent à la peinture. Cette bizarrerie les fait ressembler aux tableaux chinois, et plus encore aux tableaux mexicains. Peut-être sont-ils l'ouvrage d'un certain Ramirez, artiste espagnol, qui alla se fixer au Mexique." Francisco Antolinez (1645-1700) is, indeed, a Sevillian artist who painted series of the Life of Christ and the Life of the Virgin, although the similarities with *enconchado* paintings end there. See Juan Carlos Lozano López, "Una serie inédita del pintor Francisco Antolinez en la iglesia parroquial de Brea de Aragón (Zaragoza)," *Antigrana* 17 (2002): 329-340.

Another series of *enconchados* came to the attention of the director of the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid, Antonio García Gutiérrez, whose 1876 survey of works at the museum aptly describes “a collection of twenty-four panel paintings with inlaid mother-of-pearl that represent the most notable episodes of the conquest of Mexico by Hernando Cortés, painted by Miguel González in the year 1698.”³⁵ This was corroborated in 1925 when F. Alvarez Ossorio confirmed the existence of the panels in the Museo Arqueológico in Madrid, although, as García Saiz, the foremost authority on this topic of *enconchados*, points out, he did not include at the time of his writing a new series of the same subject matter newly acquired by the museum.³⁶

While Elisa Vargaslugo, the Mexican scholar who has also delved in the study of these works, and García Saiz acknowledge Genaro Estrada’s interest in these works, it is Sonia Ocaña Ruiz’s research where the connection between Genaro Estrada (1887-1937) and Alfonso Reyes (1889-1959) was first revealed in full. Estrada, a journalist, novelist, and university professor, founded the Academia Mexicana de la Historia in Mexico City, and Reyes was one of the most important Mexican intellectuals of his generation. According to Ocaña Ruiz, Estrada and Reyes were close friends, both diplomats, both interested in boosting all aspects of the culture of their homeland, especially abroad. Reyes was Mexican ambassador to Argentina from 1927 to 1930, and then again from 1936 to 1937; Estrada was ambassador to Spain from 1932 to 1935. It was at this time that their interest in *enconchados* emerged in correspondences between them. Following Ocaña Ruiz, Reyes wrote Estrada on 21 February of 1931: “I am sending you a gem for

³⁵ *Noticia Histórico-Descriptiva del Museo Arqueológico Nacional, publicada siendo director del mismo Don Antonio García Gutiérrez* (Madrid: Imprenta de T. Fortanet, 1876), 193.

³⁶ María Concepción García Saiz, *La pintura colonial en el Museo de América II*, 6.

Contemporáneos: the Conquest of Mexico by Miguel González [...] Here [in Rio de Janeiro] I have no way of knowing or finding out anything about Miguel González. If you have any information, which I'm sure you do, take the time to add it, from your own hand, at the end of my brief notice."³⁷ Thus, in the Mexican magazine *Contemporáneos*, the whole collection of 22 panels of the Conquest of Mexico that were part of the Museo de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires, were reproduced in March 1931; two years later, in *Cuadernos Mexicanos*, Genaro Estrada published reproductions of the two collections of *enconchados* also depicting the Conquest of Mexico:³⁸ one from the Museo Arqueológico Nacional de Madrid and the other from the collection of the Dukes of Moctezuma de Tultengo, also in Madrid, which then belonged to the Marquise of Peñalver; today, it is in the hands of their heirs, as Vargaslugo has pointed out.³⁹

These studies set the stage for Manuel Toussaint's seminal essay of 1952, "La pintura con incrustaciones de concha nácar en la Nueva España."⁴⁰ Written much earlier than its publication date, it was part of a dialogue between Toussaint and the art historian José M. González de Mendoza concerning the nationality of the known artists of *enconchados*, Juan and Miguel González. At the time, Toussaint's assertions were based more on conjecture than on actual documentation, leading him to declare the Spanish

³⁷ Serge I. Zaïtzeff, ed., *Con leal franqueza, Correspondencia entre Alfonso Reyes y Genaro Estrada, 1930-1937* (Mexico City: El Colegio Nacional, 1994), vol. III, 112, quoted in Sonia Ocaña, "Marcos enconchados," 111: "Le mando una joya para Contemporáneos: la Conquista de México de Miguel González [...] Aquí [en Río de Janeiro] no tengo manera de saber ni averiguar nada de Miguel González. Si Ud. Sabe algo, que de seguro lo sabrá, tómese el trabajo de añadirlo de su propia minera, al final de mi breve noticia."

³⁸ Genaro Estrada, *Las tablas de la conquista de Mexico en las colecciones de Madrid* (Cuadernos Mexicanos de la Embajada de México en España, 1933).

³⁹ Elisa Vargaslugo, "La pintura de enconchados," 119.

⁴⁰ Manuel Toussaint, "La pintura con incrustaciones de concha nácar en Nueva España," *AIIE* 20 (1952): 5-20.

nationality of the artists, against González de Mendoza's claim of their being Mexican. However, Toussaint's incursion into the Archivo de los Alcaldes Ordinarios y Corregidores de la Ciudad de México shed light on some aspects of *enconchados* based on last wills and testaments dated from 1692 through 1752 (See Appendix 1).⁴¹ In Toussaint's opinion, the various names given in these paintings obscured the fact that they were all made of "maque," an imitation of lacquer. This misconception of the actual technical aspects of the panels did not prevent the Mexican scholar from associating them with objects brought from Asia in the Manila Galleon. However, since most of the panels known to him at the time were located in Spain, it was his logical conclusion that the authors were of Spanish origin and that their technique, even if Asian, was eventually brought to the New World from the metropolis.⁴² It is interesting to note at this point that even though Toussaint's early affirmation that the authors were of Spanish origin has been proven wrong, the conclusions he drew to explain the predominance of the theme of the conquest of Mexico are still debated today.

By 1959, when George Kubler and Martin Soria published their voluminous study of art in the Iberian Peninsula and its colonies, more *enconchados* had surfaced.⁴³ Kubler, Yale professor and specialist in Prehispanic and Iberian art, and Soria, full-professor at Michigan State University and specialist in Latin American Renaissance painting, co-authored this volume for *The Pelican History of Art*. One of their most important contributions was the finding of two more signatures, Nicolás Correa and Antonio de

⁴¹ Ibid., 8-9.

⁴² Ibid., 10.

⁴³ George Kubler and Martin Soria, *Art and Architecture in Spain and Portugal and their American Dominions* (Baltimore, Penguin, 1959).

Santander, both well known Mexican artists of paintings other than *enconchados*. About their Mexican origin, the authors are clear: “One wonders how Toussaint could have questioned the Mexican provenance of the mother-of-pearl paintings.”⁴⁴ They also agree that Juan González painted the series of the conquest belonging to the Peñalver family, copied by Miguel González in the series now in Buenos Aires.

In the footsteps of Kubler and Soria, Antonio Bonet Correa, emeritus professor at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, published his article on the seventeenth-century *biombo* from the collection of Fernando Beickemeyer, in San Francisco, California (now in the Museo del Virreinato in Tepotzotlán). Bonet Correa identifies the original owner as don José Sarmiento y Valladares, thirty-second viceroy of New Spain, Count of Moctezuma y Tula, a Spanish nobleman, loyal to the Hapsburgs, and married to a descendant of the Aztec emperor. His penchant for *enconchados* can be construed as evidence of a particular turn-of-the-century culture that was beginning to harbor nostalgic recollections of an important historical event that merged royal Aztec names to European nobility.⁴⁵

José de Santiago’s *Algunas consideraciones sobre las pinturas enconchadas del Museo Nacional de Historia* in 1976 is the first scholarly work that delves into the technical aspects of the production of these works in a more scientific way.⁴⁶ After considering the trajectory of some of the works that were acquired by the Museo Nacional de Historia, a history not irrelevant to this study (see Chapter 5), Santiago published the

⁴⁴ Ibid, 394.

⁴⁵ Antonio Bonet Correa, “Un biombo del siglo XVII,” *Boletín del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* 21 (September 1965): 33-37.

⁴⁶ José de Santiago, *Algunas consideraciones sobre las pinturas enconchadas del Museo Nacional de Historia* (Mexico City: INAH, 1976).

first chemical and stratigraphic analysis by the Restoration Department of the Patrimonio Cultural of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. He subjected the panel entitled *El Gran Motecuhzoma recibe a Cortés* to microscopic observation which resulted in detailed information as to the content of the pigments, varnishes, and adhesives.

Marta Dujovne's first of three books on *enconchado* paintings came out in 1972: *La Conquista de México por Miguel Gonzáles*.⁴⁷ It is the first attempt to classify all five series of panels of *enconchados* with episodes of the conquest of Mexico in the collections of the heirs of the Marquise de Peñalver, the Museo de América, the Jesuit convent of Chamartín de la Rosa in Madrid, and the Mayer Collection in Mexico City, along with the twenty-two panels that had ended up in Buenos Aires. Dujovne matches the inscriptions of the twenty-two panels in her native Buenos Aires to corresponding scenes in Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*.

María Concepción García Saiz's publication in 1980 of a study of the sixty-nine panels then in the Museo de América in Madrid was the culmination of half a century of investigations locating the panels and identifying their iconography, putting to rest, once and for all, the conjecture that they may have been produced in Spain among other issues.⁴⁸ This seminal study paid as much attention to the panels representing the conquest of Mexico as those of a religious nature, opening new avenues of research. García Saiz not only identified the iconography of the panels, but also attempted to link the scenes to sources, a task not completely successful in the conquest series, considering the many histories from which the scenes depicted could have sprung.

⁴⁷ Marta Dujovne, *La conquista de México por Miguel Gonzáles, Colecciones del Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes* (Buenos Aires: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1972).

⁴⁸ María Concepción García Saiz, *La pintura colonial en el Museo de América II*, 13-15.

Four years later, Marta Dujovne's second book *Las pinturas con incrustaciones de nácar*, catalogued all known *enconchado* paintings, including many in private collections that had surfaced during her investigation, contributing to a bibliography that has kept expanding.⁴⁹ Dujovne includes a chart at the end of her book comparing the choice of themes and scenes based on the inscriptions in the conquest panels. One curious contribution by Dujovne is the analysis of the orthography in the inscriptions and the differences among panels.⁵⁰ By this time, more than one-hundred and fifty panels had been identified, making these two studies the most comprehensive to date.

García Saiz followed suit in 1990 with an excellent article in the journal of the Museo de América, "Aportaciones al catálogo de *enconchados*," written in collaboration with Juan Miguel Serrera, where they add more *enconchados* and two more signatures, those of Pedro López Calderón and Rudolph, the latter a still unknown painter to this day.⁵¹ In this thorough study of mainly religious paintings depicting the life of the Virgin, Christ, or other saints, the authors conjecture about the idiosyncratic characteristics of many individual panels, contemplating the notion that, perhaps, there are more singular artists than heretofore documented by signatures.

The last decade of the twentieth century saw three important works that added much needed context to the study of *enconchados*. First, Elisa Vargaslugo's essay in the important series *México en el Mundo de las Colecciones de Arte* summarized all previous

⁴⁹ Marta Dujovne, *Las pinturas con incrustaciones de nácar* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1984).

⁵⁰ Dujovne charts the use of the sibilants "s" and "c" or "z" that is not uniform in all the panels, as well as archaizing spelling, not unusual at the time.

⁵¹ María Concepción García Saiz and Juan Miguel Serrera, "Aportaciones al catálogo de *enconchados*," *Cuadernos de Arte Colonial* 6 (1990): 55-87.

research and analyzed particular works, especially those with religious subject matter.⁵²

The importance of this multivolume series gave impetus to the study of these works, by now catalogued in important art historical surveys.⁵³

A relevant study by experts on different fields entitled *La concha nácar en México* appeared in 1990.⁵⁴ Comprising four essays, this work explored different media that utilize mother-of-pearl in Mexico, honing in on pre-Hispanic uses, Asian influence, artisans who produced objects and furniture, and artists of *enconchados*. The chapter by Guillermo Tovar de Teresa identifies five painters and produces documents unearthed by the author that suggest that the González signatures were indeed the product of a family workshop, a claim later disputed by García Saiz. Nevertheless, the different areas discussed in the book are a valuable yardstick for investigating the cultural milieu in which these objects were produced and their relationship to artist's workshops.

Even though by these dates most scholars had cited the Asian influence in these works, it was not until Julieta Avila Hernández's 1997 work, *El influjo de la pintura china en los enconchados de Nueva España*, that a detailed analysis of the hybrid aspect of *enconchados* was tackled more consistently.⁵⁵ Avila Hernández was part of a team of restorers who took it upon themselves not only to analyze the constituents of the paintings to ascertain their composition, but also to gather a group of interdisciplinary experts to

⁵² Elisa Vargaslugo, "La pintura de enconchados," 119-156.

⁵³ By the end of twentieth century, the editors Ramón Gutiérrez and Rodrigo Gutiérrez Viñuales' large survey of Iberian art mentions *enconchados* alongside other seventeenth-century paintings and includes the latest information on their manufacture: *Historia del Arte Iberoamericano*, ed. Ramón Gutiérrez and Rodrigo Gutiérrez Viñuales (Barcelona: Lunwerg, 2000), 78-79.

⁵⁴ *La Concha Nácar en México*, ed. Virginia Armella de Aspe (Mexico City: Grupo Gutsa, 1990).

⁵⁵ Julieta Avila Hernández, *El influjo de la pintura china en los enconchados de la Nueva España* (México: INAH, 1997).

determine the differences in technique between Western and Asian paintings. The final outcome of over a decade of startups was the collaboration, among others, of an expert in traditional Asian painting, a chemist, and the writer of the book, who drew conclusions from the study.

The most current scholarship, not surprisingly, has focused on the political aspects of the representation of the conquest which is found in about half the known panels. For the 1999 exhibition in Madrid, *Los Siglos de Oro en los Virreinos de América 1550-1700*, where a large number of the paintings were displayed, García Saiz again contributed an essay focusing on the distinctive New Spanish characteristics of these works, as well as the patrons whose taste made them possible.⁵⁶ Furthering this latter aspect, García Saiz's 1999 essay in the exhibition of that same year in the Museo Nacional de Arte in Mexico, *Los Pinceles de la Historia: El origen del reino de la Nueva España*, wraps up twenty years of research in what was, to that date, the most incisive analysis on *enconchado* painting yet undertaken.⁵⁷ By referring to the reception that these works of art had in royal collections in Spain as well as in the collections of the Spanish nobility, García Saiz traces the development of a taste for these works of art in the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth. A more detailed analysis of the rising *criollo* class's re-evaluation of Hernando Cortés role in the conquest of Mexico, the sources of the images and their interrelatedness, and ultimately, the ideological repercussions in the construction of a national identity are some of the topics explored in this essay.

⁵⁶ María Concepción García Saiz, "Nuevos materiales para nuevas expresiones," "Primores artísticos: técnicas y materiales del Nuevo Mundo," in *Los Siglos de Oro en los Virreinos de América 1550-1700*, ed. Joaquín Berchez, Luisa Elena Alcalá (Madrid, Spain: Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 1999), 127-139, 373-407.

⁵⁷ María Concepción García Saiz, "La conquista militar y los *enconchados*," 127-139, 384-389.

More recently, as part of the project that focused on studying the images of native Mexicans in art of the colonial period, Marita Martínez del Río de Redo examined another set of *enconchados* depicting the conquest, hitherto unknown, the panels from the Koplowitz collection in Spain.⁵⁸ Drawing on all previous studies, she not only discusses each panel from this series, but also observes the physical aspect of native people in the paintings and contextualizes the panels with the literature, theater, and histories of their time.

Finally, Michael Schreffler's *The Art of Allegiance*, takes upon itself the task of relating the surge in imperial images at this particular time in Mexican history to a re-interpretation of the past based on misconceptions that had taken root over the previous two hundred years of colonial rule.⁵⁹ This lucid study uses *enconchados* as well as architecture and other cultural icons to conclude that these images were purveyors of an imperial ideology and not necessarily representations of the rise of the *criollo* factions as asserted in previous studies, namely those of García Saiz and Bailey.

One final relevant study is Sonia Ocaña Ruiz's Master's thesis at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, centering not on the production of paintings, but rather on the frames inlaid with mother-of-pearl that often accompanied these panels.⁶⁰ This scholar's investigations have led her to publish three important articles: one, linking the

⁵⁸ Marita Martínez del Río de Redo, "La conquista en una serie de tablas enconchadas," in *Imágenes de los naturales en el arte de la Nueva España, siglos XVI al XVIII*, ed. Elisa Vargaslugo, et. al. (Mexico City: Fomento Cultural Banamex, 2005), 62-93.

⁵⁹ Michael Schreffler, *The Art of Allegiance*.

⁶⁰ Sonia Irene Ocaña Ruiz, "Los marcos enconchados una vía ornamental novohispana," (M. A. thesis, UNAM, 2005).

frames to Japanese Namban lacquers;⁶¹ another, furthering her assertions, associating the Japanese style of the frames to the rest of the New Spanish production of painting;⁶² and third, a new version of the latter, in English, based on a paper she read at the symposium series at the Mayer Center for Pre-Colombian and Spanish Colonial Art at the Denver Art Museum in 2006.⁶³

The interest in *enconchado* painting was highlighted in 2009-2010 when the British Museum's blockbuster exhibition *Motecuhzoma, Aztec Ruler* displayed seven works from the collection of the Museo de América in Madrid. In the catalogue entry, María Concepción García Saiz reiterates the idea of the role that these paintings played in the shaping of the *criollo* identity in New Spain.⁶⁴ The lending of these panels for this exhibition opened the opportunity for scholars in the English-speaking world to view these artworks that have generally remained in Spain and in Latin America, offering a fresh perspective from scholars for years to come. Although they were illustrating scenes from the conquest, the panels were put adjacent to Aztec objects inlaid with mother-of-pearl, thereby accentuating the pre-Hispanic utilization of this material before the conquest.

In the United States, an exhibition displaying Mexican objects with evident Asian characteristics opened in Dallas, Texas, from October 2010 until January 2011. Entitled *Black Current: Mexican Responses to Japanese Art, Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries*,

⁶¹ Sonia Ocaña Ruiz, "Los marcos 'enconchados' y las lacas japonesas namban: Apropiación de un repertorio formal," in *XXVII Coloquio Internacional de Historia de Arte, Orientes-Occidentales: El arte y la mirada del otro* (Mexico City: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2007): 503-531.

⁶² Sonia Ocaña Ruiz, "Marcos 'enconchados,'" 107-153.

⁶³ Sonia Ocaña Ruiz, "Enconchado Frames: The Use of Japanese Ornamental Models in New Spanish Painting," in *Asia and Spanish America: Trans-Pacific Artistic and Cultural Exchange, 1500-1850*, ed. Donna Pierce and Ronald Otsuka (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2009).

⁶⁴ María Concepción García Saiz, "Enconchado Series," in *Motecuhzoma, Aztec Ruler*, ed. Colin McEwan and Leonardo López Luján (London: The British Museum Press, 2009), 246-249.

it juxtaposed a number of *enconchado* paintings alongside mother-of-pearl inlays on chests, folding screens, and other objects from the same period, believed by the curator of the show, Caron Smith, to display affinities due to the Manila Galleon trade. Celebrating the bicentennial of Mexico's independence, this exhibition at the Crow Museum of Asian Arts reiterates the Asian connection in these works. Unfortunately, this important exhibition aimed at American audiences produced no catalogue.

Even though no new discoveries have been made as to the authorship of some of these panels, the time is ripe now to study all the bits of information gathered in the last few years to provide a more comprehensive understanding not only of specific works, but of the social, cultural, and political context in which they were made. Three hundred years after their production, more information is available so that art historians can now trace the different perceptions that they elicited through the centuries, itself a constituent of their history as art objects.

Chapter 2

Materials and History

Mother of Pearl in Pre-Hispanic Cultures: A Cultural History

The most distinctive feature of *enconchados* is the use of mother-of-pearl, a material not alien to either pre-Hispanic or Asian cultures. Denise Patry Leidy, curator of Asian art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, describes mother-of-pearl as “the lustrous material in the interior of such mollusks as the sea-ear, nautilus, and green snail, found in warm waters, both fresh and marine, in many parts of the world.”⁶⁵ The shiny multi-colored reflection from these shells have made them prized items in the production of myriad objects in several cultures throughout the ages. A long history of its use in Asia and the Americas attests to its importance in trade as well as its value as a sumptuary item. Even though the Asian connection seems to have occupied a majority of the scholars studying the sources or influences of these unique paintings, this chapter will discuss the local environment in which they were produced, where pre-Hispanic uses of mother-of-pearl could have added a layer of significance to the works as well.

In the chapter from *La Concha Nácar* devoted to pre-Hispanic New Spain, Adrián Velázquez Castro, the Mexican archeologist and scholar, asserts that the inhabitants of

⁶⁵ Denise Paltry Leidy, *Mother-of-Pearl: A Tradition in Asian Lacquer* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006), 9.

Mexico utilized conch shells from time immemorial.⁶⁶ Not only were they used for utilitarian purposes, like weapons or utensils, but they were also prized for their aesthetic value and used as jewelry or sumptuary objects as well as ritual ones. Its ubiquity is demonstrated, according to Velázquez Castro, by the intense trade in marine shells that appeared inland, as much as from the fact that they were coveted by the Mesoamerican elite. Basing his contention on the important early work of Lourdes Suárez Diez, the Mexican naturalist and expert on seashells, Velázquez Castro asserts that the conch shell industry was widespread throughout Mesoamerica, where workshops employed full-time artisans who specialized in the techniques of manufacturing objects using this precious mollusk.⁶⁷ The final product often included varied techniques such as polishing and burnishing, among others, as well as etching through incisions over a previous drawing to produce a beautifully rendered design (fig. 2.1). The technique whereby the mother-of-pearl was inlaid in other materials was very widespread. Mother-of-pearl was also used, along with small stones, in the formation of mosaics. The substance that glued them together was the resin of the tree known as *copal*, mixed with other substances, like *tzacuhтли*, obtained from the pseudobulbs of some orchids.⁶⁸

Lourdes Suárez Diez's numerous articles, doctoral dissertation, and several books on the subject of conch shells have added to our knowledge of this material so important

⁶⁶ Adrián Velázquez Castro, "La concha nácar en la época prehispánica," in *La Concha Nácar en México* (México: Grupo Gutsa, 1990), 14.

⁶⁷ Lourdes Suárez Diez, *Talleres de concha, Unidades habitacionales mesoamericanas y sus áreas de actividad* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1986).

⁶⁸ Velázquez Castro, 18, quoted from Fernando Martínez Cortés, *Pegamentos, gomas y resinas en el México prehispánico*, (Mexico City: Nuevo Mundo, 1970), 31-40.

in Mesoamerica.⁶⁹ Her conclusions are based on archeological findings as well as information gathered from several post-contact chronicles that mention the existence of objects with mother-of-pearl. Suárez Diez's work is also important because it delves into the biological aspects of mollusks that, according to her studies, conforms to one of the most abundant groups of invertebrates and one of the most copious divisions of zoological classification.⁷⁰

By rummaging through the texts of various chroniclers and historians of the colonial period, this author has been able to pinpoint references to this material in the chronicles and letters of Hernando Cortés, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Francisco López de Gómara; the friars Diego Durán and Toribio de Benavente (Motolinía); indigenous historians such as Fernando Alvarado Tezozomoc, Fernando de Alva Ixtlixochitl, Domingo Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Cuahlehuantzin, and others, whose descriptions offer a glimpse of sumptuous objects of precious workmanship. Above all, are the illustrations in the Florentine Codex by friar Bernardino de Sahagún. The Europeanized descriptions drawn by native artists between 1540 and 1585 offered Suárez Diez the foundation for painting a clear picture of the ubiquitous nature of the material and its value and importance in pre-Hispanic Mexico:

The Mexica people were well aware of the biology in their environment and possessed information about the fauna of its territories. Doubtless, they knew and utilized a great quantity of the species of mollusks; however, according to the sources, it was only possible to classify taxonomically the species presented in the illustrations of the Florentine,

⁶⁹ Lourdes Suárez Diez, *Tipología de los objetos prehispánicos de concha*, (Mexico City: INAH, Colección Científica 54, 1977); *Técnicas prehispánicas en los objetos de concha*, (Mexico City: INAH, Colección Científica 14, 1981); *Talleres de concha, Unidades habitacionales mesoamericanas y sus áreas de actividad* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1986); "Una escultura de concha nácar en la cultura tolteca," paper presented in seminar *Mesoamerica y norte de México, siglos IX al XII*, Museo Nacional de Antropología, México, 1990; *Conchas y caracoles: Ese universo maravilloso* (Mexico City: INAH, 2008).

⁷⁰ Suárez Diez, *Conchas, caracoles y crónicas* (Mexico City: INAH, 2004), 13.

since the rest of the chronicles do not give any biological information nor did taxonomic classification exist then, a product of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The identifiable ones were: *Lygunia recta* (*Margaritifera margaritifera*, according to Emerson and Jacobson), *Trachicardium panamense*, *Pictada mazatlantia*, *Lyropecten nodosus* and *Unionidaes sp.*, among the pelicipods, and *Strombus gigas*, *Oliva sp.* and *Fascionaria tulipa*, among the gasteropods.⁷¹

After identifying all the different types of mollusks present in the descriptions of the chronicles, Suárez Diez concludes that the Mexicas must have had ample trade relations with the people of the Pacific, the Atlantic, and the Caribbean coast.⁷² Most importantly, its prevalent use attests to its importance in Mexica culture, not only as an ornamental function, but as “social identifiers like insignias of power, markers of hierarchical status, and military attributes, as well as powerful amulets for the clergy.”⁷³

Furthermore, “they were also magic and sacred symbols within the complex ideology of the Mexica religion; this in part because the conch was associated with many deities, part of some of the garments worn by them, and also, a specific attribute of certain divinities, as well as a deity itself.”⁷⁴

The shells of marine gastropod and pelecypods mollusks, according to Velázquez Castro, are the ones whose interior valve consists of the lustrous material that is called

⁷¹ Ibid., 55. “El pueblo mexica tenía conocimiento de la biología de su entorno y contaba con información sobre la fauna de sus territorios. Es indudable que conocieron y utilizaron Buena cantidad de especies de moluscos; sin embargo, según las Fuentes, solo fue posible clasificar taxonómicamente las especies presentadas en los dibujos del Florentino, debido a que el resto de los cronistas no dan ninguna información biológica ni en esa época existía una clasificación taxonómica producto de los siglos XVIII y XIX. Los gérenos identificados fueron: *Lygunia recta* (*Margaritifera margaritifera*, según Emerson y Jacobson, *Trachicardium panamense*, *Pictada mazatlanica*, *Lyropecten nodosus* y *Unionidaes sp.*, entre los pelicipodos, y *Strombus gigas*, *Oliva sp.*, y *Fasciolaria tulipak*, entre los gasterópodos.”

⁷² Ibid., 56.

⁷³ Ibid., 91.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

mother-of-pearl (nácar).⁷⁵ As conch shells of many kinds were used to produce the myriad objects that were bestowed with the symbolism stated above, the ones endowed with mother-of-pearl were also used for ornaments, or to be inlaid, and were particularly prized for their shimmering nature and beauty.

According to Suárez Diez, mother-of-pearl was considered a symbol for water, the fertility of the land, the abundance of plants, and a lunar and Venusian symbol. It was also associated with the night sky, and especially, a representation of the stars.⁷⁶ Both the deities Texcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl wore pectorals made of mother-of-pearl. In her opinion, the pectoral *ehcacózcatl* (breast jewel, literally, breastplate of the wind, fig. 2.2), the earring *epcololli* (twisted shell) and the choker of *oliva* (a kind of shell), the “three inseparable objects, are associated with the complex deity Quetzalcóatl-Ehécatl-Tlahuizcalpantecutli-Xolotl.”⁷⁷ Therefore,

This association makes the conch shell, of which the three objects are made, participate in some way in the functions characteristic of this complex deity, a deity that takes part in the creation of the Fifth Sun of the Nahuas, serves as a benefactor of humanity by providing maize; god of the rivers and water that runs, inventor of the calendar, and the creator of a mankind endowed with divine breath.⁷⁸

Further studies by Adrián Velázquez Castro have shed light on the symbolism of objects of mother-of-pearl as they pertain to findings in the Templo Mayor, the most important pyramidal temple in the Mexica capital of Tenochtitlan. Echoing Suárez Diez,

⁷⁵ Velázquez Castro, 20.

⁷⁶ Suárez Diez, 91.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid. “Esta asociación hace que la concha, de los que los tres elementos están hechos, participe en alguna forma de las funciones propias de esta compleja deidad, que toma parte en la creación del Quinto Sol de los nahuas, es benefactora de la humanidad, pues le da el maíz; dios de ríos y agua que corre, inventor del calendario y creador del hombre investido del ábito divino.”

Velázquez Castro's investigation concludes that two fields of significance can be derived from these objects: "water, food, fertility, and the generation of life, on the one hand, and the stars, war and sacrifice, on the other."⁷⁹ If these associations seem disparate or contain contrasting meanings, the author asserts that the common denominator is fertility.⁸⁰

These diverse and exhaustive studies on the use of conch shells and, in particular mother-of-pearl, in Mesoamerica point to a long tradition that did not die completely after the conquest and that extended far beyond the Mexica boundaries.⁸¹ In the Maya region, nacreous beads of the marine pearl oyster shell are found in low-status residential groups as well, according to Hattula Moholy-Nagy, Research Associate of the Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia, whose exhaustive studies on the materiality of objects in sites such as Tikal in Guatemala and Chichen Itzá in the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico attest to the pervasive use of this material.⁸² Maholy-Nagy observes the projection of elite identity in the Maya region too, confirming the widespread symbolism of this material, extending beyond Mexica culture.⁸³

⁷⁹ Adrián Velázquez Castro, *El simbolismo de los objetos de concha encontrados en las ofrendas del Templo Mayor de Tenochtitlan* (Mexico City: INAH), 233.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁸¹ Hattula Moholy-Nagy's archeological studies and exhaustive classification of Mayan sites and the use of shells, sea materials, stone, and bone are one example of such research, especially "Shells and Other Marine Material from Tikal," *Estudios de Cultura Maya* 3 (1963): 65-83; Hattula Maholy-Nagy and John M. Ladd, "Objects of Stone, Shell, and Bone," in *Artifacts from the Cenote of Sacrifice, Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Memoirs of the Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology*, ed. Clemency Chase Coggins (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 1992), 99-151.

⁸² Hattula Moholy-Nagy, "Formed Shell Beads from Tikal, Guatemala," in *Proceedings of the 1986 Shell Bead Conference, Selected Papers*, ed. Charles F. Hayes, Lynn Ceci, Connie Cox Bodner (Rochester: Rochester Museum and Science Center, 1989), 142-154, as quoted in *Veiled Brightness: A History of Ancient Maya Color*, ed. Houston, Brittenham, Mesick, Tokovinine, Warinner (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 52.

⁸³ Hattula Moholy-Nagy, "The Social and Ceremonial Uses of Marine Molluscs at Tikal," in *Prehistoric Lowland Maya Environment and Subsistence Economy*, ed. Mary Pohl (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985), 147.

An exhibition that opened first at the Peabody Essex Museum in Massachusetts and later at the Kimball Museum in Fort Worth in 2010 illuminates the centrality of the sea and the objects therein in Maya culture. Titled *Fiery Pool: The Maya and the Mythic Sea*, the exhibition explores imagery pertaining to shells and shell motifs, considering the materiality of water symbols so pervasive in Mayan art as intrinsic to that culture's worldview.⁸⁴

Like featherwork or corn paste (a technique in which the pre-Hispanic artisans molded images with the pith of the cornstalk), the technique of mother-of-pearl survived the Spanish conquest, not only in the workmanship of the material itself, but in the imagination of the artists who sought to embellish the multiple commissions that came their way. It attests to the singularity of New Spanish styles that did not adhere wholeheartedly to any prescribed notion or canon.⁸⁵ The manufacture of objects with mother-of-pearl, it will be argued here, will be taken up just as the also long-lasting featherwork technique begins its decline and will last well into the eighteenth century. If the artisans who fabricated those splendid feather mosaics represent a continuation of pre-Hispanic art forms in a historical continuum, they also manifest the European's acceptance of an indigenous skill that was highly praised by Bartolomé de las Casas and Hernando Cortés among others. Objects inlaid with mother-of-pearl were also praised by the early

⁸⁴ Daniel Finamore and Stephen D. Houston, *Fiery Pool: The Maya and the Mythic Sea* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010).

⁸⁵ Featherwork was an art form that was continued immediately after the conquest during the sixteenth century, now following European models based on Flemish, Spanish, French, or Italian prints and engravings, and had already begun to wane by the middle of the seventeenth century. However, feather mosaics "conferred the works with luminous and chromatic features that would have been difficult to reproduce in painting with mineral and paint pigments," according to the catalogue to a 2011 exhibition of featherwork in Mexico City, resulting in a similar effect to that achieved by mother-of-pearl. Alessandra Russo, Gerhard Wolf, Diana Fane, eds., *Images Take Flight: Feather Art in Mexico and Europe* (Mexico City: Museo Nacional de Arte, 2011), 27.

colonizers and missionaries in their chronicles and letters. This latter technique reappears at a time when ideological and historical re-evaluations were taking place within the viceroyalty and, thus, conform to a different set of motivations, as will be explained further in Chapter 4. I contend that in Mexico the ascendancy of the *criollos*, the increase in native population during the seventeenth century, the widespread commerce with Asian objects, the assertion of Mexicanness, and the re-evaluation of the pre-Hispanic past in this century prior to independence from Spain, all contributed to the development of art forms indigenous to the new economic, political, and social reality.

In his essay, “Stealers of Light, Traders in Brilliance,” Nicholas J. Saunders, the British archeologist and anthropologist from the University of Bristol, explores indigenous conceptions of brilliant materials in the Amerindian world. According to Saunders, “Amerindians saw spirituality in many shiny things, not just the few regarded as precious by Europeans. Spiritual essence, manifested as brilliance, inhered in the celestial bodies, meteorological phenomena, fire, water, metals, minerals, shells, ceramics, feathers, bone, blood, and semen, amongst other things.”⁸⁶ This shamanic view of objects can also be perceived in the terminology of radiance, according to Saunders, as in the Aztec word for soul, *tonalli*, “derived from the noun *tona*, meaning to ‘irradiate’.”⁸⁷ In this sense, the indigenous conceptions of light “were imbued with sacred, mythic, moral, and social values, which penetrated to the heart of culturally variable world views.”⁸⁸ It is pertinent to point out that in the exchange that took place during the encounter between

⁸⁶ Nicholas Saunders, “Stealers of Light, Traders in Brilliance: Amerindian Metaphysics in the Mirror of Conquest,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 33 (1998): 226.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 228.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 230.

Motecuhzoma and Cortés, where the gifts that the Aztec emperor gave the Spaniards were also of a bright and shiny nature, as befitted an important personage.⁸⁹ These exchanges based on surface glitter, Saunders explains, often revealed “the stark incommensurability of the two valuations of brilliance.”⁹⁰

The arrival of the Spaniards in Mexico enhanced the indigenous notions of light-bearing objects as sacred (fig. 2.3). The shiny Spanish armor and guns, the gunfire produced by the latter, the beads and glass that the Spanish exchanged for gold, silver, and copper were deemed of a spiritual nature by the Mesoamerican people, in tandem with their own beliefs. For Saunders, even though the natives’ materials were still at hand, they “appeared powerless to uphold indigenous social and mythical realities in the face of disease and death which appeared with Europeans, yet to which Europeans themselves seemed largely immune.”⁹¹

The Europeans’ desire to accumulate gold and silver, notwithstanding, was not devoid of contradiction. It gave impetus to the conquest, but at the same time the lust for its acquisition was also recognized as the root of all evil.⁹² In summary, Saunders affirms:

Where Europeans saw the possession of wealth as a real (or potential) moral contradiction, Amerindians saw glittering objects as endowing life, physical health, vitality, and spiritual well-being –their fluorescence unifying physical and spiritual realities.⁹³

⁸⁹ Ibid., 237.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 238.

⁹¹ Ibid., 241.

⁹² Ibid., 242.

⁹³ Ibid., 243.

If shiny objects were endowed with metaphysical properties in the pre-Hispanic world-view, we cannot forget that the seventeenth-century Baroque aesthetics of Spain and New Spain also privileged surfaces whose luminosity would call to mind metaphysical Christian precepts. The gilded altarpieces, sculptures painted with the underlying gold leaf *estofado* technique, and the golden ornaments that often embellished many sculptural figures and retables attest to this penchant. This coincidence, however, had different repercussion in the way either culture responded to the brilliance of objects. It is true that by the Renaissance in Europe, arcane symbolism attributed to medieval notions had begun to wane. However, Christian notions of God's light were embodied in the figure of Christ himself, who was "'Light Incarnate' according to John the Baptist, and 'the light of the world' to the Gospel of St. John."⁹⁴ It was not unusual for Counter-Reformation images of the Trinity or the Virgin Mary to appear emerging from a radiant light source.

Even the encounter between the Europeans and the Mesoamericans was fraught with omens that were often described as representation of light (fig. 2.4). Following Saunders, Bernardino de Sahagún's Florentine account, in retrospect, relates a number of manifestations, "from a sparkling tongue of flame that appeared in the midnight sky, to the mysterious unquenchable fire that destroyed Huitzilopochtli's temple," among others.⁹⁵ The Aztec capitulation after Cortés victory was, according to Saunders, described "as brightness dimmed."⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Ibid., 242.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 239.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 240.

The conclusion to be drawn from Saunders' study is that there are layers of meaning in the material culture of the Mesoamerican people that the Spaniards were not aware of at the time of the encounter, or even afterwards. The luminosity and brilliance of certain materials, including shells and mother-of-pearl, were part of a wide range of metaphysical markers that had informed the cultures of Mesoamerica and were not easily erased by the arrival of the conquerors. A seventeenth-century painter using mother-of-pearl incrustations to highlight scenes of the conquest of Mexico or the Virgin of Guadalupe may be seen as responding to centuries of symbolic values that supplied the reception of the objects at hand with a more nuanced and multifaceted understanding.

Thus, for the Mesoamerican, these shiny objects “were fundamentally materializations of light –sensuous, variable colored embodiments of bright cosmic energy, whose possession, display, and exchange articulated intersecting physical, spiritual, and mythical realities.”⁹⁷ This is especially true of the luster of pearls.

In an essay published a year later, Saunders explores “the ways in which these earliest of traded objects [pearls] embodied, bridged and transformed the material, social and imagined worlds of Amerindians and Europeans from AD 1492 onwards.”⁹⁸ In the cultural exchange that took place in the years following the encounter and conquest, the significance of the material objects that each culture deemed of special economic or social value was transformed. Saunders explains that “making shiny objects was an act of transformative creation, converting –in a sense, re-cycling—the fertilizing energy of light into brilliant solid forms via technological choices whose efficacy stemmed from a

⁹⁷ Ibid., 244.

⁹⁸ Nicholas J. Saunders, “Biographies of Brilliance: Pearls, Transformations of Matter and Being c. AD 1492,” *World Archeology* 31, no. 2 (October 1999): 243.

synergy of myth, ritual knowledge and individual technical skill.”⁹⁹ The technology appropriated for the construction of panels inlaid with mother-of-pearl instilled an archaic property to the painting that reflected not only light, but also light’s own power over the viewer.

In the unequal interchange of objects, the Europeans reinterpreted their luminescent quality to values that had been set for centuries, in accordance to other symbolic systems. The very fact that the Amerindians endowed some objects with a spiritual value made these objects less valuable for the Europeans. In this sense, the Europeans “exercised creative agency, denying the defining qualities of the object’s indigenous ‘life’ and revaluing it in accordance with their own system of commercial exchange.”¹⁰⁰

Pearls were known to be commercially viable items in pre-Hispanic America (fig. 2.5).¹⁰¹ Their brilliance, whiteness, gloss, translucence, iridescence were “imbued with a sacredness magnified by their origins beneath water’s mirror-like surface.”¹⁰² Pearls, associated with water, were “miniature symbols of the generative power of the sea a ‘mother of fertility’, and were votively offered as such.”¹⁰³ Saunders quotes from Eduard Seler’s study of the *Relación de Michoacán* where these natural objects are associated

⁹⁹ Ibid., 246.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 247.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 248.

with “an origin myth which describes the primeval ocean home from which people emerged as ‘the jar of pearls’”¹⁰⁴

In the final analysis, notwithstanding the differences in the perception of shiny objects such as mother-of-pearl in European and Amerindian cultures, the effect of its luster and natural qualities lent meaning to the objects adorned with them. This difference can be thus summarized:

For Amerindians, pearls were one of many kinds of brilliant matter—a sensuous variably colored embodiments of bright cosmic energy that energized the universe. For Europeans during the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, the commercial, aesthetic and social value of pearls was determined by their (naturally and socially controlled) availability, flawlessness, color and symbolic use as fashion items through which elites displayed (and through sumptuary laws reinforced) their social status, competing with each other and advertising colonial possessions.¹⁰⁵

These cultural differences in perception are the topic of Gabriela Siracusano’s work, *El poder de los colores*, where the Argentine scholar studies the effect of pigments in the sacred practices of the pre-Hispanic Andean region and thereafter.¹⁰⁶ Siracusano’s thesis tackles the questions of materiality “from the perspective of a cultural history, this side of the material dimension of the colonial representations” as they pertain to the Andean region of South America, but her postulations can also be applied to the other Spanish colonies.¹⁰⁷ Basing her theoretical assumptions on the works of Michael Baxandall, Thomas Cummins, John Gage, Serge Gruzinski, David Freedberg, and Louis

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 253.

¹⁰⁶ Gabriela Siracusano, *El poder de los colores: De lo material a lo simbólico en las prácticas culturales andinas, Siglos XVI-XVIII* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2005).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 21. “Abordaré entonces, a partir de la perspectiva de una historia cultura, este costado de la dimension material de las representaciones colonials.”

Marin, Siracusano understands the problem of color in Andean painting as “an active agent in practices and representations of cultural formation, in which the powers or faculties attributed to base materials –be they of a political, economic or ritual nature—or to their participation as a code of acknowledgement of iconographic symbols, allow us to identify slippages of sense and discursive strategies that can differ among the different cultures.”¹⁰⁸ By examining paintings made during the colonial period, Siracusano juxtaposes the traditional European art historical theories of representation with the local vernacular practices in the Andean region to throw light on the meanings that these fusions of materials and techniques imbued in the objects. In this way, Siracusano identifies and weaves concepts associated with knowledge, manufacturing, and power to derive “a network of meanings linked to the symbolic power of the images produced in America in the process of evangelization.”¹⁰⁹

One of the principal objectives of Siracusano’s thesis is that in colonial South America the artistic representations were linked to practices and scientific-technological knowledge that allow the supposition of a “simultaneity and coexistence of knowledge from other fields linked to contemporary chemistry and alchemy, mineralogy and astrology.”¹¹⁰ Siracusano’s interest lies in scrutinizing the materials the painters used as

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 22. “...desde perspectivas e intereses distintos, los trabajos de Michael Baxandall, Thomas Cummins, John Gage, Serge Gruzinski, David Freedberg y Louis Marin ofrecen herramientas teóricas para comprender el problema del color como un agente activo en prácticas y representaciones de las formaciones culturales, en las que los poderes o facultades atribuidos a sus bases materiales –sean de carácter político, económico o ritual—o a su participación como código de reconocimiento de símbolos iconográficos, permiten identificar deslizamientos de sentido y estrategias discursivas que pueden diferir entre las distintas culturas.”

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 21. “...una red de significados ligados al poder simbólico de las imágenes producidas en América como parte del proceso de evangelización.”

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 170. “...una simultaneidad y una coexistencia de conocimientos con otros ámbitos vinculados a la química y la alquimia, la mineralogía y la astrología contemporáneas.”

purveyors of ancient wisdoms which encompassed not only the symbolism that this or that color or pigment conveyed, but the incorporation of those symbols to alchemical and curative powers:

In what way the space of the painter, laden with images, brushes, vessels, containers of powders, oils and resins, and stones to grind, was linked to these other spaces that surely he frequented and that were associated with curative or alchemical practices?¹¹¹

Siracusano's reading of the treatise written in 1640 by the secular Catholic priest and metallurgist Alvaro Alonso Barba (1569?-1661, fig. 2.6) on mineralogy, widely circulated in the Americas, opens her discussion of this affinity between such apparently remote practices as that of the painter and that of the alchemist, the minerologist, or the philosopher. In *El arte de los metales*, Barba's commentary on the Catalan philosopher Ramon Llull summarizes Siracusano's focus on the linkages of mineralogy, alchemy, and the plastic and sacred arts:

In the compendium of the Transmutation that engaged Robert King of England, he teaches in particular to make in parts the precious stones, so fine and of such virtue, like the ones nature produces, with several mixtures of water from metals: a science which over the other ones that this admirable gentleman possessed, seems to exceed human capacity. Something proves this way of knowing the use of making glazes of various colors, according to the mineral things with which the glass is melted and mixed, and the false stones that are made in the same manner.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Ibid. "En qué forma el espacio del pintor, plagado de imágenes, pinceles, frascos y sobres con polvos, aceites y resinas, y piedras para moler, se vinculaba con esos otros espacios que seguramente frecuentaba y que estaban asociados a prácticas curativas o alquímicas?"

¹¹² Ibid., 171-172. "En el compendio de la Transmutación, que dedicó a Roberto Rey de Inglaterra, enseña muy en particular, hacer por parte las piedras preciosas tan finas y de tanta virtud, como las que la naturaleza produce con varias mezclas de agua de metales: ciencia que sobre las demás que tuvo este admirable varón, parece exceda a la capacidad humana. Algo acredita aqueste modo de sentir el uso de hacer esmaltes de colores varios, según las cosas minerales con que se derrite y mezcla el vidrio, y las piedras falsas que de la misma manera se componen."

In this hermeneutic lies Siracusano's proposition, which can be applied not only to the Andean region but the rest of the Americas. In her study, she traces the chronicles and treatises available in the New World where the European medieval tradition linked colors with the "four primordial elements, the celestial bodies, the humors, and the Zodiac,"¹¹³ This leads to her assertion that in the New World three philosophical currents were available to the colonizers and the colonized as support to the epistemological apparatus regarding the scientific activities of the time. These were the "organicist current, rooted in Aristotelian precepts, which recovered a conception of an orderly universe; a current that utilizes terms such as substance, accident, matter, existence and essence."¹¹⁴ Secondly, following Siracusano's thesis, a mechanist current that was open to experimentation and a modern scientific praxis "with a strong dosage of religious and inquisitorial emphasis."¹¹⁵ This philosophical current can be seen in the works of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (1478-1557), the Madrid-born Spanish writer and historian who chronicled his experiences in the Caribbean; fray Toribio de Benavente (Motolinía, 1492-1568) one of the twelve Franciscan missionaries who arrived in Mexico in 1524; Bernardino de Sahagún (1499-1590) the compiler of the Florentine Codex; José de Acosta (1539-1600), Jesuit missionary and naturalist; and Francisco Hernández (1514-1587) the physician and naturalist, all promoters of a Thomist culture.¹¹⁶ Lastly, Siracusano points to the hermetic tradition also circulating during this period:

¹¹³ Ibid. 172. "...los cuatro elementos primordiales, los cuerpos celestes, los humores y el zodiaco."

¹¹⁴ Ibid. "Por un lado, la corriente organicista, de fuerte raigambre aristotélica, la cual recuperaba una concepción del universo ordenada, dogmática y jerárquica transitada por términos como sustancia, accidente, material, existencia y esencia."

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 173. "...de una fuerte impronta religiosa e inquisitorial."

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Taking as a starting point the plurality of the natural signs in numerical and cabalistic terms, and the attempts to discover the mysteries of matter and the spiritual world by means of initiation schemes, one considerable part of the texts that circulated and were published in America—in tandem with the practices that were taking place—intersected with the thirst for a description and interpretation of the marvelous American spectacle with a tradition that allowed to link the unknown with a different order.¹¹⁷

It is no coincidence that the works of the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher, so widespread in American libraries, was so keen on offering a representation of the world in a “symbolic-hermeneutic register.”¹¹⁸ Along with Kircher, the Spanish Jesuit José de Acosta and the Spanish-born physician Juan de Cárdenas (1563-1609), who practiced in Mexico, shared this interest in linking the properties of stones and metals with astronomical and celestial objects. Siracusano quotes from Cárdenas’ *Problemas y secretos maravillosos de las Indias*, published in 1591 (fig. 2.7), where he warns that:

In the same way that the sun and the other planets in the sky, penetrating with their celestial influx toward the abyss of the earth, are wont to raise, and do raise from the humidity in the contained earth, a great quantity of humid vapors, that way they raise and engender from the most subtle, burned and bleakest earth, a certain kind of very dry vapor called exhalation by the philosophers.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Ibid. “A partir de un ordenamiento de la pluralidad de los signos naturales en términos numéricos y cabalísticos y de una intención de descubrir los misterios de lo material y del mundo espiritual por medio de un esquema iniciático, una parte considerable de los textos que circularon y publicaron en América—como también las prácticas que se llevaron a cabo—intersectaron el afán por una descripción e interpretación del maravilloso espectáculo Americano con una tradición que permitía ligar lo desconocido con un orden distinto.”

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 174.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. “...de la misma suerte que el sol y los demás planetas del cielo, penetrando con su celestial influjo hacia el abismo de la tierra, suelen levantar, y levantan de la humedad en la contenida, gran copia de húmedos vapores, así levantan y engendran de la parte más sutil, quemada y austa de la tierra cierto género de vapor sequísimo, llamado de los philosophos, exhalación.” Quoted from Juan de Cárdenas, *Problemas y secretos maravillosos de las Indias* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, Colección de Incunables Americanos, s. XVI, vol. IX).

Cárdenas' ideas correspond to those espoused by Barba in that both believe that such exhalations were precisely the origins of metals and precious stones, a kind of “action from a distance.”¹²⁰ The materials that the artists used to sculpt or to paint, be they stone or pigments, organic or inorganic, precious or semiprecious, imbued with the celestial matter of their genesis, were, therefore, endowed with particular characteristics that the hermeneutic philosophers deemed important and meaningful.

In the exhibition at the Museo Nacional de Arte in Mexico City in 2011 entitled *El vuelo de las imágenes: Arte plumario en México y Europa* (Images Take Flight: Feather Art in Mexico and Europe), the curators (Alessandra Russo, Gerhard Wolf, Diana Fane) introduce the topic by asking the following question: “How and in what material did the divine take shape?”¹²¹ These authors support the hypothesis that the “conceptions of Huitzilopochtli and of Christ show the power of feathers in conceiving and personifying the sacred, as well as in materializing a temporal and mythical division between a before and after.”¹²² It is precisely this role of sacredness that can be attributed to the material obtained from mollusks, mother-of-pearl, that merges the tradition of a pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican culture to the counterreformation drive towards a more visible evidence of the realms of the spiritual or the godly. Thus, the material itself is part and parcel of the message.

Religious images were thus permeated with meanings that were part of the materiality of their manufacture, thus layering meanings inherent in various disciplines.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 175.

¹²¹ Alessandra Russo, Gerhard Wolf, Diana Fane, *El vuelo de las imágenes*, 9.

¹²² Ibid.

For the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spanish evangelists in the New World, the purpose of the images was to “represent and move” as well as “see and evoke.”¹²³ Whether the artists who produced the *enconchado* paintings were Asian, Spanish, or native Mexicans, the result of the inlaid mother-of-pearl was to create a luminescence that infused the object with a cultural charge evoking not only pre-Hispanic notions of sacredness, but also Baroque Spanish markers of Christ’s light. But more than that, they also symbolize the complexity of a colonial environment where intellectual notions of the cosmos fused with more popular cultural practices. Michael Schreffler, a scholar of colonial Latin American art, adds an economic and political dimension to this issue of materiality when he links the golden hues resulting from gold dust in some of the *enconchado* paintings to the Spanish crown’s claims to the gold mines and natural resources of the New World.¹²⁴ Even if devoid of intentionality, these precious works that were often gifts from Spanish noblemen to the monarchs (as attested in royal inventories), or commissioned by New World viceroys, produced a different reaction in a viewer’s perception by the reflection of light in the mother-of-pearl and the shininess of the gold dust and varnish. Schreffler points out that the shell fragments “are concentrated very densely in certain areas of the panels’ composition, and viewed from a distance, the glittering mosaic sometimes even takes visual precedence over the subjects of the episodes themselves.”¹²⁵ Since Schreffler’s contention is to equate these works with Spain’s

¹²³ Siracusano, 281.

¹²⁴ Michael Schreffler, *The Art of Allegiance*, 103-104.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 104.

imperial propaganda, the materials of the *enconchado* paintings offer an opportunity to relate their production to an all-encompassing political agenda. Schreffler adds:

These material and optical components of the panels suffused the works with a visual intensity and sense of economic value that reinforced ideas about the America's role in the enrichment of the crown. Moreover, their sumptuous appearance attested in a more subtle way to the labor-intensiveness of the acquisition and manipulation of the materials used in their manufacture. As such, the works blur the fine line that separates gifts from commodities, a status that is further promoted by the prominence and visibility on the panels of the names of their makers.¹²⁶

The makers of *enconchado* paintings could have been influenced by Asian objects made with mother-of-pearl, including furniture; or they could have been deliberately reviving an ancient Mesoamerican tradition. The choice of inlaying pieces of cut mother-of-pearl, however, responded more to an intention of creating an object that was neither Asian nor Aztec or Mayan, but New Spanish. The brilliance of the material artists chose to enhance the colonial paintings endowed them with a quality all other paintings at the time lacked. Literally, thousands of paintings were produced during this period for the churches, convents, government institutions, or palaces of the rich. In the midst of that plethora of images derived mostly from European styles in vogue at the time, such as tenebrism, *enconchado* paintings make their appearance. The diversity of styles and the longevity of the *enconchado* technique attest to multiple workshops bent on creating a different kind of painting for a newly formed taste. But what they all had in common was the desire to use a material that added meaning and resonance to images that had become humdrum in religious paintings, as well as importance to images of a historical nature, a new subject matter by the mid seventeenth century. The unique result has baffled scholars

¹²⁶ Ibid.

because little has come down to us from contemporary sources to explain this phenomenon. Notwithstanding this lack of information on the reception of these works, what is unquestionable from the perspective of the present is their uniqueness and the esteem in which they were held, as well as the multiple resonances that their viewing entailed.

The subject of originality, pertinent to the discussion of colonial works, is tackled by Clara Bargellini in the essay “Originality and Invention in the Painting of New Spain.”¹²⁷ Bargellini reminds us that painting in New Spain began soon after the conquest imitating European models that were brought to the New World.¹²⁸ Europe’s Renaissance was underway, a movement that gave impetus to the status of the artist and placed keen interest on originality, *or invenzione*. Copying, following Bargellini’s argument, was only a first step, one that painters in New Spain particularly employed in the first years of colonization, as “throughout the viceregal period they were often presented with the task of reproducing models.”¹²⁹ In this sense, art historical discourse has often dismissed sixteenth and even seventeenth-century painting in New Spain as derivative, a peripheral art. Bargellini quotes from the eminent nineteenth-century Mexican lawyer and father of Mexican art history, José Bernardo Couto, who refers to sixteenth-century Mexican painting as “simply copies...not yet art, but only the beginning of its instruction.”¹³⁰ Manuel Toussaint, the eminent Mexican art historian, was not far from this dictum:

¹²⁷ Clara Bargellini, “Originality and Invention in the Painting of New Spain,” in *Painting a New World: Mexican Art and Life 1521-1821* (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2004).

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ José Bernardo Couto, *Diálogo sobre la historia de la pintura en México*, ed. Juana Gutiérrez de Haces and Rogelio Ruiz Gomar (Mexico City: CONACULTA, 1995), 78-80.

“Originality of ideas [was] never vigorous in colonial painting, since artists sought to copy anything and everything that came into their hands.”¹³¹ Bargellini goes on to assert that Toussaint came around to see the indigenous participation in Mexican art as, indeed, its most original aspect, a deviation from Couto’s view.¹³² Subsequent discussion about indigenous agency in the production of Mexican art found itself on either end of two poles. On the one hand, those like Toussaint who defended the art of the viceroyalty; and those who –Spanish authors of the first half of the twentieth century in general—saw it as provincial. Toussaint himself eventually came to see the production of *enconchados* under the lens of an original New Spanish form with Asian antecedents.

Mother-of-Pearl in Asia and Its Influence

Mother-of-pearl techniques were developed in China during the eleventh century and soon were used for making furniture in which the mother-of-pearl was inlaid into lacquer. It became a suitable means of decorating vessels, boxes, and, eventually, all kinds of folding screens, furniture, trays, and so on that were traded within Asia.¹³³ According to Denise Patry Leidy, curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, mother-of-pearl inlaid in lacquer existed in China even in the Neolithic Period, but the final outcome of the combination can be traced conclusively to the Shang dynasty (ca. 1600-ca. 1050

¹³¹ Toussaint, *Pintura colonial* (Mexico City: Imprenta Universitaria, 1965), 159.

¹³² Bargellini, 80.

¹³³ Denise Patry Leidy, *Mother-of-Pearl: A Tradition in Asian Lacquer* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006), 9-10.

BCE).¹³⁴ Such a long period of gestation evidences the gradual development of an art form, as well as the popular embrace of the technique for the subsequent centuries in Japan, Korea, and throughout the Far East.

Patry Leidy traces the development of mother-of-pearl in East Asia and corroborates the production of furniture, containers of many sorts, drum stands and toys with historical references.¹³⁵ An example of this is found in the work of Zhou Mi (1232-1290), a government officer and poet. According to Leidy, in his *Miscellaneous Notes from Guizin Alley*:

Zhou noted that Wang Fu, a customs commissioner in the city of Fuzhou in Fujian Province, presented ten lacquer desks screens with mother-of-pearl inlay to the notorious Prime Minister Jia Shidao.¹³⁶

In the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) and the following Ming (1368-1644), lacquer products made with mother-of-pearl were important commercial items as well as domestic goods and diplomatic gifts.¹³⁷ Trays, boxes, or folding screens with decoration in mother-of-pearl of domestic scenes or scenes of elite leisure activities were common, sometimes paralleling the ceramic productions of the time (fig. 2.8).¹³⁸

The Japanese also sent lacquer items with pieces of mother-of-pearl as gifts to Chinese and Korean courts and temples.¹³⁹ In the sixteenth century, Japanese

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 23.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 26.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 27-31.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 24.

lacquer with inlaid mother-of-pearl was collected in China, and later in the century, in Europe.¹⁴⁰ By the end of the sixteenth century, after the arrival of the Portuguese from their Indian trading colonies, Japanese techniques were impacted by these other Asian links. Some designs were actually obtained from textiles from Indian and Southeast Asian sources.¹⁴¹ In the seventeenth century, lacquer boxes and trays decorated with mother-of-pearl that shaped scenes taken from literary texts became highly coveted items.¹⁴² The figural decoration, according to Leidy, suggests the influence of China or the Ryukyu Islands.¹⁴³ Such is the case of a rectangular tray from the Edo period with a scene from the Tale of Genji (fig. 2.9).

Chinese folding screens made of wood, covered in lacquer, and decorated with mother-of-pearl (or paint and semiprecious stones) were produced for domestic use and for export to European centers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁴⁴ These were often denominated Coromandel screens, “a reference to the mistaken perception that the screens were produced on the eastern coast of India, and not in China.”¹⁴⁵ Janice Katz, Roger L. Weston Associate Curator of Japanese Art at the Art Institute of Chicago, in her essay for the 2009 exhibitions in Saint Louis and Chicago of folding screens, attributes the earliest mention of

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 45.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 47.

¹⁴² Ibid., 49.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 65.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

folding screens in Japan to the late seventh century, when they were brought from China or Korea as gifts to the Japanese court.¹⁴⁶ After tracing the development through the ensuing centuries, Katz devotes a whole section of her introductory essay to New Spanish folding screens, considering it a Western response to that Asian format.¹⁴⁷ Focusing on a folding screen in the Museo de América in Madrid, *A View of the Viceregal Palace in Mexico City* (fig. 2.10), of unknown authorship, Katz associates this (and other) folding screens in New Spain to Japan's production of luxury gold-leaf folding screens in the middle of the seventeenth century.¹⁴⁸ Recalling how the only secular paintings aside from portraits in New Spain at this time were these folding screens, Katz recalls that the folding screens were "put to many of the same uses as in Japan, both domestically and politically."¹⁴⁹

It is not surprising, then, that besides panel paintings inlaid with mother-of-pearl there are also a number of *enconchado biombos* (folding screens) painted by the same hands as the panels, including some depicting the conquest of Mexico. The *biombos*, or *byōbu*, (the Japanese word *byōbu* literally means "stop the wind") have been systematically studied by the American scholar Sofia Sanabrais, who considers them "associated with imperial status and taste and ... one of the most desired painting formats

¹⁴⁶ Janice Katz, "Hidden Behind History: Revealing Moments in the Evolution of Japanese Folding Screens," in *Beyond Golden Clouds: Japanese Screens from the Art Institute of Chicago and the Saint Louis Art Museum*, ed. Janice Katz (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 14.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 22-25.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

in Japan.”¹⁵⁰ Accordingly, her dissertation explores how the Japanese *byōbu* “inspired artists in New Spain to translate the Japanese artifact into a Hispanic idiom ... that appealed to a large section of elite society.”¹⁵¹ *Biombos* and *enconchados* provided the elite of the viceroyalty with material goods that would expand the colonial vocabulary of power by association with imperial Japan. Michael Cooper’s edition of *João Rodrigues’s Account of Sixteenth-Century Japan* shows how the Portuguese missionary excelled as an interpreter and left a legacy of writings expressing that Asian cultures “independently developed a highly sophisticated society ... [whose] refined culture came as a salutary surprise to Europeans, and in time produced far reaching revisions in Western thought and outlook.”¹⁵² Rodrigues’s descriptions, furthermore, equate *byōbu* with European tapestries, certainly one of the most valued of luxurious items that bespoke the courtly splendor of the Renaissance. Like the *enconchados*, when folding screens made their way to New Spain, they provided a hybrid vocabulary that enhanced the elite’s pictorial formulation of their power, authority, and cosmopolitanism.

It is interesting to note that the political, social, and cultural implications of using the *biombo* format in New Spain to represent historical scenes as well as vernacular saints and virgins was not so far from the resonance they had achieved in Japan. Katz recalls their importance at the end of the sixteenth century:

For Japan, the most compelling incident revealing the perceived political power of screens toward the West is perhaps the Azuchi Castle Screens (Azuchijō byōbu) commissioned by Oda Nobunaga in 1580 and

¹⁵⁰ Sofia Sanabrais, *The Biombo or Folding Screen: Examining the Impact of Japan and the Globalization of Taste in Seventeenth-Century New Spain* (PhD diss., New York University Institute of Fine Arts, 2005), 27.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., 86, quoted in Michael Cooper, ed., *João Rodrigues’s Account of Sixteenth Century Japan* (London: Hakluyt Society, 2001), xv.

painted by Kano Eitoku (1543-1590). Nobunaga gave this work to the Jesuit Alessandro Valignano, who as part of the Tensho Mission in turn presented it to Pope Gregory XIII in 1585. Showing the teeming metropolis of Kyoto, the pair were likely a shrewd gift to portray his “empire” as orderly, refined, and most importantly, ruled by him. It seems likely that screens of similar subject matter would have made their way to New Spain, as gifts directly from Japan, or as part of the galleon trade.¹⁵³

In this sense, the Museo de América’s screen also shows an “orderly, well-functioning multiethnic and multiclass society.”¹⁵⁴ The scenes of the *enconchado* paintings of the conquest of Mexico or the battles of Alessandro Farnese with their respective representations of implementing a new order in New Spain or restoring the power of the Hapsburg monarchy in the Northern European Spanish dominions echo this notion. Even though the materials used and the subject matter was different from the Japanese prototypes, New Spanish folding screens did not distance themselves from their progenitors. A luxury item to the elite, “a screen could show the world as you wanted to see it, or as you would have foreigners see it.”¹⁵⁵

Asia and the Americas

According to Gauvin Alexander Bailey, “Colonial Latin America was more directly and profoundly affected by Asian culture than Europe ever was.”¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, it was not until 1976, as Sofia Sanabrais points out, that these links came to the fore in a

¹⁵³ Katz, 25.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 25.

¹⁵⁶ Gauvin Alexander Bailey, “Asia in the Arts of Colonial Latin America,” in *The Arts in Latin America 1492-1820*, ed. Joseph J. Rishel and Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 57.

symposium held in El Colegio de México. Sanabrais aptly reminds us that of the eleven essays included in the publication following the event, only one pertained to art.

Significantly, the author's attitude is quite explicit:

The topic of the Asian influence in the art that flourished in the Americas during the colonial period is of such magnitude and extent that it would be useless to try to compress it, or even summarize it, because like a fan of human expressions, it spreads to include other disciplines such as ethnology, where art and custom merge....Although one is aware of the Asian influence in the colonial culture of the Americas and despite the great importance of this subject, it has scarcely been investigated and, when studied, has only been on a monographic level or on specific subjects. Taking all this into account, this brief exposition does not pretend nor wish to be anything more than a rough sketch or suggestion of the importance of the subject.¹⁵⁷

The relationship between Asia and the Americas may be said to have been established by Columbus himself, who, Bailey rightly points out, “thought he had landed in Japan.”¹⁵⁸ Moreover, Bailey recalls the notion, begun in the sixteenth century by the Jesuit José de Acosta in Perú, that Amerindians had migrated through the Bering Strait centuries earlier, the first one to have proposed it.¹⁵⁹ Miguel López de Legazpi (1502-1572), the Spanish conquistador, arrived in the Phillipines from New Spain in 1565 with the sole intent of colonizing the archipelago. A year later, the San Pablo Galleon, commanded by Fray Andrés de Urdaneta, made its first trip to New Spain, having found a practicable route across the Pacific and initiating the trans-Pacific trade in earnest.¹⁶⁰

When inventories in the households of the viceroyalty's elite are inspected, as Bailey

¹⁵⁷ Sofia Sanabrais, *The Biombo or Folding Screen*, 22-23, quoting in Manuel González Galván, “Asian Influences in the Colonial Art of the Americas,” in *Asia and Colonial Latin America* ed. Ernesto de la Torre (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1981), 141-144.

¹⁵⁸ Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America*, 351.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Dujovne, *Las pinturas con incrustaciones de nácar* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1984), 10.

points out, “the furniture, ceramics, and textiles that adorned colonial homes and churches—whether from Potosí, Bolivia, or Pernambuco, Brazil—either came from Asia or was inspired by Asian art.”¹⁶¹ As Bailey asserts, the Manila Galleon left the port of Acapulco laden with American silver and other raw materials and natural products and returned, months later, with “manufactured goods, primarily porcelains from Jingdezhen, China; ivory statues of saints from Fujian and Manila; folding screens from Macao and Japan; spices, pearls, and furniture, mainly from Southeast Asia; and above all, fine silk cloth—including (before 1692) pieces of Chinese imperial court costume, sent to the Americas after the dynasty that commissioned them had fallen.”¹⁶²

However, it is chiefly due to the Jesuit missions to Japan that a more permanent and continuous relationship was established between the European colonialists and the Asian countries. Even though they were not the first, once the Jesuits arrived in Japan in 1549, closer ties ushered a century-long of social, cultural, and artistic exchanges. After Saint Francis Xavier’s conversion efforts took hold, art academies were founded with up to forty artists and apprentices in workshops.¹⁶³ The Seminary of Painters, as it was called, trained mostly Japanese or Chinese converts under the aegis of the Neapolitan Jesuit artist Giovanni Niccoló (1563-1623).¹⁶⁴ By the time the Jesuit Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606), Visitor to the Indies, made his imprint after 1579, accommodating to Japanese modes of artistic production, European and Japanese art had taken a turn toward a confluence of styles within mission culture. As “*il modo soave*’, it was much more open

¹⁶¹ Bailey, “Asia in the Art of Colonial America,” 57.

¹⁶² Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America*, 368.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

to acculturative experimentation than the more colonialist approach of the Portuguese” in earlier outposts.¹⁶⁵ These artistic exchanges had the implicit purpose of indoctrinating the populace by utilizing Christian imagery as a means to achieve conversions. Hybridization thus began as a conversion tool that, in turn, resulted in a hybrid artistic product as well. Similarly, the work of Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) in China in the last decades of the sixteenth century provided an impetus for the confluence of European and Chinese artistic modes, even though Ricci “more than any other, tried to integrate European Renaissance culture into Chinese civilization.”¹⁶⁶

These religious missions were only part of the grander trade relationships that ensued beginning in the sixteenth century. Namban art, “the European art introduced into Japan by Catholic missionaries around the middle of the sixteenth century, and subsequently copied by the Japanese,”¹⁶⁷ flourished, but eventually ceased to be produced after the missionaries were expelled from Japan in the seventeenth century (fig. 2.11). The word Namban means “southern barbarians,” a term with ambiguous connotations but which, nevertheless, refers to the hybrid art resulting from such an encounter. Some of the Japanese artists who had converted and were the object of persecution were able to flee and establish themselves in Spanish Manila or even crossed the Pacific to settle in the New World.

The *Não de China* brought not only goods but migrants and slave labor as well. Tomás Calvo, a Mexican scholar, makes the case for a large community of Japanese

¹⁶⁵ Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions*, 61.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁶⁷ Tagashe Sugase, “Namban Art,” in *Namban Art: A Loan Exhibition from Japanese Collections*, ed. Shin’ichi Tani and Tadashi Sugase (Meriden: Meriden Gravure, 1973), 20.

migrants in Guadalajara in the seventeenth century.¹⁶⁸ Calvo points out that a series of mural paintings in the cathedral of Cuernavaca gives away the presence in Mexico of Japanese people.¹⁶⁹ Besides Guadalajara, Mexico City, Cuernavaca, and Puebla also had large number of Asian immigrants.¹⁷⁰ Bailey asserts that by 1624 Japanese residents were already recorded in Ahuacatlán (Nayarit) on Mexico's West Coast.¹⁷¹

The hypothesis that artists from Asia arrived in New Spain in the seventeenth century can only be surmised through circumstantial evidence. To this day, no documents have been unearthed that substantiate the claims of some scholars whose desire to solve this issue has lead them to conjectural conclusions.¹⁷² That some Asian artists took up residence in the Mexican capital and established themselves in workshops where they were able to impart their techniques to whomever was interested in learning this exotic art (which in turn, was analogous to vestigial pre-Hispanic art forms) is still not corroborated by any specific names. Some migrants, eager to blend with the rest of the population, may have adopted Spanish names.¹⁷³ Even though the antiquarian Rodrigo Rivero Lake has asserted that González was a favorite name adopted by these migrants, Solange Alberro

¹⁶⁸ Tomás Calvo, "Los japoneses en Guadalajara durante el seiscientos mexicano," in *Sociedad y costumbres*, ed. José María Muriá and Jaime Olveda, (Guadalajara, INAH, 1991), 81-92.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁷⁰ See Michael Mathes, *Sebastián Vizcaino y la expansion española en el Océano Pacífico, 1580-1630* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1973) and Victor Manuel Patiño, *Historia de la cultura material en la América equinoccial, vol 8, Trabajo y ergología* (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuero, 1993).

¹⁷¹ Bailey, "Asia in the Arts of Colonial America," 60.

¹⁷² Such is the case of Rodrigo Rivero Lake, whose scholarship, in the otherwise beautifully illustrated book about Namban art, is faulty and, as has been pointed out by Solange Alberro, is also "badly organized, often badly written, without any order, careless, plagued with errors, imprecisions, banalities, generalities, lacking notes when these are indispensable, and without pertinent explanations, without a solid bibliography, of any type of indexes, and centered on affirmations lacking foundation." Solange Alberro, Review of Rodrigo Rivero Lake, *El arte namban en el México virreinal, HMex, LVI, 3* (2007): 1067.

¹⁷³ Rodrigo Rivero Lake, *Namban Art in Viceregal Mexico* (Mexico City: Estiloméxico Editores, 2005), 297.

has been able to contradict that assertion by recurring to a personal communication with Deborah Oropeza, who in the process of writing her dissertation (on “Los ‘indios chinos’ en la Nueva España: la inmigración de la nao de China, 1565-1700”) was able to register 1500 Asians settled in New Spain between 1565-1700, and found only one who had adopted the surname González.¹⁷⁴ This is one reason why it is so difficult today to identify Asian migrants, since once they hispanized their names their origin became practically impossible to ascertain. The eminent English professor of Princeton University, Jonathan Israel, clearly states the case:

...in the constitutions of the craft guilds, even those of seventeenth-century as opposed to sixteenth-century origin, do not treat the Chinos as a specific category in the hierarchy of labor or make any reference to them. Like the ladino Indians, and indeed like the Negroes, mulattoes, and mestizos, Filipinos and Chinese in seventeenth-century Mexico usually bore simple Spanish names.¹⁷⁵

Rivero Lake reaches the conclusion that the famous González family of painters in Mexico is descended from one such family of migrants. In his opinion, it would follow that the three painters, Miguel, Juan, and Antonio, who bore the surname González, were the sons of a Tomás González Villaverde. Both these names were common in the city of Pátzcuaro, where the Manila Galleon’s custom official had an office.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, the

¹⁷⁴ Solange Alberro, Review of Rodrigo Rivera Lake, 1063.

¹⁷⁵ Jonathan Israel, *Race, Class, and Politics in Colonial Mexico 1610-1670* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 76-77.

¹⁷⁶ The issue of the nationality of the González family, or for that matter, of any of the painters of *enconchados* is still debatable. Analysis of the panels have proven inconclusive on this point, especially the ones performed by Alejandro Huerta, *El análisis de la técnica y materiales de dos colecciones de pinturas enconchadas* (Mexico City: INAH, 2001); and Julieta Avila Hernández, *La influencia de la pintura china en los enconchados de Nueva España*, 76. The latter work tends to regard the option of an immigrant’s hand as more feasible, as does Rodrigo Rivero Lake in *Namban Art in Viceregal Mexico*, 301-302. See also Marta Dujovne, *La conquista de México por Miguel Gonzáles* (Buenos Aires: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1972), 15; Armella de Aspe, “Influencia asiática,” and Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, “Los artistas y las pinturas de incrustaciones de concha nácar en México,” in *La concha nácar en México*, 106-134.

viceroys of Mexico at the time, José Sarmiento y Valladares, commissioned a number of works from several of the González family of painters. Rivero Lake is able to make this important connection because of the published contract found by Guillermo Tovar de Teresa in the Archivo de Notarías where “the first written notice of the González family appears.”¹⁷⁷

Tovar de Teresa’s inquiry in the archives led to his finding a debt document dated 27 of January of 1689 in the Archivo General de Notarías. The notary public Juan de Marchena declares that “Tomás González, Master in painting with lacquer, principal debtor and Miguel González official of said art of painting, twenty five years old, as his guarantor, consented to pay Captain Martín Piñero de Ulloa and Doña Juana de Alvarez y del Rosal, his wife, one hundred fifty pesos in gold for renting a house that said debtor inhabited.”¹⁷⁸ From the given information of the age of Miguel González, it can be assumed his birth year as 1664, Tovar de Teresa calculates. Another document he unearthed from the previous year records the apprenticeship of the son of a Tomás González de Villaverde, Master Painter, with Nicolás de Alarcón, barber and blood-letter.¹⁷⁹ That is not all. Another document asserts that Juan González de Mier contracts two series of “Láminas” (illustrations) with someone Tovar de Teresa is not able to make

¹⁷⁷ Rivero Lake, *Nambar Art*, 298-299.

¹⁷⁸ “Tomás González, maestro de pintor de maque, como principal deudor y Miguel González oficial de dicho arte de pintura, de veinticinco años de edad, como su fiador, otorgaba pagarle al capitán Martín Piñero de Ulloa y a Doña Juana de Alvarez y del Rosal, su mujer, ciento cincuenta pesos de oro por arrendamiento de una casa que habitó dicho principal deudor.” Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, “Documentos sobre ‘enconchados’ y la familia Mexicana de los González,” *Cuadernos de Arte Colonial* 1 (October 1986): 98.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

out because of the damaged condition of the document, but that appears to him as “Antonio de A...”¹⁸⁰

There is no evidence to support the contention that the González family of painters were descendants of Asian migrants, or migrants themselves. Bailey maintains that the difficulty in tracing the migrants is also the result of the Asian’s seamless interaction with the Europeans. A case in point is Juan Antón, “of the Japanese nation,” who, Bailey points out, appears in a document of 1631 as “the godfather of the child of a freed black slave in Guadalajara.”¹⁸¹ According to Edward R. Slack, Jr., the cities of Puebla, Veracruz, and Mexico City had high densities of “chinos”.¹⁸² This scholar’s research has led to the revelation of frictions between Asian migrant workers in Mexico and the *criollos* or *mestizos* that plied for the same work.¹⁸³

As Donna Pierce aptly notes, there are a number of Chinese figures in the panel, “Transfer of the Image and Inauguration of the Sanctuary of the Virgin Guadalupe,” by Manuel de Arellano from c. 1709 (figs. 2.12, 2.13). Recognized by their native garb and hairstyle, they are avidly looking over a balcony at the proceedings. In a scene that purports to display the melting pot of the viceregal capital, the Chinese element does not seem out of place. Pierce, moreover, quotes from Thomas Gage, the English Dominican friar who in the second decade of the seventeenth century reported that “the Indians and

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 100.

¹⁸¹ Bailey, “Asia in the Arts of Colonial Latin America,” 60, as quoted in Calvo, “Los japoneses en Guadalajara,” 82.

¹⁸² Edward R. Slack, Jr., “The Chinos in New Spain: A Corrective Lens for a Distorted Image,” *Journal of World History* (March 2009): 42.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 44.

the people of China that have been made Christians and every year come thither, have perfected the Spaniard in [the craft of goldsmithery].¹⁸⁴ The thesis of Avila Hernández's book is that the *enconchados* "were not only made with 'eastern influence', but that their whole manufacture corresponds to the artistic style of the Far East."¹⁸⁵ The connection between Asia and the Americas appears to be unavoidable, and at the same time, elusive.

These links with the Far East were not limited to the mingling of immigrants in the large New Spanish cities, to their contributions to colonial society, or to the goods (mostly luxury ones, but not solely) that were available to the colonial household. Many intellectuals observed affinities between the New World and Asia that went far beyond the superficial similarities of crafts, art forms, script, or such. The German Jesuit scholar, Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680), for example, a contemporary of the Mexican intellectuals Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and of Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, went as far as to link the pre-Hispanic past to Asian cultures by arguing that they had a common ancestry in Egypt.¹⁸⁶ In fact, Kircher's *Oedipus aegyptiacus* and *China illustrata* (fig. 2.14) were works instrumental in closing the distance between these far-off continents, and making connections with their past.¹⁸⁷ This was not a new concept as some of the first

¹⁸⁴ Donna Pierce, "At the Crossroads: Cultural Confluence and Daily Life in Mexico, 1521-1821," in *Painting a New World: Mexican Art and Life 1521-1821*, ed. Donna Pierce, Rogelio Ruiz Gomar, and Clara Bargellini (Denver, Colorado: Denver Art Museum, 2004), 30, quoting Thomas Gage, *Thomas Gage's Travels in the New World*, ed. J. Eric S. Thompson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 68.

¹⁸⁵ "No sólo fueron hechos con 'influencia oriental', sino que toda su factura responde al estilo artístico del Extremo Oriente." Julieta Avila Hernández, *El influjo de la pintura china*, 11.

¹⁸⁶ Bailey, "Asia in the Arts of Latin America," 63.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 68. Athanasius Kircher, *Oedipus aegyptiacus* (Rome: Vitalis Mascardi, 1652); *China illustrata* (Amsterdam: Jacob à Meurs, 1667).

Franciscan friars to set foot in Mexico after the conquest associated the native population of Mexico with the lost tribes of Israel.¹⁸⁸

Therefore, Asia was present in the Viceregal imagination in more ways than one. Bailey traces three traditions that follow the Asian mode: the Talavera ceramic kilns of Puebla, Quito sculptures enhanced with ivory-white skin tones, and Latin American furniture that emulated Gujarati works inlaid with mother-of-pearl.¹⁸⁹ *Enconchado* paintings may claim a similar source as these objects.

It is no coincidence that besides the general religious scenes from the Bible and the panels pertaining to the conquest of Mexico, there is another showing the Jesuit founder Saint Francis Xavier embarking for Asia (fig. 2.15). This particular panel, signed by Juan González, depicts a scene based on a print by Cornelius Bloemaert (fig. 2.16), the Netherlandish painter and engraver (1623-1680).¹⁹⁰ Saint Francis Xavier, the Jesuit follower of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, spent several years in Goa, Japan, and finally made his way to China, where he died evangelizing the newly converted Christians. A private devotional panel, judging from the inscription to a Doña Ana Rodríguez from Madrid, depicts St. Francis Xavier in front of a galleon attentively contemplating a map of China displayed by a personification of Europe flanked by personifications of the continents of Asia, Africa, and America. As Bargellini has pointed out, this panel in itself embodies the confluence of cultures like no other. Not only is the creation of the painting, perhaps, the work of Asian immigrants to Mexico who had brought the *enconchado* technique to New

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 63.

¹⁸⁹ Bailey, 66. Gujarat is a province in Western India, famous for its works in mother-of-pearl, where Portuguese colonizers settled in the seventeenth century.

¹⁹⁰ Clara Bargellini, *Painting a New World*, 187.

Spain and turned to Dutch engravings for inspiration, but the scene rendered is also one where European colonialists are imposing their world view on the other continents of the planet, personified by figures in different shades of brown and exotic dress. The piece was made for a Spaniard (Doña Ana Rodríguez) who had left her country to establish herself in Mexico and who was the “sister of the first Marquis de Villamediana and daughter of Pascual Rodríguez de Mediavilla y Rodríguez del Corral, who had come to Spain in 1673 with the Viceroy Pedro Niño de Portugal, Duke of Veragua.”¹⁹¹

Furthermore, the figure portraying Africa holds a battle-ax; the figure portraying Asia, a lance or a spear; and the one portraying America, a bow. This contrasts with the Europeans who are holding a huge, well-defined map of the East, a rather accurate depiction of that part of the world for the time. The disparity in attributes where the Europeans appear as civilized, and the others as awaiting such civilizing effects are evident. The obvious message delivered by such an image of Eurocentric propaganda could not have escaped either the Dutch engraver, the González family of painters, or the recipient of the panel, Doña Ana, who would have embraced such ideological content.

Other series of panels depict the battles by Alessandro Farnese, the Italian general and diplomat who, under Phillip II of Spain, contained the Netherland’s uprisings against the crown. Although it is well known that Italian, Flemish, and German prints were decisive in the artistic representation of religious and historical paintings in the New World, the extent to which these were available may be due to the Jesuit missions whose truly global networks provided such prints, like the one by Bloemaert. Rodrigo Rivero Lake has found striking similarities between these panels and Western engravings. He

¹⁹¹Ibid., 189.

attributes this practice to the Japanese penchant for strictly copying what was desired, which, in his view, “was transferred to Mexico with painters who emigrated from Japan,”¹⁹² although this has yet to be proven.

Hybrid Objects

The term hybridity –like syncretism, *mestizo*, confluence, among others- has become a catch-all phrase in post-colonial studies to address, among other things, the role of the subaltern in the relationships arising from the encounters of two or more cultures. Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn tackle this issue in their essay “Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America,” where they attribute political connotations to the term whose very acceptance and recognition “is usually understood to designate products of European expansion.”¹⁹³ Seen from this perspective, the adoption of an Asian technique in colonial Mexico, which also evokes art forms from an indigenous past, may be construed as a dissolution of a pure European, or a pure Asian, or a pure American product. To the degree that the *enconchados* represent the mixture of different cultures, the recognition of a difference from the “norm,” according to Dean and Leibsohn, “is generated out of intolerance, out of the need to distinguish and come to terms with unacceptable, conditionally acceptable, or uneasy mixes.”¹⁹⁴ This may be the view from the perspective of the present, when scholars look to the past to find the

¹⁹² Rivero Lake, 292.

¹⁹³ Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, “Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, no. 1 (2003): 6.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

origin, or the degree of acceptance of influences from another culture. However, the most important question would be: what was the effect of the adoption of forms and techniques on the culture where the new forms and techniques settled?

In the case of the *enconchados*, the paintings do not appear to have elicited any commentary from contemporaries, as they may have been seen as a natural outgrowth of a pre-Hispanic tradition. The essay by Dean and Leibsohn begins by mentioning an inventory of a seventeenth century woman from Cuzco, Doña Isabel Yupa Cuca, who owned “clothing of Spanish *bayeta*, Chinese silk, Andean cotton and alpaca fiber.”¹⁹⁵ The point the authors make is that for such a personage of Spanish and Inka ancestry, the combination of materials from different parts of the world did not seem an exceptional occurrence. By the same token, people in colonial New Spain were able to go to the Parián market near the Zócalo in Mexico City and obtain merchandise brought by the Manila Galleon as well as from other parts of the Spanish empire and Europe, as shown on the painting by the pre-eminent Mexican painter Cristóbal de Villalpando (fig. 2.17). This heterogeneity does not seem to have fazed the colonial inventory-taker, as it was probably more the norm than the exception that objects from different parts of the Spanish world would be found in colonial households. The question asked in the present is whether this confluence of styles originating in both the East and the West conjured a conscious or unconscious effect on the owner or the beholder. Were the items brought from Asia or Europe considered more luxurious than the ones produced at home, in the colony? The imported objects may have been impregnated with the quality of the exotic, at least, and their greatest cost considered a sign of status. If this is true of the desks and chests made of mother-of-pearl, what could be the verdict on paintings that portrayed religious subjects

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 5.

and the conquest of Mexico? This is the question that is apt to be posed when looking at the panels of *enconchados* found today in the collections of Mexico, Buenos Aires, and Madrid, among other places. One such panel, in the Hispanic Society of America in New York, will also be brought to bear in this discussion. The cross-cultural encounter that made possible these *enconchados*, following Dean and Leibsohn, can be seen and understood in this way:

as a perhaps obvious subaltern strategy for coping with dominant and dominating cultures. It should also be understood as a perhaps obvious strategy utilized by dominant cultures to incorporate subalterns. In turn, recognizing colonial hybrids is –or ought to be—a profoundly political act, for hybridity is inherent to the process of colonization.¹⁹⁶

Enconchados, as well as *biombos*, silks, furniture, and other merchandise from Asia that comprised the main items of trade between Asia and America, made their way, in turn, to the ports of Europe, creating for the first time a truly “globalized” economy of goods. When the work and travels of the missionaries, especially the Jesuits, who established long-standing colonies in India, China, and Japan, are added to this equation, a more complex picture of the Renaissance and post-Renaissance world emerges, joining cultures hitherto unknown to each other. Hybridization then takes place on a more widespread scale than ever before. According to Octavio Paz, Mexico’s most prominent twentieth-century poet and critic, Baroque New Spain’s art was unique precisely because it was able to weave all these strands successfully:

The art of New Spain, like the very society which created it, did not want to be *new*; it wanted to be *another*. This ambition tied it even more firmly to its peninsular model: the baroque aesthetic sought to surprise, dazzle, go beyond. The art of New Spain is not an art of invention but of free use –more precisely: of freer use—of the fundamental elements of

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 24.

imported styles. It is an art that combines and mixes motifs and manners. That is why, in her great poem, “El Sueño” (“The Dream”), Sor Juana combines the visual and plastic style of Góngora with conceptism, and both with scientific erudition and neoscholasticism.¹⁹⁷

References to Asian techniques or to the pre-Hispanic tradition in the context of peninsular Spain’s own models, cemented this idea of a truly original form in New Spain, continuing traditions with a millenary history.

A case in point is the furniture that arrived on Mexican shores in the Manila Galleon. Many references in inventories attest to the abundance of items brought to New Spain, some of which can still be seen in churches or homes throughout the country. According to Manuel Carballo, who has studied the Asian influence in Mexican furniture, there is a cultural parallelism between Asian and pre-Hispanic cultures in Mesoamerica when it comes to decorative elements. For Carballo, lacquer in Asia (mainly China and Japan) and *maque* in Mexico are similar procedures for the revetment of many materials, including wood.¹⁹⁸ The Asian lacquers are of vegetable origin, according to the Mexican scholar, which produces a hard surface suitable to incrustations and paint.¹⁹⁹ The Mexican ones, of animal origin, are also prepared for similar applications.²⁰⁰

In the latter, Asian influence is definitive and the inspiration can be traced from Peribán (Mexican state of Michoacán), the zone where they originated, to Uruapán and

¹⁹⁷ Octavio Paz, foreword to *Quetzalcóatl and Guadalupe: The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness 1531-1813* by Jacques Lafaye (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), xiv.

¹⁹⁸ Manuel Carballo, “La influencia asiática,” in *El mueble mexicano: Historia, evolución e influencias*, ed. María del Carmen Aguilera García (Mexico City: Fomento Cultural Banamex, 1985), 130.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

Quiroga, and finally to Pátzcuaro (all also in Michoacán) where, not coincidentally, was the site of the Royal Custom House.²⁰¹

The designs of flowers and bird common to these works, which can also be seen in the *enconchado* paintings and in the frames of the paintings, are repeated over and over again. Carballo concludes:

...native techniques of pre-Hispanic origin coincide in the production of articles similar to the ones brought from those distant lands, thus achieving a cultural mosaic that is represented full of color and richness as much in the spheres of high art as in popular art during hundreds of years.²⁰²

Another case that illustrates the global reach of furniture manufacture is the cabinet in the collection of the Dallas Museum of Art (fig. 2.18). A “masterpiece of colonial cabinetry,” as the catalogue entry describes it, the shape of the piece replicates European models, and yet, according to the catalogue entry, was probably made in the Philippines for export to New Spain.²⁰³ According to this source, the piece was first owned by Don Melchor Portocarrero, third count of Monclava, Viceroy of New Spain from 1686 to 1715.²⁰⁴ Mother-of-pearl and tortoise shells are inlaid to form intricate designs representing flowers and vegetation. The entry adds that the shimmering geometric designs display prototypes that can be traced both to Moorish patterns in the Iberian peninsula as well as seventeenth-century marquetry from Goa in India, a

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid., 132.

²⁰³ Charles Venable, *Dallas Museum of Art, Guide to the Collection*, ed. Suzanne Kotz (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 1997), 204.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

Portuguese colony.²⁰⁵ This global assimilation of styles common in seventeenth-century New Spain produced not only furniture, but sacred and secular objects such as *enconchado* paintings, a taste obviously entertained by the elite as confirmed by the many viceroys who either owned such works or commissioned them.

Composition and Technique of *Enconchado* Paintings

The first thorough analysis of the techniques of *enconchados* was the one done by José de Santiago Silva in his publication of 1976.²⁰⁶ Manuel de Toussaint's early description of these works had already claimed that "the painting that was used in these pictures inlaid with mother-of-pearl was called *maque*, that is something that imitated lacquer."²⁰⁷ With this affirmation, Toussaint was actually opposing Manuel Romero de Terreros's contention that these paintings were made with "maqueado" produced by the incrustation on the panel of pieces of mother-of-pearl (fig. 2.19).²⁰⁸ For Toussaint, the "maque" was absolutely independent of the shell, and the technique consisted of "polishing or "lacquering" the painting by different procedures, some of which were of indigenous provenance, to give the terse and glazed aspect to the lacquers."²⁰⁹ Since this description was not really based on any scientific or chemical analysis, Santiago Silva

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Santiago Silva, *Algunas consideraciones sobre las pinturas enconchadas del Museo Nacional de Historia* (Mexico City: INAH, 1976).

²⁰⁷ Manuel Toussaint, "La pintura con encrustaciones de concha nácar," 9.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 9-10.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 10.

embarked on a meticulous observation of the *enconchado* panels at his disposal in the Museo Nacional de Historia in Mexico City to produce a more detailed result. The first observation concerns the supporting wood panels, which in the *enconchado* he describes, is covered with canvas (linen) joined two by two with two pieces of wood, one at the top, and one at the bottom.²¹⁰ He adds the comment that perhaps these pairs may have been divided since their dimensions are similar to the ones usually seen in folding screens. Concepción García Saiz was quick to point out a few years later that this was not the only possible support for the paintings, referring to the ones at the Museo de América in Madrid that she could observe first hand. She concluded that the *enconchado* artists employed three different types of techniques: the one Santiago Silva describes, another that discards the canvas with the preparation directly on the panel, and one García Saiz calls a mixed technique because it employs the canvas only in parts of the panel in the spaces destined to cover the joints in the wood, leaving the rest free in the remainder of the picture.²¹¹

It is pertinent to mention the progression in the description by scholars of the methods of manufacturing of these works to show how idiosyncratic they are: the perplexing reactions their format and technique elicited and the gradual detection of their chemical composition as different technologies became available. The vexations propounded by the unexpected materials and their complex application in layers was the result of an orthodox European training in the techniques of art which did not answer some of the questions posed when looking at these paintings. Their unique pictorial style,

²¹⁰ Santiago Silva, *Algunas consideraciones sobre las pinturas enconchadas del Museo Nacional de Historia*, 24.

²¹¹ García Saiz, *La pintura colonial en el Museo de América (II): Los enconchados*, 13.

the use of mother-of-pearl, and the varnished surfaces were only the tip of a deeper distinction from any other painting being produced in New Spain during the latter part of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Santiago Silva also observed a technique he associates with tracing (as in the fresco technique) over the primed area to ascertain the location of the figures where the mother-of-pearl was to be inlaid. Following this author, “once the fragments of mother-of-pearl are inlaid in their proper spaces, the artist would then proceed to prime the surface where the preparatory drawing had already been traced. Once dried, it received the “trace” which, based on the “stenciled” paper, was made by redoing the drawing now already over the priming.”²¹² The author then describes the limited chromatic palette, the glazes, India inks, and the steps taken by the artists in their application. The discreet use of colors (yellowish, grayish) and the yellow, toasted siena, carmine, and green glazes, add to the idiosyncratic character of these paintings. One last remark regarding this technique is the lack of impasto, even though Santiago Silva does find it in the borders of some of the panels. The most important part of this investigation, however, is the chemical and stratigraphic analysis undertaken by the specialists, the first of its kind.

This early assessment of the technique reaches the conclusion that these paintings were executed by artists trained in the European manner, whether the medium was oil, tempera, or *maque*.²¹³ Nevertheless, Santiago Silva adds that the use of mother-of-pearl in furniture and sculptures in the Far East and Mesoamerica is so prevalent that he goes on to

²¹² Santiago Silva, *Algunas consideraciones sobre las pinturas enconchadas del Museo Nacional de Historia*, 25.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 28.

quote from Andrés de Tapia's description of a Templo Mayor sculpture decorated with mother-of-pearl that he thinks may have been an antecedent to the *enconchados*:

Two idols barely three *varas* of measurement: they were made of polished stone and over the stone they were covered with mother-of-pearl, which is a shell where the pearls are bred and on this mother-of-pearl, glued with bitumen, many jewels...so that all the mother-of-pearl was covered, except in some parts where they were left so that they would contrast with the stones.²¹⁴

Santiago Silva goes on to add that these antecedents were part of a pre-Hispanic artistic vocabulary assimilated by the Europeans, but it was not until contact with the Far East that the techniques were absorbed to a greater extent.²¹⁵ In some ways, there is an ambiguity between his assertion of a European style, a pre-Hispanic antecedent, and an Asian influence, without a definite conclusion, but it is proof of the gradual appreciation and interpretation that these works were eliciting over the course of the century. As mentioned earlier, the use of mother-of-pearl had such symbolic value in pre-Hispanic representations of deities, that its artistic status cannot be dismissed easily. In any event, Santiago's ambiguity has proven to be a harbinger of my own theory that *enconchado* paintings subsume traits from many different strands.

The most exhaustive study concerning the composition of these works after Santiago Silva's was undertaken by Alejandro Huerta Carrillo, the results of which were published in book form in 1991.²¹⁶ Huerta Castillo examined four panels from the series of six of the Conquest of Mexico, then in the Museo de Historia in the Chapultepec Castle in Mexico City (the other two at the Franz Mayer Museum); and six panels of a series of six,

²¹⁴ Andrés de Tapia, *Relación de algunas de las cosas que acaecieron al muy ilustre señor Don Hernando Cortés, Crónicas de la conquista* (México: UNAM), 1963, 65-66, quoted in Santiago Silva, 28.

²¹⁵ Santiago Silva, 29.

²¹⁶ Alejandro Huerta Carrillo, *Análisis de la Técnica y Materiales de Dos Colecciones de Pinturas Enconchadas* (Mexico City: INAH, 1991).

the so-called *Alegorías del Credo*, belonging to the Museo del Virreinato in Tepotzotlán, Mexico. Six aspects of the paintings were studied: identification of the original materials, technique of the paintings and colors, period in which they were painted, school of painting, origin of the paintings and painters, and finally, how the lacquered and luminous effect was achieved in these paintings.²¹⁷ Huerta Carrillo's book goes on to describe in detail characteristics of each and every one of the ten panels at his disposal, including stratigraphic analysis. The identification of eleven layers detected in the Conquest panel of *El gran Motecuhzoma recibe a Cortés* (The Great Motecuhzoma Receives Cortés, fig. 2.20) is an example of this:

Layer 1 corresponds to the wood support, layer 2 to the bands of canvas support, 3 to the first foundation of priming, over which was applied the impermeable agent (layer 4) constituted by an organic layer whose function is to cover the porous area and separate the priming base from the layers of paint, 5 to the second foundation of priming (*imprimatura*) of less thickness than the previous one, of high potency for covering, which in this case functions like an optical screen to give more luminosity to these zones, over which the outline can be found (layer 6) and gold dust (layer 7) which also contributes to increase the luminosity of the painting, layer 8 corresponds to the pictorial layer, applied generally in form of a glaze, over which can be found the line drawings (final tracing of the figures and other elements) in black, red, gold (layer 9); 10 and 11 correspond to two layers of varnish.²¹⁸

A similar stratigraphy is applied to the same painting in the areas covered with mother-of-pearl. Huerta Carrillo proceeds to analyze the above materials using the same work and his thorough analysis leads to the following conclusions:

1. Support. Support panels: both panels are constituted by red cedar (*Cedrela odorata*). Supporting canvas: no sample was available for analysis.
- 2 Foundation primer: constituted by plaster agglutinated with animal glue with a small amount of carbon black. In some zones, the adhesive is oxidized giving the base a yellowish tone.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 15.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 29.

3. Impermeable agent (impregnation): this is an organic layer made up of animal glue applied over the priming foundation to separate the layer of paint. Currently, it is spread toward the base of the preparation and is of a yellowing color due to the oxidation of the material.

4. Second base of preparation (*imprimatura*): it is constituted by lead white (2PbCO₃); Pb (OH)₂ and Spanish White (CaCO₃) with a small amount of carbon black; this layer is very fine and is found applied with tempera.

5. Outline: it is black and represents the first drawing for the execution of the paint; it was applied directly over the wooden support (in the zones with mother-of-pearl) and over the *imprimatura*. In the zones without shells it is constituted by smoke black with small amounts of carbon black and an adhesive with tempera.

6. Gold dust: it is deposited over the impermeable agents or over the second base of preparation to give more luminosity to the layers of paint; if this dust is the same found in the small golden leaves of the border, it is constituted by an alloy of gold and copper and therefore it is not pure 24 karat gold.

7. Pictorial layer: it is applied generally in the form of glazes directly over the mother-of-pearl and over the first preparation foundation in the zones with the inlays of mother-of-pearl; in the backgrounds it is applied over the second foundation of preparation. This layer is constituted by a mixture of pigments and colors with an abundance of adhesive, especially when it is in the form of a glaze.

7. For more information about the work, the results for each color is presented here.

7.2. Adhesives: in general, the adhesives are based on proteins, within the technique of tempera, except in the skin colors of an indigenous figure where the technique is oil.

8. Varnish: it is formed by one or two layers, oxidized and cracked, up to five times thicker than the layer of painting; normally, both layers are yellowish due to the natural oxidation of the material, to a possible warming before its application, or to the addition of a yellow colorant. This layer is darker in some zones, perhaps to achieve special tones. In the greater number of the samples studied this layer gives a negative reaction to proteins and swells with a solution of KOH with 10% water, but does not become like soap, which indicates that this layer of protection can be constituted by a base of resins, rubbers, or a combination of both.

9. Drawing: these are the finishing lines of the figures that are found in the painting and the border and they are red, black and gold. These lines are found directly above the pictorial layer and below the varnish and the black ones are constituted by smoking black; the red ones, by *laca de granza*, and the gold ones, with gold dust.²¹⁹

By the end of this comprehensive study, Huerta Carrillo reiterates the findings of Soria, García Saiz, and Dujovne to agree on the Mexican origin, the Asian technique, common use of materials, and unique New Spanish style of these works.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 31-34.

A 1995 technical study carried out during the restoration of the *enconchado* with the image of *Saint Isidro and the Miracle of the Fountain* (fig. 2.21) in the Museo de América by the museum's restorer, Dolores Medina, sheds some light on peculiarities common to many, but interestingly, not in all *enconchados*.²²⁰ Not unlike the *enconchado* described by Santiago Silva or Huerta Carrillo, the panel on which this one is painted consists of four pieces of wood joined by two transversal ones reinforced with bands of linen canvas. The base consists of plaster and glue, visible where the mother-of-pearl has fallen off. The painting was executed with sepia and black ink, sometimes with a nib or a paintbrush, with traces of pencil. The surface reveals layers slightly coated, as Dolores Medina explains, sometimes only like glazes with pigment and varnish, or pigments and lacquer of great brilliance.²²¹ The appearance of gold is also identified. In the application of the mother-of-pearl, once inlaid, a substance is added around it until it is even with the surface. Finally, the varnish is applied in various layers of considerable thickness, which makes the painting look yellow.²²²

The unorthodox qualities of this *enconchado* pertains to the adhesives, the reinforcing canvas, and the varnish. According to Medina, the mother-of-pearl in this *enconchado* is glued, not on the wood panel itself, as had been affirmed in previous studies, but on the linen canvas and the priming foundation. Only in the frames is the mother-of-pearl directly glued to the support. She thinks that in some occasions, a mixture of wax resin had been used because of the following reasons:

²²⁰ Dolores Medina, "Aspectos técnicos manifestados durante la restauración del *enconchado San Isidro y el milagro de la fuente* perteneciente al Museo de América," *Anales Museo de América* 3, (1995): 97-100.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

²²² *Ibid.*, 99.

1. In this picture, remains of wax appear beneath the finishing varnish; therefore, they seem to be contemporary with the execution of the painting.
2. We corroborate the continuous light resistance that the adhesives display at the moment of the inspection (such as animal-based glues or even APV –acetate of polivynil—since, in our storage rooms, and due to the mobility of the wooden panels in contrast to the stationary nature of the mother-of-pearl, this latter one can come unstuck with ease, even in the optimal conditions of the storage area. These two reasons make us doubt that they would not have come down to us from the eighteenth century in such good condition if only animal-based adhesives had been applied.²²³

When discussing the varnishes, Medina points out that the most external layer consists of lacquer glue, since its odor, when dissolved, is strongly characteristic. This is one reason why so much dirt is collected, resulting in the yellowish tone, that is not necessarily the color intended by the artist when first executed.²²⁴ Underneath that layer, moreover, other layers are detected that allow the traces of drawing to become visible, the *pentimenti*, and the iridescent effect of the mother-of-pearl.²²⁵ She believes that the varnish was applied later in the process and therefore the effect of the mother-of-pearl lost its original brilliance. Through the mother-of-pearl one can see not only the preparatory phases but also the extent of the linen, which creates a sense of depth and perspective that the artist was counting on when executing the work.²²⁶

More recently, another restorer from the Museo de América, Estefanía Rivas Díaz, embarked on a radiographic analysis that added more information about the composition

²²³ Ibid. Translation mine.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid, 100.

of these works.²²⁷ New technologies allowed for a revision of earlier studies and the team headed by Rivas Díaz examined underdrawings, perspective studies, the use of canvas over wood panel, and even the author's own meticulous application of each of these elements.²²⁸ A more detailed analysis than the one carried out earlier, this one relied on AGFA radiographic sheets, model Structurix D7 DW Rollpac, revealing data about the wood, pigments, and adhesives never before explained. The two most common characteristics of all the *enconchados* in the Museo de América are first, that the fragments of mother-of-pearl are always of a different size and thickness; and second, that lead white is utilized as a foundation for pigments of the skin color of the figures and decorative elements in the garments, architecture, and landscape.²²⁹ Rivas Díaz explains that the brushstroke for the skin color reveals the features of the figures. In her opinion, when observing these common characteristics it is possible to find unique ways of handling them that will allow the researcher to establish the intervention of different hands.²³⁰

In terms of the fragments of mother-of-pearl, the examination concludes that they are mostly cut in an irregular manner, their dimensions average 3 to 3.5 cm in diameter, and according to their shape, are fitted to form the silhouette of the image. This shape is the result of cutting the borders of the shell irregularly to take advantage of the central portion. Sometimes, these cuts are very regular, square shapes, as in the case of the Museo

²²⁷ Estefania Rivas Díaz, "El empleo de la concha nácar en la pintura virreinal: estudio radiográfico de la colección de pintura *enconchada* del Museo de América de Madrid," *Espacio, tiempo y forma*, Serie VII *Historia del Arte* 1, 15 (2002): 147-167.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 150.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 154.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

de América's panel *Saint Joseph with Child* (fig. 2.22); other pieces are cut perfectly straight, revealing an attempt by the artist to fit each and every piece. These cases are only found in figures that are the central ones of the painting.²³¹ Furthermore, small pieces of mother-of-pearl are found filling in areas that decorate only elements of landscape or ancillary scenes. Perhaps, according to the author, this is an attempt to use as many pieces as were available to the artist. Their effect is very dramatic as the multiplicity of small pieces creates an effect of greater iridescence that contrasts with the flat patinas of the bigger shells.²³² Another difference is found in the application of the white lead. In some cases, this preparatory pigment is found in the skin color of the figures, as shown in the series of the *Conquest of Mexico 1* and the *Life of the Virgin 1*.²³³

The differences in technique, however, are not so overwhelming as to make any real difference in the appearance of these paintings. It is curious how these restorers handle the tasks of cleaning, restoring a number of shells, and bringing back to the original aspect some of the most deteriorated panels. Instead of the original animal glue, for example, the team from the Museo de América, comprising Dolores Medina (the only specialist in this field) and Margarita Bassy Guerrero, proceeded to apply some of the loose particles with diluted Italian *coletta* (a kind of glue) and a hot spatula. For the application of the mother-of-pearl, they used a synthetic adhesive by the name EPO-TEX 301-2, made with epoxy resins giving transparency to the effect. Together with this, the darkening varnish was removed by using a gel made with cetilacetic acid, bicarbonate of

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid., 155.

²³³ Ibid. 156.

ammonium and white spirit with a low pH (8.5-9.0) dissolved in 20% ethanol. For the final protection, paraloid dissolved in a nitrocelulic dissolving agent, in a 4% proportion, which resulted in a less brilliant finish. This is also applied to the back of the wood.²³⁴

Julieta Avila Hernández links this technique, which she calls tempera on glue, to Asian traditions. Her assertions go beyond the use of mother-of-pearl to encompass other techniques that, in her opinion, distinguish these works from others made in New Spain at the same time.²³⁵ In this, she reaffirms Virginia Armella de Aspe's earlier assessment that there is "not only influence, but direct Asian intervention,"²³⁶ in the *enconchados*.

According to Avila Hernández, the most distinctive differences between New Spanish painting and the *enconchados* resides in the following factors. First of all, the style prevalent in Baroque Europe and New Spain at the time was the use of chiaroscuro to highlight volume and depth in painting, a technique completely absent in these works, which use drawing to a larger extent with a predominance of lines and the application of inks with different saturations.²³⁷ In addition, *enconchados* tend to be monochrome, as opposed to the vivid colorations of seventeenth-century European-style paintings. In fact, even though there are ocher, white, red, and green pigmentation, these are applied in their pure form in light and transparent layers. The predominance of the yellow, almost golden tones, of the overall panels, which give it a medieval look, make no distinction between the earth and the sky, a far cry from the contemporary European mode. Avila Hernández

²³⁴ Dolores Medina and Margarita Bassy Guerrero, "Pintura de *enconchados* (Primera Parte): Efectos especiales de brillo" *Restauración y Rehabilitación* 30, March (2000): 75.

²³⁵ Avila Hernández, *El influjo de la pintura china*, 10.

²³⁶ Virginia Armella de Aspe et al. *La concha nácar en México*, 72.

²³⁷ Avila Hernández, 19.

believes that all of these differences respond to a creative program quite different from a Western aesthetic.²³⁸

Following this premise, Avila Hernández finds in Far Eastern paintings (China, Japan, and Korea) characteristics akin to the *enconchados*. For one, the flat surface, devoid of perspective, and the use of the line with sparse application of colors are features found in the Far East that contrast with Western styles. Whereas Western artists depict depth by decreasing the size of the figures to show their distance from the picture plane, Asian artists utilize a different kind of perspective, known as triple perspective, whereby objects in the lower section of the panels are more important than those appearing in levels above. The most important differences are the Asian use of India ink and *sfumato* in their paintings, which, according to Avila Hernández, resemble drawings more than paintings.²³⁹

Avila Hernández compares the fundamental differences on the interpretation of world views exemplified by different cultures and the resulting idiosyncrasies in styles. Quoting the work of George Rowley, a scholar of Chinese art, Avila Hernández attempts to link *enconchados* to the basic tenets of Asian social, philosophical, and artistic modes. Chinese painting, according to Rowley, whose writings are the foundation of her conclusions, relies on distinct assumptions:

What makes a painting Chinese? We never put it in words because the art itself is such a direct and immediate revelation of the spirit of a people. That spirit is so manifest that we seldom stop to ask why this pottery is Greek or that sculpture is Hindu, or why this figure must be

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid., 20.

Italian or that landscape English. Although these characteristics of the spirit seem self-evident, their roots lie deeply buried in the early orientations of the different cultures.²⁴⁰

In Avila Hernández opinion, even though it is known that the *enconchados* were commissioned by known patrons in some cases, their technique bespeaks of the “creativity of the [Asian] artists [and does not] prevent them from manifesting some aspects of their idiosyncrasy.”²⁴¹ Following Rowley, Avila Hernández shuns the importance of religion in Chinese art (except during its Buddhist phase, a foreign influence), and posits the dominant influence of art on a poetic and imaginative way of thinking.²⁴² Exempt from the dual system of opposites prevalent in European thinking, the central doctrines of Tao appear to hold the answer to the essence of Chinese painting for Avila Hernández: unity of spirit and matter, the eternal flux of all things, the resolution of opposites, and the importance of the non-existent.²⁴³ Using this framework, Avila Hernández then proceeds to document those aspects of *enconchados* that suggest an Asian essence. These elements comprise idea, format, selection of materials, composition, drawing and color. Her exhaustive and detailed analysis of these forms the core of her conclusion, summarized at the end of her study:

1. Technically speaking, *enconchados* can be considered as Far Eastern art. Therefore, they cannot be judged by the pictorial precepts to which we are accustomed since they are alien to European painting, even though the subject matter is indeed Western.
2. Mother-of-pearl has been considered the most important element of these paintings until today. However, it is the use of India ink and the pictorial technique

²⁴⁰ George Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 3, as quoted in Avila Hernández, 21.

²⁴¹ Avila Hernández, 21.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

- employed in the paintings, tempera on glue, and the yellowish color what confers on them their originality and links them indissolubly with the art of the Far East.
3. If it is true that the *enconchados* were made in New Spain, the fact that their manufacture responds to Far Eastern rules, and not to European or New Spanish ones, makes them not only important historical works, but also unique for being different from the rest of the viceregal production.
 4. It is beyond any doubt that, at least, the first painter of *enconchado* or whoever introduced the technique in New Spain, must have been an individual of Asian origin. The series of *enconchados* of the Conquest of Mexico, shared between the Museum Franz Mayer and the INAH vouch with each line and conceptual technique to a brush operated by an Easter painter knowledgeable about his trade, The resulting work could not have been made or conceived by a Westerner.
 5. Many questions remain. Only the origin of the particularities of the techniques utilized in the *enconchados* are undoubtedly from the Far East. But who brought this technique? Who was the master of *enconchados* in New Spain? Where and when were the first *enconchados* made? Were the Gonzálezes from China, Japan, or anywhere in the Far East? Is it possible that the same painters who used oil as their medium also painted *enconchados* with this Far Eastern technique as in *The Conquest of Mexico* that we have studied or did they make some modification? Could the painter by the name Juan González who signed *The Nativity* and *The Adoration of the Shepherds* in 1662, be the same one who signed as Juan González de Mier in the document found by Tovar or the one who signed the *San Miguel* dated 1717, or are they two different painters? Since we do not have an answer currently, we hope that the next findings will allow us to solve these existing problems.
 6. Little by little elements are coming to light that allow us to trace a panorama of the life of the painters of *enconchados*. Myths are being destroyed in the long process of studying these works, like the fact that Juan and Miguel are brothers. The analysis of the documents and of works show that they are not. In the last few years more signatures have appeared, one being the González in the *Conquest of Cholula* of the series of *The Conquest of Mexico*.
 7. It would be convenient if one person or institution that owns *enconchados* would take it upon themselves to perform modern physical and chemical analysis that would allow better knowledge of this genre of paintings, as for example, how to identify the glue employed by the painters who worked on other works in oil and also made *enconchados*.²⁴⁴

It is my intention to review these claims, one by one, as follows:

1. That *enconchados* should be considered a Far Eastern technique is tantamount to declaring that Namban art is a European technique. The encounter of Asian with American cultures, like the encounter of Asian with European ones, produced a fusion of techniques that

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 87-88.

resulted in a new format that owes to both traditions. It replaced aesthetic concerns from the Asian traditions with new ones. In the case of the *enconchados*, the fact that the subject matter is often derived from European prints, or that the incrustation of mother-of-pearl is reminiscent of pre-Hispanic objects, complicates the labeling as Far Eastern. I believe Avila Hernández is right when she asserts that *enconchados* should not be judged by the same precepts as European art canons; on the other hand, nor should it be judged by Asian ideas of painting as prescribed by Chinese, Japanese, or Indian ones.

2. The tempera on glue or the India ink, which Avila Hernández ascribes to the most Eastern of features of the *enconchados*, and the yellowish varnish that covers the panels, are the very elements that constitute part of the originality of these panels. There is no equivalent in China, Korea, Japan, or India of paintings that use the combination of mother-of-pearl, with India ink, tempera on glue, varnish, and different pigments (red, green, gold dust, glazes, etc.); therefore, the application of this combination of materials is a creation of New Spanish artists that responds to the availability of these materials in Mexico City, where the confluence of trade routes made it possible.

3. Avila Hernández's assertion of the uniqueness of these works and their historical importance is unquestionable. It is not because of their Far Eastern rules, but precisely because their manufacture responded to new needs and new aesthetic concerns.

4. To conclude that the first painter of *enconchados* was of Asian origin is not a far-fetched proposition. However, the environment in which the New Spanish artists developed their trade was complex. With Asian mother-of-pearl furniture and porcelains and Japanese lacquers and folding screens at their disposal, and a renewed interest in archeological items from a pre-Hispanic past which manifested the use of techniques

dormant but not extinct, it is not difficult to see how new solutions to old problems became the norm rather than the exception.

5. Avila Hernández's information about Juan and Miguel González has now been superseded. Her assumption, based on Tovar de Teresa's discovery of the document concerning Juan and Miguel González, has been disputed by García Saiz.

6. Modern physical and chemical analysis of *enconchados* have been undertaken by the Museo de América and other institutions throwing light on the myriad substances that made up their composition, all available to the seventeenth-century painter of the panels, some coming from different parts of the world.

Avila Hernández's research is invaluable in characterizing these distinct features of *enconchados* and their predecessors in Asian cultures, but the hybridity of these works requires a different tactic for analysis, one that takes into consideration the originality of the New Spanish artists. Her plea to analyze the chemical and physical properties has resulted in the various studies cited in this chapter to provide a clearer picture of their composition and the various differences amongst them. There are now twelve recognized and accepted signatures or attributions to artists of New Spain who delved into this art form from the middle of the seventeenth century to the beginning of the eighteenth. This fact reveals a certain vogue within particular circles of viceregal society who saw fit to commission these works during this time, as discussed in Chapter 5. One thing, however, should be reinforced: even though the pre-Hispanic or the Asian models may have been imitated at the beginning, it was not long before they became part and parcel of an expanding vocabulary constitutive of a new American identity. Gustavo Curiel makes it clear in the essay "Perception of the Other and the Language of 'Chinese Mimicry' in the

Decorative Arts of New Spain.” He states that “the new forms and ornamentations became incorporated into a language of New Spanish identity with its own special characteristics and discourses.”²⁴⁵ Referring to the blue-and-white enameled ceramics manufactured in Puebla that emulated Chinese imports, Curiel observes that “the processes determining the trade in these articles, the materials used in their manufacture, the characteristics of the producers and the way their labor was organized, as well as the decoration of the objects, are very different” from the model.²⁴⁶ This could be said of the *enconchados* also, as well as the differences in “the audiences at whom these artistic objects were aimed.”²⁴⁷

Sonia Ocaña’s studies have led her to conclude that the decorative elements on the frames of *enconchado* paintings can be traced to Namban lacquers. For Ocaña, the frames “demonstrate that certain Japanese lacquers were the point of departure for a production that New Spaniards appropriated as their own and that differentiated itself, in a deliberate way, from the Asian works that initially inspired its development.”²⁴⁸

An interesting example of the amalgam of European, indigenous, and Asian styles is the chest that Curiel alludes to in his essay mentioned above, now in the Hispanic Society of America in New York. The author describes:

Western-style rural buildings with gable roofs and openings
spanned by lintels, French *rocaille*, a mythical Pegasus from the Classical

²⁴⁵ Gustavo Curiel, “Perception of the Other and the Language of ‘Chinese Mimicry’ in the Decorative Arts of New Spain,” in *Asia and Spanish America: Trans-Pacific Artistic & Cultural Exchange, 1500-1850*, ed. Donna Pierce and Ronald Otsuka (Denver, Colorado: Denver Art Museum, 2009), 19.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

²⁴⁸ Sonia Ocaña Ruiz, “Enconchado Frames: The Use of Japanese Ornamental Models in New Spanish Painting,” in *Asia and Spanish America: Trans-Pacific Artistic and Cultural Exchange, 1500-1850*, ed. Donna Pierce and Ronald Otsuka (Denver, Colorado: Denver Art Museum, 2009), 145.

world, and costume of “the Land” worn by the figures, while the base on which the piece stands is of clearly English (Queen Anne) inspiration.²⁴⁹

Obviously, Manuel de la Cerda, the maker of the chest, appropriated the different styles at his disposal for its manufacture, an excellent example of their availability in the eighteenth century. As Virginia Armella de Aspe asserts, Chinese artisans would obtain precious woods in the Philippines, manufacture chests and other types of furniture with the raw material, return the finished objects to Manila, “nurturing the ‘memories’ of the New Spanish tradesmen and its transport to Acapulco, with their final destinations in cities of Spain or New Spain.”²⁵⁰

Japanese-inspired folding screens (biombos)

Interestingly, one of the most widespread objects of consumption in the viceroyalty was the Japanese-inspired folding screen, or *byōbu*. As expressed in Chapter 2, Japanese-European relations began in earnest in the seventeenth century with the Jesuit missions that established colonies in the islands since the arrival of Saint Francis Xavier in 1549, ushering what is usually called the “Christian Century.”²⁵¹ Between 1610 and 1614, a group of nineteen Japanese traders arrived at the capital of the Viceroyalty of New Spain headed by Tanaka Shozuke, a representative of the great Japanese trader Goto Shosaburu

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 24.

²⁵⁰ Virginia Armella de Aspe, “La influencia asiática,” in *La concha nácar en México*, 66.

²⁵¹ See Charles Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan 1549-1650* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), quoted in Sonia Sanabrais, “The Biombo or Folding Screen in Colonial Mexico,” 70.

from Kyoto.²⁵² According to Deborah Oropeza Keresey, the Viceroy sent his own carriage to bring Tanaka Shozuke to receive him with proper protocol, and the Japanese stayed in the convent next to the church of San Agustín along with a judge and an interpreter.²⁵³

Sonia Sanabrais' investigations on the arrival of the folding screen in New Spain led her to identify these diplomatic visits as events that ushered in the taste for Japanese objects in the viceroyalty. The Italian Jesuit Scipione Amati published an account of the Japanese mission of 1614 to New Spain and Europe, as told to him by members of ambassador Hasekura Tsunenaga (fig. 2.23). In it, he asserts the impact of these missions in both Europe and the New World.²⁵⁴ A most interesting narrative of the same activities can also be found in the diary of the Nahua writer don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhlehuanitzin. Chimalpahin, as he is commonly known, recorded events in the City of Mexico from 1589 to 1615; his writings are a rich source of information about the impact that the Japanese missions had in New Spanish territory.²⁵⁵

Chimalpahin's mention of the Japanese mission of 1610 attests to the importance and pageantry that these entries into the capital elicited:

Thursday in the afternoon, the 16th of the month of December of the year 1610, at 6 o'clock, was when perhaps as many as nineteen people from Japan, in China, arrived and entered here in the city of Mexico. A noble, their lord, the ambassador, from the court of the great ruler the emperor in Japan, who brought them, came to make peace with the Christians so that they would never make war but always be at peace and

²⁵² Deborah Oropeza Keresey, "Los "indios chinos" en la Nueva España: la inmigración de la nao de China, 1564-1700" (PhD diss., El Colegio de México, 2007), 108.

²⁵³ Ibid., 109.

²⁵⁴ Sanabrais, 148.

²⁵⁵ A scholarly assessment of Chimalpahin's work is the newly translated and edited work by James Lockhart, Susan Schroeder, and Doprís Namala, *Annals of His Time: Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhlehuanitzin* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006).

esteem each other, so that Spanish merchants will be able to enter Japan and none of the people there would be able to impede them.²⁵⁶

According to Sanabrais, Chimalpahin's numerous entries emphasize the importance of the visit in the context of the local history of Mexico City.²⁵⁷ She concludes that these sojourns were actually the motivating factor for the iconography of one of the folding screens that depicts festivities she interprets as taking place near the Japanese embassy in Mexico City. A large part of her dissertation deals with the description of this *biombo* and its relation to Chimalpahin's narrative, a testament to the impact of Japanese culture in the early seventeenth century in New Spain.

Diarists such as Chimalpahin, Antonio Robles, or Gregorio Guijo offer illuminating pictures of the importance of the Manila Galleon during the entire seventeenth century, and of the foreign visitors who opened the eyes of the population of the viceroyalty to the outside world.

It is clear Chimalpahin considered the Japanese entrance to Mexico City as an opportunity for mercantile transactions and the establishment of peaceful relations between the two countries. Later in the century, the Italian adventurer Gemelli Careri observed similar commercial advantages in the capital, as mentioned earlier. Details that the diarist includes display astonishment at the magnificence of the embassy. They summarize the New Spanish awareness of the rich culture of the foreigners and the advantages of establishing cultural and commercial links with them.

In conclusion, Mexico was at the crossroads of the first global commercial routes that resulted in a variety of styles being imported from Asia and Europe. Mexico City, the

²⁵⁶ Lockhart, Schroeder, Namala, 171.

²⁵⁷ Sanabrais, 150.

seat of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, occupied a central position in this trade and saw, by the middle of seventeenth century, a resurgence of the indigenous population not adverse to rescuing age-old techniques. The ascendancy of the *criollo* factions in society and their desire to create autonomous forms provided an environment in Baroque New Spain in which the different cultural strands were being woven and stitched together in myriad new ways.

Authorship of *Enconchado* Paintings

María Concepción García Saiz has commented in several of her studies on the authorship of *enconchado* paintings. In the 1992 colloquium in honor of Manuel Toussaint, she summarized conclusions arrived after more meticulous investigations of signatures in some of the panels as well as findings based on stylistic merits.²⁵⁸ In this seminal essay, García Saiz reminds us that by 1952 Toussaint had already assigned the authorship of all *enconchado* panels to the painter Miguel González.²⁵⁹ However, Toussaint was also aware of the signature of Juan González as it had appeared in the earlier study by Alfonso Reyes in *Contemporáneos*.²⁶⁰ José de Santiago Silva did not veer from this assumption in his 1976 study of the composition of the panels outlined earlier in this chapter. By this time, Martín Soria had also found two signatures, that of Antonio de Santander and Nicolás Correa. Another signature, that of Agustín del Pino, emerged from

²⁵⁸ María Concepción Garceia Saiz, “Precisiones al estudio de la obra de Miguel González,” in *Manuel Toussaint: Su proyección en la historia del arte mexicano* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1992), 105-116.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 105.

²⁶⁰ Toussaint, 5.

a *Virgin of Guadalupe* in the Franz Mayer Museum in Mexico City and two more paintings. By the time Marta Dujovne and María Concepción García Saiz published their compilation and study of *enconchado* paintings in the 1980s to which I have been referring, the name of Juan González and his association with Miguel was established. At first, Marta Dujovne had not determined Juan's authorship of the series of panels of the conquest in the Museo de América, perhaps because of the illegibility of the name in the unclear panels, a signature that Toussaint, however, had already established in the last panel: "Ju. Gonz. Fecci 1698."²⁶¹ García Saiz and Juan Miguel Serrera, in their 1990 publication, uncovered another name, Rodolpho, in a panel depicting the Virgin of Guadalupe in the Casa Natal de Jovellanos in Gijón.²⁶²

Guillermo Tovar y de Teresa provided the most important information to document the life of the painter Miguel González which he published in 1986, as explained earlier in this chapter.²⁶³ García Saiz analyzes these documents and comes to the conclusion that, according to the information gathered in this document, Miguel's birthdate could be calculated around 1663 or 1664.²⁶⁴ No work is known that can be attributed to his father, Tomás González, whose name is included in this document. The few facts about Miguel that can be ascertained are that he was an "official painter of *maque*" in Mexico City between 1688 and 1689 and that he is busy during the nineties, as

²⁶¹ Ibid., 108.

²⁶² García Saiz, Juan Miguel Serrera, "Aportaciones al catálogo de *enconchados*," 74.

²⁶³ Guillermo Tovar y de Teresa, "Documentos sobre *enconchados* y la familia de los González," *Cuadernos de Arte Colonial* 1 (1986), 97-103.

²⁶⁴ García Saiz, "Precisiones al estudio de la obra de Miguel González," 109.

evidenced by the signatures in a Virgin of Guadalupe (1692 or 1697), and the series of the Conquest of Mexico I in the Museo de América.²⁶⁵

According to García Saiz, Juan González's birthdate could be estimated around 1640, considering that his first signed work dates from 1662.²⁶⁶ She refutes Tovar y de Teresa's contention that Juan and Miguel are brothers and concludes that the former is a man at least twenty years older than Miguel, as evidenced by the fact that according to the document, Miguel is Tomás' eldest son.²⁶⁷ Following this reasoning, García Saiz declares that it is probable that the relationship between Miguel and Juan may be one of uncle and nephew, thus inserting their experience as painters in the same tradition of other families in New Spain, such as the Echave, Juárez, or Correa, whose workshops spanned several generations.²⁶⁸

The information concerning Juan González, however, elicits more questions than answers. After his first signed work, dating from 1662, he paints a series of the *Life of Saint Ignatius*, signed 1698; collaborates with Miguel in another from 1698; is still working in 1699 in Mexico City; and signs another work in 1717.²⁶⁹ These consecutive dates lead García Saiz to conjecture that this painter had a professional life of over fifty-five years, certainly an unusual occurrence at the time. However, García Saiz's analysis of the stylistic differences between Miguel and Juan provides a more hesitant conclusion. In her opinion, when the two series of *enconchado* paintings representing the *Life of Saint*

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 110.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

Ignatius are compared, it appears that “the stylistic differences, more than obvious, are difficult to explain when considering that the artist [Juan] had been working for three decades by this time.”²⁷⁰ Observing the rigid fidelity to European images as well as their awkward execution in this series, García Saiz finds it hard to believe that this same artist carried out the very accomplished series of the *Conquest* only a year later.²⁷¹

Martín Soria had established the authorship of the *Conquest of Mexico* series belonging to the Motecuhzuma family (*Conquest of Mexico III*) to Juan González.²⁷² The three series of 24 panels depicting the conquest of Mexico have as many similarities as differences in the selection of scenes as well as their imagery. The coincidence of passages indicates, according to García Saiz, a common model not extant today.²⁷³ She conjectures about the authorship of the one attributed to Juan:

If we accept Soria’s proposition concerning the paternity of Juan González in the *Conquest* series, something for which we still do not have all the definitive elements, we could consider that his contribution to the series signed in collaboration could be said to be more iconographic than stylistic. However, we cannot forget—and here emerges a new element of discord with which we did not count—that we have to take into consideration that, by the decade of the eighties, Tomás, Miguel’s father, was already working as a master, and that at the moment we know of no work from his hand. It would not be so strange, therefore, that this anonymous series was the work of Tomás and was executed in the family workshop while Miguel’s skills were being developed. It is only a hypothesis worth considering.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 111.

²⁷² Kubler and Soria, *Art and Architecture in Spain and their American Dominions*, 394.

²⁷³ García Saiz, “Precisiones,” 112.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. “Si aceptásemos la propuesta de Soria en torno a la paternidad de Juan González sobre esta Conquista—algo para lo que todavía no poseemos los elementos definitivos—podríamos considerar que su aportación a la serie firmada en colaboración estaría más en lo iconográfico que en lo estilístico. Sin embargo, no podemos olvidar—y aquí surge un nuevo elemento en discordia con el que no se contaba—que hemos de tener en cuenta que, para la década de los ochenta, ya trabajaba como maestro Tomás, el padre de nuestro Miguel, y que por el momento no conocemos nada de su mano. No sería extraño por lo tanto que

Miguel González signs the other two series of the *Conquest of Mexico* (I and II). According to García Saiz, the differences in these two series are accounted by the development of the artist who executes the scenes, following the model, in closed human groups in the first series, and then develops an interest in individualization of each figure in the second.²⁷⁵

Very little is known about some of the other artists of *enconchado* paintings. Perhaps the best known is Nicolás Correa who has left three signatures on paintings inlaid with mother-of-pearl even though he also executed the more traditional oil on canvas paintings. Belonging to a well-known family of painters, his work is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 3.

José Bernardo Couto already mentions Pedro López Calderón in his *Diálogos*, if only incidentally. Referring to the dearth of Mexican seventeenth-century painters, Couto mentions a work of López Calderón he came across in the cloister of San Fernando in Mexico City. In his search for a *Last Supper* by a lesser known artist, Couto stumbles upon a painting “from the hand of Pedro López Calderón, executed in 1728, of not so much merit.”²⁷⁶ Another mention of this painter attributes an image of Saint John Nepomuceno from 1721 in an unspecified church in Mexico.²⁷⁷

esta serie anónima se debiera al trabajo de Tomás y estuviera realizada en el taller familiar mientras el propio Miguel se formaba en él. Se trata solo de una hipótesis más a considerar.”

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ José Bernardo Couto, *Diálogo sobre la historia de la pintura en México*, ed. Juana Gutiérrez Haces and Rogelio Ruiz Gomar (Mexico City: CONACULTA, 1995), 99.

²⁷⁷ Pavel Stépánek, “San Juan Nepomuceno en el arte español y novohispano,” *Revista Virtual de la Fundación Universitaria Española*, vol. III, no. 6 (1990). <http://www.fuesp.com/revistas/pag/cai0602.html> (accessed August 6, 2011).

Very little is also known of the painter Antonio de Santander. As son-in-law of the painter Rodrigo de la Piedra (born in Cádiz), he carried on with the workshop of his mentor. According to Clara Bargellini, both painters “have been associated with the two massive canvases in the chapel of the Virgen de la Soledad in the cathedral of Puebla.”²⁷⁸

A mystery still envelops the painter by the name Rodolpho who signed a Virgin of Guadalupe, the one today in Gijón, Spain.

²⁷⁸ Bargellini, 277.

Chapter 3

Enconchado Paintings of Religious and Secular Imagery

Religious Subjects

Perhaps because of their unique subject matter and the revisionist notions of the Spanish conquest of Mexico prevalent at the end of the seventeenth century, these historical paintings have elicited the most attention by scholars. However, the panels depicting the life of the Virgin Mary, Christ, Saint Francis Xavier, and especially the Virgin of Guadalupe—among others—also echo the age’s preoccupation with devotional images that was being fostered by the Franciscans, Mercedarians, Dominicans, Jesuits, and ecclesiastical authorities. Of special significance were the paintings representing the Virgin of Guadalupe supplemented by scenes from Juan Diego’s visionary encounter, which were growing in importance due to the *criollos*’ identification with that miracle. “Religious themes dominated viceregal art between 1600 and 1785,” according to Kelly Donahue-Wallace, and their diversity is seen not only in the large number of commissions, but also in the different techniques employed.²⁷⁹ Donahue-Wallace sheds light on the complicated colonial circumstances that formed the backdrop of the careers of highly specialized artists working on important ecclesiastical and viceregal commissions and indigenous patrons, as well as on the careers of “native artists who were reconciling the newly introduced religious and pictorial systems with ancestral traditions, new social

²⁷⁹ Kelly Donahue-Wallace, *Art and Architecture of Viceregal Latin America 1521-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 134.

circumstances, and contemporary indigenous tastes.”²⁸⁰ Like scenes of the conquest of Mexico, the panels representing the lives of the Virgin, Christ, and saints were often compartmentalized in series of six, twelve or twenty-four, although some panels are no longer extant.

The Life of the Virgin

One set depicting the life of the Virgin Mary, today in the Museo de América in Madrid, consists of six panels representing the following scenes: *The Presentation in the Temple*, *The Marriage of the Virgin*, *Joseph’s Dream and Repentance*, *Mary and Joseph Seeking Admittance to the Inn*, and *The Assumption of the Virgin*. All six are framed in similar mother-of-pearl inlaid with birds and flowers reminiscent of Japanese models.²⁸¹ Both García Saíz and Vargaslugo document the series as the one Louis Viardot saw in the Museo del Prado in 1855 before its transfer to the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid.²⁸² Eventually, in 1941, it became part of the Museo de América’s collections, where it was restored in 1979 and can be seen today.²⁸³ It can only be conjectured whether there were other scenes besides the extant ones, but the uniformity of the frames and the similar technique of canvas glued over wooden panels attests to the fact that they were conceived as a series.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ See Sonia Ocaña, “Marcos enconchados: Autonomía y apropiación de formas japonesas en la pintura novohispana,” *AIIE* 92 (2008): 107-153.

²⁸² Elisa Vargaslugo, “La pintura de enconchados,” in *México en el mundo de las colecciones de arte, Nueva España I* (México: Grupo Azabache, 1994), 138.

²⁸³ Ibid.

Depicting the life of the Virgin Mary had a long tradition in Europe, mostly based on medieval apocryphal stories that told the story of her parents, Joachim and Anne, Mary's early childhood, marriage to Joseph, and events leading to the announcement of her virgin pregnancy. Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, widely quoted by the end of the thirteenth century, expanded on the scant biblical details, providing ample opportunities for the representation of the Virgin's life that gave rise to multiple interpretations by artists. Extraordinary depictions, like Giotto's in the Scrovegni Chapel murals in Padua (1305), or Duccio's *Maestà* in Siena (1308), continued the pace in the early Renaissance and culminated in Baroque Europe's images by Diego Velázquez, Juan de Valdés Leal, Francisco de Zurbarán, Peter Paul Rubens, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, and others. In New Spain and Peru, the life of the Virgin was one of the most common themes between 1600 and 1785, according to Donahue-Kelly.²⁸⁴

The proliferation of images of the Virgin in New Spain, supported the conquistadors' political agenda to evangelize and convert the indigenous populations to Christianity. One of the first images of the Virgin Mary appears in the codex Huejotzingo of 1531, a manuscript detailing a complaint by Mexican natives to the newly established courts in New Spain. One of the eight surviving pages features the picture of a processional banner on which an image of the Virgin and Child is depicted (fig. 3.1). The innovative aspect of this particular image is that it is drawn by a *tlacuilo* (Mexican painter-scribe) in an already Europeanized style, making reference to an even earlier image, made from featherwork, now lost.²⁸⁵ Donahue-Kelly points out that when Hernando Cortés

²⁸⁴ Donahue-Kelly, 141.

²⁸⁵ "More perceptual than conceptual in style, the image may be one of the earliest Indian depictions of Christian iconography in Central Mexico." Xavier Noguez, "The 1531 Codex Huexotzinco," *Chipping away*

made his entry into the city of Tenochtitlán, the conquistador brought a banner of the Immaculate Conception that had been carried throughout his journey toward the city.²⁸⁶

Once the missionaries arrived, settled into missions, and started the conversion process in the 1520s, it was not hard to supplant pre-Hispanic female deities with localized devotions to the Virgin. In many cases these referred to particular miraculous apparitions, as had been the case in Spain for centuries. Donahue-Kelly adds that a Virgin of the Remedios, which later became a cult figure in the viceroyalty, also accompanied one of Cortés' men.²⁸⁷ These images often were ascribed miraculous power as the earlier pre-Hispanic ones had been, a case of overlap that conveniently aided conversions.²⁸⁸ One such example is the Central Mexican cult to the goddess Tonantzin, a devotion that easily translated to the new Catholic precepts, in particular those related to the cult to the Virgin of Guadalupe. It was the Virgin of Guadalupe that sparked the most fervent devotion in New Spain. For the artists of the latter part of the seventeenth century and early eighteenth, when the devotion was already established, it was an object "that played a fundamental role in the history of New Spain," in the words of Clara Bargellini.²⁸⁹

The series of the life of the Virgin Mary in the Museo de América, like others of its kind, illustrates common biblical or apocryphal scenes that were often represented in oils by the painters of the viceroyalty, usually by copying Flemish, Spanish, or Italian

on Earth: Studies in Prehispanic and Colonial Mexico in Honor of Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble, ed. Eloise Quiñones Keber (Lancaster, California: Labyrinthos, 1994), 67.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Clara Bargellini, "Originality and Invention in the Painting of New Spain," in *Painting the New World: Mexican Art and Life 1521-1821* (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2004), 85.

prints, by basing information on treatises that set forth the iconography such as Francisco Pacheco's *The Art of Painting* (1564-1644), editions of which circulated widely in the New World. Unlike their contemporaries, *enconchado* painters eschewed color and realism for decorative and devotional effect. Often, several moments or scenes were depicted in one panel. This is the case in the panel of the *Encounter in the Golden Gate* (fig. 3.2), where both Anne's revelation that she is to have child, and the joyous encounter with her husband, Joachim, are depicted, as pointed out by Vargaslugo.²⁹⁰ However, that does not mean that the modeling of the figures, the depiction of the architecture and the landscape, or the formal aspects lack veracity. The artist of this particular scene represents the gate as an elaborately decorated, self-standing entrance on one side of a river spanned by a bridge. The revelation of her pregnancy takes place on one side of the river where an angel announces the happy tidings to Joachim, thus bridging the space with a metaphorical "before and after" as well as providing for perspectival distance with its diagonal direction. The main actors, Joachim and Anne, parents of the Virgin Mary, hold each other in a tight embrace, framed by two dead and gnarled tree trunks in the foreground, perhaps representing the inevitable outcome and future destiny of their descendant. Besides the angel appearing to Joachim in the far background, the two figures of Joachim and Anne stand alone in the foreground, concentrating the viewer's attention on the main narrative of the story represented and the emotion of the embrace. Mother-of-pearl has been employed mainly in the garments of Joachim and Anne, thus becoming the equivalent of the traditional halos by imbuing the figures with a brilliant surface tantamount to divine light. The yellowish varnish adds to the effect created, which is not unlike Byzantine icons

²⁹⁰ Vargaslugo, 138.

with their special revetments in semi-precious stones, believed to produce or intercede in miracles.

The composition of *The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple* divides the panel into two diagonally (fig. 3.3). On one side are the mother-of-pearl studded steps leading to the altar where the high priest is extending his hand to the young Virgin; on the other side are Joachim and Anne, who cannot hide their astonishment at their daughter's precocious resolve to climb the steps by herself, as the legend relates. García Saiz accurately describes the scene as one that appears not only in Saint James's Protoevangelium, but also in Matthews's *Pseudo-Gospel* and the *Book of the Nativity*, all of which recount the event, even though the Virgin is supposed to be only three years old.²⁹¹ The Spanish scholar alludes to the fact that the architectural details, as is often the case, may have been taken from European prints, as the scalloped niches and classical columns attest. The figures are inlaid with mother-of-pearl, for reasons already stated, as are the steps leading up to the place of the consecration of the Virgin and her ascent to a spiritual confirmation.

The Marriage of the Virgin (or *The Betrothal*) was not uncommon in European representations (fig. 3.4). In Spain, a number of altarpieces displayed the scene, sometimes as part of a series on the life of the Virgin, as in the case for two commissions from the workshop of Francisco Ribalta (1565-1628), one for the series on Saint Joseph in the parish church of Algemesi, and the other, a canvas painted in 1621, for the parish church of Andilla.²⁹² Juan Valdés Leal (1622-1690) painted the scene in 1667 for the church of

²⁹¹ García Saiz, *La pintura colonial en el Museo de América II: Los enconchados* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1980), 92.

²⁹² Charlene Villaseñor Black, *Creating the Cult of St. Joseph: Art and Gender in the Spanish Empire* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 42.

Saint Joseph in Sevilla (fig. 3.5) and Gregorio Fernández (1576-1636) sculpted the scene for the Cathedral of Plasencia, attesting to the popularity of the subject matter.²⁹³

The depiction of this scene became a favorite among New Spanish painters, including Cristóbal de Villalpando (1649-1714; fig. 3.6), Luis Juárez (1585-1639; fig. 3.7), both of whom painted more than one version, and Sebastián López de Arteaga (1610-1652), whose *Marriage of the Virgin* in the Museo Nacional de Arte in Mexico City had a great influence on later painters of the scene. A long tradition in Europe had established the parameters for portraying the story. On the day celebrating St. Joseph, March 19, preachers often extolled the virtues of marriage in their sermons.²⁹⁴ Both Francisco Pacheco's *The Art of Painting* of 1649 and Fray Juan Interián de Ayala's *The Christian Painter* of 1730 prescribe the image.²⁹⁵ The topic of the betrothal was also dealt with in the theater. The play *El mejor esposo, San José* (The Best Husband, St. Joseph) by Guillén de Castro (1569-1631), one of the best-known dramatists of Spain's Golden Age, attests to the popularity of this theme in the theater as well.²⁹⁶

The main protagonists in the *enconchado* painting occupy the center of the composition, flanking the high priest. For the depiction of the Jewish high priest, painters often relied on Old Testament descriptions, such as *Exodus* 28: 1-15 where Aaron's vestments are elaborately described.²⁹⁷ In this *enconchado* painting, as in Villalpando's

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 43.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Rogelio Ruiz Gomar, *Painting a New World: Mexican Art and Life 1521-1821* (Denver, Colorado: Denver Art Museum, 2004), 180.

similar oil in the Museum of the Cathedral of Jaén in Spain, the high priest is wearing a “horned headdress or miter of gold that alludes to the beams of radiant light that shone on Moses’ face as he descended from Mount Sinai with the second tablet of commandments (*Exodus* 34-29).”²⁹⁸ The priest in the *enconchado* painting is gazing upward, as in Villalpando’s, while Mary and Joseph look downward modestly. The Virgin’s suitors and the accompanying maidens complete the composition. The suitors are part of a legend stating that when the Virgin reached puberty, the temple priests tried to arrange her marriage by asking male candidates from the House of David to submit their staffs to the temple, with the expectation of a god-sent sign. Unlike the others, Joseph’s staff burst into bloom by morning and the Holy Spirit made its presence known through the sign of the dove hovering above it. As in most models, the Virgin and Joseph are exchanging rings. In his study of Christian iconography, the French scholar Louis Réau commented that marriage between Jews was a civil contract and not a religious ceremony.²⁹⁹ Therefore, the scene became westernized beginning with the symbolic gesture of the *conjunctio manuum*, originated in Roman law.³⁰⁰ This reflects the Greco-Roman tradition whereby the use of the ring represented authority and the handing over of it, “which is why [in these paintings] the precise moment when Joseph puts the ring on the Virgin’s finger during the ceremony is represented.”³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Louis Réau, *Iconographie de l’art chrétien* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957), vol. II/2, 171, quoting Nelly Sigaut, *Catálogo comentado del acervo del Museo Nacional de Arte, Nueva España*, vol. II, edited by Rogelio Ruiz Gomar, Nelly Sigaut, Jaime Cuadriello (Mexico City: Museo Nacional de Arte, 2004), 379.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

All of the figures are inlaid with mother-of-pearl, as are the columns that support the interior space and the border of the scalloped niches, similar to those in the previous scene of the *Presentation at the Temple*. Above, in the center, the Holy Spirit presides over the scene, its luminescence due more to paint and varnishes than to mother-of-pearl. It was a theme for which the painter of an *enconchado* had no difficulty in finding models and indeed followed the established iconography.

Joseph's Dream was famously represented in the Scrovegni Chapel by Giotto and later by Robert Campin in the Netherlands (*Joseph's Repentance and Second Dream*, c. 1425), as well as by Rembrandt in Northern Europe (*Saint Joseph's Dream*, 1645). Francisco Pacheco's own painting of *The Dream* (in the Academia de San Fernando in Madrid) served as a prototype for iconography in the seventeenth century.³⁰² The figure of Joseph had a long tradition in Europe but its transplant to the Americas actually enhanced the cult considerably. The pairing of the *Betrothal* with *Joseph's Dream* was not unusual in New Spain, according to Villaseñor Black.³⁰³

By 1555 Joseph was made patron saint of the Mexican conquest and conversion, “a position he held until 1746, when the Virgin of Guadalupe was elevated as his co-patroness.”³⁰⁴ In 1672 Charles II proclaimed Saint Joseph patron of his kingdom, in some ways overshadowing Saint James.³⁰⁵ Villaseñor Black examines this cult in Baroque Spain and New Spain where the figure of Joseph became a symbol of authority and conversion and was related to gender issues, in particular with masculine authority. In her study of his

³⁰² Villaseñor Black, 50.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 50.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

cult in Mexico, Villaseñor Black examines visual imagery of the colonial period in print sources and documents in Spanish, Nahuatl, and Otomí to investigate “the rich, coded language of Catholicism in the construction of gender discourses in Spanish and Mexican art of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.”³⁰⁶ In her opinion, St. Joseph came to be seen in the Americas “as model father, caring spouse, and hard-working provider...the perfect paradigm of Spanish colonial power.”³⁰⁷ It is no coincidence, then, that in three of this series of six *enconchado* paintings the figure of Joseph has a protagonist role. Francisco Pacheco, the Spanish painter and treatise writer prescribes the way the image should be represented:

San José was a carpenter, and this was enough reason for the mother Church, faithful secretary of the Holy Spirit, to use his image in complying with the annotations in the Gospel In the Chapel of the Anunciate of the Colegio de San Hermenegildo, next to the Epistle, there is a history painted by my hand that in my opinion is exemplary: a piece of a humble house and next to it, a carpenter’s bench surrounded by splinters and Saint Joseph seated on a wood stool with his tunic and mantel and reclining on his right arm, defeated in sadness and sleep; next to him is a sack with clothes tied with a string, and leaning on the house, some tools of the trade, the most important ones: a saw, an adze, a brush, a hammer, a drill and chisel, all tied up with a string.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Francisco Pacheco, *Arte de la Pintura*, ed. B. Bassegoda y Hugas (Madrid: Cátedra, 1990), 600-602. “San José fue carpintero y para esto, bastaba el uso de nuestra madre la Iglesia, fiel secretaria del Espíritu Santo, conformándose con lo que nota el evangelio (...) En la capilla de la Anunciata del Colegio de San Hermenegildo, al lado de la Epístola, está pintada esta historia de mi mano, que a mi ver puede ser ejemplar: un pedazo de casa pobre y junta a ella, un banco de carpintero cercado de astillas y San José sentado sobre un soquete de Madera, con su túnica y manto, y recostado sobre el brazo derecho en él, vencido de la congoja y del sueño; junto a sí está una talega con ropa atada con una cuerda y, arrimadas a la casa, algunas herramientas de su oficio, las más forzosas: una sierra, azuela, cepillo, martillo, barrena y formón, todo atado con un cordel.”

The *enconchado* panel of *Joseph's Dream* (fig. 3.8), depicts two scenes, Joseph's dream in the background, and Joseph's repentance in the foreground. The *enconchado* painter follows the biblical text of Matthew 1:18-25 in which Joseph is told that the baby his wife is carrying is the son of God. In the same style as the other panels in this series, one scene is recessed and takes place outside (the dream) and the other is in the foreground and takes place indoors (the repentance). Joseph is depicted under a gnarled tree not very different from the one in the *Golden Gate* scene, and the angel is also depicted in a way similar to that of that scene, hovering over the figure. A "before and after" are represented, with the most recent event in the foreground. Joseph's workshop is visible through one of the doors in the background. The *enconchado* painter, however, has minimized the details of the essential event. Joseph puts his hat on the floor as he kneels to ask his wife's forgiveness for his errant thoughts before he had the dream. As in the other panels of the series, the use of mother-of-pearl is restricted to the garments of the figures and as a decorative element in the borders of the doors.

The European version of this story usually concentrates on the dream itself, as in Pacheco's 1604 oil in the Academia de San Fernando in Madrid (fig. 3.9) or the version by the Mexican painter Juan Correa (1646-1716) in the Pinacoteca del Departamento de Restauración del Patrimonio Cultural at the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia in Churubusco, Mexico, both of which show a sleeping Joseph and an angel. Juan Rodríguez Juárez (1675-1728) painted an oil of St. Joseph before Mary in the church of La Concepción in San Miguel Allende, Mexico, that also shows a contrite Joseph kneeling before the Virgin. The importance of the repentance scene in this panel, as well as in the *enconchado*, illuminates Joseph's acceptance of the outcome of the dream. It is no

coincidence that the story of Joseph and Mary became emblematic, both in Europe and in the Americas, of the pivotal role of marriage in Catholic morals. “The status of the institution of marriage was a major concern to the Church and the monarchy,” according to Villaseñor Black.³⁰⁹ It was especially relevant in the Americas, where indigenous practices of polygamy and divorce were abhorrent to the colonizers. In the 1585 Third Mexican Provincial Council, this issue was of utmost importance.³¹⁰ Therefore, images of the *Betrothal* and *Joseph’s Dream* became popular in New Spain in the seventeenth century to ensure that the values represented by Mary and Joseph would be advocated in the colony:

...by giving visual form to a specifically European Counter-Reformation ideology of marriage. By upholding Church-sanctioned monogamy as the only alternative, these images helped extend Church control over indigenous converts’ lives. Christian marriage thus became a form of colonialism.³¹¹

The representation of the carpenter’s shop in the upper left-hand corner of the composition was not unusual in Spain or its colonies. Villaseñor Black points out that artists as varied as Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682), Jusepe de Rivera (1591-1652), Juan de Valdés Leal (1662-1690), among others in Spain, reflected the importance of Joseph’s worldly virtues and his trade.³¹² This was yet another way of encoding “moral philosophies of labor, sanctity, virtue, and true nobility, new ideas that were spread throughout the Hispanic world by Josephine confraternities of carpenters.”³¹³ In this way,

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 55.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid., 56.

³¹² Ibid., 117.

³¹³ Ibid.

the colonial power would ensure the honor of manual labor as an efficient instrument of social control.

The scene depicting *Mary and Joseph Seeking Admittance to the Inn* is also framed by two gnarled trees (fig. 3.10). A city in the distance appears to have been the point of departure for Mary and Joseph, who have arrived at the inn after having crossed a bridge. The denial of their admission is represented by the gesticulating arm of the figure in the doorway. This is another example of the preeminence of the family in the depictions of the life of Mary, where Joseph appears prominently.

And finally, there is the scene of the *Ascension of the Virgin*, one of the most represented of all biblical stories (fig. 3.11). Ascending through clouds of cherubs and angels, the Virgin gazes upward as do the apostles who appear below in rapt veneration. As García Saiz aptly asserts, this Rubensian panel appears to be more dynamic than the rest, perhaps because of the very nature of the representation.³¹⁴

Another set of twelve *enconchado* paintings depicting the *Life of the Virgin* were bought by the Museo de América in 1980.³¹⁵ According to García Saiz, they may not belong to a single series, since some scenes are represented more than once, and the style of the figures seems to conform to different hands. In the opinion of the Spanish scholar, this is probably due to the fact that they were produced in a workshop where several assistants were employed.³¹⁶ The similarity with the six panels previously reviewed is

³¹⁴ García Saiz, *La pintura colonial en el Museo de América: Los enconchados* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1980), 98.

³¹⁵ García Saiz, *Los siglos de oro de los virreinos de América* (Madrid: Museo de América, 1999), 376.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

evident, in spite of some differences in individual renderings of the figures and the architecture.

The two panels representing the *Dream and Repentance of St. Joseph* form a case in point (figs. 3.12 and 3.13). These two panels from the group of twelve differ slightly from the series of six; they are also different from each other. In one, more lavish than the other, the architectural space is divided into a perpendicular inside space in whose walls two openings allow for the exterior space to illustrate the dream on the left, and the carpenter's workshop on the right. Joseph, kneeling in front of the Virgin, takes center stage here. The dream takes place near the conventional gnarled tree, but the details of the drawing appear to be more sophisticated, allowing for a more naturalistic depiction of the surrounding landscape. The same can be said of the carpenter's shop, which is full of details not seen in the others. Both ancillary scenes are surrounded by mother-of-pearl studded frames and are lit in a way that is reminiscent of stage settings. The large number of scenes depicting Joseph underscore the importance of the cult devoted to him and attest to the church's interest in promoting acts of penitence and conjugal loyalty as displayed in these episodes.

García Saiz addresses the idea that the panels were commissioned as series and produced by artists in a workshop.³¹⁷ It is well known that artists in a particular workshop specialized in this or that area of painting (figures, landscapes, animals), and, therefore, it is possible that one painting may have been produced by different hands. However, García Saiz points to the fact that individual paintings appear consistent with others in the series, and at the same time, distinct from others, giving rise to the conclusion that each panel is worked by one hand. I agree with this contention since the different paintings do have

³¹⁷ García Saiz and Serrera, "Aportaciones al catálogo de enconchados," 63.

particular stylistic traits, even though they all conform to a set of models that were available to all members of a workshop.

An *enconchado* painting that appears to be from another set of the *Life of the Virgin* in a private collection in Monterrey, Mexico, yields a signature and a date. *The Birth of the Virgin Mary* represents a domestic setting where Mary's mother Anne is depicted still on the bed where she has just given birth to the Virgin (fig. 3.14). Attendants are about to swaddle the newly-born baby with a cloth being warmed over a brazier with hot coals. The signature of Pedro López Calderón and the date 1723 are clearly painted on the lower right hand corner (fig. 3.15). Joachim takes center stage, lovingly gazing at his daughter while one little angel prepares the mother-of-pearl studded cradle and another watches with his back to the viewer. The use of mother-of-pearl by this artist is more akin Chinese inlaid lacquers in that the pieces are cut to conform to a shape, as in the case of the cradle in the foreground. One of the later *enconchado* paintings in existence, the painter, of whom very little is known, appears to delight in a genre scene of multiple characters.

Images of Saint Joseph and Child

One *enconchado* in the Museo de América depicts *Saint Joseph with Child* (fig. 2.22). Though a small composition (17.5 cm x 14.5cm), Joseph nevertheless takes up the entire vertical center, endowing the figure with a certain monumentality despite its size. The painter establishes a rapport between Joseph and the infant he is carrying on his shoulder, providing a sense of humanity in an otherwise heavily decorated piece with

rectangular pieces of mother-of-pearl. Joseph is holding a staff on his hand, a reference to the legend of his marriage to the Virgin. “Joseph’s mature age,” explains Donahue-Kelly, “reflects Francisco Pacheco’s demand that he appear as a man in his early thirties, mature yet youthful enough to provide for his family’s safety and well-being.”³¹⁸ Unlike other *enconchado* paintings, these fragments of mother-of-pearl are so precisely cut that the lines between them are difficult to discern.

Another panel depicting a similar scene, at the Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales in Madrid, offers a more nuanced composition. Even though it portrays the same devotional figure of Joseph with the Child on his shoulder, the baby appears to be blessing the viewer with one hand and clutching his father’s garment for support with the other, thereby giving the composition a more naturalistic look. God the Father at the top left radiates a light that falls on the main figures. A landscape with houses and a large tree to the right of the figures completes a very accomplished painting whose different hues of red, green, and ochre are still visible today.

These images of Saint Joseph reinforce the idea of an ideal father. In some way, these images of father and son are not very different from the ones of the Madonna and Child and elevate Joseph to the important place held by the Virgin Mary. According to Villaseñor Black, this may be due to the “absence of an established visual tradition for Josephine imagery,” in Spain and New Spain, and therefore, “consciously borrowed poses, gestures, and compositions previously reserved for images of Mary, ennoble the saint by implying his association with the Virgin.”³¹⁹ However, one difference in the iconography

³¹⁸ Donahue-Kelly, 154.

³¹⁹ Villaseñor Black, 166.

of Joseph which is evident in the two *enconchado* paintings discussed above is that, unlike most images of the Virgin and Child, Joseph “rarely meets the beholder’s gaze, but instead looks to Christ as if directing our attention to Him,” according to Villaseñor Black.³²⁰ For this author, it is a suggestion that the most important figures are Mary and the Child who are the main object of devotion.³²¹

The Life of Christ

There is a series of twenty-four *enconchado* paintings portraying the *Life of Christ* at the Museo de América in Madrid that, unlike most other *enconchado* paintings, lacks a canvas as part of the support of the mother-of-pearl. Already catalogued in the 1980 study by García Saiz, this series was ceded to the Museo de América in 1962 by the Museo Arqueológico of Valladolid where it had been accessioned from the convent of Aniago, near Valladolid.³²² Compared to the panels of the Life of the Virgin referred to above, these panels recreating the scenes of the life of Christ generally have more figures, respond to more than one moment in the story, and proliferate in secondary details that add verisimilitude to the representation.

Kelly Donahue-Wallace reminds us that Christological series “were as inspirational and theatrical as they were didactic.”³²³ Following the post-Tridentine spirit, theorists such as Francisco Pacheco advocated for more intense devotional images, and the

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² García Saiz, *La pintura colonial en el Museo de América*, 103.

³²³ Donahue-Wallace, 148.

artists of the viceroyalties, like those in Spain, “displayed both form and material to heighten their objects’ dramatic impact.”³²⁴ Mother-of-pearl seems a choice material to achieve these objectives. Other materials were also used to embellish or in some way enhance the naturalistic effect:

Passion figures regularly included human –or horse—hair wigs and eyelashes, glass eyes, and ivory teeth and fingernails. Clear or colored crystals became realistic tears or glistening drops of blood. Even bits of cork were added to molded gesso wounds to make ripped flesh and spilling blood real to the viewer.³²⁵

The prints and engravings that may have been models for the *enconchado* paintings proliferated throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as they were inexpensive devotional images affordable to a great number of people. The printing press arrived in New Spain by 1539, roughly 20 years after the conquest, and printmakers arriving from Europe or trained in the viceroyalty produced illustrations for the flourishing publishing industry, or single sheets commissioned by private patrons.³²⁶ So individual *enconchado* paintings of the life of Christ could stand on their own as devotional images or they could be displayed in series representing multiple biblical stories, an open book for the pious spectator.

The 24 panels at the Museo de América consist of the following scenes:

1. *Adoration of the Shepherds*
2. *Adoration of the Magi*
3. *Circumcision*
4. *Presentation in the Temple*
5. *Baptism of Christ*
6. *Temptation of Christ*

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Ibid., 151.

³²⁶ Ibid., 150.

7. *Wedding at Cana*
8. *The Storm Subsides*
9. *The Repentant Sinner*
10. *Christ Walks on Water*
11. *The Transfiguration*
12. *Christ's Entry Into Jerusalem*
13. *Christ's Purification in the Temple*
14. *Last Supper*
15. *Prayer in the Garden*
16. *Christ's Arrest*
17. *Peter's Denial and Christ Before the High Priest*
18. *Christ Tied to the Column*
19. *The Mocking of Christ*
20. *Ecce Homo*
21. *Christ Before Pilate*
22. *Christ Carrying the Cross*
23. *Christ's Crucifixion*
24. *Resurrection.*

There is nothing extraordinary about this list: the 24 panels represent commonly depicted New Testament scenes, both in Europe and in New Spain. Most follow traditional formats often employed in depicting them, with the exception of the *Transfiguration*, in which the composition is simplified by limiting the number of figures present. Architectural elements are often used to provide background or to define distinct settings for different moments of a narrative cycle, similar to scenes depicting the Life of the Virgin.

In the *Adoration of the Magi* and the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, the figures are placed in the center and are flanked by diagonals to define the space (figs. 3.16 and 3.17). In the former painting, the side openings show the exterior of the manger. On the brightly lit left side, an angel announces the birth of Christ to the shepherds; on the right, an urban landscape with a tower and a dome appears in the distance. In the *Adoration of the Magi*, however, the interior space is awkwardly suggested, as if open to the distant urban

landscape. To the left, as García Saiz suggests, an exterior space shows the attendants to the Magi milling about in front of what appears to be a pyramidal construction. This perhaps is an allusion to a local reality, which was very rare in these paintings. Although representing scenes that could have been depicted in the same setting, these two panels are completely different.

The *Wedding at Cana* is represented in a lavish setting reminiscent of those inhabited by members of colonial New Spain's elite class, who may have commissioned a painting such as this (fig. 3.18). An interior space appears behind open curtains. A table placed on the diagonal depicts the wedding guests with Christ and his mother in the foreground. Mary is standing, motioning her son to perform the miracle. The composition is full of genre elements, not unlike the Flemish paintings so well liked in Spain and in the viceroyalty. This image can be traced, in fact, to Martin de Vos (1532-1603), a leading Antwerp painter. On the upper left is a kitchen scene with domestic animals and several figures going about their business; in the left foreground two attendants are pouring the water turned miraculously into wine. In the background, shelves with dishes inlaid with mother-of-pearl accentuate the sumptuous setting –the mother-of-pearl suggesting, perhaps, silver plates, one of the main products exported by the viceroyalty. The painting by Martin de Vos shows a lavish table set at an angle and surrounded by guests, with Christ and Mary in the foreground, attendants pouring the water into the pitchers (pitchers very similar to the ones in the *enconchado*). It is very possible that the painter of this *enconchado* may have seen an engraving based on the De Vos painting (fig. 3.19). Referring to Vos's work, José Guadalupe Victoria observes that the Flemish painter had a penchant for creating compartments in his works in order to “create a picture within the

picture.”³²⁷ This is true of many of these *enconchado* panels, as can be seen in the scenes from the life of Christ or the life of the Virgin Mary as well.

José Guadalupe Victoria’s study of Baltasar de Echave Orio (c.1558-c.1623) the Basque-born artist who established a workshop in Mexico, sheds light on the proliferation of Flemish paintings in New Spain by the middle of the seventeenth century, such as those of Martin de Vos. This author has found as many as four oils by Martin de Vos in and around Mexico City. Four panels in the Franciscan church of Cuautitlán depicting *Saint Michael*, *Saint Peter*, *Saint Paul*, and an *Assumption-Coronation of the Virgin*; in the Cathedral of Mexico a *Tobias and the Angel*; an *Adoration of the Shepherds* in a private collection; a *Last Supper* in the Museo San Carlos.³²⁸ A *St. John Writing the Apocalypse* in the Museo Nacional del Virreinato could be the model for the *enconchado* painting *Saint Mathias, The Perdurable Life* examined below.

A similar *enconchado* painting of the *Wedding at Cana* in the Hispanic Society of America in New York utilizes the same iconography to better effect (fig. 3.20). The painting, signed by Nicolás Correa, echoes the previous composition with some variations. It is evident that this painter is more accomplished in the representation of space, in the gestures of the figures, and even in the background genre scene. The same angled table at the center of the composition displays a rich, sumptuous dinner setting, around which elegant figures display a variety of actions. The guests are eating or relating to each other, while the attendants are busy pouring, serving, or bringing the trays to the table. The kitchen scene has been moved to the right, and the shelves with dishes to the left. Use of mother-of-pearl is not limited to the garments of Mary and Joseph or the guests, but is

³²⁷ José Guadalupe Victoria, *Un pintor en su tiempo: Baltasar Echave Orio* (Mexico: IIE, 1994), 238.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 237.

applied also to decorate the room, frames, and even interspersed on the floor. These latter tiny pieces of mother-of-pearl would have reflected the light of candles placed under the painting in a way that made the whole scene glow. García Saiz, in the catalogue of the exhibition *The Arts of Latin America, 1492-1820*, remarks on the tendency of this painter to include figures dressed in contemporary garments, while the holy figures of Mary and Christ are attired in biblical tunics.³²⁹

There are two other *enconchado* paintings attributed to Nicolás Correa, a *Holy Family* and a *Christ on the Road to Calvary*, which may have been intended as part of a series. Correa belongs to the family of painters that includes Juan Correa (1645-1716), who was very prolific during these years, and his son José, also a painter. Juan Correa is the artist who painted the biombo known as *The Four Continents*, whose connection with Japanese formats as well as the insertion of New Spanish subject matter within a colonial context can relate to Nicolás' work also. Nicolás's most important work, arguably, is the *Mystical Nuptials of Saint Rose of Lima* (1691), the first American Roman Catholic saint. The use of different techniques in the production of these commissions attests to the variety of patrons as well as the myriad models available to the New Spanish artist.

In the series at the Museo de América, *Christ's Entry Into Jerusalem* is accorded a complex composition (fig. 3.21). Christ is at the center foreground, on his mule amid his followers. The scene takes place in front of a city wall that runs from one side of the canvas to the other, with a small arched gate at the left. Behind the principal protagonists, a throng is visible, as is the customary figure clinging to a tree in the upper right-hand corner.

³²⁹ García Saiz, *The Arts of Latin America*, 123.

The *enconchado* painting representing the *Last Supper* concentrates on the moment of the story when Christ is about to tell his disciples that one among them will betray him (fig. 3.22). Elisa Vargaslugo asserts that this version of the episode contrasts with the one in which Christ blesses the bread and wine and offers it to his disciples as the Eucharist.³³⁰ Even though the latter was a common theme after the Council of Trent, reinforcing the miraculous transubstantiation of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood, the *enconchado* painter decided on the more dramatic moment, also the one with a clear didactic lesson.

Vargaslugo traces the iconography to the Gospel of John, although the location of the narrative corresponds to Mark XIV: 14-15, where it is described.³³¹ In a large room flanked by two columns the artist has placed a horizontal table around which the twelve disciples portray different gestures of astonishment. As is customary, Christ's favorite disciple, John, is resting by his side. The figure of Judas is portrayed with his back to the viewer, holding a bag of money with one hand and reaching to Christ with the other. Christ is about to give him the soaked piece of bread that determines who is the traitor in the group. The faces of the disciples are individualized in a manner similar to the ones in the panel of *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem*, testifying to the skill of the artist. The entire composition takes place in front of a curtained background, giving the scene a subdued atmosphere but also evoking a kind of *tableaux vivant*. The use of mother-of-pearl is restricted to the garments of the figures and does not overwhelm the overall effect.

³³⁰ Vargaslugo, *México en el mundo de las colecciones*, 145.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

The panels depicting the scenes of the *Christ Carrying the Cross* (fig. 3.23) and the one of the *Crucifixion* (fig. 3.24) are very complex in their arrangement of figures and representation of architecture. The artists appear to be following established models closely and including as much detail as the *enconchado* technique allows. Donahue-Wallace reminds us that the object of these scenes was to instill piety through the viewing of Christ's suffering.³³² These expressions of Christ's human pain, according to her, were instrumental for the colonist's evangelization in that "they may have evoked memories of indigenous blood sacrifice, whereas *criollos* recalled Spanish religious and artistic practice."³³³ These two panels also recall sculptural reliefs since the main actors in the narrative appear near the picture plane.

In *Jesus Tied to the Column*, the artist has rendered a scene that is often portrayed soberly with a large number of figures present and several ancillary moments, as García Saiz remarks (fig. 3.25).³³⁴ At the center, Christ is leaning to the right due to the injuries being inflicted on him. He is surrounded by a crowd of torturers, some raising their hands in attack. On both the left and the right of the composition there are openings showing nearby areas. On the right, the High Priest observes the scene impassively. The architecture resembles a Renaissance-style courtyard surrounded by a two-tier arcade. The countryside can be seen through the doorways, allowing for an effect of perspective not unusual in this painter. Mother-of-pearl is used liberally in this panel: in the garments of the figures, in the architectural frames, and on the ground.

³³² Donahue-Wallace, 150.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ García Saiz, *La pintura colonial en el Museo de América*, 138.

One of the most dramatic panels in this series is *Ecce Homo* where Christ is brought out on a balcony and presented to the multitude below (fig. 3.26). According to García Saiz, this panel illustrates the differences in technique between the *enconchado* paintings of the conquest and those created later.³³⁵ In the opinion of the Spanish scholar, “the superficial and inexpressive facial features in the series of a historical subject matter contrasts strongly with the technique employed on this occasion, which evidently bespeaks of another sensibility alien to the one employed by the González.”³³⁶

The Virgin of Guadalupe

Representations of the Virgin of Guadalupe are common in *enconchado* paintings. Of all the depictions of the Virgin in the viceroyalty, none were as politically charged as those of this cult. For Jeanette Favrot Peterson, she “is still perceived as both a symbol heralding freedom and a signifier of submission.”³³⁷ To summarize the legend:

According to the account of the apparition, which was not recorded in a dated publication until the mid-seventeenth century, Guadalupe first appeared on December 8, 1531, on the hill of Tepeyacac (now Tepeyac) to the north of Mexico City. She showed herself to a newly Christianized native, whose baptismal name was Juan Diego. Using the Aztec language of Nahuatl, the Virgin asked that a church be erected in her honor. Juan Diego tried three times to convince Archbishop Zumárraga when roses tumbled out of his opened *tlimatli*, or cloak, and a life-sized image of the Virgin was found miraculously imprinted on its cactus-fiber cloak. Juan Diego’s cloak is said to be the same painted icon that is central to the cult

³³⁵ Ibid., 142.

³³⁶ Ibid. “Los rasgos someros e inexpressivos de los rostros de los conjuntos de tema histórico contrastan fuertemente con la técnica empleada en esta ocasión que evidentemente hablan de otra sensibilidad ajena a la empleada por los González.”

³³⁷ Jeanette Favrot Peterson, “The Virgin of Guadalupe: Symbol of Conquest or Liberation?” *Art Journal* (Winter 1992): 47.

of the Virgin of Guadalupe, venerated today in the twentieth-century basilica that bears her name.³³⁸

The painting in the Basilica de Guadalupe in Mexico City is thus believed to be the one inscribed on Juan Diego's cloak (fig. 3.27). The image is privileged in that it is not merely painted by human hands, according to Clara Bargellini, since the "image itself is the Virgin of Guadalupe and, thus, the very miracle."³³⁹ In any event, it was the prototype that inspired the countless images that sprang up especially in the seventeenth century and after. The introduction of the cult in the seventeenth century responded to the Spanish authorities' desire to stamp out the natives' idolatries and fuse the pre-Hispanic deities with Old World practices. According to Peterson, this may be understood in the context of class distinctions, based mostly on skin color. In her opinion, fomenting the cult of Guadalupe was an effective way for *criollos* to advance their desire to create a Mexican nation out of New Spain.³⁴⁰

García Saiz, agrees with Francisco de la Maza's assertion that "the cult to Guadalupe and Baroque art are the only authentic creations of the Mexican past, different from Spain and the world."³⁴¹ However, it can also be seen as Habsburg Spain's effort to further its self-appointed role as the defender of the Catholic Church, chosen by divine providence to spread its doctrine to the world.

³³⁸ Ibid., 39.

³³⁹ Bargellini, 85.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 46.

³⁴¹ Francisco de Maza, *El guadalupismo en México* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1981), 10, quoted by García Saiz, *Los siglos de oro*, 378. "El guadalupismo y el arte barroco son las únicas creaciones auténticas del pasado mexicano, diferenciales de España y del mundo."

Even though the apparition is purported to have occurred in 1531, the first large-scale copy of the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe is dated 1606 and signed by Baltasar de Echave Orio, a Basque immigrant to New Spain who established a family workshop that lasted for several generations (fig. 3.28).³⁴² By 1615-1620, an engraving by the Flemish artist Samuel Stradamus (or van der Straet) confirms the popularity of the Virgin. It was commissioned by Juan Pérez de la Serna, the metropolitan archbishop whose coat of arms, according to Peterson, appears at the foot of the engraving that was used to raise funds for the construction of the new basilica in 1622.³⁴³

The first published account of the Virgin's apparition did not take place, however, until 1648. Miguel Sánchez's book on the subject established the image as a miraculous sign and had the effect of accelerating the devotion. Titled *Imagen de la Virgen María Madre de Dios de Guadalupe milagrosamente aparecida* (Image of the Virgin Mary Mother of God of Guadalupe That Appeared Miraculously), it asserted that "it was regarded as the prefiguration of the Immaculate Conception and of Mary as the Church of New Spain," in the words of Bargellini.³⁴⁴ Four *criollo* authors (now referred to as the "four evangelists") spread the word about the apparition over the next few years, establishing the historicity of the event.³⁴⁵ One of them, Luis Lasso de la Vega, a friend of

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Peterson, 40.

³⁴⁴ Bargellini, 86.

³⁴⁵ Peterson, 42.

Sánchez's, followed up with a description of the apparition in Nahuatl, thus addressing the large indigenous population by using a readily understood lexicon.³⁴⁶

In the frontispiece of Sánchez's publication, the Virgin is placed on a *nopal*, a native cactus, emphasizing her Mexicanness.³⁴⁷ The fervent feelings of nationalism created by the devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe served to justify the conquest and, at the same time, glorify Mexico. These results were not alien to the *criollo* agenda.³⁴⁸ In retrospect, it is evident that Sánchez was moved not only by religious zeal, but also by nationalist fervor. In his comprehensive study of the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe, David A. Brading concludes that Sánchez's "concern was to demonstrate that the Mexican Church owed its foundation to the direct intervention of the Mother of God, who thereby declared herself the special patron and mother of the Mexican people."³⁴⁹

But another aspect of Sánchez's book emphasizes the writer's scorn for the art of painting in general, an opinion that reflects seventeenth-century society's view of painters as craftsmen.³⁵⁰ Therefore, the Virgin of Guadalupe could be linked to the question of the status of painters in the viceroyalty, as Bargellini has stated.³⁵¹ This scholar points out that since "the passing of the roses from Juan Diego to the Virgin and back again into the cloak

³⁴⁶ Serge Gruzinski, *La Guerra de las Imágenes: De Cristóbal Colón a "Blade Runner" (1492-2019)*. (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990), 123.

³⁴⁷ Peterson, 42.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ David A. Brading, *Mexican Phoenix, Our Lady of Guadalupe: Image and Tradition Across Five Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 5.

³⁵⁰ Bargellini, 86.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

appears in various paintings of the period,” it implies the artist’s agency.³⁵² Considering that the roses were the instrument by which the image of the Virgin was imprinted on the cloak, “the association between the flowers and colors called attention to the art of painting.”³⁵³

The inclusion of narrative to clarify the Virgin’s role as a miraculous object of devotion resulted in images that included several scenes from the story of Juan Diego surrounding the central image of the Virgin. José Juárez’s 1656 painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe includes three of the four scenes common to this legend. Because of its early date, this rather large canvas is one of the earliest depictions of the whole story of Juan Diego that would become standard in the next few decades. Correa’s 1667 version in the Museo San Gregorio in Valladolid, Spain, continues the tradition of representing several moments in the narrative of the apparition.

An *enconchado* of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the convent of Capuchine nuns in Castellón de la Plana in Spain is one of several in which the garment of the Virgin at the center of the panel is inlaid with mother-of-pearl and four scenes from the legend are depicted in the four corners of the picture (fig. 3.29). Unlike the *enconchado* paintings with scenes of the Life of the Virgin or the Life of Christ, where the narrative prevails, in this panel the monumental figure of the Virgin is meticulously rendered with square pieces of mother-of-pearl of similar size. Due to their profusion, it is even more brilliant than the mandorla that by tradition surrounds the figure of the Virgin or Christ. The well-modeled face of the Virgin as well as her hands are painted a dark hue suggesting her indigenous origin. García Saiz compares the composition to a similar Guadalupe *enconchado* in the

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid., 87.

church of San José de Tlaxcala that is believed to date to the end of the seventeenth century.

Romanian art historian Victor Stoichita, professor at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland, discusses the relationship between mystical vision and pictorial image. He takes up the idea that “if visions engender pictures, then pictures in turn can provoke visions.”³⁵⁴ The foundational myth of this iconic Virgin developed in special ways in Mexico, according to Stoichita. One particular trait is the fact that the representations of the Virgin of Guadalupe show, in effect, an Immaculate Conception, a *mulier amicta sole*, standing on a crescent moon.³⁵⁵ Furthermore, the four cartouches with scenes from the story convey the “transformation of the vision into a miraculous image, while the central figure unequivocally presents itself as the result of this transposition.”³⁵⁶ Another interesting facet of the evolution of this icon is the fact that there was already a Romanesque Virgin of Guadalupe in Spain who, as Stoichita points out, was also called a “Black Virgin”.³⁵⁷ Therefore, the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe “was derived from that of an old devotional image of the mother country, while the added iconography of the Immaculate Conception was a product of the Spanish Counter-Reformation.”³⁵⁸ Between the Virgin’s apparition in 1531 and Sanchez’s publication of 1648, these different threads had time to fuse and create the fervent devotion that has persisted to this day.

³⁵⁴ Victor Stoichita, “Image and Apparition: Spanish Painting of the Golden Age and New World Popular Devotion,” *RES Anthropology and Aesthetics* 26 (Autumn 1994): 39.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 40. “A woman clothed by the sun.”

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Once the cult to the Virgin of Guadalupe was established, the miraculous power of the image went hand in hand with the history of Mexico. The image was subject to impassioned pleas from the population for healing during calamitous events like floods or earthquakes. In an ex-voto painting from 1743 by José de Ibarra and Baltazar Troncoso, *During the Epidemic of Matlazahuatl in 1737*, the Virgin appears in the sky presiding over the end of the epidemic (fig. 3.30).

The mother-of-pearl in the figures of Guadalupe added a metaphorical dimension to its very materiality. As the devout believer approached the image, its brilliance already acted in such a way as to promote the miraculous intervention sought. At the same time, association with an indigenous past that seemed to live on in people's sets of beliefs was inevitable, if not necessarily intentional, regardless of the authorities' efforts to the contrary.

For Serge Gruzinski, the French specialist in Latin American art and history, Mexican artists of the Baroque achieved a more intellectual, and more rhetorical, relationship with the image than their Spanish forebears.³⁵⁹ The Mannerist image, according to Gruzinski, "plays with decorative loading, allegorical flowering, the pursuit of wisdom, sophistication, and a multiplicity of meaning."³⁶⁰ One cannot forget that these images were usually part and parcel of a larger decorative program that included elaborate altarpieces covered in gold leaf, a profusion of candles, and on many occasions, architectural splendor in which to display the images. Referring to the profusion of gold in Mexican Baroque images, Gruzinski asserts that the effect of this magnificence

³⁵⁹ Serge Gruzinski, *Images at War: Mexico from Columbus to Blade Runner (1492-2019)* trans. Heather MacLean (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), 114.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

“undoubtedly fed the fascination it occasioned.”³⁶¹ In this sense, the Virgin of Guadalupe, covered in mother-of-pearl, reflects Baroque Mexico’s preoccupation with opulence. Gruzinski adds that “the Christian image, in its own way, hypostatized wealth, since a spiritual treasure was erected upon the temporal treasure that it magnified.”³⁶²

Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s friend and one of the most erudite scholars of his time, was not timid in his devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe. His Parnassian poem, *Indian Spring*, published in 1662, compares Northern Europe’s heretical movements of the earlier century to the Virgin’s providential appearance in Mexico.³⁶³ In 1680, Sigüenza y Góngora celebrated the dedication of a new church to the Virgin of Guadalupe in Querétaro in his *Glories of Querétaro*.³⁶⁴ In this document, the author describes the masque commissioned by the governor of the local Indian community, as David A. Brading explains, “in which figures of the Otomí founder, the emperor of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, and Charles V, all paraded through the city streets.”³⁶⁵

Sor Juana, herself, dedicated a sonnet to the Virgin of Guadalupe. Praising the poetic skills of the Jesuit priest Francisco de Castro, who describes the miraculous apparition of the Virgin in verse, the nun’s poem refers to the Guadalupe as a “Mexican Rose” and as “American Protector,” attributes that were already well established:

Marvelous flowers arranged to reveal

³⁶¹ Ibid., 141.

³⁶² Ibid., 146.

³⁶³ Brading, 115.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

America's shield in a wondrous pose,
Surpassing in essence the Mexican rose
To equal a rose of Castille.

Instead of the dragon, at whom would kneel
St. John in his vision on Patmos,
Here pure intelligence knowingly chose
Pure grandeur for her throne and seal.

And now the mysterious signs of Heaven
Copy her form in a heavenly field,
Ciphers of flowers proclaim her paeon.

Heavenly, too, is the copy written:
Verses picked from your learned garden,
Marvelous blooms from your learned pen.³⁶⁶

Two Virgin of Guadalupe panels in the Franz Mayer Museum in Mexico City exemplify this posture regarding opulence and brilliance. One, signed by Agustín del Pino, is reminiscent of the woman of the Apocalypse (fig. 3.31). The figure occupies most of the panel and is surrounded by flowers, an allusion to the myth of Juan Diego. The frame is also inlaid with mother-of-pearl flowers and birds but in a different style from the painting. According to Marta Dujovne, very little is known about this painter except that he worked in Mexico City in the years 1727 and 1728.³⁶⁷ He is the author of another *enconchado* painting in the Spanish Colonial Collection of the Denver Art Museum that represents Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order.

³⁶⁶ Translation from <http://spanishpoems2.blogspot.com/2006/10/sor-juana-ins-de-la-cruz-la-compuesta.html> (accessed December 4, 2011). Original version: La compuesta de flores maravilla,/divina protectora americana,/que a ser se pasa Rosa Mexicana,/apareciendo Rosa de Castilla;/la que en vez del Dragón –de quien humilla/cerviz rebelde en Patmos--, huella ufana,/hasta aquí Inteligente Soberana,/de su pura grandeza pura silla;/ya el cielo, que la copia mistrioso,/segunda vez sus celestiales/en guarismos de flores claro suma:/pues no menos le dan traslado hermoso/las flores de tus versos sin iguales,/la maravilla de tu culta pluma. See Raquel Chang-Rodríguez, ed. “*Aquí, ninfas del sur, venid ligeras,*” *Voces poéticas virreinales* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2008), 300.

³⁶⁷ Marta Dujovne, *Las pinturas con incrustaciones de nácar*, 59.

The other, larger, panel of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the Franz Mayer Museum is the work of an anonymous artist (fig. 3.32). It seems a finer, more sophisticated product because the Virgin's robe is inlaid with very small pieces of mother-of-pearl and the brilliant rays surrounding her like a mandorla are inlaid with mother-of-pearl fragments, producing a dazzling effect. The hands and face of the Virgin, of a dark hue, are reminiscent of Italian painting of the fifteenth century and like other *enconchado* paintings, evokes indigenous ethnicity. The fact that the image of the Virgin appears by itself with no other narrative contributes to the sense of an apparition that the shiny surface helps to produce.

The image of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the Museo de América signed by Miguel González in 1692 offers characteristics that typify Baroque Mexico's desire to join Old Testament stories with the apparition of the Virgin in the New World (fig. 3.33) Jaime Cuadriello elucidates the iconography of this singular painting in his essay "La propagación de las devociones novohispanas: las guadalupanas y otras imágenes preferentes."³⁶⁸ The Virgin appears in the center surrounded by the usual mandorla. According to Cuadriello, the medallions that surround the image are in keeping with those described in the devotional writings that were so prevalent in the seventeenth century. This image of the Virgin, however, is related to genealogical images associated with the tree of Jesse, the symbol of the house of David, as represented here by the branches originating from the recumbent figure of David and joining all the medallions. At the top center, the figures of God the Father and the Holy Spirit are prominent above the rest.

³⁶⁸ Jaime Cuadriello, "La propagación de las devociones novohispanas: las guadalupanas y otras imágenes preferentes," in *México en el mundo de las colecciones de arte, Nueva España I*, ed. María Luisa Sabau García (Mexico City: D. R. Primera, 1994), 288.

They are flanked by Saint Anne and Saint Joachim, the parents of the Virgin. Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Bonaventure, a Franciscan himself, figure in the medallions at center on either side of the Guadalupe, as if they were the donors of the painting. Images of John the Baptist and John the Evangelist occupy the lower medallions.

The use of the tree of Jesse to link the Virgin of Guadalupe to the Old Testament is not coincidental, according to Cuadriello, “Miguel Sánchez had already applied the verse from Isaiah *Egredietur virga de radice Jesse*.”³⁶⁹ Furthermore, Cuadriello quotes from Delfina López de Sarralengue’s *Una villa mexicana del siglo XVII* to explain that in the gilded silver tabernacle, which was a gift from the Viceroy Count of Salvatierra (c. 1647), “the saintly image was already seen surrounded by statues representing the lineage of King David.”³⁷⁰

A Virgin of Guadalupe recently acquired by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art similarly represents the different stages of the episodic story of Juan Diego in four medallions located in the four corners of the panel at the center of which is the figure of the Virgin (fig. 3.34). In this case, instead of being joined by branches, the medallions are independently held by *putti* who hover above or below them. The medallions are elaborately framed in scroll-like patterns enveloped with acanthus leaves and studded with mother-of-pearl. The Virgin, whose mantle is completely inlaid with mother-of-pearl, stands on a crescent moon held by a *putto* above another medallion representing an eagle perched on a cactus, the coat of arms of Mexico City. The frame of the panel, also inlaid, contributes to the Baroque effect of iridescence with elaborate floral patterns and symbols

³⁶⁹ Ibid. “A rod out of the tree of Jesse.”

³⁷⁰ Delfina López de Sarralengue, *Una villa mexicana del siglo XVII: Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* (Mexico: Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas-Porrúa, 2005), 27, quoting from Jaime Cuadriello, 288.

of the Litany of the Virgin. Signed by Miguel González, it is perhaps the most accomplished work in an American collection.

These two versions of the Virgin of Guadalupe signed by Miguel González offer an interesting contrast from the hand of the same artist, perhaps six or eight years apart in their manufacture. The panel in the Museo de América, as discussed above, provides a complex iconographic image, suggesting Old Testament associations (the house of David) and Franciscan connections (Saint Francis and Saint Bonaventure). González utilizes the mother-of-pearl to decorate the branches that join the medallions around the Virgin whose garments are painted with red, blue, and gold pigments. By contrast, the panel at LACMA, less intricate in composition, is more lavish in the use of mother-of-pearl, inlaid on the garment of the Virgin as well as on the frames of the medallions that surround her. The execution of both panels attest to the accomplished production of Miguel González who does not seem content to simply repeat literally the same image in the same style, seeking variations on the same theme.

Another Virgin of Guadalupe in the Museo de América in Madrid appears to hover above a small colonial town or the Villa of Guadalupe, with the basilica at the center under construction (fig. 3.35). The figure of the Virgin is completely studded with mother-of-pearl, except for her painted face and hands. The innovation in this panel is that the floral decoration surrounding the Virgin, in addition to the inlaid mother-of-pearl, renders the seeds and branches in relief, as García Saíz observes in the catalogue.³⁷¹ This panel is part of the series of six panels of the Life of the Virgin that Louis Viardot saw in 1855 in the Museo del Prado. The museum's inventories refers to this panel as proceeding from

³⁷¹ García Saíz, *La pintura colonial en el Museo de América*, 160.

the Museo de la Trinidad, the former Museo Nacional de Pintura y Escultura whose collections were added to the Prado Museum when it closed in 1872.³⁷²

Series of El Credo

There are twelve panels of *enconchado* paintings denominated El Credo (Apostle's Creed) because they illustrate themes of Catholic dogma through representative religious scenes. These tenets of Christianity were mostly set in the Nicene and Apostles' creeds dating back to the Council of Nicea in 325 CE.³⁷³ It is possible, as some scholars assert, that the twelve panels were once hung in the Church of Santa Isabel Tola, not far from the Villa de Guadalupe.³⁷⁴ Each scene is presided over by one of the apostles and refers to a different theme; both apostle and theme are specified in a legend at the bottom of each panel. According to William H. Forsyth:

...the Apostles' Creed, has been used throughout Western Europe since the fourth century and was, according to medieval tradition, first recited by the twelve apostles at Pentecost, each apostle uttering one of the twelve articles under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The Credo was naturally a subject congenial to medieval art. It was generally illustrated by a number of individual scenes, sometimes twelve or less, but often more.³⁷⁵

³⁷² Ibid., 87. The Museo de la Trinidad was formed from the disentanglement of the churches in the nineteenth century in Spain; eventually, the works were ceded to the Museo del Prado. See María Dolores Antigüedad de Castillo-Olivares, "El museo de La Trinidad, germen del museo público en España," *Espacio, tiempo y forma serie VII, Historia del Arte 11* (1988): 367-396.

³⁷³ William H. Forsyth, "A 'Credo' Tapestry: A Pictorial Interpretation of the Apostles' Creed," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, n.s.* 21, no. 7 (March 1963): 242.

³⁷⁴ Johanna Hecht, *Mexico, Splendors of Twenty Centuries*, ed. Octavio Paz (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990), 149.

³⁷⁵ Forsyth, 242.

The Banco Nacional de México (Banamex) today owns six of the panels. They were acquired from the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia when the former financed the sale of panels representing the Conquest of Mexico that today are in the Museum of History in Chapultepec. The other six are in the Museo Nacional del Virreinato in Tepotzotlán, Mexico. The themes of the panels in the possession of Banamex are the following:

1. Saint Peter, The Creation, I believe in God the Father
2. The Community of the Catholic Church
3. Saint Simon, The Remission of Sins
4. Saint Thomas, The Coming of the Holy Spirit
5. Saint Judas Thaddeus, The Resurrection of the Flesh
6. Saint Matthias, The Perdurable Life

The theme of the other six is as follows:

7. Saint Andrew, I believe in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord
8. Saint James the Elder, Conceived by the Grace of the Holy Spirit
9. Saint Philip, Descended to Hell, Resurrected on the Third Day
10. Saint Bartholomew, Rose to Heaven and is Seated Next to Our Father
11. Saint James the Younger, Holy Catholic Church, Communion of the Saints
12. Saint Matthew, From There Will Come to Judge the Living and the Dead

Four of these paintings are signed by Miguel González and, therefore, this series displays exceptional artistic competence, a fact that has not escaped museum curators and private collectors.

The panel *Saint Peter, the Creation*, represents the creation of the sun and the moon as well as a number of animals (fig. 3.36). Eve's creation is also depicted in the background as part of Adam's dream. Miguel González, whose signature appears in the lower left hand side of the panel, is obviously eschewing any reference to local tradition by excluding American animals and including animals in the foreground of the composition that would have been exotic, even in Europe, like a dromedary, a unicorn, or

an elephant.³⁷⁶ A bevy of sea creatures appear behind the earthly fauna, while birds surround the figure of the Creator. The animals' lively poses and God's flowing robes give this panel a sense of dynamism lacking in most others of the series. Johanna Hecht, a former curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, suggests the engravings by the German artist Daniel Hoffer (1470-1536), who engraved a set of Apostle's Creed, as a possible model, as well as Salvador de Ocampo, the Mexican sculptor of the choir stalls of the Church of San Agustín in Mexico City, whose "image of God the Father also closely relates" to the one in this panel.³⁷⁷

The cult of Saint Peter reminded the populace not only of the apostle's humble origins but also of the successor who sat in Rome presiding over the Church, a relevant topic in post-Tridentine Europe as well. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz wrote a series of *villancicos* (a kind of Christmas carol) commemorating Saint Peter for the Metropolitan Cathedral in Mexico City in 1677, 1683, 1691, and 1692, and for the Cathedral of Puebla in 1680, all of them going to the presses at the time, thus extending their popularity.³⁷⁸ Literature, music, and the visual arts came together in Baroque New Spain's religious and secular realms.

The panel with the cartouche dedicated to Saint Andrews, also signed by Miguel González, is a traditional rendition of the Transfiguration, with Christ hovering in the air at the center, flanked by Moses and the prophet Elias. An inscription above Christ reads *hic est filius meus dilectus* (this is my beloved son). Peter, James, and John, the apostles

³⁷⁶ Luis Ortiz Macedo, *La colección de arte del Banco Nacional de México: Un legado a la cultura mexicana, siglos XVII-XX* (México City: Fomento Cultural Banamex, 1983), 44.

³⁷⁷ Hecht, *Mexico, Splendors of Twenty Centuries*, 150.

³⁷⁸ See Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras completas* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1985), 225-234, 242-247, 334-339, 349-355, 363-369.

who had fallen asleep on the top of the mountain, awoken to the sight of Christ. Two trees frame the composition.³⁷⁹

The Saint James panel, also the work of Miguel González, depicts an Annunciation in an interior space that paradoxically opens to the sky where the Virgin appears kneeling in front of a table with a lectern and a vase with a branch. To the left, the angel folding his wings, and above a heavenly scene with god at the center flanked by angels. Through a small opening to the right of the Virgin, an Adoration of the Shepherds can be seen.

Marta Dujovne explains that a panel that should correspond to Saint John and the passage of the Creed that reads “suffered under Pontius Pilates, was crucified, died and buried,” does not represent any of this.³⁸⁰ On a landscape in front of a city, the Holy Family are represented. Since there is no cartouche, Dujovne suggests that this panel can be associated with one of the series of the Virgin in the Museo de América.³⁸¹

The third panel with Miguel González’s signature is the one dedicated to Saint Philip. The cartouche reads: “Saint Philip, descended to hell, on the third day he resurrected from the dead.” Dujovne explains the iconography as Christ descending to limbo at the center, carrying a cross, surrounded by figures representing Adam, Eve (with an apple) Abel, David (with his crown and harp), among other figures from the Old Testament, as well as Saint Joseph who kisses the hand of Christ, who is next to Saint

³⁷⁹ For a complete set of images of the Allegories, see Dujovne, *Las pinturas con incrustaciones de nácar*, 28-51.

³⁸⁰ Dujovne, *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Dimas.³⁸² In the background, on the right hand side of the panel, Christ appears rising from his tomb to the surprise of the Roman soldiers.

An unsigned panel dedicated to Saint Bartholomew depicts Christ's Ascension to heaven at the center. The cartouche reads: "St. Bartholomew rose to heaven and is seated to the right of God the Fahter." The Virgin and the apostles contemplate this vision while, receding into space on the right hand side, another scene unfolds in a cityscape. Kneeling in front of a church, a group gazes at the heavens where Christ is seated next to God the Father. Next to the kneeling figures, a papal crown and royal crown are set on the floor, which Dujovne interprets as symbols of civil and ecclesiastical hierarchy.³⁸³ These scenes not only depict theological principles, but they also legitimize the authority of the institution of the Church as represented by the Pope and the bishops, as well as the bureaucracy of the viceroyalty that aligned itself with the Church.

The panel *Saint Matthias' Perdurable Life*, sometimes called *The Eternal Life*, portrays Mexico City as the new Jerusalem (fig. 3.37). On the left, an angel points to the apparition of the city to a rapt Saint John. According to Richard Kagan, the painting references "John the Apostle's apocalyptic vision of the heavenly city Jerusalem in which he saw a squared, walled city at the center of which was the temple of the Lord."³⁸⁴ God the Father presides over the composition holding a globe. In the foreground, the sacrificial lamb is led by the Good Shepherd to the heavenly Jerusalem. The façade of the temple of the Lord, according to Kagan, resembles the basilica at Tepeyac, where the Virgin of

³⁸² Ibid., 35.

³⁸³ Ibid., 37.

³⁸⁴ Richard Kagan, *Urban Images of the Hispanic World*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 166.

Guadalupe is said to have appeared.³⁸⁵ By implication, Kagan asserts, "... it appears that Mexico City, with the Virgin of Guadalupe's help, had become a perfect city, a *communitas perfecta* fashioned in the image of God."³⁸⁶ Saint Matthias was the apostle chosen by lot after Judas' suicide, granted the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost; of his later apostolate very little is known.³⁸⁷

This panel, however, appears to have a precedent in Martin de Vos's *Saint John Writing the Apocalypse* in the Museo Nacional del Virreinato in Tepotzotlán, Mexico (fig. 3.38). Even though he never set foot in New Spain, the Flemish painter's work did cross the ocean becoming one of the most influential painters in the viceroyalty. His St. John shows, like the *enconchado* painting, an angel instructing St. John in the upper left-hand corner (their positions reversed) and a heavenly Jerusalem as a walled city with twelve gates as per the New Testament description. The chorographic view of Jerusalem in Martin de Vos's painting is imitated in the *enconchado* painting through a perspective that assumes the viewer is looking down from a higher plane. The association of the heavenly Jerusalem with the newly Christianized Mexico City did not escape the artists of the viceroyalty. In the Museo Regional de Guadalupe in Zacatecas, an oil painting by Cristóbal de Villalpando of Saint John the Evangelist and Mother María de Jesús de Agreda also depicts a similar walled city with twelve gates in the center of the composition, attesting to the popularity of the image.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ David Farmer, *Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 359.

Saint Simon, the Remission of Sins and *Saint Jude Thaddeus, the Resurrection of the Flesh* juxtapose two first-century martyrs commemorated on the same date, October 28. The former, an apostle, disappears from history after Pentecost, according to the Oxford Dictionary of Saints.³⁸⁸ A tradition that goes back to the sixth century holds that Simon went to Egypt to preach where he chanced upon Jude, who had recently arrived from Mesopotamia. They both went on to Persia where they were martyred.³⁸⁹ In the *enconchado* painting of Saint Simon, the apostle appears to be preaching in an exterior space to a group including a figure with a turban, an allusion to the place of his martyrdom. Judas Thaddeus, in the painting of *The Resurrection of the Flesh*, appears with a host of heavenly figures including Christ, the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, and angels sounding trumpets as they witness the rising of the dead from their tombs (fig. 3.39). The four evangelists, John, Luke, Mark, and Matthew, appear with their traditional iconographic elements (eagle, ox, lion, and angel, respectively).

In *Saint Thomas, the Coming of the Holy Spirit*, the Virgin presides at the center, surrounded by the apostles who are gesticulating as if speaking in tongues, while the Holy Spirit hovers above. According to Marta Dujovne, the presence of two women responds to the Apocryphal Gospels.³⁹⁰

Other Religious Subjects

³⁸⁸ Ibid, 479.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 479-480.

³⁹⁰ Dujovne, *Las pinturas con incrustaciones de nácar*, 41.

The Virgin of Valvanera

There is one panel in the Museo de América in Madrid of the Virgin of Valvanera, patron of the Rioja region in Spain. According to tradition, two disciples of Saint Peter brought the image, which had been made by Saint Luke himself, to Spain (fig. 3.40).³⁹¹ There are two versions of the episode. According to Marta Dujovne, a cult arose in a small valley community populated by hermits who at one point had to flee because of the incoming Moorish hordes. The one hermit who stayed behind took the image and hid it in the cavity of a tree trunk at the top of a hill.³⁹² As the hermit began to cover the opening, he was surprised to see that the tree bark started to grow before his eyes, miraculously closing the cavity. Years later, bandits laid siege to the village, among them a man named Munio, the most fearsome of them. One day, as Munio was about to assault an unsuspecting peasant, he watched the peasant kneel to pray to the Virgin for the success of his crops. He was so moved by the scene that he renounced his criminal ways and became a penitent.³⁹³ From that day on, he led a saintly life. Eventually the Virgin appeared to him and told him where to find the image hidden in the tree. When Munio and his friend arrived at the tree, a light illuminating the trunk made the image visible to the two friends.³⁹⁴

³⁹¹ Dujovne, 63. Dujovne's information is taken from José Augusto Sánchez Pérez, *El culto mariano en España* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto "Antonio de Nebrija," 1943).

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

The panel at the Museo de América is quite descriptive of the miracle. Even though the signature is now illegible, documents confirm that it was painted by Juan González, the same artist who painted the Conquest panels.³⁹⁵ The Virgin and Child appear at the center in front of the hollow tree. Munio is on the right with his horse behind him. The composition forms an oval surrounded by a flower arrangement, with a landscape surrounding the tree showing houses, trees, and birds. García Saiz mentions that already in 1950 Kubler and Soria mention similar panel bearing the signature of Antonio de Santander in a private Mexican collection.³⁹⁶ An oil painting in the Franz Mayer Museum by Juan Correa attests to the popularity of theme in New Spain. It is not known how or when this devotion was started in the New World, but it is likely that migrants from the Rioja region of Spain were responsible for its spread.³⁹⁷

The version by Juan Correa may refer to another interpretation of the miracle, according to which the image was also produced by Saint Luke and sent to Spain by Saint Peter (fig. 3.41), according to the catalogue of the exhibition of treasures from the Franz Mayer Museum,

...where it was venerated in a chapel erected in the Venas Valley (Balvanera), in La Rioja. Before the impending threat of invasion by Arian king Theodoric's armies in the year 462, an elderly man stowed the statue away in the hollow of an oak tree. It remained there until the year 568 when Nuño Oñez, a former bandit converted to Christianity and living as a recluse, and a priest named Domingo, stumbled across the icon in the hollow of the stately oak tree. A fountainhead bubbled up at the roots of the tree, which also sheltered a beehive. A hundred years later, the Catholic

³⁹⁵ García Saiz, *La pintura colonial*, 155.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ *The Grandeur of Viceregal Mexico: Treasures from the Museum Franz Mayer* (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2002), 78.

king Ariomiro vanquished the Arians and rebuilt the chapel, entrusting it to the Benedictine order.³⁹⁸

One can see that there are some similarities in the versions, and that the iconography of the *enconchado* painting and of Juan Correa's painting respond to a similar set of incidents.

Saint Isidro and the Miracle of the Fountain

An anonymous panel in the Museo de América in Madrid (fig. 3.42) represents the Madrid-based Saint Isidro (1080-1130). According to the Oxford Dictionary of Saints, Saint Isidro was formally canonized in 1622 alongside Saint Francis Xavier and Saint Theresa of Avila, which explains why the anonymous author of this panel and the ones of Saint Francis Xavier were so popular at this time.³⁹⁹ It is said that King Philip III petitioned the Holy See for his canonization when he was cured of a disease when his relics were brought to the king's bedroom.⁴⁰⁰ Saint Isidro is said to have come from a humble family and married a good woman by the name of María. According to tradition, Isidro and María were examples of humility, patience, and closeness to God.⁴⁰¹ Isidro's most famous miracle, the one depicted here in this panel follows the legend that states the following:

... while the saint was one day tilling the land, he was interrupted by a man on horseback who was passing by, exhausted from the heat of the day, he

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ David Farmer, *Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 224.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Vargaslugo, *Mexico en el mundo de las colecciones de arte*, 150-151.

asked Isidro where he could find water to refresh himself. The saint pointed to a place in the field where he would find a fountain and the wandering traveler went in that direction but found nothing. Angry, he returned to Isidro and insulted the saint pushing him to the indicated place in the field. The saint, trusting his own faith in God, tapped a rock nearby with a shovel and at that very instant water in abundance started to come out.⁴⁰²

The saint and the traveler appear in the panel's foreground. Saint Isidro has just tapped the rock with his shovel and water spouts from the rock as both figures look in the direction of the miracle. The irregular fragments of mother-of-pearl are placed mostly on the garments of the figures, although smaller pieces can be seen throughout. A landscape in the background depicts a few houses, leafless trees, and angels with oxen yokes. Of special interest in this panel is the lobed frame surrounding the central rectangular panel decorated also with inlaid mother-of-pearl, accentuating the decorative nature of the painting in a way no other *enconchado* I have found.

Series of Saint Francis Xavier

The panel of the *Episode of the Evangelization of the Philippines* in the Museo de América appears to be a fragment of a larger, now lost, composition. According to Marta Dujovne, the museum bought it from a private collector in Asturias, Spain. The life of Saint Francis Xavier was one of the favorite themes of colonial art as it conveys a manifold lesson. On the one hand, the Jesuit missionary was an apt exemplum of a pious

⁴⁰² Ibid. "Estando el santo un día arando la tierra, fue interrumpido por un hombre a caballo que pasaba por allí y que abochornado por el clima caluroso, le preguntó a Isidro dónde encontraría agua para refrescarse un poco. El santo señaló un lugar adelante del campo de labranza y el viajero se encaminó hacia allá sin encontrar ninguna fuente. Colérico regresó a reclamarle a Isidro con insultos y zarandeos por haberlo hecho caminar infructuosamente, empujándolo hasta el lugar que le había indicado. San Isidro, entonces, haciendo alarde de su fe y confianza en Dios golpeó con su pala una roca y al instante brotó un copioso manantial." See Diácono Juan, *Vida y milagros del glorioso S. Isidro Labrador* (Madrid: Tomas Iunti, 1622).

life to be imitated; on the other, the act of global evangelization was true to the Counterreformation spirit. Established in 1540, the order arrived in New Spain in 1572 and quickly set up convents and schools of primary and secondary education.⁴⁰³ A seminary opened in Tepotzotlán in 1585, not far from Mexico City, grew considerably in the following century, mostly due to the patronage of the Medina Picazo family.⁴⁰⁴ In the 1670s and 1680s, this family's immense fortune contributed to the construction of the Jesuit church in Tepotzotlán, designed by the *criollo* architect José Durán, who finished the original construction in 1682.⁴⁰⁵ This is the same architect who, twelve years later, designed the Basilica de Guadalupe in Mexico City.⁴⁰⁶

The importance of the Jesuit culture cannot be overestimated. Even though all mendicant orders were concerned not only with conversion, but also with the education of their brethren, the Jesuits appear to have excelled in this field. Perhaps because they came to the scene much later, “the Jesuits had the luxury of hindsight,” according to Gauvin Alexander Bailey.⁴⁰⁷ Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora dedicated his *Oriental planeta evangélico* (published posthumously in 1700) to Saint Francis Xavier, a work he wrote around the same time as his *Primavera Indiana* (1668), dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰³ Donahue-Wallace, 170.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions*, 40.

⁴⁰⁸ See Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, *Oriental planeta evangélico*, ed. Antonio Lorente Medina (Frankfurt: Vervuert, 2008).

The Museo de América panel shows a scene from the life of Francis Xavier popularly known as the “scene of the crab” where during his journey through the Moluccas, his ship got caught in a storm. The crucifix Francis is using to calm the storm blows away and a crab rescues it from the bottom of the sea and brings it to Francis, who is already on the shore.⁴⁰⁹ Even though the details of the ship are somewhat naturalistic, the story is sparsely told. García Saiz considers that it may be part of a series of either Saint Francis Xavier, or some saints.⁴¹⁰

Series of Saint Ignatius of Loyola

An *enconchado* painting in the private collection of the Areco family in Buenos Aires, Argentina, represents a scene from the life of Saint Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order. As indicated by Marta Dujovne, the panel has been subject to several interventions and the frame, which had also been inlaid with mother-of-pearl, is no longer part of the work, according to the owners.⁴¹¹ The composition is divided into two distinct areas side by side, as if different panels had been joined together, which is quite unusual for an *enconchado* painting. On the left side, Saint Ignatius is being granted the status of the order by the Pope. On the right side, the saint appears praying in front of an altar where an apparition of God the Father, the Virgin Mary, Christ, and the Holy Spirit is taking place.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁹ García Saiz, *La pintura colonial del Museo de América*, 168.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁴¹¹ Marta Dujovne, *Las pinturas con incrustaciones de nácar*, 99.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 100.

A small oval representation of Saint Ignatius Loyola at the Denver Art Museum is signed by Agustín del Pino (fig. 3.43), whose two other known works are the pendant to Saint Ignatius, a Saint Francis Xavier at the Museo de América in Madrid, and a Virgin of Guadalupe at the Franz Mayer Museum in Mexico City. Like the *Saint Francis Xavier Embarking for Asia enconchado* painting by Juan González discussed earlier (fig. 2.13), and the Virgin of Valvanera in the Museo de América (fig. 3.40), the frame of this panel and the one in the Museo de América, consisting of flowers and stems, appear in relief, a feature not common to most *enconchado* paintings.

Miguel Mateo Maldonado y Cabrera (1695-1768) painted 32 canvases about the life of Saint Ignatius for the Jesuit church of La Profesa in Mexico City (fig. 3.44) and another series for the church of Saint Ignatius in Querétaro, both mirroring Cristóbal de Villalpando's 28 canvases, painted in 1710 for the cloister of Saint Francis Xavier in Tepotzotlán.⁴¹³ The series depicting Saint Ignatius Loyola and Saint Francis Xavier demonstrate the importance the Jesuit order had acquired in New Spain. The eighteenth century, according to Donahue-Kelly, "has been described as the century of Jesuit triumph, and their pedagogical, spiritual, and financial success in New Spain is embodied in the renovation of the seminary at San Francisco Xavier in Tepotzotlán and Cabrera's painted series."⁴¹⁴ The *enconchado* painter evidently was reflecting the extent of the power and influence of the Jesuit order in the viceroyalty.

⁴¹³ Donahue-Kelly, 156.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

Apparition of the Virgin and Child to Saint Francis

There are a number of single *enconchado* paintings that represent biblical episodes or the life of saints, but that do not form part of a series, and seem to have been produced as an independent commission. A case in point is a panel at the Museo de América of the *Apparition of the Virgin and Child to Saint Francis* (fig. 3.45). Of special interest is the modeling of the faces, more akin to oil painting of the period in the opinion of García Saiz.⁴¹⁵ Very small pieces of mother-of-pearl are inlaid in the trunk of the tree next to the figure of Saint Francis, an idiosyncratic use of the material. Most of the elements characteristic of *enconchado* paintings have eroded, except in the few areas where mother-of-pearl remains.

Saint Jerome, Saint Augustine

A very brightly colored *Saint Jerome* in the Franz Mayer Museum in Mexico City offers an intellectual Father of the Church, next to a table with writing instrument and a trumpet announcing the final judgment, attributes of the saint (fig. 3.46). Considering that this appears to be the only Saint Jerome painted with this technique, we can assume that it was a private commission. Like the Xavier and Loyola pendants, some commissions may have consisted of three paintings. The Church of Saint Bartholomew in Seville, for example, has three paintings of similar dimensions: a Saint Gregory, Saint Augustine (fig. 3.47), and a Young Virgin with Mother and Father. Currently in an office in the sacristy of

⁴¹⁵ García Saiz, *La pintura colonial en el Museo de América II: Los enconchados*, 166.

the church, these panels appear not to have been cleaned in a long time, hence their dark coloration.⁴¹⁶ Like many other New Spanish paintings in many parishes of Spain, their American manufacture came to represent Spain's widespread evangelizing mission in the New World.

Nativity: First Dated *Enconchado* Painting

An *enconchado* painting of the *Nativity* dated 1662 (fig. 3.48) and signed by Juan González throws into question the chronology of the González family, most of whose panels by Miguel González are dated to the last decade of the seventeenth century. This panel, part of the Gellatly Collection of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D. C., represents the usual cast of characters in a *Nativity* with the added inclusion of a girl carrying a water jug. Marta Dujovne associates this classical figure with Baroque depictions of shepherdesses, especially in canvases by the Flemish painter Rubens.⁴¹⁷ The Argentine author also links this characteristic to other *Nativity* scenes in *enconchado* paintings, specifically two versions of the *Adoration of the Shepherds* in the Behrens Collection in Mexico.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁶ For New Spanish art in Spain see Patricia Barea Arcón, "Localización de pinturas novohispanas en España," *Revista Complutense de Historia de América* 32 (2006): 252-268.

⁴¹⁷ Dujovne, *Las pinturas con incrustaciones de nácar*, 66.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

The Apostle Saint James

One of Christ's apostles, Saint James Major (Santiago in the Spanish world) became not only Spain's patron saint, but one of the most important saints represented in the Spanish colonies. Because his remains were thought to be buried in the town of Santiago de Compostela in the northwest of Spain (Galicia), the shrine built in commemoration became one of the most visited pilgrimage destinations of the Middle Ages, and hence the depiction of the saint as a pilgrim himself. The saint was also said to have miraculously appeared in the battle of Clavijo between Christians and Moors in the ninth century and, therefore, became known as Santiago Matamoros (Saint James, the Moorslayer). When the devotion to the saint arrived in the New World, it is no coincidence that instead of appearing in the fight against the Moors, he would appear on the side of the conquistadors in their struggle to eradicate indigenous idolatry. One notable intervention occurred in 1536 during the Inca siege of Cuzco when he appeared riding a white horse "brandishing a sword that reflected light and looked to the Inca warriors like a bolt of lightning."⁴¹⁹ Miracles such as this earned the saint the new name Santiago Mataindios (Santiago, the Indianslayer).⁴²⁰

A well preserved *enconchado* painting attributed to the followers of the González family in the Museo Soumaya in Mexico City depicts the figure of Santiago standing in a landscape, next to a leafless tree (fig. 3.49). The saint is holding the customary staff and hat that are his attributes as a pilgrim. He even wears a conch shell made of mother-of-

⁴¹⁹ Donahue-Wallace, 157.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

pearl, both on his garment and on his hat, the most distinctive attribute of a Compostela pilgrim. Behind the figure of the saint, the city of Santiago de Compostela rises majestically, where several towers, apses, and domes are seen towering, accurately, over red roofs. Two birds perched on the tree are reminiscent of ones usually found on *enconchado* frames.

Secular Subjects

Battle of Vienna

Two series of panels represent the *Battle of Vienna* (fig. 3.50), and a series of six panels, comprising a folding screen (biombo), represent the Battles of Alessandro Farnesio, Duke of Parma. As disparate as these themes may appear at first, there is an underlying reason for the choice of the subject matter. The sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries were a time of Hapsburg supremacy in Western Europe. The Austrian dynasty's rise to power culminated in Charles I (1500-1558) of Spain's ascent to the title of Holy Roman Emperor, becoming Charles V in 1519. On his paternal side he inherited not only the German countries, but Burgundy as well, the wealthiest region in Europe; from his maternal side, the new lands his grandmother Queen Isabel of Castille had procured through the aid of Christopher Columbus' voyages; and from his grandfather, King Ferdinand of Aragon, the Duchy of Milan and Kingdom of Naples. The *enconchado* paintings representing these conflicts reflect Western Europe's determination to roll back the Ottoman threat and Islamic expansion as well as to draw the line for Christian

hegemony and orthodoxy in the northern countries that had already fallen to the lure of protestantism.

There are six panels in the series of the *Battle of Vienna*, currently in a private collection in the Canary Islands, Spain. The series represents the battles between the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V against the Ottomans in 1529.⁴²¹ Antonio María González Padrón, who wrote about these panels for the Colloquium of Canarian-American History in 1986, suggests that such a European-based theme produced in Mexico must have been the result of an official commission, a statement often agreed upon by scholars, including myself.⁴²² The bellicose imagery of the panels can be traced to European models popularized in the New World through engravings and other kinds of prints, as was often the case in these paintings.⁴²³ These panels are very large (206-208cm x 130-140 cm), similar in size to another set of six of the Conquest of Mexico at the Museo de América. The set underwent restoration under the team lead by Moisés-Leal in 1971.⁴²⁴ This 16-month intervention shed light on some aspects of the panels, including the confirmation that they were all produced by the same hand, most likely Juan González whose signature was found in one of them.⁴²⁵

The first panel's (fig. 3.51) circular legend on the lower left hand side reads as follows;

⁴²¹ María de los Reyes Hernández Socorro, *Arte hispanoamericano en las Canarias Orientales siglos XVI-XIX* (Las Palmas, Gran Canaria: Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria, 2000), 268.

⁴²² Antonio María González Padrón, "Enconchados mexicanos en Gran Canaria," *VII Coloquio de historia canario-americana (1986)* (Las Palmas, Gran Canaria: Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria, 1990), 554.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 553.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

- A. Coronation of the King of Hungary;
- B. Tyranny of the Turk rebels;
- C. They walk in the direction of Vienna;
- D. City of Vienna.

There are multiple scenes of battles between Christians and Turks, between Hungarian and Turks, and views of several cities.

The second panel's oval legend, also in the lower left hand side reads:

- A. Entrance of the Great Vizier to visit Vienna;
- B. Trenches, battery, and the might of the Turks;
- C. Ammunition carriages.⁴²⁶

A similar profusion of different scenes run through the panel, beginning at the bottom by the picture plane and distancing themselves from the viewer. González Padrón sees a resemblance to a Rubensian style in some of the features of this panel.⁴²⁷ The zigzagging defense wall running from top to bottom with its multitude of defenders unites the scene of the entrance of the Vizier, surrounded by his troops, from the more immediate ammunition carriages drawn by oxen and a dromedary on the picture plane. This is, perhaps, the most accomplished composition for its complex resolution of the different planes.

The third panel's round legend, also in the left of center in the lower area reads:

- A. Conquest and ruin of Tabor Leopoldstad;
- B. Danube and Presburgh by the Turks;
- C. Zeal and desire by Vienna's religious and secular population to animate and burn the Turkish army headquarters.

⁴²⁶ For images in this series see Antonio María González Padrón, "Enconchados mexicanos en Gran Canaria," in *VII Coloquio de historia canario-americana (1986)*, ed. Francisco Morales Padrón (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria, 1990), 356-366.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 557.

González Padrón reminds us that the “apparent anarchy in which some of these scenes of this panel are displayed are reminiscent of Flemish and German miniatures of the fourteenth century.”⁴²⁸

The fourth panel’s legend on the inferior left hand side reads:

- A. Mines and assaults by the Turks. Against the mines and exit of the sieged.
- B. Attack of the imperials which makes the Turks lift the siege.

A battle between Turks and Christians can be seen in the foreground and a Christian horseback rider at the center. González Padrón remarks that popular imagery of the period represents the apostle Saint James battling against the Moors in a similar manner.⁴²⁹

The fifth panel’s circular legend, right of center, reads:

- A. Exit and defeat of the Turks near Ribaxe and in the woods of Vienna.

This panel is very dynamic in its depiction of the fleeing cavalry, and the battle in the woods. The red standards add color to the otherwise monotone scene.

The sixth panel’s oval legend, on the inferior left hand side reads:

- A. Defeat of the Turks and taking of the standard and others.
- B. Glorious and triumphant entry of His Ceasarean Majesty in the tent of the Grand Vizier.

This panel reveals the artist’s attempt in creating images of splendor in the Ottoman camp.

Another folding screen in the Museo Nacional del Virreinato in Tepotzotlán, Mexico, offers multiple scenes of the Battle for Vienna. It was published in Marta Dujovne’s seminal *Las pinturas con incrustaciones de nácar*, where the scholar considers the fact that it is not signed but carries the seal of the Count of Moctezuma y Tula,

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 559.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 561.

Viceroy of New Spain between the years 1696 and 1701.⁴³⁰ It belonged to Fernando Beickemeyer from San Francisco, California, before it was sold to the Mexican museum.⁴³¹ The six wings of the folding screen represent the siege of Vienna of 1683 by the Ottomans on one side and a hunting scene on the other.⁴³² The images refer to the historical siege of the Austrian city that had taken place in the not too distant past when the panels were painted. The Vizier Kara Mustapha and his 100,000-man army embarked on the invasion of the Austrian lands in 1683.⁴³³ At first, the task of defending the Hapsburg monarchy fell to Duke Charles of Lorraine.⁴³⁴ A complex European case of *realpolitik* involving France, Poland, Hungary, Croatia, Austria, and the Pope, the events of the siege placed John Sobieski, king of Poland, at the head of a coalition that included the Electors Max II Emanuel of Bavaria and John George III of Saxony, among others from the Holy Roman Empire led by the Emperor Leopold, to stop the Ottomans at the gates of Vienna.⁴³⁵ The Ottoman threat, according to Charles W. Ingrao, “facilitated the search for allies, especially among those neighboring countries which had the most to lose from a Turkish conquest of the [Hapsburg] monarchy,” a fact the painter of the *enconchado* considered by representing the different factions.⁴³⁶ Mustapha’s defeat at the

⁴³⁰ Marta Dujovne, *Las pinturas con incrustaciones de nácar*, 101.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*

⁴³² For images of this *enconchado* painting, see Dujovne, *Las pinturas con incrustaciones de nácar*, 102-107.

⁴³³ Charles W. Ingrao, *The Hapsburg Monarchy 1618-1815* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 75.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, 75-83.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

end of 1683 prompted the sultan Mehmed IV to strangle him “and [have] his severed head dispatched in Constantinople.”⁴³⁷ Leopold’s aim to obtain peace at all costs was instigated also by his realization of an imminent war with France over the Spanish Succession.⁴³⁸

Teresa Castelló Yturbide and Marita Martínez del Río de Redo refer to this biombo in their seminal work on folding screens, *Biombos Mexicanos*.⁴³⁹ The Mexican authors note that the figure of the elector, the Duke of Baviera, displays a preeminence that should have been given to Sobieski, the figure who fought heroically against the Muslims.⁴⁴⁰ The six wings of the folding screen show the walled city of Vienna overlapping the wings, the Alps in the background, the Danube, and fighting warriors, some carrying standards proclaiming their side. There are inscriptions that depict the different protagonists of the conflict, including the Grand Vizier, Emanuel of Baviera, the Duke Charles of Lorraine, and others. Following Antonio Bonet Correa’s description of the particular scenes in this folding screen, the narrative develops as

...the Turks and Tartars are defeated by the Christians who, as they come out of the gates of the city, assault the bridges under heavy fire from the artillery, facing the reinforcements and the galleons of the Duke of Baviera, seen on the right-hand side of the screen by the picture plane, surrounded by his officials. On the left, fallen from his horse, in the midst of the confusion of the defeat, the Grand Vizier appears, a scene that recalls as much Suleyman the Magnificent as Suleyman III, even though the armor of the Christians appears to be closer to the sixteenth century.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 77.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 83.

⁴³⁹ Teresa Castelló Yturbide and Marita Martínez del Río de Redo, *Biombos Mexicanos* (Mexico City: INAH, 1970).

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., 49.

⁴⁴¹ Antonio Bonet Correa, “Un biombo del siglo XVII,” *Boletín del INAH* 21 (September 1965): 33-34. “Los turcos y los tártaros son derrotados por los cristianos que al salir por las puertas de la ciudad asaltan los puentes bajo el nutrido fuego de la artillería, ante los refuerzos y los galeones del duque de Baviera, al que vemos a la derecha del biombo, en primer término, rodeado de su estado mayor. A la izquierda, caído de su caballo, en medio del desconcierto de la derrota aparece el Gran Visir, lo que hace pensar tanto en Solimán

The second section of the screen offers a hunting scene in which a king on horseback appears receiving a salute from an elegantly attired gentleman, one hand reining his horse, the other bowing with his hat. According to Bonet Correa, the landscape around the hunting scene is reminiscent of French paintings from the time of Louis XIV, based on the garments worn by the figures.⁴⁴² By the same token, the battle scenes remind him of Flemish tapestries of the sixteenth century, perhaps because of the sweep of the narrative.⁴⁴³ In the case of the former, Bonet Correa identifies the French penchant for battles and hunting scenes that can be seen in the cartouches of Adam Frans Van der Meulen (1632-1690) or Charles le Brun (1619-1690) that were often reproduced by the Gobelins workshop in Paris. For this author, this is an indication that the original owner of this screen, the viceroy José Sarmiento y Valladares, followed the fashion of his day in commissioning decorative works that depicted heroic battle scenes for the interior of the noble palaces.⁴⁴⁴ The breadth of this folding screen, with its multiple scenes, does recall European tapestries, the most expensive and most coveted possessions of European royalty. Sarmiento y Valladares, in fact, was the first to live in the new viceroyalty palace, and Bonet Correa suggests that the viceroy would have had to furnish the new palace with representative political or historical imagery.⁴⁴⁵ Antonio de Robles, the diarist, recalls the Viceroy's entrance into the capital on Saturday, February 2: "the day of the Purification of

el Magnífico como en Solimán III, aunque las armaduras de los cristianos nos inclinan más por el siglo XVI."

⁴⁴² Ibid., 34.

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 34-35.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 33.

Our Lady, in the afternoon, the new viceroy Count of Moctezuma, made his public entrance, and as he passed through the Arch of Santo Domingo, the horse that carried him threw him down and his wig came off.”⁴⁴⁶ He was also the owner of another folding screen, one depicting the Conquest of Mexico, today in the Museo de Historia de Chapultepec in Mexico City.⁴⁴⁷

The ecumenical victory of the European powers against the Turks resonated throughout the continent. “For generations afterwards, mothers in Graz frightened their children with tales that the Turks would get them,” asserts Andrew Wheatcroft, a specialist in the Hapsburg dynasty’s history.⁴⁴⁸ The military victory in Vienna had been preceded by a century of “incessant glorification of the house of Habsburg,” that culminated in the building of the new palace that Philip IV, the “Planet King,” had built as a pleasure pavilion, the Buen Retiro.⁴⁴⁹ According to Jonathan Brown and J. H. Elliott, there were more than 1500 paintings, a testament to the monarchy’s intent on disseminating the political ideology of its making.⁴⁵⁰ The Hall of the Realms contained twelve battle paintings commemorating Philip’s victories.⁴⁵¹ It is in this spirit that New Spanish painters honored the last gasps of a declining dynasty by the turn of the new century.

⁴⁴⁶ Antonio Robles, *Diario de sucesos notables (1665-1703), Vol. III* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1972), 58.

⁴⁴⁷ Bonet Correa, 33.

⁴⁴⁸ Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Habsburgs, Embodying Empire* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 182.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 174, see Jonathan Brown and J. H. Elliott, *A Palace Fit for a King: The Buen Retiro and the Court of Philip IV* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 114-115.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

The other half of this folding screen is in the private collection of Rodrigo Rivera Lake and is no less rich in the representation of epic battle scenes, landscape, and architecture (fig. 3.50). Inscriptions enhance the didactic quality of the images, clarifying the events represented. Cavalry and foot soldiers attack amid the towers and walls of the city, trumpets blare, drummers beat their drums, severed heads appear on pikes, a camel makes its appearance among the horses. The siege by the Turks and the defense of Vienna by the European coalition, including the Polish reinforcements charging down the hillside, fill every inch of the folding screen.

The Battles of Alessandro Farnesio

Another set of six panels comprising a folding screen in the private collection of Rodrigo Rivera Lake in Mexico City is the one Antonio Ponz saw in the house of the Duque del Infantado in the eighteenth century (fig. 3.52). It represents the Battles of Alessandro Farnesio, Duke of Parma, the son of Ottavio Farnese and Margaret of Parma, illegitimate daughter of Charles V, King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor.⁴⁵² One of the panels depicts the Battle of Lepanto (1571; fig. 3.53); the others, the wars of Flanders where Alessandro distinguished himself as general appointed by the King of Spain, Phillip II, Charles' son. The episodes in the panels appear to have been taken partly from the 1686 edition of the *History of the Civil Wars in France* by Enrico Caterino Davila (1556-1631), published in Madrid by the Imprenta Real in 1675, a translation of the original

⁴⁵² For the most recent biography of the Duke of Parma see Juan Carlos Losada, *Los generales de Flandes* (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2007).

Italian published a few years earlier.⁴⁵³ Another edition of this important work was edited in Antwerp by Juan Bautista Verdussen in 1713-1729, attesting to the regard for the incidents described. Details such as the following from this text correspond, in spirit, to the images of the *enconchado* painting:

It was up to Lañy Monsier de la Fin with fifteen French infantry flags, that the whole army of the League turning against itself, defending the towns on the other side of the river where the enemies were coming from appearing impossible, broken and unmade the bridge so that they could not pass easily, he retreated with his people to defend the land, that could not be assaulted without crossing the river, a fact he could not have imagined. The Duke of Parma, after occupying the towns without much conflict, put up his French infantry in them, and half a mile in front of it, confined his troops to the barracks in the place of Pompona, as well as the rest of the army, assisting with vigilance, with trenches, with repairs, flags at half mast, to secure the land....⁴⁵⁴

The Farnese of Parma and Piacenza had a tangled history of dynastic marriages and papal involvements in their rise and fall of grace throughout the sixteenth century. Pope Paul III (1468-1549), a Hapsburg ally, entrusted the territories of Parma and Piacenza to his son Pier Luigi Farnese in 1545.⁴⁵⁵ In effect, the Pope was giving up lands belonging to the Papal States; however, Pier Luigi's alliances with the King of France

⁴⁵³ Enrico Caterino Dávila, *Historia de las Guerras Civiles de Francia... Noble Cavallero de Chipre. Traduxula del idioma toscano en nuestra lengua Castellana el M.R.P. Basilio Varen de Soto, Provincial de los Clerigos Reglare Menores desta Provincia de España. Y añadiola de Nuevo en esta tercera impresion, desde el año de 1598, hasta el de 1630* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1675).

⁴⁵⁴ Arrigo Caterino Dávila and Basilio Varen de Soto, *Historia de las guerras civiles de Francia: en que se escriven los hechos de quarto reyes, Francisco II, Carlos IX, Enrique III y Enrique IV, llamado el Grande* (Amberes: Juan Bautista Verdussen, 1713), 354. "Residía en Lañy Monsier de la Fin con quince banderas de infantería francesa que viendo fuera de lo que imaginaba, vuelto contra sí todo el ejército de la liga y pareciéndole imposible defender los burgos puestos de la otra parte del río, por donde venían los enemigos, rota y deshecha la Puente para que no pudiesen pasar tan fácilmente, se retiró con su gente a defender el recinto de la tierra, que no se podía asaltar sin atraesar el río. El Duque de Parma ocupados los burgos sin contraste alojó luego en ellos la infantería francesa, y media milla delante de ella acuarteló en el lugar de Pompona con todo lo restante del ejército, atendiendo con gran desvelo con trincheras, con reparos, con redutos con media lunas a asegurar el campo..."

⁴⁵⁵ William Maltby, *The Reign of Charles V* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 95.

resulted in Charles V's distrust and the emperor probably had something to do with his assassination.⁴⁵⁶ Pier Luigi's son Ottavio succeeded him, but Charles V, concerned with the neighboring Duchy of Milan's falling from his sphere of influence, seized Piacenza.⁴⁵⁷ Ottavio, in the meantime, married Margaret, the emperor's illegitimate daughter, who had almost married Alessandro de Medici, surely to regain the confidence of Phillip II, who in 1556 restored Piacenza to him.⁴⁵⁸ Alessandro, the offspring of Ottavio and Margaret would serve the Hapsburgs handsomely throughout his life and long military career. The representation of battles commemorating Spain's victory over the Turks in Lepanto, and over their Flemish possessions, attest to the original patrician *enconchado* owner's complicity in accepting Spain's role of defending, not only its territory, but the Catholic faith in a Europe beset by Protestants, on the one hand, and the Ottomans on the other.

The legends on the panels read as follows (following Marta Dujovne):

Victory of Lepanto: A. Flagship Genova with Alessandro Farnesio and 300 soldiers by his side. B. Alessandro on board Mustafa's flagship, carrying the treasure. C. Mustafa's flagship imprisoned. D. Alessandro's flagship coming to Mustafa's aid. E. Army of the Turks in half-moon. F. the royal ship of the Austrian. G. galleys that the royal ship sunk. H. Venencia's flagship. I. from Malta. K. the Turk's pennant (standard) taken by a comrade of Alessandro. L. Lepanto.

Farnese's Bridge. A. Alessandro Farnesio endorsing the plan. B. Fortress Santa Maria. C. Castle. D. Wide Bridge, 12 feet long/400. E. San Felipe. F. Boats garrisoned

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

with steel points for the defense of the bridge. G. Galleys on duty by the bridge. I. Re-
encounter of the galleys and boats on duty against those of Antwerp. K. the pearl. L. The
Escalda River. M. Antwerp. N. Castle. O. Fortress of the Rebels. P. Open dike. Q.
Farnesio's headquarters.

Lañy's assail. A. Lañy. B. Burnt bridge. C. Marne River. D. Alessandro Farnesio.
E. Spanish, Italian, and Wallon attack. F. Marco Antonio Lantes. G. Occupied burghers of
the League. H. Ships with the king's attendants taken by Alessandro's faction, swimming.
I. Trumpet. K. Farnese's artillery. M. Army of the King of Navarre. N. Renchia provokes
battle from the king's faction by order of Farnese. L. The call.

Battle of Aumale. A. Army of the league. B. Alessandro Farnesio. C. King Enrico.
D. Breastplate of the league. E. Conflict between Royalists and Catholics. F. Wounded,
the King retires. G. Longavila comes to the aid of the king with the nobles. H. House with
dragons as garrison to harbor the king's escape. I. The league attacks the House and the
dragons flee. K. Farnese gets people to follow the king. L. The Aumale River. M. Woods
where the king is treated for wounds. N. Aumale. O. Poitu. P. Obinil. Q. Lavardino. R.
Giuri.

The Great Retreat of the Incomparable Duke D. R. A. Seine River. B. The
League's army. C. Fortress of Bosu. D. Fortress of Barlote. E. Alessandro Farnesio
leading his happy army through the passage. F. Ruan. G. Prince Ranucio with troops
distracts the Royalists so they cannot see the army's passage. H. Skirmish between
Ranucio and Viron. I. Army of the King of Navarre. K. Ranucio receives an order from
his father to retreat. Covering the last ship and taking the cannons from his enemies. L.
Artillery against those in the passage. M. Dutch navy shooting against the league's ships.

N. Ranuncio and his comrades jump on skiffs against the Dutch. O. Caudebec. P. Dieppe.
Q. Paris. R. Lañy.

Triumphal celebrations that took place in Paris in honor of Alessandro Farnese for having freed the city of the siege. A. Alessandro Farnesio. B. The one from Maine. C. Prince Ranucio. D. Farnese's carriage. E. Triumphal Arch. F. Spanish infantry. G. Paris.⁴⁵⁹

The importance of Spain's involvement in Flanders cannot be underestimated. For the historian Henry Kamen, it was a turning point in the European balance of power and Spain's greatest disaster.⁴⁶⁰ "Not only because it ruined the country," according to Kamen, "but also because it made its success [Spain's] impossible as a great imperial power. Had

⁴⁵⁹ VICTORIA DE LEPANTO AAABAL / A. Capitana de Genova y en ella Alexandro farnese Con 300 / Caualleros militantes a su costa B. Alexandro en el abordo / de la capitana de Mustafa que lleuaua el Tesoro C. Capi/ ttana de Mustafa presa D. la capitana de Alexandria que uen / ia al Socorro de Mustafa presa E. Armada del Turco en medi /a luna F. la rreal del austriaco G. galeras que cho a pique / la Real H. Capitana de Venencia I. de malta K. / estandarte del Turco tomado por un camarada / de Alexanre I. Lepanto.

EL PUENTE D. FARNESE / A. Alexandro farnese aprobando el designio B. fuerte // Santa Maria C. Castillo D. Puente ancho 12 pies largo / 400 E. Sa phelipe F. barcones guarnecidos con puntas / de asero para defensa del Puente G. galeras de guardia / al Puente I. rrequen / tros entre las galeras y nabios de guardia Contra los / de amberes K. la perla L. Rio escalda M. Ambe / res N. Castillo O. Fuertes de los Rebeldes / P. dique huierto Q. quartel / de farnese.

EXPUGNACION / D LAÑI / A. lañy / B. Puente quemado C. Marne Ryo D. Alex /andro farnese E. asalto de españoles ytalianos yualones F. / marco antoño lantes G. burgos ocupados de los de la liga / H. naues con uiueres de los del Rey Cojidas por los de / farnese a nado I. un trompeta K. bateria de farnese M. exer /sito del Rey de nabara N. Renchiae prouoca a batalla / a los del Rey deorden de farnese L. llamada.

BATALLA DE AUMALA A / A. Exercito de la liga B. Alexandro Farnese C. Rey Enrico / D. Corazas de la liga E. Conflicto entre Realistas y catolicos. / F. Erido El Rey Se retira. G. Longavida acude al Socorro del Rey / Con la Nobleza, H. Casa con dragones de guarnicion pa abrirla / fuga del Rey. I. Atacan los de la liga la Ca Y uien los dragones K. / Saca Farnese Jente que siga al Rey L. Rio de Aumala M. Bos / que adonde se cura el Rey N. Aumala O. Poitu P. Obini, / Q Lavardino R. Giuri.

LA GRAI RETRADA /DL INCOMPARABLE DUQUE Dma R / A Rio Sena B. Exercito de la liga C fuerte de Bosu D fuerte de / Barlote E Alexandro farnese Saltando su exercito alegre Sobre El / passage F. Ruan G. EL principe Ranucio con tropas entretiene a los de Rea / listas para q no vean el passage del exercito H. Escaramuza entre Ranucio / y viron I Exercito del Rey de Navarra K. Ranucio Recibe Orde de / su Padre que se Retire cubriendo la ultima embarcacion y les quita a los / enemigos de las manos tres cañones L. Bateria contra los del passage / M. Naves olandesas disparando a los de la liga N. Ranucio don sus / camars salta en chalupas contra los olandeses O. / Caidejec {/ Doe[Q/ Paros / R. Lañy.

FIESTAS TRIVNP / HALES QVE PARIS / HIZO A ALEXANDRO / FARNESE POR HAVERLA LIBRADO / DEL CERCO I SOCORIDO A. Ale / xandro Farnese B El de Maine / C Principe Ranucio D. Carrua / ge de Farnese E Arco Triumphal / F la Infanteria Española / G Paris.

⁴⁶⁰ Henry Kamen, "El duque de Alba, un gran personaje olvidado," *La Aventura de la Historia* 76, Madrid (February 2005) as quoted in Juan Carlos Losada, *Los generales de Flandes*, 235.

Spain solved the problem peacefully, together Spain and the Low Countries, perhaps they would have created an empire without equal in the world. The result would have changed entirely the world we know today.”⁴⁶¹

Juan Carlos Losada’s assessment of the achievements of Alessandro Farnesio are no less revealing of his role in the interests of the Hapsburg dynasty:

There is no doubt that Farnesio was probably the greatest general of his time. He demonstrated it not only in the management of his troops, his strategic direction of the conflict, in the study of how to supply his forces, in the psychological treatment of his men, and in his skillful way of commanding, but also in his constant attention to military innovation, which made him a decided promoter of engineering works in the wars in Flanders. He demonstrated how to control the dykes and water flows, as well as how to advance and take cities by constructing bridges and every kind of artifice and engineering feat that made him a consummate expert. He also understood that the future of war was in the artillery and in its power to overwhelm, the ability to detonate when facing walls: this was going to be the decisive key to conquer cities.⁴⁶²

When Farnesio took charge of the government in Flanders, Losada adds, he not only consolidated the territories for the Spanish crown, but did so in the name of Catholicism.⁴⁶³ The conflicting interests of the Dutch and the Spanish occupiers were also tangled in the religious fervor of the period and in the different alliances that were

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Juan Carlos Losada, *Los generales de Flandes: Alejandro Farnesio y Ambrosio de Spínola, dos militares al servicio del imperio español* (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2007), 236. “De lo que no cabe duda es de que Alejandro Farnesio fue, posiblemente, el mayor general de su tiempo. Lo demostró no solo en el manejo de las tropas, en su dirección estratégica del conflicto, en el estudio del abastecimiento de sus fuerzas, en el trato psicológico con sus hombres y en su capacidad de mando, sino también en la constante atención por la innovación militar, que le llevó a ser un decidido impulsor de las obras de ingeniería en las guerras de Flandes. Demostró cómo se podían dominar diques y cursos de aguas, así como cercar y tomar ciudades mediante la construcción de puentes, fuertes y todo tipo de artilugios, ingeniería de la que se convirtió en un consumado experto. También comprendió que el futuro de la Guerra estaba en la artillería y en su uso contundente, con gran capacidad de fuego, frente a las murallas: ésta iba a ser la llave decisiva para tomar ciudades.”

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

conflated between Calvinists and Catholics, among others. Therefore, the representation of the battles of Flanders became inextricably intertwined with Spain's relationship with Rome as well as against other European powers who were vying to undermine the emperor.⁴⁶⁴ Recalling this important event of the previous century, the painter of the *enconchado* panels was reviving the memory of one of Spain's most consecrated generals at the time of the country's zenith in its European expansion. In a way, it was an antidote to the growing Black Legend that was becoming more and more widespread throughout Europe.

The panel with the inscription *Farnesio's Bridge* accurately describes strategies characteristic of Farnesio's siege of Antwerp (fig. 3.54). A city of more than 150,000 inhabitants, it was not only Flanders's richest city, but the one with the best defenses.⁴⁶⁵ The Escalda River, which surrounds the town, is shown at the center of the panel. On the left, marked with the letter P, is the dyke that was so critical for its defense. On the lower left hand side, Farnesio himself, the strategist, is seen displaying the plan of building a bridge across the river. Losada explains:

The plan included the construction of a great bridge across the river, near its mouth, that would completely impede supplies from the sea. This construction, an engineering feat of great magnitude for its time, had to be defended by numerous strongholds by both ends. Therefore, two great fortresses were erected, San Felipe and Santa María, one at each end of the bridge, each one capable of accommodating fifty men.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁴ For more on the Spanish war in Flanders, see Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567-1659: The Logistics of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries' War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁴⁶⁵ Juan Carlos Losada, 149.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid, 151. "El plan incluía la construcción de un gran puente sobre el río, cerca de la desembocadura, que impidiese por completo el abastecimiento desde el mar. Esta construcción, una obra de ingeniería de gran magnitud para la época, habría de estar defendida por numerosos baluartes en sus dos cabezas. De esta manera se levantaron dos grandes Fuertes, el de San Felipe y el de Santa María, cada uno en un extremo del Puente, capaz cada uno de albergar a cincuenta hombres."

The figure of Farnesio, in fact, is represented at one end of the bridge, inscribed in the cartouche with a B as the Fortress Santa María (Fig. 3.55). The construction of the bridge, as stated, was a daunting task. According to Losada, the depth of the river as well as its strong currents made building the bridge extremely difficult.⁴⁶⁷ Farnesio's solution to this problem is stated by Losada:

The solution Farnesio devised consisted in placing 32 of the boats clustered in the center of the bridge, uniting the two built stretches. Tied strongly to each other with ropes, chains, and girders, they were placed at the center of the construction site. This structure was protected with thick planks to avoid musket shots from the enemy reaching the construction force. Thick wooden beams crowned by metal pikes were nailed to the boats on their decks. They overhung like large lances pointing up and down the river, preventing any attempts to breakup the construction by enemy boats.⁴⁶⁸

It is obvious from this historical description that the painter of the *enconchado* was well informed about military strategies, judging by the placement of the boats, the construction of the bridge, the tactician Farnesio devising the plan, the lances (metal pikes) pointing. These paintings, on a scale not unlike royal tapestries, extolled the Spanish monarchy's military superiority.

Religious, secular, and historical, *enconchado* paintings correspond to New Spain's particular development a century and a half after the conquest of Mexico. If evangelization had mostly been accomplished in the sixteenth century, by the seventeenth

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 153. "La solución ideada por Farnesio consistió en situar 32 de los barcos apresados en el centro de ese Puente, uniéndolos a los dos tramos construidos. Fuertemente atados entre sí con sogas, cadenas y vigas, se ubicaron en el centro de la construcción. Esta estructura fue protegida con gruesos tablones para impedir que los tiros de mosquete del enemigo alcanzaran a los constructores. También se clavó a los barcos, encima de las cubiertas, gruesas vigas de Madera rematadas por puntas metálicas, que sobresalían a modo de largas picas y apuntaban tanto río arriba como río abajo, para prevenir un intento de romper su obra por parte de buques enemigos."

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

devotional practices increased as visual imagery appropriated European Baroque styles that highlighted the miraculous nature of the images. The shiny nature of the mother-of-pearl enhanced the religious experience for a viewer of a scene from the Life of Christ, the Life of the Virgin, or individual saints. *Enconchado* paintings not only fulfilled yearnings for the miraculous effects of images, but also imparted to the newly formed Creole class an artistic vocabulary that reverberated with vestigial pre-Hispanic forms, Asian influence, and European subject matter. In short, it fulfilled the Creole's cosmopolitan ambitions.

Chapter 4

Paintings of the Conquest of Mexico

Chronicles of the Conquest of Mexico

Most historians today agree that the chronicles, histories, “relaciones,” letters, and documents that make up the body of information on the conquest in the sixteenth century had not only a political agenda in common, but most likely, a personal one as well. According to Rolena Adorno, a specialist in Peruvian history and literature and professor at Yale University, the most pressing issue when writing these documents “were not the wars long since won or lost but rather the rights to the rewards of conquest.”⁴⁶⁹ It is no wonder that when these histories are read, discrepancies arise in the depiction of events as well as the degree of protagonism of the figures involved. Adorno reminds us that Bernal Díaz del Castillo “expressed considerable antipathy for Francisco López de Gómara,” and also refuted Bartolomé de las Casas concerning two episodes of the conquest, “when the Spaniards slaughtered large numbers of natives, possibly without provocation, first at Cholula and then at the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan.”⁴⁷⁰ The incidents at Cholula and at

⁴⁶⁹ Rolena Adorno, “The Discursive Encounter of Spain and America: The Authority of Eyewitness Testimony in the Writing of History,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (April 1992): 211.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 212-213. Also, see Adorno “Discourses on Colonialism: Bernal Díaz, Las Casas, and the Twentieth-Century Reader,” *MLN* 103 (1988): 239-258.

the Templo Mayor are representations that appear in Conquest *enconchados*, as will be analyzed later in this chapter.

Seventeenth-century historiography did not differ much from the previous century.⁴⁷¹ The so-called Cronista Mayor de Indias, court-appointed historians authorized to produce comprehensive compendia of the most important events in the New World, did not fulfill historian Juan de Ovando's dictum of 1571 to write "a general history...with the greatest precision and truth possible," according to David H. Bost, professor in the Department of Modern Languages and Literature at Furman University in South Carolina.⁴⁷² Probably the most important purpose of the Cronista Mayor de Indias was to compensate for the spread of the Black Legend throughout Europe.⁴⁷³ In Bost's opinion, these chroniclers were intent on serving "the national interest by supporting Spain's legal and moral right to govern a land that she had pacified and Christianized."⁴⁷⁴

Pedro Fernández de Pulgar (1621-1698) was, according to Bost, the "most stridently nationalistic," of the chroniclers.⁴⁷⁵ Antonio de Solís' (1610-1686) *Historia de la Conquista de México*⁴⁷⁶ was, however, the history that most fervently defended Spain's role in the New World and the one that best functioned as "a corrective of earlier

⁴⁷¹ David H. Bost, "Historians of the Colonial Period: 1620-1700," *Cambridge History of Latin American Literature* 1, ed., Roberto González Echevarría, Enrique Pupo-Walker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 143.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, 144.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁶ Antonio de Solís y Rivadeneyra, *Historia de la conquista de México* (Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1992).

narratives and appointed rejoinder to misinformed and ill-intentioned historians.”⁴⁷⁷ His most mordant criticism was leveled against earlier historians like López de Gómara and Bernal Díaz del Castillo. Regarding the latter, Solís contended that his criticism of Cortés was ill-advised, considering the role that the conquistador had in the establishment of a Christian nation in Tenochtiltan. The first edition of Solís’s work came out in 1684, at around the same date as some of the *enconchados* were being produced. Soon after, the work was translated into French, English, Italian, Portuguese, and German.⁴⁷⁸ However, according to the Mexican scholar Elvira López de Gutiérrez Baez, the eighteenth century saw at least 23 editions of the work, making it one of the most popular histories of its time.⁴⁷⁹

In the 1704 edition, the editor Francisco Foppens recognized the importance of the work by comparing it to the work of Cortés, “since one carried out the feats, but the other carried out a very urgent task: to immortalize them.”⁴⁸⁰ Solís was following a historical tradition of writing history that posited as much importance to the events narrated as to the form. A dramatist and poet as well, Solís wrote no less than 15 plays, one of them in collaboration with Calderón de la Barca, arguably Spain’s greatest playwright of the Golden Age.⁴⁸¹ Bost sees Solís work “as the standard reference work on Cortés and the

⁴⁷⁷ Bost, 145.

⁴⁷⁸ Elvira López de Gutiérrez Baez, “La historia de Solís, testimonio del siglo XVII,” *Historia Mexicana* 15, 1 (July-Sept. 1965): 85.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, quoting from Antonio de Solís, *Historia de la conquista de México* (Antwerp, 1704).

⁴⁸¹ Bost, 145.

conquest of the Aztec empire, and for many years was held up as an exemplary model of narrative elegance in Spanish.”⁴⁸²

Hernando Cortés and the Conquest of Mexico in the Literature of the Golden Age

In Spain, the name of Hernando Cortés was becoming more and more widespread in the literature, as well as in the histories. It was in the romances that the heroic exploits of the Extremeño are first seen, as attested by Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s own quotation from one of them.⁴⁸³ In a sad moment of the anonymous romance, after the loss of his comrades during the Noche Triste, Cortés reminiscences:

In Tacuba Cortés finds
Himself with his valient squadron;
Sad and pensive he was
Sad and with much delicacy,
He puts one hand on his cheek
And the other on his side.⁴⁸⁴

After the fall of Granada in 1492, Spanish epic poetry lost some of its luster, so it is not surprising that a new impetus in recreating the heroic deeds of the conquistadors makes its appearance by the middle of the seventeenth century.⁴⁸⁵ According to Winston A. Reynolds, who has tallied the numerous literary appearances of the figure of Cortés in the literature of the Golden Age, the first printed poem to make reference to the

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Winston A. Reynolds, *Hernán Cortés en la literatura del siglo de oro* (Madrid: Centro Iberoamericano de Cooperación, Editora Nacional, 1978), 15. “En Tacuba está Cortés/con su escuadrón esforzado;/triste estaba y muy penoso,/ triste y con gran cuidado,/una mano en la mejilla,/y la otra en el costado, etc.”

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 16.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid. 15.

conquistador was published in Valencia in 1566, the *Carlo famoso* by Luis Zapata de Chaves (1526-1595).⁴⁸⁶ In fifty cantos, it focuses on Charles V and the conquest of Mexico, with Cortés as one of the main protagonists. Gabriel Lobo Lasso de la Vega (1559-1615) wrote not one, but two epic poems of the conquest, *Primera parte de Cortés valeroso*, and *Mexicana*.⁴⁸⁷ *Elegías de varones ilustres de Indias* (1st part, 1589),⁴⁸⁸ written by Juan de Castellanos (b. first half sixteenth century), dedicates elegy VII and VIII to the figure of Cortés.⁴⁸⁹ Raquel Chang-Rodríguez, a specialist in colonial literature, describes this work as “a virtual encyclopedia of the initial years of the Iberian presence in the New World; when it appeared, it was a necessary work consulted by those who wrote about the Americas.”⁴⁹⁰

In her edition of Antonio de Saavedra y Guzmán’s *El peregrino indiano*, María José Rodilla León’s introduction contextualizes this text by amplifying this list of references to Cortés and the conquest to include, among others, Arias de Villalobos’ (1568-?) 1623 edition of *Canto intitulado Mercurio*,⁴⁹¹ where the “indigenous legends of

⁴⁸⁶ Luis Zapata, *Carlo famoso: el primer poeta que trata del descubrimiento y conquista del Nuevo Mundo*, ed. José Turibio Medina and Winston A. Reynolds (Madrid: Porrúa, 1984).

⁴⁸⁷ Lasso de la Vega, Gabriel, *De Cortés valeroso, y Mexicana*, ed. Nidia Pullés-Linares (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2005).

⁴⁸⁸ Juan de Castellanos, *Primera parte de las elegías de varones ilustres de Indias* (Madrid: en casa de la viuda de Alonso Gómez, 1589).

⁴⁸⁹ Antonio de Saavedra Guzmán, *El peregrino indiano*, edited by María José Rodilla León (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2008), 36.

⁴⁹⁰ Raquel Chang-Rodríguez, “*Aquí ninfas del sur, venid ligeras*”: *Voces poéticas virreinales* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2008), 35.

⁴⁹¹ Arias de Villalobos, “Canto intitulado Mercurio,” in *El lector novohispano*, ed. José Joaquín Blanco (Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 2003).

the foundation of Mexico in a lake,” and the description of “the colonial city and the arrival of the tenth viceroy” are related.⁴⁹²

The precursor of all the epic poetry written on the New World was Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga, whose *La Araucana*, published in 1569, became an instant “best seller,” according to Chang-Rodríguez.⁴⁹³ Thirty years later, New Spanish *criollo* Antonio de Saavedra Guzmán’s (1555-1599?) *El peregrino indiano* was published in Madrid in 1599. This work was well received by the author’s contemporaries, including Bernardo de Balbuena (1562-1627), the author of *Grandeza Mexicana*,⁴⁹⁴ who praised Saavedra Guzmán. Another contemporary was the New Spanish chronicler Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza (1550-1604) who considers Saavedra Guzmán “the first to have documented some of the magnitude of the conquest of this new world and thus much is owed to him for having brought to light what had been completely buried.”⁴⁹⁵ This quote alludes to the fact that at the turn of seventeenth century, references to the conquest in Spanish and New Spanish historiography and literature were beginning to surge. According to the authors of the article “Ocho grandes lienzos de la conquista,” this poem highlights a history where

⁴⁹² Elizabeth B. Davis, “La épica novohispana y la épica colonial,” in Raquel Chang Rodríguez, ed. *Historia de la literatura mexicana II: La cultura letrada en la Nueva España del siglo xvii* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 2002), 129-152, quoting Rodilla León, 36.

⁴⁹³ Chang Rodríguez, 2008, 34.

⁴⁹⁴ Bernardo de Balbuena, *Grandeza Mexicana* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 2006).

⁴⁹⁵ Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza, *Sumaria relación de las cosas de la Nueva España con noticia individual de los conquistadosres y primeros pobladores de México* (México City: Porrúa, 1987), 178, quoting María José Rodilla León, ed. *El peregrino indiano* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2008), 33.

“Cortés and his soldiers are put to the service of the Christianization of the inhabitants of the Indies, always aiming toward greater and more perdurable glory.”⁴⁹⁶

Epic poetry, according to Rodilla León, is not only a genre concerned with heroes and war since antiquity, but it is also a political genre that narrates victories, conquests and expansion of empires.⁴⁹⁷ In her words:

It could be said to be a panegyric genre of imperial power and the historical destiny of the nations, which, in the case of Spain and its expansion in America, is transformed into a providential destiny: it is the Catholic nation that has to extricate from paganism and barbarity the people lacking the gospel, which is the reason why some poems gloat describing the Mexica’s sacrifices.⁴⁹⁸

Dorantes de Carranzas’ *Sumaria relación de las cosas de la Nueva España*, published in 1604 before the death of its author, includes three anonymous poems that already reflect, according to Chang-Rodríguez, the animosities that were arising between *criollos* and Spaniards.⁴⁹⁹ One of them, “Viene de España por el mar salobre” is a good example of the way a *criollo* poet satirizes the prompt ascent of the Spaniards as they arrive to New Spain:

From Spain through the salty sea
To our Mexican domicile he comes
A rough man, without any attributes,
Not very healthy, not very rich,

⁴⁹⁶ Various authors, “Ocho grandes lienzos de la conquista,” in *Imágenes de los naturales en el arte de la Nueva España, siglos XVI al XVIII*, ed. Elisa Vargaslugo et. al (Mexico City: Fomento Cultural Banamex, 2006), 46.

⁴⁹⁷ Rodilla León, 11: “Es un género panegírico, podría decirse, del poder imperial y del destino histórico de las naciones, que, en el caso de España y su expansión en América, se transforma en un destino providencial: es la nación católica que debe sacar de la gentilidad y la barbarie a los pueblos sin evangelizar, por eso algunos poemas se regodean en describir los sacrificios de los mexicas (*El peregrino*) o la ingesta de carne humana (*El Bernardo*), por poner solo dos ejemplos, con el fin de denunciar las atrocidades y hacer la apología de los que lograron aniquilarlas.”

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Chang Rodríguez, 2008, 38.

And then fortune and encouragement given,
Are applied to him in his barbarous associations
Others like him, from Ceasar and Virgil
Of bay and laurel the two crowns.
And the other, who sold needles and pins
On the streets, is already a Count
In quality, Opulent in quantity;
And then he abominates the land where
He acquired esteem, taste, and property,
When he used to throw his net in Sanlúcar⁵⁰⁰

Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra (1547-1616), Spain's greatest Golden Age writer, mentions the name of Francisco de Terrazas (1543-1600?) and praises his fame "here and there," when making reference to the New and the Old World. Terrazas' *Nuevo Mundo y Conquista* seems to have had an audience in the late sixteenth century and he is often considered "the first poet to have been born in Mexico and, perhaps, the first in all Spanish America."⁵⁰¹ The poem relates Cortés arrival in Veracruz and the sinking of his ships. According to Reynolds, both Saavedra and Terrazas allude to the injustice that befell the conquistadors for not having recourse to a hereditary *encomienda*, not the case in reality regarding Cortés.⁵⁰² Political agendas, as well as personal ones, were the case in these historical accounts that were dedicated to someone high in office.

Several other epic poems were written in the first half of the seventeenth century. *Las Cortesiadas* (ca. 1665) by Juan Cortés Osorio, unpublished, narrates Cortés fright in

⁵⁰⁰ Chang-Rodríguez, 38-39, quoting Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de la poesía hispanoamericana*, vol. 1, ed. Enrique Sánchez Reyes (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1948), 40-41. "Viene de España por el mar salobre/a nuestro mexicano domicilio/un hombre Tosco, sin algún auxilio/de salud falto y de dinero pobre/y luego que caudal y ánimo cobre,/le aplican en su bárbaro concilio/otros como él, de César y Virgilio/las dos coronas de laurel y robre./Y el otro, que agujetas y alfileres/vendía por las calles, ya es un Conde/en calidad, y en cantidad, Fúcar:/y abomina después el lugar donde/adquirió estimación, gusto y haberes./Y tiraba la jábega en Sanlúcar."

⁵⁰¹ Reynolds, 30.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, 31.

facing Monctezuma, a feature that distances it from other views of the Aztec emperor, according to Rodilla León.⁵⁰³ The best known of all the poets of the seventeenth century was Bernardo de Balbuena (1561-1627), whose *Grandeza Mexicana* is one of the most widely read by contemporaries. His *Bernardo, o Victoria de Roncesvalles* refers to Cortés several times, even though the narrative takes place in the eighth century. A sorcerer, Alcina, reads the future in a magical tapestry to the Moor Farragut. In this tapestry, scenes from the conquest of Mexico and Cortés depict the event as the inevitable triumph of Christianity over the heathen natives. It is interesting to note here a literary reference in which a visual pictorial image is included in a medium usually reserved for the exploits of mythical events, such as the Trojan War, or events of historical importance to contemporaries. The *enconchados* could be considered the ekphrastic equivalent to such fictitious tapestry.

The Conquest of Mexico in European and New Spanish Drama

Scenes of the conquest were no less prevalent in the theater of New Spain. Already in the early days of the post-conquest, Fray Toribio de Benavente (Motolinia), had Indians perform *autos sacramentales* where the figure of Cortés makes an appearance. Following Reynolds, in 1566 a celebration in Martín Cortés' house, second marqués del Valle, "to celebrate the birth of his twins, a farse was represented, whose subject matter was the

⁵⁰³ Rodilla León, 36.

original meeting in 1519 of Hernando Cortés and Motecuhzoma at the entrance of Tenochtitlán.⁵⁰⁴

In Spain, the country's most prolific playwright, Lope de Vega (1562-1635) wrote two full length plays on the subject of Cortés: *La conquista de Cortés* and *El marqués del Valle*. Even though they are not extant, according to Reynolds, these two titles may be alternate ones for the same play. Lope's first novel, *La Arcadia, prosas y versos*, refers to Cortés tangentially, in a funerary distich (rhyming couplet) the poet dedicated to the Marqués del Valle:

Hernando Cortés

I am Cortés, the man who vanquished
By land and by deep sea
With this sword, another world
If another world could then witness.
I gave Spain triumphs and laurels
That very successful wars granted,
Infinite lands to the king,
And to God, infinite souls.⁵⁰⁵

According to this source, Cortés is one of the illustrious characters in marble statues that populate a cave where a magician lived, a kind of hall of fame from ancient Greece, Italy, and Spain.⁵⁰⁶ Among the other figures were Alexander the Great, Julius Ceasar, the Catholic Monarchs, Hannibal, Cleopatra, El Cid, and Charles V. The character of Lope's novel, Dardanio, would stand in front of each of the heroes and explain to his interlocutor the accomplishments and fame of the different effigies. When he got to the

⁵⁰⁴ Reynolds, 51.

⁵⁰⁵ Various authors, "Ocho grandes lienzos de la conquista," 44. "Cortés soy, el que venciera/por tierra y por mar profundo/con esta espada otro mundo./si otro mundo entonces viera./Di a España triunfos y palmas/con felicísimas guerras,/al rey, infinitas tierras,/y a Dios infinitas almas."

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

figure of Cortés, Dardanio explained: “This one, at whose feet you have seen so many kingdoms and cities, the sacred tree of Alcides crowning his temple, is the famous conqueror of the New World, Hernando Cortés, whose unprecedented feats not even Time could put an end, nor envy darken.”⁵⁰⁷

Tirso de Molina (1583-1648), Velez de Guevara (1579-1644), Fernando de Zárata y Castronovo, among others, produced plays in which the conquest of Mexico is either in the foreground of the drama, or implied in some way. But the Mexican epic was also resonating throughout Europe, most evidently in England where the country’s foremost Restoration dramatist, John Dryden, wrote two very successful plays where the conquest of Mexico is at issue, *The Indian Queen* (1665) and *The Indian Emperor or the Conquest of Mexico* (1667). The sources of these plays can be traced to a myriad number of romances, Spanish plays, and even the histories. They generally cast the Indians in the role of noble savages and “the invaders were civilized brutes, with the notable exception of Cortés.”⁵⁰⁸ The elevation of Motecuhzoma to heroic heights is one of the themes of *The Indian Emperor* which, after it opened on January 15, 1667, continued to be performed until 1737, attesting to the popularity of its exotic characters to the English audience.⁵⁰⁹

One aspect of Dryden’s play that seems to have pervaded some of the representations of both Motecuhzoma and Cortés is the cultural relativism implicit in its plot. According to the editors of Dryden’s work, *The Indian Emperor* “puts Cortez’s forces in a bad light and offers a strong appeal for primitivism and the toleration of

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ L. A. Beaurline and Fredson Bowers, eds. John Dryden, *Four Tragedies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 29.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

religions other than Christianity.”⁵¹⁰ It is no surprise, then, that in his dedication to the first quarto, Dryden implies, as Beaurline and Bowers suggest, that he was more interested in Motecuhzoma than in Cortés, when he writes to the Duchess of Monmouth:

Under your Patronage Montezuma hopes he is more safe than in his Native Indies: and therefore comes to throw himself at your Grace’s feet; paying that homage to your Beauty, which he refus’d to the violence of his Conquerors. He begs only that when he shall relate his sufferings, you will consider he is an Indian Prince, and not expect any other Eloquence from his simplicity, then that, with which his griefs have furnished him. His story is, perhaps, the greatest which was ever represented in a Poem of this nature; (the action of it including the Discovery and Conquest of a New World.” In it I have neither wholly follow’d the truth of the History, nor altogether left it: but have taken all the liberty of Poet, to adde, alter, or diminish, as I thought might best conduce to the beautifying of my work. It being not the business of a Poet to represent Historical truth, but probability. But I am not to make the justification of this Poem, which I wholly leave to your Grace’s mercy. ‘Tis an irregular piece if compar’d with many of Corneille’s, and if I may make a judgment of it, written with more Flame than Art; in which it represents the mind and intentions of the Author.⁵¹¹

The fact that Dryden, in a critical vein, espouses Motecuhzoma’s greatness and adds his own justification for adding, altering, and diminishing the available histories brings up two points to be considered. On the one hand, the exaltation of Motecuhzoma over Cortés displays a penchant in countries outside of Spain or New Spain to side with the heroic and tragic figure of the conquered Aztec ruler that was being disseminated in the second half of the seventeenth century as part of the so-called Black Legend. On the other hand, Dryden’s own admission in altering history is not very different from the other points of view that the chroniclers and historians themselves were taking, or the painters of the *enconchados* would later undertake. Indeed, one of the sources that has been traced

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 30.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., 31.

for Dryden's play is none other than Calderón de la Barca, arguably the greatest of Spanish Golden Age dramatists. The literary critics N. D. Shergold and Peter Ure, argue that even though Dryden's *Moteczuhzoma* is a composite figure, "based partly on the historical character, partly on the Inca Atahualpa of Peru, and partly, perhaps on other unlucky Indian chiefs who suffered at Spanish hands, including Moteczuhzoma's successor Cuauhtemoc," the plot of *The Indian Emperor* and the structure of the play are derived directly from Calderón de la Barca's *El príncipe constante*, from around 1628 or 1629.⁵¹²

What plays, epic poems, histories, chronicles, and other documents of a historical nature have in common, as discussed in this chapter, is a political agenda that is never far from the personal, or in some instances, international politics. When it comes to the foreign plays or, indeed visual representations like De Bry's illustrations, we see the development of the Black Legend as a means to diminish Spain's stature on the world's political stage at a time when the fortunes of France and England were in ascendancy. According to José Antonio Mazzotti, the heroic epic poetry of the last quarter of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth, and especially the ones written by the *criollos* of New Spain, attests to the fact that several decades after the events of the conquest, the *criollos* were bent on "singing the praises of their own ancestors, companions of Cortés, and at the same time, infiltrating their claims for ancient familial merits."⁵¹³

⁵¹² N. D. Shergold and Peter Ure, "Dryden and Calderón: A New Spanish Source for 'The Indian Emperor'" *Modern Language Review* 61, no. 3 (July 1966): 370-371.

⁵¹³ José Luis Mazzotti, "Resentimiento criollo y nación étnica: el papel de la épica novohispana," *Agencias criollas: La ambigüedad "colonial" en las letras hispanoamericanas* (Pittsburgh: Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, 2000), 143.

Sixteenth-Century Representation of the Conquest of Mexico

The conquest of Mexico has been illustrated in several codices during the sixteenth century. Elizabeth Hill Boone, Martha and Donald Robertson Chair in Latin American Art at Tulane University, describes the early visual representations following the conquest by indigenous hands that continued the pictographic tradition of their ancestors in her book *Stories in Red and Black, Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and the Mixtecs*.⁵¹⁴ Aztec annals, cartographic histories and *lienzos* (paintings produced on linen) were part of a tradition that documented the memory of the past. Diana Magaloni Kerpel, the director of the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City, has classified the most important images related to the conquest in colonial manuscripts executed by indigenous hands:

The omens that took place ten years before the arrival of the Spaniards; 2) the arrival of the Spanish armada from the east, by sea; 3) the arrival of Christianity; 4) the death of Motecuhzoma; 5) the massacre in the Templo Mayor the month of the Toxcatl; 6) Cuauhtémoc's surrender; and 7) the arrival of the twelve mendicant friars.⁵¹⁵

Magaloni Kerpel

pictographs linked to calendrical dates.”⁵¹⁶ Eventually, a new form of images develops following the more European pictorial modes. The Codex Aubin, for example, shows the image of a European ship with a Christian cross (Fig. 4.1), the death of Motecuhzoma,

⁵¹⁴ Elizabeth Hill Boone, *Stories in Red and Black, Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and the Mixtecs* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 64-70.

⁵¹⁵ Diana Magaloni Kerpel, “Imágenes de la conquista de México en los códices del siglo XVI: Una lectura de su contenido simbólico,” *AIE*, UNAM 82 (2003): 12-13. Other studies of early images of the conquest are Serge Gruzinski, *Painting the Conquest: The Mexican Indians and the European Renaissance* (Paris: Flammarion, 1982), and Pablo Escalante, “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 City: INBA, 1999).

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*

and the massacre in the Templo Mayor (fig. 4.2). To show this massacre, Magaloni Kerpel reveals that the *tlacuilo* gives more emphasis to the site of the incident than the incident itself.⁵¹⁷ In this way, the image acts like a cosmogram, which, according to her, represents the center of the cosmos in crisis.⁵¹⁸ These images would be replaced a few decades later by such manuscripts as Diego Durán's *Historia de las Indias de la Nueva España*,⁵¹⁹ and Bernardino de Sahagún's Book XII of the *Florentine Codex*⁵²⁰ that "combine the tradition of the pre-Hispanic annals with a new form of visualizing history, closer to the Western tradition."⁵²¹ This evolution toward a more European expression, following Magaloni Kerpel, is not a simple matter of syncretism where models from different traditions are appropriated, or the result of the process of colonization, even though it certainly altered the visual fields.⁵²² It is rather "the result of the creative effort on the part of the indigenous artists in their search for a historical functional response to the reality of the conquest."⁵²³

Magaloni Kerpel analyzes two of the images that represent the conquest as foundational images of the New World. The first represents the arrival of the Spaniards in Diego Durán's *Historia de las Indias de la Nueva España*. Instead of representing the

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., 23.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 24.

⁵¹⁹ Fray Diego Durán, *The History of the Indies of New Spain*, trans. Doris Heyden (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1994).

⁵²⁰ Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1950).

⁵²¹ Ibid., 30.

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Ibid.

significance of the event, the *tlacuilo* presents the arrival as an almost idyllic scene (fig. 4.3).⁵²⁴ She refers to this “apparent neutrality and innocence” of the images as typical of this new pictorial tradition she calls “Nahua-Christian.”⁵²⁵ In fact, the whole scene shows signs of what Alessandra Russo, professor at Columbia University, has tracked as a similar type of pictorial representation found in the *Biblia Pauperum* (fig. 4.4). These medieval bibles, instead of simply illustrating the extensive text, utilized centrally located images on the page, with scant text, or no text at all. In the biblical passage where Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem shows Zaqueo climbing a tree and pointing at Jesus because he recognizes the Messiah, Russo finds a similitude with Duran’s image of the indigenous messenger climbing the tree and pointing to the Spaniards arriving in his land.⁵²⁶ Magaloni Kerpel concludes that in this way, “the indigenous historian simultaneously achieves a historical parallelism typical of his conception of the temporal cycles as recurrent in history....”⁵²⁷ Furthermore, “the *tlacuilo* has transformed the apparently inoffensive scene of the arrival of the Spaniards by the sea (in 1 Reed/Ce Acatl) into the iconic image of the arrival of a new Mesoamerican era.”⁵²⁸

By the end of the sixteenth century, the interpretation of the conquest of Mexico achieved by indigenous *tlacuilos* –showing the conquest as a cosmic war where a new era is born from the ashes of the old—did not gain more resonance as the new century settled

⁵²⁴ Ibid., 31.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., quoting Alessandra Russo, “Les formes de l’art indigène au Mexique sous la domination espagnole au XVIème siècle. Le Codex Borbonicus et le Codex Durán,” PhD. dissertation, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 1997, 75.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 33.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., 34.

in. By the middle of the seventeenth century, however, a number of representations of the conquest began to appear as series of narrative illustrations. Such is the case of the eight canvases of the so-called Kislak Collection, several biombos of the Conquest of Mexico, and numerous series of *enconchados*. According to Matthew Restall, who discusses the theme of the conquest of Mexico as a Spanish creation, the backdrop surrounding the emergence of these groups of paintings reveals two idiosyncrasies:

One was the development of Baroque painting, specifically the ongoing popularity of battle scenes and the florescence of secular-themed paintings commissioned by local elites and executed on a scale suitable for elite homes (far larger than non-elite houses but offering smaller hanging spaces than churches and royal palaces). The second larger phenomenon of particular relevance here was the dawn in late seventeenth-century Mexico of an interest in, perhaps even a preference for, local themes.⁵²⁹

Even though the series of paintings, *biombos*, and *enconchado* paintings share the theme of the conquest and other traits, their execution displays a myriad of styles and possibilities open to the artists of the middle of the seventeenth century. In chapter 2, I referred to Julieta Avila Hernández's assertion that *enconchado* paintings could be considered a Far Eastern technique, and therefore, should not be judged by European standards of the time. Although the technique may be partly of Asian origin, the manufacture of *enconchado* paintings reflected Baroque New Spain's political, cultural, and social environment where the subject matter of the conquest was taking center stage. Historical narratives of the epocal event were being published, republished, and re-edited, eliciting visual interpretations that went hand-in-hand with the intellectual effervescence of the age.

⁵²⁹ Matthew Restall, "Spanish Creation of the Conquest of Mexico," in *Invasion and Transformation: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico*, ed. Rebecca P. Brien and Margaret A. Jackson (Denver: University Press of Colorado, 2008), 93.

Painting in Seventeenth-Century New Spain

Painting in seventeenth-century New Spain consisted mostly of religious commissions for the numerous churches, convents, and ecclesiastical dependencies that had been established. Production for private consumption in the homes and the domestic chapels of the elite was also important. In the public sphere, the viceroy's official duties were amply documented by the artists of his time, along with the members of his court, mostly in portraits produced to be hung in official sites, in their own homes, or to be sent abroad. Secular scenes satisfied the thirst for worldly subject matter that suited the elite's cosmopolitanism. Besides portraits, artists produced "genre scenes, mythological narratives, still lifes, landscapes, and history paintings to hang in urban palaces and country homes." according to Donahue-Wallace.⁵³⁰ Of these, still lifes along with landscapes were perhaps the least practiced visual representations, even though the latter did form part of the backgrounds of portraits, as well as of historical and mythological paintings, and flourished on its own in the following century. Sonia Sanabrais contends that many of these secular themes were well represented in the folding screens (biombos) characteristic of this period.⁵³¹ It is in this context that paintings representing the conquest of Mexico, some of which also appeared on biombos, make their appearance.

Like the chronicles of the conquest written in the sixteenth century, this is a genre that would proliferate by the middle of the seventeenth century. And like those accounts of

⁵³⁰ Kelly Donahue-Wallace, *Art and Architecture of Viceregal Latin America, 1521-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 200. This work is the most up-to-date survey of Spanish colonial arts to be published recently in the English language.

⁵³¹ Sanabrais, *The Biombo or Folding Screen: Examining the Impact of Japan and the Globalization of Taste in Seventeenth-Century New Spain* (PhD diss., New York University Institute of Fine Arts, 2005), 87.

the conquistadors and missionaries that documented the early years of colonization, they can be seen as a separate genre since the tropes that characterize the pictorial narratives reiterate cultural, social, philosophical, and political views about a past that was being reconsidered and reinterpreted constantly. Referring to the histories that were written mostly in the sixteenth century, literary historian Michael G. Brennan asserts that these were a novel development:

A new literary form developed, commonly known as the ‘History of the Indies,’ in which chroniclers produced, to modern eyes, a strangely eclectic blend of chronological narrative, descriptions of landscapes, justifications of military actions, political interpretations, and anthropological curiosity over the customs, beliefs, and social practices of the native population.⁵³²

In his incisive article about the historiographic theory of the chronicles of the conquest, Karl Kohut, the German Latinamericanist, compares the above quote from Michael G. Brenner with Yale professor and literature scholar Roberto González Echeverría’s estimation that such incoherence and eclecticism were mostly a concerted effort to follow a tradition already established in the writing of history:

This model was the one used by the humanist historiography of the sixteenth century, a historiography that gave a prominent place to the aesthetic value of the history, to the organization of the facts in a coherent and harmonious fashion so that it would elicit not only pleasure, but would be, at the same time as a rhetorical mediation, as also a kind of interpretation.⁵³³

These two views of the conquest historiography, in Kohut’s opinion, reflect two different perspectives: Brennan’s point of view, from the perspective of the modern

⁵³² Michael G. Brennan, “The Texts of Peter Martyr’s *De orbe novo decades* (1504-1608): A response to Andrew Hadfield,” *Connotations* 6, (2): 228, as quoted in Karl Kohut, “Las primeras crónicas de Indias y la teoría historiográfica,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 18, no. 2, (August 2009):154.

⁵³³ Roberto González Echeverría, as quoted in Karl Kohut, “Las primeras crónicas de Indias y la teoría historiográfica,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 18, no. 2, (August 2009): 154.

historian, on the one hand; and González Echeverría's from the perspective of the seventeenth-century humanists, who follow a path already traced by the classical tradition, where rhetoric, for instance, plays a part.⁵³⁴ In any event, both perspectives bring to light a common conundrum when viewing the conquest of Mexico in the literature that can shed some light on the approaches to the event as seen by the visual artists who had not many images to emulate. In the first place, who was the recipient of the chronicle, explicitly or implicitly? And what was the writer to gain from such exposure? These are questions also apt to be asked of the *enconchados* of the conquest as well.

Seventeenth-Century Representations of the Conquest of Mexico

The eight paintings comprising the Kislak Collection offer insight into the popularity of conquest subject matter and the particular scenes recreated on their canvases. The main themes depicted are: The Entrance of Cortés Into Tabasco (fig. 4.5), The Arrival of Cortés at Veracruz and the Reception by Motecuhzoma's Ambassadors (fig. 4.6), The meeting of Cortés and Motecuhzoma (fig. 4.7), The Death of Motecuhzoma at the Hands of His Own People (fig. 4.8), The Sad Night (fig. 4.9), The Battle of Otumba (fig. 4.10), The Conquest of Tenochtitlan (fig. 4.11), and The Capture of Cuauhtemoc (fig. 4.12). Besides those, the panels are filled with subsidiary scenes with all the drama and detail seen in similar European representations. Their unknown artist recalls "the traditional formula for seventeenth-century Spanish battle paintings in which large figures often on

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

horseback, are highlighted in the foreground.”⁵³⁵ The numbered events in each painting and the accompanying legend explaining the incidents, however, denote New Spanish authorship. There is even a certain similarity in the representation of the canopy under which Motecuhzoma meets Cortés in this series with the canopy where Cortés is seen eating and in dialogue with Motecuhzoma’s ambassadors in several of the Conquest *enconchados*.

The exact date of these paintings is not known, but what is certain is that they were acquired by the Cholmley family in Great Britain by the end of the seventeenth century.⁵³⁶

Enconchados of the Conquest of Mexico

One aspect of *enconchado* paintings that is uniform and widespread in the depiction of the Conquest of Mexico (like the series of the Life of the Virgin and the Life of Christ) is the fact that they are part of a series of four, six, twelve, or even twenty-four panels, shedding some light on their narrative and didactic intention. This characteristic links them to the eight oil paintings of the Kislak collection and biombos of the conquest whose several wings also depict a number of episodes of the conquest. The didactic intention is enhanced by the inclusion of letter referents (or numbers, in some cases) explaining the episodes represented, usually several in each panel. In the series comprising 24 panels, for example, there are well over one hundred different episodes represented throughout the entire series.

⁵³⁵ Arthur Dunkelman, ed. *The Jay I. Kislak Collection at the Library of Congress*, Catalogue (Washington, D. C. : Library of Congress, 2007), 76.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

There are five sets of *enconchado* paintings whose subject matter is the conquest of Mexico. The Museo de América in Madrid has the largest collection. One series has 24 panels, two signed, one by Miguel González and the other, by Juan González. Once part of the collection of Charles II, they were inventoried in 1700. I refer to this series as Conquest of Mexico I. There is a similar series of 24 panels, 22 of which are in the Museo de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, with two others in private collections. One of the panels of this series is signed by Miguel González and I refer to this series as Conquest II, or Buenos Aires. Another series of 24 panels that belonged to the Counts of Motecuhzoma, later Dukes of Motecuhzoma, are now divided between two collections. Twelve refer to episodes of war and twelve to episodes of peace. I refer to this series as Conquest III. Of a series of six panels, two are currently in the Franz Mayer Museum and four in the Museo Nacional del Virreinato in Tepotzotlán. This is the series that belonged to the Dukes of the Infantado, in Madrid. The panels in Tepotzotlán have been made into eight and fitted as a folding screen. I refer to this series as Conquest IV. Finally, a series of six large format panels in the Museo de América, has no signature, although scholars usually attribute the series to Miguel González. I refer to this series as Conquest V.

María Concepción García Saiz, Marta Dujovne, and Marita Martínez del Río de Redo describe in detail the different episodes in the individual panels of the conquest series and their sources in the chronicles. Therefore, I will focus only on some aspects that shed light on particular notions of history and its representation that stand out in these paintings.

Conquest of Mexico I, II, III, and IV

I begin by examining some aspects seen in three series of 24 paintings, in the Museo de América in Madrid, in the Museo de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires, and in a private collection (Conquest I, II, and III). A comparison between some of the panels will reveal aspects of their manufacture, style, and content.

The first group of the Conquest of Mexico in the Museo de América (Conquest of Mexico I) was once part of the royal collections belonging to the Palace of La Granja of San Ildefonso. It arrived in the Gabinete de Historia Natural de Madrid in 1776, according to Pedro Madrazo's notation in his *Viaje artístico de tres siglos por las colecciones de los reyes de España*.⁵³⁷ Following María Concepción García Saiz seminal investigation concerning the locations and the iconography of these panels, this series remained in the Gabinete (in the building that later became the Museo del Prado) until they were installed in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in 1873.⁵³⁸ Once the Museo de América was created in 1941, the collections of ethnographic artifacts, including the *enconchados*, were turned over to the newly established institution, even though they remained in the same building.⁵³⁹ The collection was eventually transferred to the new building of the Museo de América which was inaugurated in 1965, and they have remained there to the present.

According to García Saiz, this series is complete, a fact that is corroborated by the perfect numerical order of the episodes as well as by the fact that the first and the last

⁵³⁷ Pedro Madrazo, *Viaje artístico de tres siglos por las colecciones de los reyes de España* (Barcelona: Biblioteca Arte y Letras, 1884), 162, as quoted in María Concepción García Saiz, *La pintura colonial en el Museo de América (II): Los enconchados* (Madrid: Patronato Nacional de Museos, 1980), 19.

⁵³⁸ García Saiz 1980, 19.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*

panels display a decorative band on the left and right side, respectively, in effect framing the entire 24 panels.⁵⁴⁰ Referring to the historical facts, García Saiz points out that the episodes are considerably faithful to the chronicles, even though the chronology does not seem to fit the historical record.⁵⁴¹ Miguel González's signature is on several of the panels.

Considering the first episode in Conquest of Mexico I and II, María Concepción García Saiz thinks that even though both series display the same signature, there is reason to doubt that they were both executed by the same hands.⁵⁴² The problem of the authorship, which has preoccupied art historians for at least the last century, is fraught with ambiguities since most assessment have been done according to stylistic characteristics when there is no signature. Their differences also address myriad ways of looking at the chronicles and distilling a narrative that dramatizes particular events, positing weight on some particular issues, but not others.

In the Conquest of Mexico I (Museo de América) first panel (fig. 4.13), Cortés is seen seated at a table under a canopy conversing with ambassadors sent by Motecuhzoma, while his guards surround the scene. In the background, Spaniards watch Cortés' fleet sinking into the water. García Saiz accurately points out the source of this episode in Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia Verdadera*:

The next day, Easter Sunday, the governor whom they spoke of arrived. His name was Tendile, a man of affairs, and he brought with him Pitalpitoque who was also a man of importance amongst the natives and there followed them many Indians with presents of fowls and vegetables.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid, 20.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² García Saiz, 1980, 22.

Tendile ordered these people to stand aside on a hillock and with much humility he made three obeisances to Cortés according to their customs, and then to all the soldiers who were standing around. Cortés bade them welcome through our interpreters and embraced them and asked them to wait as he wished presently to speak to them. Meanwhile he ordered an altar to be made as well as it could be done in the time, and Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo, who was a fine singer, chanted Mass, and Padre Juan Díaz assisted, and the two governors and the other chiefs who were with them looked on. When Mass was over, Cortés and some of our captains and the two Indian Officers of the great Montezuma dined together.⁵⁴³

The scene of the sinking of the ships occurs in an earlier chapter in Bernal Díaz's narrative. Cortés refers to it in his *Letters* as a strategem to convince Charles V of his intent not to turn back:

Believing, therefore, that if the ships remained there would be a rebellion, and once all those who had resolved to go had gone I would be left almost alone, whereby all that in the name of God and of Your Highness has been accomplished in this land would have been prevented, I devised a plan according to which I declared the ships unfit to sail and grounded them; thus they lost all hope of escape and I proceeded in greater safety and with no fear that once my back was turned the people I had left in the town would betray me.⁵⁴⁴

The scene of the sinking of the ships became very popular in the literature of the Golden Age. Most accounts, according to Winston A. Reynolds, follow Francisco López de Gómara, a fact that the scholar finds meaningful.⁵⁴⁵ Reynolds has found references to this incident in Zapata's *Carlo famoso*, in Lasso's *Cortés valeroso* and *Mexicana*, Zárate's

⁵⁴³ Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The History of the Conquest of New Spain*, ed. David Carrasco (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 53.

⁵⁴⁴ Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, trans. and ed. Anthony Pagden (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 51-52. Pagden remarks that the account of grounding the ships varies: "Bernal Díaz says that it was done by consent of Cortés supporters; Cervantes de Salazar says that he [Cortés] persuaded the pilots and masters to declare the ships unseaworthy. Five were grounded first and later four. Cortés then offered the remaining one to anybody who might still wish to return; no one accepted and it too was grounded. He did not burn his ships, a myth that seems to have originated in 1546 from another of Cervantes de Salazar's works (the dedication to Cortés of the 'Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre,' in *Obras que Francisco Cervantes de Salazar a hecho, glosado y traducido*, fol. 4), though he may have burned them later, when all the tackle had been removed." *Ibid.*, 460-461n.

⁵⁴⁵ Winston A. Reynolds, *Hernán Cortés en la literatura del Siglo de Oro*, 107.

La conquista de México, among some of the playwrights. The legend of the burning of the ships is first expressed in Francisco Cervantes de Salazar's 1546 *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre* and later, in 1559, it was "pictorially represented on a pedastal column that was part of the memorial tomb erected in Mexico City in honor of Charles V."⁵⁴⁶

Reynolds adds that the sinking of ships can also be traced to ancient legends and histories, like Agatocles from Siracuse, who led an expedition against Carthage in the fourth century BCE and burned his ships after disembarking in North Africa.⁵⁴⁷ The links between Cortés and the heroes of antiquity were obviously the intent of both writers and painters in their attempt to construct a heroic Cortés.

The painter's decision not to include the Mass, or the friar, or the presentation of the gifts attests to the fact that what was deemed most important was the representation of the two dignitaries of the two cultures seated at a table as equals, in this particular panel. The inscription at the top of the panel, as usual in this series, is surrounded by floral ornaments and numbers the episodes, one and two:

1. Cortés orders the sinking of the ships; 2. Cortés eats with two ambassadors of Motecuhzoma in the port of Veracruz.⁵⁴⁸

The first panel of *Conquest of Mexico II* (Buenos Aires) more elaborately depicts these scenes, and in fact, adds a third intermediary element (fig. 4.14). The inscription above (not numbered as *Conquest I*), reads:

Captain Cortés arrives with his men at the port of San Juan de Ulloa. The Indians go out to greet them in canoes. The ambassador Tendile receives him with a gift. He asks to have Cortés and his men painted to

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 109. This is described in detail in Cervantes de Salazar's *Túmulo imperial*.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 111.

⁵⁴⁸ "1. Manda Cortés echar las Naos a pique. 2. Cortés comiendo con dos embajadores de Motecuhzoma en el Puerto de Veracruz."

send pictures to his Lord. Captain Cortés eats with the ambassadors of the great Motecuhzoma.⁵⁴⁹

Marta Dujovne finds the same source for this panel in Bernal Díaz del Castillo. The section pertaining to the Indians painting Cortés and his men on a canvas in the center of the panel refers to the following section of Bernal's account:

It appears that Tendile brought with him some clever painters such as they had in Mexico and ordered them to make pictures true to nature of the face and body of Cortés and all his captains, and of the soldiers, ships, sails and horses, and of Doña Marina and Aguilar, even of the two greyhounds, and the cannon and cannonballs, and all of the army we had brought with us, and he carried the pictures to his master.⁵⁵⁰

Michael Schreffler makes the point when analyzing this episode of the Indian's painting (fig. 4.15), that painters in the seventeenth century (as well as the chroniclers) "constructed a distorted view of painting in Aztec Mexico and entangled it in the conventions of colonial historiography."⁵⁵¹ Schreffler's thesis is that when the painter of the *enconchado*, González, portrays the Aztec painter employing a European convention of easel painting, he is presenting "a view of conquest and political transition that, like Díaz's description of Cortés portrait, elides differences between 'theirs' and 'ours' and, in so doing, challenges the modern viewer's conception of colonial history."⁵⁵² In other words, if there is a tendentious political motive in the writings of the chronicles from which these

⁵⁴⁹ "Llega el Capitán Cortés con su armada al Puerto de San Juan de Ulúa. Salen en canoa a reconocerle los indios. Recíbele el embajador Tendile con un presente. Mándale a él y a su armada para llevarlo a su señor. Come el Capitán Cortés con los embajadores de Motecuhzoma."

⁵⁵⁰ Bernal Díaz del Castillo, 54-55.

⁵⁵¹ Michael Schreffler, "Their Cortés and Our Cortés: Spanish Colonialism and Aztec Representation," in *The Art Bulletin* 4 (December 2009): 407.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 420.

paintings take their cue, another layer of interpretation is inserted when the words are changed into images. As Schreffler asserts, both the colonial text and the colonial image are not “a transparent window onto the past.”⁵⁵³

Focusing on images from sets of *enconchados* in both Madrid and Buenos Aires, Scheffler asserts that one of the important ways in which the campaigns of Cortés are rendered in these series has to do with “a radical transformation of space.”⁵⁵⁴ He describes one of the panels in which the cartouche on top reads as follows:

The soldiers of Captain Cortés work in constructing the Villa Rica, the Totonoque Indians help them; Father Bartolomé de Olmedo preaches to the Indians and baptizes the eight female Indians that the Fat Chief gave them; Captain General Cortés orders the destruction of the idols in the town of Zempoal.⁵⁵⁵

In this scene, the construction of a church is seen in the upper section of the panel, while the destruction of idols in a lower section is offered as contrast (fig. 4.16). For Schreffler, the image in the center, where evangelization is taking place, unites the themes of conversion with that of territorial transformation.⁵⁵⁶ A similar construction is represented in the Madrid panel where in the upper section the war against the Cholulans is shown as violent and chaotic, with figures indistinguishable one from the other. In the lower part of the panel, where peace reigns, the Spanish standard is unfurled. Following Schreffler: “The Crown enacts a political transformation of the conquered subjects of Cholula. Two Indians kneel, lay down their arms, and prostrate themselves before the

⁵⁵³ Ibid., 407.

⁵⁵⁴ Schreffler, *Invasion and Transformation*, 111.

⁵⁵⁵ “Trabajan en fabricar la Villa Rica los soldados del Capitán Cortés, les ayudan los indios totonaques. Predica el padre Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo, y bautiza las ocho indias que dio el Cacique Gordo. Manda el Capitán General Cortés derrocar los ídolos, que estaban en el pueblo de Zempoal.”

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

standard that marks the king's presence."⁵⁵⁷ In Schreffler's opinion, those spaces rendered in the panels are clear examples of metaphors that demonstrate the Spanish victory over Aztec America, but even more remarkable, are not the depiction of a historical event taken from either Bernal Diaz del Castillo, Cortés, Gómara, or Solís. Rather, it is the resolution of the incident, in the foreground scenes of the panel, resolutions only hinted at in the textual sources.⁵⁵⁸

Father Olmedo's baptism of the eight female Indians and the destruction of the idols repeat the evangelization process that can also be seen in several of the panels. Implicit in all chronicles beginning with Cortés, the messianic nature of the conquest was also a favorite topic of Golden Age writers in both prose and verse, as Reynolds reminds us.⁵⁵⁹ One of the earliest poems exalting the figure of Cortés as the one "chosen" by God to bring the "true" religion to the indigenous populations of the New World was by Jerónimo Ramírez's *Al marqués Don Fernando Cortés sobre la conversion de los indios de la Nueva España*. One passage very admiringly of the conquistador states:

There being many in the Holy Church
To Whom God this enterprise could give
Illustrious in virtue and in Faith
That like the brilliant Sun would shine;
The eternal Sacrosanct Majesty
To Cortés only hands the banner,
And selects as most apt and most sufficient
To light the world to those erred people.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., 112.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid., 115.

⁵⁵⁹ Winston A. Reynolds, *Hernán Cortés en la literatura del Siglo de Oro*, 286.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid. "Auiendo muchos en la iglesia santa/a quien Dios esta empressa dar puidiera/ilustres en virtudes y en Fee tanta/que como el claro Sol resplandeciera;/La Magestad eternal Sacrosanta/solo a Cortes entrega la vandera,/y escoge por mas apto y suficiente/para alumbrar aquella errada gente."

The three series of 24 panels come to a point in the narrative where they all depict the visit by Cortés to Motecuhzoma's palace. The inscription on the Conquest I panel (fig. 4.17) reads: "Cortés visits Motecuhzoma and the others are received by the kings that accompany them." The inscription in the Conquest II panel (fig. 4.18) reads: "Captain General Cortés visits the emperor Motecuhzoma in his royal palaces and takes him by the hand and offers him his gold seats. He shows Cortés his ancestors, the emperors whose portraits were displayed, and the soldiers admire them." The Conquest II (Buenos Aires) panel is signed by Miguel González. Marta Dujovne remarks that this signature is different from the one by Miguel in the Museo de América's panels, but she does not think this is significant since it is possible that the signature on the Museo de América's panels was inscribed by the same calligrapher who painted the inscriptions in the cartouche.⁵⁶¹ The inscription on the panel in a private collection (Conquest III) reads as follows: "Captain Cortés visits the Great Motecuhzoma in his Royal Palace and speaks to him about the Holy Faith and orders his soldiers the distribution of gold necklaces and two bundles of blankets from each one."

The fact that the three series are so similar, even as the inscriptions vary somewhat, indicates that a singular workshop produced these panels, and yet their differences also reveal the possibility of more than one painter, as well as a probable progression, improving from an earlier commission. All three depict a two-storied interior where figures on the lower right hand side of the panel appear to move forward and up the steps to the throne room, where one can see Cortés, Motecuhzoma, and their associates. Under an

⁵⁶¹ Marta Dujovne, *La Conquista de México por Miguel Gonzáles, Colecciones del Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes* (Buenos Aires: Asociación Amigos del Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Buenos Aires, 1972), 44.

arched decorative frame (inlaid with mother-of-pearl) that links the panels to folding screens, the central narrative takes place with some variation. In I and II, Motecuhzoma appears to be inviting Cortés to sit in one of two elaborate thrones on the right hand wall. In III, however, they are already seated at the center and Doña Marina is seen more prominently, just behind the figure of Cortés. Under a wood ceiling, the back wall depicts a series of portraits (eight in I and II, six in III) representing Monctezuma's predecessors.

The episode itself is documented, most explicitly in Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia Verdadera*, the writer being, perhaps, one of the figures represented alongside Cortés in the *enconchado*:

The next day Cortés decided to go to Motecuhzoma's palace, and he first sent to find out what he intended doing and to let him know that we were coming. He took with him four captains, namely Pedro de Alvarado, Juan Velázquez de Leon, Diego de Ordás, and Gonzalo de Sandoval, and five of us soldiers also went with him.

When Monctezuma knew of our coming he advanced to the middle of the hall to receive us, accompanied by many of his nephews, for no other chiefs were permitted to enter or hold communication with Montezuma where he then was, unless it were on important business. Cortés and he paid the greatest reverence to each other and then they took one another by the hand and Montezuma made him sit down on his couch on his right hand, and he also bade all of us to be seated on seats which he ordered to be brought.⁵⁶²

Interestingly, the scene depicted by the painters of the *enconchados*, namely the courteous reception by the Aztec emperor with the due pomp and circumstance foreign ambassadors warranted, highlights the importance of the meeting. In fact, according to Francis J. Brooks, this particular encounter had a wider repercussion in world affairs than the mythical moment of Columbus' landing, singled out by both Adam Smith and Karl

⁵⁶² Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The History of the Conquest of New Spain*, 162-163.

Marx. For Brooks, the meeting between Cortés and Motecuhzoma marks “that moment the Spanish Empire in America was born, and with it the age of European imperialism.”⁵⁶³

The analogies that have been traced in the *Letters to the King* by Cortés, Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s *Historia Verdadera*, and Antonio Solís’ *Historia de la Conquista de México* can only remind us of the rhetorical constructs inherent in these texts. The first two, obviously witnesses to the events unfolding, were written years after the events took place, and were therefore not a day-to-day account of them. Referring to Cortes’ *Letter*, Brooks states that “in both the immediate and the wider contexts, the rhetorical strategy, to which all else is subservient, is to give the maximum dramatic form to Motecuhzoma’s submission to Charles V.”⁵⁶⁴

In the Conquest I series (Madrid), the painter preceded this episode by Motecuhzoma’s grand entrance while on his way to the Spaniards followed by Motecuhzoma’s visit to Cortés. In the Conquest II series (Buenos Aires), the episode is preceded by two panels, one depicting Motecuhzoma’s entrance, and the other, Cortés entrance with his men; succeeded by two panels, one representing Motecuhzoma and Cortes’ meeting by a pyramidal temple, and the other, showing Motecuhzoma’s display of allegiance to the King of Spain. In the panel in the private collection (Conquest III), the episode is preceded by the encounter between Motecuhzoma and Cortés, which the painter opted to show in front of the pyramidal temple, followed by the same scene of Motecuhzoma’s showing of the temple to Cortés.

⁵⁶³ Francis J. Brooks, “Motecuzoma Xocoyotl, Hernando Cortés, and Bernal Diaz del Castillo: The Construction of an Arrest,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 75, no. 2 (May 1995): 150.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 158.

What these divergences indicate is that while the workshop artist was, perhaps, following a model, new ideas or enhancements were added, expanding the narrative. One can surmise, for example, that the frontal view of Motecuhzoma's quarters in the Conquest II panel, showing a wall on the right, may have been followed by the Museo de América's panel, where both right and left wall open up at the edges of the composition. The one in a private collection appears to provide a more angled view where only the left side can be seen as an opening to the exterior showing a wall. More complex, it was possibly the last one painted.

Another departure from the norm is the representation of the Aztec kings on the back wall (fig. 4.19). Conquest I and II include the names of the previous rulers of Motecuhzoma's empire. Michael Schreffler aptly points out that "the artist's rendering of a fictive series of state portraits brings to the fore ideas about kingly succession and legitimacy, while painterly practice—that is, the artist's modification of a print—transforms the encounter between Cortés and Motecuhzoma into an image of the latter's abdication."⁵⁶⁵ It is evident that the *enconchado* painter relied on a European model for a royal reception room. Marita Martínez del Río de Redo observes that in the Conquest III panel Motecuhzoma is wearing a garment that suggests a Roman emperor.⁵⁶⁶ The baroque thrones in Conquest I and II are further proof that the pictorial anachronism of some of these panels are not so much intended as window to the past, as Michael Schreffler asserts,

⁵⁶⁵ Michael Schreffler, "'Their Cortés and Our Cortés': Spanish Colonialism and Aztec Representation," *The Art Bulletin* (December 2009): 418.

⁵⁶⁶ Marita Martínez del Río de Redo, "La conquista en una serie de *enconchados*," 78.

but rather became part of “the conventions of colonial historiography,”⁵⁶⁷ not unlike the chronicles themselves.

Louise M. Burkhart, the ethnohistorian and anthropologist from the State University of New York at Albany, suggests that the iconic status of the meeting between Cortés and Motecuhzoma was such that it became “the point of juncture between two clashing cultures,” and as such “that it was symbolically replayed in other formats.”⁵⁶⁸ Burkhart analyzes an anonymous, undated, Nahuatl colonial drama where King Herod meets the three Magi, drawing a connection between the Gospel of Saint Matthew and the meeting of the Spanish and Aztec leaders with the Kislak painting of the encounter. Having uncovered the eighteenth-century edition of the drama in the Clements Library at the University of Michigan, Burkhart compares Herod with Motecuhzoma, both proud kings who face foreigners “whose arrival from the East heralds a new age.”⁵⁶⁹ For Burkhart, the Cortés-Motecuhzoma encounter “stands synecdochically for the larger cultural encounter and for the doomed splendor of the Mexica Empire about to yield to a new world order.”⁵⁷⁰

Conquest of Mexico V

The series of six large format panels depicting the Conquest of Mexico at the Museo de América (Conquista de México V), each measuring 205 cm by 121 cm are,

⁵⁶⁷ Schreffer, *ibid.*, 407.

⁵⁶⁸ Louise M. Burkhart, “Moteuczoma and Cortés, Herod and the Magi,” *Invasion and Transformation*, 11.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

arguably, the most accomplished of all *enconchado* paintings, not only because of their size and narrative complexity but, more importantly, their consummate art. García Saiz observes that the fact that each panel's narrative is independent from the others demonstrates that there is no certainty as to whether there were other panels made of the same size and characteristics.⁵⁷¹ Similar to the series of 24 panels signed by Miguel and Juan González, the canvas is used only to cover the points joining the wood panels.⁵⁷² García Saiz tends to regard these as from the hand of Miguel González, if only because this painter is the one from whom more signatures are available and the undeniable relationship between them, a point with which I agree.⁵⁷³ The uniformity of this series, besides the dimensions, resides in the fact that they are surrounded by a strip that frames the image with inch-long pieces of mother-of-pearl interspersed decoratively all around in a floral pattern, the profusion of scenes depicted rather randomly throughout the panel, and the cartouches with explanation of the scenes taking place with capital letters identifying their location, not unlike the series of *enconchado* paintings representing the Battles of Alessandro Farnesio.

The first of these (fig. 4.20), following García Saiz's catalogued panels, represents the following scenes, as explained in the cartouche:

A. Port of Veracruz. B. Cortés eating with two ambassadors and Motecuhzoma. C. The ambassadors in horseback run and admire the proceedings. D. Cortés names General Mayor of the town. E. Doña Marina explains to the Totonaque people who Cortés is. F. The Villa Rica is built. G. Cortés enters

⁵⁷¹ García Saiz, *La pintura colonial en el Museo de América II*, 70.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, 71.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*

Zempoala and the Fat Chieftain receives him, who performs a ritual, gives him something to eat, and provides gifts to all the Spaniards.⁵⁷⁴

At the bottom of the panel, on the picture plane, the regal figure of Cortés, extending his hands and followed by his armored men, appears to greet the so-called Fat Chieftain. As the eye is directed to the scenes above, workers are seen bringing timber as others work on the construction of a church that occupies the center of the panel. To the left of this building, Cortés is seen by a table where an open book is shown that names the officials of the newly founded Villa Rica. Further left, Marina (or La Malinche), Cortés lover and translator, appears to address some figures. In the upper left hand side of the panel, almost imperceptibly, is a scene labeled with the capital letter B, Cortés eating with two ambassadors and Motecuhzoma. The port of Veracruz is seen full of ships in the upper right-hand side of the panel, like the scene of Cortés and Motecuhzoma in atmospheric perspective, suggesting its distance in the background

Typical of these panels, the scenes are not shown chronologically, nor do they attempt to depict chronicled events literally. For example, in showing the founding of the Villa Rica of the Vera Cruz, an event that took place shortly after Cortés arrived in Mexico, together with a representation of Motecuhzoma, who did not meet the conqueror until he arrived in the capital city of Tenochtitlán several weeks later, indicates that the painter was looking more for effect than for historical accuracy. Bernal Díaz del Castillo recounts the founding of Veracruz thus:

⁵⁷⁴ “ A. Puerto de Veracruz. B. Cortés comiendo con dos embajadores de Motecuhzoma. C. Corren a caballo y se admiran los embajadores. D. Hace Cortés Alcaldes Ordinarios de la Villa. E. Doña Marina da a entender a los Totonagues quien es Cortés. F. Hacese la Villa Rica, a que ayudan los Indios Totanaques. G. Entra Cortés en Zempuala y le Recive el Cazique Gordo, que le sauma, da de comer, y regala a todos los Españoles.”

As soon as we had made this federation and friendship with more than twenty of the hill towns, known as the towns of the Totonacs, which at this time reveled against the great Motecuhzoma, and gave their allegiance to His Majesty, and offered to serve us –we determined with their ready help at once to found the Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz on a plain half a league from this fortress like town, called Quiahuitztlan, and we laid out plans of a church, marketplace and arsenals, and all those things that are needed for a town, and we built a fort, and from the laying of the foundations until the walls were high enough to receive the woodwork, loopholes, watchtowers and barbicans, we worked with the greatest haste.⁵⁷⁵

It is evident that it is the Indians who are doing the manual work and the Spaniards directing them. Not unlike the scenes in Conquest I and II, the Indians busy themselves with the construction of a church, implying the implicit acceptance of their new religion and their submissiveness.

The appearance of Doña Marina, or Malinche, as in some of the other panels, indicates her importance in the chronicles as well as in the fictive literature of the time. She also appears in several of the panels of the Kislak Collection and the Conquest biombos, making her an indispensable character in the story. Her role as interpreter is seen here in the middle left of the panel. According to Constance Cortez, professor at Texas Tech University, contradictory representations of Malinche abounded in the sixteenth century. In fact, they were often “directed toward two audiences: one indigenous and the other European.”⁵⁷⁶ Examining the Kislak Collection panels where Malinche appears, Cortez concludes that a new type of representation of Malinche appears by the seventeenth century, “in keeping with the need to bestow upon her a level of respectability

⁵⁷⁵ Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The Conquest of New Spain*, 71.

⁵⁷⁶ Constance Cortez, “Now You See Her, Now You Don’t: Memory and the Politics of Identity Construction in Representations of Malinche,” in *Invasion and Transformation*, 87.

concomitant with seventeenth-century elite norms.”⁵⁷⁷ In this panel of this series of *enconchado* painting, her mother-of-pearl studded garment, her gesture, and the important function she serves attests to this view of her.

La Malinche, along with the Virgin of Guadalupe and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz have become, over the years, archetypes of Mexican femininity, according to Rosario Castellanos, the Mexican poet and author.⁵⁷⁸ The myth of La Malinche over the centuries has been studied by Sandra Messinger Cypess who uses the sign “La Malinche” to uncover the palimpsest embedded in her figure.⁵⁷⁹ For this author, “the Amerindian woman called Malinal was quickly transformed into a Hispanic lady and baptized with the name of Doña Marina.”⁵⁸⁰ It is in this capacity also that she can be seen in this *enconchado* painting.

A second *enconchado* painting from this series equally represents myriad scenes without a strict chronological order (fig. 4.21). The cartouche reads:

A. Cortés orders the sinking the ships. B. [Cortés] walks with the people of Pánfilo de Narváez. C. Snow falls on them on the road. D. Three of their priests put away their Idols. E. War in Cholula. F. The people of Cholula give obedience to the King of Spain. G. The Cholulans provide food. H. Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo baptizes seven female Indians. I. They sever the hands of two of Xicotenca’s spies. J. They are so hungry that they eat dog meat.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 88.

⁵⁷⁸ Rosario Castellanos, “Once again Sor Juana,” *A Rosario Castellanos Reader*, ed. And trans. Maureen Ahern (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1988), 222.

⁵⁷⁹ Sandra Messinger Cypess, *La Malinche in Mexican Literature: From History to Myth* (Austin Texas, University of Texas Press, 1991), 8.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁸¹ “A. Manda Cortés echar las Naos a pique. B. Camina con la Gente de Pamphilo de Narvaez. C. Nievaes en el camino. D. Tres de sus Sacerdotes guardan sus idolos. E. Guerra en Cholula. F. Danla obediencia al Rey de Spaña los de Cholula. G. Comida que dan los Cholultecos. H. Frai Bartolome de Olmedo Baptiza siete Indias. I. Cortan las manos a dos espías de Xicotenca. J. Comen carne de perro de hambre.”

Even though the legends in the cartouche are supposed to be read from the top of the panel down, the figures at the bottom appear larger and closer to the picture plane suggesting a reading from bottom up that is consistent with the legend or the chronology. The sinking ships appear in atmospheric perspective in the upper left hand corner of the composition, as a background to the events unfolding elsewhere. This incident can be construed as a measure of the inevitability of the conquest, as it refers to the fact that Cortés' forces could not turn back, as stated above. Next, Cortés walks next to the men of Pánfilo de Narváez, the expeditionary force sent by the governor of Cuba Diego Velázquez to stop Cortés. The outcome of this conflict was that the men of Narváez were lured by the wealth promised them by Cortés and deserted their commander, increasing the ranks of Cortés and thwarting Narváez (and Diego Velázquez's) purpose. The inclusion of this incident reveals the painter's (or patron's) desire to enhance the figure of Cortés, as it promotes the concept of his independence and signals that his only allegiance was to the king of Spain and not to the governor of Cuba. The events described at the bottom of the composition, the cutting of the hands of Xicotenga's spies, appears as the most important incident because of its position as well as because it is the most accomplished representation, with more detail, modeling, and individual depictions. The gore evident in the depiction of the cutting of the hands is not rare in this series where heads are seen falling from warrior's bodies in other paintings. The prominence of the scene in the panel also acts as an exemplum, the meteing of punishment. It follows closely Bernal Díaz del Castillo's account:

It seems that these Indians whom Xicotenga had sent with the food were spies. They remained with us that day and the following night, and some of them went with messages to Xicotenga and others arrived. Our

friends from Cempoala were sure that they were spies, and were the more suspicious of them in that they had been told that Xicotenga was all ready with a large number of warriors to attack our camp by night, and the Cempoalans at that time took it for a joke or bravado, and not believing it they had said nothing to Cortés; but Doña Marina heard of it at once and she repeated it to Cortés.

So as to learn the truth, Cortés had two of the most honest looking of the Tlaxcalans taken apart from the others, and they confessed that they were spies; then to others were taken and they also confessed and added that their Captain Xicotenga was awaiting their report to attack us that night with all his companies. When Cortés heard this he let it be known throughout the camp that we were to keep in the alert. Then he had seventeen of those spies captured and cut off the hands of some and the thumbs of others and sent them to the Captain Xicotenga to tell him that he had had them thus punished for daring to come in such a way.⁵⁸²

The priests hiding the Indian's idols, their gestures of obeisance to the Spaniards, and Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo's baptism of seven female Indians complement the other scenes insofar as they display the Spaniard's superiority over the Indians, militarily as well as in the realm of the new religion imposed on them summarily.

On the lower right hand side, Spaniards are depicted roasting a dog, as specified in the cartouche. References to dog-eating abound in both Cortés letter to Charles V and Bernal Díaz del Castillo's account when referring to the Mexican's dietary habits: "They sell rabbits and hares, and stags and small gelded dogs which they breed for eating."⁵⁸³

A third panel (fig. 4.22), somewhat busier than the last two, contains the following inscriptions in the cartouche:

A. Motecuhzoma's nephew receives Cortés, who is given gifts and incense ritual. B. Xicotenga comes in peace, offers flowers, and the chieftains offer their daughters to Cortés who does not accept them. C. Cortés entrance to Mexico and Motecuhzoma's reception. D. Cortés visits Motecuhzoma. E. They take Cortés to the House of the Idols. F. Motecuhzoma visits Cortés

⁵⁸² Bernal Díaz del Castillo, 106.

⁵⁸³ Hernando Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, trans. and ed. by Anthony Pagden (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 103.

and offers him gifts and gold. G. Gardens and various recreations of Motecuhzoma.⁵⁸⁴

Like the other two panels, the scenes appear randomly placed. The encounter of Motecuhzoma and Cortés, crucial to the story, are relegated to smaller areas of the canvas; the most important part, in the bottom picture plane, depicts Cortés receiving flowers from Xicotenga and the chieftain's daughters. However, the importance of the meeting between the two leaders (Cortés and Motecuhzoma) is accentuated by giving equal importance to the visit of one to the other, even if in smaller spaces. The pageantry of Cortés' entrance is suggested by the myriad boats accompanying Motecuhzoma's followers and by Cortés' busy entourage, the latter with horses, banners, and spears. The representation of Motecuhzoma's well-documented menagerie of animals on the upper right hand side of the composition is one of the few instances where the painter of these panels shows some regard for the cultural milieu in which the Aztec emperor thrived, even if the animals appear to be of a somewhat fantastical nature.

One third of the entire fourth panel (fig. 4.23) represents one event, the discovery of the treasure, surely the focus of the conquistador's ambition, hence its pictorial relevance. The cartouche reads as follows:

A. Crowning of the King of Texcoco and banishment of the former one through Cortés influence. B. Distribution of gold amongst the soldiers. C. Cortés orders the release of the Indians dedicated to sacrifice. D. Pans of flesh of sacrificed victims for the priests. E. Two Indians are burned by orders of Motecuhzoma for having betrayed Cortés. F. Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo preaches the faith to Motecuhzoma. G. Motecuhzoma's imprisonment. H. They attempt to take down the cross in front of the idols,

⁵⁸⁴ "A. El sobrino de Moctezuma resive a Cortes, le sauma y regala. B. Xicotenga viene a hacer paces da Suchiles y los Caziques ofresen sus Hijas a Cortes y no las admite. C. Entrada de Cortes en Mexico y Recivimiento de Moctezuma. D. Visita Cortes a Moctezuma. E. Lleva a aposentar a Cortes a la Cassa de los Ydolos. F. Visita Moctezuma a Cortes y da dadas y oro a Españoles. G. Jardines y Recreos Varios de Moctezuma."

but are not able to. I. Motecuhzoma is stoned and bowshot. J. Four Spaniards discover the treasure and they don't take it. K. The Spaniards retreat, the Sad Night.⁵⁸⁵

This panel juxtaposes scenes of the Spanish hunger for gold, conflicts arising from their attempts to eradicate the Aztec's religious cults and ceremonies, and the important scene of Motecuhzoma's fatal stoning. The Aztec emperor appears on the balcony of the second floor of a three-storied building flanked by Spaniards, reminiscent of scenes of Christ conventionally called *Ecce Homo*. This version of his death from wounds received from his people is consistent with most Spanish accounts. There are conflicting accounts concerning the death of Motecuhzoma, the exact cause of which may never be known. Indian informants often contradict Spanish versions, such as Bernal Díaz del Castillos' or even Cortes'. For the British historian John H. Elliott, professor at the University of Oxford, the exact cause "remains a mystery."⁵⁸⁶ Echoing those earlier chroniclers, Antonio de Solís' *Historia de la conquista de Mexico* is clear on this matter:

...they shouted that he was not their king any more; that he should give up his crown and staff for the spinning wheel and the spindle, calling him coward, effeminate, and vile prisoner of his enemies. The insults got lost in the shouting and he tried, with his frown and gestures, to appear to speak, when the multitude started to shoot and he saw upon himself the last insult from his vassals. Two soldiers nearby stationed on the orders of Cortés attempted to shield Motecuhzoma to prevent this danger; but it was not enough to stop arrows and, even more rigorously, stones to reach him,

⁵⁸⁵ "A. Coronación del Rey de Tescoco y destierro del que lo era a influencia de Cortés. B. Repartese Oro a los Soldados. C. Manda Cortés soltar los indios dedicados al Sacrificio. D. Ollas de carne de Sacrificados para sus Sacerdotes. E. Quemanse dos indios por mandado de Moctezuma por aver sido traidores a Cortés. F. Predica la fee Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo a Moctezuma. G. Prisión de Moctezuma. H. Intentan derribar la Cruz de enfrente de los idolos y no pueden. I. Pedrada y flechasos a Moctezuma. J. Hallan Quattro españoles el Thesoro y no le llegan. K. Retirada de los Españoles la noche triste."

⁵⁸⁶ John H. Elliott, "The Overthrow of Moctezuma and his Empire," in *Moctezuma: Aztec Ruler*, ed. Colin McEwan and Leonardo López Luján (London: The British Museum Press, 2009), 231.

one of which hit him on the head breaking part of his temple, and making him fall unconscious to the ground.⁵⁸⁷

Diego Duran (1537-1588), the Dominican friar who authored one of the first histories of the Aztec people and the conquest of Mexico taking into account indigenous informants, offers a different story:

I wish to avoid being blamed for having stated something false that the conquerors had not said or written, since it was generally believed that Motecuhzoma had been stoned to death. In order to clear up this point to my satisfaction, I again asked my informant and insisted that some writers had said that Motecuhzoma had been killed with stones. But I was told that the wound from the stone had been nothing, the head wound had healed quickly, and that in truth he had been found knifed.⁵⁸⁸

Even though Elliott observes that the cause of Motecuhzoma's death may never be known, he thinks that by the time it took place, the Aztec emperor was really of no use to the Spaniards. In his view, "to attempt to take him, or members of his entourage, with them as they made their escape would simply have added to their problems. The case for dispatching him on the spot was therefore a strong one."⁵⁸⁹ Obviously, the painter of the *enconchado* panel was adhering to the most widespread account from the Spanish side, eliding evidence to the contrary.

A fifth panel of this series offers a group of scenes reminiscent of the other series of *enconchado* paintings with the signature of Miguel González, those in the Museo de

⁵⁸⁷ Antonio de Solís y Rivadeneryra, *Historia de la conquista de México*, ed. Luis A. Arocena (Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1992), 755. "Dijérole a grandes voces que ya no era su rey; que dejase la corona y el cetro por la rueca y el huso, llamándole cobarde, afeminado y prisionero vil de sus enemigos. Perdíanse las injurias en los gritos y él procuraba, con el sobrecejo y con la mano, hacer lugar a sus palabras, cuando empezó a disparar la multitud y vio sobre sí el último atravesamiento de sus vasallos. Procuraron cubrirle con las rodela dos soldados que puso Hernán Cortés a su lado previniendo este peligro; pero no bastó la diligencia para que dejase de alcanzarle algunas flechas, y más rigurosamente una piedra que le hirió en la cabeza rompiendo parte de la sien, cuyo golpe le derribó a tierra sin sentido."

⁵⁸⁸ Fray Diego Durán, *The History of the Indies of New Spain*, ed. Doris Heyden (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 545.

⁵⁸⁹ Elliott, *Ibid.*

América and in Buenos Aires (fig. 4.24). According to García Saiz, the Conquest I series shows a very similar *cu* (or temple) repeated also in the Chamartín series (Conquest IV), now in Mexico (reproducing it twice), and not far in style from the series that belongs to the heirs of the Peñalver family (Conquest III).⁵⁹⁰

The inscriptions on the cartouche read as follows:

A. Guatemuz [Cuauhtemoc] is acclaimed as king. B. War in Tacuba and the Spaniards burn the houses. C. The Tlaxcalans mistreat Xicotenga. D. Sandoval's help. E. Restoration of the Royal Standard and death of the official standard bearer. F. The Great Temple is overtaken and the idols are brought down. G. The Indians take Cortés prisoner and take him to be sacrificed but he is liberated by Christobal de Olea together with some Spaniards and Tlaxcalans.⁵⁹¹

The incidents in this panel all take place toward the end of the conquest of the city of Tenochtitlan, after Motecuhzoma's death, with the same juxtaposition of religious and military victories depicted. Guatemuz (Cuauhtemoc), the last Aztec ruler, appears in the upper left hand corner among trees. An Indian is climbing a tree from which Spanish men hang, not far from the clamoring of the new Aztec emperor. The image on the picture plane shows a number of figures seemingly fighting to free Cortés.

The last of the six panels is no different from the rest (fig. 4.25). The cartouche reads:

A. The Indians eat Spanish flesh and are nauseated. B. With five heads the Indians threaten to do the same with the rest. C. They hang Xicotenga. D. Lerma, the Indian, wanted to defend Xicotenga. E. García Holguín arrests

⁵⁹⁰ García Saiz, *La pintura colonial en el Museo de América*, 80.

⁵⁹¹ "A. Aclaman a Guatemuz por Rey. B. Guerra en Tacuba I queman los Españoles las Casas. C. Los Tlaxcaltecas maltratan a Xicotenga. D. Socorro a Sandoval. E. Restauración del estandarte Real y muerte del Alférez. F. Fanase el Gran Cu y derribanse lo Idolos. G. Hacen prisionero a Cortés los Indios y llevandole a Sacrificar le libra Christobal de Olea, con algunos Españoles y Tlaxcaltecas."

Coactemuz. F. Help by land. G. Cortés orders their idols burned and destroyed. H. Defeated ship that aided the Villa.⁵⁹²

The introduction of the Indians act of cannibalism in the upper left hand side of the panel sets the tone in this *enconchado* painting believed by García Saiz to be the one that should close the series if a certain order is to be considered when viewing.⁵⁹³ According to Anthony Pagden:

None of the tribes with whom Cortés came in contact were truly cannibalistic. Certain portions of the sacrificial victims were eaten, but this was a symbolic ritual. The reiterated accusations made by Cortés and other Spaniards seem partly an excuse for taking slaves, partly a preconceived idea of native customs acquired in the Antilles, whose inhabitants were often cannibals.⁵⁹⁴

The human flesh eaters then set five heads on the ground, clearly visible in the painting. It has been evident to many scholars that even though the Spaniards were horrified as they witnessed some rituals involving human sacrifice, the religious or cosmological aspects of the activity was not well understood. For David Carrasco, a specialist on pre-Hispanic religion, “these dramatic and gruesome actions had both mythic and military significance for the people carrying them out, expressive of Mesoamerican religious traditions of cosmic protection and rejuvenation through ritual killing.”⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹² “ A. Comen los Indios carne de Españoles y tienen asco. B. Con cinco cavezas amenazan los Indios hacer lo mismo con los demas. C. Ahorcan a Xicotenga. D. El Indio Lerma quiso defender a Xicotenga. E. García Holguín prende a Coactemuz. F. Socorro por tierra. G. Manda Cortés quemar y destrozarse los idolos. H. Nao derrotada que dio Socorro a la Villa.”

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁵⁹⁴ Hernando Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, 480-481.

⁵⁹⁵ David Carrasco, “Human Sacrifice/Debt Payments from the Aztec Point of View,” in *The History of the Conquest of New Spain*, ed. David Carrasco (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 459.

On the right, the scene of Xicotenga's hanging, even if relegated to the background, is still dramatic for its detail. In the foreground, Cortés on horseback looks ahead to the burning of the idols, one of which stands out as having a human figure and the head of a bird. On the lower left-hand side of the panel, not described in the cartouche, are a number of dismembered limbs and disembodied heads.

Ideology in the *Enconchados* Depicting the Conquest of Mexico

Since almost half of the more than two-hundred extant *enconchado* works scattered in different collections and museums pertain to the Conquest of Mexico, several scholars have recently focused their attention on the ideological impact of such images in viceregal New Spain. An international symposium at the University of Miami in 2003 was held in conjunction with an exhibition of the extraordinary anonymous seventeenth-century paintings of the Conquest of Mexico, including the eight conquest paintings depicting the Conquest in the Kislak collection. Several speakers undertook the task of relating the surge in imperial images at this particular time in Mexican history to an interpretation of the past based on misconceptions that had taken root over the previous two-hundred years. Using anthropologist Dennis Tedlock's term "mythhistory" to refer to the "blending of mythic and historical elements of the great written history of the Quiché Mayas,"⁵⁹⁶ historian Matthew Restall finds that the narratives rendered in the Kislak paintings recreated a legend retold many times. For him, "mythhistory" is "a vision of the

⁵⁹⁶ Matthew Restall, "Spanish Creation of the Conquest of Mexico," in *Invasion and Transformation: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico* (Boulder, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 2008), 94.

historical past heavily infused with misconceptions and partisan interpretations so deeply rooted as to constitute legends or myths.”⁵⁹⁷ In other words, histories drew from previous ones, according to Restall, thus legitimizing or enhancing a certain type of narrative. Although the artist or the exact date of execution of the Kislak canvases are not known, Restall asserts that they must have been painted after 1684 when Antonio de Solís (royal chronicler since 1661) had published his *Historia de la conquista de México*, “a distillation of a century and a half of conquest mythistory.”⁵⁹⁸ Some aspects of “mythistory” that Restall points out as represented in the Kislak collection can also be attributed to *enconchado* paintings. One instance of “mythistory” that Restall illustrates is the portrayal of the conquistadors as soldiers, well equipped, as if they belonged to a royal army.⁵⁹⁹ Another interesting facet of “mythistory” is the way native peoples are portrayed as “either lacking the attributes of culture and society, almost like animals; as innocent and childlike; or as savage and wicked.”⁶⁰⁰

This conception of the conquest images is taken up by another scholar in the compilation, Michael Schreffler, who, identifying the *enconchados* of the conquest with the pictorial vocabulary of the Kislak paintings, asserts that both “embrace of an official, imperial version of the Conquest visibly proclaimed their patron’s allegiance to the king at a time when that history and, indeed, the power of the Crown were being contested on a variety of fronts.”⁶⁰¹ This essay, which is part of the author’s doctoral dissertation,

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 95.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., 97.

⁶⁰¹ Michael Schreffler, *Invasion and Transformation*, 122.

eventually became one of the chapters in his book *The Art of Allegiance: Visual Culture and Imperial Power in Baroque New Spain*, a work that expands on the views of his conference.⁶⁰²

Antonio de Solís' 1684 publication of the *Historia de la Conquista de México* could have, in fact, elicited an interest in the topic that resulted in a number of works of art that included not only *enconchados*, but also *biombos*, as well as the series of eight paintings now in the Kislak collection. Whether the proliferation of images depicting the conquest was a concerted effort to reinvigorate the legitimacy of its consequences, or the *zeitgeist* of the period, the events pictured invited the contemporary viewer to reflect on these issues.

Marita Martínez del Río de Redo, echoing García Saíz, enumerates the different versions of the history of the conquest available to the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century artists in New Spain, beginning with Cortés' *Cartas de Relación*, which were widely read and distributed both in Mexico and in Spain, Francisco López de Gómara's *La conquista de México* (1554), essentially based on Cortés' account, Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera* (1629), Bernardino de Sahagún's *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España* (1569, original Nahuatl version, now lost), to the latest, Antonio de Solís' *Historia de la Conquista de México* (1684). The latter was recently published at the time the *enconchados* were produced and the one most widely read.⁶⁰³

However, Martínez del Río de Redo's sees in the interpretation of historical sources by the

⁶⁰² Michael Schreffler, *The Art of Allegiance: Visual Culture and Imperial Power in Baroque New Spain* (University Park, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press), 2008.

⁶⁰³ Marita Martínez del Río de Redo, "La conquista en una serie de tablas enconchadas," in *Imágenes de los naturales en el arte de la Nueva España, siglos xvi al xviii* (México: Banamex, 2005), 62.

enconchado artists a more conventional view of the process of the conquest. She views “the artists or intellectual authors of these works as inspired principally by the redeeming work of Solís, which is reflected in the focus on the theme of conquest, accomplishing equal treatment in greatness to both armies.”⁶⁰⁴

The representation of power, or the performance of authority, were major propaganda exercises for the inculcation of fidelity to the Crown as well. The power of the viceroy as representative of the king in the New World necessitated of the trappings of royalty that were displayed at entrances to the towns and cities and religious festivals. The absent monarch had to be constantly recalled by the use of emblems, not least of which was the palio under which the viceroy was paraded during processions. According to Alejandro Cañeque, “the palio was probably the most important marker of royalty, more important than even the crown, because the Spanish monarchy was conspicuous for the absence of a coronation ceremony.”⁶⁰⁵ In one Madrid panel Motecuhzoma himself is depicted under a palio (fig. 4.26), a transfer of legitimacy that underscores the painter’s resolve to have the Aztec ruler associated, anachronistically, with the continuation of a historical epoch begun by his demise. By allowing the Aztec king the same manifestation of power as Cortés, this scene, and a similar one in the Kislak painting, seems to contradict Schreffler’s suggestion of a marker of Spanish superiority. This ambiguity is at the heart of contradicting opinions about whether these conquest scenes represent an appropriation of Aztec history for the *criollo*’s advantage, or whether they express the Spaniard’s superiority over the Aztecs, and are thus markers of imperial dominance.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., 63.

⁶⁰⁵ Cañeque, *The King’s Living Image: The Culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Colonial Mexico* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 125.

Schreffler's argument resides in his interpretation of these secular objects as constructions of a spatial order that privileges the Spaniards over the indigenous populations. In this sense, he suggests that this order "was unified in its deployment of a fixed vocabulary of forms and symbols, and it ultimately gave shape and structure to an ideology of imperial power and rule as well as a mode of ideal, imperial subjectivity."⁶⁰⁶ He sees the prevalent use of Antonio de Solís' revisionist historiography as a means to this end, especially the fact that Solís' extolling the figure of Cortés can be construed as a "manifestation of the power and glory of the crown of Charles V."⁶⁰⁷ For Schreffler, Cortés is thus emblematic of a proto-nationalistic view where the conqueror is seen to represent the king of Spain, and thus the crown's authority over the newly conquered lands. The panels are then "ideologically similar to the laudatory account of Solís."⁶⁰⁸

Furthermore, Schreffler associates the demise of the Hapsburgs with the need to nurture an acceptance of the new order in Spain. According to this view of the transition from one dynasty to another, from the Hapsburgs to the Bourbons, Spain's political crisis in the 1680s and 1690s provided fodder for Spain's enemies by challenging its territorial integrity.⁶⁰⁹ The perception that the newly installed king, Charles II, was ineffectual and a weakling, Schreffler adds, resulted in an overwhelming propaganda program where royal symbols proliferated throughout the country: "mirrors, eagles, lions, and orbs."⁶¹⁰ In this

⁶⁰⁶ Schreffler, *The Art of Allegiance*, 2.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁶⁰⁹ Schreffler, *Invasion and Transformation*, 118.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 119.

atmosphere, this profusion of symbols was a consequence “necessary to articulate the Crown’s power in unambiguous terms.”⁶¹¹

What this view presupposes is that these works were part of a concerted effort by a monarchy that saw fit the implementation of artistic programs from the colony that would resonate with the patrons of the paintings in Spain, as it was to the metropolis that these works were destined in most cases. But it was more likely that the ideas inherent in the interpretation of the history of the conquest were more the result of the conflicting political and social environment in which they were produced. If the artists were reproducing Solís’ views on Cortés, a book that is contemporaneous with the paintings, they were also responding to the criollos’ ascendancy in cultural matters, as attested by the writings of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, and by the myriad implications of the mother-of-pearl in pre-Hispanic cultures, as expressed previously in Chapters 2 and 3.

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

Chapter 5

Three Hundred Years of *Enconchado* Paintings

The *Aura* of a Work of Art

Interest in *enconchado* paintings has gradually increased in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as attested by the numerous exhibitions and scholarly attention devoted to these works, especially in the last few years. The 2010-2011 exhibition *Black Current* at the Crow Museum in Dallas, a museum devoted exclusively to Asian arts, and the exhibition *Monctezuma* at the British Museum in London in 2009-2010, demonstrate the appeal and relevance of these works of art that were produced in seventeenth-century Baroque Mexico. These two recent exhibitions, furthermore, are witness to an interest that goes beyond the intrinsic value of the works and connects them to a wider world as well as to diverse cultural and historical processes, such as the Battles of Alessandro Farnese depicted in the folding screen in Dallas or scenes of the conquest of Mexico in the London show. Patrons of the former would have made the connection with Asian cultures, the intention the curator of the exhibit desired; patrons of the latter, would have made the connection with the pre-Hispanic cultures alongside whose objects the *enconchado* paintings were displayed. In either exhibit, historical issues were brought to the fore, eliciting a re-interpretation of the political circumstances in which they were produced and the commercial viability of them as works of art with resonances beyond the culture where they were manufactured.

Even though very little is known about the reception of these works in the seventeenth century when they were produced, one can surmise that the original impact they produced on the beholder could be associated more with their religious aspect than with an aesthetic response, especially regarding the ones with sacred subject matter. A work of art, according to Walter Benjamin, the German cultural philosopher (1892-1940), “is inseparable from its being imbedded in the fabric of tradition.”⁶¹² *Enconchado* painting, a new art in New Spain absorbing techniques from different traditions, resulted in a singular style that conforms to Benjamin’s definition of a work of art’s *aura*—its uniqueness, which “determined the history to which it was subject throughout the time of its existence.”⁶¹³

The techniques that the *enconchado* painter utilized, namely the use of mother-of-pearl and its association to Asian models or pre-Hispanic dormant practices, were most likely intended to provoke a devout reaction from onlookers, an expression of a cult or ritual, in the case of the religious images. For Benjamin, “originally the contextual integration of art in tradition found its expression in the cult,” and therefore “the existence of the work of art with reference to its aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function.”⁶¹⁴ In other words, following Benjamin’s example, a Greek sculpture of Venus was an object of veneration when it was produced in ancient Greece and an “ominous idol” for the clerics of the Middle Ages.⁶¹⁵ An *enconchado* painting displaying an event from the life of the Virgin or the life of Christ, enhanced by its shiny surfaces summoning light

⁶¹² Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 1969), 223.

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 223-224.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*

effects, would have made an otherworldly impression on onlookers in tandem with their beliefs and expectations of the miraculous.

Royal inventories

Divorced from their original contexts as ritual images in colonial New Spain, the first references to *enconchado* painting in Antonio Ponz's inventory of works of art in Spanish collections of the eighteenth century attest to the distance that these works had traveled in space and, more importantly, in time, to a response elicited a century later and an ocean away. María Concepción García Saiz's seminal essay "La conquista militar y los *enconchados*," begins by referring to the inventory and appraisal of the assets of the last Hapsburg king, Charles II, upon his death in 1700.⁶¹⁶ As they perused the different rooms in the royal palaces, the numerous personalities close to the crown, experts in their own right on the matter at hand, came upon a number of works of art whose provenance appeared "to have been made in the Indies."⁶¹⁷ One of the persons in charge of the inspection, the marble sculptor Alejandro Dubo, came across *enconchado* paintings in the royal gallery denominated "Titian's Vault" in the chapter of the inventory titled "Alhajas del quarto de Su Magestad" (Jewels in the room of His Majesty).⁶¹⁸ As the very first reference of these works in royal collections, Dubo's mention follows the common practice both in Spain and in New Spain of calling them "embutidos de nácar" (inlaid mother-of-pearl).⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁶ García Saiz, "La conquista militar y los *enconchados*," 109.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 110-111.

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 111.

Moreover, as García Saiz also indicates, Dubo distinguishes between works produced in Asia from those of the New World by describing “charol lexítimo” (genuine lacquer) for those made in Japan, China, or India, and those coming from the New World as “charol embutido de nácar” (lacquer inlaid with mother-of-pearl).⁶²⁰ These designations were applied to a panel of the Virgin of Guadalupe, another twelve panels depicting the life of the Virgin, and twenty-four of unknown subject matter, according to García Saiz as she reviewed these documents published in 1975.⁶²¹ The Spanish scholar Gloria Fernández Bayton had prepared an exhaustive six-volume compendium of Charles II’s will and testament, including inventories, where several paintings inlaid with mother-of-pearl were documented:

A panel painting of Our Lady of Conception in an oval with flowers with a glass in front and shell and ebony frames cuartos high.

A lacquered folding screen consisting of eight panels three yards high each and it is from the Indies.⁶²²

These findings from the royal inventories demonstrate that a large number of lacquer works were arriving in the royal quarters from different parts of Asia and the New World as gifts from the Japanese court or from American viceroyalties and were being displayed in the royal palaces alongside other works of art by Zuccaro, Rubens, Veronese, Dürer, Tintoretto, or Ribera.⁶²³ This is also true of other patrician Spanish families, as is the case of objects described in the dowry supplied by Doña Catalina de la Cueva y de la Cerda when

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² Gloria Fernández Bayton, *Inventarios reales I, Testamentaria del Rey Carlos II* (Madrid: Museo del Prado, Patronato Nacional de Museos, 1975), 124-125.

⁶²³ García Saiz, “La conquista military y los enconchados,” 111.

she married her cousin Don Ambrosio Spinola de la Cerca in 1717.⁶²⁴ One of them was a series of “alaxas de charol” (lacquer jewels) appraised by Pedro Onofre Cotto, who describes himself in the document García Saiz investigated as “painter of His Majesty and expert in lacquer.”⁶²⁵ According to García Saiz, besides other desks and pieces of furniture included in this document, “two panels one *vara* high and three quarter wide, one with the *Conversion of Saint Paul* and the other with the *Martyrdom of Saint Peter*, inlaid with mother-of-pearl and with reliefs and gold from China,” surely of Mexican origin, attests to the esteem in which these objects were held by this family.⁶²⁶

The penchant for collecting objects made from lacquer and other *chinoiserie* did not diminish when the Bourbons came to power.⁶²⁷ The Italian architect Filippo Juvara (1678-1736) was employed by the Spanish Crown to design a new royal palace after a fire that destroyed the Alcazar in 1734. The architect, following the newly acquired taste, utilized Chinese lacquers for the decoration of its interior, as he had done previously in the decoration of the Chinese rooms of the royal palace in Turin.⁶²⁸ These lacquers were part of the decoration of the royal rooms of the Granja de San Ildefonso, the palace where the 24 panels “embutidas de nácar” (inlaid with mother-of-pearl) sent from Mexico to Charles II ended up.⁶²⁹ They remained there until 1776 when they were transferred to the recently created Gabinete de Historia Natural founded by Charles III, as García Saiz points out.⁶³⁰

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

⁶²⁶ Ibid.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 112.

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

An aspect of the trajectory of these *enconchado* panels is the fact that they were stored alongside the Asian ones.⁶³¹ Yves Bottineau, the French scholar who has studied the decoration of the Granja de San Ildefonso, refers to the interest that Isabel de Farnesio (Philip V's second wife) had for these objects as well.⁶³² Furthermore, the 24 panels that Dubo describes ambiguously as "small panels that can serve as backing or folding screen for lower platform," implying several manners of display rather than a single one, were once hung as pictures and not displayed as folding screens.⁶³³

Viceroy of New Spain as commissioners of *enconchado* paintings

The taste for distinctive paintings inlaid with mother-of-pearl that was embraced in the Spanish court as well as in the palaces of the nobility appears not to have been commissioned from Spain, but were rather goods sent from Mexico as gifts or examples of a new art.⁶³⁴ García Saiz matches the date of the paintings, 1698, with the government of the viceroy José de Sarmiento y Valladares in New Spain, for a number of such works in

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

⁶³¹ Ibid.

⁶³² Ibid. García Saiz's information is taken from Yves Bottineau, *El arte cortesano en la España de Felipe V (1700-1746)* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1986), 521, n. 371.

⁶³³ Ibid. García Saiz also addresses the issue of whether some of these series of *enconchado* paintings were ever part of a folding screen or not. As far as the most recent investigations are concerned, only the folding screen divided between the Museo del Virreinato in Tepotzotlán and a private collection in Mexico City shows signs of such intention. See García Saiz, "Precisiones al estudio de la obra de Manuel Toussaint: Su proyección en la historia del arte mexicano," *Coloquio Internacional Extraordinario* (Mexico City: IIE, UNAM, 1992), 105-116.

⁶³⁴ Ibid., 113.

Spanish collections.⁶³⁵ Since they must have been sent during the tenure of Sarmiento y Valladares, as he governed between 1696 and 1701, it can be conjectured that they were part of the viceroy's agenda to make the Crown aware of new developments in the establishment of a *criollo* imprint in the aesthetic values of the viceroyalty. It is no coincidence, moreover, that Sarmiento y Valladares held the title of Count of Motecuhzoma, which he acquired from his first wife, which links this Spanish noble to the Aztec elite.⁶³⁶

Marita Martínez del Río de Redo traces the genealogy of the viceroy's wife to illustrate the connection between Old and New World nobility. According to her research, Doña María Jerónima y Jofre de Loaisa, Countess of Motecuhzoma and Tula (or Tulengo), “was a descendant four times removed from Don Pedro Xohualcahuatzin Motecuhzoma, son of the Aztec emperor, baptized in February 1525 in Mexico City.”⁶³⁷ Pedro's son, Diego, married Doña Francisca de la Cueva and their offspring, Don Pedro Tesifón Motecuhzoma de la Cueva, was granted the title of Count of Motecuhzoma and Tula by Philip IV on December 13, 1627.⁶³⁸ In his time, this Don Pedro married Doña Jerónima Porrás and their son, Don Luis, married Doña Luisa Jofre de Loaisa, the daughter of the Count of Arco.⁶³⁹ José de Sarmiento y Valladares' wife, Doña María Jerónima, was Doña Luisa's daughter who became the third Countess of Motecuhzoma.⁶⁴⁰ When Don José, Duke of Atrixco, the thirty-second viceroy of New Spain, arrived in New Spain in 1696, María Jerónima had

⁶³⁵ Ibid.

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

⁶³⁷ Marita Martínez del Río de Redo, “La conquista en una serie de tablas enconchadas,” in *Imágenes de los naturales en el arte de la Nueva España, siglos XVI al XVIII*, 65.

⁶³⁸ Ibid.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

already died (in 1668), so he came accompanied by their two daughters Doña Fausta and Melchora and a new wife, Doña Andrea de Guzmán.⁶⁴¹ Melchora died of smallpox soon after arrival and, therefore, her sister Doña Fausta inherited the title.⁶⁴²

That descendants of the Aztec emperor became entangled with members of the Spanish nobility is not surprising. What is notable, however, is that some of these *enconchado* panels depicted the conquest of Mexico and, therefore, indicate a sense of pride in vindicating the transition from a pre-Hispanic past to a Spanish colonization that echoed, in the minds of the Europeans, Europe's own transition from pagan antiquity to the Christian era. The rise of the *criollo* class in New Spain was, thus, accompanied by its own Greece and Rome. A number of panels of the conquest extant today are in the hands of either descendants of Motecuhzoma or families descending from New Spanish viceroys as well as royal and noble households.⁶⁴³

The series of *enconchado* paintings depicting the conquest of Mexico that Martínez del Río de Redo studies in *Imágenes de los naturales en el arte de la Nueva España* consists of twelve panels from a private collection of twenty-four.⁶⁴⁴ These paintings were once part of the collection of Alicia Motecuhzoma, who inherited them from her father, the Duke of Motecuhzoma Tultengo.⁶⁴⁵ According to Martínez del Río de Redo, these paintings were offered by Isabel Motecuhzoma to the Mexican government, but the sale did not take place. Later, the Marquise of the House of Peñalver bought them, and she, in turn, bequeathed

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² Ibid.

⁶⁴³ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid.

them to her two daughters, each acquiring twelve. It is the twelve depicting the conquest of Mexico that the Spanish scholar analyzes in the above-mentioned book, which is fully illustrated.⁶⁴⁶

The viceroy Don José de Sarmiento y Valladares (fig. 5.1), himself a patrician from the House of Sarmiento, is likely to have commissioned the painter of the folding-screen now in the Museo Nacional del Virreinato in Tepotzotlán and even suggested the subject matter, although no document exists as evidence. His coat of arms appears on one of the leaves of the folding screen mentioned above, surely painted at his request.

Martínez del Río de Redo makes the point that many other noble families in Spain were proud owners of lacquered items inlaid as well with mother-of-pearl.⁶⁴⁷ Such is the case of the wife of the viceroy Don Joaquín de Monserrat, Marquee of Cruilles (1760-1766) who acquired a number of items “maqueadas” (lacquered) that were “admired in the New Spain.”⁶⁴⁸ It has already been mentioned in the Introduction that Antonio Ponz came across *enconchado* paintings in the palace of the Duke of the Infantado. Ponz also perused the collections of the Marquee of Loreto, the second of this title, Nicolás del Campo Rodríguez de las Varillas de Salamanca y Solís, who was viceroy and General Captain of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata.⁶⁴⁹ In his collection, according to an eighteenth-century

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid. Quoted from José Joaquín Granados y Gálvez, *Tardes americanas trabajadas por un indio y un español* (Mexico: UNAM, Coordinación de Humanidades, Miguel Angel Porrúa, 1987), 117.

⁶⁴⁹ Antonio Ponz, *Viages de España*, III, 186, as quoted in Teodoro Falcón, “El patrimonio artístico del I Marqués de Loreto (1687-1772) y de la familia del Campo,” *Laboratorio de Arte* 19 (2006): 288.

inventory, there is mention of *enconchado* paintings of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the Virgin of Mexico, and Saint John.⁶⁵⁰ The entries read as follows:

A picture of the Virgin and Child in her arms and pilgrims adoring her, with golden molding and field of shell, in one hundred reales.

A picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe, two *varas* high and five quarters wide, with golden molding and field of shell, in one hundred twenty reales.

A picture of the Virgin of Mexico, three quarters high and half a *vara* wide, with frame inlaid in mother-of-pearl, in thirty reales.

A picture of San Juan, seven quarters high and five quarters wide, with gilded molding and field of shell, in one hundred reales.⁶⁵¹

Many other *enconchado* paintings, mostly of religious nature, have been found as part of private collections. A 1709 inventory of a Madrid lingerie shop owner, Doña Agustina de Santos who died April 14, 1709, reveals that the deceased owned six *enconchado* paintings.⁶⁵² This information, found in the Archivo Histórico de Protocolos in Madrid, attests to the popularity of devotional images in the households of the Spanish elite as Doña Agustina's inventory (executed by a painter by the name of Gabriel Antonio Corvoysier) includes images of saints and the Virgin, along with *enconchado* paintings, stated as follows:

Six paintings from the Indies, of different saints, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, two of the same thing, a *vara* and a quarter wide by one high, and the others somewhat smaller, 1800 reales.⁶⁵³

⁶⁵⁰ Teodoro Falcón, 294.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., 297-298. "Un cuadro de la Virgen con el Niño en los brazos y unos peregrinos adorándola, con moldura, perfil dorado y campo encarnado a concha, en cien reales. Un cuadro de la Virgen de Guadalupe de dos varas de alto y cinco cuartas de ancho, con moldura dorada y campo de concha, en ciento y veinte reales. Un cuadro de la Virgen de Méjico, de tres cuartas de alto y media vara de ancho, con marco embutido en nácar, en treinta reales. Un cuadro de San Juan de siete cuartas de alto y cinco de ancho, con moldura de talla dorada y campo de concha, en cien reales."

⁶⁵² José Luis Barrio Moya, "Seis *enconchados* mexicanos en un inventario madrileño de 1709," in *Archivo Español de Arte* 268 (1994): 413.

⁶⁵³ Ibid., 414. "Seis pinturas de Indias, de diferentes sanos, embutidas de nácar, las dos yguales de cosa de vara y quarta de ancho y una de alto, y las otras algo más pequeñas, 1800 rs."

Another such inventory, taken in 1700 from the belongings of Juan de Soto Noguera from Utrera (a municipality of Sevilla in Southern Spain), a proprietor of an hacienda with the name “Cusco Nuevo,” indicates the fondness for New World nomenclature (Cusco Nuevo) and New World images of devotion brought back to the Old World by *indianos* (Spaniards who returned to their mother country). In this inventory that García Saiz located, the deceased leaves among his goods, “an image of the Holy Family on panel, with moulding, all inlaid in mother-of-pearl, two tercios high and other images of different devotions and painting on panel, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, half a vara high.”⁶⁵⁴

Enconchado paintings as symbols of power

It is pertinent to remember that one of the first things Hernando Cortés did as soon as the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán was occupied was to send a number of objects from the New World to the Spanish monarch, including gifts that Motecuhzoma himself had given him. Some of these objects eventually made their way to Sevilla, Toledo, Valladolid, and Brussels to be displayed to a public avid for information about the lands on the other side of the ocean.⁶⁵⁵ The Aztecs were perceived by the Europeans not only as a mysterious culture who performed human sacrifices to appease their gods, but at the same time, as a somewhat highly sophisticated civilization whose monumental architecture and

⁶⁵⁴ M. Jesús Sanz and M. Teresa Babrio, “Inventarios artísticos sevillanos del siglo XVIII: Relación de obras artísticas,” *Archivo Hispalense*, Sevilla, 1974, 120, as quoted in García Saiz and Juan Miguel Serrera, “Aportaciones al catálogo de ‘enconchados’,” 56.

⁶⁵⁵ Paz Cabello, “La formación de las colecciones americanas en España: Evolución de los criterios,” *Anales del Museo de América* 9 (2001): 303.

sculpture, intricate mythology, and centuries-old history merited admiration. The indigenous cultures of Central America and South America utilized feathers, jade, gold, silver, mother-of-pearl and other precious or semi-precious stones, to make finely crafted objects never before seen by Europeans. And it was not only their art that elicited curiosity and awe, but all the new species of flora and fauna that were arriving in Europe from different parts of the Americas that sparked the European imagination. So it is not surprising that when Cortés showed the fruits of his conquest, first in Madrid, and then in Brussels (a Burgundian dependency of the Spanish crown), the other noble families of Europe immediately showed interest in acquiring objects from the far-flung New World. According to Detlef Heikamp, a scholar who has researched the connection between the Medici family in Florence, Italy, and Mexico, these treasures initially brought to the Old World were inventoried in both Seville and Vienna.⁶⁵⁶ It is in Brussels that Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), the German Renaissance artist, saw some of these objects that commented on them in his own diary.⁶⁵⁷ He writes:

Also I have seen the things which have been sent to the King from the new golden land [Mexico]: a sun all made of gold, a whole *klaffter* [fathom] wide, and a moon all of silver of the same size. Also two rooms full of the arms of the people there, and all sorts of wonderful weapons of theirs, armor and darts, wonderful shields, strange clothing, bedspreads, and all kinds of wonderful objects of various uses, much more beautiful to me than miracles {Wunderding}. These things were all so precious that they have been valued at 100,000 florins. In all my life I have seen nothing that made my heart rejoice so much as these things. Here I have found wonderful, costly things and I have marveled at the subtle ingenuity of people in strange lands.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁶ Detlef Heikamp, *Mexico and the Medici* (Florence: Editrici Edam, 1972), 7.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁸ Jane Campbell Hutchison, *Albert Dürer, A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 141.

As the Spanish curator Paz Cabello asserts, “the criteria that appears to preside over the act of collecting continues to be dynastic, the object as a symbol of the power of the Crown.”⁶⁵⁹ The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were periods of unprecedented rivalry among the European nations, keen on expanding their territories, authority, power, and sphere of influence to the newly conquered peoples of the New World, Africa, and Asia. Collecting objects from these far-off lands became, not only proof of participation in those exploratory, imperialistic epics, but also proof of the collector’s access to those cultures, an access that denoted power over the other European nations scrambling for a piece of the pie.

Thus, the inventory of the last Hapsburg king of 1700, where the mention of *enconchado* paintings is documented, demonstrates the Spanish Crown’s interest in collecting works that reminded the world of their role on the world’s stage. It was also a way to create a sense of the “other,” as these cultures became the object of as much physical and economic exploitation, as they were of symbolic discourses that reflected the European’s world-view, as well as the view they had of themselves. The later incorporation of these works in ethnographic or archeological museums is testament that these works were considered suited to “cabinets of curiosities” and displayed for contemplation by the public.

⁶⁵⁹ Paz Cabello, 305.

The Pursuit of *Enconchado* Paintings by Private Collectors and State Institutions

José de Santiago Silva, the Chief of the Technical Department of the National Museum of History in Mexico City, traces the provenance of the panels acquired by his museum in the early nineteen seventies. Basing his findings on a letter by Antonio Martínez Baez in the archives of the museum to Antonio Arriaga Ochoa, the Director of the museum, Santiago Silva relates in detail Martínez Baez's trip to Spain in search of Monctezuma's descendants in 1970.⁶⁶⁰ By that time, the paintings belonging to the Motecuhzoma Tultengo family had been offered for sale to Franz Mayer, the Mexican-naturalized German collector and philanthropist. That information was supplemented with information from Dr. Silvio Zavala who was informed by the Spanish ambassador to Paris that said collection, already fragmented, was for sale.⁶⁶¹ Martínez Baez, according to the letter, was not able to make contact with the Motecuhzoma family, but did learn that the collection had already passed to other hands.⁶⁶² In the meantime, he also learned that there were other *enconchado* pieces in the Colegio Jesuita de Nuestra Señora del Recuerdo, in Chamartín de la Rosa, in Madrid.⁶⁶³ He contacted the administrator of the Jesuit school, Father Javier Martínez de Ubago, who promised Martínez Baez to sell the *enconchado* paintings.⁶⁶⁴ Santiago Silva continues

⁶⁶⁰ José de Santiago Silva, *Algunas consideraciones sobre las pinturas enconchadas del Museo Nacional de Historia*, 6.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶⁶² Ibid.

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid.

the reading of the letter by adding that once Martínez Baez inspected the panels closely, he realized that they were part of a series of which two panels already were in the possession of Franz Mayer, who had acquired them in the United States.⁶⁶⁵ This offered the opportunity, according to this author, to join together the series of six panels in Mexico.⁶⁶⁶

Alberto Cortina y Alcocer, the son of the Spanish ambassador to Paris, corresponded with Martínez Baez, offering him the option of acquiring the part of the collection of *enconchado* paintings that belonged to him, as well as the part that belonged to his cousin, Alberto Alcocer.⁶⁶⁷ Martínez Baez, who was at the time in Mexico, returned to Europe to examine the twenty-four panels that were actually hung on the walls of the dining rooms of the Alcocer cousins' apartments.⁶⁶⁸ The price of the panels was one million dollars, not an insignificant amount at the time; the price for the four in the Jesuit school was a million *pesetas*, considerably less, especially taking into account the exchange rate, but still substantial.⁶⁶⁹

Considering the cost, the *enconchado* paintings from Chamartín de la Rosa were deemed more affordable. Martínez Baez then obtained a credit from "Financiera Metropolitana," a lending institution whose director was keen on bringing the paintings to Mexican soil, "even with an undetermined final recipient, be it a private

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

collector, a private credit institution, or the National Museum.”⁶⁷⁰ It appears that at this point both Franz Mayer and the Banco Nacional de Mexico had expressed the intention of buying the panels.⁶⁷¹

Following the entangled trajectory of these paintings that Santiago Silva has provided, the administrator of the Colegio Nuestra Señora del Recuerdo in Madrid took the matter of exporting works of art out of Spain to the Junta Española de Valoración y Exportación de Obras de Arte (Spanish Council of Appraisal and Exportation of Works of Art), an office under the Minister of Education and Science, through the Department of Fine Arts. That council was the entity responsible for the permission needed to export works of art and consisted of six members that came from different art institutions.⁶⁷² Two of the members (José Camón Aznar, Director of the Museum Lázaro Galdiano, and the scholar Diego Angulo Iñiguez) opposed the exportation of the paintings.⁶⁷³ The criteria for this refusal was the evident worth that these works of art had accrued and which were now seen as part of the country’s legacy. The official bulletin of June 16 1971, moreover, recommended that the panels should be sent to the Museo de América in Madrid.⁶⁷⁴

Notwithstanding this hindrance, Martínez Baez set himself the goal of persuading the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia and the Subsecretaría de

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² Ibid., 8.

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid.

Cultura Popular y Educación Extraescolar, under the directorship of Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, to acquire the works, in view of the fact that one of the objections of the Spanish government had been that the paintings would have been purchased by a private institution.⁶⁷⁵

This letter from Antonio Baez to Antonio Arriaga is an inexhaustible source of information and José de Santiago Silva's account continues to shed light on the interest sparked by these works as part of the heritage of both Mexico and Spain. Martínez Baez's plan of sparking interest at the highest levels of the Mexican cultural institutions succeeded by eliciting a response from the director at the time of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), Luis Ortis Macedo, who saw the opportunity of incorporating to the national patrimony these paintings from Madrid, as well as the ones Franz Mayer had acquired, since he, himself, had already promised their donation.⁶⁷⁶ Mayer had discussed the matter at a meeting at his residence with Ortis Macedo, Martínez Baez, Gonzalo Obregón, and the sub-director of the Banco Nacional de México, Ignacio Orvañanos.⁶⁷⁷ These discussions resulted in the decision to obtain the *enconchado* paintings for a Mexican museum since that was the only way of guaranteeing their export from Spain.⁶⁷⁸ Because the Financiera Metropolitana, the

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

credit institution was no longer viable, the Banco Nacional de México was asked to provide the money and donate the works to the INAH.⁶⁷⁹

According to the letter in question, incidents in Madrid then took a dramatic turn. Apparently, a rumor spread that the panels had been sold surreptitiously to Mexico, and yet another rumor that they had been stolen.⁶⁸⁰ It was also rumored that the Colegio de Nuestra Señora del Recuerdo had sold another set of *enconchado* paintings depicting the battles of Alessandro Farnesio, among them, the Battle of Lepanto.⁶⁸¹ These reports elicited not only official investigations, but even student unrest, as right-wing elements of the latter demanded information about the whereabouts of the paintings.⁶⁸²

These obstacles did not discourage Martínez Báez, who persisted in his eagerness to overcome them by whatever means at his disposal. His first step was to guarantee that the paintings would become part of the collection of the Museo Nacional de Historia del Castillo de Chapultepec; for this purpose, he obtained written proof from the director of the INAH, Luis Ortis Macedo.⁶⁸³ This document was then presented to the Junta de Valuación y Exportación, namely to Diego Angulo Iñiguez, the person in charge of these matters.⁶⁸⁴ After a long process that did not exclude

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid.

⁶⁸² Ibid.

⁶⁸³ Ibid., 11.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid.

Martínez Báez's numerous pleas to officials of the government and politicians, the bulletin of July 16, 1971, was revoked.⁶⁸⁵

Consequently, the Banco Nacional de México defrayed the cost of the *enconchado* paintings (a million pesetas), as well as packing, shipping, and insurance.⁶⁸⁶ However, as Santiago Silva reminds us, this was not a philanthropic transaction as the bank also got in exchange the collection of six *enconchado* paintings from the Museo del Virreinato in Tepotzotlán, the panels known for their subject matter of the *Credo*.⁶⁸⁷ These six paintings, as has already been stated, are signed by Miguel González, one of the masters of the style and, therefore, very valuable.

As Santiago Silva states, on January 5, 1971, the transaction was finalized in Madrid. The contract was signed by the administrator of the Colegio de Nuestra Señora del Recuerdo in Chamartín de la Rosa, Father Francisco Javier Martínez de Ubago and Antonio Martínez Báez, representing the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia in Mexico.⁶⁸⁸ See Appendix 2 for a transcript of this informative letter in the original Spanish and an English translation.

Classification Through Three Centuries

The Mexican pursuit of these works indicates the high regard in which these paintings were held by the end of the twentieth century. Government entities,

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

museums, and banks were vying for the rights to *enconchado* paintings, works that represented an autochthonous art and that displayed a particular cosmopolitan sensibility dating back to the seventeenth century. The emergence of the *criollo* class at the end of that century, and the nationalist fervor aroused after the Mexican Revolution of 1910 opened the door for the appreciation and investigation of these works, somewhat overshadowed by European fashions in the art world. Even though many *enconchado* paintings are still in private hands today, the Museo Franz Mayer, the Museo Nacional de Historia de Chapultepec, the Museo Nacional del Virreinato in Tepotzotlán, Museo Soumaya, among others, are the proud holders of some of the most important panels that were once part of Spanish collections. However, isolated works, like two Virgins of Guadalupe, one in Gijón and the other in the Cathedral of León, also attest to a wide circulation of these works by the beginning of the twentieth century. The Mexican antiquarian, Rodrigo Rivero Lake not only has a large collection in his possession, but has sold a number of them to private collectors in the last few decades. These private collectors in Mexico City, Monterrey, and other Mexican cities proudly lend their works to exhibitions.

As it has been stated above, the Museo de América in Madrid has also been the recipient of a large number of *enconchado* panels that had once belonged to royal collections, then passed on to the newly built palace of La Granja de San Ildefonso, where they remained until moved to the Gabinete de Historia Natural, founded by Charles III in 1776, before arriving at the Museo.⁶⁸⁹ The Age of the Enlightenment had arrived in Spain full force with the Bourbon dynasty and these “curiosities” so highly

⁶⁸⁹ García Saiz, “La conquista militar y los *enconchados*,” 112.

esteemed by Isabel de Farnesio (Philip V's wife), constituted a prized possession worthy of display. From the Gabinete, they were later moved to the Museo Arqueológico, fulfilling that age's desire to encompass a wide range of objects that would define and illustrate cultures other than the European. By 1905, the Spanish government was interested in purchasing a series of six panels of the Conquest in private hands, which also made it to the Museo Arqueológico, specifically to the Ethnography section of the museum.⁶⁹⁰ Eventually, this series became part of the collection of the Museo de América.

The fact that these panels, like any other work from Latin America, were not considered suitable for display in the Museo del Prado attests to the division between what is considered the "Western tradition" and art from the colonies, considered to be peripheral, provincial, derivative, or ethnographic.

A set of *enconchado* paintings of the Conquest in Buenos Aires, similar to the one in Madrid, consisting of 22 panels, was bought in London by a private collector, Alejandro McKinley, who later donated it to the Museo Público de Buenos Aires.⁶⁹¹ Marta Dujovne, the Argentine scholar who has written several books on the subject, asserts that Germán Burmeister, a German scientist dedicated to the natural sciences, believed that these paintings were tantamount to historical chronicles in that they bear witness to the historical events they represent.⁶⁹² When the publication of the *Anales del Museo Público de Buenos*

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., 114.

⁶⁹¹ Marta Dujovne, "Los enconchados de la conquista de México", in *Los enconchados de la conquista de México, Colección del Museo de Bellas Artes de Buenos Aires* (Mexico City: Museo del Carmen, 1998), 3. (This catalogue lacks page numbers).

⁶⁹² Ibid.

Aires first appeared in 1869, Burmeister did not include these panels in the artistic area, but rather, in the historical area. Dujovne quotes from Burmeister's entry in the *Anales* to point out the scientist's belief in the verisimilitude of the *enconchados* in the Buenos Aires collection:

Conquest of Mexico: the 22 panels that represent the conquest by Hernando Cortés, painted in a special technique by Miguel González, who probably took part in the expedition, in virtue that the figures, as well as the buildings, indicate that the author was present in the field of action, making the collection the most notable of its kind that the Museo owns. The family of Mr. MacKinley donated the paintings to the Museo.⁶⁹³

Following Dujovne, these panels became part of the Museo Histórico Nacional when it was created, and later in 1898 they became part of the collections of the Museo de Bellas Artes where its director, Eduardo Schiaffino classified them under the decorative arts.⁶⁹⁴ Dujovne remarks on Burmeister's naïveté, considering his scientific background, when he referred to them as eyewitness accounts of the conquest.

When Mr. Schiaffino found out about the panels then in the Museo Arqueológico in Madrid, signed by the Gonzálezes and dated 1698, he supposed "it was a later copy and considered the possibility of a dynasty of painters that 'like the monks in Mount Athos,' had repeated the same subject matter from generation to generation."⁶⁹⁵ In 1932 the Buenos Aires series was relocated to the Museo Etnográfico in Buenos Aires, confirming their classification as exotic or archeological objects; they were returned to the Museo de Bellas

⁶⁹³ Ibid. "Conquista de Méjico: los 22 cuadros que representan la conquista por Hernán Cortés, pintados de una manera especial por Miguel González, que probablemente formaba parte de la expedición, pues así las figuras, como los edificios indican, que el autor se hallaba presente en el campo de la acción, forman la colección más notable de su género, que posee el Museo. Fue ofrecido por la familia del Señor MacKinlay."

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

Artes in 1967 where they are currently displayed side by side in a gallery of their own, appropriately lit to highlight the mother-of-pearl. In spite of their fragility, the series was once lent in 1997-1998 for an exhibition in the Museo de El Carmen in Mexico City. Teresa Franco, Director of the Instituto Nacional de Arte e Historia (INAH), in her presentation to the catalogue of this exhibition, reiterates the decorative aspect of these works when she expresses what “an honor to offer the Mexican public a beautiful example of viceregal decorative arts.”⁶⁹⁶

An *enconchado* painting of the Virgin with Child and St. John the Baptist is seen hanging in the stair landing of Olana, American artist Fredric Church’s (1826-1900) picturesque home in upstate New York. One of the most important of the Hudson School landscape artists, Church traveled almost every year to Mexico the last two decades of his life.⁶⁹⁷ His interest in Mexican colonial art led the artist to buy a number of works, including a portrait of a crowned nun, a watercolor, some figurines, as well as the *enconchado* painting, which he may have painted over to look more like a nineteenth century work, according to Bargellini.⁶⁹⁸

We have already referred to the correspondence between Alfonso Reyes in Buenos Aires and Genaro Estrado in Madrid in Chapter 1, acknowledging this collection. Dujovne also informs us also about Gómez Acebo, ambassador of Spain in Finland, who had acquired in London two *enconchado* paintings, whose subject matter was also the conquest

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁷ Clara Bargellini, “Fredrick Edwin Church, Sor Prudencia y Andrés López,” *AIIE* 62 (1991): 123.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., 125.

of Mexico, attesting that by the second quarter of the twentieth century, auction houses and private collectors were beginning to pursue these works in earnest.

The political and cultural climate that separated works of art by Spanish artists from those in the colonies, however, seems to be coming to an end. An exhibition that took place in the Palacio Real in Madrid, jointly with the Museo del Prado, entitled *Pintura de los reinos, identidades compartidas* (Painting of the Kingdoms, Shared Identities) in 2010-2011, which traveled to the Palacio Iturbide in Mexico City in 2011, attempted for the first time to consider the affinities that were shared by painters on either side of the Atlantic. The public was invited to see paintings by Baltasar de Echave Ibía, Cristóbal de Villalpando, Juan Correa, Luis Juárez, Miguel Cabrera, Juan Rodríguez Juárez, and other New Spanish artists, alongside their Flemish and Spanish contemporaries, such as Francisco de Zurbarán, Juan Martín Cabezalero, Juan de Valdés Leal, or Bartolomé Esteban Murillo. It is true that no *enconchado* painting was included in the exhibition, but the fact remains that the curator of the exhibition, and general coordinator and scientific director of the project, Jonathan Brown, is evidently interested in erasing the distinctions that formerly wrote the art histories of the two continents. The public's appetite for these works of art, once whetted, could have been satisfied by a visit to the nearby Museo de América in the case of the Madrid exhibit. A four-volume catalogue, not so much of the exhibition itself, but including the exhaustive project and investigations prior to the exhibition, was published, beginning in 2008.⁶⁹⁹ In the Introduction to the first volume, Jonathan Brown states general coordinator Juana Gutiérrez Haces' intention to build a new model of art historical research concerning the New World,

⁶⁹⁹ Juana Gutiérrez Haces, *Pintura de los reinos: Identidades compartidas, Territorios del mundo hispánico, siglos XVI-XVIII*, vols. I and II (Mexico: Grupo Financiero Banamex, 2008, vols. III and IV, 2010).

“locating it under the wide panorama of the beginnings of the modern world.”⁷⁰⁰ However, the Asian connection or the Pre-hispanic links are not addressed in this important exhibition, focused, as it is, on the common visual languages resulted from the Flemish, Italian, and Spanish models. A deeper understanding of New Spanish art will have to take into consideration the plethora of cultural stimuli that the artists of the colony had at their disposal.

In conclusion, whether considered decorative arts, ethnographic studies, curiosities from the Indies, imitations of Asian objects, historical documents, or any other classification, *enconchado* paintings have now taken their place alongside the great works of world art of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid, vol 1, 34.

Conclusion

New Art Form in a Global Economy

What wealthy city, land like no other
Fuller of treasure and beauty
Than fish and sand in the deep sea!

Who can account for your wealth,
Who can count the number of your famous merchants,
More truth and faith than subtleties?

Who will say of your rich fleets
The assets that come and go laden
If you are the sum total of them.

In you their greatness abbreviated
You supply them with fine gold and silver
And they supply you with with more precious things.

In you Spain and China are one,
Italy and Japan, and finally
A whole world in trade and discipline.

In you the treasure of the Orient
Are better enjoyed; in you, the cream
Of all that the Orient breeds among its light.⁷⁰¹

These verses from Bernardo Balbuena's erudite poem *Grandeza mexicana* from 1604 sum up the Spaniard's appraisal of Mexico City, the city he loves, and the city he places at the epicenter of world culture at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The references to the wealth in goods and treasures, in gold and silver, as well as in other

⁷⁰¹ Bernardo de Balbuena, *Grandeza Mexicana* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 2006), 91." !Oh, ciudad rica, pueblo sin Segundo./más lleno de tesoros y bellezas/que de peces y arena el mar profundo!/¿Quién podrá dar guarismo a tus riquezas,/número a tus famosos mercaderes./de más verdad y fe que sutilezas?/¿Quién de tus ricas flotas los haberes./de que entran llenas y se van cargadas./dirá, si tú la suma dellas eres?/En ti están sus grandezas abreviadas;/tú las abasteces de oro y plata fina' y ellas a ti de cosas más preciadas.' En ti se junta España con la China,/Italia con Japón, y finalmente/un mundo entero en trato y disciplina./En ti de los tesoros de Poniente/se goza lo mayor; en ti la nata/de cuanto entre su luz cría el Oriente."

intangibles, indicates not only Baroque New Spain's exuberant riches, but the myriad sources from which the colony has been nurtured. No doubt, Balbuena exalts the Spanish empire that so cogently has given this land "order, concert, propriety, harmony, and peace of the city's religious and civil mechanisms and of its physical layout," to quote from Stephanie Merrim's *The Spectacular City, Mexico, and Colonial Hispanic Literary Culture*.⁷⁰² "En ti se junta España con la China," Balbuena's verse explains, and indeed it was that idea of New Spain as a kind of exuberant melting pot between the East and the West that produced *enconchado* paintings.

Stephanie Merrim, Royce Family Professor of Comparative Literature and Hispanic Studies at Brown University, weaves all the strands of cultural formation taking place in Mexico City during the seventeenth century and calls this interdisciplinary construct "the spectacular city" of the book's title. For Merrim:

The colonial city reached its fruition in the seventeenth century, when reacting to the austerity of the Reformation, the Hispanic worlds fired back with spectacle and ostentation. The Spanish colonies in the New World produced the overblown wealth that brought those spectacular proclivities to a hyperbolic peak in statecraft, religion, architecture, consumerism, daily life, and so on.⁷⁰³

The Spectacular City contends that the motivation for the Baroque traits of the seventeenth century in New Spain lies on the conjunction of festivals, wonder, and great cities. Merrim's thesis is that this is what "triggers the genesis of the Baroque on New World soil rather than as an imported mode and subsequently plays a determining role in advancing the spirited work of the New World Baroque *for* the New World."⁷⁰⁴ It is true

⁷⁰² Stephanie Merrim, *The Spectacular City, Mexico, and Colonial Hispanic Literary Culture* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2010), 117.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

that different interpretations have been produced to explain the nature of the Baroque. Gonzalo Celorio, Mexican author and professor at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, reminds us of two views in this regard: “For some, it is a colonialist imposition, while others see it as the point of departure for the continent’s cultural emancipation.”⁷⁰⁵ For the former position, the art of the Baroque “had the underlying purpose of justifying absolute rule,” fulfilling and advancing the role of the church, namely, “the prevention of any deviation from Catholic orthodoxy on the part of the Creoles.”⁷⁰⁶ On the other hand, the appearance of *tequitqui*⁷⁰⁷ art from the earliest days of colonization, along with the subsequent hybridity of Asian, African, and European forms and styles, resulted in a new, exuberant expression that addressed a new reality. Celorio reminds us of the testimony by twentieth-century Cuban writer José Lezama Lima (1910-1976) who, referring to the New World’s transition to independence, celebrated the development of this authentic new art as a political as well as an aesthetic manifestation. Lezama Lima describes the continent’s readiness for its independence with these words:

In eighteenth-century America, the Baroque style has already created a family pact with the Indian Kondori and the prodigiously triumphant Aleijandinho, who pave the way for the next century’s rebellion and offer proof that the continent has matured and is ready for a rupture. Here we have the most decisive proof: when an energetic artist inherits a style from a great tradition and, far from diminishing it, manages to augment it, it is a symbol that this country has achieved a form of its own in the art of the city.⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁵ Gonzalo Celorio, “From the Baroque to the Neobaroque,” in *Baroque New Worlds: Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest*, ed. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Monika Kaup (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 494.

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 494-495.

⁷⁰⁷ The term *tequitqui*, a Nahuatl word that means “tributary,” was first used by José Moreno Villa, to describe objects that displayed traits from both the Pre-hispanic and European styles. José Moreno Villa, *Lo mexicano en las artes plásticas* (México, D. F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1948).

⁷⁰⁸ José Lezama Lima, “Baroque Curiosity,” in *Baroque New Worlds*, 237.

Lezama Lima's words seem to apply very aptly to the art of *enconchado* painting. "A form of its own" describes the work of Mexican artists who in the seventeenth century were deploying techniques fraught with polyvalent meanings. The rich luster of the mother-of-pearl aroused the devotion of the onlooker by its brilliance and its supernatural connotations associated with light. In this sense, it fulfilled the colony's yearning for orthodoxy. On the other hand, its vestigial references to a Pre-hispanic history, its Asian technique, and its incorporation of local historical subject matter can be understood as a political appropriation by the *criollos* in their desire to establish a legitimate voice in the affairs of the nation.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's poem *Primero Sueño* with its dazzling erudition, imitation of Spanish poet Góngora's style, and references to both European and Mesoamerican myth, perhaps best exemplifies a form analogous to *enconchado* painting in the second half of the seventeenth century in the viceroyalty of New Spain. Stephanie Merrim refers us to Rafael Catalá's interpretation of Sor Juana's poem in *Para una lectura americana del barroco mexicano* ("Toward an American reading of the Mexican Baroque") where Sor Juana's sources are studied:

For example, in his fourth chapter, Catalá details the multiple valences of the eagle who introduces the *Primero Sueño*'s so-called "Intermezzo of the Pyramids" and thus the poem's first epistemological inquiry. According to Catalá, Sor Juana's eagle at once evokes Tenochtitlán and Huitzilopochtli (the founding of the Aztec city), Jupiter (eagle as bird of divine majesty), Cuauhtémoc and Juan Diego (both of whose Nahuatl names relate to the eagle), and the Virgin Mary of Revelation 12:14. By the same token, the poem's epistemologically inflected rose would conjure up the Virgin of Guadalupe's flowers as well as the rosary. Catalá's examples, together with Sor Juana's renditions of the Virgin of Guadalupe herself, disclose the *modus vivendi* of the nun-writer's literary allusions. Diffuse, impossible to pin down, her imagery inhabits multiple worlds.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁹ Merrim, 225.

Indeed, multiple worlds are the impression one gets when closely observing *enconchado* paintings. A Virgin of Guadalupe studded with mother-of-pearl simultaneously evokes sacred images loaded with miraculous possibilities, so ubiquitous in post-Tridentine European art; hints of pre-Hispanic objects deemed sacred because of their shiny nature; and signs of the cosmopolitanism the *criollos* have achieved in ascertaining their ascendancy in viceregal society. In other words, the effect from the light emanating from the mother-of-pearl cannot simply be attributed to Asian technique or indigenous sources, but rather to the milieu that provided Mexican artists with a plethora of possibilities. As Serge Gruzinski explains, referring to European and indigenous forms, or the passage from hybrid to mestizo:

Light-drenched vision was thus shared by both worlds. They were not juxtaposed; neither had to mask the other. Divine light united them by unifying appearances, yet it was more than appearance, it was also a presence. Like music, light and color could generate mestizo meanings.⁷¹⁰

One question that may be posed at this time is: Are *enconchado* paintings original works of art, or copies? “A work of art has always been reproducible,” in the words of Walter Benjamin.⁷¹¹ That *enconchado* paintings absorb techniques from Asia (mother-of-pearl, Indian ink), from Pre-hispanic sources (mother-of-pearl), and from European prints (iconography), does not make the work any less original. There does not exist a stagnant, monolithic culture whose artifacts represent only one way of reconstructing reality or creating objects for reverence or consumption. Neither the indigenous populations of Mesoamerica and the Europeans come from societies

⁷¹⁰ Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind*, trans. Deke Dusinberre (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 167.

⁷¹¹ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), 218.

exempt of change, especially in the aesthetic field. Even less the Iberian peninsula which had just undergone eight centuries of Islamic “convivencia” and wars. The frames of *enconchado* paintings have been associated with Japanese forms by Sonia Ocaña,⁷¹² and the Chinese techniques in the paintings themselves by Julieta Avila Hernández.⁷¹³ Therefore, to say that the New Spanish artists (notwithstanding their culture or ethnic background) merely “copied” European prints runs the risk of preventing a true evaluation of the artists working in New Spain at this time, whose responses to viceregal society’s complex interweaving of cultural threads resulted in a singular art form.

I have argued in this dissertation that the Pre-Hispanic characteristics of *enconchado* painting cannot be dismissed. The fact that this aspect has not been studied properly is due, perhaps, to the “incommensurability between languages and cultures.”⁷¹⁴ Silvia Spitta, Professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature at Dartmouth, reminds us that this dismissal of Pre-hispanic forms “erases an entire vital cultural register.”⁷¹⁵ Citing the work of Lois Parkinson Zamora, Spitta advocates for a concept of legibility that takes into consideration the complexities of the visual and verbal arts in the New World.⁷¹⁶ Lois Parkinson Zamora, professor of comparative

⁷¹² Sonia Ocaña, “Enconchado Frames: The Use of Japanese Ornamental Models in New Spanish Painting,” *Asia and Spanish America: Trans-Pacific Artistic and Cultural Exchange, 1500-1850*, ed., Donna Pierce and Ronald Otsuka.

⁷¹³ Julieta Avila Hernández, *El influjo de la pintura china en los enconchados de la Nueva España* (Mexico City: INAH, 1997).

⁷¹⁴ Silvia Spitta, *Misplaced Objects: Migrating Collections and Recollections in Europe and the Americas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 99.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid.

literature at the University of Houston, explores the imposition of Baroque style in Latin America as a means of colonizing the New World and encoding the ideologies of the church and the state simultaneously. The *criollo* culture that began to take shape in the seventeenth century, as has been proposed earlier, was asserting a tradition dating back to a Pre-hispanic past, and its elite “embraced the Baroque as an instrument of counterconquest, to use Lezama Lima’s term, filling Spanish forms and New World content, the better to consolidate their own political and cultural territory.”⁷¹⁷

Therefore, it is not a coincidence that there are so many images of the Virgin of Guadalupe inlaid with mother-of-pearl as well as scenes from the conquest of Mexico among the *enconchado* paintings. This subject matter that made its appearance in the seventeenth century was also fraught with contradictions. The prominent Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, an exponent of the *criollo* class, was not exempt of paradoxes, as Alejandro Cañeque affirms when he says that the Mexican philosopher had a negative view of the indigenous population whose history, at the same time, he was attempting to rescue. Cañeque reminds us that Sigüenza y Góngora “was the first to utilize images of Aztec rulers on a viceregal arch and he also concerned himself with recovering Aztec civilization, or at least some part of it.”⁷¹⁸ The separate identity that the *criollos* were forging for themselves at this conjectural period in Mexican history, however, seems to have been making a distinction between the Aztec past that they were trying

⁷¹⁷ Lois Parkinson Zamora, *The Inordinate Eye: New World Baroque and Latin American Fiction* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 40.

⁷¹⁸ Alejandro Cañeque, *The King’s Living Image: The Culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Colonial Mexico* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 226.

to recover, and the present descendants from that past, according to this author.⁷¹⁹

Cañeque echoes Mary Louise Pratt's concept of an "archeological perspective" which asserts that:

The European imagination produces archeological subjects by splitting contemporary non-European peoples off from their precolonial and even colonial pasts. To revive indigenous history and culture as archeology is to revive them as dead. The gesture simultaneously rescues them from European forgetfulness and assigns them to a departed age.⁷²⁰

Further on, Pratt explains the Europeans attempt to deterritorialize indigenous populations from the areas they once dominated:

The archeological perspective....obliterates the conquered inhabitants of the contact zone as historical agents who have living continuities with pre-European pasts and historically based aspirations and claims on the present. Those whom colonizers see as "remnants of indigenous hordes" are unlikely to see themselves as such, however. What the colonizers kill off as archeology often lives among the colonized as self-knowledge and historical consciousness, two principal ingredients of anti-colonial resistance movements.⁷²¹

The Indians that appear in the *enconchado* paintings of the conquest of Mexico manifest this two-fold expression: they are acknowledged as part of the heritage of New Spain at the same time as they are seen as a dead culture, whose values are redefined by the newly imposed reality. Unlike the English possessions in the New World, where the Amerindians were relegated and displaced, the Spanish colonizers in some measure attempted to integrate the indigenous cultures, if on their own terms. The architecture, the literature, and the arts of the colonial period

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

⁷²⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 132.

⁷²¹ Ibid.

in Mexico reflected the amalgam of political, economic, and cultural forces that this newly formed society displayed, giving vent to multilayered strands of historical influences. Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora died in 1700; Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz in 1695; the major commissions from the González family appears to have been concluded by 1698. It is in this climate that *enconchado* painters will produce these works, many of which will be sent to the metropolis, where they will be esteemed as New World jewels.

APPENDIX 1

A list of wills and testaments gathered by Manuel Toussaint in his 1952 study “La pintura con incrustaciones de concha nácar en Nueva España,” published in the *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas*.

1. Year 1692. Doña Catarina Rodríguez de Cazorla testament. Two inlaid images in ebony frames.
2. Year 1698. Captain Juan de Lobera Otáñez testament. Two panels made of shell with its moldings.
3. Year 1699. Pedro de la Calzada testament. Three images with shell and maque of different saints with its frame made of the same materials in 5 pesos.
4. Year 1704. Doña Angela de Villalobos testament. An image with shell two tercios high of Our Lady of Concepción, 5 pesos. A shell image of Our Lady of Remedios half a vara high in 10 pesos.
5. Year 1707. Doña Leonor Cano y Daza testament. A shell image of Our Lady, 10 pesos.
6. Year 1707. Lic. D. Joseph de Mercado, Secretary of the Royal Audiencia and of the Inquisition, testament. Two shell images of the Prayer in the Garden and Jesus Nazarene.
7. Year 1708. Pedro de España Lezama testament. A painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe made with shells.
8. Year 1709. D. José de Bueno Basorí testament. Two panels made with shell of Our Lady and Saint Joseph. Two shell images of San Juan de Dios and Saint Steven. Another two made with shells of the Last Supper and Washing of the Feet. All said four made of shell of the four doctors. Two small panels made with shell of Saint Peter and Saint Paul.
9. Year 1709. Juan Millán de Poblete testament. Two panels measuring one quarta one of Saint Joseph made of shell; one panel of Our Lady of Guadalupe measuring three quartas made of shell.
10. Year 1711. Pedro de Vergara testament. Twelve small panels with shell. Another four with shell.
11. Year 1711. D. Joseph de Estrada testament. A panel with shell of Nuestra Señora de la Defensa.
12. Year 1713. Lic. D. Juan de Valdés testament. Judge of the Royal Audiencia. A panel with shell of three cuartos of Our Lady of Belen.
13. Year 1718. D. José Miguel de Torres’ possessions. A basin of holy water made of maque and inlaid with shell with an image of Our Lady of Concepción.
14. Year 1720. D. Juan de Mendieta testament. A panel of shell of Saint Christopher.
15. Year 1722. Cap. D. Gregorio Martínez de Solís testament. Three images, one with shell.
16. Year 1727. Doña Ana María de la Puente widow of Lic. D. Félix González de Agüero testament. A panel with shell with an inlaid frame of Our Lady of Concepción.

17. Year 1727. The possessions of D. Alonso Gutiérrez Deza and his wife, Doña Bernarda Básquez, deceased. Two canvases and panels inlaid with shell with frames of same, one of the Flight Into Egypt and the other of the Incarnation. Six panels half a vara inlaid of shell with frames of the same, of poor quality. Fourteen small panels with shell, of poor quality.
18. Year 1736. D. Francisco de Fagoaga testament. Ten images of shell on panel of the life of Our Lord.
19. Year 1752. D. Joseph Pedraza Marañón testament. A small picture with shell on panel of Saint Anthony of half a vara.
20. Year 1752. D. Santiago Contti testament. Four small antique canvases with shell; another two, old, with shell.

1. Año de 1692. Testamentaria de Doña Catarina Rodríguez de Cazorla. Dos láminas embutidas en marcos de ébano.
2. Año de 1698. Testamentaria del Capitán Juan de Lobera Otáñez. Dos tableros de concha con sus molduras.
3. Año de 1699. Testamentaria de Pedro de la Calzada. Tres laminas de concha y maque de diferentes santos con sus marcos de lo mismo.
4. Año de 1704. Testamentaria de Doña Angela de Villalobos. Una lamina de concha de dos tercias de alto de Ntra. Sra. De la Concepción en 5ps. Una lamina de concha de Ntra. Sra. de los Remedios de media vara de alto en 10ps.
5. Año de 1707. Testamentaria de Doña Leonor Cano y Daza. Una imagen de concha de Ntra. Sra. 10 pesos.
6. Año de 1707. Testamentaria del Lic. D. Joseph de Mercado, Relator de la Rl. Aud. y del Sto. Of. de la Inq. Dos laminas de concha de la Oración del Huerto y Jesús Nazareno.
7. Año de 1708. Testamentaria de Pedro de España Lezama. Una hechura de concha de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.
8. Año de 1709. Testamentaria de D. José Bueno Basori. Dos tableros de Ntra. Sr. y S. S. José, ambos de concha. Dos laminas de concha de S. Juan de Dios y S. Esteban. Otras dos dichas de cncha de Cena y Lavatorio. Quatro dichas de concha de los quarto doctores. Dos tableritos de concha de San Pedro y S. Pablo.
9. Año de 1709. Testamentaria de Juan Millán de Poblete. Dos tableros de la quarta el uno pintado S. Joseph en concha; un tablero de Ntra. Sr. de Guadalupe de tres quartas de concha.
10. Año de 1711. Testamentaria de Pedro de Vergara. Doce tableritos de concha. Otros quarto de concha.
11. Año de 1711. Testamentaria de D. Joseph de Estrada. Un tablero de concha de Ntra. Sra. de la Defensa.
12. Año de 1713. Testamentaria del Lic. D. Juan de Valdés. Oidor que fue desta Rl. Aud. Un tablero de concha de tres cuartos de Ntra. Sra. de Belén.
13. Año de 1718. Bienes de D. José Miguel de Torres. Una pileta de agua bendita de maque embutida de concha con una imagen de Ntra. Sra. de la Concepción.

14. Año de 1720. Testamentaria de Don Juan de Mendieta. Un tablero de concha de San Cristóbal.
15. Año de 1722. Testamentaria del Cap. D. Gregorio Martínez de Solís. Tres laminas, la una de concha.
16. Año de 1727. Testamentaria de Da. Ana Ma. de la Puente vda. Del Lic. D. Félix González de Agüero. Un tablero de concha con su marco embutido de Ntra. Sra. de la Concepción.
17. Año de 1727. Bienes de D. Alfonso Gutiérrez Deza y de su mujer Da. Bernarda Básquez, difunta. Dos lienzos y tableritos embutidos de concha con marcos de lo mismo, uno de la Huída de Egipto y el otro de la Encarnación. Seis tableros de a media vara embutidos de concha con marcos de lo mismo ordinarios. Catorce liencesitos laborados de concha muy ordinarios.
18. Año de 1736. Testamentaria de D. Fco. De Fagoaga. Diez laminas de concha en tabla de la vida de Ntro. Sr.
19. Año de 1752. Testamentaria de D. Joseph Pedraza Marñón. Un quadrito de concha en tabla de Sr. S. Antonio de a media vara.
20. Año de 1752. Testamentaria de D. Santiago Contti. Cuatro liencesitos pequeños antiguos de concha; otros dos de concha, viejos.

APPENDIX 2

Letter from Antonio Martínez Báez to Antonio Arriaga Ochoa, director of the Museo Nacional de Historia de Chapultepec in Mexico City concerning the sale of four *enconchado* panels with scenes of the Conquest of Mexico; a sale that took place in Madrid in 1971 from the Colegio Nuestra Señora del Recuerdo in Chamartín.

In accordance with the indications received from Dr. Silvia Zavala regarding the whereabouts in Madrid of the members of the family Moctezuma Tultengo, owners of a collection of *enconchado* paintings with scenes of the Conquest of Mexico, a collection that according to what the Spanish ambassador in Paris had expressed, has been divided into two parts making its acquisition more feasible; on a trip to Geneva I took advantage of this circumstance to look for this collection in Madrid, according to information I had gathered in Mexico from Mr. Franz Mayer to whom it was once offered for sale by a member of the Moctezuma family, although at a very high price, showing him one of the said paintings.

During my stay in Madrid, for the period of my vacations in August-September 1970, I was not able to find any member of the Moctezuma family, but was given several reports regarding the collection of panels of the conquest that had been passed on to other persons.

But in this search I had the opportunity to come into contact with the current Marqués de Cerralbo, a very cultured person and a connoisseur of things related to paintings and art, also a descendant from the legitimate branch of Doña Isabel de Moctezuma. He had seen the collection of *enconchados* with scenes of the Conquest of Mexico in the Colegio de los Jesuitas established in Chamartín de la Rosa, "Our Lady of Recuerdo." Through the Marqués de Cerralbo, I got in contact with the Administrator of the School, who with previous authorization from his superiors, arranged with me a contract of a promise of sale of four panels measuring 1.60 x 1.10, two of which have decorative trims on one side, evidence of being the right and left panels of a series making up an entire folding screen.

From the moment I signed that preparatory contract, prior to the taking of photographs, I found that said panels corresponded to a larger collection of which two panels were already in Mexico and were part of Franz Mayer's already mentioned collection, as evidenced by the similar dimensions of the panels as well as the same decoration of the upper and lower sections and the same style of the cartouches where the historical incidents were described.

It is worth mentioning that the panels owned by Mr. Mayer were acquired in San Francisco, California, as an antiquarian in Seville, Spain, Mr. Ortega, gave me this piece of information, that he had these two *enconchados* outside of Spain and Mr. Mayer became so interested in this piece of information that he sought and obtained those panels, moreover, from the hands of a third party, since there were no such paintings of scenes of the conquest in Mexico.

When I returned from the first of the trips I made to Spain with the objective of buying the collection of enconchados, I came across a letter from Mr. Alberto Cortina y Alcocer, son of the Spanish ambassador to Paris, expressing his desire to sell half of his collection of panels of the conquest, as well as the other half, owned by his first cousin Alberto Alcocer, which was also for sale. On my second trip to Madrid, I visited the two owners of the collection that was the one that had belonged to the family Moctezuma Tultengo. In their elegant residences, I had the opportunity to see the collection, the 24 panels, being divided according to an artistic or decorative criteria, not necessarily following a chronological order of the incidents represented in the panels. They were to be displayed, some in fake diptychs and triptychs, according to the dimensions of the dining rooms of the residences. That collection had already been the object of a meticulous restoration and simple and elegant framing.

The owners expressed that as a series, this collection had already suffered a division, each one of them being now the owners of half the entire series, with the concomitant diminished quality, and that even though they had no financial need to sell considering their magnificent social and economic situation, they were ready to sell the collection for a fixed price, free of taxes, for one million American dollars.

However, for the four great panels promised to be sold by the Colegio de Chamartín a price of one million pesetas was set, that is, at the exchange rate of the time, one sixty-ninth only.

Based on the promissory contract for sale and purchase, which stipulated on my part a 10% down payment of the agreed price, the Administrator of the Colegio of Our Lady of Recuerdo applied for the official permit that would authorize the departure of the paintings, by the Council of Assessment and Exportation of Works of Art, under the Ministry of Education and Sciences, through the Direction of Fine Arts; that council was comprised of six members, ex officio, directors of art institutions and national and private museums. That permit was the required condition, as indicated in the preparatory contract to allow the final sale of the panels; it was also stipulated that the buyer should pay the taxes in the amount of 25% of the value assigned to the paintings. The taxes were in favor of the official council, which could actually deny the exportation and exercise its pre-emptive right of acquiring such panels at the stipulated price between the parties involved; all the expenses regarding insurance, storage, packing, freight fees would fall to the buyer, as the stipulated price would be free of any change for the seller Colegio.

It should be noted now that the formaliz of the promissory contract of sale of the panels was possible thanks to the will and enthusiastic decision of Mr. Adolfo Lamas, Director of the Financiera de Crédito, S. A. who gave me a letter of credit for the necessary quantity to close the operation, as well as a sum to cover the expenses of the trip in which the original contract was signed. Mr. Lamas facilitated the operation in a disinterested manner since his main purpose was for the paintings to come to Mexico, with their final destination still undetermined, whether it were a private collector, a private or official credit institution or a national museum. Mr. Franz Mayer and the Banco Nacional

de México, S. A. had expressed their intention of acquiring the panels, but at that time the attitude of the Spanish officials was not known as to the exit permit for the paintings. Therefore, no formal procedure could be initiated nor could the corresponding expenses be budgeted. Only thanks to the generous position taken by the director of the Financiera Metropolitana, S. A. was the acquisition of the panels possible, still with an undetermined or uncertain repository, although it would be Mexican, private or public.

According to the reports that the illustrious art critic D. José Camón Aznar, director of the Museo Lázaro Galdiano, provided me, the application for the export permit had been given to the ex-director of the Museo del Prado and director of the Instituto “Diego Velázquez,” of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, D. Diego Angulo Iñiguez, also a great connoisseur of Latin American art.

Having been interviewed a number of times, this distinguished examiner of the export application maintained earnestly his initial opinion regarding the panels, namely that they should not leave Spain unless they were destined to a Mexican national museum open to the general public, and that they should not leave the country for the decoration of a private collector or for an official or private bank.

According to Mr. Angulo Iñiguez, some people expressed interest in having the paintings remain in Spain and that they could be sent to the Museo de América in the Ciudad Universitaria in Madrid, or to an official institution in Huelva that would establish a museum specializing in the discovery, conquest, and colonization of the Americas.

Various events of diverse nature took place in Madrid around the time of the sale of the panels, including the false rumor that the panels had already been sent fraudulently to Mexico, or that they had disappeared, as well as the rumor that the Colegio de Chamartín had sold another collection of enconchados that depict the military exploits of the General Alejandro Farnesio, among them the Battle of Lepanto.

These versions offended the administration of the Colegio on account of the resulting official inquiries as well as the violent petition made by a group of youths of the extreme right who demanded to know where the paintings were.

Since the plausible resolution of the permit was taking an excessive time and without explanations, I had to take into my own hands several direct and indirect negotiations and pull political and administrative strings aimed at a favorable termination of the matter. But I did not know at the time that the export permit had already been denied by means of the official order dated June 23 1971, published in the Boletín Oficial del Estado the following July 16: which declared these paintings non-exportable since they were part of the artistic, cultural, and historical patrimony of Spain and that they should be sent to the Museo de América.

This formal and public decision was, therefore, a serious obstacle for a final resolution, even more inasmuch as I had absolutely no idea, although it was well known by the Colegio that left it up to me to go through the proper channels.

To satisfy the requisite that the paintings, object of the promissory contract for sale, would end up in a Mexican national museum, it was decided to involve the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, as well as the Subsecretaría de Educación Pública presided by Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán. Mr. Luis Ortiz Macedo, Director of the INAH expressed enthusiasm at the possibility of acquisition of the Chamartín panels, as well as their being complemented by the addition of the two panels held by Mr. Franz Mayer, who made the corresponding promise during a meeting at his own residence with Mr. Ortiz Macedo and Mr. Gonzalo Obregón, Mr. Ignacio Orvañanos, Sub-Director of the Banco Nacional de México, S. A., and myself.

The bank offered to cover the price stipulated in the preparatory contract as well as the corresponding costs incurred by the granting of the export permit, freight expenses, insurance, and transportation to Mexico City. In exchange it would receive from the INAH a collection of enconchado paintings with religious subject matter that was located in the ex-convent of Tepotzotlan that lacked historical interest. This exchange or swap was very favorable to both parties and especially so the Instituto as in our country there were no collection of panels of the conquest of Mexico, whereas in Madrid there was one in the Museo de América and another in the Museo de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

In agreement with what he told me in a special interview that Mr. Aguirre granted me, the Director of the INAH, Ortiz Macedo sent me a letter where it was made clear that the collection of paintings promised for sale would be destined to be part of a gallery of the Museo Nacional de Historia in Chapultepec, where it would remain to be admired by the public.

Once this official declaration was obtained from Mexico, I submitted it to the Council of Assessment and Exportation and informed the member in charge, D. Diego Angulo Iñiguez. In an ensuing meeting of said official organism, where the amicable General Technical Director of the Ministry of Justice, D. Marcelino Cabañas intervened, together with his colleague in the Ministry of Education and Science Prof. D. Pedro Aragonés, the application for the exit permit was resolved favorably, abrogating the previous ministerial one published in the Boletín Oficial del Estado.

Once this permit was obtained, fulfilling the prerequisite of the promissory contract of sale, the Banco Nacional de México, by way of its representative in Madrid, gave the Administrator of the Colegio de Nuestra Señora del Recuerdo the amount of one million pesetas and gathered the amount of the down payment, or guarantee that I had given in dollars as a precaution in case the anticipated pesetas were not convertible. The bank also paid an institution that specialized in these matters, Macarron, S.A., the amounts corresponding to the payment of the various fees for a total of two hundred fifty thousand pesetas, as well as the remaining costs in packing, insurance, and air freight to Mexico.

The above information should be complemented with the special documents pertaining to the sale: the original promissory contract of purchase, the application for the

export permit, the administrative order denying such permit, the official agreement whereby it was revoked, the document from the director of the INAH concerning the final destination of the collection and documents referring to the history of the sale of the panels, expedited by the Colegio de Chamartín, etc. I want to again give credit where it is due in this noble enterprise, namely to Mr. Adlofo Lamas and the Financiera Metropolitana, S.A. who made the formal initiation of the acquisition of these paintings for Mexico feasible, as well as acknowledging the Banco Nacional de México, S. A. that paid the price of purchase and all the expenses until their final delivery to the INAH in this city.

Besides these acknowledgments to this banking institution, the agreement should be now formalized by which it receives the collection of enconchados that the INAH promised in exchange for the corresponding sums of money for the acquisition and delivery of the four panels from the Colegio de Chamartín.

I am also of the opinion that the promise made by Mr. Franz Mayer to the effect that his two panels be exhibited together with the four mentioned above should be formalized, as they comprise a unified folding screen; in other words, the only complete collection that will now exist in Mexico with scenes of the conquest.

Very affectionately,

Mexico City, June 10, 1973

Lic. Antonio Martínez Baez

Información que rinde al Sr. Lic. D. Antonio Arriaga Ochoa, Director del Museo Nacional de Historia, de Chapultepec, el Lic. Antonio Martínez Báez, sobre la adquisición de cuatro tablas enconchadas con escenas de la Conquista de México por D. Hernán Cortés; compra efectuada en Madrid, en 1971, del Colegio Nuestra Señora del Recuerdo de Chamartín.

Conforme a las indicaciones recibidas del Dr. Silvio Zavala, en el sentido de localizar en Madrid a los miembros de la familia Moctezuma Tultengo, propietaria de una conquista de México, colección de las pinturas “enconchadas” con escenas de la Conquista de México, colección que, según había manifestado el Embajador español en París, al haber sido ya dividida en dos partes, era factible su adquisición; aproveché la circunstancia de un viaje a Ginebra para buscar en Madrid dicha colección, la cual según se me había informado en México por el Sr. Franz Mayer le fue ofrecida en una ocasión por una persona de la familia Moctezuma, aunque a un precio muy elevado, mostrándosele una de dichas pinturas.

Durante mi estancia en Madrid, en época de vacaciones de Agosto-Septiembre de 1970, no localicé a los miembros de la familia Moctezuma, pero se me dieron varios informes en el sentido de que su colección de las Tablas de la Conquista habían pasado a otras personas.

Pero en mi búsqueda tuve la oportunidad de relacionarme con el actual Marqués de Cerralbo, persona muy culta y conocedora de pinturas y de materias artísticas, también descendiente, por la rama legítima, de Dña. Isabel de Moctezuma, quien había conocido en el Colegio de los Jesuitas establecido en Chamartín de la Rosa, de “Nuestra Señora del Recuerdo,” una colección de “enconchados” con escenas de la Conquista de México. Por conducto del Marqués de Cerralbo me puse en contacto con el Administrador del Colegio, quien previa autorización de sus superiores concertó conmigo un contrato de promesa de venta sobre cuatro tablas con dimensiones de 1.60 x 1.10, dos de las cuales tienen orlas decorativas en uno de sus lados, de modo que revelan ser los extremos derecho e izquierdo de una serie, seguramente para integrar así la unidad de un biombo.

Desde que celebré ese contrato preparatorio, con base en la comparación de fotografías, encontré que dichas cuatro tablas correspondían a una colección mayor, y que dos tablas ya existentes en México, en poder del Sr. Franz Mayer, eran parte de la colección mencionada, pues así lo indicaban su igual dimensión, la misma decoración en sus partes inferior y superior y el mismo estilo de las cartelas donde se mencionan las escenas históricas.

Cabe expresar que las tablas del Sr. Mayer fueron adquiridas en la Ciudad de San Francisco de California, en virtud de que en una casa de antigüedades de Sevilla se me dio el dato por el Sr. Ortega, de que tenía esos dos “enconchados” fuera de España, y tanto le interesó el dato al Sr. Mayer, que buscó y logró la adquisición de esas tablas, inclusive de manos de un tercer adquirente, ya que en México no existía ninguna de esas pinturas con escenas de la Conquista.

A mi regreso del primero de los viajes que hice a España con el objeto de adquirir la colección de “enconchados”, encontré una carta del Sr. Alberto Cortina y Alcocer, hijo del Embajador de España en París, manifestándome su deseo de vender su mitad de la colección de Tablas de la Conquista, así como que la otra mitad, perteneciente a su primo hermano Alberto Alcocer, estaba también a la venta. En mi segundo viaje a Madrid visité a los dos propietarios de la colección, que era la que había pertenecido a la familia Moctezuma Tultengo, y tuve la oportunidad de ver en sus elegantes residencias las 24 tablas, divididas conforme a un criterio artístico o decorativo, pero sin sujetarse a una secuencia cronológica de los sucesos representados en las tablas. Así mismo estaban agrupadas algunas en falsos dípticos y trípticos, para ajustarse a las medidas de los comedores de las dos residencias. Dicha colección había sido objeto de una restauración muy minuciosa y de un enmarcado sencillo y elegante.

Aunque se me manifestó por los propietarios que, como conjunto, esta colección había sufrido ya una división, que dando cada uno de ellos como dueño de una mitad, con la consiguiente merma, y que si bien no tenían necesidad de dinero dada su magnífica posición social y económica, estaban dispuestos a vender la colección a un precio fijo y libre de todo impuesto, de Un Millón de Dólares norteamericanos.

En cambio, a las cuatro grandes tablas comprometidas en venta por el Colegio de Chamartín se les fijó un precio de Un Millón de Pesetas, o sea, al tipo de cambio entonces vigente, equivalente a una sexagésima-nona parte solamente.

Con base en el contrato de promesa de compra-venta, en el cual se estipuló la entrega por mi parte del 10% del precio pactado, el Administrador del Colegio de Nuestra Señora del Recuerdo formuló la solicitud relativa al permiso oficial que autorizara la salida de las pinturas, ante la Junta de Valoración y Exportación de Obras de Arte, dependiente del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias, a través de la Dirección de Bellas Artes; junta integrada por seis miembros, ex-oficio, con directores de instituciones de arte y de museos nacionales y privados. Este permiso era la condición señalada en el citado contrato preparatorio para su conversión en la venta definitiva de las tablas: en el concepto de que la parte compradora se comprometía a cubrir también el gravamen del 25% del valor asignado a las pinturas, en favor de la citada Junta oficial, la que podía negar la exportación y ejercitar el derecho preferente de adquirir dichas tablas por el precio estipulado entre las partes; así mismo serían a cargo del comprador todos los gastos de seguro, almacén, empaque y fletes, pues el precio estipulado sería libre de toda carga para el Colegio vendedor.

Conviene destacar ahora, que fue posible la celebración formal del contrato de promesa de venta de las tablas, gracias al empeño y decisión entusiasta del Sr. Adolfo Lamas, Director de “Financiera Metropolitana,” S. A., quien me entregó una carta de crédito por la cantidad necesaria para cerrar la operación, así como una suma para cubrir los gastos del viaje en el que se celebró el contrato preparatorio. El Sr. Lamas facilitó la operación en forma desinteresada, ya que su principal propósito fue que vinieran a

México las pinturas, con el destinatario final indeterminado, ya fuera éste un coleccionista particular, una institución de crédito privada u oficial, o bien un museo nacional. El Sr. Franz Mayer y el “Banco Nacional de México,” S.A. habían manifestado su interés en adquirir las tablas, pero se ignoraba entonces la actitud posible de las autoridades españolas ante la petición de salida de tales pinturas, por lo que no podía iniciarse ninguna gestión formal ni erogar los gastos correspondientes. Solamente pudo hacerse esto gracias a la posición generosa del Director de “Financiera Metropolitana,” S. A., de adquirir las tablas con destinatario indefinido o incierto, pero sí mexicano, público o privado.

Por los informes que me proporcionó el ilustre crítico de arte y hombre de letras, D. José Camón Aznar, Director del Museo Lázaro Galdiano, la solicitud del permiso de exportación había sido turnada al ex-Director del Museo del Prado y Director del Instituto “Diego Velázquez,” del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, D. Diego Angulo Iñiguez, también gran conocedor del arte hispano-americano.

Entrevistado en varias ocasiones este distinguido ponente en la solicitud de exportación, sostuvo con gran firmeza su inicial opinión en el sentido de que las tablas no debían salir de España sino a condición de que fueran destinadas a un museo nacional mexicano para ser expuestas al público en general, y que no debían salir para un coleccionista privado, ni adornar a un banco oficial o privado.

Según el Sr. Angulo Iñiguez, había interés en que España conservara las tablas, y que podían ser enviadas al Museo de América, en la Ciudad Universitaria de Madrid, o bien a una institución oficial de Huelva que iba a establecer un museo especializado en el descubrimiento, conquista y colonización de América.

Varias circunstancias de diverso carácter ocurrieron en Madrid alrededor de la compraventa de las tablas, entre otras el falso rumor de que éstas ya se habían enviado fraudulentamente a México, o habían desaparecido, así como que el Colegio de Chamartín había vendido otra colección de “enconchados” que representa las hazañas del Gral. Alejandro Farnesio, entre ellas la Batalla Naval de Lepanto.

Estas versiones ocasionaron molestias al Administrador del Colegio, por las inquisiciones de carácter oficial e inclusive por la violenta petición de un grupo juvenil de extrema derecha para conocer el paradero de las pinturas.

Como dilatarla en forma excesiva y sin explicación plausible la resolución del permiso, tuve que realizar muchas gestiones directas e indirectas, y mover influencias políticas y administrativas para la favorable terminación del asunto; pero yo ignoraba entonces que la solicitud de exportación había sido ya resuelta en sentido negativo mediante el acuerdo u orden oficial de fecha 23 de junio de 1971, publicado en el “Boletín Oficial del Estado,” del día 16 de Julio siguiente, en cuya virtud se habían declarado inexportables estas pinturas, así como integrantes del patrimonio artístico, cultural e histórico de España y que debían enviarse al Museo de América.

Esta resolución formal y pública fue así un serio obstáculo para la resolución favorable final, tanto más cuanto que era desconocida en lo absoluto por mi parte, aunque no por la del Colegio vendedor, que dejaba así a mi carga las gestiones relativas.

Para satisfacer el requisito de que las pinturas prometidas en venta fueran destinadas a un Museo Nacional Mexicano se recurrió al procedimiento de interesar al Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia y a la Subsecretaría de Educación Pública a cargo del Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán. El Sr. Arq. Luis Ortiz Macedo, Director del INAH se manifestó entusiasmado con la posibilidad de la adquisición de las tablas de Chamartín, así como con su complementación mediante la entrega de las dos restantes del Sr. Franz Mayer, quien hizo la promesa relativa en una reunión en su casa con asistencia del Arq. Ortiz Macedo y del Sr. Gonzalo Obregón y del Sub-Director del “Banco Nacional de México,” S. A., Sr. Ignacio Orvañanos y la mía personal.

El Banco mencionado ofreció cubrir el precio señalado en el contrato preparatorio, así como los derechos correspondientes por el otorgamiento del permiso de exportación, los gastos de embalaje, seguros y fletes hasta la Ciudad de México, a cambio de recibir del INAH una colección de pinturas “enconchados,” con asunto o motivo religioso, que existió en el ex-Convento de Tepotzotlán, que carece de interés histórico, canje o trueque muy favorable para ambas partes, y principalmente para el Instituto, dado que en nuestro país no existía ninguna colección de las Tablas de la Conquista de México, y en cambio sí varias en Madrid y una en el Museo de Bellas Artes de Buenos Aires, República Argentina.

Con la conformidad del Sr. Subsecretario Aguirre Beltrán, quien me la manifestó en entrevista especial que me fue concedida, el Director del INAH, Arq. Ortiz Macedo me envió una comunicación haciendo constar que la colección de pinturas prometida en venta se destinaría a formar parte de la galleria del Museo Nacional de Historia, en Chapultepec, donde quedaría para ser exhibida al público.

Una vez obtenida esta declaración oficial de México, la presenté ante la Junta de Valuación y Exportación y la hice del conocimiento del Vocal ponente, D. Diego Angulo Iñiguez, y en subsecuente reunión de dicho organismo oficial, mediando la intervención amable del Director General Técnico del Ministerio de Justicia, D. Marcelino Cabañas, ante su colega de igual carácter en el Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, Prof. D. Pedro Aragonese, se resolvió favorablemente la solicitud del permiso, revocándose la orden ministerial anterior publicada en el “Boletín Oficial del Estado.”

Una vez obtenido ese permiso, y cumplido así el requisito o condición del contrato de promesa de compra-venta, el “Banco Nacional de México,” S. A. por conducto de su representante en Madrid, cubrió al Administrador del Colegio de Nuestra Señora del Recuerdo, la cantidad de Un Millón de Pesetas y recogió el importe del anticipo o “señal” que había yo entregado en dólares, en precaución de que fueran “no convertible” las pesetas anticipadas. El mencionado Banco cubrió igualmente a una casa especializada en estos asuntos, “Macarron”, S. A. las cantidades correspondientes al pago de los derechos,

que importaron la suma de doscientos cincuenta mil pesetas, y los gastos de empaque, seguros y fletes por avión hasta México.

Al rendir la anterior información, la que creo debe ser complementada con los documentos principales relativos: contrato de promesa de compra-venta, solicitud del permiso de exportación, orden administrativa denegatoria de tal permiso, el acuerdo oficial de revocación de esta orden, constancia del Director del INAH sobre el destino de la colección y constancia sobre el historial de las tablas vendidas, expedida por el Colegio de Chamartín, etc., me interesa reiterar y destacar el crédito que en esta noble empresa corresponde al Sr. Adolfo Lamas y a la “Financiera Metropolitana”, S. A., que hicieron posible la iniciación formal de la adquisición para México de esas pinturas, así como el que toca al “Banco Nacional de México”, S. A. quien pagó el precio de compra y todos los gastos hasta su entrega en esta Ciudad at INAH.

Además de este crédito que debe reconocerse a dicha institución bancaria, procede se formalice el convenio por el que la misma reciba la colección de “enconchados” que el INAH le prometió a cambio de las sumas correspondientes a la adquisición y envío de las cuatro tablas del Colegio de Chamartín.

Estimo que debe también formalizarse la promesa hecha por el Sr. Franz Mayer, a efecto de que se exhiban sus dos tablas juntamente con las cuatro antes mencionadas, que forman en su conjunto un solo biombo, o sea la única colección completa que ya existe en México con las escenas de la Conquista por D. Hernán Cortés.

Muy afectuosamente,

México, D. F. a 10 de junio de 1973.

Lic. Antonio Martínez Báez

APPENDIX 3

Inventory of Enconchado Paintings

A. Conquest of Mexico series

1. Six panels, formerly from the Duque del Infantado's collection in Madrid.

Museo Franz Mayer:

"A. Fernancortes se desembarca en la isla de cosumel. B. Capitana. C. El baleroso Cortes manda echar apique las Naos Enque bino. Con admirasion de todos sus Capitanes. D. Cosumel. E. Naos que se ban apique. F. barcos Enq, sacan a tierra la municion y bastimentos, G. Ysla demugeres."

"Batalla de Sempoala A. Acude Cortés con la caballería contra Acamapich que benia con sus Exercitos. B. Acamapich C. Maxtatlon Cappn D. Acechan los Españos del puete ha los Yndios q estorban El passo E. Encuentro de Espaes con Aculbuaqe Sr. de Teteponco F. Un tersio de ... de Paphilo de Narbaez G. Arcos de Zempoala."

Museo Nacional del Virreinato, Tepotzotlán

(Four panels, separated into eight and made into a folding screen.)

"Conquista de Cholula A. Acude Cortes con su jente ha socorrer ha los de Pamphilo Narbaes B. Aflicto grande entre Indios y Españoles C. Echan serco los Españoles Y huyen los Yndis y las Yndias dejando dehaparadas su cas D. Itzoatl mâda hazer diferêtes castigos con 12 Españo q hapersibio E. serco de Cholula."

"A. Elgran Motecuhcuma Recive a Cortes Viniendo enombros de 7 Reyes. B. Fernan Cortes. C. Fiestas y Regosijo de los Yndios en Canoas a la Entrada de Cortes en Mexico. D. Yndios principales q tienden sus mantas para q pase Metecuhcuma."

"A. Motecuhçuma se asoma al Balcon donde su sobrino Quauhtemoc letira una pedrada, y Ahuitzol un flechaso, B. Quauhtemoc. C. Ahiutzol. D. Quuede la plasa de Mexico donde se vierô mui afligidos los Españoles, E. D. Martín Ecathin quita El Estandarte Rl imatan al alferes. F. Pegan Fuego los yndios ala casa del tesoro. G. guardia que defiende la Rl persona de Motecuma. H. Huizilihuitl. I. Palacio. K. El Ydolo lauyo Flacoante."

"A. Sale Cortes uyendo la noche triste. B. Salto de Alvarado. C. Yndios de trascala D. Avisa El Capitan Saldoval a Cors q ya ai paso, E. bartoloe ... F. la malinchi. G. ... Rl Los Españoles en el ... H. Caños de agua."

2. Twenty-four panels, formerly from the collection of the Counts of Moctezuma, then the Dukes of Moctezuma. Currently divided in two private collections in Madrid.

"Llega el Capitan. Cortes al Puerto de San Juan de Ulua y salê los indios ê canoas arreconoser Sus naos, Saltâ ê tierra y le Resibe têdile êbaxador del gran Moca. y mâda Retratarlos ael ilos demas soldados para ê biarlos a Su S."

"Embia el grâ Mocte Suma ael Capitan. Cortes Con sus êbaxadores Tendile y Pictalpito q el presente de la petaca de las joyas de oro y Cargas de mantas y Cortes come con ellos y los demas Capitanes, y fue esta en baxada para que se bolbiera a Santiago de ..."

"Embia el grâ. Motma. del Capitan. Cortes cò suêbaxador Quintalbor Porqseparesia a Cortes el presête del Sol de oro y la luna d Plata y Cortes manda a sus Soldados Corrà es caramusas disparê la artilleria y los Casiques Seadmiran."

"4. Alsó todo el exercito al Capn. Cortes por Capn. general y Justisia maior, y Cortes elige al Caldes ordinarios y Regidores para Villa rica mada poner horca i picota, Camina el egersito para Sempoal"

"Llega el Capn. general Cortes a Cempoal y les sale a resebir el Casiq gordo y los demas casiques Principales ile Sauman ientriega el Casiq gordo a Cortes a 8 indias Principales y frai Bartolome deolmedo las Bautisa."

"trabaxan los Soldados Enfabricar y fortaleser la Villa rrica Por mandado desu Capn. general Cortes y allu en la obra los indios totonaques y El mismo En persona."

"Cam'ma el Capn. General Cortes con Suexercito Paratlascalca y enlaentrada leda el Principe Xicotenga el moso gerra Con muchas Capitancias de tlascaltecas."

"Manda el Capn. a los Soldados les cortes las manos a las ... Hase paces el Prer. Xico. Llega el...i visita a Cortes en su Real...y promete ayudarle queda...vasallos y camina este para Cholula."

"Despues de 3 dias de esntrado el Cap. Cortes ê la Ciua d Cholula ledan guerralos chulultecos en la Plasamaior Sunto al grancu, manda Cortes a sus Soldados Rôpan las puertas de las carseles donde tenian yndios cautivos Encevo para Sacrificar."

"10. Resebimiento de Cacamatzin S. detescuco Sobrino del grâ. Motma..En Ystapalapa, al Cap Cortes, con todos los Casiques, pororden del grâ Motma. cò suplica d q Sebulba Camina Cortes Para Mexco."

"11. Entra al Cap. General Cortes en la Ciudad de Mexco Con quatrosientos y Sinquenta Soldados que traia Suexercito y dosmil tlaxcaltecas que vinieron en su còpañia."

"12. Grâde y Solene Resivimiento que le hiso el Gran Motma. al Cap. General Cortes, Salê en la laguna En canoas yndios de dâsa y demas gente al Reservimiento."

"Visita El Gran Moctesuma al Cap. General Cortes ensuaposeno, contodos los Grâdes casiques i capitanes y Mando dar a capitanes i Soldados Jollas de oro y Ropa y chalchiguis piedras de balor."

"14. Visita El Cap. General Cortes al gran Moctesuma en su Real palacio ilehablo tocante a la St. Fee y mando que serrepartiesen collares de oro a los Soldados y dos Cargas de mantas acadauno."

"15. Vael Cap. General Cortes al gran Cue de tlattelulcu que tenia sientu icatorse gradas y los papas le quieren tomar de las manos para alludarle asubir, sauma Moctesuma alos Idolos yasesus SaCrifisios."

"16. Entra el Cap. general Cortes en consejo con sus soldados para prender al gran Moctezuma llevalo preso hechale grillos Y manda quemar dos capitanes por aver muerto en la Villa Rica al Cap. Escalante."

"17. Soberbia Batalla que tuvo el Cap. general cortes dentro de la Ciudad de Mexico hasta el gran Cue de tlattelulco donde peleo mui valerosa mente hasta subir el cue i derroco los ydolos."

"Embia el Cap. general cortes al grn. Motma. aque seasome auna Sotea a Sosegar asus capitanes iellos lerresponden q ya tienen otro Sr. danle un flechaso. ydos pedradas de que murio Sientelo mucho el Cap. itodos imanda seentierre como monarca."

"19. Noche triste y lloviosa En q Salio el Cap. genl. Cortes huyendo de mexico elitodo el exercito por la multitu de gerreros dond en la primer puente murierô muchos Soldados y tlascaltecos y al varado q venia ê la Retaguardia Salto de una parte aotra."

"20. despues de aver puesto Cerco el capitan Cortes a Mexico Entra dando guerra hasta las casas de la ciudad, por todas las calsadas y matan muchos Soldados de los Mexicanos."

"21. Grâ desvarate q tuvo El Cap. Gral. Cortes dentro del agua despues d aver hecho los vergantines dôde lo qria llevar a sacrificar socrênlo los Soldados para sacrificar a Susidolos."

"22. Celada que hecho El Cap. General Cortes enlaguna consus Vergantines alas Canoaspiraguas delos indios coxelasen medio dales guerra y desvarata las Capitancias de los mexicanos perdida que atemoriso a Cuautemus."

"23. Despues de ganado el Cuemaio de tlatilulco huye el monarca Cuatemu, mâda el Cap. General Cortes al Cap. de los vergantines Gonzalo de Sandobal valla i traiga preso a Cuautemus iel desde Cucuela prision."

"24. Traepreso el Cap. de los vergâlines Sandobal al monarca Cuautemu, ala presencia del Cap. General Cortes q estaba enel tlatilulco llegaile abrassa iñehase dar la obediencia al emperador Carlos V."

3. Twenty-four panels of unknown origin. Twenty-two are in the **Museo de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires** and two in a private collection.

"Llega el Capitan Cortes con su armada al puerto de San Juan de Ulua. Salen en canoa a reconocerle los indios. Recibe el embajador Tendile con un presente. Mandale retratar a el y a su armada para llevarlo a su señor. Come el Capitan Cortes con los embajadores del gran Moctezuma."

"Manda El Capitan Cortes echar las naos a pique, corren los soldados escaramusas Disparan los tiros i se admiran los embaxadores, trae Tendile y pitalpitoque el preçente del Sol de Oro y la Luna de plata, que envia Mocteuâ Con su embajador Quintalvor, que se parecia a Cortes."

"Alsa todo el exerçito por Capitan general y Justicia mayor Al Capitan Cortes, Egige alcaldes ordinarios para la Villa Rica, Manda poner Horca y picota. Resivelo el Casique Gordo Y le saluda y sahuma."

"Trabajan en fabricar la Villa Rica los soldados del Capitan Cortes, les ayudan los indios totonaques. predicael padre Fray Bartolome de Olmedo, y bautiza las ocho indias que dio el Cacique Gordo. Manda el Capitan general Cortes derrocar los idolos que estaban en el pueblo de Zempoal."

"En la entrada de Tlascalala, le dan los indios tlascaltecas tres vatallas Rigorosas al Capitan general Cortes, y sale Vençedor Viene el Capitan Xicotenca el moço a açer pazes i le da la Ovediençia a su Majestad por mando de su padre Xicotenga el Viejo."

"Trae el Capitan Xicotenga el moço Dies mil Yndios de guerra, que le ofrece al Capitan general Cortes; manda romper las Carçeles donde tenian indios que çacrificar, i comer la carne que ofrecian al idolo Los Papas, traen los tlascaltecas sinco indias que le ofrecen al Cap. general Cortes."

"Repártense capitancias de indios guerreros en la sierra de Cholula, para darle guerra a los españoles. Manda el capitán Cortés quemar a los capitanes en los patios de Cholula que estaban junto al gran Cue por haber ordenado contra el y sus soldados."

"Camina el capitán general Cortés para la ciudad de México acompañado de los tlascaltecas. Nievales en el camino. Sale a recibir al capitán general Cortés Cacamatzin, señor de Tescuco, por mandato de su tío el gran emperador Moctesuma."

"Entra el capitán general Cortés en la gran Ciudad de México, por la calçada mayor con cuatrocientos y cincuenta Soldados de su Ejército y dos mil tlascaltecas que venían en su compañía Con todos sus Capitanes."

"Grande y solebne Reseuimiento que iso el grande Emperador Moctesuma al Capitan general Cortés en la entrada de México, donde salieron en canoas muchos indios de danza y demas regocijos de fiestas con que les rresivieron."

"Viçita El Emperador Moctesuma al Capitan Cortés en sus aposentos y le pone una cadena de oro en el cuello màda que les repartan a sus Soldados Joias de oro, lleva el emperador Moctesuma al Capitan general Cortés al adoratorio de sus dioses y se los muestra."

"Viçita el Capitan general Cortés, al emperador Moctesuma en sus Reales palacios donde lo lleva por la mano y le ofrese sus acientos de oro, Muestrale a sus antepaçados los emperadores que tenían Retratados, y los Soldados Se admiran."

"Va el capitán general Cortés con sus capitanes al gran Cu de Tlatilulco, que tenía ciento catorce gradas de alto. Sahuma el emperador Moctesuma a sus idolos y los Papas se los señalan, y Fray bartolomé replica el sacrificio que se esta haciendo."

"Manda el emperador Moctesuma a sus capitanes le traigan preso a su sobrino Cacamatzin señor de Tescuco. Traenlo en sus ricas andas. Entregaselo al capitán general Cortés. Da el emperador Moctesuma la obediencia a su Majestad."

"Entra el Capitan general Cortés En consexo Con sus Capitanes y Soldados para prender al Emperador Moctesuma, llevalo preso, echale grillos y Manda quemar dos Capitanes indios porque mataron a Juan de esCalante En la Villa Rica."

"Soberbia batalla que tuvo el capitán general Cortés dentro de la ciudad de México con los mas valerosos capitanes mexicanos, donde peleó valerosamente hasta retirarlos al gran Cu de Tlatilolco donde venció la batalla."

"Envia el capitán general Cortés al emperador Moctesuma a que se asome a una azotea a asegurar a sus capitanes y ellos responden que ya tienen otro Señor. Danle flechazo y de pedradas de que murió. Manda Cortés que se entierra como monarca."

"Noche triste y lloviaosa, en que salió el Capitan general Cortés uyendo y todo su exercito de la Ciudad de México, por la multitud de guerreros, donde en la primer puente muchos soldados murieron de una y otra parte Y Alvarado Salto la Puente a la otra parte."

"Baptisase el Señor de tecuco i es su padrino el Capitan gl Cortes, i le pone por nombre Hernando Cortes. Selevran su Baptismo con mucha solebridad, ase el Capitan gl Cortes entrada en istapalapa, donde le sueltan el agua i le dan Guerra."

"Despues de aver puesto el Capitan general cortes çerco a la Ciudad de Mexico entrada guerra asta las casas matando muchos guereros de los Mexicanos asta ganarles los puentes Donde vençio la Batalla con gran Valor de los Soldados."

"Gran desvarate que tubo el Capitan general Cortes dentro del agua despues de aver echo los vergantines, donde lo queria çacrificar. Socorrenlo los Soldados y dos pierden la vida en su defensa llevanle sesenta soldados para çacrificar a sus idolos."

"Celada que Echo el Capitan general Cortes en la laguna con sus vergantines a las Canoas i Piraguas de los indios Donde las cogio en medio. Dales guerra i hase desuaratar a los Mexicanos Capitanes que las traian."

"Despues de ganado el Cu mayor de Tlatilulco huye el emperador Guatemuz. Manda el capitan general Cortes al capitan de los bergantines que vaya y traiga preso a Guatemuz y desde el Cu mayor ve la prision."

"Trae preso el capitan de los bergantines al emperador Guatemuz a la presencia del capitan general Cortes que estaba en el gran Cu de Tlatilulco, llega recibelo y le abraza y hace que le de la obediencia al emperador Carlos Quinto, que fue el año de 1521."

4. Twenty four panels in the Museo de América, Madrid, formerly from the Royal Collection of Charles II, the last of the Hapsburg kings.

"1 Manda Cortes echar las Naos a pique. 2 Cortes comiendo con dos embajadores de Motecuhçuma en el puerto de Veracruz"

"3 Corren a Cavallo y se admiran los Embajadores. 4 D^a Marina da a entender a los totonaques quien es Cortes. 5 Hase Cortes Alcal-Ordinarios de la Villa."

"6 Hacesse la Villa Rica Por mandado de Cortes a que ayudan los indios totonaques."

"7 Entra Cor. en Zempuala y le Recive el Cazique Gordo que le Sauma, da de comer y Regala a todos los Españoles. 8 Camina con la Gente de Pamphilo de Narvaez."

"9 Nievaes en El Camino. 10 Tres de los Echiceros que llaman papistas Guardan los Ydolos y Cuerpos de los Sacrificados"

"11 Los Tlaxcaltecas ofrecen a Cortes Diez mil indios y azeta mil. 12 Guerra en Cholula. 13 Dan la obediencia al Rey de España los de Cholula."

"14 Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo Baptiza cinco Yndias. 15 Cortan las manos a dos Yndios Espias de Xicotenga El moso."

"16 El Sobrino de Motecuhçuma Resive a Cortes, le Sauma y regala. 17 Xicotenga viene a hacer pazes, da Suchiles y los Caziques ofresen a sus Hijas a Cors y no las admite."

"18 Entrada de Cortes En Mexico Por la Calsada de San Antonio Abad."

"19 Recivimiento de Motecuhçuma. 20 Dansas de los Mexicanos en Canoas por la Laguna."

"21 Visita Cortes a Motecuhçuma Y Resiven a los demas los Reyes que le acompañan."

"22 Llevan a posentar a Cortes...de los Idolos. 23 Visita Motecuhçuma a Cortes y dale una cadena de Oro. Los demas reparten dadivas y oro tambien."

"24 Coronacion del Rey de texcoco y destierro del otro a influencia de Cors. 25 Repartese el oro a los Soldados. 26 Manda Cortes soltar los indios presos."

"27 ollas de Carne de sacrificados para sus Sacerdotes. 28 qman dos indios por traidores a Cortes, por mandao de Motecuhçuma. 29 Predica la Fee Fr. Barme de Olmedo a Motecuhçuma."

"30 Prision de Motecuhçuma. 31 Intentan derribar la Cruz de enfrente de los Idolos, y no pueden conseguirlo."

"32 Pedrada y flechazo a Motecuhçuma. 33 Hallan seis soldados Españoles el thesoro y no le llegan."

"34 Retirada de los Españoles la noche triste. 35 Aclaman a Quauhtemoc por Rey. 36 Guerra en tacuba y Queman los Españoles las Casas."

"37 Los Tlaxcaltecas maltratan a Xicotenga. 38 Socorro de Sandoval. 39 Restauracion del Estandarte Real y muerte del Alferes."

"40 Ganase el gran Cu y derrivanse los idolos. 41 cavezas de Indios prensipales."

"42 Hacen prisionero a Cortes los Indios y llevandolo a Sacrificar le libra Christoval de Olid con quaa Esps tlaxcaltecas."

"43 Comen los indios Carne de Españoles y tienen asco. 44 Con cinco caveças de Españoles los Indios Hamenasan Haser lo mismo cô los demas."

"45 Ahorcan a Xicotenga. 46 El Indio Lerma quiso defender a Xicotenga."

"47 Garsia Holinge prende a Quahtemoc. 48 Socorro por tierra."

"49. Manda Cortes quemar y destroz ar los Idolos que abian quedado. 50 Nao derrotaa que dio socorro a la Villa."

5. Six panels of unknown origin in the Museo de América, Madrid.

"A. Puerto de la Veracruz. B. Cortés comiendo con dos Embajades de Moctezuma. C. Corren â Caballo y se admiran los Embajadores. D. Hace Cortes Alcaldes Ordinarios de la Villa. E. D^o Marina da âentender â los totonaques quien es Cortés. F. Haçese la Villa Rica, â que ayudan los Indios totonaques. G. Entra Cortés en Zempuala, y le Recive el Cazique Gordo, que le sauma, da de comer, y regala â todos los Españoles."

"A. Manda Cortes echar las Naos â pique. B. Camina con la Gente de Pamphilo de Narvaez. C. Niéva les en el Camino. D. tres de sus Sacerdotes guardan sus Idolos. E. Guerra en Cholula. F. Dan la obediencia al Rey de España los de Cholula. G. Comida que dan los Cholutecos. H. Frai Bartolome de Olmedo baptiza siete Indias. I. Cortan las manos a dos Espias de Xicoteca. J. Comen Carne de perro de hambre."

"A. El Sobrino de Moctezuma resive â Cortes, le sauma y regala. B. Xicotenca viene â hacer pazes, da Suchiles y los Caziques ofresen sus Hijas â Cortes y no las admte. C. Entrada de Cortes en Mexco. y Recivimiento de Moctezuma. D. Visita Cortes â Moctezuma. E. Lleva â aposentar â Cortes a la Cassa de los Ydolos. F. Visita Moctezuma â Cortes y da dadivas, y oro a Españoles. G. Jardines y Recreos Varios de Moctezuma."

"A. Coronacion del Rey de tescoco y destierro del que lo era â influencia de Cortes. B. Repartesse Oro a los Soldados. C. Manda Cortes soltar los Indios dedicados al Sacrificio. D. Ollas de carne de Sacrificados para sus Sacerdotes. E. Quemanse dos Indios por mandado de Moctezuma por aversido traidores â Cortes. F. Predica la Fee Fray Barne de Olmedo â Moctezuma. G. Prision de Moctezuma. H. Intentan derribar la Cruz de enfrente de los Idolos y no pueden. I. Pedrada y flechasos a Moctezuma. J. Hallan quatro Españoles el Thesoro y no le llegan. K. Retirada de los Españoles la noche triste."

"A. Aclaman â Guatemuz por Rey. B. Guerra en Tacuba i queman los Españoles las Cassas. C. Los Tlaxcaltecas maltratan â Xicotenca. D. Socorro de Sandoval. E. Restauracion del Estandarte Real y muerte del Alferes. F. Ganasse el Gran Cu y derribanse los Idolos. G. Hacen prisionero a Cortes los Indios y llevandole a Sacrificar le libra Christobal de Olid, con algunos Españoles y Tlaxcaltecas."

"A. Comen los Indios carne de Españoles y tienen Asco. B. Con cinco cavezas de Españoles amenazan los Indios hacer lo mismo con los demas. C. Ahorcan a Xicotenca. D. El Indio Lerma quiso defender a Xicotenca. E. Garçia Holguin prende a Coactemuz. F. Socorro por tierra. G. Manda Cortes quemar y destroz ar los Idolos. H. Nao derrotada que dio socorro â la Villa."

B. Religious Subject Matter

Museo de América, Madrid, Spain

1. Series I of six panels of the Life of the Virgin

Abrazo ante la puerta dorada (Joachim and Ann meeting at the Golden Gate); wooden support with canvas, mother-of-pearl; 61 x 86 cm.

Presentación de la Virgen en el templo (Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple); wooden support with canvas, mother-of-pearl; 61 x 86 cm.

Desposorios de la Virgen (The Marriage of the Virgin); wooden support with canvas, mother-of-pearl; 61 x 86 cm.

Sueño y arrepentimiento de José (Joseph's Dream and Repentance); wooden support with canvas, mother-of-pearl; 61 x 86 cm.

Petición de posada (Petition at the Inn); wooden support with canvas, mother-of-pearl; 61 x 86 cm.

Asunción (Assumption); wooden support with canvas, mother-of-pearl; 61 x 86 cm.

2. Series II of eight panels of the Life of the Virgin (Later acquisition)

El abrazo ante la puerta dorada (Joachim and Ann meeting at the Golden Gate); 97 x 68 cm; wooden support with mother-of-pearl.

La presentación de la Virgen en el templo (Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple); wooden support, mother-of-pearl; 97 x 68 cm.

Desposorios de la Virgen (The Marriage of the Virgin); wooden support, mother-of-pearl; 97 x 68 cm.

El sueño de San José (Saint Joseph's Dream); wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 97 x 68 cm.

La dormición de la Virgen (The Dormition of the Virgin); wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 97 x 68 cm.

El traslado del cuerpo de la Virgen (The Translation of the Body of the Virgin); wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 97 x 68 cm.

La Asunción (The Assumption); wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 97 x 68 cm.

La Coronación (The Coronation); wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 97 x 68 cm.

3. Series III of four panels of the Life of the Virgin

El sueño de San José (Saint Joseph's Dream): wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 97 x 68 cm.

Unknown subject matter: La Virgen con José (¿Cristo?) ante un rey (The Virgin and Joseph or Christ Before a King); wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 97 x 68 cm.

La aparición de Cristo resucitado ante María (Christ Resurrected Appearing Before Mary): wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 97 x 68 cm.

Pentecostés (Pentecost); wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 97 x 68 cm.

4. Twenty-four panels of the Life of Christ

Adoración de los pastores (Adoration of the Shepherds); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Adoración de los magos (Adoration of the Magi); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

La circuncisión (Circumcision); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Presentación en el templo (Presentation in the Temple): wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Bautismo de Jesús (Baptism of Jesús); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Tentaciones de Cristo (Christ's Temptations); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Bodas de Cana (Wedding at Caana); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

La tempestad calmada (The Quelling of the Tempest); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

La pecadora arrepentida (The Repentant Sinner); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Jesús anda sobre las aguas (Jesus Walks on Water); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

La transfiguración (The Transfiguration); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Entrada en Jerusalén (Entry into Jerusalem); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Purificación en el templo (Purification in the Temple); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

La última cena (The Last Supper); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

La oración en el huerto (Agony in the Garden); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

El prendimiento (Arrest of Jesus); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Negación de San Pedro y Jesús ante el sumo sacerdote (Peter's Denial and Jesus Before the High Priest); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Jesús atado a la columna (Jesus Tied to the Column); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Jesús escarnecido por los soldados (The Flagellation); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Ecce Homo (Ecce Homo); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Jesús ante Pilatos (Jesus Before Pilates); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Camino del Gólgota (Christ Carrying the Cross); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

La lanzada (Jesus's Flank Being Pierced); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

Resurrección (Resurrection); wooden support without canvas, mother-of-pearl; 69 x 102 cm.

5. Panels of the Virgen of Guadalupe in the Museo de América

Virgen de Guadalupe (Virgin of Guadalupe); signed "Miguel Gon...ses. f. 1692" 74 x 57 cm.

Virgen de Guadalupe (Virgin of Guadalupe); wooden support with canvas; 97 x 72.5 cm. Number 515 in red in the lower left corner.

Virgen de Guadalupe (Virgin of Guadalupe): 28 x 19.5 cm.

Virgen de Guadalupe (Virgin of Guadalupe): 41 x 30 cm.

C. Other religious subjects

La Virgen de Valvanera (Virgin of Valvanera): signed "Juan Gonzlaes fesit"; 63 x 42 cm.

Aparición de la Virgen y el Niño a San Francisco (Apparition of the Virgin and Child to Saint Francis); wooden support with canvas; mother-of-pearl; 84 x 60 cm.

Vida de San Francisco Xavier (Life of Saint Francis Xavier); wooden support without canvas; 47 x 61.5.

San Francisco Xavier (Saint Francis Xavier); oval shape; wooden support with mother-of-pearl and seeds; 83.5 x 61 cm.

San José con el Niño (Saint Joseph with Child); gold thread and mother-of-pearl; 17.5 x 14.5.

Alegoría de Atlas (Allegory of Atlas); 36 x 34 cm.

San Isidro y el milagro de la fuente (Saint Isidro and the Miracle of the Fountain); anonymous; seventeenth century; oil on wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 83 x 73 cm.

Virgen de la Redonda (Virgin of Redonda); wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 83.5 x 52.5 cm.

Vida de San Ignacio de Loyola (Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola); signed Juan González; wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 46 x 61 cm.

Soumaya Museum, Mexico City

Santiago Apóstol (Saint James); oil, tempera, mother-of-pearl; 66.2 x 49.4 cm. First half of eighteenth century.

San Juan Evangelista (Saint John); oil, tempera, mother-of-pearl on wooden panel; 66.2 x 49.4 cm. First half of the eighteenth century.

Asunción de la Virgen (Assumption of the Virgin); c. 1700; oil, tempera, mother-of-pearl on wooden panel; 39.3 x 29.2 cm.

Nacimiento (Nativity); c. 1700; Oil and mother-of-pearl; 39.5 x 29 cm.

El juicio del conde Guillermo III (The Judgement of Count William III); oil, tempera, and mother-of-pearl; first half of the eighteenth century.

Nacimiento (Nativity); oil, tempera, gold and silver dust, mother-of-pearl; first half of eighteenth century.

Museo Catedralicio y Diocesano de León, León, Spain.

Virgen de Guadalupe (Virgin of Guadalupe); anonymous, seventeenth century, wooden support, oil with mother-of-pearl.

Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales, Madrid, Spain

Inmaculada (Immaculate); anonymous; oil and mother-of-pearl on wooden support with linen canvas; 64 x 42.5 cm.

San José con el Niño (Saint Joseph with Child); oil and mother-of-pearl on wooden support with linen canvas; 64 x 42.5 cm.

Convento de las Carmelitas de San José, Guadalajara, Spain

Santa Teresa (Saint Theresa): wooden support with mother-of-pearl; early part of eighteenth century, 64 x 40.

Parroquia de la Asunción, Allo, Navarra, Spain

Sagrario exento (Tabernacle); on two sides: Sacrificial Lamb on one; Christ on Column in the other; 60 cm high; anonymous; seventeenth century.

Church of Saint Bartolomé, Sevilla, Spain

San Gregorio (Saint Gregory); wooden support with mother-of-pearl, c. seventeenth century.

San Agustín (Saint Augustine): wooden support with mother-of-pearl, c. seventeenth century.

La Virgen Niña con San Joaquín y Santa Ana (The Young Virgin with Saint Joachim and Saint Ann); wooden support with mother-of-pearl, c. seventeenth century.

Hermandad y Archicofradía de Nazarenos del Dulce Nombre de Jesús, Sevilla, Spain

Alegoría de la Encarnación (Allegory of the Incarnation); wooden support with mother-of-pearl.

Museo de Bellas Artes, Sevilla, Spain

Virgen de Guadalupe (Virgin of Guadalupe); with four apparitions; wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 94 x 63 cm.

Private Collection, Spain

Virgen de Guadalupe (Virgin of Guadalupe); with Saint John the Evangelist; wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 43 x 29 cm.

Private Collection, Spain

Mística ciudad de Dios (Mystical City of God); wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 62 x 47 cm.

Private Collection, Spain

Santo Tomás de Aquino predicando desde el púlpito (Saint Thomas Aquinas Preaching from the Pulpit); wooden support with mother-of-pearl.

Museo de Bellas Artes, Gijón, Spain

Virgen de Guadalupe (Virgin of Guadalupe); signed “Rudolpho M. Fe” wooden support with mother-of-pearl.

Capitanía General, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Virgen de Guadalupe (Virgin of Guadalupe): wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 75 x 65 cm.

Hispanic Society of America, New York, USA.

Bautismo de Cristo (Baptism of Christ): anonymous; seventeenth century; oil with mother-of-pearl on wooden support; 42.6 x 32.1 cm.

La boda en Cana (The Wedding at Cana); signed Nicolás Correa, 1693; oil on canvas, wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 58 x 75.5 cm.

Collection of the Banco Nacional de México

Series of six, “El Credo”

La creación (The Creation); signed Miguel González, end of seventeenth century.

La comunidad de la Iglesia Católica (The Community of the Catholic Church); signed Miguel González, end of seventeenth century.

La remisión de los pecados (The Remission of Sins); signed Miguel González, end of seventeenth century.

La venida del Espíritu Santo (The Coming of the Holy Spirit); signed Miguel González, end of seventeenth century.

La resurrección de la carne (The Resurrection of the Flesh); signed Miguel González, end of seventeenth century.

La vida perdurable (The Eternal Life); signed Miguel González, end of seventeenth century.

Other subject matter

La Sagrada Familia (Holy Family); signed Miguel González, end of seventeenth century.

Private Collection, Mexico City

Series IV of the Life of the Virgin

Sueño de San José (Saint Joseph's Dream); wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 86.5 x 102.

Petición de Posada (Petition at the Inn); wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 86.5 x 102.

Series V of the Life of the Virgin

El nacimiento de la Virgen (The Birth of the Virgin); signed by Pedro López Calderón, 1723; wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 86.5 x 102.

Private Collection, Mexico

Arcángel (Archangel); wooden support with mother-of-pearl; first quarter of eighteenth century; 41 x 26 cm.

Private Collection, Mexico

Virgen con San José y San Luis (Virgin with Saint Joseph and Saint Louis); wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 40 x 44 cm.

Private Collection, Mexico

Series of six panels about the Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola divided among several Private Collections between Madrid, Buenos Aires, and Mexico.

Vida de San Ignacio de Loyola (Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola); signed Juan González; wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 46 x 61 cm.

Private Collection, Mexico (Daniel Liebsohn)

Ascension of the Virgin; wooden support with mother-of-pearl.

Dormition of the Virgin, wooden support with mother-of-pearl.

Private Collection, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Vida de San Ignacio de Loyola (Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola); signed Juan González; wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 46 x 61 cm.

Vida de San Ignacio de Loyola (Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola); signed Juan González; wooden support with mother-of-pearl; 46 x 61 cm.

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, Hungary

Adoración de los Reyes (Adoration of the Magi); oil and tempera on wood support, mother-of-pearl; 44.4 x 55.2 cm.

Saint Anthony of Padua Performing a Miracle; oil and tempera on wood support, mother-of-pearl.

Robert Simon Art, New York

San Jorge y el dragón (Saint George and the Dragon); oil on wood support, mother-of-pearl. From Peru.

San Martín de Tours ofreciendo el manto (Saint Martin of Tours Dividing his Cloak); oil on wood support, mother-of-pearl. From Peru.

Collection Rodrigo Rivera Lake, Mexico

Battles of Alessandro Farnesio; twelve-panel folding screen; wood panel with gesso, mother-of-pearl, attributed to Juan and Miguel González, last decade seventeenth century.

Defense of Vienna, six-panel folding screen, ink, oil, varnish over mother-of-pearl inlay; attributed to Juan and Miguel González. Inscribed: Made for Don José de Sarmiento y Valladares, Count of Moctezuma and thirty-second viceroy of New Spain.

Joseph and Child, wood panel with mother-of-pearl. Anonymous.

Saint Martin of Tours and Beggar, wood panel with mother-of-pearl. Anonymous.

Bethrothal of the Virgin, wood panel with mother-of-pearl. Anonymous.

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