The Sacred Historian’s Craft:
Francisco de Florencia and Creole Identity in Seventeenth-Century New Spain

by

Jason Dyck

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Department of History
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Jason Dyck 2012
The Sacred Historian’s Craft: Francisco de Florencia and Creole Identity in Seventeenth-Century New Spain

Jason Dyck

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Department of History
University of Toronto

2012

Abstract

This dissertation examines how and why creole scholars practiced the sacred historian’s craft in seventeenth-century New Spain. I explore the context in which they performed their research and the multiethnic sources they used to interpret their sacred past. In particular, I analyze expressions of creole patriotism by demonstrating how sacred historians engaged with their “saints,” images, and religious institutions to challenge European theories of American degeneracy. Although sacred history was designed for spiritual edification, I argue that it was also a political medium through which creoles voiced their concerns and declared their cultural and spiritual parity as members of Catholic kingdoms within the Spanish empire. To follow the multiple tasks of the sacred historian my dissertation focuses on the religious career of the Jesuit Francisco de Florencia (1620–1695), a prolific writer on several popular devotions and the Company of Jesus in New Spain. Instead of studying his sacred biographies, devotional histories, and provincial chronicle in isolation from each other, I analyze them together as a group
to illustrate how creoles incarnated the sacred historian’s craft into their New World environment.

There are three parts in this dissertation. In the first part I provide a brief survey of Florencia’s life by concentrating on his peregrinations throughout the New World and the Old. Through his travel and pilgrim experiences, I demonstrate how creoles invented Europe and their own creole identities by appropriating European and indigenous spiritual topographies, traditions, and customs. In the second part I treat Florencia’s idea of sacred history and his method of collecting and evaluating his sources. Sacred historians in New Spain, I contend, sought to prove with evidence that they belonged to Catholic kingdoms with authentic sacred traditions that were just as reliable as all others in the Spanish empire and larger Christendom. And in third part I explore how Florencia applied the sacred historian’s craft to imagine the human and physical geography of New Spain. By analyzing how he drew upon and modified a wide range of sacred traditions, I elucidate the ways in which creoles envisioned New Spain as a land teeming with sanctity and material wealth.
Acknowledgements

I was very pleased to hear about your curiosity (inquietud) to learn more about the discovery of the New World and the “so-called conquest” that, as my father explained in his different works, was not a conquest.¹

– Jovita Chávez de Urízar, October 18, 2002

In the spring of 2001 I spent one month in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala at a language school. It was there that I was hosted by Jovita Chávez de Urízar, whose father happened to be a historian and translator of the Popol vuh, a creation narrative of the Quiché-Maya. Several months after I had returned home I wrote Jovita a letter to express my thanks for her hospitality and to share with her my future plans for graduate school. I am thankful for Jovita’s response because she pointed me to alternative narratives of the colonial past of Latin America. Many others have influenced me in similar ways and I would like to take this opportunity to mention them here.

Without the financial aid of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities I would have been unable to complete this project. Their scholarship programs allowed me to explore rare book libraries and archives in Canada, the United States, Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Spain, and Italy.

While on research trips friends, family members, and strangers graciously opened up their homes to me. I would like to thank Celso Morales Milacatl and Gregoria Pérez Armas in San José Texopa; Jeremy Koop and Neil Klassen in Toronto; Charles and Ann Palmer and Steve and Janice Friesen in Austin; Roxy Allen and Marietta Allen in Oakland; Jim and Shirley Holms in Reedly; Dave and Carol Dickie in Pasadena; César

¹ “Me alegró mucho saber . . . tu inquietud por saber más sobre el Descubrimiento del Nuevo Mundo y de la “llamada Conquista” que como lo explica mi padre en sus diferentes trabajos; no fue una conquista.”
Moya and Patricia Urueña in Quito; José Manuel Prada Bernal and Esperanza Lucía Rodríguez de Prada and Otto and Lidia Funk in Lima; and Hiram Carpinteyro Anguiano in Puebla.

Several of my professors have instilled within me a passion for history and more specifically an interest in Latin American studies. I would not have arrived at nor finished my dissertation without the comments and encouragement of Alan Arthur, Mark Anderson, David S. Parker, David Rojinsky, Allan Greer, Nicholas Terpstra, Isabelle Cochelin, and Mark Meyerson. In particular, I am indebted to Beatriz de Alba-Koch for providing me with my first extended encounter of Mexico and for her continued interest in my work. And it has been both a blessing and a sheer delight to have Kenneth Mills as my doctoral supervisor, a man of great patience and unbridled enthusiasm who possesses a contagious excitement for the “things of the Indies.”

At conferences and during other research trips I was able to share some of my ideas and converse with several scholars. I am grateful for the time, comments, and encouragement I received from William B. Taylor, Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, Antonio Rubial García, Susan Deans-Smith, Robert Douglas Cope, Amy Remensnyder, Nancy van Duesen, and Luisa Elena Alcalá.

Many librarians and archivists were particularly helpful to me in locating documents relevent to my research. I would like to recognize the following individuals: Charles Tingley at the Saint Augustine Historical Society; Martha Whittiker at the Sutro Library; Andrés Pérez García at the Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de México de la Compañía de Jesús; Mercedes Aguilar Lara at the Archivo Histórico de la Basílica de Guadalupe; and Leticia Ruiz Rivera at the Biblioteca Eusebio Francisco Kino.
Throughout college and university my friends have been great intellectual and athletic companions. Over the years I have greatly appreciated the friendship of Jason Baerg, Gabe Boldt, Bill Huizer, David Jackson, Jeremy Koop, Frank Pearson, and Trevor Wiebe.

My family in both Mexico and Canada have provided me with the love and support I needed to conclude this chapter of my life. I want to express my sincerest gratitude to my mother-in-law María Imelda Guerrero Landa; to my sister-in-laws Guadalupe Imelda Manzo Guerrero and Gabriela Manzo Guerrero; to my brother and sister-in-law Kevin and Sarah Dyck, together with my nephews Jared and Ethan and my niece Danae; and to my father and mother Ronald and Bettie Dyck. In particular, I wish to acknowledge my parent’s dedication to my post-secondary education. They have modeled to me two of the greatest characteristics of any good historian: the former with his unbounded imagination and the latter with her great attention to detail.

And finally, my wife Cynthia Luz Manzo Guerrero has steadfastly stood by me throughout the duration of my doctoral studies. She has read through parts of my manuscript, travelled with me to archives, and she has patiently endured my excitement for mendicant convents in pueblos off the beaten track. She alone knows how grateful I am to her for accompanying me on this journey into the colonial past.
# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................................................... ii  

Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................................. iv  

List of Figures ......................................................................................................................................... ix  

List of Appendices ................................................................................................................................. xi  

List of Abbreviations ............................................................................................................................ xii  

Introduction ............................................................................................................................................. 1  
  The Glory of Our Company .................................................................................................................. 5  
  The Glory of Our Creole Nation ........................................................................................................... 12  
  Chapter Outline and Sources .............................................................................................................. 24  
  Note on Transcriptions, Translations, and Terminology ................................................................. 26  

Part I: The Creole Discovery of Europe .................................................................................................. 28  

Chapter 1: The Things of the Indies ....................................................................................................... 31  
  The Edges of Empire .......................................................................................................................... 33  
  The Preparation of a Pilgrim ............................................................................................................. 37  
  The Crossing of the Atlantic ............................................................................................................. 46  
  The Missionary Vocation .................................................................................................................. 58  
  The Centre of Christendom ............................................................................................................... 66  
  The Head of the World ...................................................................................................................... 73  
  The Procurador of the Indies ............................................................................................................ 78  

Part II: The Creole Idea of History ........................................................................................................ 88  

Chapter 2: The Cuidado of History ......................................................................................................... 91  
  The Obligations of the Craft .............................................................................................................. 93  
  The Vivaciousness of History .......................................................................................................... 101  
  The Care of the Soul ......................................................................................................................... 112  
  The Alms of the Faithful .................................................................................................................. 122  
  The Hydra of Heresy ....................................................................................................................... 138  

Chapter 3: The Crédito of the Sacred ...................................................................................................... 146  
  The Evidence of the Craft ................................................................................................................. 148  
  The Experience of the Eyes .............................................................................................................. 153  
  The Authorities of the Indies ............................................................................................................ 161  
  The Search for Ancient Papers .......................................................................................................... 173  
  The Tradition of Fathers to Sons ...................................................................................................... 189
Part III: The Creole Invention of America ................................................................. 200

Chapter 4: The Nobility of the Soul ................................................................. 203
  The Eyes of God ............................................................................................ 206
  The Distinguished Sons of the Province .................................................. 212
  The Three Fortunate Indians ................................................................. 225
  The Mestizo Hermits of Chalma .............................................................. 241

Chapter 5: The Zodiaco Mariano ........................................................................ 258
  The Sun of Justice ...................................................................................... 261
  The Bastions of Mexico ............................................................................. 266
  The Pilgrim House of Loreto ................................................................. 278
  The Celebrated Shrines of Guadalajara ..................................................... 286
  The Beauteous Churches of New Spain .................................................... 296

Chapter 6: The Errors of the Ancients ............................................................ 311
  The Land of Promise ............................................................................... 314
  The Endless Provinces of New Spain ....................................................... 319
  The Fertility of La Florida ....................................................................... 327
  The Greatness of Mexico ........................................................................ 345

Conclusion .................................................................................................... 363

Appendix A: The Zodiaco Mariano ................................................................. 368

Bibliography .................................................................................................. 372
  Archives and Manuscript Collections ..................................................... 372
  Bibliographic Catalogues, Dictionaries, and Encyclopaedias ............... 373
  Published and Manuscript Works by Francisco de Florencia ............... 375
  Published and Manuscript Works Reviewed by Francisco de Florencia 383
  Primary Sources ....................................................................................... 385
  Secondary Sources .................................................................................. 400
# List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 1-1</th>
<th>Signature of Francisco de Florencia .................................................. 35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1-2</td>
<td>Hill of Tepeyac ........................................................................................ 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1-3</td>
<td>Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial ....................................... 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1-4</td>
<td>Juan Bautista Zappa ................................................................................... 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1-5</td>
<td>Marble exterior of the Santa Casa ............................................................. 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1-6</td>
<td>Basilica of Loreto ...................................................................................... 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1-7</td>
<td>Chiesa del Gesù ......................................................................................... 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1-8</td>
<td>Shipping inventory by Francisco de Florencia .......................................... 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2-1</td>
<td>Emblem of the Society of Jesus ................................................................ 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2-2</td>
<td>Engraving of Gregorio López ................................................................ 108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2-3</td>
<td>Engraving of an Angel ............................................................................... 113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2-4</td>
<td>Engraving of the Virgin of Guadalupe .................................................... 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2-5</td>
<td>Basilica of the Virgin of Remedies .......................................................... 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2-6</td>
<td>Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe ........................................................ 131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2-7</td>
<td>Sanctuary of the Crucified Christ of Chalma .......................................... 133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2-8</td>
<td>Sanctuary of the Archangel San Miguel del Milagro .................................. 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2-9</td>
<td>Protesta by Francisco de Florencia ........................................................... 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2-10</td>
<td>Sentir by Francisco de Florencia ............................................................... 141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3-1</td>
<td>Engraving of Faith ..................................................................................... 149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3-2</td>
<td>Engraving of the Virgin of Remedies ......................................................... 159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3-3</td>
<td>Library of the Jesuit College of Tepotzotlán .......................................... 164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3-4</td>
<td>Bibliographic reference to Andrés Pérez de Ribas .................................... 165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3-5 Jesuit chest..............................................................................................................176
Figure 4-1 Engraving of Juan Diego before Juan de Zumárraga........................................210
Figure 4-2 Vida of Antonio Rincón........................................................................................219
Figure 4-3 Painting of Diego Lázaro....................................................................................228
Figure 4-4 Engraving of Juan Diego....................................................................................233
Figure 4-5 Caves of Chalma..............................................................................................252
Figure 5-1 Title Page of La milagrosa invención ...............................................................268
Figure 5-2 Title Page of La estrella del norte.................................................................270
Figure 5-3 Title Page of La casa peregrina........................................................................280
Figure 5-4 Title Page of the Zodiac Mariano .................................................................298
Figure 6-1 Title Page of the Historia de la Provincia.....................................................321
Figure 6-2 Frontispiece of the Historia de la Provincia.......................................................323
Figure 6-3 Engraving of the Columns of Hercules..............................................................326
Figure 6-4 Engraving of Pedro Martínez .............................................................................337
Figure 6-5 Engraving of Juan Bautista Segura.................................................................338
Figure 6-6 Map of the Discalced Franciscan Province of San Diego of Mexico.....358
List of Appendices

Appendix 1       The *Zodiaco Mariano*........................................................................... 368
## List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGI</td>
<td>Archivo General de Indias</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGN</td>
<td>Archivo General de la Nación de México</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHH</td>
<td>Archivo Histórico de Hacienda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHBG</td>
<td>Archivo Histórico de la Basílica de Guadalupe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHPM</td>
<td>Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de México de la Compañía de Jesús</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHPSMM</td>
<td>Archivo Histórico Parroquial de San Miguel del Milagro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>Archivo Nacional de Chile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARSI</td>
<td>Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>Hubert H. Bancroft Library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLB</td>
<td>Nettie Lee Benson Library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNAH</td>
<td>Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia “Dr. Eusebio Dávalos Hurtado”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNE</td>
<td>Biblioteca Nacional de España</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL</td>
<td>Huntington Library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>Mexican Manuscripts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HM</td>
<td>Huntington Manuscripts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

[Francisco de Florencia] was a genuine representative of the era and had a thirst for miracles. In his hands everything is marvellous . . .

– Joaquín García Icazbalceta, 1896

In Spanish America people from all ethnic groups participated in the construction of the sacred through their prayers, pilgrimages, processions, and other acts of piety. But it was primarily sacred historians, most of them members of the regular clergy, who dominated how the sacred was represented in writing. By the seventeenth century creoles (criollos), those born in the Indies with either real or imagined European ancestry, began to replace Europeans as the leading sacred historians of the church in America. To firmly establish the origins of their miraculous images and the foundations of their religious provinces they returned to sixteenth-century accounts of conquest and evangelization and searched for archival documentation. With the hope of learning more about the virtues of their religious brethren and the miracles of local shrines they conducted interviews with both their coreligionists and the Christian faithful. Through an engagement with their sacred past they imagined the grandeur of their homelands (patrias) and forged local, imperial, and Christian identities as Catholic kingdoms within the Spanish empire and global Christendom. Although they performed research, interpreted the past, and recorded their findings as other early modern Catholic scholars, creoles adapted and transformed sacred history to suit their own needs and context in the New World.¹ The following study

---

¹ I have followed Marc L. B. Bloch’s coinage here from The Historian’s Craft [ca. 1942], trans. Peter Putnam (New York: Knopf, 1962), because I find it helpful to understand sacred history as a rhetorical skill that only a few men (and a handful of women) acquired during the colonial era.
examines how and why creoles exercised the sacred historian’s craft in New Spain during the seventeenth century.

In order to investigate creole approaches to sacred history I have chosen to concentrate on the religious career of Francisco de Florencia (1620–1695), a well-known yet understudied Jesuit and author of an impressive corpus of writings. Florencia penned more sacred histories than any of his contemporaries in New Spain and his works illustrate how religious scholars throughout the Spanish world employed similar methodologies when investigating holy men and women, images, and religious institutions.  

He began with a menology (1671) of his Jesuit province and three sacred biographies on his coreligionists Luis de Medina (1673), Nicolás de Guadalajara (1684), and Gerónimo de Figueroa (1689). During the last decade of his life he published a series of devotional histories on the Virgin of Remedies (1685), the Virgin of Guadalupe (1688), the Virgin of Loreto (1689), the Crucified Christ of Chalma (1689), the Archangel San Miguel (1692), and a combined history on the Virgins of Zapopan and of San Juan de los Lagos (1694). Amongst his final projects were a provincial chronicle on his Jesuit Province of New Spain, of which he was only able to publish the first volume (1694), and a manuscript compendium of Marian shrines that was printed in an edited and amplified form over a half-century after his death (1755).  


3 See the bibliography under “Published and Manuscript Works by Francisco de Florencia” for a full list of Florencia’s published and manuscript works. Throughout this study Florencia’s sacred biographies will be cited as: Menologio (Menology); Vida de Medina (Luis de Medina); Relación de Guadalajara (Nicolás de Guadalajara); and Vida de Figueroa (Gerónimo de Figueroa). His devotional histories will be cited as: La milagrosa invención (Virgin of Remedies); La estrella del norte (Virgin of Guadalupe); Descripción histórica (Crucified Christ of Chalma); La casa peregrina (Virgin of Loreto); Narración de la maravillosa (Archangel San Miguel); and Los dos célebres santuarios (Virgins of Zapopan and of San Juan de los
creole bibliographer José Mariano Beristáin y Souza (1756–1817), Florencia also wrote a manuscript history of the Crucified Christ of Ixmiquilpan.⁴

Florencia also offers an excellent window onto the sacred historian’s craft because he drew upon a wide range of personal experiences and sources to construct his patriotic vision of New Spain. He left record in his sacred histories, albeit brief, of his travels and pilgrimages in both the New World and the Old. Although he was born and raised in La Florida, Florencia spent most of his life in Mexico City, he visited several regions of New Spain, and he lived in Spain and Italy for almost a decade where he was directly exposed to the sacred traditions and customs of Europe. His observations of negative stereotypes on the Indies are representative of larger creole frustrations with Europeans who argued that they were inferiors because they inhabited lands that were physically degenerate. Together with other religious scholars—both creoles and a few European émigrés—Florencia turned to New World “saints”⁵ and images to demonstrate the natural and spiritual abundance of America. He gathered together a wide range of materials from libraries and archives from both sides of the Atlantic and put his work in

---

conversation with the sacred historiography of the Spanish world. In this study I argue that beyond his pious goal of religious edification, Florencia used his sacred histories as a political medium through which to criticize the imperial relationship between New Spain and Spain. His research and writings can be seen as a quest for cultural and spiritual parity, one that is reflective of the larger creole confidence in the face of an increasingly weakened Habsburg monarchy.

Despite his extensive literary trail, Florencia, as it was briefly noted above, has received limited scholarly attention. One can find reference to him in bibliographic catalogues, encyclopaedias, and dictionaries, but he has never been the subject of a biography.⁶ There are a handful of dissertations and articles that concentrate on his devotional histories, but his entire corpus of sacred histories has not received monographic treatment.⁷ And Florencia’s name frequently appears in the massive literature on the Virgin of Guadalupe, but he has been virtually ignored in studies on

---

⁶ For a listing of these entries, see the bibliography under “Bibliographic Catalogues, Dictionaries, and Encyclopaedias.” It was common for Jesuits to write letters of edification (cartas de edificación) upon the death of their members, but I have been unable to locate the one penned for Florencia. Although a biography of Florencia does not exist, the closest attempt would be Francisco Zambrano and José Gutiérrez Casillas, Diccionario bio-bibliográfico de la Compañía de Jesús en México (Mexico City: Editorial Jus, 1966–1977), 6:703–767.

creole identity in the Atlantic world.⁸ David A. Brading, for example, one of the leading scholars on creole patriotism, only made passing reference to the Jesuit in his seminal study *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State, 1491–1867* (1991). Tracing a “nascent consciousness of creole identity” in seventeenth-century chronicles, he argues that creoles created their own intellectual heritage out of European literary and cultural forms and from their own experiences of the New World. “[T]he historical arguments and religious myths which figured so largely in the patriotic tradition,” Brading concludes, “were always liable to acquire a political resonance.”⁹ As I demonstrate throughout my study, Florencia was amongst the most ambitious collectors of these pious traditions, a major reason why his contemporaries considered him to be the glory of both the Company of Jesus and his “creole nation.”

**The Glory of Our Company**

Florencia became a Jesuit in Mexico City, donning a black robe he would wear for over fifty years. During his religious career he earned a reputation as an eloquent preacher, erudite teacher, and as a prolific writer. Francisco Eusebio Kino (1646–1711), an Italian Jesuit who met Florencia in Mexico City in the early 1680s before heading on to their northern missions, claimed that he was the “illustrious glory of our holy Company, very celebrated in his professorships and for his numerous and very

---


distinguished books.”\textsuperscript{10} But although Florencia was generally well-respected during his lifetime, a little over half a century after his death his status began to change both within and outside of the Society of Jesus. He became a symbol of the excesses of the Baroque and as a result, for some, was transformed from an eminent sacred historian into a credulous Jesuit chronicler. Many other creole scholars have been similarly described and hence have shared much the same fate.

The Enlightenment has cast a shadow over baroque forms and figures in the Spanish world. From the eighteenth through to the twentieth centuries several scholars have presented the baroque era as an obscure period when the Inquisition ruled supreme by successfully suppressing intellectual creativity. Steeped in Christian tradition and neo-scholastic thought, men and women were claimed to have been helplessly caught in the intolerant webs of religious fanaticism. The mid-colonial period in Spanish America, as a result, was presented as one long siesta with not much interesting taking place, its art and literature derivative and slavish imitation at best. And so when scholars turned to baroque writers in the Indies they chose to ignore many of them, concentrating more so on those who, despite the restrictions imposed upon them by colonialism, showed refreshing signs of “scientific” curiosity, poetic creativity, and literary genius. Given this tendency to see the Baroque in terms of stasis and stagnation,\textsuperscript{11} sacred historians such as Florencia have been overshadowed by their contemporaries Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora (1645–1700), a polymath and hospital chaplain, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651–1695), a nun and


extremely gifted poetess—both of whom have been viewed as “prefigures of modernity” in Mexico.\textsuperscript{12}

Florencia’s pathway to historiographic obscurity began within his own religious order as Jesuits in New Spain engaged with more “scientific” forms of historical practice by the mid 1700s.\textsuperscript{13} In this intellectual milieu, Francisco Javier Alegre (1729–1788), a creole from Vera Cruz, referred to Florencia as a “very distinguished individual,”\textsuperscript{14} but he rejected his methods and pointed out his factual errors. Since Alegre wrote his own account of the Jesuit Province of New Spain, his work superseded Florencia’s as the standard Jesuit history until the early part of the twentieth century. Since then Florencia’s brethren have claimed that his work has “great defects,” that it was “eclipsed” by Alegre, and that his style was like that “of Nieremberg with a tinge of gongorismo,” “uncritical,” and “exaggeratingly baroque, diffuse, and vague.”\textsuperscript{15} Florencia did not fare well with scholars outside of the Company either. The Mexican historian Joaquín García Icazbalceta (1825–1894) severely attacked the “prolific Jesuit” for his “marvellous histories” which, in his mind, were filled with “a multitude of fables, false miracles, and

\textsuperscript{12} For Sigüenza y Góngora, see Irving A. Leonard, \textit{Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora: A Mexican Savant} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1929); and Laura Benítez Grobet, \textit{La idea de Historia en Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora} (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982). And for Sor Juana, see Octavio Paz, \textit{Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz o las trampas de la fe} (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982).

\textsuperscript{13} For a discussion of these historical trends, see Ernest J. Burrus “Francisco Javier Alegre: Historian of the Jesuits in New Spain (1729–1788),” \textit{Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu} 22 (1953): 439–509.

\textsuperscript{14} Francisco Javier Alegre, \textit{Historia de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España} [ca. 1766], eds. Ernest J. Burrus and Félix Zubillaga (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu, 1956), 3:297 (“un sujeto tan distinguido”).

stupidities.” Others have stated that his style was similar “to the monkish chroniclers of the fourteenth century” and that the titles of his book express the “most exuberant abundance of the Baroque.” More recently, Stafford Poole has stated that as a historian Florencia “was flawed and credulous” and that his “historical approach was that of the Baroque in New Spain—traditionalist, moralistic, and uncritical.”

This disdain for the Baroque has been a barrier to understanding sacred history, which is why in recent scholarship Florencia and other creole scholars have been presented as both “hagiographers” and as “historians.” Ever since the Enlightenment, and more specifically in the nineteenth century with the rise of positivist historiography, the various subgenres of sacred history have been carefully dissected to distinguish between “fact” and “fiction” and they have been particularly ridiculed for their emphasis on the extraordinary and scrutinized for their lack of objectivity. Scholars have placed these works under the general banner of “hagiography” to distinguish them from “history” proper. Although hagiography is a genre that encompasses writings on the saints and, at times, other texts dedicated to relics and images, in many cases it has become synonymous with fable, fiction, and forgery. Colonial texts such as sacred biographies, devotional histories of Catholic images, and sections or entire volumes of provincial

---

16 García Icazbalceta, *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*, 34, 35 (“El fecundo jesuita empleó la mayor parte de su larga vida en escribir historias maravillosas”) (“por la multitud de consejas, milagros falsos y ridículos”).
chronicles containing biographic sketches have all been classified as works of hagiography. The remaining sections of provincial chronicles and other mission histories, although passing through rigorous criticism, have tended to be classified as works of history even though they employ many of the same rhetorical forms as texts that have been traditionally labelled as hagiography.

Clear distinctions between what today is considered hagiography and history were not entirely present in the early modern Spanish world. A look at the logic of classification in the Bibliotheca Hispana (1672), written by the Spanish bibliographer Nicolás Antonio (1617–1684), nicely illustrates this point. In the index to his bibliographic catalogue are several categories with various subgenres below each one. Under the category of “history” one finds “lives of the saints and illustrious men,” and under the general banner of “theology” there is a section dedicated to Mary, Joseph, and her parents that includes “histories of sacred images of Mary the Mother of God.” Although “sacred/ecclesiastical history” is listed as a subgenre under “history,” in Spanish America the category was generally applied to all forms of sacred biographies, devotional histories, and provincial chronicles. Juan Antonio de Oviedo (1670–1757), a Jesuit who worked with several of Florencia’s manuscripts after his death, praised him by saying that “his pen was always very celebrated in the numerous sacred histories he

---

20 Nicolás Antonio, Bibliotheca Hispana sive Hispanorum qui usquam unquamve sive Latina sive populari alia quavis lingua scripto aliquid consignaverunt notitia, 2 vols. (Rome: Nicolai Angeli Tinassii, 1672). Very soon after the Bibliotheca Hispana was published, Antonio discovered that he had overlooked several authors and other editions. The manuscript of his additions was later incorporated into a new edition that was edited and printed by a group of Spanish scholars in the mid-1700s as Bibliotheca Hispana Nova, sive, Hispanorum scriptorum qui ab anno MD ad MDCLXXXIV floruere notitia, 2 vols. (Madrid: Apud Joachimum de Ibarra Typographum Regium, 1783–1788). This text has been recently translated into Spanish as Biblioteca Hispana Nueva, o, de los escritores españoles que brillaron desde el año MD hasta el de MDCLXXXIV, trans. and ed. Miguel Matilla Martinez, 2 vols. (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1999).
published.”

Throughout the Spanish world theology and history were intimately intertwined; hence the goal of the sacred historian was not necessarily to present a “factual” view of the past but rather to express the truth which he believed had been revealed to humankind by the Christian God. Brading rightly points out that “sacred history [is] theology in a historic form.”

Sacred historians like Florencia wrote about real people and historical events, but they crafted imaginative narratives that eloquently expressed the providential will of the Christian God in their local contexts and an unbroken continuity with the origins of the Catholic Church. In order to achieve these ends it was necessary, at times, to engage in pious invention whereby the past was refashioned in the present to address contemporary concerns. Although the medieval and early modern periods are filled with countless examples of such devout acts, over the past few decades scholars have redirected their energy away from exposing these deliberate falsifications to the reasons why their authors engaged in such practices. By shifting their focus they have been able to uncover the multiple ways in which the sacred was locally imagined and manipulated by religious communities to further their own political agendas and to construct corporate, civic, regional, and larger “national” identities.

---

21 Zodiaco Mariano, Prólogo al lector, n.p. (“Fue siempre muy celebrada su pluma en las muchas Historias Sagradas que dio a la luz pública”).
22 David A. Brading, La canonización de Juan Diego (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2009), 78 (“historia sacra, es decir, la teología en forma histórica”).
Spanish world, scholars have identified how Spanish historians fashioned their own forms of Christian antiquity to respond to centuries of Islamic rule in the Iberian Peninsula. They have explained how these Spanish historians rigorously employed the methods of humanist historical scholarship by turning to ancient relics and papers—both spurious and authentic—to firmly establish the authenticity of an array of sacred traditions, the most prominent being the apostolic visitation by Saint James to Spain.

Similar to scholarship on Spanish historiography in the early modern period, I am not concerned with demonstrating, for example, that the Virgin never manifested herself to Indian neophytes in New Spain or that Saint Thomas never stepped foot in America as creole and other European scholars contended. In the words of Miguel León-Portilla, “the supernatural and the miraculous cannot be affirmed or denied by history.” I am more interested in analyzing how creole scholars incarnated Spanish and other Catholic forms of sacred history into their New World environments. More specifically, I seek to understand how, in compiling a wide range of sacred traditions from the first century and a half of colonization, Florencia addressed what he perceived as the secondary status afforded creoles and their territories within the Spanish empire. And so instead of seeing Florencia, along with others like him, as a credulous scholar or uncritical hagiographer, I present him as a sacred historian who mastered the art of his craft according to the


26 Miguel León-Portilla, Tonantzin Guadalupe. Pensamiento náhuatl y mensaje cristiano en el “Nican mopohua” (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000), 13 (“lo supernatural y milagroso no puede ser afirmado o negado por la historia”).
standards of his own day. Francisco Antonio Ortiz, a Jesuit and censor of one of Florencia’s works, stated that he was a “sacred historian” who was “so seasoned in his style, so garnished in his rhetoric, [and] so rich in his eloquence.”

The Glory of Our Creole Nation

Although Florencia was a Jesuit he did not limit himself to writing only about the members or affairs of his religious order. He was approached by bishops, local priests, and mendicant friars to pen sacred histories of holy men and miraculous images from various regions of New Spain. Throughout his lifetime Florencia developed a significant network of connections both within the church and with other wealthy patrons, which perhaps explains why Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora described him as “the glory of our creole nation and a very special friend of mine.” But despite the fact that Florencia was viewed as a distinguished creole by some of his contemporaries, his “nationality” soon became contested when Spanish America was carved into independent states in the early nineteenth century. With the end of colonialism and the rise of national borders, Florencia ceased to be a creole from New Spain and became a citizen of new countries he had never known. Several others in the “creole nation” have been similarly delimited to geographic boundaries that for them were far more fluid and expansive.

Since Mexican independence from Spain in 1821 the colonial era has often been interpreted through a nationalist lens. Many scholars have limited their study of New Spain to the land and people within the borders of modern Mexico. Given that creoles

28 Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, Libra astronómica y filosófica [1690] (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1959), 4 (“gloria de nuestra criolla nación y singularísimo amigo mío”).
were both insurgents in the wars for independence and important political leaders in the early nineteenth century, historians have drawn connections between the rhetoric and symbols of creole patriotism with those of Mexican nationalism. But this close relationship has led some to see the early years of the post-conquest period as the “proto-nationalist” origins of Mexican identity, while others have argued that the birthplace of modern nationalism was Mexico and was in large part a result of the efforts of creoles from the late eighteenth century. This unbroken link between the fall of Mexico-Tenochtitlan and the cry for independence in 1810 is captured in the words of the Mexican historian Francisco López Camara: “The revolution of Mexican independence truly began in the sixteenth century; it acquired “consciousness” and was announced in the seventeenth; and it began to be realized in the eighteenth when creoles as a group . . . felt capable of removing from their country their Old [World] adversary.”

---

29 David A. Brading argues that there was a transition from creole patriotism to Mexican nationalism; but even though the latter drew upon the “ideological vocabulary” of the former the two differed in terms of both discourse and symbolic representation. “Creole Nationalism and Mexican Liberalism,” Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs 15, no. 2 (1973): 139–190; Prophecy and Myth in Mexican History (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, Centre of Latin American Studies, 1984); The Origins of Mexican Nationalism (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, Centre of Latin American Studies. 1985); “Liberal Patriotism and the Mexican Reforma,” Journal of Latin American Studies 20, no. 1 (1988); The First America; and “Patriotism and the Nation in Colonial Spanish America,” in Constructing Collective Identities and Shaping Public Spheres: Latin American Paths, eds. Luis Roniger and Mario Sznajder (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1998), 13–45.


31 Francisco López Camara, “La conciencia criolla en Sor Juana y Sigüenza,” Historia Mexicana 6, no. 3 (1957): 369 (“La revolución de la independencia mexicana comienza verdaderamente en el siglo XVI,
this teleological interpretation of the colonial era Florencia, together with a host of other creole scholars, was a baroque herald of Mexican nationhood.

The specific identification of Florencia as a Mexican is in large part due to his association with the Virgin of Guadalupe, a religious symbol that unified a significant portion of the nation’s populace in the post-independence period. The origins of her cultus, as a result, have been filtered through a meta-narrative, one that assumes her primacy over all other Catholic images since 1531 when the Virgin was said to have appeared to the Indian neophyte Juan Diego. From the late colonial period onwards *guadalupanistas* (followers of Guadalupe) have declared her as the “name of our ship of war,” the “Mother of Mexicans,” the “foundation of national unity,” and the “sign of the *patria*.” Since Florencia was one of four creoles to pen an account of the image in the seventeenth century, his name is often cited in studies of the *guadalupana*. As a result of this association, he has been categorized as a “Mexican” Jesuit, a “Mexican iconologist,” and as someone who was “born in Florida [but] achieved the goal of writing a very Mexican book [i.e., *La estrella del norte*] for Mexican men and women.” The Mexican art historian, Francisco de la Maza (1913–1972), even declared him to be one of the “four

---


“evangelists” of the Virgin of Guadalupe responsible for the origins of Mexican nationality.34

Although Florencia has been cast as a Mexican, a few American Jesuits in the 1930s tried to claim that as the first-born priest within its modern borders, he was in fact one of the earliest heroes of the United States.35 Given that a good portion of their country was at one time part of the Spanish empire, they argued that its history, together with Florencia, deserved to be included in their national narrative. In the past thirty to forty years historians have in large part dropped national adjectives when describing Florencia, referring to him as “creole devotee of Mary,” a “creole orchestrator of the baroque image,” a “creole writer,” a “creole patriot,” a “creole chronicler,” and as a “creole patriotic intellectual.”36 But even when Florencia has been freed of his honorary Mexican and American citizenships, his creole identity has been primarily confined to central Mexico. Since he has been presented, for the most part, as a fervent guadalupanista, interpretations of his creole discourse have often stopped in the central valley of Mexico. The tendencies to project the boundaries of modern nations back into the colonial period have misconstrued the “nationality” of many creoles like Florencia and as a result their broader and more inclusive forms of patriotism have been distorted.

34 Francisco de la Maza, “Los evangelistas de Guadalupe y el nacionalismo mexicano,” Cuadernos Americanos 8, no. 6 (1949): 163–188.
Recent scholarship, then, has appropriately described Florencia as a creole, a term which, due to its various connotations, merits further explanation here. Creole was originally used in Brazil to distinguish between black slaves born in the New World from those brought over from Africa. Europeans eventually applied the word to those born in the Americas of European descent, sometimes in a derogatory fashion but more generally as a way of distinguishing such people from themselves.\footnote{Antonio Sebastián de Toledo Molina y Salazar (1608–1715), for example, was viceroy of New Spain between 1664 and 1673, and he said that “those born in the Indies” are “universally called creoles.”} Florencia only used the word once in his sacred histories, stating that the Discalced Augustinian friar, Miguel de Aguirre, was a “creole from Lima.”\footnote{La estrella del norte, 181v (“Criollo de Lima”).} But even though creoles were in theory those “born in the Indies of Spanish parents,”\footnote{Diccionario de la lengua castellana, en que explica el verdadero sentido de las voces, su naturaleza y calidad, con las phrases o modos de hablar, los proverbios o refranes, y otras cosas convenientes al uso de la lengua (Madrid: Imprenta de Francisco del Hierro, 1726–1739), 2:661 (CRIOLLO. El que nace en Indias de Padres Españoles”).} many of them were in fact of mixed ancestry.\footnote{Elizabeth Anne Kuznesof analyzes the mixed ancestry of creoles in “Ethnic and Gender Influences on “Spanish” Creole Society,” Colonial Latin American Review 4, no. 1 (1995): 153–176. Some scholars, such as Severo Martínez Peláez (1925–1998), have chosen to emphasize class over ethnicity, utilizing a Marxist lens to understand the colonial past. La patria del criollo. Ensayo de interpretación de la realidad colonial guatemalteca (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998). This study has recently been translated into English as La patria del criollo: An Interpretation of Colonial Guatemala, trans. M. Neve and W. George Lovell, eds. W. George Lovell and Christopher H. Lutz (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).} They were the offspring of conquistadors and other Spanish settlers, and given the scarcity of Spanish women in the early stages of colonization, large numbers of them intermarried with the daughters of indigenous nobles or had sexual

\footnote{37 For a discussion of the etymological origins of the term creole, see Ralph Bauer and José Antonio Mazzotti, “Introduction: Creole Subjects in the Colonial Americas,” in Creole Subjects in the Colonial Americas, eds. Ralph Bauer and José Antonio Mazzotti (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 3–7, 52–53.}

\footnote{38 Antonio Sebastián de Toledo, Informe que el Marqués de Mancera del comisión de guerra hace al Excelentísimo Señor Duque de Veragua su sucesor en el Virreinato de la Nueva España, Archivo Nacional de Chile (ANC), Fondo Varios, vol. 59, f. 4v (“los nacidos en las Indias que universalmente se llaman Criollos”).}
liaisons with other Indian commoners and African slaves. Many Spanish fathers, in turn, legitimized their mestizo and mulatto sons as “Spaniards” and hence secured their place within the creole elite.

Although several creoles shared bloodlines with Indians, Africans, and castas (people of mixed ancestry), they envisioned themselves as natural rulers in a society—to use the words of Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra—that was “obsessed with identifying and enforcing racial hierarchies.” In the multiethnic context of America creoles did not normally self-identify as creoles, choosing rather to refer to themselves and their families as Spaniards (españoles). But as Solange Alberro has demonstrated in several studies, they were increasingly conscious that they were Spaniards of a different type, which was in large part due to their engagement with their New World environment, and more specifically with their acculturation of indigenous customs. Hence when Florencia spoke “of all the nations of this New World” and of the “nations of Europe and Asia,” he made a clear distinction between the nations within the Indian (la república de los indios) and Spanish (la república de los españoles) republics, polities created in the sixteenth century with their own rights, privileges, and duties. In the seventeenth century

---

44 *Historia de la Provincia*, 221 (“todas las Naciones de este Nuevo Orbe”). Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia “Dr. Eusebio Dávalos Hurtado” (BNAH), Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 5v (“las demás naciones de Europa y Asia”). This manuscript, a censored portion of Florencia’s *Historia de la Provincia*, is discussed in more detail in chapter 6. A transcription of the text can be found in Jason Dyck, “La parte censurada de la *Historia de la Provincia* de Francisco de Florencia,” *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 44, no. 1 (2011): 141–188.
a nation (nación) was “a kingdom or province,”\textsuperscript{45} but it was also used to identify distinct ethnic groups, and within the context of the Spanish empire there were many. Creoles belonged to a larger Spanish nation, but they also imagined themselves as a separate “creole nation” that was equal to all others—Castilians, Andalusians, Catalans, etc.—under the Spanish crown.\textsuperscript{46}

All nations throughout the Spanish empire were joined together by one sovereign whose political centre was Madrid. The Spanish monarchy was envisioned as a body politic, the king acting as its supreme head and symbol of unity amongst its diverse parts. As John H. Elliott explains, early modern Europe was “a Europe of composite states,”\textsuperscript{47} which meant that individual kingdoms (reinos) within “Greater Spain” (Magnae Hispaniae) maintained their own laws and customs.\textsuperscript{48} Although Spanish America had been legally incorporated into the crown of Castile as a conquered territory, it was necessary to draft new laws to address American conditions; hence creoles in both New Spain and Peru imagined their lands as kingdoms with their own rights and privileges.\textsuperscript{49} Anthony Pagden suggests that they “persisted in assuming that their relationship with the mother country was founded upon a contract by which they enjoyed equal standing with

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{45} Sebastián Covarruvias Orozco, Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española (Madrid: Luis Sánchez, 1611), 560r (“NACIÓN . . . vale Reino, o Provincia extendida, como la nación Española”).
\textsuperscript{48} Francisco Cervantes de Salazar (ca. 1514–1575), one of the earliest professors of the University of Mexico, noted that the sixteenth-century geographer Juanoto Durán stated that New Spain was a part of “Greater Spain.” México en 1554 y Túmulo imperial [1554] (Mexico City: Porrúa, 2000), 66.
all the other “kingdoms” of the empire.” In his sacred histories Florencia represents this multiplicity, and always referred to the “kingdoms of Peru and New Spain,” and even though he criticized some of the weaknesses of the Spanish crown during his lifetime, he never sought after independence. Like most creoles, he was loyal first to his God, second to his monarch who represented the divinity on the earth, and then third to his patria.

The patria was a sacred place in the early modern Spanish world, a source of local pride around which personal and communal identities were formed. Sebastián de Covarruvias Orozco (1539–1613), author of an early seventeenth-century Spanish dictionary, defined patria as “the land where one was born.” In most cases this “land” was a local town or city, which is why Florencia described urban centres such as Mexico City and Puebla as the patrias of his coreligionists. The term also applied to larger regions, with Florencia noting that New Spain was the patria of Juan de Grijalva (1580–1638), an Augustinian friar, and that Peru was the patria of Antonio de la Calancha (1584–1654), a member of the same religious order. And at times all the kingdoms of the Indies together were rhetorically viewed as one common homeland, hence Francisco de Burgoa (1605–1681), a Dominican friar from Oaxaca, was able to claim that America is “our patria.” But the creole nation, to which Florencia belonged, shared its homelands with a variety of indigenous nations, which is why leading intellectuals primarily developed an elite notion of their patrias. Their patriotic discourses, although...

---

51 La estrella del norte, 106r (“Reinos del Perú, y Nueva España”).
52 Covarruvias Orozco, Tesoro de la lengua castellana, 581r (“PATRIA, la tierra donde uno ha nacido”).
53 Descripción histórica, 89–90 (“honra de su patria la Nueva España”). Narración de la maravillosa, 53 (“Escritor de las cosas del Perú, patria suya, Fr. Antonio Calancha”).
54 Francisco de Burgoa, “Parecer,” in Pedro del Castillo, La estrella del occidente, la Rosa de Lima que lo regio del lugar se erigió de las flores. Vida y milagros de la Santa Rosa de Santa María del sagrado instituto de la tercera orden y hábito de nuestro gran padre y patriarca Santo Domingo de Guzmán (Mexico City: Bartolomé de Gama, 1670), n.p. (“nuestra patria”).
infused with indigenous customs and symbols, were primarily rooted in a particular American landscape in which they had been born and with which they personally identified.

Scholars have shown that early signs of creole patriotism emerged in New Spain amongst the offspring of the conquistadors in the late sixteenth century. Bitter with the crown for phasing out the encomienda (a grant of labour and tribute rights from a group of Indians), they painted a picture of themselves as dispossessed heirs in a land their ancestors had subdued and upon which their blood was spilt. Forced to leave their seigniorial aspirations aside, they joined other early Spanish settlers to form a creole aristocracy, a small portion of the entire population of New Spain that by the end of the seventeenth century well outnumbered those arriving from the Iberian Peninsula. Isidro de la Asunción (1624–1701), a Carmelite friar who passed through New Spain in the 1670s, noted that “Spaniards, if they are born in Spain, are called gachupines, and if in the Indies, creoles.” At times creoles used gachupín in a derogative fashion for newly landed immigrants, but for Florencia the term simply referred to one who was a “recent arrival” to America. Whatever the case, he was clearly aware of the many tensions that existed between these two groups of Spaniards, particularly the assumption that gachupines were somehow superior to creoles.

---

57 La milagrosa invención, 36r (“los Gachupines . . . recién venidos”). BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 18r (“gachupín, que quiere decir recién venido”).
Some contemporaries tried to explain that creoles, together even with other long-term residents born in Europe, were corrupted by their New World environment. Other observers pointed to their intimate interactions with the Indian, African, and casta populations, believing that creoles had acquired many of their immoral habits. In the late seventeenth century Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri (1651–1725), a Neapolitan traveller, passed through Mexico City where he noted significant animosity between Europeans and creoles. He claimed that creole women preferred European men over locals, even the wealthiest who were “lovers of mulatto women, from whom they have suckled their bad customs along with their milk.” Given these theories of degeneracy, some peninsular Spaniards tried to argue that creoles were unfit to govern in both the colonial bureaucracy and the church. Creoles, nevertheless, still managed to obtain important posts in the audiencias (high courts), cabildos (town councils), cathedral chapters, and the religious orders; but the highest positions of authority in New Spain—namely the viceroy and local bishops—were still generally granted to those born in the Iberian Peninsula. To address their purported moral depravity and inability to govern, creoles and other sympathetic Europeans wrote patriotic defences of their lands. Many of these men were religious scholars, like Florencia, who had been filling up the secular and regular wings of the Catholic Church in New Spain since the late sixteenth century.

Over the past few decades scholars have looked for signs of creole patriotism in histories, sermons, maps, city views, paintings, food, shields, science, “saints,” Catholic

---

58 Gemelli Careri, Viaje a la Nueva España, 22 (“éstos amantes de las mulatas, de las cuales han mamado, junto con la leche, las malas costumbres”).

59 Scholars have demonstrated how the discourse of creole patriotism was principally developed within the colonial convents and Jesuit colleges of Spanish America. For Peru, see Bernard Lavallé, Las promesas ambiguas: Criollismo colonial en los Andes (Lima: Pontifica Universidad Católica del Perú, Instituto Riva-Agüero, 1993). And for New Spain, see Solange Alberro, El águila y la cruz. Orígenes de la conciencia criolla—México, siglos XVI–XVII (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999).
images, and in the pre-Hispanic past. But in the context of New Spain a patriotic trinity has emerged that centres on the following three themes: (1) the Mexica (or Aztecs), (2) the Virgin of Guadalupe, and (3) the land. Works on the Mexica have demonstrated how creole patriots used the ancient history of Mexico-Tenochtitlan to imagine their own classical antiquity in the tradition of those of the Greeks and the Romans. These studies

suggest that creoles idealized the pre-Hispanic Indian in writing but distanced themselves from the colonial Indian—both past and present—who was for them a wretched image of his glorious ancestors. Research on the Virgin of Guadalupe has concentrated, as mentioned above, on the patriotic character of her cultus, specifically with the invention of the apparition story by creole priests in the early part of the seventeenth century. Her rise in devotional popularity, as William B. Taylor has noted, is commonly interpreted as “a Wal-Mart style history in which other shrines fell away in the face of irresistible attraction and relentless promotion for one dominant symbol.”⁶¹ And studies on the land have primarily concentrated on the debate over the nature of the New World that took place in the eighteenth-century as American writers, principally exiled Jesuits in Europe, defended their patrias against enlightened ideas of environmental determinism.⁶²

Florencia’s creole identity was also rooted in this patriotic trinity, but his vision of New Spain was certainly not confined to it. His interest in indigenous history moved well beyond pre-Hispanic civilizations to Indian commoners of the colonial era, important protagonists in the apparition narratives of miraculous images who became symbols of creole pride for him alongside Mexica kings. There is no question that Florencia was amongst the most important promoters of the cultus of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the seventeenth century, but several other images in the devotional landscape of New Spain also captured his attention. He wrote about devotions of Mary, Christ, and San Miguel, and instead of rooting his patriotism in Guadalupe alone he looked to the plethora of

---

Marian advocations spread throughout his entire kingdom. And although Florencia exalted the fertility and natural abundance of New Spain to address European theories of American degeneracy, the geography in his sacred histories reaches well beyond central Mexico to include the modern-day regions of the American Southeast and Southwest and most of Central America. Instead of delimiting Florencia as a Mexican or American, then, I insist on describing him and his contemporaries as novohispano creoles. Together with many others in the “creole nation,” Florencia constructed his creole identity and vision of his patria in a vast kingdom that in the late seventeenth century was still in the process of determining the northern limits of its frontiers.

Chapter Outline and Sources

The first part of this study is entitled “The Creole Discovery of Europe,” and its one and only chapter provides a biographic telling of Florencia’s life with an emphasis on his extensive transatlantic peregrinations. I follow his travels and pilgrimages throughout the Spanish and Catholic worlds, tracing his footsteps from his birth in Saint Augustine to his education in Mexico City to his Jesuit service in Madrid, Rome, and Seville to his return home to Veracruz. But Part I is more than just a “thick description” of Florencia’s family past, Jesuit studies, religious training, teaching assignments, and his administrative duties. I examine the ways in which ideas and material objects in the Atlantic world became “things of the Indies” that creoles appropriated as their own and which formed the basis of their identities. In particular, I discuss how Florencia developed his understanding of patria by drawing upon his experiences of Europe, both as a continent he lived on for several years and as an idea he constructed in his writings. His
transatlantic encounters, I conclude, significantly shaped how he both viewed sacred history and his overall vision of New Spain. To write this part I have benefitted from correspondence, inventories, and other administrative documents both written by and addressed to Florencia. I have also reconstructed his itinerary of travel and pilgrimage through his personal references in his sacred histories and the Jesuit catalogues from their central archives in Rome.

In the second part—“The Creole Idea of History”—there are two chapters that examine the ways in which Florencia understood and practiced the sacred historian’s craft in the final decade and a half of his life. In the first chapter I look at his general idea of history, his motivations for writing, the patrons who supported his work, the economic circumstances surrounding his publications, and his participation in colonial censorship. Florencia’s approach to research and his manner of assessing authorial credibility is my subject in the second chapter. I explore the sources he incorporated into his works, including his personal experiences and consultations, published and manuscript books, ancient papers, and oral traditions. Featuring his own language, I demonstrate how Florencia, through the cuidado (care) of history and the crédito (credit) of his evidence, sought to prove that New Spain was a Catholic kingdom with reliable sacred traditions that rivalled or surpassed all others in the Spanish empire and larger Christendom. My principal sources for this part are Florencia’s sacred histories and those of other religious scholars from both Spain and other regions of Spanish America. In order to uncover the general context in which Florencia penned his writings, and to highlight how he fits into a larger spiritual, intellectual, and cultural climate, I have turned to many other sources,
including other histories and relations, travel narratives, edicts, church registries, and licences for alms.

There are three chapters in the final part of this study entitled “The Creole Invention of America.” In the first chapter I look at Florencia’s sacred biographies of Spaniards, creoles, Indians, and mestizos to highlight his contention that all men and women, regardless of their socioracial status, had the potential to be “saints.” I examine his “Marian geography” of New Spain in the second chapter with special focus on the way he mapped, using his devotional histories on images of the Virgin Mary, the territorial boundaries and grandeur of his patria. And in the third chapter I analyze his criticisms of the “errors of the ancients,” an indirect reference to his European contemporaries, on the indigenous population and the land of the New World in the first two books of his provincial chronicle. Throughout the three chapters of Part III I show how Florencia, by engaging with European theories of American degeneracy, imagined New Spain as a Catholic kingdom that was providentially blessed with a soothing climate, beneficial stars, and abundantly fertile lands. Similar to Part II, then, my primary sources are Florencia’s sacred histories set within the broader sacred historiography of his age. But more particularly, in this part I draw upon unpublished sections of his provincial chronicle and other manuscripts he used to write his devotional histories and Marian compendium of New Spain.

**Note on Transcriptions, Translations, and Terminology**

All citations from manuscripts and printed books from the colonial era appear in the Spanish original in their corresponding footnotes. I have modernized, for the most
part, the use of accents, orthography, and archaisms such as “dello/a” and “aqueste/a” to facilitate the reader. The names of saints from Spain, cities, and other people are written in Spanish according to their present-day usage. Since many baroque titles are significantly long, I have abbreviated many of them in the footnotes; full bibliographic information, however, appears at the end in the bibliography. Throughout this study La Florida is used instead of Florida given that the former more accurately captures the vague and expansive notion of the territory that stretched from the modern-day state of Florida all the way to Newfoundland. In the same spirit, I have also chosen to use novohispano over Mexican to describe the people, objects, and institutions of New Spain. As the Mexican historian and philosopher Edmundo O’Gorman (1906–1995) once said, “the novohispano is no longer a Spaniard, but he is not yet Mexican.”

63 Edmundo O’Gorman, Meditaciones sobre el criollismo. Discurso de ingreso en la Academia Mexicana Correspondiente de la Española (Mexico City: Centro de Estudios de Historia de México, Condumex, 1970), 31, n. 7 (“No se olvide: el novohispano ya no es español, pero todavía no es mexicano”).
Part I
The Creole Discovery of Europe

A few Marian devotions in New Spain acquired special nicknames based upon their place of origin. Some were crafted in Europe and eventually transported across the Atlantic while others were carved or painted by local artisans in America. Florencia explained that the Virgin of Remedies, for example, had “left (allow me to speak in this way) her patria and pueblo in Europe where she had been born,” and that after her arrival to the Indies she became the “sure protectress of the New World.”\(^1\) She was eventually “named the conquistadora and the gachupina” because “she came from Spain or from Cuba with the Spanish conquistadors.”\(^2\) According to Florencia, the Virgin of Remedies was a “recent arrival,” and as a result was different from the Virgin of Guadalupe, “called the criolla for having appeared and been born in this land.”\(^3\) But even though the two hailed from different patrias on opposite sides of the Atlantic, he claimed that “in reality” they are “the same thing.”\(^4\) Florencia believed that the Virgin Mary was one despite her many advocations throughout the earth.

In this opening part I analyze this tension between sameness and difference in Florencia’s creole identity. On one level, Florencia personally identified with Europe, recognizing that his ancestors had originally emigrated from the Iberian Peninsula to the

---

\(^1\) *La milagrosa invención*, 70v (“dejó (permítame hablar así) a su Patria, y Pueblo de Europa, donde nació”) (“amparo cierto de este Nuevo Mundo”).

\(^2\) *La estrella del norte*, 163v (“que la llaman la Conquistadora, y la Gachupina, [porque vino de España, o de Cuba con los Españoles Conquistadores]”).

\(^3\) Ibid., 163v (“que la llaman la Criolla, por haberse aparecido, y como nacido en esta tierra”). Florencia borrowed his terminology from Miguel Sánchez, *Imagen de la Virgen María Madre de Dios de Guadalupe, milagrosamente aparecida en la ciudad de México* (Mexico City: Imprenta de la viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1648), 84v.

\(^4\) *La milagrosa invención*, 17v (“porque en la realidad ambas con distintos sobrenombres son una misma cosa”).
New World sometime in the sixteenth century. He knew that he belonged to a larger community of subjects in the “composite monarchy” of Spain and that he was a member of global Christendom which had its spiritual centre in Europe. But on the other level, Florencia was conscious that the patria of his ancestors was different from that of his own. He looked to New Spain as his own homeland, a Catholic kingdom divinely blessed with its own sacred centres. Octavio Paz (1914–1998), a Mexican poet of the twentieth century, nicely captured the ambiguity of creole identities when he suggested that “New Spain wished to be the realization of Old Spain,” but “to consummate Old Spain, the New negated it and became another Spain.” Creoles sought to be both like and unlike Spain, both distinct from and connected to an imaginary vision they had of Europe. When describing New Spain, Florencia boasted with pride that “they placed this kingdom in front of all of those of America, ennobling it with the name of Spain as they have, and not without reason, for it is the noblest part of all of Europe.”

Florencia viewed Europe as a geographic region composed of “Italy, Spain, France, and other parts.” He would have also seen Europe as an imagined cultural entity binding together diverse groups of people of varying languages, laws, and customs. The idea of Europe was never stable or fixed, but several early modern writers assumed that it was the centre of the civilized world, and that all those outside of its boundaries, no

---

5 Octavio Paz, “Foreword: The Flight of Quetzalcoatl and the Quest for Legitimacy,” in Lafaye, Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe, xii.
6 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 13r (“anteponían este reino a todos los de la América, ennoblecéndolo con el nombre de España que ellos tienen, y no sin razón por la parte más noble de toda la Europa”).
7 La casa peregrina, 74r (“Italia, España, Francia, y de las demás partes de Europa”).
matter how enlightened, were godless barbarians living in heathen darkness. Imperial expansion around the globe only served to heighten this vision of cultural superiority, which is why John H. Elliott suggests that “in discovering America Europe discovered itself.” But another “discovery” took place in the colonial context of the New World. Creoles, Indians, Africans, and castas transformed the idea of Europe according to their own cultural assumptions and in so doing refashioned themselves. At one point in his sacred histories Florencia referenced how a spring of water at the base of a hill in the province of Tlaxcala had been named after Tzopilotes in pre-Hispanic times. Knowing that many of his readers outside of New Spain were unfamiliar with the term, he explained that they were “birds that are not very well known in Europe, as they are here in our America.” After roughly a decade of pilgrimage and travel in the Old World, Florencia returned home with many other things to clarify about his side of the Atlantic.

---

11 Peter Beardsell reverses the relationship between colony and metropolis by making Latin America “self” and Europe the “other” in Europe and Latin America: Returning the Gaze (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000).
12 Narración de la maravillosa, 14 (“Son estas aves no tan conocidas en la Europa, como acá en nuestra América”).
Chapter 1
The Things of the Indies

[T]he things of the [Indies], as I have said, are very different from those of Spain, and no less the people from there.

– Martín Enríquez, 1580

[T]he things of the Indies are understood to come from beyond, hence very little is believed because much is imagined.

– Agustín de la Madre de Dios, ca. 1653

Neither the precious metals of gold and silver nor the wonderful variety of so many lovely stones are the richest [things] that come forth out of the Indies.

– Bernardo Sartolo, 1684

During the colonial era only a small number of creoles had the opportunity to visit Europe.¹ Hence most of their experiences of the continent and its people took place within the Indies. In this opening chapter I seek after a creole encounter of Europe by following Florencia’s travels and pilgrimages on both sides of the Atlantic. Florencia “journeyed” through various parts of the Old World through books, material culture, immigrants, family, religious brethren, and in his own history of faith.² But this does not

EPIGRAPHS: Martín Enríquez, “Instrucción y advertimientos que el Virrey D. Martín Enríquez dejó al Conde de Coruña (D. Lorenzo Suárez de Mendoza),” in Instrucciones que los virreyes de Nueva España dejaron a sus sucesores (Mexico City: Imprenta Imperial, 1867), 250 (“las cosas de la tierra, que como he dicho, son muy diferentes de las de España, y no menos la gente de ella”). Agustín de la Madre de Dios, Tesoro escondido en el Monte Carmelo mexicano. Mina rica de ejemplos y virtudes en la historia de los carmelitas descalzos de la Provincia de la Nueva España [1646–1653], ed. Eduardo Báez Macías (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1986), 24 (“que ya las cosas de las Indias son tenidas por de allende y se creen muy pocas porque se imaginan muchas”). Bernardo Sartolo, Vida admirable y muerte prodigiosa de Nicolás de Ayllón, y con renombre más glorioso Nicolás de Dios, natural de Chichayo en las Indias del Perú (Madrid: Juan García Infanzón, 1684), Introducción, n.p. (“Ya ni los nobles metales de oro, y plata, ni la hermosa variedad de tantas piedras preciosas son lo más rico que producen las Indias”).

¹ Irving A. Leonard points out that unlike Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, whose farthest journey was to La Florida, Florencia was able to visit various regions of Europe. Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, 47.
² Creoles were not the only observers of Europe during the colonial era. Indians, Africans, and people of mixed ancestry experienced Europe both abroad and at home in America. Carmen Bernand and Serge Gruzinski provide a look at the Peruvian mestizo El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega’s residency in Spain in “Un mestizo en el Viejo Mundo,” in Historia del Nuevo Mundo, vol. 2, Los mestizajes, 1550–1640 [1993], trans. María Antonia Neira Bigorra (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999), 81–106. Rolena
mean that he was entering into a familiar environment when he passed through the Straits of Gibraltar in the 1670s. For roughly a decade in Spain and Italy, Florencia witnessed firsthand the similarities and differences between America and Europe. He was fascinated with the lands he had been taught were the centre of civilization and Christianity. But he was also frustrated with the lack of European recognition of the “things of the Indies.” I argue that Florencia’s experiences of Europe—both real and invented—were central to how he imagined his patria.

The “things of the Indies” in this chapter refers to everything American, from physical objects to general customs. All of these “things” were given new meanings through the material and cultural mixtures (mestizaje) characteristic of colonial societies. As Serge Gruzinski has argued, “mestizo processes” accelerated in the age of Iberian expansion, but they “occurred not between “cultures” but rather fragments of Europe, America, and Africa—fragments and shards that did not remain intact for long once they encountered others.” Creoles followed European and indigenous traditions in New Spain, imitating some rather closely, and radically transforming others to suit their needs. In all cases, the material and cultural “fragments and shards” upon which they drew were made their own by becoming “things of the Indies.” Florencia knew that he formed part of a larger group of creoles throughout Spanish America because they had all been born and inhabited the same side of the Atlantic, and as a result the same position in respect to

---

3 *La estrella del norte*, 24r (“en los diez años, que Yo salté de estos Reinos”).
Europe. But the “things of the Indies” were always more specifically those of his own patria, the most important being the sacred.

This chapter is organized chronologically around Florencia’s itinerary of travel and pilgrimage in both the New World and the Old. It follows his encounters of Europe from his early childhood to his return to New Spain from the Iberian Peninsula at the age of fifty-eight. The first two sections look at Florencia as a student, teacher, and pilgrim on the frontier and in central Mexico. Subsequent sections concentrate on Florencia as a Jesuit procurador (representative of a religious order) and pilgrim throughout various parts of modern Spain, France, and Italy. And the last section specifically examines his time in Seville as procurador of all the Jesuit provinces of the Indies.

The Edges of Empire

Francisco de Florencia was born to Claudio de Florencia and Juana de Leyba on August 13, 1620. His patria was the military fort of Saint Augustine, located on the edges of the Spanish empire along the coast of a vast and loosely defined territory known as La Florida. This region was part of the frontier of New Spain, secluded from the centre of viceregal power in Mexico City. Its remoteness, however, did not mean that it was disconnected from larger cultural trends in the viceroyalty. Florencia was a novohispano

---

creole who was raised with access to all of “the basic elements of Spanish society,” even though Saint Augustine was geographically isolated.⁶

Saint Augustine was still in a primitive condition when Florencia was a child. There were roughly three hundred residents and several homes were only simple huts of palmetto. The underdeveloped garrison, however, did have a hospital, a shrine dedicated to Santa Bárbara, and a Franciscan convent where young boys could learn how to read and write.⁷ Robert L. Kapitzke argues that Saint Augustine was a common Spanish parish. Its inhabitants were held together by the unifying power of Catholicism, which allowed them “to maintain their identity as Spanish citizens, despite the geographical distance and environmental differences separating Florida from the Iberian Peninsula.”⁸ Florencia studied with the grey friars of his hometown and participated in the Christian festivals of the calendar year.⁹ He began to form an image of Europe when he learned the fundamentals of grammar and the Christian history of salvation. Through stories of the saints, martyrs, and images of Mary and Christ, he was introduced to a world across the Atlantic. These lands in the east were home to his king and the pope. Like most other

---


creole children in Spanish America, Florencia was taught to think that he was connected to a larger political and spiritual community beyond his patria.

Florencia grew up as a creole in a multiethnic community where one’s social standing mattered. Saint Augustine was populated with men from various regions of the Iberian Peninsula and other European nations. The fort had the largest African population on the borderlands, and given the scarcity of Spanish women the mestizo community was significantly large. Since the majority of settlers were single male soldiers, it was not uncommon for them to marry Indian women or to take them in as their concubines.10 Amy Bushnell explains that in Saint Augustine “where everyone’s background and business was everyone else’s concern, social presumptiveness was severely regarded.”11

Claudio and Juana were part of the hidalgo class in the small garrison where the larger Florencia family possessed significant power.\textsuperscript{12} Having parents of importance distinguished Florencia from the majority of the population in Saint Augustine. His accident of birth provided him with social opportunities unavailable to others in the military fort. He was reared with Spanish mores of civilization and with the knowledge that his ancestors had immigrated to America from Europe.

There were essentially only two vocational paths open to the sons of hidalgos in Saint Augustine. They could either enter the church or the garrison as soldiers. Since these positions were limited, at a young age Florencia was sent off to live with family in Cuba.\textsuperscript{13} Havana was the major city of the island and the principal stopping point for all ships making the trip across the Atlantic to Spain. When the Carmelite friar, Antonio Vázquez de Espinosa (1570–1630), passed through in the early 1600s, he observed the racial diversity of the port where Spaniards, blacks, mulattos, and people from “all parts of the Indies” interacted with each other.\textsuperscript{14} Florencia was amongst the creole and Spanish population who had access to mendicant schooling there. He claimed that his “early education and study of the Latin language” took place in Havana, where “the sons of Spaniards” were “very skilful with arms and even more so with letters.”\textsuperscript{15} After a short stay on the island of Cuba, Florencia was sent to Mexico City to continue his study of

\textsuperscript{12} For more on the influence of the Florencia family in La Florida, see Mark F. Boyd and Hale G. Smith, \textit{Here They Once Stood: The Tragic End of the Apalachee Missions} (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1951), 20–28.

\textsuperscript{13} Florencia conducted business with his cousin Diego de Florencia, a resident of Havana. Archivo General de la Nación de México (AGN), Jesuitas IV-18, caja 1, exp. 3, f. 4; and AGN, Archivo Histórico de Hacienda (AHH), vol. 106, exp. 13. He also had a nephew in New Spain, which means that some of his brothers and sisters may have also migrated to the mainland. AGN, Jesuitas IV-7, caja 1, exp. 8, f. 8.

\textsuperscript{14} Vázquez de Espinosa, \textit{Compendio y descripción}, 1:177 (“todas las partes de las Indias”).

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Historia de la Provincia}, 24, 23–24 (“mi primera crianza, y estudios de latinidad”) (“Los hijos de Españoles, que nacen en la Habana, y en toda la Isla, son muy hábiles para las armas, y más para las letras”).
Latin with the Jesuits. He would maintain contact with his family in Saint Augustine and Havana by correspondence throughout his adult life.\textsuperscript{16} La Florida would always play a part in how Florencia imagined the kingdom of New Spain.

**The Preparation of a Pilgrim**

Central New Spain was home to two of the largest and most important cities of the kingdom: Mexico City, considered by many to be the “Athens of America,” and Puebla, alternatively known as the “City of Angels.” Jesuit schools had been established in these urban centres by the late sixteenth century for the instruction of creole and Spanish children. Florencia most likely arrived to the viceregal capital in 1629 to begin his education at San Ildefonso.\textsuperscript{17} He moved back and forth between Mexico City and Puebla over the next forty years studying and teaching at various Jesuit colleges. His religious training, based upon the experiences of San Ignacio de Loyola (1491–1556), the founder of the Company of Jesus, prepared him to be a pilgrim at both home and abroad.

It was in central New Spain that Florencia’s vision of his *patria* formed (and was

---


\textsuperscript{17} Manuel Berganzo claimed that in 1853 there was still a portrait of Florencia in the main lecture hall of San Ildefonso stating that he was a “schoolboy seminarian” (*colegial seminarista*) there between 1629 and 1634. “Art. Colegio de S. Ildefonso; alumnos distinguidos,” in *Diccionario universal de historia y geografía* (Mexico City: Tipografía de Rafael, 1853–1856) 2:393. Félix Osores y Sotomayor (1760–1851) noted in his *Noticia de algunos alumnos o colegiales del seminario más antiguo de San Pedro, San Pablo y S. Ildefonso de México*, Nettie Lee Benson Library (NLB), Genaro García Collection, G109, vol. 1, that Florencia was a seminarian at San Ildefonso in 1636. Florencia’s history of education can be found in the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), Catalogus Provincia Mexicana, Mexicana 4 (ff. 380v, 422r, 424r, 436v, 481r), Mexicana 5 (ff. 12r, 55r, 111v, 152v, 210r, 252v, 287r, 326v, 377r), and Mexicana 6 (ff. 2v, 47v, 146r).
enlarged), both in the way he was treated differently from other European Jesuits, and in the stories of the sacred he became familiar with while on pilgrimage.

Jesuit colleges were founded in novohispano cities to provide wealthy citizens with the latest form of European education available. The *Ratio studiorum* (1599), a pedagogical guide for Jesuit instruction, emphasizes the study of Latin by concentrating on Greek and Roman texts. Students in Jesuit schools read works by classical authors such as Cicero (106–43 BC), Sallust (86–35 BC), Virgil (70–19 BC), and Horace (65–8 BC), and their philosophical training was based primarily on the writings of Aristotle (384–322 BC). When they studied theology, their principal source was Saint Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225–1274). Florencia began his studies with grammar, rhetoric, and the humanities (*estudios inferiores*) before moving on to philosophy and theology (*estudios superiores*). Through his humanistic training, he became familiarized with the general intellectual history of Europe and the cultural heritage of his ancestors from the Iberian Peninsula.  

Europe—as it was presented to him in the lecture hall, library, refectory, and college courtyards—was both distant and near for Florencia. It was distant for him because he had never experienced firsthand the lands he was learning about in books. It was near to him because many of his teachers and fellow students were from Europe. All of his training would have taught Florencia that Europe was the standard by which all other societies should be judged.

---

After earning his bachelor’s degree in philosophy, Florencia decided upon a religious vocation. In 1641 he chose to be a member of the Society of Jesus and became “a novice in the [Jesuit] house of Santa Ana.”19 This career path was only open to him because of his socioracial background. Although there were some notable exceptions, in the first half of the seventeenth century only creoles and Europeans were allowed entrance into the Society in New Spain.20 Florencia’s experience as a Jesuit novice, however, would have been different from his European brethren. There was discrimination against creole members in the early years, provinciales (the governing head of a religious province) being warned to exercise extreme caution when accepting those born in America into the order. In 1618 the situation became somewhat heated when the Spanish Jesuit, Cristóbal Gómez, preached a sermon suggesting that creoles were incompetent and unfit to run anything. Things were still somewhat tense when Florencia entered his two-year period of probation. Since he was born in New Spain, he was forced to start roughly two years later than other Europeans who generally began their noviciate at the age of eighteen. Creoles, so it was reasoned by some Spanish Jesuits, needed more time to establish the firmness of their commitment to the religious life.21

In 1643 Florencia finished his period of probation and took up the habit of the Society of Jesus. Like the other mendicant orders, Jesuits were expected to take the three religious vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity. Florencia would have written out his vows.

---

19 *La milagrosa invención*, 42r (“era Novicio en la Casa de Santa Ana, hoy San Andrés”).
vows and recited them to his superiors. He was later ordained to the Catholic priesthood in 1650 and solemnly professed the Jesuits’ Fourth Vow of obedience to the Pope concerning missions in 1660. John W. O’Malley explains that the “Fourth Vow was in essence a vow of mobility, that is, a commitment to travel anywhere in the world for the “help of souls.”” The Society had religious provinces around the globe, but was centralized with a Padre General (Father General) based in Rome who was responsible for selecting provinciales and men for other important posts. This institutional form of government helped to diminish some of the internal fighting between creoles and Europeans, a significant problem for most of the mendicant orders of New Spain. They were forced to implement a system known as the alternativa whereby the highest positions of authority were alternated between members born in the New World and the Old. Although the Jesuits never adopted any form of the alternativa, there were tensions between creole and European brethren. Florencia experienced anti-creole sentiments in the Society, even in the later period of his life when those born in America outnumbered those born in Europe.

Although Jesuits were divided by their national differences, they were trained to leave them behind when cultivating their spiritual lives. Florencia would have learned and performed the Spiritual Exercises of his order on several occasions as both a novice and as a full member of the Society. San Ignacio designed the Spiritual Exercises as a manual to assist Christians in their spiritual growth, preparing them to seek and find

22 I have been unable to locate Florencia’s vows.
“God’s will in the ordering of our life for the salvation of our soul.” Florencia would have been guided by a spiritual director over a period of roughly thirty days. During this time of retreat, he would have been instructed to examine his conscience, read sacred literature, and engage in both mental and vocal prayer. He would have been trained to exercise his imagination to the fullest, mentally visualizing the life and death of the bleeding Christ. And he would have also been encouraged to perform Christian acts of devotion, like pilgrimage to important Catholic sites. San Ignacio referred to himself as a “pilgrim” in his Autobiography, and the origins of the Society are rooted in his desire to undertake a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Florencia’s Jesuit formation taught him to view the general mission of the Society and his own spiritual life as a pilgrimage.

Performing pilgrimage was also part of the Constitutions of the Society. Novices were encouraged to go on pilgrimage in order to experience the discomfort of the itinerant life of missions. But considering that most creole Jesuits would never be able to cross the Atlantic to go to Jerusalem, Rome, or to other sacred sites important in the life of San Ignacio, they visited local shrines in their own kingdom of New Spain. Florencia recalled, in particular, two pilgrimages he made as a young man to the outskirts of Mexico City. While he was a novice at Santa Ana, he journeyed to the hill of Totoltepec (also known as Otomcapulco) to venerate the Virgin of Remedies. During his stay, he went to the house of the Indian cacique Juan de Tovar, who was credited with

26 Ibid., 211.
finding the wooden polychrome statue in a maguey plant. “I stayed there for a few days,” Florencia recounted, “and it was like [I entered] a great palace finely made.” He also climbed the hill of Tepeyac, where the Virgin of Guadalupe was said to have appeared to the Indian commoner Juan Diego. “I walked there many times in my youth,” he recalled, “[and] I always came down with something that caused me to remember, and to even feel the climb for many days after.”

![Figure 1-2. Hill of Tepeyac in Mexico City, Mexico. In front of the hill stands a modern-day representation of the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego. Photograph by Jason Dyck.](image)

It was on pilgrimage to novohispano shrines in his youth that Florencia learned about the sacred history of his patria. Ex-voto paintings and frescoes pictorially

---

29 *La milagrosa invención*, 59r (“que ahora cuarenta, y tres años me hospedé Yo en ella algunos días, y era en su grandeza un Palacio, bien hecha”).
30 *La estrella del norte*, 3v (“Helo pisado, y paseado en mi juventud muchas veces . . . siempre bajaba con algo que por muchos días me hacía acordar, y aun sentir la subida”).
displayed the divine care of the Christian God in New Spain. Miracle stories recounted prodigious wonders and supernatural healings that took place on novohispano soil. The origin stories of shrines and their images, to use the words of William B. Taylor, were given an “American twist” and thus made more relevant for the general populace.  

31 These devotional narratives were filled with American actors and a familiar environment where the sacred drama could unfold. Paintings narrating the births of European saints, like Saint Francis of Assisi (ca. 1181–1226) or Santo Domingo de Guzmán (1171–1221), were situated in novohispano contexts with material culture peculiar to their kingdom. Catholicism in the New World had to be adjusted, Antonio Rubial García argues, “mostly because that religion was born in distant lands and had developed in a distinct cultural environment.”  

32 In sum, the Christian story of salvation had to be incarnated into the cultures of New Spain so that it would make sense to its people.

But the Catholicism of New Spain was just as diverse as its people. William Christian Jr. has noted the common tendency to think of Catholicism as “one thing” that does not change across time or even national borders. Since Catholicism has a centre in Rome and a clear set of dogmas, it is too easily forgotten that the religion, as it is lived out by the faithful, varies significantly according to local customs. Christian writes that “the local manifestation of [Catholicism] is that which combines the common memory of Christ and his passion with that of a set of people and their territory.”  

33 Florencia’s patria, however, was made up of several groups of people who understood and practiced

---

Catholicism differently. Indigenous peoples appropriated the Catholic faith in their own unique ways, guided by missionaries and priests, as well as by their own cultural and religious assumptions. African slaves, free blacks, and mulattos developed their own style of Christian spirituality, either in their own confraternities or on haciendas where they were instructed by local priests. And Europeans, primarily Spaniards, arrived to America with local religious practices that were not always in concordance with some of the clerics of the Catholic hierarchy. Throughout the colonial era, “multiple realities of overseas Christendom” formed in New Spain and the Atlantic world at large, but they never developed in isolation from each other.

Creole churchmen constructed their own forms of Catholicism as well. Many men born in the Indies, like Florencia, joined the novohispano Church in the seventeenth century, both the Catholic orders and the secular clergy. In paintings, sermons, devotional literature, and sacred histories they developed a “collective consciousness” rooted in the providential idea that their church and kingdom had been divinely chosen by the

---


Christian God. They depicted their lands as a New World paradise, filled with miraculous images of the Virgin Mary and Christ, and graced with holy men and women who prophesied and worked wonders like the early apostles. Drawing upon the oral and written traditions of the early mendicant friars and indigenous populations, creole clerics rewrote the history of the sixteenth-century missionary theatre, refashioning accounts of divine apparitions and prodigious events. It was in the sacred that creole patriotisms found expression, at both local and regional levels. In many cases, Spanish priests were also involved in the construction of this providential vision of the novohispano Church. Some of them were passionate spokesmen for the sanctity of their religious men and institutions in New Spain, much like their creole brethren. But as much as foreigners played a part in the development of creole patriotisms, they still called other lands their home.

Most men and women in the Atlantic world forged their identities through the sacred of their own patrias. In the case of New Spain, this intimate bond between the sacred and place is nicely illustrated in the apparition story of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Before Florencia left for Europe, a series of sacred histories had been published, in both Spanish and Nahuatl, on the origins of the image and its shrine at the hill of Tepeyac. The pious tradition that formed in these writings, based upon oral stories and popular accounts of miracles, was that the image of the Virgin had been miraculously imprinted on the cape of Juan Diego. Unlike many other Catholic images, ones that had either been brought over from Europe or painted and sculpted in America, the Virgin of Guadalupe

---

had been “born,” so to speak, in New Spain. Creole clerics argued that the image had been painted on Juan Diego’s cape by angels or the Virgin herself on their soil, which meant that it had not come from Europe but directly from the divinity. “In our land,” Florencia declared, “the Holy Image of Mary is born, making it her patria, and all of its [inhabitants] her compatriots, transforming the place where Guadalupe miraculously [appeared] amongst the flowers into the Nazareth of the Indies.”

The Virgin of Guadalupe was a creole much like Florencia. The two would have similar experiences when they crossed the Atlantic.

**The Crossing of the Atlantic**

The seventeenth provincial meeting of the Jesuit Province of New Spain was held at San Pedro y San Pablo in Mexico City on November 2, 1668. That day Florencia was chosen to be the procurador of his religious province in the curiae of Madrid and Rome. He sailed for Spain from Veracruz in the early months of 1669, passing through Havana and the Azores Islands before disembarking at the port of Sanlúcar de Barrameda and heading northeast into the central region of the kingdom of Castile. Seafaring in the colonial era was long and unpleasant, but necessary to connect the New World to the Old. Ships were filled with both passengers and material goods from the Indies that, on an annual basis, flowed into Europe. Crossing the Atlantic provided Florencia with an opportunity to observe firsthand the reception of the “things of the Indies” in the centre of the Spanish empire.

---

37 *La estrella del norte*, 166v (“En nuestra tierra . . . nace la Santa Imagen de MARÍA, por hacerla su Patria, y todos los de ella sus conterráneos; convirtiendo el lugar de Guadalupe milagrosamente florido en la Nazaret de las Indias”).

Since Florencia was born in the Indies, he was required to obtain a permit to travel to the Iberian Peninsula. Like all other passengers, he was expected to take care of his own basic necessities as well. He needed to gather together his own food supplies, cooking utensils, and bedding. And he was responsible, like other travellers, for making arrangements with the captain of the ship, bargaining the cost of the voyage and the amount of luggage permitted on board. It took anywhere between sixty to eighty days to cross the Atlantic during the colonial era, and the prospect of arrival was never certain. Natural disasters, the unpredictability of the winds, and the fear of pirate raids all contributed to the anxiety of the journey. Living quarters were small and dark, and the stench of animals onboard was never pleasant. The Dominican friar, Tomás de la Torre (d. 1567), compared his boat to a jail when he crossed the ocean in 1544. “[T]he ship is a very narrow and fortified prison cell,” he recalled, “from which no one can escape.”

With rationed resources and confined living conditions, conflict seemed inevitable. It appears that Florencia was a peacemaker reconciling men to each other, for he claimed that discord was common in transatlantic travels.

As an ordained priest, Florencia would have also been busy hearing confession, visiting the sick, teaching Christian doctrine, and celebrating mass for the makeshift

---


40 Tomás de la Torre, “Diario del viaje de Salamanca a Ciudad Real. 1544–1544,” in Martínez, *Pasajeros de Indias*, 264 (“el navío es una cárcel muy estrecha y muy fuerte de donde nadie puede huir”).

41 *Historia de la Provincia*, 88 (“si había algunos desavenidos, (que hay de esto mucho en las navegaciones) los concordaban, y componían”).
community that formed on his vessel. Flor Trejo Rivera has described the ships of the Baroque as “floating cities” where the captain, crew, and passengers sought to recreate most aspects of urban life. Everyone on board would have celebrated Christian festivals and reproduced various forms of entertainment to pass the time. “Between banquets and austerity, favourable weather and storms, festivals and enemy attacks,” Trejo Rivera concludes, “passengers were able to adapt and transform the [ship] into a habitable metropolis until they arrived to the port of their [final] destination.” The urban life recreated at sea was neither a replica of the New World nor the Old, but a nautical halfway point between the two. Some of the “citizens” in these “floating cities” were Europeans returning home after extended residencies in America; others were creoles travelling to Europe for personal or religious reasons. Being at the mercy of the winds, with no land in sight, meant that there was plenty of time for conversation. Did Florencia seek out practical information on the Iberian Peninsula and beyond?

All passengers from America carried along with them “things of the Indies”—material objects, cultural assumptions, and other devotional objects that set them apart from other European travellers. There is record of some of the “things” Florencia had in his possession when he crossed the Atlantic. His provincial entrusted him with the appropriate funds to cancel their province’s debts in Madrid, Seville, and Rome. He was also given a slew of letters and petitions for the crown and other members of his order.

---

42 It was common for provincial chroniclers to stress the spiritual activities of their members as they crossed the Atlantic. For a Jesuit example, see Juan Sánchez Baquero, *Fundación de la Compañía de Jesús en Nueva España (1571–1580)* [ca. 1609] (Mexico City: Editorial Patria, 1945), 35.
43 Trejo Rivera, “El barco como una ciudad flotante,” 162 (“Así, entre banquets y austeridad, bonanza y tormenta, fiestas y ataques enemigos, sus habitantes lograban adaptarse y convertir los espacios en una metrópoli habitable hasta llegar al puerto de su destino”).
And in his list of expenditures it states that he had a crate of chocolate for the Padre General of the Society.\textsuperscript{45} In the seventeenth century it was common for procuradores from the Indies to give gifts of chocolate to their brethren in Europe. Florencia may have had more to distribute when he arrived to Madrid, a city he lived in for little over a year representing the interests of his religious province in the court of the Spanish king.\textsuperscript{46} The urban centre was filled with chocolate aficionados. Consumption of the drink became an integral element of elite society and a ubiquitous part of the urban landscape as it spread into public spaces. In 1685 city officials observed that “there was hardly to be found a street without one, two, or even three stands making and selling chocolate.”\textsuperscript{47} Florencia was amongst many creoles and Europeans who developed a taste for this Indian beverage.

Marcy Norton argues that European consumption of chocolate was a “contingent accident of empire” because the “transmission of taste” flowed in the opposite direction of traditional relationships in the Atlantic world. Europeans adapted Indian customs because of their dependence upon them and they acquired creole sensibilities through extended residency in America. The Old World, as a result, became “civilized” by the New; but it had not always been so. In fact, even though chocolate grew in popularity in several Spanish cities as recently as the early seventeenth century, there had been an “Iberian disdain for chocolate [that] became tantamount to peninsular denigration of Creoles.”\textsuperscript{48} The beverage had been associated with idolatry, the drinking of chocolate

\textsuperscript{45} AGN, Jesuitas IV-53, caja 1. ARSI, Mexicana 3, Epistolum General (1668–1688), f. 16r.
\textsuperscript{46} In 1653 Miguel Solana, for example, told Diego de Monroy, procurador of the Jesuit Province of New Spain, that he should take along chocolate as a gift to Madrid. Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de México de la Compañía de Jesús (AHPM), Documentos Antiguos, caja 37, carpeta 1477.
\textsuperscript{48} Marcy Norton, “Tasting Empire,” 688.
seen as having the potential to transform creoles into “barbarians.” These negative views of chocolate forced them to defend their acquired taste of Indian drinks. They sought to demonstrate that they did not become like Indians even though they shared the same patterns of consumption. Norton suggests that creoles “medicalized” chocolate as a result, denying “charges that those of European ancestry living in the Americas were less civilized than their counterparts resident in the Old World.”

In his sacred biography of Gerónimo de Figueroa (1604–1683), Florencia briefly discussed the medicinal value of chocolate. Figueroa was a creole Jesuit from Mexico City who laboured amongst the Tarahumares and the Tepehuanes in the northern missions of New Spain. In a chapter dedicated to his mortification and penance, Florencia explained that the missionary’s food was so tasteless that he only ate what was necessary to sustain himself. Considering his culinary quandary, Figueroa mixed a little bit of chocolate with his atole (an Indian drink made from corn), thus making it appear as though his whole drink was chocolate because of its transformation in colour. In this way he was able to conceal his extreme mortification. “The chocolate that he drank in the mornings,” Florencia wrote, “was more like a daily medicine than a delicacy. Almost all of it was atole, a common drink of the poorest Indians, similar to the porridge of Europe.”

Why did Florencia feel the need to compare Indian atole to European porridge? Did his gifts and consumption of chocolate in Madrid lead into larger conversations about the natural environment of New Spain? In his vida Florencia demonstrated that chocolate gave Figueroa the strength to perform his feats of penance,

---

49 Ibid., 687.
50 Vida de Figueroa, 26r (“El chocolate que tomaba por las mañanas, más como medicina cotidiana, que como regalo; era casi todo del Atole, bebida vulgar de los Indios más pobres, y corresponde a las poleadas de Europa”).
the same drink being consumed on the streets and in the royal court of Madrid. Similar to madrileños, Figueroa did not turn into a “barbarian” because of his habitual consumption of an Indian beverage.

Another “thing” with which Florencia crossed the Atlantic was silver. He recalled how he was ready “to embark for Spain in the year 1669,” but for an entire day he was unable to depart because “of the large quantity of mules with loads of silver” destined for his ship. Through most of the colonial era silver was the principal export of New Spain. According to traditional Spanish law, all natural deposits of precious metals were royal patrimony, so colonial miners only received working rights to their mines. They were also obliged to hand over a fifth (quinto) of their production to the crown, a customary tax that provided Spanish monarchs with significant revenue.

Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra points out that this “chronic dependency of the crown on silver and resources from America gave Creoles leverage” in their quest for “parity” within the empire. Men born in the Indies took advantage of the declining economic state of Spain and its partial loss of control over America throughout the seventeenth century, especially during the reigns of Philip IV (1621–1665) and Carlos II (1665–1700). John H. Elliott claims that creoles found themselves in “a semi-detached political relationship with Madrid” with “expanded space for manoeuvre.” But despite this growing self-confidence in America, silver was still technically the crown’s treasure.

51 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 15v (“cuando fue a embarcarse para España el año de 1669, un día entero sin poder pasar por las muchas acémilas de plata que habían”).
54 Elliott, Empires of the Atlantic World, 229, 224.
Florencia observed the final destination of countless loads of silver “that this extremely fertile kingdom [of New Spain] has given to Europe in one hundred and seventy-four years that fleets have departed with shipments of this treasure.” Several churches he passed through were adorned with altar pieces and images made with gold and silver from the Indies. It appears that one of the places that impacted him the most was the royal residence El Escorial, situated some forty-five kilometres northwest of Madrid at the foot of the Sierra Guadarrama. The alternative palace, royal necropolis, and Hieronymite monastery was built during the reign of Philip II (1527–1598), the monarch personally supervising much of its construction. In 1570 he ordered officers in New

---

**Figure 1-3. Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial in El Escorial, Spain. Photograph by Jason Dyck.**

---

55 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 15v (“De aquí puede la especulación hacer la cuenta de los millones que ha dado este fertilísimo reino a la Europa en ciento y sesenta y cuatro años que han ido flotas de él cargadas de tesoros”).
Spain to provide 30,000 ducats a year to the Council of the Indies to finance the royal project. When the edifice was finally completed, it became known as the “eighth wonder of the world.” The imposing granite structure was home to an impressive library and collection of Renaissance paintings, and the palace church was elaborately adorned with gold, silver, jewellery, and important relics. José de Sigüenza (1544–1606), a Hieronymite historian, likened the palace-monastery to the Temple of Solomon. It was truly a sight to behold, one that left a lasting impression on Florencia when he visited there sometime in 1670. He claimed that El Escorial “has no equal.”

Did Florencia think about the many ecclesiastical building projects underway in New Spain when he walked through El Escorial? He proudly listed many of the churches he saw come to completion throughout his lifetime in Mexico City. In particular, he claimed that the cathedral of the viceregal capital took so long to build that “King Philip IV asked if the church was made of stone or silver?” Florencia was not so naïve when he penned these words. His use of hyperbole was driven by his patriotism. He knew very well, both when he left for Europe and upon his return, that several provisional churches from the early sixteenth century were only slowly being replaced by new ones. Many other religious buildings, as seventeenth-century travellers were always careful to note, were poorly ornamented and needed repair. Florencia was aware of the novohispano wealth available for these projects, which is why he was troubled by the fact that so much

---

58 La casa peregrina, 67r (“no hablo de su edificio, que no tiene igual, en lo que yo anduve”).
59 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 19v (“que se dice preguntó el Rey Felipe IV una vez, ¿si se hacía esta iglesia de piedra o de plata?”).
61 For two examples, see Asunción, Itinerario a Indias, 51; and Gemelli Careri, Viaje a la Nueva España, 179.
of it was finding its way into the hands of foreigners due to piracy in the Caribbean and the crown’s military expenses.\textsuperscript{62} He lamented the declining state of the Spanish empire, claiming that “when I was in Europe” most nations were careful to conserve their wealth within their own borders, with little flowing away. “I believe that it was necessary [to follow such an example],” Florencia argued, “because so much flows out of Spain and the Indies to other nations!”\textsuperscript{63} Novohispano silver was indeed enriching all of Europe.

But perhaps one of the most important “things” with which Florencia crossed the Atlantic was copies of the Virgin of Guadalupe. In preparation for his trip, he went to the hill of Tepeyac to see a well-known Indian painter (\textit{copiador} or \textit{transuntador}) who had trouble keeping up with all of his requests. “When I left Mexico City for Europe,” Florencia recalled, “there was one famous painter, who throughout the entire year only painted images of [the Virgin of Guadalupe] of this sanctuary . . . I bought three that were the same size as the original.”\textsuperscript{64} The images that Florencia requested were significantly large, so most likely they were made for specific patrons in mind. It is highly probable that he also purchased other holy cards (\textit{estampas}) for personal distribution. But Florencia was not the only one to promote American devotions in Europe throughout the seventeenth century. A few religious creoles had their devotional histories published with European printers, and visiting \textit{procuradores} shared stories of the sacred from their \textit{patrias} with their European brethren.\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{62} Kamen, \textit{Empire}, 434–437.
\textsuperscript{63} BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 17r (“¡Yo creo que ya era necesario hacerlo en tanto como sale de España para otras naciones, y de las Indias y no para España!”).
\textsuperscript{64} \textit{La estrella del norte}, 99r–v (“Cuando Yo salí de México para Europa, había uno, que por famoso copiador, en todo el año no pintaba, sino Imágenes de este Santuario . . . Yo llevé tres de la medida de la Original”).
\textsuperscript{65} A notable example is Miguel de Aguirre, who distributed copies of the Virgin of Copacabana in Rome and Madrid. See Andrés de San Nicolás, \textit{Imagen de N. S. de Copacabana, portento del Nuevo Mundo, ya
important disseminators of knowledge of miraculous images in America. They grew fond of certain devotions during their residencies in the New World and departed for home with copies of them.\textsuperscript{66}

The general history of the Virgin of Guadalupe was already known in the Iberian Peninsula before Florencia’s arrival. Pedro Gálvez, a member of the Council of Indies, financed the publication of an abridged version of the apparition narrative in 1662. He was such an ardent devotee of the Virgin of Guadalupe that he also donated a copy of the image to the Colegio de San Agustín in Madrid.\textsuperscript{67} The image from Tepeyac was now in the company of the Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura, one of the most famous Marian devotions in the kingdom of Castile. According to pious tradition, Pope Gregory the Great (ca. 540–604) gave this image of Mary, carved by Saint Luke, to the Archbishop of Seville, San Leandro (ca. 534–600/601). When the Moors invaded the Iberian Peninsula in the eighth century, a group of priests fled with the image and buried it in the hills near the river of Guadalupe. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared to a poor herdsman, ordering him to tell his local priests that they would discover an image of her in the hills. After they found the wooden statue, a chapel was built in her honour. By the end of the 1300s the Hieronymites became the guardians of the Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura, receiving significant royal support for their


\textsuperscript{67} Poole, \textit{Our Lady of Guadalupe}, 3, 152, 217; and Brading, \textit{Mexican Phoenix}, 76. Florencia claimed that there were images of Guadalupe in Cádiz, Seville, and in all other regions that traded with New Spain. He also stated that holy cards of the Virgin were known in Germany, Flanders, and France. \textit{La estrella del norte}, 181v–182r.
ministries. During his stay in Madrid, Florencia travelled to see the image, claiming that the experience produced in him “holy fear, deep remorse, and affectionate veneration.” What else did he feel?

The Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura had several satellite shrines in both Spain and Spanish America. The Hieronymites sought to monitor these multiple copies by sending out their own agents (demandadores) to inspect local devotion and to collect alms. Diego de Santa María, one of these agents, was troubled by what he encountered when he arrived to Mexico City in the 1570s. He wrote King Philip II and recounted how the image at Tepeyac was “called by another name” until it was given the title Guadalupe by the mayordomos (stewards) of the shrine. They sent out their own agents, taking away “alms that normally go to Our Lady of Guadalupe [in Extremadura].” In light of this situation, Santa María proposed that his order be granted permission to move the image from Tepeyac to a new a monastery and church in Chapultepec. Florencia was aware that connections had been made between the two Virgins. Since the early conquistadors were mostly from Extremadura, some Spaniards were tempted to think that they were the ones who gave the name Guadalupe to the painted image at Tepeyac. Other creole authors

---

68 For the apparition narrative, see Gabriel de Talavera, Historia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe consagrada a la soberana majestad de la Reina de los Ángeles, milagrosa patrona de este santuario (Toledo: Thomas de Guzmán Petrus Angelus, 1597), 1r–26v.
69 Descripción histórica, 2 (“aquel temor piadoso, aquella compunción sensible, y aquella ternura respetuosa”).
71 Diego de Santa María, “Carta de Fray Diego de Santa María a Su Majestad. México 12 de Diciembre de 1574,” in Cuevas, Historia de la Iglesia en México, 2:493 (“los mayordomos de esta ermita, que entonces se llamaba por otro nombre, entendiendo la devoción con que acudían los cristianos a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, le mudaron el nombre y pusieron el de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, como hoy en día se dice llama, y pusieron demandadores pidiendo para Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, con lo cual se han defraudado las limosnas con que solían acudir a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe”). Poole follows Santa María’s mission in Our Lady of Guadalupe, 71–75.
believed that the Spaniards simply corrupted a word in Nahuatl like they did with countless others. Florencia rejected both of these theories, but he was careful not to deny the important role of the conquistadors, especially that of Hernán Cortés (1485–1547). He argued that the Virgin Mary herself gave the name Guadalupe to her image at Tepeyac, imitating the conquistadors who called towns in New Spain after their own in Spain. It was an honour for Cortés, then, that “the Most Holy Virgin would choose amongst all of their sanctuaries the famous one of Guadalupe from their patria,” the very name she gave “to the most celebrated and holiest in all of America.”

Catholic images—both originals and copies—have patrias in much the same way as people do. Florencia learned this while on pilgrimage on both sides of the Atlantic. He observed that some men and women were guided by an “indiscreet passion for the images of the Virgin in their patrias,” so much so that some have even denied miraculous power to others. In the early 1670s, María Luisa de Toledo, the daughter of the viceroy Antonio Sebastián de Toledo, returned to the Iberian Peninsula with a copy of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Roughly a decade later, in December of 1683, a preacher in the court of Madrid claimed that this image belonged more so to Spain than to New Spain. He reasoned that the roses used to paint the Virgin on the cape of Juan Diego had come from the kingdom of Castile. When Florencia read this sermon he brushed off these arguments.

---

72 For this etymological argument, see Luis Becerra Tanco, Felicidad de México en el principio, y milagroso origen que tuvo el santuario de la Virgen María N. Señora (Mexico City: Por la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1675), 9r–10r. Florencia rejected Becerra Tanco’s theory in La estrella del norte, 99v–106r. For more on the origins of the word Guadalupe, see Lafaye, Quetzalcóatl and Guadalupe, 217–218.

73 La estrella del norte, 104v–105r (“Y no se puede negar que fue singular crédito del gran Cortéz Extremeño, y de los demás de su Patria que la Santísima Virgen eligiese entre todos sus Santuarios, el insigne de Guadalupe de la Patria de aquellos . . . para poner nombre al más célebre, y de mayor Santidad, que tiene toda la América”).

74 La milagrosa invención, 17v (“Si advirtieran esto algunos indiscretamente apasionados por las Imágenes de la Virgen de sus Patrias, o de sus gremios, no se opusieran a veces a las maravillas, que Dios es servido de obrar por las que no lo son, a fin de que solo las suyas sean tenidas por milagrosas”).
as pure nonsense. In his mind, although the apparition narrative did not specify where the flowers came from, the majority were surely from the Indies. “[T]he desire to make such a prodigious image their own,” Florencia maintained, “is more of an honour for Mexico, who by the special favour of Mary owns the original, than it is for Spain, who only benefits from her copies.”⁷⁵ Europe received many material and spiritual “things of the Indies,” all of which had a life of their own once they crossed the Atlantic. Florencia had no power over how they were received, but he certainly provided his own version of their origins with pride.

The Missionary Vocation

In the fall of 1670 Florencia sailed for Rome after fulfilling his provincial duties in Madrid. His financial records state that he made a stop in Genoa along the way.⁷⁶ The coastal city was an important commercial centre and had been crucial to the overseas expansion of the Spanish empire. It was also home to the College of San Geronimo, an important resting place for Jesuits travelling throughout the Mediterranean. Florencia made shipping arrangements with the rector for some of his province’s books and other religious items he would acquire in Rome.⁷⁷ He also discussed the possibility of a missionary vocation in the Indies with some of the young men of the college. These encounters provided him with an opportunity to talk about the shortage of Jesuits in

---

⁷⁵ La estrella del norte, Prólogo al lector, n.p. (“pues el querer hacer suya tan prodigiosa Imagen, más es gloria de México, que por singular favor de MARÍA posee la Original; que de España, que solo la goza en sus copias”).
⁷⁶ AGN, Jesuitas IV-53, caja 1.
northern New Spain and the Philippines. But perhaps more importantly, Florencia was given an opportune chance to discuss the sacred landscape of America.

Miguel Venegas (1680–1764), a Jesuit historian from Puebla, provided a short narrative of Florencia’s stop in Genoa in two of his sacred biographies: *Vida y virtudes del V. P. Juan Bautista Zappa* and *El apóstol mariano representado en la vida del V. P. Juan María de Salvatierra*. Juan Bautista Zappa (1651–1694) and Juan María de

![Figure 1-4. Diego Troncoso. Engraving of Juan Bautista Zappa with the Virgin of Loreto. Taken from Miguel Venegas, *Vida y virtudes del V. P. Juan Bautista Zappa* (Barcelona: Por Pablo Nadal, 1754). Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de México de la Compañía de Jesús, Mexico City, Mexico. Photograph by Jason Dyck.](image-url)
Salvatierra (1648–1717) were both Jesuits, contemporaries of Florencia, and important promoters of the Virgin of Loreto in New Spain. Venegas suggested that Florencia had a significant impact on these two men when he passed through Genoa, cultivating within them the desire to do missionary work in the Indies. Since his *vidas* of Zappa and Salvatierra were both abridged for publication in 1754, Venegas’s account of Florencia’s stay in Genoa was significantly shortened. A manuscript copy of his life of Zappa, however, has survived and contains an extended version that illustrates some of the concerns that those interested in missionary work in America may have had.\(^7\) Since Venegas was not present for the events he described, his account should not be read as an historical narrative of Florencia’s experiences in Genoa.\(^7\) But his imaginative reconstruction of the social interactions in San Geronimo is representative of many of the encounters Florencia would have had during his entire sojourn in Europe.

As a *procurador* of his province, Florencia was responsible for recruitment. He was commissioned to find young men eager to leave the comfort of their colleges behind, travel across the ocean, and make the trek into remote Indian villages. This was by no means an easy task. Inga Clendinnen suggests that missionaries are men committed to “the notion of the portability of religion.” She describes them as “translocal men *par excellence,*” because they operate under the conviction that beliefs in the sacred can be

---

\(^7\) For the abridged versions of Florencia’s stop in Genoa, see Miguel Venegas, *Vida y virtudes del V. P. Juan Bautista Zappa de la Compañía de Jesús* (Barcelona: Pablo Nadal, 1754), 29–30; and idem, *El apóstol mariano representado en la vida del V. P. Juan María de Salvatierra de la Compañía de Jesús* (Mexico City: Doña María de Ribera, Impresora del Nuevo Rezado, 1754), 22. The original manuscript of Venegas’s *vida* of Zappa is housed at the Huntington Library (HL) and is catalogued as *Vida y virtudes del V. P. Juan Bautista Zappa de la Compañía de Jesús*, HL, Huntington Manuscripts (HM) 522. Reference to Florencia’s time in Genoa can also be found in Cesare Filippo Doria, *Edición crítica de la vida del V. P. Juan María de Salvatierra, S. J., escrita por el V. P. César Felipe Doria, S. J.* [ca. 1728], trans. Lucía Pardo Vda. de Chávez and ed. Alfonso René Gutiérrez (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1997), 154.

\(^7\) There is evidence, however, that Florencia met with Zappa and Salvatierra in Genoa. AGN, AHH, vol. 873, exp. 1.
uprooted from one end of the globe and transplanted in another “without serious deformation.” The young men Florencia was looking for were to be impassioned about spreading their universal faith in local contexts in New Spain. He had to exercise his rhetorical skills to persuade those interested in a missionary vocation, because the “portability of religion” was only possible if there was hope in both the land and people designated to receive the Christian gospel. In other words, potential missionaries wanted to gain a general picture of where and who they would be serving before making a commitment.

Venegas set the stage for Florencia’s meeting with Zappa in the company of a large group of students: “When the procurador of our Mexican province, Father Francisco de Florencia, arrived in Genoa he stayed at the house for fully professed members. As it is the custom with their guests, he was invited one day to eat in the College of San Gerónimo.” Jesuit colleges were social spaces of an international scope. Stories from abroad circulated orally in personal conversations or textually in letters, relations, and histories. Ines G. Županov notes that the “impulse to write was built into the foundations of the Society and it was amplified by the distances and ‘proximities’ that separated the correspondents.” This flow of texts going back to Europe kept men informed on what was happening globally in the order. But when men like Florencia

---

81 HL, HM 522, f. 24 (“Y fue el caso que habiendo llegado a Génova el P. Francisco de Florencia, Procurador de esta nuestra provincia de México, se hospedó en la Casa Profesa: mas de allí fue convidado un día, como se estila con los huéspedes, a comer en el Colegio de estudios de San Gerónimo”).
passed through, young novices considering service overseas had someone with experience who could speak to them in ways the written word could not.

Immediately following the silence of mealtime, Florencia was surrounded and questioned by his coreligionists just outside the refectory. Venegas characterized these Jesuits as a group of eager students hungry for knowledge of the New World. They were seeking after information on “the general layout of the kingdoms [of America], their style of civil and ecclesiastical government, [and] the climate.” This unfamiliarity with America in Genoa is not surprising. Several men from the coastal city, like Christopher Columbus (1451–1506), had travelled to the New World, and there is no doubt that various myths about its people and natural features circulated there from the late fifteenth century onwards. Even though European Jesuits received letters from their brethren in America, life across the Atlantic still remained somewhat of a mystery in the late 1600s. John H. Elliott has observed that it took a long time for Europeans to fully incorporate the New World into their mental horizon. “In spite of all the problems involved in the dissemination of accurate information about America,” he writes, “the greatest problem of all . . . remained that of comprehension.” What did Florencia feel the need to explain about the “things of the Indies” to potential missionaries in Genoa?

In his sacred histories Florencia expressed annoyance with Europeans who made false claims about America without direct experience of its land and people. He was also indignant with those who, after having spent time in the Indies, still managed to spread false claims about its climate and inhabitants, specifically of their moral decadence. So

---

83 HL, HM 522, f. 24 (“Cuando salió el P. del refectorio, lo rodearon, y ya unos, y ya otros le hacían varias preguntas sobre la disposición de estos Reinos, su modo de gobierno civil, y eclesiástico, su temperamento”).
when creoles ventured to Europe they encountered several stereotypes about life on their side of the Atlantic that travellers and missionaries had spread since the sixteenth century. When Gaspar de Villarroel (1587–1661), a creole bishop from Quito, was in Madrid he became irritated with a man who was surprised that someone from the Indies “would be so white, of a good figure, and that he would speak Castilian so well as if he were a Spaniard.”85 Considering this complete lack of knowledge of American bodies and customs in the centre of the Spanish empire, one wonders if Florencia had similar experiences with prospective missionaries in Genoa. Did he need to convince them that the land where they would be ministering was not detrimental to their physical and moral well-being? Did he provide them with a long discourse on the fertility of New Spain? Did he use himself as an example of one who was not negatively influenced by the climate of his homeland?

Describing the natural environment most likely led to a discussion of the sacred, especially when one considers the natural descriptions Florencia included in his devotional histories. While he was in Puebla in the early 1660s, for example, he heard about a miraculous shrine dedicated to the Archangel San Miguel. A pious tradition formed that San Miguel had directed the Indian commoner Diego Lázaro to a prodigious spring in the hills near the town of Santa María Nativitas. Very quickly the water, mixed together with the soil from where it poured forth, gained a reputation for its healing powers. Given this surge in popular devotion, the Bishop of Puebla, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza (1600–1659), had little pieces of bread made from the dirt for distribution to the

---

85 Cited in Gonzálo Zaldumbide, Fray Gaspar de Villarroel. Siglo XVII (Puebla: J. M. Cajica, 1960), 48 (“que un americano, esto es indio, sea tan blanco, de tan buena figura y que hable tan bien el castellano como un español”).
faithful, and a few of them even found their way back to the Iberian Peninsula.\textsuperscript{86} To where else did devotion to this miraculous spring spread in Europe? When Florencia returned home to New Spain he wrote about the miraculous origins of the fountain. Perhaps he even shared some of these stories with his brethren, because his experiences in Genoa seem to be intertwined with San Miguel. He claimed that a Jesuit chapel in Puebla housed a statue of the Archangel with jasper from the surrounding area of Tecale, cut in the same manner as in Genoa. When the black and white stones receive a good polishing, Florencia felt that “America will not have any reason to envy Europe.”\textsuperscript{87}

The group of European Jesuits peppering Florencia with questions in Venegas’s account were also naturally concerned about “the spread of the faith [and] the state of the missions.”\textsuperscript{88} Providing a general picture of the evangelization of America was a tricky problem for recruiters, especially when it came to describing the Indian. Much of the missionary optimism of the early mendicant friars had waned by the seventeenth century, and resurgent idolatry turned many into sceptics of Indian Christianity. Several believed that the indigenous were less capable than Europeans, specifically in terms of understanding Catholic doctrine. And so on the one hand, Florencia needed to

\textsuperscript{86} Pedro Salmerón, a lawyer and chaplain from Puebla, claimed that a few citizens of Seville asked him for dirt from the spring. “Relación de la aparición que el Arcángel San Miguel, defensor y patrón de esta iglesia militante y de la Monarquía de España, hizo en un lugar del Obispado de la Puebla de los Ángeles llamado de Nuestra Señora de la Natividad el año de 1631, escrita por el Licenciado Don Pedro Salmerón, clérigo presbítero,” in \textit{Imágenes más antiguas y veneradas en Tlaxcala}, ed. Román Saldaña Oropesa (Mexico City: Editorial Xicotli, 1952), 2:106. For the nineteenth-century copy of the relation upon which this transcription was based, see AGN, Historia, vol. 1, exp. 7, ff. 152r–170r. Salmerón also included a short description of the miraculous spring in \textit{Vida de la venerable madre Isabel de la Encarnación, carmelita descalza, natural de la Ciudad de los Ángeles} (Mexico City: Francisco Rodríguez, 1675), 96–98. Asunción acquired some of the little pieces of bread (\textit{panecitos}) when he visited the shrine in the 1670s. \textit{Itinerario a Indias}, 109.

\textsuperscript{87} \textit{Narración de la maravillosa}, 163 (“y el pavimento está losado de jaspes negros, y blancos, que al modo de los que se cortan en Génova se han hallado cerca de Tecale: y en acertando a darles el pulimento, que en Italia, no tendrá la América, que envidiar a la Europa”).

\textsuperscript{88} HL, HM 522, f. 24 (“la dilatación de la fe y disposición de las misiones, y otras preguntas semejantes que iban haciendo especialmente los que tenían vocación de Indias”).
demonstrate that there were indeed Indians who were “barbarous” and “idolatrous” in order to confirm the urgent need for missionaries. But he also had to show that Indians were rational beings who were both capable of the Christian faith and eager to accept it. Describing the Indian was complicated even further by European ideas of the American populace. When the Peruvian Dominican, Juan Meléndez (1633–1710), travelled through Spain in the early 1680s, he observed how some Spaniards made no distinction between creoles and Indians, ascribing the same nature to the both of them. Did Florencia experience something similar in Genoa or in other Italian and Spanish cities? Did he even have to explain the clear difference, in his mind, between himself and the indigenous population?

Zappa stood out amongst the crowd in Venegas’s account. He was driven by his Marian devotion, longing for pious stories about the Virgin in the Indies. In particular, Zappa asked Florencia, after all the others had finished with their questions, if “these kingdoms had an image and sanctuary of the Most Holy Mary that worked marvels and manifested signs of special protection.” Florencia was very pleased with this question, according to Venegas, because it provided him with an opportunity “to speak at length about the miraculous apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe.” To complement his story, Florencia passed out a “brief relation in Spanish” recounting the origin of the image and its shrine. In his vida of Salvatierra, Venegas added that Florencia also handed Zappa a

---

89 Morgan, Spanish American Saints, 11.
90 HL, HM 522, f. 24 (“Entre estos hizo también su pregunta el H. Zappa, tan propia suya, como dictada de su devoción. Preguntó que si en estos reinos tenía María Santísima alguna Imagen, y santuario en el cual obrarse maravillas, y diese señas manifiesta de tener especial amparo de estas Provincias. Satisfizo gustoso el Padre a esta pregunta, con referir por extenso la milagrosa aparición de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe: cuya Imagen estampada en la manta del dicho indio mexicano, Juan Diego, con los colores de las rosas y flores, milagrosamente aparecidas en el rigor del invierno, se había conservado por siglo y medio con un continuado milagro. Y después de haber referido todo lo tocante a esta dulcísimá historia, y satisfecho a
holy card of the Virgin from Tepeyac.\textsuperscript{91} Did he distribute images of other novohispano devotions?

The Centre of Christendom

Most Jesuit \textit{procuradores} from the Indies took a standard route to Rome by following the Mediterranean coastline until they reached Genoa. From there, depending on the season, many travelled on foot or mule to Milan, Bologna, and Loreto before heading southward to the Eternal City.\textsuperscript{92} Florencia followed this same itinerary, taking advantage at each stop along the way to visit important sites of Catholic devotion. He claimed that he was a pilgrim at shrines “in almost all of Europe.”\textsuperscript{93} But of all the holy sites he visited, it appears that his religious experiences at the Santa Casa of Loreto were by far the most significant for him. In his mind, this consecrated place was clearly the “centre of Christendom.”\textsuperscript{94} Performing pilgrimage at Loreto, and at many other European shrines, allowed Florencia to view both the differences and connections between the sacred landscapes of the New World and the Old.

It is unclear which port Florencia departed from after he left Madrid, but it is certain that he made a stop in Barcelona. Not far from the city, nestled in the mountains of Montserrat, was a shrine dedicated to a black statue of the Virgin Mary, which according to pious tradition had been discovered in a cave by a group of shepherds in the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{91} Venegas, \textit{El apóstol mariano}, 22.
\textsuperscript{92} See Miguel Solana’s instructions to Diego de Monroy, AHPM, Documentos Antiguos, caja 37, carpeta 1477. Florencia stated that he was in Loreto for three days in 1670. \textit{La casa peregrina}, 56v, 67v.
\textsuperscript{93} \textit{La estrella del norte}, 27r (“he visitado por mi devoción, en lo que he peregrinado, de casi toda la Europa”).
\textsuperscript{94} \textit{La casa peregrina}, 80v (“centro de la Cristiandad”).
\end{flushright}
late ninth century. San Ignacio visited this Catholic site on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, performing a nightly vigil before the altar of Our Lady of Montserrat. He placed his sword and dagger at the foot of the Virgin and “resolved to lay aside his garments and to don the armor of Christ.” Florencia followed in his footsteps, visiting the shrine where the founder of his order took up his pilgrim’s staff. He recalled how he was able to observe the difficulty of the road to perfection at the “famous Sanctuary of Montserrat in Catalonia, located at the [top] of a luscious and rugged mountain.”

Florencia’s next stop was Marseilles, from where he was able to travel inland towards the mountain ridge of Saint-Maximim-la-Sainte-Baume. Mary Magdalene, an early follower of Christ, is said to have lived out her remaining days performing penance there in a cave. Florencia remembered the pool of water from which he drank and the difficulty of the climb to get to the shrine erected in her honour, specifically the road he needed to take through a “pleasant and lovely forest more than a mile [long].” He would draw upon these religious experiences later in life when he visited the town of Chalma in the early 1680s. The Augustinians maintained that an image of the Crucified Christ miraculously appeared in one of the caves of the surrounding hills, destroying the existing idol of Oztoteotl. This underground cavern was soon transformed into a shrine and became a popular destination for pilgrims in the surrounding area, much as it had been in pre-Hispanic times. Florencia compared the caves of Magdalene near Marseilles

---

95 For the apparition narrative, see Pedro de Burgos, *Libro de la historia y milagros hechos a invocación de Nuestra Señora de Monserrate* [1536–1537] (Barcelona: Sebastián de Cormellas, 1605), 14v–22v.
97 Descripción histórica, 68 (“Observé todo esto en el Santuario de Monserrate, célebre en Cataluña, que está situado en una montaña tan amena, como fragosa”).
98 Narración de la maravillosa, 32 (“una alberca de agua, que destilan las peñas, y hasta hoy dura, y de ella beben los peregrinos, y yo la he bebido”). Descripción histórica, 68–69 (“En la cueva de santa Magdalena, puesta en la medianía de los Alpes, difícil de subir, y más de bajar; pero que se camina hasta llegar a ella por un bosque de más de una milla apacible, y delicioso”).
with those of the Crucified Christ of Chalma by suggesting that both had been divinely chosen in an equal manner. “Why would we not believe,” he asked, “that from the time God made the world he prepared this cave [of Chalma] to be the place of such a moving sight, the most painful scene that Europe witnessed in the divine original?” These scenes of the passion were transported across the Atlantic “in his miraculous image of the Crucified Christ of Chalma for the eyes of our America.”

The port of Savona was another place Florencia visited along the Mediterranean coastline. In the mid sixteenth century, on the outskirts of the town, a sanctuary had been built to house an image dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy. The Virgin Mary had appeared there, according to local tradition, to a humble peasant named Antonio Botta in 1536. She told Botta to inform his confessor that she wanted a church erected in her honour at the very place of her apparition. Florencia vividly remembered his journey to the shrine, describing the “path as purgatory to walk [through].” When he finally arrived and gazed upon “Our Lady of Savona” he was captivated by such a “magnificent” sight. Many of the shrines that Florencia visited throughout Europe had been constructed in mountainous regions. He noticed how the spiritual experiences of the pilgrim life were reinforced by the physical force one needed to exert in order to visit these holy places. In particular, he described the road to the Crucified Christ of Chalma as “more rugged and arduous than at

99 *Descripción histórica*, 52 (“porque no creeremos, que desde que fabricó Dios la tierra, preparó esta gruta en que había de colocar el más tierno espectáculo, el objeto más lastimoso que vio en su Divino original la Europa, y repiten dichosos en su Imagen milagrosa del Crucifijo de Chalma los ojos de nuestra América”).

100 For the apparition narrative, see Giacomo Picconi, *Storia dell’apparizione e de’ miracoli di Nostra Signora di Misericordia di Savona* [1737] (Genova: Presso Bernardo Tarigo, 1760), 45–52.

101 *Descripción histórica*, 69 (“El de nuestra Señora de Saona en una cueva soterranea, diez leguas de Génova, es gloria verlo; su camino es purgatorio andarlo”).

102 Mary Lee Nolan points out in “The European Roots of Latin American Pilgrimage,” in *Pilgrimage in Latin America*, eds. N. Ross Crumrine and Alan Morinis (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991), 33, that in both pagan Europe and pre-Hispanic America sacred places were frequently associated with heights. This emphasis was carried over in Christian times as several shrines dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the Archangel San Miguel were built in mountainous regions. William A. Christian Jr. “Priests, Mountains, and “Sacred Space” in Early Modern Europe,” *Catholic Historical Review* 93, no. 1 (2007): 96.
other sanctuaries I have seen in Europe, which was for the most part planned by the providence of God, so that we would understand how much devotion one needs to climb." Florencia was able to imitate his pilgrim journey to Savona in Chalma.

After passing through Milan and Bologna, with churches “to be admired that even amaze [the people] of Italy,” Florencia arrived to Loreto. Angels were said to have miraculously transported the Holy Family’s small brick house there from Nazareth in the late thirteenth century—with a series of stops along the way—to protect it from Muslim invaders. The Santa Casa was eventually surrounded by a basilica raised in the latter part of the fifteenth century, enclosed by walls of marble and stone, and graced with the presence of a black wooden statue of the Virgin. Loreto was a popular pilgrimage site in the early modern period, and Jesuits were major promoters of its devotion in both Europe and America. All Jesuit *procuradores* from the Indies made an attempt to visit the town along the Adriatic Sea. “I walked for two days on the outskirts [of Loreto] to get to the Santa Casa,” Florencia recalled, “from Senigallia to Ancona, and it felt as though I was following the banks of a calm and peaceful river.” Upon arrival, most pilgrims kissed and rubbed their hands against the brick walls of the Santa Casa. Florencia was moved by how the “very walls transmit respect and reverence” and remembered the

---

103 *Descripción histórica*, 68 (“Es de lo más áspero, y arduo que yo he visto en otros Santuarios de Europa, en que por la mayor parte puso la providencia de Dios mucho de esto; para que sepamos, que la devoción se ha de subir con trabajo”).

104 *La casa peregrina*, 67v (“las de Génova, Milán, y Bolonia de admiración, y aun de asombro en Italia”).


106 *La casa peregrina*, 21v (“Yo caminé dos días yendo a la Santa Casa por sus orillas, desde Sinigallia hasta Ancona, y me pareció que iba por las riberas de un manso y apacible río”).

107 For a late seventeenth-century pilgrimage account to the Santa Casa, see Eugenio de San Francisco, *Relicario y viaje de Roma, Loreto y Jerusalén que hizo el P. Fr. Eugenio de San Francisco* (Cádiz: Alférrez Bartolomé Núñez de Castro, 1693), 41–42 (“Así que pude llegar a las paredes, me abracé con ellas, con el cuerpo, cabeza, cara, y manos besando aquellos benditos ladrillos, una, y mil veces con la viva representación, de que Jesucristo N. Señor tocó con sus Divinas manos a ellas como se debe creer piadosamente y lo mismo hacen todos lo que llegan a merecer entrar en tan santo lugar”).
sensation of entering the “holy chamber where the Virgin was born, lived, and moved about for so many years.”

He also confessed, referring to some of the plates and bowls that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were claimed to have eaten from, that he “saw, kissed, and adored them,” and that he “received some small pieces of bread that were given out to the faithful.”

Figure 1-5. Marble exterior covering the Santa Casa in the Basilica of Loreto in Loreto, Italy. Photograph by Jason Dyck.

Entering the Santa Casa of Loreto was an unforgettable religious experience for Florencio. He had walked through the very place where the “Mother of God” conceived

---

108 La estrella del norte, 27r (“que se siente en entrando en la Santa Casa de la Madona de Loreto, causada del respecto, y reverencia, que despiden de si las mismas paredes, de aquella Santa Cámara, en que nació la Virgen, y que habité, y pisó tantos años”).

109 La casa peregrina, 35v (“Yo las vi, besé, adoré; y recibí algunos de los panecitos, que para repartir a los fieles”).
Jesus Christ, an event that was central to his Christian faith. Together with pilgrims from all over Europe, he was able to feel the “sovereign presence” of Mary in her childhood home. But as powerful as it was to be surrounded by the brick walls of the Holy Family, Florencia confessed that “I have not felt this [holy affection] in any other sanctuary as I have in that of Our Lady of Guadalupe of Mexico.”¹¹⁰ This statement appears to have an air of misguided patriotism in placing a New World shrine in the same ranks as the original house of Mary. It was possibly even offensive to contemporaries given that there were many other important Marian shrines spread throughout Christendom. Florencia anticipated his critics, fully recognizing how powerful his “natural inclination” was to “everything to do with the patria.”¹¹¹ But, sensitive to his own passion for the sacred of his homeland, how was he to explain the fact that men and women from several other kingdoms experienced the same religious affections as he did at Tepeyac?

Florencia strongly believed that the Virgin Mary did not limit her influence to any given kingdom or province. Her divine favour, so he argued, spread to the entire Christian Church in all regions of the globe. Men and women experienced Mary in her images, be they paintings or statues; hence he explained to devotees in New Spain that according to Catholic theology an image should be given the same cultus and veneration as that which it represents. “[T]he image and the original are the same thing in terms of the power [they possess],” Florencia explained, “but distinct in terms of their being.”¹¹² He experienced this, not only at Loreto, but also when he visited the shrine dedicated to

---

¹¹⁰ *La estrella del norte*, 27r–v (“Confieso, que en ningún otro Santuario la he sentido . . . como en el de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de México”).
¹¹¹ Ibid., 27v (“siempre he atribuido a aquella natural afición, que tan poderosamente nos inclina más, sin sentirlo, y nos mueve con más vehemencia, en todas las cosas, que son de la Patria, que en las de otras tierras de igual, o más bondad”).
¹¹² *Los dos célebres santuarios*, 48 (“la Imagen y el Original son una misma cosa, en cuanto al poder, aunque distintas en cuanto al ser”).
the Virgin of San Juan de los Lagos. The statue representing the Immaculate Conception had been made in Michoacán from the paste of maize and earned a miraculous reputation throughout the 1600s. Florencia insisted that all who visit this shrine and view the image feel like “[they] are gazing face to face with the Virgin whom [they] are invoking,” the exact same thing that “happens in the principal sanctuary of Christendom, which is Loreto.”

![Basilica of Loreto in Loreto, Italy.](Image)

Figure 1-6. Basilica of Loreto in Loreto, Italy. Photograph by Jason Dyck.

Ibid. (“que parece se está mirando cara a cara a la Señora a quien invoca . . . Esto pasa en el mayor Santuario de la Cristiandad, que es Loreto”).
The Santa Casa was a “pilgrim house” according to Florencia. Its patria was Nazareth, but like men and women, it was forced to travel and make new lands its home.\textsuperscript{114} There was an important lesson to be learned from this. If the Santa Casa could be moved from Nazareth to Loreto, what prohibited it from being transported to various regions of America? In the 1680s the Jesuits sponsored the construction of a series of imitation houses of the Santa Casa in several novohispano cities. One in particular was built in the Indian College of San Gregorio in Mexico City. Florencia knew that most devotees would never be able to cross the Atlantic to make a pilgrimage to Loreto in Italy. But this did not mean that Loreto could not be brought to them in New Spain. He confidently assured “that all those who will regularly go to the [Santa Casa at San Gregorio] will experience the same effects that the Holy Madonna works in those who visit the house of her birth in Loreto.”\textsuperscript{115} The sacred landscape of the Old World extended into the New. But even though the “centre of Christendom” was indeed portable, the centre of the Catholic Church was not so easy to budge.

\textbf{The Head of the World}

Rome was home to the central administration of the Society of Jesus. The city was the residence of the \textit{Padre General} and the meeting place for all general congregations of the religious order. Rome was also the centre of Catholic Christianity. The Pope was based within the Vatican where he oversaw several important ecclesiastical

\textsuperscript{114} \textit{La casa peregrina}, 34r (“Desde que la Señora de Loreto determinó salir con su Casa de su Patria Nazaret, tuvo previsto el lugar, a donde había de venir a parar en Italia, y donde quería asentar de una vez su domicilio: que es el que hoy tiene”).

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 123v (“Yo asiento a los que la frequentaren, experimenten en ella los mismos efectos, que obra la Santa Madona en los que visitan su Casa Natalicia en LORETO”).
institutions responsible for all major decisions of the faith. Florencia arrived to the Eternal City in the fall of 1670 after his pilgrimage to Loreto. He had a lot of work to do on behalf of his province in a short period of time. There was also some following up to do on a request made for an official feast day of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Hence in little over a year, Florencia learned how to navigate his way through the bureaucratic channels of the “head of the world,”¹¹⁶ both within his religious order and the Vatican.

Little is known about Florencia’s residency in Rome. His provincial had given him letters, money, petitions, and gifts to deliver to the Padre General of the Company, Giovanni Paolo Oliva (1600–1681). Since the central archives of the Society housed several manuscript histories of the Province of New Spain, Florencia took advantage of the collection by taking notes and transcribing several documents that he would later incorporate into his provincial chronicle. He used some of these papers in his Menologio de los varones mas señalados en perfección religiosa de la Compañía de Jesús de la Provincia de Nueva España, a text he wrote at the request of his superiors in Mexico City. There is a possibility that he finished his Menologio while still in Rome since he published the work in Barcelona in 1671 to support the Jesuit missions in northern New Spain. Jesuit procuradores also customarily acquired relics for their provinces while stationed in the Eternal City. Florencia was no doubt commissioned to add to the list of relics Pope Gregory XIII (1502–1585) gave to the Jesuit Province of New Spain in the 1570s. Although he found that earlier popes “were very hesitant” to share their relics, he believed that a more liberal policy had been adopted in the present.¹¹⁷ Florencia was not

---

¹¹⁶ La estrella del norte, 182r (“En Roma Cabeza del mundo”).
¹¹⁷ Historia de la Provincia, 332 (“Y es tanto el aprecio, que de ellas hacen los Sumos Pontífices, que aunque hoy son más liberales en repartirlas, antiguamente eran muy escasos en darlos”).
mistaken, and left Rome with some eight crates of “devotional things” and other “curiosities for the province.”

Figure 1-7. Chiesa del Gesù in Rome, Italy. Florencia would have visited this Jesuit church during his stay in Rome given that the headquarters of the Society of Jesus was stationed nearby. It was there that he had access to their central archives. Photograph by Jason Dyck.

Things were a bit more difficult with the Sacred Congregation of Rites, an ecclesiastical institution established in 1588 to review petitions for canonization. Florencia had several interactions with its representatives and left a short narrative of his experiences. He recounted how, in the early 1660s, the canon preacher, Francisco de Siles (d. 1670), got together with the Bishop of Puebla, Diego Osorio de Escobar y Llamas (d. 1673), to discuss the possibility of signing a petition to establish December 12

---

118 AGN, Jesuitas IV-53, caja 1 (“ocho cajones de cosas de devoción y algunas otras curiosidades para la Provincia”).
119 La estrella del norte, 64v–69r.
as the official feast day of the Virgin of Guadalupe in all of New Spain. They were also hopeful that they would be able to obtain a proper office and mass for the image. Members of the cathedral chapter of Mexico City and the religious orders united together to sign the petition that was eventually sent to Pope Alexander VII (1599–1667). Accompanying the petition was a Latin account of the apparition narrative together with other requests. Florencia was amongst the many creole signatories in the viceregal capital. If Rome granted their request, it meant that they would be one step closer to recognizing the miracle at Tepeyac for both the creole nation and for all of New Spain.

Unfortunately for all those involved, the petition was doomed to failure from the start because its proponents failed to follow proper canonical procedures. The Sacred Congregation of Rites needed proceedings from an ecclesiastical investigation that was performed according to an established questionnaire. But instead of waiting for Rome to send them the needed documentation, Siles prompted the cabildo of Mexico City to perform its own investigation to obtain notarized statements from witnesses, both Indians and Spaniards. Together with the cleric Antonio de Gama, Siles interviewed several Indians from the town of Cuautitlan, the reputed birthplace of Juan Diego. They also spoke with important men of authority, specifically Miguel Sánchez (1606–1674) and Luis Becerra Tanco (1603–1672), both authors of works on the apparition account. The results of these investigations (1665–1666) were sent to Mateo de Bicunia, a canon of the cathedral of Seville resident in Rome. He was commissioned to further the efforts to

---

establish December 12 as the official feast day for the Virgin of Guadalupe, but, according to Florencio, “his efforts did not produce any results.”

Novohispano churchmen were not the only ones seeking out special recognition for the miraculous images of their kingdoms. After presenting his case before members of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, Florencio was told that the Virgin of Loreto did not even have its own feast day. They explained to him that they “do not want to open the door to canonize miraculous images . . . because if they make an example of one it will be impossible to withstand [the petitions] of the rest.” But even though “canonizations” of images were difficult, they were not entirely impossible. Florencio had a few examples from the kingdom of Peru to which he could point, even if they involved people and not images. Isabel Flores de Oliva (1584–1617), a creole visionary who was more popularly known as Santa Rosa de Lima, became the first American-born saint when she was canonized in 1671. That same year the Archbishop of Lima, Toribio Alfonso de Mogrovejo (1538–1606), was beatified. Florencio saw the success that the kingdom of Peru had with the Sacred Congregation of Rites as an important lesson for New Spain. He believed that in order to achieve desired canonizations it was necessary to have someone intelligent stationed in Rome who would work with “determination and dedication.”

Florencia’s efforts on behalf of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Rome were, for the time being, unsuccessful. The Sacred Congregation of Rites did not change its stance on images until the end of the seventeenth century when the Virgin of Loreto was granted its

---

121 La estrella del norte, 66r (“No tuvieron efecto sus diligencias”). For more on the work of Bicunia, see Poole, Our Lady of Guadalupe, 142–143; and Brading, Mexican Phoenix, 80–81.
122 La estrella del norte, 68v (“así el Sumo Pontífice, como la Congregación de Ritus, de no abrir la puerta, a canonizar Imágenes milagrosas, de que hay tanta copia en la Cristiandad, que si se hace ejemplar en una, no podrá después resistirse a todas”).
123 Ibid., 69r (“sea yendo persona de por acá inteligente, que la trate con empeño, y viveza”).
own special feast day, mass, and office. Pope Benedict XIV (1675–1758) would finally grant the Virgin of Guadalupe the same privileges in 1754 when he declared her to be the principal patron of New Spain.\footnote{Brading, *Mexican Phoenix*, 81, 132–135.} Although the sacred of America was recognized in Rome, the Atlantic separated the New World from the Old, making it more difficult, not to mention more costly, to follow through with Florencia’s suggestions. This creole feeling of distance is expressed in the Latin account of the apparition narrative that Siles sent to Rome in the early 1660s. The Roman prelate Anastasio Nicoselli translated the text into Italian, publishing the work in Rome in 1681. Near the end of the narrative the author concluded that the “vast expanse of seas and oceans separate us, but they do not divide us in terms of our affectionate and true devotion to Mary.”\footnote{Relación histórica de la admirable aparición de la Virgen Santísima Madre de Dios bajo del título de Nra. Sra. de Guadalupe, acaecida en México el año de 1531, trans. from the Latin into Italian by Anastasio Nicoselli and then into Spanish by a presbyter from the Archbishopric of Mexico (Mexico City: Calle de la Palma, 1781), 25 (“No nos aparte de la tierna y verdadera devoción a MARÍA, esta vasta separación de Mares y de Océanos”).} The distance was surely great but not unbridgeable.

**The Procurador of the Indies**

Florencia was named the procurador of all the Jesuit provinces of the Indies in the fall of 1671.\footnote{Historia de la Provincia, 80.} He departed Rome for Seville to perform the duties of his new post. Seville was an important commercial centre along the Guadalquivir River that connected Spain to its overseas possessions in America. Most ships going to and coming from the Indies passed through in order to be inspected by officials from the House of Trade (*Casa de Contratación*). The city was also home to the College of San Hermenegildo where Jesuit missionaries from across Europe were hosted as they waited for their departure.
date. Florencia lived there for roughly seven years, moving back and forth between Seville and Cádiz as he made preparations to send these men and other merchandise to the Indies.\(^{127}\) Through all of his economic hardships he realized how difficult it was to send European goods back across the Atlantic.

The procurador of the Indies was the middleman between the provinciales and the Padre General.\(^{128}\) He had two principal tasks: (1) to provide for the needs of the six Jesuit provinces of America, and (2) to make sure that all correspondence, bulls, and lists of expenditures between the Padre General and the provinciales arrived to their final destinations.\(^{129}\) In order to realize the first task, procuradores needed to be good with numbers and bookkeeping because they had to keep track of all their expenses to the last penny. All of their money and accounting books were to be safely guarded in a special chest. To fulfil the second task, it was necessary to be well organized and diligent because the written word was the only means of communication between the New World and the Old. They were required to send reports to their Padre General every two months. Most procuradores of the Indies went through a customary training period to

---

\(^{127}\) Florencia was in Seville from 1671 to 1678. ARSI, Catalogus Provinciae Baetica, Baetica 10 (ff. 255v, 297r), Baetica 11 (f. 9v). Historia de la Provincia, 81 (“Por lo que Yo recibí en siete, años que viví en ella”).

\(^{128}\) For more on the office of the procurador of the Indies, see Agustín Galán García, El oficio de Indias de los jesuitas en Sevilla (1566–1767) (Seville: Fundación Fondo de Cultura de Sevilla, 1995); and J. Gabriel Martínez-Serna, “Procurators and the Making of the Jesuits’ Atlantic Network,” in Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500–1830, eds. Bernard Bailyn and Patricia L. Denault (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 181–209. Beyond his work for the Company, Florencia was also approached by officials from the House of Trade. In October of 1677 he was asked to provide geographic information on the New World in light of Portuguese encroachment along the Marañón River. Real Academia de la Historia, Jesuitas (Tomos), 9-3760/29, f. 4r.

\(^{129}\) Félix Zubillaga provides a transcription of the 1574 instructions for procuradores of the Indies in “El procurador de las Indias Occidentales de la Compañía de Jesús (1574),” Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu 22, no. 43 (1953): 398–402. A revised edition was written by Giovanni Paolo Oliva in 1668. AHPM, Documentos Antiguos, caja 37, carpeta 1487.
learn everything about their new position. Florencia, however, was an exception to this rule because of his experience as a procurador of his province in Madrid and Rome.\textsuperscript{130}

Writing letters and channelling documentation between the Indies and Rome does not appear to have been a problem for Florencia. But providing for the needs of his brethren in America with limited resources was extremely stressful and frustrating for him. Procuradores of the Indies received a set income from the six Jesuit provinces in America, but this total sum was not enough to cover all of their costs. The royal support that the office received was extremely limited and hence insufficient as a supplement. When Florencia arrived he inherited a large accumulated debt stemming back for roughly two decades, so he was naturally unpleased and in his assertive manner complained.\textsuperscript{131}

Although he wrote letters to his superiors with the intention of reforming the office, he had no success in achieving this ambitious goal. Hence, like others Jesuits before him, Florencia was forced to look to other sources of revenue to meet all of his expenses. Agustín Galán García has found that some procuradores of the Indies supplemented their incomes by trading slaves or making money off rural and urban properties. Most seem to have resorted to the selling of books, a path that Florencia appears to have taken.\textsuperscript{132}

One of the major tasks for the procurador of the Indies was the organization of missions. Throughout the 1670s Florencia recruited men to send to the Jesuit provinces of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{130} ARSI, Mexicana 3, Epistolum General (1668–1688), f. 32v (“Aviso a V. R. que he nombrado por Procurador de las Indias en Sevilla . . . al Padre Francisco de Florencia, el cual ha cumplido muy bien con las obligaciones de Procurador de esa Provincia a Roma; y de su atención, inteligencia y buenas prendas me persuadió que da plena satisfacción en su oficio”).
\item \textsuperscript{131} Galán García, El oficio de Indias, 143 (“El P. Francisco de Florencia, como administrador, reclamaba en el año 1674 las deudas acumuladas desde hacía dos décadas y que ascendían a un total de 2.732.474 maravedíes de vellón, superior incluso a la suma de todas las rentas pertenecientes a las Provincias el año 1651”).
\item \textsuperscript{132} AGN, Jesuitas IV-54, caja 1, exp. 52, f. 100 (“van 50 tomitos de los medios para la salvación del mismo y 9 votos de San Francisco Xavier que se han de entregar al Licenciado Diego Calderón para que los haga vender por mi cuenta”).
\end{itemize}
America, but he had a particularly difficult time acquiring missionaries for the Province of the Philippines. In order to garner support, he published the Exemplar vida y muerte por Cristo del fervoroso P. Luis de Medina in 1673. Luis de Medina (1637–1670) was a malagueño Jesuit who was killed by the natives of Saipan, one of the islands in Las Marianas of the Pacific Ocean. Florencia reconstructed his life from a series of letters and Medina’s own personal notes, hoping that a recent martyr would convince the faithful of the urgent need for reinforcements. “[T]o promote these missions,” Florencia wrote, “I printed a vida of Father Luis de Medina, martyr of the Marianas, and I dedicated it to the Queen.”¹³³ Royal assistance was necessary but never enough by itself. Florencia had his mind on other rich patrons, but he was also hopeful that many others would contribute to the spread of the Catholic faith. He believed that everyone could financially support the ministry of evangelization, especially considering the limited resources available to Jesuit missionaries.¹³⁴

Florencia needed to keep a record of everyone he sent to America and to make sure that they were all in good health. He also had to go through the proper bureaucratic channels in the House of Trade by acquiring the necessary licences for travel. With the right papers in hand, he could negotiate the price of passage across the Atlantic. The crown subsidized the costs of food, clothing, and transportation for religious men bound for American missions; but royal aid for Jesuit missions was insufficient and significantly

¹³³ AGN, Jesuitas IV-54, caja 1, exp. 31, f. 73r (“A fin de fomentar estas misiones imprimí la vida del P. Luis de Medina Mártir de los Marianas y se la dediqué a la Reina”).
¹³⁴ Vida de Medina, 55 (“pueden todos cooperar a la salvación de los Gentiles en cuanto su estado, y condición les permite, o con limosnas para el sustento de los que con tanta falta de lo necesario ejercitan el Ministerio Evangélico”).
reduced by the second half of the seventeenth century. Perhaps the most demanding part of organizing a mission was making sure that the missionaries were properly taken care of as they waited for their departure date. It was also necessary to keep them motivated, because Jesuits who changed their minds and returned home were an unwelcome expense. Florencia had to look after their housing and basic needs whether they went to the Indies or not, and he firmly believed that he was not the only one who should be held financially responsible.

Over the course of seven years Florencia “battled with the provinciales” of Spain, accumulating “a large file of letters with their responses.” His major grievance was that the Jesuit provinces of Spain sent out missionaries from their local colleges but were unwilling to cover all of their costs. This economic burden was being shouldered by the Jesuit provinces of the Indies. Florencia took up his case with the Padre General in hope that the cost of the missions would be more evenly distributed within the Society on both sides of the Atlantic. He was unsuccessful and clearly disappointed. In 1672 he reported to Andrés Cobián (ca. 1615–1673), the Jesuit provincial of New Spain, that “there is a lack of understanding of the things of the Indies in Rome.” The “temporal needs” of the Society in America were being overlooked. This contentious issue would trouble Florencia for the rest of his life. In his provincial chronicle he historicized the departure of the first Jesuits for New Spain, making sure to highlight the orders San Francisco de Borja (1510–1572) gave to the superiors of the Province of Andalucía. Florencia

---

135 Veitia Linaje, *Norte de la Contratación*, 1:233 (Dáseles a los Religiosos que van a costa de la Real hacienda, lo necesario para su aviamiento, vestuario, y matalotaje”). García Gálan follows the decline of royal support throughout the 1600s in *El oficio de Indias*, 115–135.
136 AGN, Jesuitas IV-54, caja 1, exp. 31, f. 71v (“Yo he batallado con los Provinciales sobre eso y tengo gran legajo de cartas de sus respuestas”).
137 AGN, Jesuitas I-11, caja 1, exp. 48, f. 187r (“Lo cierto es que hay falta en Roma de conocimiento de las cosas de las Indias”).
disguised his bitterness by diplomatically pointing out that they were ordered “to pay for
the food [of the missionaries] in Seville, San Lucas, and Cádiz.”

Despite the numerous conflicts he had with his Spanish superiors, Florencia still
claimed that the men of the Province of Andalucía were “like angels” and “generally
charitable with those of the Indies” (emphasis mine). Was he only thinking about his
economic woes when he penned these words? What else did Europe misunderstand about
the “things of the Indies”? When creoles crossed the Atlantic they understood more
clearly that they were different from Europeans. Travelling, by nature, is always a full
sensory experience. Florencia realized over the course of his European sojourn, more so
than he ever would have in America, that he was a Spaniard of a different type. He spoke
Castilian with a slightly different accent, using a native vocabulary for certain plants,
animals, and towns. In his sacred histories he took delight in pointing out the errors of
Spaniards who improperly pronounced and spelled indigenous names. Although
Florencia somewhat blended in as a Jesuit with his black robe, he would have noticed
variations in the clothing styles of the general populace. Thomas Gage (1597–1656), an
English Dominican, observed the “excessive apparel” of men and women when he passed
through Mexico City in 1625. Markets sold fruits and vegetables that were unavailable
in the Indies and culinary practices were not the same. Jeffrey M. Pilcher argues that
creoles maintained a European diet that was enhanced by native ingredients. “Foods

---

138 Historia de la Provincia, 79–80 (“Dio también un catálogo de ordenaciones llenas de Paternal
providencia, del modo como se han de portar los Superiores de la Provincia de Andalucía con todos los
Misioneros, que pasan a Indias: de lo que han de pagar por sus alimentos en Sevilla, S. Lucas, y Cádiz”).
139 Ibid., 81 (“porque generalmente hay en toda ella mucha caridad, con los de Indias, son unos Ángeles”).
140 Descripción histórica, 141; and Los dos célebres santuarios, 1–2. Pagden discusses the differences
between creole and peninsular Castilian in “Identity Formation in Spanish America,” 88.
141 Thomas Gage, The English-American: A New Survey of the West Indies [1648], ed. A. P. Newton
(London: George Routledge & Sons, 1928), 85. For more on creole clothing, see Elliott, Empires of the
Atlantic World, 244.
gained acceptance,” he contends, “only when they appeared to be Creole adaptations of Spanish dishes.”

Creoles travelling throughout Europe did not only notice differences in things such as language, clothing, and food. Many were treated differently because they were born on the other side of the Atlantic. Florencia did not record any specific experiences he had in either Spain or Italy, but he did internalize some of the observations José de Acosta (1540–1600) made concerning disgruntled Jesuits in America. Acosta, who himself was a Jesuit and an important historian of the Indies, had noted that some of his coreligionists were forever homesick and constantly expressing their desire to return to Spain. Florencia, who perhaps heard similar comments in his own day, expanded upon Acosta’s experiences by claiming that several Spaniards, seeking after a new life in the Indies, were “always gasping for their own land, missing Spain, and complaining about [America].” They could not understand why creoles were uninterested in the “things of Europe” even though their ancestors had come from there. “To these men we say,” Florencia declared, “that heaven is our true patria . . . [and] we have no need to return to Europe to go to our patria, because we have it right here, so close to us, as do those who return over there have theirs.”

Whatever went to the Indies either never came back or never came back the same. Florencia’s experiences in the ports of Andalucía must have confirmed this. Every year provinciales requested various commodities for their colleges unavailable in the Indies.

---

142 Pilcher, ¡Que vivan los tamales!, 43.
143 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 4v (“están siempre suspirando por su tierra, echando menos a España, quejándose de ésta”). To compare, see Acosta, Historia natural y moral de las Indias, 25 (“muchos de los que acá suspiran por España, y no saben hablar sino de su tierra, se maravillan y aun enojan con nosotros, pareciéndoles que estamos olvidados y hacemos poco caso de nuestra común patria”).
144 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, ff. 4v–5r (“A los cuales les decimos que nosotros tenemos por verdadera patria el cielo . . . tenemos por excusado volver a Europa para ir a nuestra patria, pues la tenemos acá tan cerca como los que se vuelvan allá la tienen”).
Florencia received petitions for religious articles such as crucifixes, reliquaries, holy cards, wax specifically made in Venice, and even little boxes of the dirt of Saint Paul. He acquired devotional aids (missals, prayers, breviaries), foodstuffs (almonds, cinnamon, oil, and wine), and religious clothing (cassocks and hats). Florencia also shipped out hundreds of books because printing costs in America were high, paper was scarce, and many libraries were still relatively small. The Spanish crown monopolized the book trade in Spanish America and the high costs of imported supplies, machinery, and paper
limited the production of colonial printers. Since publishing was so expensive, colonial
scholars were forced to send many of their manuscripts across the Atlantic, one of the
reasons why Florencia concluded that “the printed works [of New Spain] are more costly
(costosas) than lovely (preciosas).”\textsuperscript{145} Hence he purchased sacred biographies, devotional
histories, and theological works for both personal contacts and individual colleges.
Everything Florencia collected in Europe and shipped back to America would eventually
become “things of the Indies,” something he felt many Europeans were unwilling to
recognize.

In the spring of 1678 Florencia finished his term as procurador of the Indies. In
preparation for departure he went to the House of Trade to obtain a licence for travel.\textsuperscript{146}
He also ordered craftsmen in Antwerp to make him a series of medallions with images of
the Virgin of Guadalupe.\textsuperscript{147} While he was at the Santa Casa in Loreto he viewed a
citation from Psalm 147—“Non fecit taliter omni natione”/“It was not done thus to all
nations”—and reasoned that this was a suitable epigram for these medallions.\textsuperscript{148} After
having kneeled before images of the Virgin Mary in many corners of Christendom,
Florencia concluded that “God has not done the same thing with the miraculous images
of other kingdoms (if there is one more miraculous) than he has with this one.”\textsuperscript{149} He had
gone to the Old World with images of the Virgin of Guadalupe and now he was returning
home to the New World with others. The two had travelled through various regions of

\textsuperscript{145} Descripción histórica, Ocasión para escribir, n.p. (“Y así lo hago, no en la Nueva España, que son las
impresiones, como he dicho, más costosas que preciosas”).
\textsuperscript{146} For Florencia’s physical description, see Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Contratación, 5442, n. 88
(“Pareció ante mi el P. Francisco de Florencia de la Compañía de Jesús contenido en la certificación de
arriba, el cual de edad de cincuenta y ocho años, moreno barba entecara de buen cuerpo”).
\textsuperscript{147} AGN, AHH, vol. 873, exp. 1.
\textsuperscript{148} Brading, Mexican Phoenix, 111.
\textsuperscript{149} La estrella del norte, 134r–v (“no ha hecho Dios cosa semejante por otras Imágenes de otros Reinos, tan
milagrosas, o más (si hay alguna más milagrosa) que ésta”).
Europe, but a powerful force was calling them back home. “[T]he love of the patria,”
Florencia claimed after roughly a ten-year sojourn in Spain and Italy, “is in everyone a
powerful magnet.”¹⁵⁰ He arrived to the shores of New Spain in the fall of 1678 with many
“things of Europe” after a “long and turbulent trip of ninety-five days.”¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ La estrella del norte, 129r (“Pero como el amor de su Patria, que en todos es un imán poderoso”).
¹⁵¹ Biblioteca Palafoxiana, Manuscritos, 496/422 (“El viaje ha sido largo y tormentoso de 95 días”).
Florencia also commented on his return to New Spain in La estrella del norte, 112v (“más de cerca en cien
días de navegación de España a la Vera Cruz”).
Part II
The Creole Idea of History

Religious scholars in New Spain wrote about their sacred past for the “glory of God” and for the “love of the patria.”¹ But in order to practice the sacred historian’s craft they craved written documentation. When Florencia was preparing his account of devotion to the Archangel San Miguel in the diocese of Puebla, he confessed that all he was able to find was a small relation and a brief section in the second edition of a history by one of his European coreligionists. He sadly noted that this was a great misfortune, but “not for the miraculous apparition of the seraphic prince, whose fame and devotion has been fortunately accredited and propagated without a large number of writers, not only in this New World but also in the Old.” Florencia believed, like many other sacred historians, that the Christian God providentially fulfilled his divine plans regardless of human negligence. The misfortune was more for him, the one “who now attempts to write [its history] after seventy years since it took place,” because there would have been more information to work with “had there been more historians.”² Florencia saw his research on the sacred past as a collective process and viewed his histories as shared narratives.

In this second part I examine the sacred historian’s craft from a creole perspective by concentrating on Florencia’s idea of history and the manner in which he evaluated his sources. His experiences in Europe, which were described in Part I, significantly shaped his understanding of the past and how he wrote about the religious landscape of America.

¹ Los dos célebres santuarios, 2 (“el amor de la Patria”).
² Narración de la maravillosa, 2 (“Desgracia, no de la milagrosa Aparición del Seráfico Príncipe, que sin más número de Escritores ha acreditado, y propagado felísimamente, no sólo en este Nuevo Mundo, pero también en el antiguo, su fama, y su devoción; sino del que ahora emprende escribirla, después de sesenta años de sucedida, a quien es preciso hagan falta las buenas, y especiosas noticias, que se hubieran aumentado, si fueran más los Historiadores”).
He penned the majority of his sacred histories after his return to New Spain. Now although his superiors were impressed with the work he had done as a procurador in Seville, Florencia was involved in controversy upon his arrival to Vera Cruz. It came to the attention of the Padre General, Giovanni Paolo Oliva, that he was accused of selling merchandise, including “things of devotion,” at elevated prices and in the process incited a “general scandal.”

Florencia appears to have cleared himself of these charges, however, because he was still elected rector of Espíritu Santo in Puebla in the early 1680s. He later returned to Mexico City where he acted as rector and prefect of studies at San Pedro y San Pablo and San Ildefonso, earning a good name as a teacher and preacher. But many also looked to him as a leading sacred historian, which is why he was approached by a wide range of churchmen for his services.

Florencia was commissioned to write sacred history because he knew how to refashion older texts for the spiritual edification of both his kingdom and of larger Christendom. While in Europe he had gathered together documents from Jesuit archives and took down notes in their college libraries. He continued this practice in New Spain in several other ecclesiastical repositories. As he sifted through his findings, Florencia considered how his God, although incarnated into a local culture, had chosen his church

---

3 ARSI, Mexicana 3, Epistolum General (1668–1688), ff. 127v–128r, 133r (“según dicen, ha llevado con la flota muchísimas cargas de varias mercadurías, y que las ha introducido a título de ser para socorro de los colegios y que con efecto ha vendido los géneros, así de cosas de devoción . . . a precios muy subidos con nota y escándalo común”).

4 Ibid., f. 137r (“Sea rector del Colegio del Espíritu Santo de la Puebla Padre Francisco de Florencia, caso que no hubiere faltado contra la Bulla de la Santa de Clemente IX de negociatione et mercatura sarculari, del modo que avise en la 2ª carta de este despacho; más si hubiere incurrido en esta falta”). Bernardo Pardo still referred to Florencia as the rector of Espíritu Santo in June of 1681. AHPM, Documentos Antiguos, caja 37, carpeta 1481.

5 Florencia’s sermons were referenced in two seventeenth-century diaries. Antonio de Robles, Diario de sucesos notables (1665–1703) [1946], 2nd ed. (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1972), 1:301, 2:184; and Juan Antonio Rivera, Diario curioso y exacto de D. Juan Antonio Rivera Capellán del Hospital de Jesús Nazareno de México, Hubert H. Bancroft Library (BL), Mexican Manuscripts (M-M) 77–83, #2, 24.

6 La estrella del norte, 34v–35v (“y discurrido ahora once años en que apunté lo más de esta Relación estando en Sevilla”).
to be part of a larger global narrative. He tried to persuade his readers that divine providence had equally favoured New Spain as it did all other regions around the world. In particular, he noted how the shrines of his kingdom provided healing and comfort to both local residents and other pilgrims who came from far off. “[L]ike all those on the earth are at an equal distance from heaven,” Florencia tried to explain, “in the same way no one is closer to the things of heaven.” Based upon this theology of inclusion, he concluded that Christ was against “those who argue for the rights of ownership to the marvels of grace and the benefits of heaven [simply] because [the marvels] they effect are born in their patria.”

Although Florencia believed that the spiritual blessings of New Spain were to be shared by all, this did not stop him from highlighting their place of origin.

---

7 *Narración de la maravillosa*, 98–99 (“y como del Cielo todos los de la tierra distan igualmente, así de las cosas del Cielo ningunos están más cercanos . . . Es dictamen reprobado de Cristo, el de los que alegan derecho de propiedad en las maravillas de la gracia, y en los beneficios del Cielo, porque los que los obran nacen en su patria”).
Chapter 2

The Cuidado of History

Amongst all of his cuidados he did not forget the most important: to attend to the wellbeing of souls.

– Agustín Dávila Padilla, 1596

From its origins the [Catholic Church] has always taken the same cuidado in writing about the lives and works of the saints.

– Hernando de Ojea, ca. 1608

I write this history to restore to memory that which the descuido of others has taken away from it.

– Alonso de la Rea, 1643

Throughout the seventeenth century there was a flowering of sacred history in Spanish America as religious men nostalgically looked back upon the establishment of the church in their kingdoms. They penned providential narratives of the Christian God at work on their side of the Atlantic to restore what they could of the memory of those early days. This chapter analyzes why Florencia wrote sacred history and his understanding of the past within the context of this larger historiographic movement. A contemporary of his claimed that “preaching from the pulpit and the cuidado of history” were amongst his many pastoral duties as a Jesuit. The sacred historian’s craft—from start to finish—was intimately related to various aspects of his religious profession. It was also a branch of

EPIGRAPHS: Agustín Dávila Padilla, Historia de la fundación y discurso de la Provincia de Santiago de México, de la Orden de Predicadores, por las vidas de sus varones insignes, y casos notables de Nueva España (Madrid: Pedro Madrigal, 1596), 41 (“Entre todos sus [Domingo de Betanzos] cuidados no se olvidaba del principal, que era acudir a la salud de las almas”). Hernando de Ojea, Libro tercero de la historia religiosa de la Provincia de México de la orden de Santo Domingo (Mexico City: Museo Nacional de México, 1897), xiv (“También el cristiano (que es la iglesia católica) que le sucedió en la fe y religión, tuvo siempre desde sus principios el mismo cuidado de que se escribiesen las vidas y hechos de los santos”). Alonso de la Rea, Crónica de la orden de Nuestro Seráfico Padre San Francisco, Provincia de San Pedro y San Pablo de Michoacán en la Nueva España (Mexico City: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1643), 31v (“escribo esta Historia, por restituir a la memoria, lo que la ha quitado el descuido de otros”).

1 Joseph Gil Ramírez, “Aprobación,” in Descripción histórica, 10 (“la tarea de el púlpito, el cuidado de las historias”).
rhetoric, an art of spiritual edification that Florencia used to cultivate the interior life of
the soul and move the faithful to financially support works of the church. Although the
“cuidado of history” was indeed an act of religious obedience for Florencia, I contend
that underlying his sacred discourse was a creole political agenda. He sought to represent
New Spain as a Catholic kingdom like all others in the Spanish empire.

Cuidado is derived from the verb cuidar, which literally means “to look after” or
“to take care of.” To exercise cuidado is an obligation to perform any given task with
extreme diligence. Descuido, on the other hand, drawn from the verb descuidar,
expresses actions of “neglect” and “forgetfulness.” A descuido is a “loss of cuidado” and
lack of preparation for the future. In the seventeenth century cuidar and descuidar were
closely linked to the verb pensar (to think), which was “to imagine or return a given thing
to one’s memory.” New Spain was a fertile ground for a “multiplicity of memories”
given the multiethnic nature of the kingdom. Enrique Florescano describes it as a “battle
amongst different memories of the past” where creoles emerged as the only group that
“attempted to create a common memory of the land it shared with other ethnic groups.”

As much as sacred history was a “collective creation” in New Spain, the majority of those

---

2 My reading of Florencia has benefitted from Carlos M. Gálvez Peña’s call to move beyond the simple
label of “convent chronicler” (cronista de convento) to recognize the ways in which the regular clergy used
sacred history to express their political views within the Spanish empire. See “El carro de Ezequiel. La
3 Covarruvias Orozco, Tesoro de la lengua, 258v, 308v, 584r (“CUIDAR, pensar, advertir: es nombre
Frances, cuidier, termino antiguo; de allí cuidado, cuidadoso, descuidado, descuidar”) (“DESCUIDAR,
perder cuidado. Descuidado, el que no cuida de alguna cosa que le sobreviene de repente. Descuido, el
olvido y poco cuidado”) (“PENSAR, es imaginar o revolver alguna cosa en su memoria”). Diccionario de
la lengua castellana, 2:693 (“CUIDADO. Solicitud y advertencia para hacer alguna cosa con la perfección
devida/Es asimismo la atención y el cargo de lo que está a la obligación de cada uno”) (“CUIDAR. Poner
diligencia, procurar con atención y solicitud el logro de alguna cosa”).
4 Enrique Florescano, Memoria mexicana [1987], 2nd ed. (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica,
1994), 462, 464 (“multiplicación de la memoria histórica”) (“En este combate entre diferentes memorias
del pasado, sólo el grupo criollo intentó crear una memoria común del territorio que compartía con otras
etnias”).
who wrote and published were creoles. Florencia recorded as many “memorable things” (cosas memorables) from the sacred past of his kingdom as he possibly could, for both the religious instruction of his compatriots and the “Europe” he had invented through study, travel, and pilgrimage.

This chapter is organized around five separate yet interrelated acts of cuidado that were all fundamental to both the religious life and the sacred historian’s craft. The first section looks at Florencia’s vow of obedience and the multiple obligations he had as a sacred historian. In the second section his sacerdotal duty to perpetuate the memory of Christ is analyzed together with his general idea of history as both the past itself and a written narrative. The following two sections concentrate on some of the rhetorical devices he used to care for souls and collect alms from the faithful. To conclude, a final section examines Florencia’s notions of orthodoxy and heresy by outlining the process of censorship he both participated in and experienced to publish his works.

The Obligations of the Craft

Most sacred historians were members of mendicant orders or the Society of Jesus. They did not write of their own volition or for personal profit because printing was a large expense. Florencia claimed that he penned his sacred histories “by order of obedience.” He understood obedience as one of his three “religious obligations,” but

---

5 I follow Antonio Rubial García in thinking about the pious legends of sacred history as shared narratives between the various socioracial groups of New Spain. “Invención de prodigios,” 121–132.
6 La estrella del norte, 96v; Narración de la maravillosa, 119 (“cosas memorables”). Other sacred historians used similar phrases such as “memorable occurrences” (sucesos memorables) or “memorable events” (eventos memorables).
7 Vida de Figueroa, 1r (“Escribo por orden de la obediencia”). Narración de la maravillosa, 64 (“y cuando me encargué de esta obra, por obedecer a quien me lo pudo mandar”).
beyond his habit he had other obligations to his family, kingdom, and to his monarch in Spain. When writing sacred history Florencia was always guided by a “multiplicity of loyalties” within the kingdom of New Spain and the Spanish empire.\(^9\)

Florencia explained that “obedience seeks to do the will of God,” the principal reason for human existence. Drawing upon an agricultural metaphor, he claimed that “a grain of obedience is the seed of all virtues.”\(^10\) After planting obedience in the depths of the soul, an abundant harvest of virtues awaited the spiritual farmer. This moral lesson was something Florencia discovered through his practice of the *Spiritual Exercises*. He learned that “the cuidado of obedience” was by far the most important of his three religious vows, because at that moment he accepted his superiors “in the place of God” on the earth.\(^11\) The Jesuits, of course, were not the only religious order with these convictions. Agustín Dávila Padilla (1562–1604), a creole Dominican chronicler, described “obedience [as] the mysterious sum of the religious life” and “the key, door, cell, and essence of every religious order.”\(^12\) All acts of disobedience, as a result, were dutifully punished because they were detrimental to the individual soul, religious house, and to the local religious province. If submission to one’s superiors was not learned in the

---

8 *Historia de la Provincia*, 381 (“las obligaciones Religiosas”). The “religious obligations” are the three vows of the regular clergy.
10 *La estrella del norte*, 225v (“porque como la obediencia mira a hacer la voluntad de Dios”) (“Un grano de obediencia es semilla de todas las virtudes”).
11 *Relación de Guadalajara*, 5v (“El P. Nicolás, que más cuidaba de obedecer, que de sanar”). See the religious vows of Martín Arenillas, July 18, 1660, AGN, Jesuitas IV-30, caja 1 (“que tenéis . . . del Prepósito General de la Compañía de Jesús, y de sus sucesores y estáis en lugar de Dios”).
12 Dávila Padilla, *Historia de la fundación*, 43 (“Porque la obediencia es una misteriosa cifra de toda la religión”) (“La obediencia es la llave de la religión, y la puerta, y el retrete, y el todo de todas las religiones”).
early stages of training, there was no hope of ever donning a religious habit. “Everyone is obliged to be obedient,” Florencia concluded, “even if they are superiors to everyone.”

Figure 2-1. Anonymous. Engraving of the official emblem of the Society of Jesus. The emblems of the religious orders were a reminder of the obedience members owed both to their God and to their superiors. Taken from the title page of Andrés Pérez de Ribas, *Historia de los triumphos de nuestra santa fe* (Madrid: Por Alonso de Paredes, 1645). Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada de la Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, Mexico City, Mexico. Photograph by Jason Dyck.

Although Florencia stressed that all members of society were expected to be subject to the “true obedience” of the Catholic Church, only a select few were permitted

---

13 *La estrella del norte*, 226r (“A todos obliga la obediencia aunque sea Superiores a todos”).
to take religious vows. As noted in the first chapter, the religious houses of New Spain, specifically those of the Jesuits, were primarily composed of creoles and Europeans. They were connected to the ruling aristocracy of the kingdom and their relatives wielded considerable political and ecclesiastical power as judges in the audiencias, as leading members of local cabildos, or as bishops in important dioceses. Creoles held significant control over economic life as well; they were the major property holders, mine owners, and directors of mercantile activity, and as members of wealthy families they offered their sons in service to the church. Indians, Africans, and castas, on the other hand, were generally prohibited from joining the regular clergy and hence forbidden from taking religious vows. They were, for the most part, never asked to write sacred history, a task that by the second half of the seventeenth century was primarily in the hands of creoles such as Florencia.

Various clergymen from both within and outside of the Society of Jesus commissioned Florencia to write sacred histories for them. As Eric W. Cochrane has observed in Renaissance Italy, sacred historians “wrote history for one reason alone: because their superiors ordered them to do so.” Whether he wrote for his own religious order, or for other patrons sponsoring his works, Florencia needed the consent of his superiors. The demand for his talent was considerable. Lorenzo de Mendoza, the vicario (vicar) of the sanctuary of the Virgin of Remedies, and Gerónimo de Valladolid, the mayordomo of the shrine dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe, petitioned him to compose devotional histories of these two Marian images. Diego Velázquez de la Cadena

14 Ibid., 169r, 225r (“la obediencia a la Iglesia Romana”) (“verdadera obediencia”).
(b. 1638), the provincial of the Augustinian Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, asked the Jesuit to pen an account of the Crucified Christ of Chalma. The Bishop of Puebla, Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz (1637–1699), and the Bishop of Guadalajara, Juan de Santiago y León Garabito (1641–1693), requested publications from him for the Archangel San Miguel and the Virgins of Zapopan and of San Juan de los Lagos. The padres lenguas (multi-lingual priests) of the Jesuit Indian College of San Gregorio in Mexico City sought him out to craft an account of the Virgin of Loreto. And various provinciales from the Jesuit Province of New Spain ordered Florencia to write his menology; his sacred biographies on Luis de Medina, Nicolás de Guadalajara, and Gerónimo de Figueroa; and his provincial chronicle.

Yet sacred history was more than just a “religious obligation” for Florencia. He joined hundreds of men throughout the Spanish world who were convinced that the practice of their craft should be a service to their homelands. An ecclesiastical judge from Zalamea, Francisco Barrantes Maldonado (1570–ca. 1640), claimed that “we have an obligation to the patria,” and, pointing to the Greek poet Homer, he argued that it was “the same as our [obligation] to our mother and father.” Richard Kagan has studied how local scholars, such as Barrantes Maldonado, wrote civic and regional histories—what he refers to as chorography—in response to the state-sponsored histories of crown chroniclers (cronistas del rey). Spanish monarchs sought to control the memory of the past through their own official historians, suppressing local and regional versions that were not in keeping with their own interests. Kagan argues that the growing popularity of chorography in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is partially explained by the

---

17 Francisco Barrantes Maldonado, Relación de la calificación y milagros del Santo Crucifijo de Zalamea (Madrid: Viuda de Alonso Martín, 1617), El lector, n.p. (“la obligación que tenemos a la Patria, es igual a la del padre, y la madre, y por eso fue llamada Patria”).
efforts of municipal governments to fight for their own privileges in the face of a centralizing crown seeking to restrict them. In this context, local scholars rhetorically developed the Christian antiquity of their cities, praised their religious institutions, listed their miraculous images, gave details on their local saints and relics, and described the general fertility of their physical landscapes. They were also concerned with demonstrating their “perpetual loyalty” to the Spanish monarchy, which meant ignoring or modifying events in the past that spoke to the contrary.¹⁸

Chorography did not develop in the same way in New Spain as it did throughout the Iberian Peninsula. Most major urban centres were founded by the early 1600s, but did not “come of age” until the eighteenth century.¹⁹ This does not mean, however, that the “parochial spirit” and “almost mystical attachment to one’s local patria chica” was not present in New Spain.²⁰ Civic pride was a significant force shaping urban rivalries, especially between Mexico City and Puebla. But in light of the multiethnic nature of novohispano cities, creoles came together rhetorically in their sacred histories. Since most were writing about their religious provinces, which encompassed several urban centres, they addressed larger concerns of the creole elite throughout the kingdom. Men like Florencia, in imitation of Spanish chorography, wrote about their own Christian antiquity, rooted in both the conquest with Cortés and in the memory of an earlier evangelization of the indigenous population by Saint Thomas. They listed their religious

---

²⁰ Lafaye, Quetzalcóatl and Guadalupe, 10. Antonio Rubial García follows the construction of the patria chica in Puebla through an analysis of its foundation legend in “Los Ángeles de Puebla. La larga construcción de una identidad patria,” in Poder civil y catolicismo en México. Siglos XVI al XIX, eds. Francisco Xavier Cervantes, Alicia Tecuanhuey, and María del Pilar Martínez (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2008), 103–128.
establishments and praised the fertility of their lands, much like their Iberian counterparts. But creoles also had to write their history with care given the greater political and economic commitments the crown was seeking to impose upon them. Anthony Pagden notes that these royal measures gave rise to “a state of almost constant rebellion” throughout the seventeenth century.21

Despite the significant amount of revolts throughout the 1600s, there was a limit, and creoles in New Spain never sought after their own independence. They also did not see any contradiction in constructing their dual loyalty to their patria and king. The Augustinian chronicler Esteban García, for example, was displeased with the accusations that creoles were a mutinous bunch in the wake of the 1624 uprising against the viceroy Diego Carrillo de Mendoza y Pimentel (1559–1624). He diverted away from the narrative of his provincial chronicle “to defend [his] patria of New Spain, a land so beneficial and submissive to the royal crown of Old Spain.”22 Florencia wrote with a similar spirit in his sacred histories a few decades later when he encouraged “obedience to the church and the Catholic Monarchy.”23 With recurring rumours of idolatry and Indian rebellions, he sought to paint a picture of a successful “spiritual conquest” that laid the foundation for a strong and spiritually stable Catholic kingdom. Florencia claimed that all of New Spain—from Nicaragua to New Mexico—was completely subject to the “Christian yoke” of the church. “[New Spain was] so obedient to the laws of the Catholic King,” Florencia

---

22 Esteban García, Crónica de la Provincia Agustiniana del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús de México. Libro Quinto [ca. 1675] (Madrid: Imprenta de G. López del Honro, 1918), 222 (“pues me divierto en defensa de mi patria, la Nueva España, tierra tan provechosa y humilde a la real corona de la antigua España”). For a discussion of the 1624 uprising, see Israel, Race, Class, and Politics in Colonial Mexico, 135–160.
23 Historia de la Provincia, 70 (“la obediencia de la Iglesia, y Monarquía Católica”).
declared with pride, “that one could send a message throughout the entire [kingdom] with orders from the viceroy . . . without having one Indian dare to contradict them.”

In the early 1600s Antonio de Remesal (1570–1639), a Spanish Dominican friar, wrote a chronicle of his religious Province of San Vicente of Chiapas and Guatemala. He referred to the Greek historian Polybius (ca. 200–118 BC) in his introduction by claiming that “the historian should have neither patria, city, nor king.” Florencia learned that this hermeneutic lens was simply unrealistic given the multiple obligations of the sacred historian in the Spanish world. He specifically came to realize throughout his travels in Europe, and within the sacred historiography from other regions of Spanish America, that on both sides of the Atlantic men had a “blind love” for “their own things or those of their patria.” He concluded that many were incapable of seeing their homelands as the same as others because “they want them to be [considered] better.” Florencia may have criticized the impassioned discourses of others, but in the end he was describing himself. He wanted his audience—both local and global—to know the “truth” about his Catholic kingdom, one of the principal “obligations of a faithful historian.”

---

24 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 13r (“tan obediente a las leyes del Rey Católico, que podía caminar un correo por todo él con mandatos del virrey . . . sin que hubiese apenas un indio que se atreviese a contradecirlos”).

25 Antonio de Remesal, Historia de la Provincia de San Vicente de Chiapa, y Guatemala, de la esclarecida orden de nuestro glorioso Padre Santo Domingo de Guzmán (Madrid: Casa de Francisco Angulo, 1619), Prólogo, n.p. (“Que el historiador no ha de tener Patria, Ciudad, ni Rey”).

26 Narración de la maravillosa, 54 (“como los hombres por el ciego amor, que ordinariamente tienen a las cosas propias, o de su patria, no se contentan sólo con que sean buenas, y tan buenas como las de otras partes, sino que quieren, que sean mejores”).

27 La estrella del norte, 130r (“las obligaciones de un fiel Historiador”).
The Vivaciousness of History

While Florencia was engaged in his research and writing he was simultaneously involved in several pastoral duties. As a clergyman he was expected to nurture the memory of Christ’s death and resurrection amongst the faithful. He did this through a variety of different Catholic rituals, most importantly the celebration of the Eucharist. The theological significance of all of these religious observances was woven into the narratives of his sacred histories so that it would not be forgotten. “Such is the memory of man,” Florencia wrote, “for whom the vivaciousness of history is quite useful.”28 He understood history as the preservation of “memorable things” in writing given the imperfections of our human faculties. But with so many memories of the kingdom of New Spain buried under “the ashes of oblivion,” Florencia took rhetorical licence in the present to piously fill in the gaps.29

Florencia understood history (historia) as “memorable things” that took place in the past in both the realms of the sacred and the profane. But during the colonial era these two ontological spheres of existence were not so easily separated. The church and the state were intertwined within the Spanish empire and the evangelization of New Spain went hand in glove with conquest and colonization. In this context, the “memorable things” of greatest importance for Florencia were those related to the development of the novohispano Church. He considered the virtues of saintly men and women to be “more historic” than other pious discourses on theological issues.30 Prodigious wonders of Catholic images and the interior décor of their shrines were the “history” he was eager to

28 Historia de la Provincia, 2 (“Esto es en la memoria de los hombres, para la cual sirve la vivacidad de la Historia”).
29 Descripción histórica, 3 (“entre las cenizas del olvido de tantos años”).
30 Vida de Figueroa, 19v (“Si no me llamaran otras ponderaciones de su gran fe, que son más historiales, me detuviera en la explicación de S. Gregorio el Magno”).
discover. But more than anything, it was the “sanctity of that which is historicized” that interested him the most, by which he meant the miracles, signs, healings, and other works of the Christian God. Florencia may have regarded all actions performed in the past—whether human or divine—as “history,” but it was the sacred past, those deeds related to the plan of the divinity for humankind, which was most worthy of memory.

In the seventeenth-century Spanish world memory was considered to be one of the three powers of the soul, the place where the past was persevered. For men and women the past could only be experienced in the memory because all actions took place at given intervals in time, never to be repeated again. In contrast, all of history—past, present, and future—was held to be perpetually present in the divine memory of the Christian God. Florencia claimed that in “his memory the just live eternally, where the ravages of time are not enough to bury their heroic deeds.” Since human memory was both mortal and limited as a consequence of the fall, Florencia felt that it was necessary to regularly “mortify the memory” as a spiritual discipline. He learned from his coreligionist Nicolás de Guadalajara (d. 1683) that human memory is a potential warehouse for vain and indecent images, sinfully stained and in constant need of cleansing. It was crucial to be vigilant in erasing indecent thoughts, fervently praying that

---

31 *La milagrosa invención*, 1r (“Escribo la historia de la admirable Imagen de Nuestra Señora de los Remedios de México”). *Narración de la maravillosa*, 39 (“Veamos todo este diseño en el edificio del Santuario de S. Miguel, que voy historiando”).
32 *Descripción histórica*, Ocasión de escribir, n.p. (“no con la bondad de la historia, sino con la santidad de lo historiado”).
33 *Diccionario de la lengua castellana*, 4:537 (“MEMORIA. Una de las tres potencias del alma, en la cual se conservan las especies de las cosas pasadas, y por medio de ella nos acordamos de lo que hemos percibido por los sentidos”).
34 *Historia de la Provincia*, 2 (“en cuya [Dios] memoria viven eternos los Justos, sin que basten las injurias del tiempo a sepultar sus proezas”).
divine grace would “purify the memory and rid it of all impurities.” Florencia encouraged his readers to fill their souls with “religious memories” instead, most specifically with the “sacred memories of Christ.”

Whether it was the sacred memory of Christ, or others related to the sacred past of New Spain, Florencia maintained that cities and kingdoms were obliged to uphold the “public memory” of important events that took place amongst them. He recognized a major obstacle, however, to fulfilling this priestly and patriotic obligation. Men and women have a tendency to forget, often keeping “memorable things” hidden behind what Pedro de Tobar, a Dominican friar, called “the keys of forgetfulness.” And so when Florencia lamented the general “descuido, negligence, and forgetfulness” of the early Spanish conquistadors and mendicant friars in New Spain, he was joining his voice in a larger chorus of complaints on the state of historical memory in Spanish America. This general preoccupation with the descuido of the sacred past was both a grim reality and a rhetorical tool. Sacred historians like Florencia, even if they had significant material with which to work, were firm believers that their subjects must have performed many other exemplary works that had been unjustly overlooked.

35 Nicolás de Guadalajara, “Cuatro tratados que contienen muy eficaces, y provechosas meditaciones, para desarraigar vicios, y plantar virtudes en las almas que profesan la vida espiritual, y el camino de su salvación,” in Relación de Guadalajara, 6v (“y rogar siempre al Señor, que purifique la memoria, y consuma sus inmundicias”).
36 La estrella del norte, 180v (“las Religiosas memorias”). La casa peregrina, 18r (“las Sagradas memorias de Cristo”).
37 La estrella del norte, 94v (“La segunda manera de conservar en la memoria pública las cosas dignas de ella”).
38 Pedro de Tobar, Verdadera histórica relación del origen, manifestación, y prodigiosa renovación por sí misma, y milagros de la imagen de la Sacratísima Virgen María, Madre de Dios Nuestra Señora de el Rosario de Chinquirirá (Madrid: Juan García Infanzón, 1694), Prólogo, n.p. (“las llaves del olvido”).
39 La estrella del norte, 44r (“por descuido, negligencia, o olvido de los Escritores de aquellas Eras”).
The Jesuit historian, Juan Sánchez Baquero (1548–1619), wrote that many of the early saints “put all of their cuidado into their works and forgot to write them down.” Florencia firmly agreed with his coreligionist, but he believed this statement also applied to much of the early history of New Spain. Although a few conquistadors recorded the memory of some of the prodigious feats of divine favour during the siege of Mexico-Tenochtitlan in their letters and relations, they were silent about some of the finer details of this providential care. Florencia reasoned, like many others before him, that the “Spaniards were more occupied in winning [new territories] than with writing.” He observed something similar amongst the first mendicant friars. These missionaries had left an impressive trail of ethnographic works and other grammatical texts in indigenous languages. But they had seemingly failed to record the memory of the origins of several novohispano devotions and the heroic deeds of the founding fathers of their respective orders. Florencia justified these descuidos by suggesting that the “apostolic [friars] were more concerned with working wonders in the conversion of the Indians than with leaving writings of those that God worked in order to lend credence to their preaching.” Writing down “memorable things” was the best safeguard against historical loss.

When referring to writings on the past, Florencia used the terms history (historia), annals (annales), and chronicle (crónica) interchangeably in his works. He spoke of

40 Sánchez Baquero, Fundación de la Compañía, 42 (“pues ellos pusieron todo el cuidado en hacer y se olvidaron de escribir”).
41 La milagrosa invención, 1v (“porque a los principios de la conquista más se ocuparon los Españoles en ganar, que en escribir”).
42 La estrella del norte, 35v–v (“Los Apostólicos Religiosos, más atendían a obrar prodigios en la conversión de los Indios, que a dejarnos escritos, los que obraba Dios para crédito de su predicación”).
43 Ibid., 183v–184r (“que pondré en los Anales de la Provincia”). In this case, Florencia was referring to his Historia de la Provincia. For more on the use of historia and crónica in New World historiography, see Kathleen Ross, “Historians of the Conquest and Colonization of the New World, 1550–1620,” in The Cambridge History of Latin America Literature, vol. 1, Discovery to Modernism, eds. Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupu-Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 107.
them as durable forms of memory, stating that “glorious actions” are at risk of being forgotten if they “are not copied down and given the permanence of writing.”

Encoding memories in the alphabetic script was central to how Florencia understood history, although he did recognize that “history” was contained in sources such as oral traditions, songs, maps, architecture, paintings, and indigenous codices. Yet, even though certain codices were considered faithful historical documents in the seventeenth century, great efforts were made to teach Indians Western forms of writing so that they would leave behind their traditional methods of record keeping. Walter D. Mignolo has appropriately called this the “colonization of memory,” arguing that Western historiography is but one of many ways in which human cultures have preserved memories of the past.

Florencia may have made use of indigenous codices to write his sacred histories, but he was even more grateful that Indians had learned how to record their histories in their own native tongues with a Latin script. Indeed, he concluded on different occasions that the indigenous populations “showed themselves to be more cuidadosas [than the Spaniards] in leaving written” and oral accounts of divine apparitions.

Whether he was working with Spanish or indigenous sources, Florencia sought after the truth. In the words of Francisco Vázquez (ca. 1647–ca. 1714), a Franciscan chronicler from Guatemala, “the eyes of the historian” should “search for the truth

---

44 Historia de la Provincia, 2 (“la permanencia que les da la memoria de los anales, sin la cual no puede durar el ser de las más gloriosas acciones, que pasan con la sucesión de los años, si no las reproduce, y hace permanecer la duración de lo escrito”).


47 La estrella del norte, 35v (“que los Indios en esta parte, se mostraron mas cuidadosas, y más agradecidos, dejando escrito . . . el beneficio, que de la Señora recibieron”). Descripción histórica, 3 (“también fueron [the Indians] los que más conservaron su [the Crucified Christ of Chalma] piadosa memoria”).
without altering what is read.”48 This moral responsibility to be honest was the cornerstone of all forms of history from the days of Roman antiquity. Following the great poet and orator Cicero, Florencia believed that the sacred historian’s craft demanded that the “historian write about the truth of his subject.”49 He referred to the “laws of history,” which he believed gave him licence to inform his reader of the past, but not to provide him or her with complete assurance of everything.50 According to these same laws, Florencia also made sure his “pen [did] not diverge into panegyric discourses or erudite speeches.”51 He was interested in writing a “historical description” (descripción historial) as opposed to a “panegyric description” (descripción panegírico), which is why he sought to historicize (historiar) or to notify (noticiar) his readers of the sacred past of New Spain. Florencia was not interested in embellishing (exornar) because he felt that this was better left for sermons “which scarcely deal with history.”52

Florencia’s understanding of how “memorable things” should be recorded was influenced by the general belief in the Spanish world that history should be based upon personal experience. Sebastián Covarruvias Orozco defined history as “a narrative and exposition of past events, but strictly speaking of those things that the author of the history saw with his own eyes.”53 The idea that history should be a personal account based upon firsthand testimony was a longstanding tradition within the Iberian Peninsula.

---

48 Francisco Vázquez, Historia de Nuestra Señora de Loreto, cuya capilla está en la Iglesia de Nuestro Padre San Francisco de esta ciudad de Guatemala (Guatemala: Alféres Antonio de Pineda, 1694), par. 12 (“si se atiende con ojos de historiador que busca la verdad, sin ladear lo que se lee”).
49 La estrella del norte, Prólogo, n.p. (“como si no tocara a un Historiador escribir lo que en su asunto es verdad”).
50 Ibid., 126v (“licencia le dan las leyes de la Historia para escribirlo, pero no para asegurarlo”).
51 La milagrosa invención, 1r (“Escribo la Historia . . . ajustándome a las leyes precisas de ella, sin divertir la pluma a discursos panegíricos, ni a erudiciones curiosas”).
52 La estrella del norte, Prólogo, n.p. (“porque como apenas tocan la letra de la Historia, por dilatarse en lo panegírico de los conceptos”).
53 Covarruvias Orozco, Tesoro de la lengua, 473v (“HISTORIA, es una narración y exposición de acontecimientos pasados: y en rigor es de aquellas cosas que el autor de la historia vio por sus propios ojos”).
stemming back to the Archbishop of Seville San Isidro (ca. 560–636). It was also a powerful rhetorical tool during the early stages of colonization in Spanish America and remained central to the narrative strategies of sacred historians throughout the seventeenth century. But throughout the medieval period San Isidro’s idea of history was expanded upon to include events further into the past that one could reach via reports by trustworthy authors. Covarruvias clarified in his entry for history that it was perfectly fine if “the historian has reliable original [documents] and faithful authors from the times he is writing about.” In order to uncover “original” documents, then, the sacred historian was forced to spend time digging in ecclesiastical archives, places Florencia described as “awakener[s] of memory.” Throughout his life he applied significant “diligence and cuidado . . . in return[ing] to archives and annals” in both Europe and America to uncover the truth about his coreligionists and novohispano devotions.

But in many cases Florencia was unable to find the documentation he was eagerly searching for. Although this lack of sources was certainly troubling, he did not appear to worry that the truth of his narratives would be compromised. According to Catholic doctrine the “true God” (Dios verdadero) was not only the source of all truth, but was truth himself. On the basis of his faith, Florencia believed that the “Catholic truths” had been revealed to humankind in the “Holy Scriptures” (Sagradas Escrituras), which contained a New and an Old Testament. It was in this anthology of varying literary genres—referred to as a book and treated even as an oracle—that Florencia searched for

56 Covarruvias Orozco, Tesoro de la lengua, 473v (“Pero basta que el historiador tenga buenos originales, y autores fidedignos de aquello que narra y escribe”).
57 Historia de la Provincia, 157 (“que en sus Archivos para despertador a su memoria”).
58 La casa peregrina, 2r (“La diligencia, y cuidado, que estos Autores pusieron en ver, y revolver los Archivos, y Anales de la Santa Casa”).
both his literary models and historical truth. The story told in the Old Testament was of
the covenant between the people of Israel and their God that divinely chose their ancestor
Abraham, miraculously delivered them from bondage in Egypt, and through celestial
protection guided them to their Promised Land. In the New Testament the birth, death,
and resurrection of Jesus Christ is recounted, together with the origins and spread of the
early church that was accompanied by prodigious events and supernatural healings

Figure 2-2. Anonymous. Engraving of Gregorio López holding the “Holy Bible” (Biblia Sacra). Taken from Francisco de Losa, Vida que el siervo de Dios Gregorio López hizo en algunos lugares de la Nueva España (Madrid: Ribero Rodríguez, 1658). The Sutro Library, the San Francisco branch of the California State Library, USA. Photograph by Jason Dyck.
performed through the early apostles. Florencia had faith that the signs and wonders recorded in the Christian bible were repeated in the present amongst the people of New Spain. If there were doubters amongst his readers, he reminded them that “not all of the things of God and his Holy Mother should be scrutinized; instead, they should be venerated. The Holy Scriptures and Catholic histories are filled with examples of this.”

The principal lesson that Florencia learned from divine activity in the “Holy Scriptures” was that his God was the author of all history. He believed that the Christian God orchestrated history to deliver men and women from their sins, leading them through this fallen world to Christ, “the author of our redemption.” The saints always sought to keep the “memory of the painful image of his Passion” before them, because, according to Christian time, history was linear, moving towards the end of days when the wicked would be eternally separated from the righteous. Given this teleological vision, historical causation for Florencia was more about discerning how the Christian God worked in the world than observing human actions. Although he claimed at times that one would find more virtuous acts by men than miracles in his writings, Florencia was always in search of the “cuidadosa providence of God” working behind the scenes. In his sacred histories providence guides the foundation of the Jesuit order in America, arranges for the arrival of relics to New Spain, controls plagues, and protects Mexico City

59 La estrella del norte, 87v (“que las cosas de Dios, y de su Madre SS. no todas se han de investigar, sino venerar. De que están llenas de ejemplos la Sagrada Escritura, y las Historias Católicas”).
60 Descripción histórica, 38 (“Autor de nuestra redención”).
61 Ibid., 176 (“y no perder jamás de su memoria la representación dolorosa de su Pasión”).
62 La milagrosa invención, 12r, 16r (“la providencia de Dios, y cuidado de los Ángeles”) (“cuidadosa providencia de Dios”). Historia de la Provincia, Prólogo, n.p. (“No hallarás en ellos revelaciones, ni milagros (aunque no les faltan extraordinarios sucesos) porque esta Provincia, más se fundó con virtudes sólidas de los primeros Fundadores, que con milagros, ni prodigios, sin hacer comparación a otras”).
from floodwaters. All “memorable things,” whether performed through “human or angelic means,” were ultimately guided by the hand of providence.\(^6\)

Another powerful force at work in Florencia’s sacred histories was the Devil and his army of demons bent on foiling the divine plan of salvation. He referred to the Devil as “the principal enemy of humankind” whose only desire was “to take us to hell to burn and convert us into embers there.”\(^64\) This fallen angel placed “obstacles” before the religious to frustrate their ministries, and he pursued the righteous by tempting them at every corner. In spite of all these attacks, Florencia was convinced that his coreligionists “fought the Devil on all fronts, always rising to victory, and even more purified by the fires of temptation.”\(^65\) These same men were involved in the “spiritual conquest” of the indigenous population, one that was made difficult by demonic activity, especially by the shamans and their “idolatrous practices.” Although Florencia certainly recognized that the Devil “had possessed [Indian] souls for many years,” he still had hope for them in the present.\(^66\) He claimed that through the favours of the Virgin Mary the “Indians of these kingdoms have erased from their memory the superstitious worship of their idols.”\(^67\)

These conflicts between the Christian God and the Devil allowed Florencia to separate the history of New Spain into different stages. Robin G. Collingwood (1889–1943) noted how all Christian history is “divided into two periods, a period of darkness

---

\(^{63}\) *La casa peregrina*, 8v (“Quién duda, que la Providencia de Dios, que la ha conservado [la Santa Casa] hasta hoy por medio de los Ángeles, y los hombres”).

\(^{64}\) *La estrella del norte*, 105r (“Demonio enemigo capital del género humano”). *Historia de la Provincia*, 12 (“los demonios enemigos nuestros que nos quieren llevar al infierno, para quemarnos, y abrazarnos en él”).

\(^{65}\) *Menologio*, 2v (“le combatió el Demonio por todos caminos, saliendo siempre victorioso, y más puro del fuego de la tentación”).

\(^{66}\) *La estrella del norte*, 134v (“poseyó por muchos siglos sus almas”).

\(^{67}\) Ibid., 169r (“los Indios . . . de estos Reinos, ha borrado de sus memorias la supersticiosa adoración de sus Ídolos”).
and a period of light.”Florence considered the period before the conquest of Mexico-Tenochtitlan as one of “blind gentility” wherein the indigenous population was living in “deep darkness.” The arrival of the conquistadors became the dividing point in the history of New Spain, because right from the beginning Cortés’s “principal cuidado was the introduction of the [Catholic] faith” to the Indians. Post-1519 was the starting point of Christian time in the kingdom, the moment when “the true God, with his almighty providence and ineffable mercy, removed the thick darkness of their infidelity [and] enlightened them with the light of faith.” But the period of darkness, stretching from the initial settling of the New World until the conquest, was not completely without knowledge of the Christian faith according to pious legend. Following numerous authors, Florence sought to demonstrate that amongst the indigenous people there was “memory that the Apostle Saint Thomas had been and preached” in different parts of New Spain. The pre-Hispanic period of darkness had been momentarily interrupted by light during the apostolic period, similar to pious legends of Saint James visiting the Iberian Peninsula.

The “memorable things” that took place in Christian time were part of the universal history of the Catholic Church. Arnaldo Momigliano (1908–1987) explained that the “historian of the Church is inevitably faced with the difficulty of having continuously to relate the events of individual local churches to the corpus mysticum of

---

69 *Historia de la Provincia*, 222 (“las que alcanzaron densas tinieblas de su ciega gentilidad, fueron obscurecidas con muchos errores”).
70 *La estrella del norte*, 104v (“su principal cuidado fue la introducción de la Fe en ellos”).
71 Ibid., 2r (“al tiempo en que dispuso la altísima providencia, y la inefable misericordia del Dios verdadero, que desecharas las densas tinieblas de la infidelidad . . . esclareciése la luz de la Fe”).
72 *Historia de la Provincia*, 238 (“y es la memoria de haber estado, y predicado en él el Apóstol Santo Tomás”).
Throughout his corpus of sacred histories, Florencia recognized that New Spain was one of many “kingdoms of Christendom” spread throughout the entire world.\(^7^4\) He acknowledged that “the Turk [was] the common enemy of Christendom,”\(^7^5\) even if the overwhelming majority of people in his kingdom had no personal experience of the Ottoman empire. And he also accepted that the “Christendom of this New World” was a result of “the Catholic zeal of Castile.”\(^7^6\) Florencia believed that the novohispano Church was indeed part of the larger Catholic Church world wide, but he still stressed that true civility “does not allow memorable things that happen within a republic or kingdom to be buried in oblivion.”\(^7^7\) He recorded the “memorable things” of his patria for the edification of souls at both home and abroad.

### The Care of the Soul

The care of souls was Florencia’s principal duty as a sacred historian given his religious profession. He looked after his own soul through prayer, meditation, devotional reading, ascetic practices, and a host of other spiritual disciplines. When he recited masses for the dead, preached homilies, taught catechism, heard confession, and worked towards the conversion of Indians he believed he was either nurturing or saving the souls of others. Florencia claimed that he wrote his sacred histories for the “the glory of God

---


\(^7^4\) *Narración de la maravillosa*, 191 (“Reinos de la Cristiandad”)

\(^7^5\) *Historia de la Provincia*, 155 (“el Turco, enemigo común de la Cristiandad”).


\(^7^7\) *La estrella del norte*, 92v (“porque a la buena política, toca, no permitir, que se entierren en el olvido, las cosas memorables, que en una República, o Reino, acaecen”).
and the benefit of souls.”

He viewed history as one of many forms of spiritual edification, a pious end that was only achieved by concentrating on Christian virtues. Florencia imaginatively wove together the virtues of Christ with those of his own kingdom of New Spain.

---

Figure 2-3. Anonymous. Engraving of an angel hovering above the Latin phrase Soli Deo honor et gloria (“Honour and glory be to God alone”). Taken from Francisco de Écary, Deseos de asertar (Mexico City: Por la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1683). Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada de la Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, Mexico City, Mexico. Photograph by Jason Dyck.

Florencia distinguished the soul from the body according to a scholastic dualism, understanding the former to be eternal and the latter to be temporal. He believed that upon death human corpses became one with the earth, but souls eventually arrived to

---

78 Historia de la Provincia, 2 (“honra suya, y provecho de las almas”). Relación de Guadalajara, 27r (“para gloria de Dios, y mucho provecho de las almas”).
their final destination of heaven or hell. Eternal life in a celestial paradise with the Christian God after an intermediary period in purgatory was the reward men and women sought after in New Spain throughout the colonial era. Florencia claimed that after Luis de Medina was martyred “his blessed soul flew, as we piously believe, to receive the prize of his apostolic preaching.” Since the whole concept of the afterlife was based upon the immortality of the soul, Florencia argued that it was necessary to have a soul “that feared the Lord.” By reading the “Holy Scriptures” and devotional literature one was able to cleanse the “interior of the soul” and draw closer to the Christian God and his saints. Other spiritual disciplines allowed one to “water and fertilize the soul” as a spiritual garden through the cultivation of virtues. Florencia encouraged his reader to reflect upon “eternal truths” in preparation for death, because the purity of the soul was incomparably more important than that of the body.

Now although Florencia had a general “zeal for the wellbeing of [all] souls,” he wrote for a small, literate, and primarily Spanish population on both sides of the Atlantic that was mostly clerical. Only a limited number of copies were made of his sacred histories and four of them were published in Spain. When he crafted his sacred biographies and provincial history his primary audience was his own Jesuit brethren from

---

79 *Vida de Medina*, 41v ("por donde salió con la voz su dichosa alma, y voló, como piadosamente creemos, a recibir el premio de su Apostólica predicación").
80 *Relación de Guadalajara*, 15r ("las almas temerosas de Dios").
81 Ibid., 22v ("que es quien [Dios] sólo puede causar en lo interior del alma tan celestiales efectos").
82 *Descripción histórica*, 126 ("primero regando, y fertilizando su alma").
83 *Vida de Figueroa*, 13r ("las verdades eternas, que son el pasto, y las delicias de el alma"). *Narración de la maravillosa*, 136 ("pero incomparablemente más en la pureza del alma, que en la del cuerpo").
84 *Historia de la Provincia*, 67 ("el celo del bien de las almas").
85 Only 200 copies, for example, were made of his *Vida de Medina*. AGN, AHH, vol. 106, exp. 25. In contrast, 1000 copies were made of *La estrella del norte*. AGN, Bienes Nacionales, vol. 457, exp. 3. His *Menologio* (Barcelona), *Vida de Medina* (Seville), *Descripción histórica* (Cádiz), and *Narración de la maravillosa* (Seville) were all printed in Spain.
his local religious province. But since the Society was founded in Europe, Florencia was conscious that his sacred histories formed part of a larger global narrative. An anonymous Jesuit writing about the Province of Peru in the early 1600s claimed that “the history of this Province [is] part of the universal chronicle of the entire Company.” Florencia knew that his writings would reach a larger audience of Jesuits from different nations, not to mention secular and regular clergymen, wealthy donors, and hopefully the Spanish crown. The general audience of Florencia’s devotional histories was also primarily local. He wrote for the edification of novohispano churchmen, but given his lack of theological digressions, it is clear that he was also addressing a secular audience, principally rich patrons. Florencia was simultaneously writing with Rome in mind also, specifically the Sacred Congregation of Rites, given his inclusion of several juridical testimonies (informaciones jurídicas). He did not specifically write for Indians, Africans, and castas, but the content of his sacred histories filtered down to them both orally in sermons and visually in religious art and architecture. And finally, in all of his sacred histories, Florencia wrote for a “Europe” he had invented to demonstrate the place of New Spain in both the Spanish empire and global Christendom.

86 Vida de Figueroa, 1v (“y en particular de los Reverendos Padres, y charísimos Hermanos de esta Religiosa Provincia, para cuyo obsequio, y ejemplo especialmente se escribe”).
87 Historia general de la Compañía de Jesús en la Provincia del Perú. Crónica anónima de 1600 que trata del establecimiento y misiones de la Compañía de Jesús en los países de habla española en la América meridional, ed. F. Mateos (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas and Instituto Gonzálo Fernández de Oviedo, 1944), 1:117 (“aunque por ser la Historia de esta Provincia parte de la universal corónica de toda la Compañía”).
Before Florencio’s elite readers were able to engage with his words they were confronted with his texts. His sacred biographies and devotional histories are small books that are light and portable, ideal for religious men and individual devotees. These compact texts could have been used within the home, monastic cell, or while on pilgrimage to different shrines. Florencio’s provincial chronicle, on the other hand, is a large double-columned text divided into multiple volumes. Whether propped up with two hands or leaned gently against a scholar’s lectern, it bares a striking physical resemblance to the “Holy Scriptures.” These histories were primarily the property of individual colleges and convents, designed for libraries or public reading within the religious community. At times the physical size of a book itself was a testament to the wealth of miracles the Christian God had preformed for the faithful. When Florencio’s readers opened his sacred histories they were normally greeted with accompanying engravings. Some of his sacred biographies include portraits of his coreligionists while many of his devotional histories contain images of Catholic devotions. Like many provincial chronicles, the Historia de la Provincia includes a frontispiece that allegorically represents the Jesuit Province of New Spain. All of these visual aids were included in Florencio’s texts to enhance the reader’s devotional experience.

Beyond the engravings in Florencio’s books were other sculptures and paintings found in churches, convents, and personal shrines or drawings and prints on holy cards, medallions, and other forms of devotional paraphernalia. Sacred histories were meant to be read together with these visual sources to move the soul closer to the Christian God.
Mental pictures formed from devotional texts, together with images of the saints, aided the memory in recalling important events from the sacred past.

Frances A. Yates (1899–1981) demonstrated how central different techniques of artificial memory have been in Western thought from classical times to the early modern period. When analyzing the Middle Ages she pointed out that the things most worthy of memory were those “belonging to salvation or damnation, the articles of the faith, the roads to

---

heaven through virtues and hell through vices. These were the things which it sculpted in places on its churches and cathedrals, painted in its windows and frescoes.\footnote{Frances A. Yates, \textit{The Art of Memory} [1966] (London: Pimlico, 1992), 67.} The same holds true for New Spain where Florencia believed the faithful were able to relive the memories of the sacred past in the sanctuaries of their present.\footnote{La Rea, \textit{Crónica}, 32v (“Y como la Historia, según la define Cicerón, es testigo de los tiempos, luz de la verdad, y vida de la memoria, maestra de la vida, y mensajera de lo pasado”).} He hoped that his words would have the same didactic effect.

Like other sacred historians before him, Florencia drew upon “memorable things” from both visual and textual sources in order to teach moral lessons in the present. He would have agreed with Alonso de la Rea (b. 1610), a creole Franciscan chronicler, when he explained that history “is an eyewitness of the times, light of the truth, preserver of memory, teacher of life, and a messenger of the past.”\footnote{La Rea, \textit{Crónica}, 32v (“Y como la Historia, según la define Cicerón, es testigo de los tiempos, luz de la verdad, y vida de la memoria, maestra de la vida, y mensajera de lo pasado”).} In accounts of holy men and women or miraculous images one finds a wide range of pious examples (\textit{ejemplos}) to follow and extensive lists of virtues (\textit{virtudes}) to imitate. These heroic feats of sanctity became a form of holy entertainment in an age when novels were scarce in New Spain.\footnote{María Dolores Bravo Arriaga, “Santidad y narración novelesca en las crónicas de las órdenes religiosas (siglos XVI y XVII),” in \textit{La excepción y la regla. Estudios sobre espiritualidad y cultura en la Nueva España} (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1997), 111–120.} Florencia incorporated lives of creole and Spanish Jesuits, Indians, and mestizo hermits into his sacred histories “for the common edification of the entire church.”\footnote{Historia de la Provincia, 127 (“común edificación de toda la Iglesia”).} He also recorded apparition accounts of Catholic images “to augment devotion” to various shrines in New Spain.\footnote{Descripción histórica, 1 (“para aumento de la devoción de los que visitan aquel admirable Santuario”).} Through the use of exemplum, digressions, biblical citations, and references to early church fathers he was able to impress his reader with Christian piety throughout the ages. By employing literary techniques of the Baroque, such as the use of
anaphora, *ekphrasis*, and *enargeia*, Florencia was able to enhance his narratives with suspense and recreate visual images of the past with his narratives.\(^97\) His overall goal was to provoke the soul with feelings of disgust for sin and admiration for virtue.

When writing about the lives of the saints, the Jesuit Michel de Certeau (1925–1986) suggested that in general terms “hagiography is a discourse of virtues.”\(^98\) Florencia’s sacred histories can be described in much the same way. Whether he was concentrating on his coreligionists, or other holy men from New Spain, he “wrote with *cuidado*” because he believed that the “purpose of writing about the virtues of holy men is the hope of imitating them.”\(^99\) All of his sacred biographies—whether monographs, letters of edification, or sections of his devotional histories or provincial chronicle—include detailed discourses on the virtues of his exemplary subjects. His first focus was the “religious virtues” of poverty, chastity, and obedience in his religious brethren, which made one “loved by God.” Florencia then explained that “the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity are the foundation and base of the entire Christian life,” and that of these three virtues it was charity that made one “loved by men.” This moral attribute, according to him, was the “queen of virtues” because it expressed “the love of one’s neighbour and the *cuidado* and diligence to treat him well.”\(^100\)

Beyond the virtues of exemplary men were the prodigious virtues of the Christian God. Florencia spoke of how “divine virtue” providentially conserved sacred sites for the

---

\(^97\) Rubial García, “La crónica religiosa,” 332; and Santaballa, “Writing the Virgin of Guadalupe,” 87, 92.


\(^99\) *Relación de Guadalajara*, 14v ("Por eso los escribió con tanto cuidado") ("Este es el fin de escribir las virtudes de los Varones Justos, la esperanza de su imitación").

\(^100\) *Vida de Figueroa*, 18r, 20v (“las tres virtudes Teologales, que son el fundamento, y la basa de toda la vida Cristiana, Fe, Esperanza, y Caridad”) ("La caridad, que es la Reina de las virtudes"). *Relación de Guadalajara*, 18r (“el amor del próxico, el cuidado, y solicitud en hacerle bien”).
benefit of the faithful and “memory of the Virgin Mary.”\footnote{La milagrosa invención, 59r ("y prueba real de que la pobre casita, en que se hospedó la Virgen está en pie, y permanece por virtud divina, que la mantiene en honra, y memoria de su Santísima Madre!").} He also referred to the “miraculous virtue” of San Miguel who worked wonders for Indians, Spaniards, and castas alike.\footnote{Narración de la maravillosa, 46, 48, 51 ("virtud milagrosa").} The pages of Florencia’s sacred histories are filled with miraculous accounts from the age of conquest to his present day. In his provincial chronicle the Christian God miraculously saves Jesuit missionaries from vengeful Indians in La Florida while others fall dead before a miraculous crucifix for their lack of reverence. His prodigious stories in his devotional histories recount apparitions of saints and angels to Indians, miraculous springs, and natural spaces cleansed by the divine presence that were once inhabited by venomous spiders, lions, and tigers. Other common miracles include Indian labourers healed from injuries in ecclesiastical building projects, deformed children restored to complete health, raging bulls calmed through invocation of the Virgin, and freedom from demonic oppression. These stories were designed to teach the faithful that it was only the Christian God who worked miracles. “God does not work miracles without a purpose,” Florencia explained, “[and] the first is to value the truth of our sacred religion.”\footnote{Los dos célebres santuarios, 10 ("No obra Dios milagros . . . sin algún fin; y se puede con humildad rastrear, el principal, que Dios tiene, que es lo primero apreciar la verdad de nuestra sagrada Religión").}

Florencia also sought to provide his readers with lessons of virtue in the novenas he attached to the end of his devotional histories.\footnote{Florencia included novenas in La milagrosa invención, 65r–80v; La estrella del norte, 204v–241r; Descripción histórica, 277–295; La casa peregrina, 108v–123v; and in Narración de la maravillosa, 170–188. I have only been able to find eight other novenas published in novohispano printing presses in the seventeenth century. For more on this devotional genre in New Spain, see Ana Rita Valero de García Lascuráin, “Estudio introductorio,” in Florencia, Las novenas del santuario de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de México (Mexico City: Talleres de Editorial del Equipo Laico del Servicio de la Pastoral “Luz y Sal,” 1999); and Manuel Ramos Medina, “Estudio introductorio,” in Novena de la milagrosa imagen de Nuestra Señora de Aránzazu [1793] (Mexico City: Centro de Estudios de Historia de México, Condemex, 1993).} Novenas were usually separate hand-
sized devotional books dedicated to a saint or the Virgin Mary. To seek out the salvation of their souls, devotees would both read and practice novenas over a period of nine days, asking a particular favour from their saintly protector. In order to correctly execute novenas, devotees were advised to carry out acts of charity, to confess, to go to mass every day, and to receive communion. Most novenas include nine meditations, accompanying prayers, and instructions on kneeling, paternosters, Ave Marias, and penance. Florencia made a clear distinction between his “unrefined and long-winded narratives” with his novenas wherein the devotee could “rest in his devout contemplation.”

Although novenas would have been imported from Europe, very few had been printed in New Spain when Florencia was writing his devotional histories. He most likely included them at the request of his patrons who financially supported the publication of his works. Florencia used the “memorable things” from his sacred histories in his nine meditations for “the fruit of their souls.”

In his examples of saintly men, miracle stories, and novenas Florencia sought to edify the soul with examples of virtue. He agreed with Agustín de la Madre de Dios (1610–1662), a Discalced Carmelite historian, when he wrote that “virtue and sanctity have heaven as their patria.” Following idealized notions of virtue, Florencia was able to textually transform his subjects from the “real” men they were into his own imagined vision of Christ. His Jesuit brethren in the missionary field faced death as if they were

---

105 La milagrosa invención, 64v (“Baste ya de Historia, y para descansar de mi inculta, y prolija narración, conviño a los que han caminado por lo fragoso de ella, en el Capítulo siguiente a las Novenas del Santuario, en que descanse su devota contemplación nueve días”).

106 Ibid., 80v (“espero en Nuestro Señor, se ha de lograr el fruto de las Santas Novenas, que desea en Romeros, y Peregrinos del Santuario el celo del Bachiller D. Lorenzo de Mendoza, a cuya instancia se han hecho”).

107 Descripción histórica, 254 (“sus Novenas con fruto de sus almas”).

108 Madre de Dios, Tesoro escondido, 38 (“la virtud y santidad tenga al cielo por su patria”). Historia de la Provincia, 207 (“que debieran tener solo por patria el Cielo, y por origen la virtud”).
martyrs of the early church. Some of his indigenous protagonists look like medieval monks instead of recently converted Indians. The mestizo hermits of Chalma appear more like the early desert fathers than Augustinian friars. And his lists of miracles contain biblical examples from the four gospels of the New Testament, which is why the blind see, the death hear, and paralytic men and women are healed of their infirmities. Although Florencia believed that Christian virtue was not site-specific on the earth, he still took pride in its local manifestation, especially with men who were an “honour to [their] patria for [their] talents and illustrious virtues.”109 He felt that there were many others in New Spain who could be described in much the same way for their Christian charity.

**The Alms of the Faithful**

Caring for souls was a costly affair. Florencia knew that significant funds were needed to both perform his ministries and maintain ecclesiastical facilities, houses of worship, and the colleges of the Society of Jesus. The collection of alms was one of many forms of generating income he had at his disposal.110 But since there were so many charitable options available, he devised several ways to draw particular attention to the spiritual benefits of his own causes. The printing press became an important tool to achieve these pious ends in New Spain, particularly the publication of sacred histories. Florencia assured his readers of the spiritual and material blessings the Virgin Mary

---

109 *Historia de la Provincia*, 144 (“honra de su Patria, por sus prendas, y esclarecidas virtudes”).
extends to “the souls of those who open up their hands to give alms.” He knew that convincing men and women to give to the works of the church was a major part of the sacred historian’s craft.

Florencia felt that everyone was capable of supporting the church with alms according to their station in life. In the seventeenth-century alms (limosnas) signified both charitable handouts to the poor and donations of varying kinds to other “pious works” (obras pías) within the church. In New Spain residents supported local “pious works” by providing the necessary capital to found urban religious houses, financing missions amongst the indigenous populations, making offerings of gold and silver to adorn shrines, designating endowments to supplement clerical incomes, and by bequeathing large portions of their estates to the church. They also lent their aid to “pious works” within other parts of Catholic Christendom by donating funds for shrines in the Iberian Peninsula (some of which had “satellite shrines” in the New World) and setting aside alms for the redemption of Christian captives within the Muslim world. The creole Mercedarian chronicler, Francisco de Pareja (1620–1688), noted how the men of his order “placed great cuidado in collecting alms” for the work of their order overseas. Florencia believed that their task, along with those of all the other religious

---

111 La milagrosa invención, 62v (“para las almas de los que abren las manos para hacer a su Santuario limosnas”).
112 Diccionario de la lengua castellana, 4:408 (“LIMOSNA. Lo que se da al pobre necesitado, condoliéndose de su miseria, o para ayuda de alguna obra pía”).
114 Francisco de Pareja, Crónica de la Provincia de la Visitación de Nuestra Señora de la Merced Redención de Cautivos de la Nueva España [1688] (Mexico City: Imprenta de J. R. Barbedillo y Compañía, 1882–1883), 2:639 (“y viendo cuanto cuidado ponen los religiosos en recoger las limosnas”).
orders, was made easier by the fact that New Spain, specifically Mexico City, was filled with people who had a “natural inclination to give alms.”

Alms gatherers were part of everyday life in New Spain. Members of the regular clergy, leaders of confraternities (cofradías), Indian mayordomos, and foreign clerics could be seen in urban centres or travelling along rural highways. In order to collect alms these various representatives orchestrated processions, preached sermons, knocked on the doors of private homes, and set aside special boxes where the faithful could leave donations. Luis de Cisneros (d. 1619), a Mercedarian friar born and raised in Mexico City, claimed that “although it is law that he who gives should later forget what he gave, it is the obligation of he who receives to leave memory of it.” Alms came into the church from all social classes and ethnic groups. Spaniards, creoles, Indians, Africans, and castas donated their earnings to the church, beyond the required tithe on agricultural products and clerical fees. But those who gave the most—in terms of sheer numbers and not the percentage of donations to earnings—were generally wealthy elites from the Spanish and creole populations. Their acts of Christian charity were amongst the “memorable things” that Florencia recorded in his sacred histories. He left lists of full names of donors with the objects they gave for the adornment of local shrines.

Florencia also reverently remembered the initial benefactors of the Society of Jesus when

---

115 Historia de la Provincia, 115 (“hoy son, y siempre han sido, tan piadosos, tan liberales, y propensos a hacer limosnas”).
116 For an interesting study of Indian alms collectors, see Edward W. Osowski, “Carriers of Saints: Traveling Alms Collectors and Nahua Gender Roles,” in Nesvig, ed., Local Religion in Colonial Mexico, 155–186.
117 Luis de Cisneros, Historia del principio, origen, progresos y venidas a México y milagros de la santa imagen de Nuestra Señora de los Remedios [1616] (Mexico City: Imprenta del Bachiller Juan Blanco de Alcazar, 1621), 113v (“que aunque es ley de quien da, olvidarse luego, de lo que dio, es obligación de quien recibe hacer memoria de ello”).
118 La milagrosa invención, 48r–49v; La estrella del norte, 183r–198r; La casa peregrina, 72r–73v; Los dos célebres santuarios, 133–137.
they first arrived to Mexico City in 1572, especially Alonso de Villaseca (1500–1580), whom he felt obliged to thank by “eternalizing his glorious memory.”

There were times when Florencia was unable to find some of the names of important patrons, but he reasoned that “if they are written in the book that is the memory of God” it meant little that “they are not included in [books] of corruptible paper!” Since family members of deceased donors were still living it was important to recognize their generosity, especially if one hoped for continuing financial support. As Beryl Smalley (1905–1984) suggested, one should ask “not why history was written, but why it was needed.” The lists of donations and names of benefactors that appear in Florencia’s histories were the same things his many sponsors were seeking out in the present. Alms provided finances for ministries that touched all social and ethnic groups, not to mention the needed capital to adorn and repair houses of worship, sacred spaces shared by all. The alms that would be generated from Florencia’s sacred histories were to be used to address the spiritual and material needs of all sectors of the novohispano populace.

The needs that perhaps concerned Florencia the most, however, were those of his own religious province. When his coreligionists approached him to write sacred histories they were attending to their ministries amongst both the Indian and Spanish populations. In the mid 1680s San Gregorio was looking to increase its teaching staff to educate more effectively the Indian nobles of Mexico City. Since the college had received significant

---

119 Historia de la Provincia, 306 (“Es uno de los Patrones, y Fundadores, a quien más debe la Compañía en estas Provincias; y a la causa no puedo pasar de aquí sin mostrar nuestro agradecimiento, eternizando su gloriosa memoria en esta Historia”).
120 La estrella del norte, 184v (“pero si están escritos en el libro de memoria de Dios . . . poco importa que no estén en este libro, que es de papel corruptible!”).
121 Smalley, Historians in the Middle Ages, 184.
financial support from rich patrons after the construction of a replica of the Santa Casa of Loreto, *La casa peregrina* was published to encourage further donations. Jesuit missions were also in a stage of expansion in the northern regions of New Spain during the 1680s. Although he officially left his post as procurador of the Indies in Seville, Florencia still continued to work in favour of Jesuit missions in New Spain by maintaining contact with important patrons. He also finished his sacred biography of Figueroa at the close of 1689 as various efforts were being made to strengthen the northern missions. Shortly thereafter, Juan de Estrada was sent to Europe to seek out more men and financial aid. It seems likely, as he parted for Spain, that he brought along with him *Vida admirable y muerte dichosa del religioso P. Gerónimo de Figueroa*.

The education of the Spanish elite was another important need which impressed itself upon Florencia. According to him, it was the knowledge “from Europe of the cuidado, effort, and diligence” with which the Company performed its ministries that prompted the citizens of Mexico City to request their services. But to acquire a royal licence for a new foundation, the religious orders needed to persuasively convince their local residents, the bishop, the viceroy, and the king. They also needed significant capital to build their residences, colleges, and churches. In the early stages of colonization the crown subsidized the costs of many ecclesiastical buildings, but by the end of the 1500s these funds were expected to come from the pockets of local residents. Acquiring these

---

125 *Historia de la Provincia*, 158 (“por las noticias, que de Europa tenían del cuidado, empeño, y puntualidad, con que en este ejercicio se ocupaba en todas partes”).
financial resources became more competitive throughout the 1600s as New Spain became more urbanized. It was in this context that Florencia wrote his *Historia de la Provincia* throughout the later 1680s and early 1690s. During this same period, the mendicants founded a significant number of new convents throughout the kingdom, while the Jesuits sought to establish new colleges in Chiapas, Oaxaca, Puebla, Havana, and San Salvador. The economic weight of so many religious houses did not go unnoticed. The viceroy, Juan de Ortega Montañés (1627–1708), counselled the crown by 1696 “to avoid the distribution of licences for new foundations because the body and stomach of New Spain does not even have the capacity to cover the expenses of the existing religious houses of either sex.”

There were other needs within the wider novohispano Church with which Florencia became acquainted during his travels. During the seventeenth century the devotional landscape of New Spain was in an early stage of development, both in terms of pilgrimage routes and the material state of shrines housing images with popular followings. Several of these shrines had been built in the sixteenth century and were


127 Juan de Ortega Montañés, *Instrucción reservada que el Obispo-Virrey Juan de Ortega Montañés dio a su sucesor en el mando el Conde de Moctezuma* [1697], ed. Norman F. Martin (Mexico City: Editorial Jus, 1965), 91 (“excusar dar licencias para nuevas fundaciones, porque la substancia y estómago de la Nueva España no tiene calor aún para asistir al gasto de las comunidades que hay de ambos sexos”).
either too small to properly house the growing number of pilgrims or were simply in need of repair given the weathering of time. Florencia claimed that some had even reached a state of disrepair, a “descuido and forgetfulness [that] demonstrates the inconstancy and shifting nature of man.” In order to avoid further ruin mayordomos were charged with the “cuidado of the administration” of these sacred places. They needed to look after their repairs, housing for pilgrims, and the general maintenance of both their interior and surrounding properties. It was also under their responsibility to furnish them with religious art and raise funds for new building projects. Several were underway in the final decades of the seventeenth century and in need of alms to support them.

Although the shrine dedicated to the Virgin of Remedies was well adorned, Florencia knew that the hill of Totoltepec had not always been home to such a sumptuous sanctuary. Cortés appears to have been responsible for the construction of the first shrine there in the 1520s to honour the Virgin for her protection in the conquest. This primitive structure fell into ruins shortly thereafter, prompting the Mexico City cabildo to assume complete administration of the image by the 1570s. They erected a new church

---

128 *La milagrosa invención*, 16r (“Pero como en este descuido, y olvido se califican la inconstancia, y mudanza de los hombres en sus cosas”).
130 Asunción, *Itinerario a Indias*, 105 (“Es la iglesia más suntuosa en grandeza, riqueza y aliño que la de Guadalupe”). Gemelli Careri, *Viaje a la Nueva España*, 78 (“Por las grandes riquezas que allí hay, y por estar en el monte, por temor de los ladrones, no se abre la iglesia sino dos horas antes de mediodía”).
131 Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* [1632], 19th ed. (Mexico City: Porrúa, 2000), 257 (“después de ganada la gran ciudad de México, hicimos una iglesia que se dice Nuestra Señora de los Remedios, muy devota, y van ahora allí en romería y a tener novecas muchos vecinos y señores de México”). Using the minutes of the Mexico City cabildo, Francisco Miranda Godínez demonstrates that a shrine was built on the hill of Totoltepec by at least 1528. *Dos cultos fundantes. Los Remedios y Guadalupe (1521–1649)* (Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán, 2001), 21, 36–42, 50.
and decorated it with a group of paintings depicting the apparition narrative. During the 1620s a series of hospices were built to accommodate growing numbers of pilgrims, but Florencia claimed that sixty-five years later it was a shame that they had not been entirely completed. By the 1680s a group of devotees were seeking to construct another shrine where they believed Juan de Tovar housed the Virgin of Remedies for fifteen years. To raise funds for some of these projects the *mayordomo* chose a delegate to travel with a copy of the original—colloquially referred to as a “pilgrim image” (*la peregrina*)—to various towns to promote devotion. Florencia claimed that “this holy image collects large amounts of alms for the sanctuary during her pilgrimages,” a feat that appeared to be almost miraculous given “the innumerable demands [for alms] throughout this kingdom.” When *La milagrosa invención* was published it contributed to these fundraising efforts and confirmed the Mexico City *cabildo* as the official patron of the shrine.

---


134 *La milagrosa invención*, 26v–27r, 59v.

135 Ibid., 62r–v (“Las limosnas, que esta Santa Imagen en sus peregrinaciones recoge para el Santuario, suelen ser muchas; y parece milagro, que no sean pocas, por las innumerables demandas, que hay en el Reino”).

136 The Virgin of Remedies was transported to the cathedral in Mexico City in 1692 during the construction of a new chamber in the shrine. Jesús García Gutiérrez, *Datos históricos sobre la venerable imagen de Nuestra Señora de los Remedios de México* [1930], 2nd ed. (Mexico City: Edición ANT-VAL, 1940), 24. By the 1670s a major conflict arose between the archbishop of Mexico, Payo Enríquez Ribera (1612–1684), and the Mexico City *cabildo* over the patronage of the shrine. The Council of the Indies was forced to mediate, ruling in favour of Mexico City in 1684. In May of this same year delegates from the city went to “take possession of the shrine.” Robles, *Diario*, 2:66 (“Lunes 29, fue la ciudad a tomar posesión de la ermita de nuestra Señora de los Remedios, en carrozas”). Miranda Godínez provides a nice summary of the conflicts in *Los dos cultos fundantes*, 50–59. For an eighteenth-century copy of the king’s edict, see NLB, Edmundo O’Gorman, R7. Florencia’s version of the conflict can be found in *La milagrosa invención*, 19v, 29r.
Over the course of many years living in Mexico City Florencia observed that the “Virgin of Guadalupe [did] not have the same riches of golden jewellery and precious stones as the Virgin of Remedies.”\footnote{La estrella del norte, 190v (“No tiene la Santa Imagen de Guadalupe la riqueza de joyas de oro, y de piedras preciosas, que la de N. Señora de los Remedios”).} Construction of the first shrine at the hill of Tepeyac appears to have been initiated by the Archbishop Alonso de Montúfar (1498–1573) in the mid 1550s.\footnote{Poole, Our Lady of Guadalupe, 66–68. Guadalupanistas maintain that the first chapel was built in 1531—the traditional date of the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego—by the Franciscan friar and first bishop of Mexico Juan de Zumárraga (1468–1548).} A second shrine was erected in 1622 under the sponsorship of the Archbishop Juan Pérez de la Serna (d. 1631), but roughly a decade later it was considered to be “very poor,” and by 1664 the mayordomo and vicario noted that it was

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure2-5}
\caption{Basilica of the Virgin of Remedios in Naucalpan, Mexico. Photograph by Jason Dyck.}
\end{figure}
“deteriorated” and “in much need.”\textsuperscript{139} Although significant payments were made in the 1660s to improve it, Isidro de la Asunción was still underwhelmed when he passed through in the mid 1670s, claiming that the sanctuary was “neither very magnificent nor rich.”\textsuperscript{140} Although Florencia noted the various efforts made to collect alms to adorn the shrine and hospices by the hill, he felt there was still much to be done. “Those who take care (cuidar) to decorate my image, furnish my house, and adorn my sanctuary,”

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure2-6}
\caption{Figure 2-6. Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico City, Mexico. Photograph by Jason Dyck.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{139} William B. Taylor, “Mexico’s Virgin of Guadalupe in the Seventeenth-Century: Hagiography and Beyond,” in Bilinkoff and Greer, eds., \textit{Colonial Saints}, 285. Archivo Histórico de la Basílica de Guadalupe (AHBG), Santuario de Guadalupe, Limosnas, caja 378, exp. 10, f. 2r (“hoy se halla deteriorada y la ermita con mucha necesidad”).

\textsuperscript{140} Asunción, \textit{Itinerario a Indias}, 103 (“no es muy suntuoso ni rico”).
Florencia declared through the lips of the Virgin Mary, “will inherit eternal life.”\textsuperscript{141} La estrella del norte was designed to encourage rich patrons to donate funds for a new basilica. The first stone of a chapel built to house the Virgin of Guadalupe while the structure was under construction was laid in 1694.\textsuperscript{142}

During his stay at the Jesuit sugar mill in Xalmolonga, while visiting the shrine dedicated to the Crucified Christ of Chalma, Florencia had the opportunity to view devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe outside the capital.\textsuperscript{143} By the 1620s a crucifix housed in one of the caves of the surrounding hills of the town gained a reputation for its miraculous power when the mestizo hermit Bartolomé de Jesús María (1568–1658) began to live there performing penance. Roughly a year after he died his disciple, Juan de San José (d. 1689), transformed this cave into a chapel to accommodate the growing number of pilgrims. He also converted the adjacent caves into chapels dedicated to the Pure Conception and to the Virgin of Guadalupe. Although there were some hospices, it was not until the 1680s that Chalma was truly transformed from a primitive pilgrimage site into a more controlled and accessible place for devotees. In 1682 the Crucified Christ was lowered from the cave to a new church below the embankment. This new sanctuary, together with a house of seclusion (casa de recolección) for the growing number of

\textsuperscript{141} La estrella del norte, 190r–v (“Los que cuidan de ilustrarme en mi Imagen, de lucir mi Casa, y de adornar mi Santuario, tendrán vida eterna”).

\textsuperscript{142} Robles, Diario, 2:309. The basilica was eventually completed in 1709. AHBG, Santuario de Guadalupe, Dedicación del Templo, caja 403, exp. 3. Several other smaller shrines and chapels were built both on the hill of Tepeyac and around its base throughout the seventeenth century. José Mariano Alarcón, a priest at the Basílica of Guadalupe, made a copy of a 1691 anonymous drawing of these various structures in 1795. The topographic plan has been reproduced with a study by Ana Rita Valero de García Lascuráin in Plano topográfico de la villa de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y sus alrededores en 1691 (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 2004).

\textsuperscript{143} Descripción histórica, Ocasión de escribir, n.p. (“Pasaba por el ingenio de hacer azúcar de Xalmolonga, que de la Compañía, el año de 1683, y estando apenas dos leguas distante del Santuario, que llaman de Chalma”).
hermits living there, was dedicated in the spring of the following year.\textsuperscript{144} When the Descripción histórica was published a few sections of the convent were still under construction.\textsuperscript{145} “The works of God,” Florencia reminded his readers, “depend upon our works.”\textsuperscript{146}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure2.jpg}
\caption{Sanctuary of the Crucified Christ of Chalma in Chalma, Mexico. Photograph by Jason Dyck.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{144} Florencia provided a description of these events in Descripción histórica, 54–67. A registry (libro de inventarios) of the shrine describing its material wealth appears to have survived, but I have been unable to locate it. The “Nota introductoria” to Joaquín Sardo, Relación histórica y moral de la portentosa imagen de N. Sr. Jesucristo Crucificado aparecido en una de las cuevas de San Miguel de Chalma [1810] (Mexico City: Biblioteca Enciclopedia del Estado de México, 1979), xx–xxi, references a “manuscript book that was preserved in the archive of the convent of Chalma” (“libro manuscrito que se conservaba en el archivo del convento de Chalma”). During my visit to Chalma I was told that it was no longer housed there, but the Augustinian friar Jorge Ayala Q. quotes extensively from the registry in his devotional history Chalma that he wrote for modern pilgrims in 1962 (with a new edition in 2000). When I contacted Ayala he was unwilling to share information with me as to its whereabouts. Joseph de Olivares preached when the Crucified Christ was lowered and later printed his Oración panegyrica que a la fiesta solemnidad de la nueva capilla que se consagró a N. Señora de Guadalupe (Mexico City: Por la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1683).

\textsuperscript{145} Ayala, Chalma, 52.

\textsuperscript{146} Descripción histórica, 62 (“Las obras de Dios que dependen de nuestras obras”).
Florencia was able to view another important shrine in the early 1680s while he was living in Puebla. In the Franciscan *doctrina* (Indian parish) of Nativitas, an image of San Miguel in a man-made hole of a hillside gained a popular following as a result of a prodigious spring located at its base. An Indian neophyte took care of the image and nursed some of the faithful who came for healing in the makeshift hospices of the surrounding caves. To accommodate the growing number of pilgrims, two shrines were built successively both above and below the hill in the early 1630s. But not long after, on a pastoral visit to the shrine in 1643, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza ordered that another sanctuary be built “to preserve the spring of water that the holy archangel discovered.”

Three years later he sought royal permission to collect alms throughout the Indies for the construction of a new church. Although the new shrine dedicated to San Miguel had episcopal support, it was still in rough shape in the 1670s. Isidro de la Asunción noted that there were “limited alms” and that the resident priest did not live very comfortably.

In 1685 the vicario of the shrine requested the help of two Indians to take

---

147 Salmerón, “Relación del Arcángel San Miguel,” 105–108. *Narración de la maravillosa*, 20–23. I found an eighteenth-century copy of a document entitled *Diligencias practicadas en solicitud de la licencia que pidió el año de 1631 la Provincia de Tlaxcala al virrey de México para la fundación de la ermita del glorioso Arcángel San Miguel* in the Archivo del Venerable Cabildo Metropolitano de la Catedral de Puebla. The manuscript is not catalogued and was together with a series of loose papers. It states that there was a “country chapel under the advocation of San Miguel” and that political leaders of the city and province of Tlaxcala “have attempted to make a country chapel to the Archangel San Miguel.” (“Por cuanto el gobernador, alcaldes, regidores y comunidad de la ciudad y provincia de Tlaxcala me han hecho relación, que en la doctrina del convento de Santa María Nativitas, de aquel distrito, hay una ermita de vocación de San Miguel, en la cual, como en las demás de los conventos de este reino, se suele decir misa algunas veces en el año: y que medio cuarto de legua de la dicha ermita en una barranca se ha descubierto una fuente de agua milagrosa con que han sanado muchos enfermos, y para frecuencia con más devoción, han pretendido hacer una ermita a el Arcángel San Miguel”).

148 Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, *Relación de la visita eclesiástica de parte del obispado de la Puebla de los Ángeles (1643–1646)*, ed. Bernardo García Martínez (Puebla: Gobierno del Estado, Secretaría de Cultura, 1997), 70 (“Di orden para que se hiciese un santuario para conservación de una fuente de agua que el santo arcángel descubrió”)

149 Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado de México (AHAM), Fondo Episcopal, Secretaría Arzobispal, Reales Cédulas, caja 5, exp. 45.

150 Asunción, *Itinerario a Indias*, 109 (“muchas es la devoción de los fieles a este santuario, pero pocas las limosnas... vive allí un clérigo y no muy acomodado”).
care of the grounds every week because there was “no fixed income for the maintenance and decoration . . . of the church.” By the time Florencia was writing in the early 1690s he hoped that the “Holy Archangel would move his devotees so that they would help” with the construction of a new vault that was already underway. A year after the Narración de la maravillosa was published, a licence was granted for the collection of

Figure 2-8. Sanctuary of the Archangel San Miguel del Milagro in San Miguel del Milagro, Mexico. Photograph by Jason Dyck.

151 AGN, Indios, vol. 28, exp. 221, f. 185v (“el sitio es incómodo apartado del P. y no tiene renta ninguna para la decencia y ornato y servicio de su templo”). Joseph Gómez de la Parra, a Pueblan priest, described Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz’s patronage of the shrine during this same period in “Relación de lo que hizo y obró el ilustrísimo y excelentísimo Señor Doctor Don Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz en su Obispado de la Puebla de los Ángeles, en poco mas de veinte y dos años que lo gobernó,” in Panegyrico funeral. La vida en la muerte de el illmo. y excmo. Señor Doctor Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz Obispo de la Puebla de los Ángeles en la Nueva España (Puebla: Por los Herederos del Capitán Juan de Villa Real, 1699), 70–71.

152 Narración de la maravillosa, 33 (“El adorno, que se está disponiendo para engrandecer esta Iglesia dándole otra bóveda de largo, será el complemento de su hermosura. El Santo Arcángel mueve a sus devotos, que ayuden para ello, que él lo sabrá agradecer, y pagar”).
alms in both New Spain and Peru for the duration of six years.\textsuperscript{153} The expenses of the shrine continued to rise so that by 1705 a similar licence was granted once again.\textsuperscript{154}

Florencia may have also visited the sanctuaries dedicated to the Virgins of Zapopan and of San Juan de los Lagos in the Bishopric of Guadalajara in the 1690s.\textsuperscript{155} It is uncertain when the first shrine was erected in Zapopan, but pious authors claim that the Franciscan missionary Antonio de Segovia (1485–1570) built a primitive chapel there in the early 1540s.\textsuperscript{156} Another shrine was constructed sometime thereafter because Diego de Herrera, a parish priest, recorded in 1653 that there was a “church, which due to its great antiquity, was falling into ruins because its planks were rotten.”\textsuperscript{157} This building eventually collapsed in the first decade of the 1600s, which prompted the faithful to erect yet another shrine which was later replaced by a basilica in 1690.\textsuperscript{158} The Virgin of San Juan de los Lagos, on the other hand, was originally housed in the chapel of a hospital. By 1634 this structure was considered to be “a poor house,” hence a new shrine was eventually completed in 1641 under the direction of the Bishop Leonel de Cervantes y

\textsuperscript{153} AGN, Reales Cédulas Duplicados, vol. 40, exp. 327, ff. 507v–508v.
\textsuperscript{154} Archivo Histórico Parroquial de San Miguel del Milagro (AHPSMM), Caja 23, Disciplinar, Cordilleras (1683–1739).
\textsuperscript{155} Carta Anua del Colegio de Guadalajara, AHPM, Documentos Antiguos, caja 17, 653, f. 1r.
\textsuperscript{156} Without providing evidence, several authors give Segovia the credit for this shrine. Luis del Refugio de Palacio y Basave, Historia breve y sumaria del origen y principio que tuvo la Imagen de Nuestra Señora de Zapopan (Guadalajara: Tip. y Lit. Loreto y Ancira y Cía, 1918), 23; Ángel S. Ochoa V., Breve historia de Nuestra Señora de Zapopan, 2nd ed. (Zapopan: n.p., 1961), 72; Sebastián Verti, Nuestra Señora de Zapopan. Madre de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo (Mexico City: Editorial Diana, 1997), 15; and Luis Sandoval Godoy, Reina de Jalisco. Historia y costumbrismo en torno a la imagen de Nuestra Señora de Zapopan. (Guadalajara: Talleres Fotolitográficos de Impre-Jal, 1984), 6.
\textsuperscript{157} Diego de Herrera, “Relación breve y sumaria del origen y principio que tuvo la Imagen de Nuestra Señora de la O del Pueblo de asimismo los milagros que ha obrado Señora Santísima mediante ella,” in Luis del Refugio Palacio y Basave, ed., Interesantísimos documentos, casi todos inéditos, relativos a Nuestra Señora de Zapopan (Guadalajara: Tio-Lit. y Enc. de J. M. Yguíniz Sucr., 1921), 10 (“la iglesia, la cual por su mucha antigüedad hubo de arruinarse faltando las maderas por estar podridas”). For Florencia’s version, see Los dos célebres santuarios, 16.
\textsuperscript{158} By 1670 the shrine was undergoing a series of renovations. Los dos célebres santuarios, 41. AGN, Jesuitas I-23, exp. 9, ff. 47–51. The basilica, which later replaced the shrine, was only completed in 1730. See Ignacio Ramírez Acevedo, “Historia de la basílica de Zapopan,” in Iglesias y edificios antiguos de Guadalajara, ed. Ramón Mata Torres, 2nd ed. (Guadalajara: Ayuntamiento de Guadalajara, 1984), 134–136, for an overview of the various structures at Zapopan.
Carvajal. Seven years later, while on a pastoral visit, the Bishop Juan Ruiz de Colmenero (1596–1663) found that the building was in ruins and ordered that it be destroyed. The second shrine, according to the Franciscan chronicler Antonio Tello (1596–1652), was finished five years later, but its bell towers were only completed in the mid 1680s. Hence when Juan de Santiago y León Garabito was Bishop of Guadalajara between 1678 and 1694, he asked Florencia to pen Origen de los dos célebres santuarios to contribute to his efforts of improving the two principal shrines of his diocese.

When the faithful responded to Florencia’s call for alms to support missions, education, foundations, and building projects they were not merely caring for their own souls and the material wellbeing of the novohispano Church. Their contributions were considered universal. Agustín de Vetancurt (1620–1700), a creole Franciscan chronicler, claimed that when compared to Mexico City “no other city in the world is known to share so many alms for masses [and] dowries for orphans, hospitals, the ‘shame-faced’ poor, beggars, confraternities, and convents.” The generosity of an urban centre or kingdom, combined together with the number and opulence of its ecclesiastical establishments, was an important sign of its greatness in the Spanish world and thus before the Christian God. Alms allowed the faithful to support works in the global church as much as it provided them with the opportunity to highlight their own Catholic charity. While stationed in

159 Los dos célebres santuarios, 52 (“pobre casa”).
160 Antonio Tello, Libro Segundo de la Crónica miscelánea, en que se trata de la conquista espiritual y temporal de la Santa Provincia de Xalisco en el Nuevo Reino de la Galicia y Nueva Vizcaya y descubrimiento del Nuevo México [ca. 1652] (Guadalajara: Imprenta de “La Republica Literaria,” 1891), 858. For the bell towers, see Los dos célebres santuarios, 114.
161 Asunción claimed that the image of San Juan de los Lagos was carried throughout the kingdom to collect alms “for the expenses of its church.” Itinerario a Indias, 107 (“Llévanla por el reino, y está en cada lugar algunos días y recogen limosna los que la llevan, para los gastos de su iglesia”).
162 Agustín de Vetancurt, “Tratado de la Ciudad de México, y las grandezas que la ilustran después que la fundaron españoles,” in Teatro mexicano (Mexico City: Doña María de Benavides, Viuda de Juan de Ribera, 1698), 4 (“no se conoce en el mundo Ciudad donde se repartan cada año tantas limosnas en Misas, dotes de huérfanas, Hospitales, vergonzantes, mendigos, Cofradías, y Conventos”).
Seville Florencia wrote that “those of this kingdom [of New Spain], especially those from Mexico City, [are] so inclined to piety that they are not surpassed by anybody from other parts.” Given this collective spirit of religious devotion, Florencia argued that his kingdom was also on the frontline in the battle against heresy.

The Hydra of Heresy

Throughout his life Florencia found himself on both sides of censorship. He read manuscripts for both his superiors and the Inquisition. And then when it was time for him to publish his own works, he had them sent off to their appropriate censors. Through both the control of the press and the publication of their works sacred historians helped to maintain and disseminate orthodoxy in New Spain. Florencia encouraged his readers to uphold Catholic dogma with faith that the Virgin Mary had “broken the head of the hydra of heresies throughout the entire world!” He recognized that sacred history existed to combat heterodox ideas, especially in the wake of the “Protestant” Reformation in Germany.

Florencia explained that he wrote about the sacred past “with the same cuidado that we have taken in spreading the mysteries of our holy faith and the prayers that the holy church teaches.” From the patristic period the early church fathers concluded that it was impossible to have the Christian God as their father if they did not have the church as their mother. Following an array of theologians, Florencia referred to the Catholic

---

163 Vida de Medina, 14r (“los de aquel Reino, especialmente en los Mexicanos, tan inclinados a la piedad, que no dan ventaja en esta parte a ningunos”).
164 La estrella del norte, 156r (“Tú eres, Soberana Señora, la que como afirma la Iglesia, quebraste la erigida cabeza a la hídria de las herejías de todo el mundo!”).
165 Ibid., 96r (“con aquel cuidado, que nosotros en las noticias de los Misterios de nuestra Santa Fe, y de las Oraciones, que enseña la Santa Iglesia”).
Church as “a Mystical Mother of the heroic saints” whose commandments one needed to obey. The principal teachings of the “Holy Scriptures” were to be taught “with great cuidado” through catechism to recent converts and children. They learned the apostle’s creed, the meaning of the sacraments, the Decalogue, and the paternoster, amongst other moral lessons and traditional prayers. After baptism and catechism one was expected to be “virtuous, of good and praiseworthy customs, a regular attendee of the divine service, zealous in the service of Our Lord God, and very cuidadoso in frequenting [classes of] Christian doctrine, mass, and sermons.” But one of the most important things all Catholics learned was that there was no salvation outside of the Roman Church. “We should recognize . . . that the church in this New World,” Florencia wrote, “is according to dogma the same church [everywhere] because . . . there is no other Catholic in the world but one.”

In order to test his level of orthodoxy, Florencia was required to submit manuscripts (borradores) of his works to various censors (calificadores) of both the church and the state. Throughout the viceregal period colonial scholars needed the consent of the viceroy before they obtained printing licences. But since Florencia was a member of the regular clergy, he had one more hurdle to clear before he saw his works published. He was obliged to send his manuscripts to his superiors for examination. Only

---

166 Relación de Guadalajara, A la religiosa, n.p. (“por quien S. Ambrosio, San Agustín y Beda entienden a la Iglesia, Madre Mística de los heroicos Santos, que la ennoblecen”). Vida de Figueroa, 20r (“a guardar los Mandamientos del Señor, y de la Iglesia”).

167 Historia de la Provincia, 25 (“Enseñaban con gran cuidado el Catecismo a los muchachos Indios, y a los adultos”).

168 Narración de la maravillosa, 74 (“virtuoso, de buenas, y loables costumbres, muy aplicado al Culto Divino, y celoso del servicio de Dios N. Señor, y muy cuidadoso de acudir a la Doctrina Cristiana, Misa, y Sermones con grande cuidado”).

169 Ibid., 70 (“debemos confesar, que en la letra de ellas está comprendida la Iglesia de este nuevo mundo, que según dogma de ella, es una misma Iglesia: porque según el Símbolo de la Fe, no hay en el mundo Católico más que una”).
after they had been revised, and he had made all of the necessary corrections, would his censors stamp their seal of authority by writing short letters of approval (aprobación, parecer, or sentir) that were included in his publications.¹⁷⁰ When Florencia handed in

![Figure 2-9. Francisco de Florencia’s protesta for his Historia de la Provincia (Mexico City: Mexico City: Iván Joseph Guillena Carrascoso, 1694). Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada de la Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, Mexico City, Mexico. Photograph by Jason Dyck.](image)

his manuscripts to the printers he was expected to write a declaration (protesta) stating
his obedience to the Catholic Church, which in turn was placed at either the beginning or
the end of his sacred histories. “Everything that I have written in this book,” Florencia
declared on numerous occasions, “is subject to the correction of Our Holy Mother the
Roman Catholic Church.”

While Florencia handed in rough drafts to his censors he read the works of others

---

Figure 2-10. Francisco de Florencia’s sentir for Joseph de Olivares, Oración
panegírica (Mexico City: Por la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1683). Biblioteca
Miguel Lerdo de Tejada de la Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, Mexico
City, Mexico. Photograph by Jason Dyck.

171 La milagrosa invención, Protesta, n.p. (“Todo lo que en este Libro he escrito, va sujeto a la corrección
de N. S. M. Iglesia Católica Romana”).
for the Inquisition. As a censor himself he gave his seal of approval on a wide range of works before publication. Most of the manuscripts he reviewed were sermons, but he did inspect a work on astrology and other sacred histories. Florencia declared that the texts he approved were “very Catholic and in line with that which concerns the dogmas of the faith and Christian piety.” He was one of many creoles involved in determining the level of orthodoxy in printed works in New Spain. Magdalena Chocano Mena argues that the involvement of creoles in censorship forces one to reconsider the belief that it was “an external bureaucratic apparatus forced upon colonial scholars [because] censorship in New Spain emerged from within the scholarly group itself.” Creoles, such as Florencia, were just as concerned as the Spanish crown with both publishing and distributing books that were in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church. The “line between heresy and treason” was virtually indistinguishable, so most religious men in New Spain did all they could to avoid the strong arm of the Inquisition.

Florencia expressed concern over the growth of heresy in various regions of Spanish America at different points in his sacred histories. In the seventeenth-century Spanish world heresy was defined as an “opinion, choice, or sect” that in “the Castilian language . . . has always signified desertion and separation from the faith and from what the said holy mother the church stands for and believes.” Heresy was considered an

---

172 See the bibliography under “Published and Manuscript Works Reviewed by Francisco de Florencia” for a list of Florencia’s letters of approval.
173 Francisco de Florencia, “Señor maestre escuela,” in Eusebio Francisco Kino, Exposición astronómica de el cometa (Mexico City: Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio, 1681), n.p. (“muy Católico, y ajustado en lo que mira a los dogmas de la Fe, y piedad Cristiana”).
174 Chocano Mena, “Colonial Printing and Metropolitan Books,” 84.
176 Covarruvias Orozco, Tesoro de la lengua, 467r (HEREGE y Herejía . . . vale tanto como opinión, elección, secta . . . Pero en nuestra lengua Castellana, y en todas las de los Católicos que militan debajo de
infectious disease that had the potential to spread rapidly within and beyond any given Catholic community, and if not properly treated it welcomed the wrath of the Christian God. The thought of heresy was so appalling because the heretic not only maintained that he or she was a Christian, but that his or her version of Christianity was more in keeping with the teachings of Christ and his apostles. In New Spain one of the greatest perceived threats of heresy was “Protestantism,” a blanket term not so easily separated from piracy in the Atlantic world. Florencia mentioned how the English were taking over important regions of La Florida and that “Calvinist heretics” were roaming the islands of the Caribbean that were “deserted of [Indians] and populated by heretics as a result of our sins.”

Although Florencia made distinctions between different Protestant groups, it was often more convenient for him to lump them all together under the general banner of “Lutheranism.” By the seventeenth century, Martin Luther’s (1483–1586) ghost haunted the pages of Spanish American historiography, specifically the chronicles of the Franciscan order. Various grey friars represented Luther as the Devil incarnate, comparing the spread of his heretical ideas in Germany with the Catholic evangelical zeal of Cortés throughout the conquest. The chronicler Juan de Torquemada (1557–1624) claimed that it was a mystery that “in the same year that Luther was born in Islebio, villa of Saxony, Hernando Cortés was born in Medellín, villa of Spain in Extremadura.”

---

179 Historia de la Provincia, 33 (“hoy desiertas de ellos, y pobladas de Herejes por nuestros pecados”).
former, in his mind, was a “damned heretic” who perverted souls in the Old World while Cortés saved an “infinite multitude of people” in the New World. Florencia borrowed heavily from Torquemada’s writings throughout his sacred histories, but instead of making the Luther-Cortés contrast, he drew a parallel between San Ignacio and the conquistador. He observed that Cortés conquered the Mexica empire for the Spanish crown in the same year that San Ignacio left behind his sword. “God took San Ignacio out of the world’s militia,” Florencia piously reasoned, “to make him the Captain General of the Christian Company which he raised up from within the church to wage war against impiety, heresy, and idolatry.”

Alicia Mayer has examined the perception of Luther in New Spain throughout the colonial period in paintings, sermons, and sacred histories. She notes that although there was never any “Lutheran” Church in Spanish America, the German reformer played a significant role in the colonial imagination as a “wretched heresiarch.” Mayer explains

---


181 *Historia de la Provincia*, 3 (“el Invicto Don Fernando Cortés este Imperio Mexicano para la Corona de España, el año mismo que fue el de 1521 en que sacó Dios a San Ignacio de la milicia del mundo, para Capitán general de la Compañía Cristiana, que levantó en la Iglesia, para hacer guerra a la impiedad, herejía, e idolatria”). The only other Ignacio-Cortés reference that I have been able to find is in an anonymous Jesuit history of Sinaloa from the late seventeenth century. BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 7, f. 3v (“Y es así que el mismo año de 1521 y la misma Pascua consagrada al divino espíritu que el Magno Fernando Cortés botaba sus bergantines al agua de la laguna en la ciudad de Texcoc para sitiar a esta imperial ciudad de México ese mismo año y en la misma solemnidad de la Pascua en el muro de Pamplona cae Ignacio profano y terreno y se levanta sagrado y celestial”).
that Luther was mythologized into everything evil, a monster, dragon, and antithesis of
the “Hispanic, Catholic, Counter-Reformist man.” But she also observes that creoles
developed another parallel myth, the idea that the New World was a heavenly paradise, a
new Promised Land that was free of “Protestant” heresies. In an age when “Spain’s
decline in the political sphere was evident,” Mayer argues that the “Spanish and Creole
elite wanted to show to the world that reform was being accomplished without
vacillation” in New Spain.182 Florencia clearly wrote his sacred histories with this larger
political context in mind. He reasoned that “God chose the conversion of New Spain and
Mexico City [as a means] to repair the damages to the faith that took place in the northern
provinces of [Europe] that were almost destroyed by the perverso heresy of Luther.”183

Heresy endangered the souls of New Spain, as much as it was a political threat to
the unity of the Spanish empire. Throughout his sacred histories Florencia demonstrated
that New Spain was a Catholic kingdom with its own examples of virtue worthy of
recognition in other parts of the “composite monarchy” of Spain. The sacred historian’s
craft was a rhetorical art he learned and practiced within the context of the religious life,
but it was also a skill he used to construct a political vision of his patria. Florencia tried
to convince his readers on both sides of the Atlantic that New Spain was filled with cities
that were the “most pious, devout, exemplary, and cuidadosas of the divine service as can
be found, not only in both Americas, but in both [New and Old] Spain as well.”184

182 Alicia Mayer, “The Heresiarch that Burns in Hell: The Image of Martin Luther in New Spain,” in Luther
zwischen den Kulturen. Tagung der Universität Erfurt anlässlich des 500. Jahrestages der Immatrifikation
Martin Luthers an der Universität Erfurt, eds. Peer Schmidt and Hans Medick (Göttingen: Verlag
Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2004), 129, 126.
183 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 20v (“Quería Dios a la Nueva España y a México para
reparar en su conversión los daños que ocasionó la ruina en la fe de las provincias del septentrión, que
destroyidas casi todas por herejía del perverso Lutero”).
184 Narración de la maravillosa, 64 (“una de las más piadosas, devotas, ejemplares, y cuidadosas del Culto
Divino, que tienen, no sólo las dos Américas, sino las dos Españas”).
Chapter 3
The Crédito of the Sacred

Traditions and ancient papers establish the crédito of the truth of any history.
– Diego de Jesús María, 1650

I am a historian with personal experience and hence I merit crédito.
– Diego Basalenque, 1673

He heard what the Indian affirmed with admiration, [but] he did not give him complete faith and crédito, judging that it was just [his] imagination.
– Luis Becerra Tanco, 1675

To awaken the memory of the past religious scholars demonstrated great cuidado with their sources. They hoped that their investigations would uncover trustworthy evidence to bolster the credibility of their sacred traditions. This chapter complements the previous one by looking at the visual, written, and oral sources Florencia used to construct his sacred histories and his manner of assessing their worth. One of his censors was impressed with the number of proofs he mustered together and was confident that he had “collected them all.”¹ Gathering together as many sources of crédito as possible was fundamental to the sacred historian’s craft. At times Florencia drew upon his own personal experiences; in most cases he combed libraries and archives for printed and manuscript materials; and on many occasions he was inclined to resort to oral traditions. But his sources were not always viewed as credible with respect to their authorship and

¹ Antonio de la Gama, “Aprobación,” in La estrella del norte, n.p. (“que sin duda su Autor . . . las ha recogido todas”).
place of origin. I argue that Florencia’s hunt for sources of crédito was more than just standard practice amongst ecclesiastical historians; his efforts in this regard were a way of placing the sacred of America on the same footing as Europe. He believed that the sacred traditions of his patria were just as reliable as those on the other side of the Atlantic.

Crédito is both “the credit we grant towards that which is told to us” and “public esteem and reputation.” In the seventeenth century the extent of one’s crédito—and hence his/her oral or written testimony—was based upon virtuous behaviour, noble standing, age, wisdom, power, honour, and other social titles. Men and women of crédito established the crédito of sacred traditions which, in turn, gave crédito to their homelands. Perhaps nowhere else was the relationship between credence and fame more complex than in the multiethnic context of New Spain. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra has rightly pointed out that fundamental to understanding New World historiography is the question of “upon whose sources and authority to write the history of the Americas?”

“Memorable things” had been created and preserved in libraries, archives, personal memories, and shrines by men and women of all ethnic groups. And so unlike sacred historians in the Iberian Peninsula, Florencia sought after the crédito of not only the sacred traditions of his patria, but of the multiethnic nature of his sources as well.

This chapter traces Florencia’s pursuit and presentation of credible sources from both America and Europe. The first section examines how his general understanding of evidence was influenced by changes taking place in historical practice throughout the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Atlantic world. Subsequent sections offer an analysis

---

2 Covarruvias Orozco, Tesoro de la lengua, 246v (“CRÉDITO, la credulidad que damos a lo que se nos dice. Crédito, buena opinión, y reputación”).
3 Cañizares-Esguerra, How to Write the History of the New World, 6.
The Evidence of the Craft

Since Florencia was in search of the truth he was forced to produce evidence. He fully recognized that his pious arguments needed to be well-founded if they were to be credible beyond New Spain. Florencia drew upon a wide range of sources to write his sacred histories so that the providential care of the Christian God in his kingdom would be “seen with more evidence.”4 His incessant desire for satisfying proof was influenced by a long line of ecclesiastical scholars from the early church to his present. But Florencia’s need for evidence was also informed by larger intellectual trends within the Atlantic world that significantly influenced how he practiced the sacred historian’s craft.

Florencia made distinctions between different types of evidence (evidencia), clearly favouring written documentation, but he did not object to other visual and oral sources. All of the evidence he collected provided him with moral evidence (evidencia moral) that allowed him to establish the certainty (certidumbre) of his pious arguments.5 But religious scholars in the seventeenth century believed that different bodies of

---

4 Historia de la Provincia, 76 (“Y para que se vea con más evidencia el cuidado, que tenía el Señor de guardar a sus Siervos”).
5 Ibid., 249 (“diré algunos casos de edificación, que con moral evidencia lo muestran”).
knowledge possessed varying levels of certainty, theology ranking at the top because of its status as a divine science. Hence Florencia explained that it was absolutely crucial to make a clear distinction between the truths one knows by divine (verdades de fe divina) and human faith (fe humana). The former had been revealed to humankind by the

![Engraving of Faith](image)

Figure 3-1. Anonymous. Engraving of Faith (Fe), one of the three theological virtues. Taken from the frontispiece of Francisco de Burgoa, Geográfica descripción de la parte septentrional (Mexico City: En la Imprenta de Juan Ruiz, 1674). Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada de la Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, Mexico City, Mexico. Photograph by Jason Dyck.

---

6 La milagrosa invención, 8v (“Esto aun en las verdades de Fe divina, que distan tanto de las que tenemos por ciertas sólo con Fe humana, pasa así muchas veces”).
Christian God and was hence understood to be infallible according to Catholic doctrine. The latter, on the other hand, was what men and women could gather from “public fame,” information based upon human judgements. Florencia would have agreed with Manuel de Salcedo Olid, an officer of the Inquisition in Andújar, when he reasoned that it “is not [becoming] of sensible and wise men to search all things for evidence and conclusions of mathematical precision.”

In order to explain the different levels of certainty between divine and human faith, Florencia turned to an example from the Judeo-Christian creation story. In the Old Testament book of Genesis, Adam and Eve are presented as the parents of humankind, created to live together in the earthly paradise of Eden. This was a truth that, for Florencia, was undeniably certain. How long they had been in the garden was another story, something that had been hotly debated by theologians for centuries. Whether it was days or weeks did not matter much to Florencia, because “these doubtful circumstances do not oppose the principal truth we believe.”

This distinction between the substance (substancia) of a given truth and its accidents (accidentes) was crucial to how Florencia viewed his evidence. His use of Aristotelian logic provided him with the rationale he needed to not only account for apparent contradictions in his sources, but to explain important omissions as well. He exhorted his readers to remember the accounts of the “canonical historians” in the four gospels of the New Testament, because what one evangelist included on the life of Christ another omitted altogether. They may “disagree

---

7 Manuel de Salcedo Olid, Panegírico historial de Nuestra Señora de la Cabeza de Sierra Morena (Madrid: Julián de Paredes, 1677), 87 (“Y no es de hombres cuerdos, y sabios buscar en todas las cosas evidencia, y claridad matemática que concluya”).
8 La milagrosa invención, 8v (“Ser estas circunstancias dudables, no se opone a la verdad principal, que creemos”).
in the accidents of their narratives,” Florencia noted, but when they are all placed
together they provide the “the full history of their evangelical message.”

Since there were possible variations in his evidence, Florencia made one more
important distinction, that of proof (prueba) and conjectures (conjeturas). The madrileño
presbyter, Gerónimo de Quintana, explained in his history of the Virgin of Atocha that
although “conjectures are not clear proof,” they can still provide some level of “certainty
and probability.” When narrating the sacred past of New Spain, many times Florencia
tried to identify when he had proof for his statements or when he was merely recounting
the conjectures of his sources. In one case, he claimed that the very fact that the image of
the Virgin of Guadalupe had not faded over the years in such an unforgiving environment
“proves with evidence that it was not painted by human hands.”

That Juan Rodríguez de Villafuerte brought the statue of the Virgin of Remedies along with him to New Spain
was merely a conjecture, for after all, it could have arrived by the hands of another
conquistador. But even though Florencia recognized that there was no “metaphysical
certainty” with any of these “human proofs,” he believed that “conjectures, in the absence
of evidence, are [welcomed] succour for writers.”

Conjectures concerning the sacred, however, were increasingly more difficult for
Catholic historians in the early modern period. Protestant and radical groups questioned
the veneration of relics, saints, and images, specifically all of the miracles attributed to them. Florencia was well aware of those who judged that “it is not necessary to turn to the angels for what men can do with their own hands.”

After the Council of Trent the process of canonization also went through a series of modifications, the Sacred Congregation of Rites requesting more witnesses and documentary evidence to verify a candidate’s virtues and miracles. Other groups, like the Bollandists and the Maurists, scrutinized the lives of the saints and monastic charters, demanding a more critical reading of ecclesiastical records. This emphasis on documentary proof was influenced by larger trends amongst Renaissance historians who, according to Peter Burke, formed an “awareness of evidence” that was distinct from the medieval period. They were far more critical of their sources, exposing forgeries, questioning myths, and identifying internal contradictions of traditional authorities. Influenced by these arts of reading, local scholars in the Spanish world combined elements of humanist historical practices with antiquarian forms of research to write about their sacred traditions.

Florencia’s exposure to these newer forms of scholarship came through his engagement with Spanish historiography. He witnessed the ways in which sacred historians, as Katie Harris writes, were “eager for any kind of documentary proof

14 Descripción histórica, 18 (“no se ha de recurrir a los Ángeles, en lo que pueden obrar los hombres”).
16 For more on the importance of the historical scholarship of the Bollandists (Jesuits) and the Maurists (Benedict Monks), see David Knowles, Great Historical Enterprises/Problems in Monastic History (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1963), 3–61.
attesting to an early embrace of Catholicism.”19 These men, most of them clerics, were concerned with tracing the origins and persistence of Christianity in the Iberian Peninsula despite centuries of Islamic rule. They wrote histories with documentary and non-literary sources to demonstrate traces of apostolic preaching, the presence of early martyrs, and the origins of local churches. In a similar fashion, Florencia looked to illuminate the early history of the Catholic faith in New Spain, specifically the foundation of his religious order and the origins of prodigious images. At one point he explained how he wanted to establish the “truth and crédito” of the miraculous apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe, “not so much for those of Mexico [City] and New Spain,” but for “those distant kingdoms and foreign nations that have been surprised by the news of this marvel and have found fault in the early historians of this kingdom.”20 He felt the same about many other sacred traditions of his patria, and for this reason he drew upon as much evidence as he could possibly find.

The Experience of the Eyes

Many of the events and people Florencia referenced in his writings were from the remote past and as a result he had no way of experiencing them firsthand. But even though he did not live through the foundation of the Society of Jesus in Mexico City, he could still attest to the holiness of some of his coreligionists in the present. And although he was not present to witness the origins or miracles of Catholic images, he was able to

19 Harris, From Muslim to Christian Granada, 51.
20 La estrella del norte, 17r–v (“Cuya verdad, y crédito constante procuraré fundar en adelante; no tanto para los de México, y Nueva España, que en la Santa Imagen, que gozan, y en las maravillas, que en ellos obra, tienen el apoyo más auténtico de ella; cuanto para los Reinos lejanos, y para las naciones Extranjeras, a que ha llegado con asombro la noticia del portento; y han echado menos en los Historiadores primeros de aqueste Imperio”).
testify to their prodigious activity and sanctity while on pilgrimage. Whenever possible, Florencia drew upon the “experience of the eyes”\(^{21}\) to enhance the authority of his narratives. He “collected” observations he made of his brethren’s virtues and of the visual splendour of novohispano shrines, using them both as “ocular evidence” to authenticate the truth of his sacred histories.\(^{22}\)

Firsthand experience (\textit{experiencia}), as noted in the previous chapter, was both fundamental to how Florencia understood history and to how he wrote about it. He used the personal “I” on various occasions, specifically when referring to his own private encounters with the sacred. At times he claimed that he could “testify as an eyewitness and from experience” to what he was describing in his narratives.\(^{23}\) Although Florencia was clearly influenced by ancient historians in this methodological conviction, together with other religious scholars he drew much of his inspiration from the “Holy Scriptures.” Andrés Pérez de Ribas (1576–1655), a Jesuit missionary and chronicler, had carefully notified his readers in the prologue to his mission history of Sinaloa that “the one who writes is an eyewitness of much of what is recounted throughout, and he touched it (as they say) with his own hands.”\(^{24}\) Florencia knew that this statement was based upon the opening words of the first epistle of John, and like its author, he too sought to write down what he had “seen” and “touched.”

Most of the Jesuits Florencia wrote about in his provincial chronicle and sacred biographies had died before he had entered the Company of Jesus. But when he crafted

\(^{21}\) BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 6r (“experiencia de los ojos”).

\(^{22}\) \textit{La milagrosa invención}, 1v (“cuando podía testificar la evidencia ocular las maravillas”).

\(^{23}\) \textit{Relación de Guadalajara}, 9v (“Puedo testificar de vista, y de experiencia”).

\(^{24}\) Andrés Pérez de Ribas, \textit{Historia de los triumphos de nuestra santa fe entre gentes las más bárbaras, y fieras del nuevo orbe: Conseguidos por los soldados de la milicia de la Compañía de Jesús en las misiones de la Provincia de Nueva España} (Madrid: Alonso de Paredes, 1645), Prólogo al lector, n.p. (“Y finalmente advierto, que el que la escribe, es testigo de vista de mucho de lo que en ella se refiere, y lo tocó (como dicen) con las manos”).
his *vidas* of Nicolás de Guadalajara and Gerónimo de Figueroa he was writing about men he had interacted with personally. “Those of us who knew brother Nicolás during his noviciate,” Florencia wrote, “did not know whether to admire his humility, his modesty, his silence, his strict obedience, [or] his love of devotion.” He further stated “as an eyewitness” that Guadalajara surpassed his classmates, finishing his studies of grammar, rhetoric, and the humanities “to his own acclaim and for the great *créditos* of the Company.”

Florencia also had the opportunity to meet with Figueroa in Mexico City in the early 1680s. In the final days of his life several Jesuits went to comfort him, all of them admiring his “peace and joy” as he prepared for death. “I visited him,” Florencia recalled, “[and] it appeared to me that Father Figueroa was not only without fear of this difficult and arduous situation, but that he was calling out and encouraging death to come without delay.”

Through his own personal descriptions of his brethren, Florencia was able to highlight their sanctity, adding to the “experience” others had “of this holy Institute” of the Society of Jesus.

Florencia also drew upon his personal experience as a sacred “ethnographer” at local shrines. By the time he was writing in the 1680s and early 1690s, the makeshift chapels of the early colonial period had been replaced by newer edifices to accommodate growing numbers of pilgrims. Although most of these buildings were still modest structures, their interiors had changed according to the aesthetic values of the Baroque. Florencia explained that “sanctuaries, whether of the Most Holy Mother, the angels, or of

---

25 *Relación de Guadalajara*, 2v (“Los que conocimos al Hermano Nicolás en el Noviciado, no sabíamos si admirar su humildad, si su modestia, si el silencio, si la puntualidad en la obediencia, si el amor a la devoción”) (“puedo decir como testigo”) (“con aplausos suyos, y créditos grandes de la Compañía”).

26 *Vida de Figueroa*, 17r (“Yo le visité . . . me pareció, que estaba el P. Figueroa, no solo sin temer aquel trance formidable, sino como llamando, y animando a la muerte, a que viniese, y no se detuviese”).

27 *Historia de la Provincia*, 70 (“este santo Instituto; como de experiencia unos, y otros de relaciones ciertas de Europa conocían”).
the saints, are abbreviated heavens on the earth, and God desires his heavens to be not only perfect but well adorned.”

The art and architecture of the Counter Reformation was highly elaborate and emotional, designed to draw devotees into worship with a visual taste of heavenly glory. The altarscreens, altars, candles, chalices, sculptures, thrones, tabernacles, and painting frames were decorated with gold and silver to awe the faithful with images of the celestial riches they believed awaited them in paradise.

Florencia argued that in New Spain “there is not a man (and I speak from experience), however distracted he might be, that in entering inside is not moved with warm admiration.”

Upon entering any given shrine, usually from the west end, Florencia would have walked up the nave towards the transept where he was able to view the chancel which, in some cases, was separated from the rest of the structure by a wooden or iron screen. Situated behind the high altar was the principal image of the shrine that occupied the central position of the altarscreen within the apse. It was these images—whether painted or sculpted—that attracted pilgrims to shrines like magnets, especially when “they have crédito and miraculous reputations.”

Florencia described the beauty of novohispano images and their ability to “steal hearts” by moving the spiritual senses of the faithful. The religious affections they produced in devotees were evidence of their sanctity and miraculous power. In his history of the Virgin of Remedies he explained how one man had given “complete crédito to the history” by “just looking at the sacred image and the

---

28 Narración de la maravillosa, 35 (“Son los Santuarios, así de su Santísima Madre, como de sus Ángeles, y de sus Santos, unos Cielos abreviados en la tierra, y a sus Cielos los quiere Dios, no sólo perfectos, sino adornados”).
30 Narración de la maravillosa, 33 (“Y no hay hombre (hablo de experiencia) por distraído que sea, que en entrando en ella no se conmueva con un amoroso respeto”).
31 La estrella del norte, 27r (“la Madre de Dios, representada visiblemente en sus Imágenes, y con más poderosa moción en las que tienen crédito, y aplausos de milagrosas”).
beauty of the [Christ] child she held within her arms.” On another occasion he remembered when Francisco de Siles invited doctors, learned men, and a few painters to examine the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe at Tepeyac. Florencia was able to touch its cloth that day and view the face of the Mexican Madonna up close, confirming his conviction that it could not have been painted by human hands. “I believe what the painters say,” Florencia declared, “and I believe what my own eyes saw.”

As Florencia concentrated upon the altarscreen in the chancel, he mostly likely would have shifted his attention to the religious paintings decorating the interior walls of the shrine. At the sanctuary housing the Virgin of Zapopan he claimed that the faithful “were gazing upon and reading the marvels that the image had worked which were painted and written in the church.” While most paintings would have been images of the saints and other biblical figures, in some cases a few canvases or frescoes visually narrated the origin stories and declared miracles of novohispano devotions. Through personal experience and study, Florencia became convinced that religious art was a “book” for the illiterate and an important piece of evidence in the absence of writing. The Spanish historian, Fernando Alonso Escudero de la Torre, explained that a painting “is nothing other than a history or writing of past events,” which is why historians “utilize these paintings as proof for their histories, for this is how the Spaniards historicized miraculous events in ancient times.”

32 La milagrosa invención, 5r (“y sólo con ver la sagrada Imagen, y la belleza del niño, que tiene en sus brazos, dio entero crédito a la historia”).
33 La estrella del norte, 141r (“creo lo que los pintores dicen: y creo lo que mis ojos vieron”).
34 Los dos célebres santuarios, 21 (“y los demás mirando, y leyendo las maravillas, que la Imagen había obrado, que estaban pintadas en la Iglesia, y escritas”).
35 Fernando Alonso Escudero de la Torre, Historia de los célebres santuarios del Adelantamiento de Cazorla y milagrosas imágenes de el Santo Cristo de Villa-Carrillo, Virgen de la Fuen-Santa, en Villa-Nueva de el Arzobispo y Nuestra Señora de Tiscar, de la Villa de Quesada (Madrid: Bernardo de Villa-Diego, 1669), 46–47 (“pues la pintura, como dijeron el Poeta Lucrecio, y Juan Molano, no es otra cosa que..."
to the frescoes he viewed at the shrine of the Virgin of Remedies depicting the apparition narrative and miracles of the wooden polychrome statue. He claimed that what he saw were indeed “visible histories of the past” that had been painted with a very “good and ancient hand.” These paintings, so Florencia believed, were clear “verification of the truth” of its origins and prodigious reputation.  

Other important visual aids for Florencia were offerings (dones, votos or presentallas) attached to the chancel arch, placed at the foot of the miraculous image, or hung on hooks in designated areas of the shrine. Offerings were physical objects presented to the Christian God and his saints with the goal of fulfilling a promise made for some sort of special favour. Some of the offerings Florencia found at novohispano shrines were votive paintings, crutches, burial shrouds, candles, and silver replicas of various body parts. Through his reading of Iberian devotional histories he learned that...

una Historia, o Escritura de los sucesos pasados; y así los Historiadores, como vemos en Garibay, y Padilla, traen estas pinturas para prueba de sus Historias, por usar de este modo de Historiar los sucesos milagrosos, los Españoles antiguamente”).

La milagrosa invención, 22r, 2v (“las pinturas, y más las antiguas, son historias visibles de lo pasado; las de esta iglesia pueden ser como pruebas”) (“Todo lo cual está pintado de muy buena, y antigua mano en dicha Iglesia para comprobación de esta verdad”). For more on the “reading” of miracles in the religious artwork of colonial shrines, see Luisa Elena Alcalá, “¿Pues para qué son los papeles?,” 43–56; “The Jesuits and the Visual Arts,” 80–125; and “Imagen e historia. La representación del milagro en la pintura colonial,” in Los siglos de oro en los virreinatos de América, 1550–1700 (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2000), 107–125.

Offerings are generally referred to as ex-votos today, but the word did not make its first appearance in the Diccionario de la lengua castellana until 1884. For the origins of ex-votos in general, see Thomas Calvo, “El exvoto. Antecedentes y permanencias,” in Dones y promesas, 500 años de arte ofrenda (exvotos mexicanos) (Mexico City: Fundación Cultural Televisa, 1996), 31–39. In the same work Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru provides a nice summary of ex-voto paintings from the colonial era in “Lo prodigioso cotidiano en los exvotos novohispanos,” 47–63. To view some of the earliest ex-voto paintings of the Virgin of Guadalupe, see Elin Luque Agraz and Mary Michele Beltrán, El arte de dar gracias. Selección de exvotos pictóricos del Museo de la Basílica de Guadalupe (Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana and Casa Lamm, 2003).

La estrella del norte, 161v–162r (“los demás milagros, que en su Santuario se ven pintados en tablas, y se reconocen en mortajas, muletas, brazos de plata, piernas cabezas, y otros miembros del cuerpo; que son votos, y presentallas de beneficios recibidos por intercesión de esta misericordiosa Señora en su Imagen”). Narración de la maravillosa, 31–32 (“En los dos testeros interiores, que cogen en medio las puertas de la Iglesia, se ven colgadas de varias perchas mortajas de moribundos, y ya desahuciados de la vida, o acaso de alguno, o algunos, que la recobraron por intercesión del Soberano Arcángel; cabezas, piernas, brazos, &c. despojos de la muerte, y trofeos de su poder”).
offerings could be interpreted in much the same way as paintings. When José de la Justicia, a Jesuit historian, visited the Virgin of the Holy Cave in Valencia he counted more than three hundred silver votos amongst some of the other offerings, something he believed was “a faithful argument that testifies that the miracles of this holy image are innumerable.”39 Counting offerings, or even taking notes on the miracles portrayed in votive paintings, were methods Florencia employed in his own investigations of the sacred past of New Spain. To show how the Virgin of Remedies had instilled devotion

Figure 3-2. Anonymous. Engraving of the Virgin of Remedies. Notice the votive replicas of an arm, heart, leg, and head dangling at the top. Taken from Francisco de Florencia, La milagrosa invención (Mexico City: Doña María de Benavides, Viuda de Juan de Ribera, 1685). Biblioteca Eusebio Francisco Kino, Mexico City, Mexico. Photograph by Jason Dyck.

39 José de la Justicia, Historia de la Virgen de la Cueva Santa (Valencia: Bernardo Nogues, 1655), 108 (“Visitando la Cueva santa el año de mil seisientos cuarenta y tres, conté los de plata solos, y hallé más de trescientos votos, que hacen fe de otros tantos milagros, sin las mortajas, retablillos, muletas, y figuras de cera . . . Todo es fiel argumento, que declara ser innumerables los milagros de esta sagrada Imagen”).
within the people of his kingdom he claimed that “in no other thing is this demonstrated with more evidence than with the gifts and offerings that they have given her.” The greater the layers of offerings at shrines meant that sacred historians had more proof for their pious arguments.

Firsthand experience was an important part of how Florencia practiced the sacred historian’s craft. In recording down what he had seen and touched he was able to testify to the unbroken continuity of sanctity between the past and the present. In this he was similar to Hernando de Ojea, a Dominican friar who claimed that all of the “holy ceremonies of the church, inspired and illuminated by God, are dedicated for particular ends, whose marvellous effects we see every day through experience, and I have experienced and seen some of them with my own eyes.” A sacred historian, generally speaking, had to record his own experiences of the sacred if he wanted his narrative to be credible. Whether he was at the bedside of his brethren or on his knees praying at a local shrine, Florencia took mental notes of his devotional encounters. “[I]n the midst of my greatest religious experiences,” he explained, “every time I have seen [Catholic] sanctuaries I have allowed my curiosity to play its part so that with an investigation my memories of them would be better preserved.” The memories of others, fortunately for him, had also been preserved in writing.

40 La milagrosa invención, 23r (“Y esto en ninguna cosa se muestra con más evidencia, que en los dones, y presentalllas, que le han ofrecido”).
41 Ojea, Libro tercero, 22 (“ceremonias santas que la Iglesia, inspirada y alumbrada por Dios, tiene dedicados para particulares cosas, cuyos efectos maravillosos vemos cada día por experiencia, y yo he experimentado y visto algunos de ellos por mis ojos”).
42 La estrella del norte, 139v (“Pero como en medio de mis mayores devociones, siempre que he visto algunos Santuarios, he dado lugar (confieso mi culpa) a que la curiosidad haga su oficio, para que queden con la investigación más fijas las memorias de ellos”).
The Authorities of the Indies

Throughout his writings Florencia employed a “scissors-and-paste” method by stringing together quotations from as many authorities as he possibly could.\(^{43}\) Several chronicles either mentioned or had been written on his religious province and the majority of the Catholic images he treated had their own devotional histories. Since he relied heavily upon his predecessors for evidence, he judged many of his sources based upon whether their authors had direct experience of the Indies. Not only this, but he searched for texts penned by men of “authority, letters, and known piety”\(^{44}\) from both sides of the Atlantic, including indigenous writers. All of the texts he acquired, when put together, lent evidentiary weight to the veracity of his sacred histories. But to his dismay, he discovered that the authorities comprising the “library of the Indies” were not always treated with the same level of respect as European books.

An authority for Florencia was both a book (libro manuscrito or libro impreso) that one cited and the author who penned it.\(^{45}\) In the seventeenth century the written word was generally considered a faithful medium through which historical truth was expressed; hence the greater number of authorities supporting a sacred tradition increased its overall level of certainty. When the Jesuit Francisco de Padilla wrote his history of the Virgin of Loreto, he assured his readers that “for more authority and certainty of the truth of the abovementioned history . . . it will be useful to refer to what some authoritative and trustworthy authors have written about it.”\(^{46}\) Florencia followed his coreligionist’s lead

\(^{43}\) I have borrowed the expression “scissors and paste” from Collingwood, The Idea of History, 257–261.
\(^{44}\) La estrella del norte, 118v (“personas de autoridad, de letras, y de calificada piedad”).
\(^{45}\) Diccionario de la lengua castellana, 1:490 (“AUTORIDAD. Se toma por el texto, o palabras que se citan de algunos libros o sujetos que hacen y deben hacer opinión”).
\(^{46}\) Francisco de Padilla, Historia de la santísima casa y devotísimo santuario de Nuestra Señora de Loreto (Madrid: Por la Viuda de Alonso Gómez, 1588), 16v–17r (“para más autoridad y certeza de la verdad, de la
when he penned his own history of the Lauretan Madonna. After providing all of the necessary bibliographic information on the authorities he consulted, he explained how each author had built upon the work of the last, and how all of them had been diligent researchers of the Santa Casa. Ending with the Jesuit Juan de Burgos (b. 1612) from “this Province of Mexico,” Florencia claimed that “I cannot morally err in what I write, because their authority is great, their créditos many, and they are taken to be honourable and truthful writers in Rome and in all of Europe, that it would be rash and imprudent to deny the truth of their writings.”

Florencia searched for authorities in libraries (librerías) on both sides of the Atlantic. In the Spanish world a library was both a collection of books and the physical location where those books were housed. The possession of books was primarily an elite affair and played an important role in the colonization of the New World.

Florencia availed himself to the private collections of other scholars and the repositories

47 La casa peregrina, 2r–v (“no puedo moralmente errar, en lo que escribiere; porque su autoridad es tanta, tales sus créditos, y la opinión de ajustados, y verídicos Escritores, que en Roma, y toda la Europa, tienen, que sería temeraria osadía, negar la verdad de sus escritos”).

48 The Franciscan friar Diego de Arce explained that there are two Spanish words for repositories of books: “The Greeks use the word Biblioteca, which means depository or place of books [and] the proper Latin term that signifies libreria is Libraria, which was derived from librarium, a cabinet or box of books.” De las librerías, de su antigüedad y provecho, de su sitio, de la estimación que de ellas deben hacer las republicas [1608] (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 1998), 11–12 (“Los Griegos usan la voz Bibliotheca, que quiere decir depósito, o lugar de libros . . . La voz propiamente latina que significa librería es Libraria . . . de donde vino librarium, un armario, o cajón de libros”). Librería also signified a bookstore and was used interchangeably with biblioteca. Covarruvias Orozco, Tesoro de la lengua, 524r (“LIBRERO, el que tiene tienda de libros. Librería, la dicha tienda. Librería, cuando es pública, se llama por nombre particular Biblioteca, como en Roma la Biblioteca Vaticana”).

of Jesuit colleges. But a library (biblioteca) was also a bibliographic catalogue that listed the “distinguished works of various authors” or “all of the writers of a nation.”

While preparing his sacred histories, Florencia made use of many of these “libraries,” particularly subject bibliographies dealing with the Jesuits and the Virgin Mary. It is uncertain whether he was familiar with Antonio de León Pinelo’s (1590–1660) *Epitome de la biblioteca oriental y occidental* (1639), but he certainly would have agreed with his assessment that “the books of the Indies” are “the most forgotten and dejected.”

Bibliographic catalogues may have aided scholars, but they also drew attention to the literary grandeur of a given kingdom. In European bibliographies American authors were


52 León Pinelo, *Epitome de la biblioteca oriental y occidental*, Prólogo, 4v (“comenzando por lo más olvidado y abatido, que son los libros de Indias”).
not always well represented, which is why Florencia hoped that men like Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora would publish books “for the crédito of his patria.”

Although Florencia never included a formal bibliography (catálogo or lista) in any of his works, he cited many of his authorities within the body and side margins of his texts. Although he referenced works of philosophy, geography, poetry, grammar, and

---

53 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 6r (“para crédito de su patria”). Peter Burke notes that there were few books dealing with America in bibliographies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many times works about the New World were simply lumped together with those on India. “America and the Rewriting of World History,” in America in European Consciousness, 1493–1750, ed. Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 36. Luis Agustín Cordero Medina has counted 793 “American” writers in the eighteenth-century edition of the Biblioteca Hispana. Nicolás Antonio. Bibliógrafo americanista (Lima: Centro Nacional de Documentación e Información Educacional, 1984), 7. Authors from New Spain only totalled fifty-three

54 For two examples of bibliographies in seventeenth-century New Spain, see Baltasar de Medina, “Lista de escritores que han impreso noticias de San Felipe de Jesús,” in Vida, martirio, y beatificación del invicto protomártir del Japón San Felipe de Jesús (Mexico City: Juan de Ribera, 1683); and Vetancurt, “Catálogo
law, most of his authorities were classified under theology and history. Regardless of what he was writing, Florencia engaged with the “authorities of the Scripture” and the “authority of the Holy Doctors” of the Catholic Church. But he also drew upon a wide range of historical authorities. When he concentrated on his religious province he was primarily interested in Jesuit chronicles and sacred biographies that narrated both the foundation of the Society of Jesus in New Spain and the lives of its most outstanding members. He made passing references to works by creole Jesuits from other parts of Spanish America and to the writings of European Jesuits which included sections or references to the Province of New Spain. His principal source, however, was a provincial chronicle that Pérez de Ribas had completed around 1653 but was unable to publish. Florencia wove large portions of this text into his own provincial chronicle because

![Image of bibliographic reference]

Figure 3-4. Bibliographic reference to Andrés Pérez de Ribas’s manuscript provincial chronicle in the side margin of Francisco de Florencia, Historia de la Provincia (Mexico City: Iván Joseph Guillena Carrascoso, 1694). Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada de la Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, Mexico City, Mexico. Photograph by Jason Dyck.
“the provincial Father Andrés Pérez, who was from this Province, was able to speak with its founding fathers.”

Not only this, but he was “an eyewitness, the best because of his great posts in the Province, and for his great religiosity.”

Through Pérez de Ribas Florencia was able to experience some of the earlier moments of his province’s history and attest to the sanctity of his brethren.

Some of the other authorities Florencia worked with dealt with indigenous history and the “conquest” of New Spain. When he wrote about the pre-Hispanic past he either referenced or cited large portions from José de Acosta and Juan de Torquemada. He judged that these men were trustworthy because they were “diligent writers” who had shown great cuidado in the collection of their sources. In particular, Florencia stated that Acosta wrote “what he saw and experienced with such great diligence as he put into investigating the things of Peru and New Spain.” When he discussed the fall of Mexico-Tenochtitlan he turned to Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1495–1583), a conquistador who penned a lengthy account of the “conquest” while in retirement in Guatemala as an encomendero (one who was “entrusted” with a group of Indians). In order to demonstrate the grandeur of the Mexica capital, Florencia claimed that there was no “need to make comparisons with other famous cities in Europe, but only to say something of what the

---

56 Historia de la Provincia, 138 (“El Padre Andrés Pérez Provincial, que fue de esta Provincia, que alcanzó a los Padres primeros de ella”).
57 Ibid., 190 (“que este ocular testigo, mayor de toda excepción por sus grandes puestos en la Provincia, y por su gran religión”).
58 Florencia was not alone in this practice, including Acosta and Torquemada themselves. Acosta relied heavily upon the writings of Juan de Tovar, a fellow Jesuit, and Juan Polo Ondegardo (ca. 1510–1575), a Spanish lawyer active in the viceroyalty of Peru. Historia natural y moral de las Indias, 281. Torquemada, on the other hand, was significantly indebted to the work of Bartolomé de las Casas. Monarquía indiana, vol. 2.
59 La milagrosa invención, 13r (“Autoridad de Torquemada”) (“escritor diligente de las cosas de su Provincia”). La estrella del norte, 80v (“un Escritor [Torquemada] tan diligente en juntar papeles”).
60 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 6r (“que escribe lo que vio y alcanzó con la exquisita diligencia que puso en averiguar las cosas del Perú y de la Nueva España”).
captain Bernal Díaz del Castillo, an eye witness, writes.” After citing large passages from the Historia verdadera de la conquista, which was published posthumously in 1632, Florencia added statements such as, “Thus far from this eyewitness and truthful writer.” He was convinced that the conquistador should be given “complete crédito” because he only wrote about the things he had seen with his own eyes.

Florencia also turned to “ecclesiastical histories, chronicles of Catholic kingdoms, and the annals of the religious orders.” The provincial chronicles of the mendicant friars were particularly invaluable because they narrated the “conversion of this vast kingdom” and provided prodigious details on Catholic images. By the seventeenth century the authors of many of these histories were creoles, and Florencia never shied away from highlighting their credentials as faithful writers. He stated that Baltasar de Medina (1634–1697), a Discalced Franciscan from Mexico City, was “a great historian of this century [whose] extremely assiduous knowledge I venerate as truthful oracles.”

And Juan de Grijalva, an Augustinian friar born in Colima and raised in Michoacán, was an “incomparable man, honour of his patria of New Spain, and of extraordinary crédito to his Province.” Other ecclesiastical histories were also important to Florencia, particularly Gregorio García’s (ca. 1575–1627) work on the evangelizing work of Saint Thomas in the New World. According to the Spanish Dominican, who had spent some

---

61 Ibid., f. 6v (“no he de hacer comparaciones con otras ciudades famosas de Europa, sino decir algo de lo que escribe el Capitán Bernal Díaz del Castillo, testigo ocular”).
62 Ibid., f. 7r (“Hasta aquí este ocular testigo y verídico escritor”).
63 Ibid., f. 11r (“su entero crédito que lo escribió un hombre que lo vio”).
64 Historia de la Provincia, 1 (“las Historias Eclesiásticas, las Crónicas de los Reinos Católicos, y los Anales de las Sagradas Religiones”).
65 Ibid., 99–100 (“la conversión de este Reino tan dilatado”).
66 Descripción histórica, 53 (“el P. Fr. Baltasar de Medina, Historiador grande de este siglo, y cuyas diligentísimas noticias venero yo como oráculos ciertos”).
67 Ibid., 89–90 (“incomparable varón, honra de su patria la Nueva España, y crédito singular de su Provincia del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús”).
twelve years in the Indies, the apostle had left a cross in the port town of Guatulco which miraculously withstood the attacks of the English pirate Francis Drake in the 1580s.68 When Florencia included his own abbreviated version of the Cross of Guatulco in his provincial chronicle, he claimed that its history “is treated by many authors of great authority and crédito, hence to not believe them would be offensive.”69

Although Florencia referenced the “histories of the most famous shrines of Europe,”70 the majority of the devotional histories he consulted were from New Spain. Luis de Cisneros, for example, was the first to pen an account of the Virgin of Remedies, and Florencia was impressed with his work because he “wrote what he heard from the mouth of those who were almost eyewitnesses.”71 The Mercedarian friar had talked with Doña Ana, the daughter of the Indian seer Juan de Tobar, which is why it could be concluded that he was a “reliable author and that he had complete authority.”72 When he focussed on the history of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Florencia constructed a mini-bibliographic catalogue to bolster the credibility of the apparition. The first section of his “Guadalupan library” concentrates on eight authorities, three “writers of this kingdom” and five from outside of it who made “honourable mention” of the image. But Florencia devoted most of his attention to creole authors, highlighting their reputations as learned men worthy of full credence. He claimed that Miguel Sánchez, the first to write about Guadalupe, was “born in New Spain [and] amongst a select few with such ability and talent for the pulpit that Mexico has ever produced, a fertile mother of distinguished men

68 Gregorio García, Historia eclesiástica y seglar, de la India Oriental y Occidental, y predicación del Santo Evangelio en ella por los apóstoles (Baeça: Pedro de la Cuesta, 1626), 183v–190v.
69 Historia de la Provincia, 239 (“Esta Historia la traen tantos Autores, y de tanta autoridad, y crédito, que no dárselo sería ofenderlos”).
70 La estrella del norte, 44r (“Léanse las Historias de los Santuarios más famosos de Europa”).
71 La milagrosa invención, 6r (“El P. M. Cisneros, escribió, lo que oyó de boca de testigos casi oculares”).
72 Ibid. (“Autor fidedigno, y que tiene toda la autoridad, que puede asegurarnos moralmente de su certeza”).
of all types.” Mateo de la Cruz, who had edited Sánchez’s work into a smaller tract, was “a preacher of qualified talent and spirit.” And Luis Becerra Tanco, according to Florencia, had written an account of the Virgin of Tepeyac that contained “expert knowledge from the treasure of his great erudition.”

Included in Florencia’s “Guadalupan library” were also indigenous sources. He believed, together with other religious men, that Indian systems of writing, although inferior to the alphabetic script, expressed historical truth. He viewed Indian codices as authorities alongside European books, alternatively calling them paintings (pinturas) or maps (mapas). Before the arrival of the Spaniards, the Nahua-speaking people of the central valley of Mexico had developed their own sophisticated forms of writing through a combination of pictograms, ideograms, logograms, and phonograms. They recorded their histories in painted books made of paper or animal skins which they stored in their own repositories known as the amoxcalli (literally “house of books”). Although some of

3 La estrella del norte, 88v (“fue el Licenciado Miguel Sánchez, uno de los nacidos en Nueva España de más escogidas prendas, y talento de púlpito, que ha dado México, Madre fecunda de esclarecidos Varones en todas lineas”).

4 Ibid., 90v (“acumula otras buenas noticias del tesoro de su mucha erudición”).

5 For a discussion on the reliability of indigenous sources in the colonial era, see Cañizares-Esguerra, How to Write the History of the New World, 60–129.


the early conquistadors viewed these texts with fascination, it did not take long before they were placed under suspicion by colonial churchmen. In the first few decades of colonization various wings of the church exerted significant effort to destroy indigenous codices, believing that they had ultimately been written by Satan and hence were leading converted Indians back into idolatry. Florencia criticized these early idolatry campaigns, suggesting that “in the beginning the bishops and priests (perhaps with more zeal than discretion) saw their paintings, which served as letters for them like those of the Egyptians, Japanese, and Chinese, and suspected that they were images of their false Gods, so they took them away and burned them.”

Although several painted books had indeed been lost, a few were preserved through the combined efforts of the mendicant friars and their indigenous informants. Florencia explained that “after the ministers of the gospel started to understand these hieroglyphs and realized their previous errors, they began to both value and collect them.” He claimed that he was able to view “some of these writings” in the Jesuit library of San Pedro y San Pablo, particularly one that traced the history of the Mexica from the remote regions of the north to the central valley of Mexico “with few errors.” But although Florencia claimed to have seen these painted books, it appears as though he was only able to interpret them with the help of other religious scholars. In his provincial

78 Hernán Cortés sent a few indigenous “books” back to King Charles V with a series of other gifts he acquired from New Spain. “Primera carta-relación” [1519], in Cartas de Relación, 19th ed. (Mexico City: Porrúa, 2002), 33 (“Y más dos libros que acá tienen los indios”).

79 La estrella del norte, 69v (“Y es la razón de haber ya pocos, o ningunos: que a los principios los Señores Obispos, y Curas (no se si con más celo, que discreción) viendo las pinturas de ellos, que eran las que, cómo a los Egipcios, Japoneses, y Chinos, servían de letras, sospechando que eran Imágenes de sus vanos Dioses, se las quitaban, y quemaban”).

80 Ibid. (“Después que los Ministros del Evangelio fueron entendiendo estos Hieroglíficos, y cayeron en la cuenta de su engaño, empezaron a estimarlos, y recogerlos”).

81 Ibid., 93r–v (“He visto algunos escritos de estos, en particular uno, que se guarda en nuestra librería del Colegio de San Pedro, y San Pablo de esta Ciudad de México, en que se contiene la Historia de los Mexicanos desde su venida de aquellas Regiones ignotas, hasta los tiempos de la Conquista con poca diferencia”).
chronicle he provided an explanation of how the Tarascans arrived to the region of Michoacán, reasoning that “they came from the west of that place they call Chicomoztoc, meaning seven caves, [which] is found painted in their maps.” Since Florencia claimed that this account was “the most current opinion,” he was clearly following the work of Alonso de la Rea. But even if he did not know how to interpret the painted books he claimed to have seen, what is important to note is his defence of them as reliable sources.

Florencia explained that the Mexica recorded their histories with “hieroglyphic characters” in the same way as the Egyptians and Chinese, using “characters of small size in the form of men, quadrupeds, birds, fish, plants, and other recognizable species.” He claimed that they employed this system of writing to record their laws, make contracts, perform transactions, eternalize their heroes, and to preserve the traditions of their ancestors. Since they recorded all of these things with such precision, Florencia concluded that their painted books “held great authority amongst the Indians, like the authorized lawsuits and signatures of our public scribes.” One of the major reasons why these painted books were so esteemed was due to the fact that their priests were the only ones who penned them, which is why Florencia believed they should be considered “authentic historians.” He insisted that the Mexica “gave complete crédito to these men,” something he argued should be done in his own day with material from “the realm of history” that did not touch the subject of their “superstitious rites.” He further affirmed the credibility of their painted books in his present, pointing to how their “hieroglyphic

---

82 Historia de la Provincia, 219 (“La más corriente opinión es, que los Tarascos . . . vinieron del Poniente, de aquel lugar, que llaman Chicomoztoc, que quiere decir siete cuevas . . . que se halla pintado en sus mapas”).
83 La Rea, Crónica, 7v (“Y según las pinturas, y tradiciones, que se han conservado en el archivo de los tiempos . . . Pintaron aquellas nueve naciones saliendo de las siete cuevas del Poniente”).
84 La estrella del norte, 92v, 93r (“con sus figuras hieroglíficos”) (“Eran estas unas figuras de bultos pequeños de hombres, de brutos, de aves, de peces, de plantas, y de otras visibles especies”).
“characters” were valuable pieces of evidence in colonial courts and used to establish land disputes between Indians and Spaniards.  

Although the production of painted books significantly declined in the 1500s, Florencia noted that there were still a few Nahua who continued to practice their ancient art of writing. It had been necessary to establish the credibility of their writings because “in some of these maps of their public and private histories, the admirable apparition of Our Lady and of her holy image of Guadalupe can be found written with these characters and hieroglyphs.” Florencia pointed to one map in particular that Luis Becerra Tanco claimed he had read in the house of Fernando Alva de Ixtlixochitl (1578–1650), a mestizo historian with ancestral links to the indigenous nobility of Texcoco. This map was said to have contained annals of the Mexica and covered over three hundred years of history, which included the conquest and the “apparition of Our Lady to Juan Diego and her blessed image in the palace of the bishop.” Florencia recognized that it was not in Sigüenza y Góngora’s personal library, but he argued that this did not mean that it never existed. “This is a negative argument,” he explained, “but to say that the Licenciado Becerra [Tanco], an exemplary priest who is well-versed in the interpretation of these

85 Ibid., 93v (“Estos eran entre los Naturales de tanta autoridad, como los procesos autorizados, y signados de nuestros Escribanos: porque corrian por cuenta de solos los Sacerdotes, que eran sus Historiadores auténticos, a quienes se daba todo crédito; y hoy se debe dar el mismo, en lo que no toca al culto de sus falsos Dioses, y ritos supersticiosos, que a él concernían; sino en lo que se queda en la espera de Historia. Y a esta causa hasta el día de hoy tienen mucho valimiento en los Juzgados, y se presentan en ellos para probar los sitios, los parajes, y linderos de las tierras, que les tocan, y pertenecen, no sólo cuando litigan entre sí, sino cuando contestan con los Españoles sobre ellas.”)
86 Ibid., 94r (“en algunos de estos Mapas de sus Historias generales, y particulares, se halló escrita con estas figuras, y hieroglíficos la admirable Aparición de Nuestra Señora, y la de su Santa Imagen de Guadalupe”).
87 Ibid. 94v (“En este pues entre otros acaecimientos memorables, y sucesos después de la Conquista de México, estaban figuradas, la Aparición de Nuestra Señora a Juan Diego, y la de su Bendita Imagen en el Palacio del Obispo”).
said maps, testified in the juridical testimonies that he saw it . . . is a positive argument that should be given more crédito.”

The multiethnic libraries of the New World were made up of manuscript, printed, and painted books by creole, European, mestizo, and Indian authors. Some of these books were sent back across the Atlantic as novelties, but many remained in their American context with limited circulation. Juan Rodríguez de León, the brother of Antonio de León Pinelo, noted in an introductory piece to the Epitome de la biblioteca oriental y occidental that “since only silver and gold is desired in the Indies, its writers are so neglected and their histories barely seen.” Roughly fifty years later Florencia expressed similar sentiments. At one point he described how a twelve-volume manuscript history by the Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún had been lost after it was sent by the viceroy Martín Enríquez to King Philip II. “This great treasure of information,” Florencia noted with a mixture of pride and irritation, “had the same fate as the innumerable amounts of silver and gold that have gone out of New Spain, and we do not know what Spain has done with them.” He sadly discovered that many more treasures on the sacred past of his kingdom were also missing from the archives of the Indies.

The Search for Ancient Papers

Authorities were invaluable resources for Florencia, but it was next to impossible to write sacred history without ancient papers. He visited various repositories for the

---

88 Ibid. (“pero éste es argumento negativo, y el decir el Licenciado Becerra, Sacerdote ejemplar, y entendido en la inteligencia de dichos Mapas, que lo vio, y haberlo testificado en las Informaciones . . . es argumento positivo, a que se debe dar más crédito”).
89 Rodríguez de León, “Discurso apologético,” in León Pinelo, Epitome de la biblioteca, 7r (“que como de las Indias sólo se apetece plata y oro, están sus Escritores tan olvidados, como sus historias poco vistas”).
90 La estrella del norte, 159v (“Tuvo este gran tesoro de noticias el paradero, que los innumerables de plata, y oro, que de esta Nueva España han pasado, que no sabemos, que ha hecho España de ellos”).
earliest documents he could find, earnestly hoping that he would uncover an old charter, relation, letter, or book of miracles that would prove the antiquity of the sacred traditions he was investigating. To his great fortune, Florencia discovered some of the papers he was looking for, both those related to the early years of Jesuit missionary activity and the miracles of local devotions. But as valuable as these documents were as evidence, they were few and far between. Florencia gathered together as many archival materials as he possibly could, but he found himself dedicating almost the same amount of energy into explaining their absence.  

The papers (papeles, manuscritos, instrumentos, or escrituras) that Florencia drew upon for his sacred histories were both authentic and ancient. In order for a paper to be authentic it needed to be signed by an official scribe before a series of witnesses or marked with the official seal of the given signatory. For a paper to be ancient it had to be old, but this did not necessarily mean that it had to be from the remote past. Florencia referred to papers written in his own lifetime, together with those penned during the early days of colonization, as ancient papers. Possession of an old document provided vital credibility to sacred traditions. To claim that a manuscript was ancient, dusty, frayed at the edges, and safely stored away in an official archive was rhetorically powerful and designed to impress readers. But in some cases, naming a paper ancient was nothing other than pious invention, a literary move to make up for an extremely thin documentary trial. Francisco de Pereda, a Spanish Dominican friar, explained in his history of the Virgin of

---

91 In the early modern Spanish world the line between libraries and archives was not always clearly marked as it is today. Arce wrote that, “Some Latin authors, especially ecclesiastics, have used the Greek word Archive for libraries.” De las librerías, 12 (“Algunos autores Latinos, especialmente Eclesiásticos, han llamado a las librerías con esta voz Griega Archivía”).

92 In a royal decree of December 28, 1638, Philip IV ordered that all public documents in the Indies should be written upon officially stamped paper. Hans Lenz, Historia del papel en México y cosas relacionadas (1525–1950) (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1990), 89.
Atocha that “ancient papers, writings, and notebooks are of great authority when they treat of ancient things.”

Florencia looked for papers in archives on both sides of the Atlantic. An archive (archivo) was normally a chest (arquilla or cajón) “storing public papers” or an actual place, like the castle tower of Simancas that Charles V set aside in 1540 to house royal documents. But an archive was also a cabinet (armario) or folder (cartapacio) that was safeguarded in a designated room of a home or institution. In most cases, archives were secured by locks whose keys were entrusted to a select few; permission to view the documentation they contained was determined by a “hierarchy of access.” During his research, Florencia made use of personal archives, specifically “the rare papers and very ancient maps” of Sigüenza y Góngora. He sifted through the records of the Mexico City cabildo and made use of documents from the diocesan archives of Guadalajara and Puebla. On at least one occasion he visited a parish archive in Mexico City where his coreligionist Gerónimo de Figueroa had been baptized. And Florencia collected papers

---

93 Francisco de Pereda, *Historia de la santa y devotísima imagen de Nuestra Señora de Atocha Patrona de Madrid* (Valladolid: Sebastián de Cañas, 1604), 31v (“y se refiere de papeles antiguos, escrituras y memoriales, que en cosas tan antiguas son de mucha autoridad”).


96 *La estrella del norte*, 94v (“entre los muchos, y curiosos papeles, y Mapas antiquísimos, que de todas partes a costa de mucha solicitud, y dineros ha juntado, y tiene, y entiende D. Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora”). Sigüenza y Góngora was a generous scholar who lent some of his maps to Francisco Eusebio Kino and showed his collection of indigenous codices to Gemelli Carreri. Leonard, *Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora*, 57. Gemelli Careri, *Viaje a la Nueva España*, 118–119, 156.

97 *La milagrosa invención*, 19v, 44r (“como consta del libro del Cabildo por ese tiempo”) (“Yo no la hallo en los asientos del Cabildo”). *Los dos célebres santuarios*, 45 (“Sacada de los procesos auténticos, que se guardan en los Archivos del Obispado”).

98 *Vida de Figueroa*, 2r (“Como consta del libro de Bautismos del dicho año a fojas 92 a la vuelta”).
from the Jesuit central archives in Rome, “our archives” of his religious province in Mexico City, and the Jesuit “archive of Oaxaca.”

Figure 3-5. Chest used by the Jesuits for shipping goods and storing papers. Museo Histórico de Acapulco, Fuerte de San Diego, Acapulco, Mexico. Photograph by Jason Dyck.

Although Florencia never included lists of his archival material, there were times when he described the characteristics of the papers he found. But in many cases, he was much more general, referring to “papers” without providing any further details. Some of the documents he referenced in his sacred histories were letters, relations, baptismal books, cabildo records, decrees, diaries, financial books, rough drafts of histories, juridical testimonies, and other ecclesiastical papers. Manuscripts such as these

---

99 Historia de la Provincia, 5, 19, 170, 194, 386, 395, 397, 413, 414 (“Archivos de Roma”) (“nuestros archivos”) (“hay memorias en el Archivo de Oaxaca”).

100 It was not common practice in New Spain, but some sacred historians provided names of the archives and manuscripts they used in their opening prefaces. For one such example, see Baltasar de Medina, Crónica de la Santa Provincia de San Diego de México, de religiosos descalzos de N. S. P. Francisco en la Nueva España (Mexico City: Juan de Ribera, 1682), Prólogo, par. 6.
filled Spanish American archives, but a significant amount of them were lost during the colonial era to floods, earthquakes, theft, and even arson. In other cases, official and ecclesiastical documentation was converted into new sheets for reuse given the general scarcity of paper in New Spain. Although there were some early examples of paper mills in New Spain, they had little impact on the general production of paper, an industry monopolized by the Spanish crown. Lenz, *Historia del papel en México*, 65–84.

Florencia explained that in the early years of colonization there was “a lack of paper in this kingdom for the span of one year, resulting in the loss of many papers from the Archive of the Archbishopric.” Although there is record of such shortages, referencing lost papers was always a convenient way to explain why little had been written on a sacred tradition.

Since Jesuit archives were meticulously maintained in the early modern period, Florencia had a significant amount of materials to draw upon for his provincial chronicle. Despite this wealth of documentation, he still lamented that there was “little material for [the history] regarding what could have and should have been in more than one hundred years since this Province [of New Spain] was founded.” He explained that resources were minimal because the men of his order, like the early heroes of Rome, were so busy performing great deeds that they forgot to write them down. This was clearly a pious exaggeration. Florencia included letters and edicts from the Spanish crown to demonstrate that their presence in America had been royally approved. He specifically quoted a 1571 decree from Philip II “word for word” that gave permission to

---

101 Although there were some early examples of paper mills in New Spain, they had little impact on the general production of paper, an industry monopolized by the Spanish crown. Lenz, *Historia del papel en México*, 65–84.
102 *La estrella del norte*, 55r (“por haber faltado un año el papel en el Reino, a cuya causa desaparecieron muchos papeles del Archivo de el Arzobispado”).
103 Robles recorded a shortage of paper in December of 1677. *Diario*, 1:229.
105 *Historia de la Provincia*, 2 (“y por los pocos materiales, que para ella hay respecto de los que podia, y debia haber en más de cien años que ha que se fundó esta Provincia”).
the Jesuits to assist in the labour of evangelization in Peru, La Florida, and New Spain. In other cases, he worked with the annual letters (*Anuas*) of local Jesuit provinces around the world, especially when he was narrating their early missionary activity in Habana in the 1560s. Not only this, but he made use of letters of edification and quoted excerpts from a diary by Pedro Sánchez, one of the founding fathers of his Jesuit province. While he was in Rome Florencia also found “fragments of the history of this province” of New Spain that he said were in “my possession.” When he had papers that were unsigned, he judged that they were of “distinct authors because they are [written] with a different hand and style.”

Several of the papers that Florencia used for his provincial chronicle would have been stored together with other valuable articles. When he was *procurador* in Seville he was required to keep “a crate closed with two keys” where “the money and accounting books” would be safely deposited. At times, some of the manuscripts in Jesuit archives even made the transition from ordinary documents to objects worthy of veneration. As he prepared his sacred biographies of Medina and Guadalajara, Florencia acquired their

---

106 Ibid., 73 (“esta carta [que he puesto aquí a la letra, porque se vea el concepto, que el prudente Rey tenía de la Compañía, y el celo de propagar en estos Reinos, que Dios le dio, la Fe de Jesu Cristo]”).
107 Ibid., 32 (“Y fue tanto el fruto, que en la Habana, y en toda la Isla se hizo, que las Anuas, que de esta Misión, se hicieron, y enviaron a Roma desde la Nueva España dicen estas palabras en el Cap. 5”).
108 Ibid., 397, 144, 147 (“y con esa ocasión dice más de la Vida del Padre Plaza en su carta de edificación el Padre Martín Fernández”) (“dice así el Padre Pedro Sánchez en un libro como Diario, que está en el Archivo de su mano”) (“Dirélo con las palabras mismas con que lo anotó el Padre Provincial Pedro Sánchez en su Diario num. 16”).
109 Ibid., 397, 411, 413 (“mucho del segundo libro de los fragmentos de la Provincia”) (“Dice el libro segundo del fragmento de la Historia de la Provincia”) (“hasta que leyendo dicho libro del Fragmento de la Historia de esta Provincia, que tengo en mi poder sacada del Archivo de Roma en letra Italiana”). Félix Ayuso has identified the author of these fragments as Juan Sánchez Baquero. See his introduction to *Fundación de la Compañía*, 7–10.
110 Historia de la Provincia, 386 (“parece son de distintos Autores, porque están de diferentes letras, y estilos”).
111 Zubillaga, “El procurador de las Indias Occidentales,” 399 (“Tenga una arca cerrada con dos llaves, de las cuales la una tendrá el dicho Procurador, y la otra su compañero; y en ella se guarde el dinero, y el libro de cuentas del recibo y del gasto”).
spiritual writings from his superiors and referred to them as “relics,” believing that they needed to be guarded with special care. He also stumbled across a series of orders that San Francisco de Borja left for the superiors of the Jesuit Province of Andalucía “in the archive of the [Council] of the Indies in Seville.” Since the Padre General was canonized in 1671, his signature on the document was given new meaning. “I adorned [the orders] in a very unique silver reliquary,” Florencia said, “with a glass window of crystal where the exact signature can be seen that is guarded in the said archive.”

Amongst the other Jesuit documents that Florencia mentioned were “ancient papers,” which were useful for correcting older traditions he believed were ill-founded. Some claimed that Pedro Sánchez, for example, had initially rejected the site of land that Alonso de Villaseca offered the Company in Mexico City because it was not close enough to the University. “In the ancient papers I have sifted through,” Florencia stated, “I do not find this, but everything to the contrary.” These types of documents also allowed him to show that he had done everything possible to uncover information on a given topic. On one occasion he noted that important dates on the first rector of the Jesuit college of Pátzcuaro were missing in the archives, explaining that “I have not been able to find out the day and month [Juan Curiel] passed away because the ancient papers do

112 *Vida de Medina*, 49r (“que Dios le hacía, como consta del papel de sus apuntamientos, que hoy se guarda como preciosa Reliquia”). *Relación de Guadalajara*, 11v (“Después de la muerte de el P. Nicolás de Guadalajara, con intervención de el Superior, repartieron entre si algunos de casa ciertos papeles, que por suyos estimaban como reliquias”). For a discussion of a similar transition from text to relic in New France, see Julia Boss, “Writing a Relic: The Uses of Hagiography in New France,” in Bilinkoff and Greer, eds., *Colonial Saints*, 211–233.

113 *Historia de la Provincia*, 80 (Estas ordenaciones originales, que están en el Archivo del oficio de las Indias de Sevilla, por mayor veneración de la firma de mano del S. General, cuando lo canonizó la santa Silla el año de 1671 un siglo cabal después, de la fundación de la Nueva-España, y los sujetos de ella las hice Yo . . . adornar en una nomina de plata muy curiosa con su vidriera de cristal por donde se puede ver la precisa firma, que se guarda en dicho Archivo”).

114 Ibid., 118 (“porque de los papeles antiguos, que he revuelto, no hallo, sino todo lo contrario”).
not distinguish between the two.”\textsuperscript{115} But Florencia resorted to ancient papers primarily to
demonstrate the heroic deeds of his brethren. In 1578 Pope Gregory XIII sent a series of
relics to the Jesuits in New Spain, an event that was elaborately celebrated in Mexico
City in a series of festivities. On the sixth day there was a poetry contest, and amongst the
last to be read was one that represented the triumphs of the early church. Florencia
claimed that the men of his order followed this contest with a harvest of souls because the
“the ancient relations testify to how they were able, through some very persuasive
sermons, to work about confessions and notable conversions in sinners and lost men for
the great crédito of the Company.”\textsuperscript{116}

Although it is possible to trace some of the ancient papers Florencia used for his
provincial chronicle, those in his devotional histories are not as easy to follow. Some of
the papers he cited he only knew through the works of others, such as “the manuscript
annals of one of the conquistadors that the Maestro [Luis de] Cisneros testified to have
held in his hands and read.”\textsuperscript{117} In other cases, like when he was writing about the Virgin
of Guadalupe, he claimed that Miguel Sánchez had written his history based upon “some
ancient papers preserved by providence.”\textsuperscript{118} Sánchez, however, never specified which
papers he was referring to or where they were housed, so Florencia clearly had no
knowledge of them. But he does appear to have been familiar with other older texts in
Nahuatl written by anonymous Indians. He explained that although Spaniards had been

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 295 (“No he podido averiguar el día, y mes de su fallecimiento, porque los papeles antiguos no los
distinguen”).
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 354 (“pues testifican las Relaciones antiguas, que como pudieran de unos sermones muy
persuasivos, se siguieron Confesiones, y conversiones notables de pecadores, y hombres perdidos, con
mucho crédito de la Compañía”).
\textsuperscript{117} La milagrosa invención, 9r (“como refieren los Anales manuscritos de uno los Conquistadores, que
testifica haber tenido en sus manos, y leído el Maestro Cisneros”).
\textsuperscript{118} La estrella del norte, 89r (“Sacó lo más de esta Historia, como dice en su Prólogo, de unos papeles
antiguos, que conservó la providencia”).
negligent with the pen, “it was the Indians who preserved in their own writings, and in those that they wrote with our letters,” the sacred traditions of New Spain.\textsuperscript{119} He was not always clear, however, in his description of the ones he claimed to have found or heard about, nor was he entirely transparent concerning their whereabouts.

Florencia cited Nahuatl manuscripts in his history of the Virgin of Guadalupe, but before he described them he explained why there was a general lack of authentic papers. He also wanted to clarify why Sánchez’s 1648 account was the first published history to reference the origins of the shrine at Tepeyac, more than one hundred years after its reputed origins. Drawing upon the arguments of Becerra Tanco, Florencia reasoned that there were no authentic papers on the apparition because “there was neither an ecclesiastical cabildo nor architectural plans for the cathedral church nor archives established to preserve papers when the holy image appeared.”\textsuperscript{120} But the lack of an archive did not fully resolve the question of why Juan de Zumárraga, after having been said to have witnessed the Virgin miraculously appear on the cloak of Juan Diego, failed to perform a proper ecclesiastical investigation to verify the entire story. Florencia piously argued that the bishop clearly attended to the matter, but since he left for Spain three months after the event, the papers must have been lost and “until this day they have not appeared, for God has its discovery reserved for the time when he knows it will be most fitting for his greater glory and the crédito of his Mother.”\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 99r (“fuesen los Indios, los que conservasen en sus escritos propios, y en los que escribieron con caracteres nuestros”).
\textsuperscript{120} La estrella del norte, 36r (“que ni había Cabildo Eclesiástico en forma, ni traza de Iglesia Catedral, ni Archivos señalados para guardar papeles, cuando se apareció la Santa Imagen”). For Becerra Tanco’s argument, see Origen milagroso del santuario de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (Mexico City: Por la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1666), 7v; and Felicidad de México, 10v.
\textsuperscript{121} La estrella del norte, 36r (“en que hasta hoy no han parecido, y tendrá Dios reservado su descubrimiento, para cuando sabe, que más ha de convenir a su mayor gloria, y crédito de su Madre”).
Some of these missing documents were supposedly available to religious scholars by the second half of the seventeenth century. Florencia claimed that he had consulted an “ancient relation” in Sigüenza y Góngora’s library; a text he calculated was “almost one hundred years old, if not more.” Its antiquity, so he reasoned, was clearly evident in its title: Relación de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, la cual se trasladó de unos papeles muy antiguos, que tenía un indio con otros curiosos. Florencia further explained that this relation had been translated from Nahuatl into Spanish by Alva de Ixtlilxochitl, and based upon the “dullness of the paper and fading of the ink it can be deduced that the translation is very ancient,” by which he meant seventy or eighty years. “If the translation is so old,” he asked, “and the papers from which he copied them very ancient, how old might they be?” Florencia assumed that this text was the same one Sánchez and Becerra Tanco used for their histories, figuring that its author was a grey friar. After a conversation with Agustín de Vetancurt, he concluded that it was most likely Gerónimo de Mendieta, an important Franciscan chronicler, but he was also open to the possibility that it could have been “another Franciscan friar of equal piety and antiquity.” Florencia said that he was going to publish the “ancient relation” at the end of La estrella del norte, but he eventually changed his mind and left it out.

---

122 Ibid., 75v (“llegó a mis manos una Relación de esta Aparición milagrosa, tan antigua, que a mi ver ha casi cien años, si no ha más, que se compuso”).
123 Ibid. (“por el deslustre del papel, y lo amortiguado de la tinta, se está conociendo, que el traslado es muy antiguo, y que a mi entender, ha más de setenta, u ochenta años, que él lo trasladó”).
124 Ibid., 76r (“Y si el traslado tiene tantos de edad, llamando a los papeles de que se copió muy antiguos, que años tendrían estos?”).
125 Ibid., 113r (“aunque aquella antigua Relación (que se presume ser del V. P. Fr. Gerónimo de Mendieta, o de algún otro Religioso Seráfico de igual piedad, y antigüedad”)”.
126 Ibid., 241v (“Aquí se había de imprimir aquella antigua Relación, que he citado varias veces en el cuerpo de esta Historia. Pero por haber salido más abultada, y crecida de lo que yo quisiera la dejo contentándome con lo que de ella digo en el § 8, 9, y 10 del Cap. 13”).
Florencia’s description of this “ancient relation” is rather confusing, especially when one considers how Sigüenza y Góngora, the one who lent him the manuscript, contradicted many of his statements. Since Sigüenza y Góngora was one of the censors for *La estrella del norte*, he explained that the rough draft he had initially approved for publication had later been changed, especially the part about the authorship of the “ancient relation.”\(^{127}\) He stated that he had found the “ancient relation” amongst the papers of Alva de Ixtlilxochitl and clarified that Mendieta was not its author given that it treats of miracles that took place after his death.\(^{128}\) According to his assessment, the “ancient relation” had originally been written in Nahuatl by Antonio Valeriano (d. 1605), an Indian student from Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco. A few more miracles had been recorded or transcribed by Alva de Ixtlilxochitl, also in Nahuatl, and were added to the end of Valeriano’s text. Sigüenza y Góngora clarified that the manuscript he had lent to Florencia was a “paraphrased translation” by Alva de Ixtlilxochitl of these two documents.\(^{129}\)

To complicate matters even further, Florencia made reference to two more texts in Nahuatl that he believed confirmed the sacred tradition of Guadalupe. The first was a notebook from the collection of Alva de Ixtlilxochitl that he claimed was written by an

\(^{127}\) Sigüenza y Góngora, *Piedad heroyca de don Fernando Cortés* [ca. 1700], ed. Jaime Delgado (Madrid: José Porrua Turanzas, 1960), 63 (“y con especialidad una antiquísima, que aún tengo M. S. y estimo en mucho, y es la misma que presté al R. P. Francisco de Florencia para que ilustrase su historia”).

\(^{128}\) He also noted that this text was the same one that Becerra Tanco referenced in the 1685 edition of *Felicidad de México* (Seville: Thomas López de Haro, 1685), 29–30.

\(^{129}\) Sigüenza y Góngora, *Piedad heroyca*, 65 (“Digo, y juro, que esta Relación hallé entre los papeles de D. Fernando de Alva, que tengo todos, y que la misma que afirma el Licenciado Luis de Becerra en su libro . . . haber visto en su poder. El original en Mexicano está de letra de Don Antonio Valeriano Indio, que es su verdadero autor, y al fin añadidos algunos milagros de letra de Don Fernando, también en Mexicano. Lo que presté al R. P. Francisco de Florencia, fue una traducción parafrástica, que de uno y otro hizo Don Fernando, y también está de su letra”). As Poole points out in *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, 166–167, Sigüenza y Góngora was not entirely clear either in his description of the “ancient relation.” Earlier in the *Piedad heroyca* he stated that he had given Florencia the original text by Valeriano, as noted in fn. 127 of this chapter.
Indian who had been educated in Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco. According to Florencia, this notebook “extensively recounted the four apparitions of the Most Holy Virgin to Juan Diego and the fifth to Juan Bernardino his uncle.” He also claimed that this notebook, which he distinguished from the “ancient relation,” was the basis for the Nican mopohua, a section in Luis Laso de la Vega’s Huei tlamañucoltica omonexit in ilhuicac tlatocaçihuapilli (1649) that treats of the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Some scholars, based upon Sigüenza y Góngora’s description of the “ancient relation,” have argued that the Nican mopohua was originally penned by Valeriano soon after the apparition was said to have taken place in the sixteenth century. But Sigüenza y Góngora never claimed that the Nican mopohua had been written by Valeriano; instead, he explained that the Indian scholar was the author of the “ancient relation” upon which the “paraphrased translation” was based, the one he had lent to Florencia. Eighteenth-century scholars, as Stafford Poole demonstrates, are the ones responsible for conflating the “ancient relation” with the Nican mopohua.

---

130 La estrella del norte, 97v (“se contaban por extenso las cuatro Apariciones de la Santísima Virgen a Juan Diego, y la quinta a Juan Bernardino su Tío”).

131 Luis Laso de la Vega, Huei tlamañucoltica omonexit in ilhuicac tlatocaçihuapilli. Santa Maria Totlaçonantzin Guadalupe in nican huei altepenahua ac Mexico itocayocan Tepeyacac (Mexico City: Juan Ruiz, 1649). This text has been translated into English by Lisa Sousa, Stafford Poole, and James Lockhart as The Story of Guadalupe: Luis Laso de la Vega’s Huei tlamañucoltica of 1649 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

132 León-Portilla makes this case in Tonantzin Guadalupe. Sousa, Poole, and Lockhart argue to the contrary, suggesting that “Laso de la Vega was strongly, directly involved in the writing” and may have been assisted by an indigenous aid. They also state that Sánchez’s account of the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe, together with an engraving (ca. 1613–1615) by Samuel Stradanus, were the sources for the Nican mopohua. “Introduction,” in The Story of Guadalupe, 43–47. For more on Stradanus’s engraving, see Jeanette Favrot Peterson, “Canonizing a Cult: a Wondering-Working Guadalupe in the Seventeenth Century,” in Poole and Schroeder, eds., Religion in New Spain, 125–156.

133 Poole, Our Lady of Guadalupe, 167–170. In particular, Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci (1698–1755), an Italian scholar and fervent devotee of the Virgin of Guadalupe, said that the “ancient relation” mentioned by Sigüenza y Góngora “was perhaps the one that the Bachelor Laso de la Vega printed.” “Catálogo del museo histórico indiano del Caballero Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci,” in Idea de una nueva historia general de la América Septentrional (Madrid: Juan de Zúñiga, 1746), 86 (“que quizás es la que imprimió el Bachiller Lasso de la Vega”).
The second text in Nahuatl that Florencia cited was “another document in the form of annals” that was in the possession of the Jesuit Baltasar González, one of the censors for the *Heui tlamahuïcoltîca*. González claimed that Laso de la Vega’s Nahuatl account of the origins of the shrine of Tepeyac was indeed in line “with what is known by tradition and annals,” but if these annals ever existed, they have not survived into the present. Florencia, however, was somehow able to determine, despite the fact that he never saw them, that they had been written “in the hand of an Indian” and followed the history of the Culhuas and the Toltecas from their origins until the year 1642. He further noted that these annals followed the days and the months according to the Christian calendar; that it was most likely composed by a series of chroniclers; and that it referenced the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Florencia did not quote from the annals, but he stated that “perhaps that manuscript was translated from this history that the Licenciado Luis de Becerra Tanco cited, and from which he translated, as a faithful interpreter, the colloquies that Juan Diego had with the Virgin and the Most Holy Virgin with Juan Diego.” In a note in the side margin he also said that “perhaps it is the very ancient relation that I mentioned above, the one in the possession of and preserved by the said Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora.” The “ancient relation” that at one point Florencia attributed to Mendieta he later claimed was possibly written by an Indian from

---

134 *La estrella del norte*, 97v (“De otro escrito en forma de Anales, tuve noticia, estaba en poder del P. Baltasar González Profeso de la Compañía de Jesús”).
136 *La estrella del norte*, 97v–98r (“Este escrito de mano de un Indio, comprendía la Historia de los Culhuas, y Toltecas desde su origen, anotados los años, y meses, reducidos los suyos a los nuestros, en que acaecieron los sucesos, hasta el de 1642”).
137 Ibid., 98r (“Y por ventura de esta Historia se trasladó aquel cuaderno que alegra el Licenciado Luis de Becerra Tanco; y del cual el tradujo cómo fiel interprete los coloquios que Juan Diego tuvo con la Virgen; y la Santísima Virgen con Juan Diego”).
138 Ibid., 97v (“Acaso es la Relación antiquísima de que hice mención arriba, y tiene, y guarda el dicho D. Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora”).
the sixteenth century. Florencia’s description of these Nahuatl accounts has confounded scholars from his own day to the present. But despite his lack of clarity, somethingSigüenza y Góngora was at pains to point out, Florencia was instrumental in popularizing the existence of an “ancient” indigenous account on the origins of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Florencia also referenced indigenous papers in his history of the Crucified Christ of Chalma. In a customary fashion he began his history by lamenting the lack of written material, specifically amongst the Augustinian friars who had been responsible for the evangelization of the region. Juan de Grijalva, who had been the first historian of the Augustinian Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, had failed to mention anything about the prodigious crucifix in his provincial chronicle. But Florencia defended his compatriot by saying that “without a doubt he did not find anything written in the archives nor someone who could give him faithful information on [the image], which is great crédito to the truth of his history.” Although documentation was unavailable from the sixteenth century, Juan de San José had written down a relation that provided some information on the apparition account. Florencia used this manuscript, together with some “ancient papers of the Indians,” to provide his own narrative of the origins of the Crucified Christ. These papers, if they ever existed, have not survived into the present; but they were rhetorically useful in determining how the image arrived to its cave in Chalma. After reviewing some of the diverging opinions on the matter, Florencia

---

139 Brading notes that by claiming that the “ancient relation” was the text that Sánchez and Becerra Tanco used “Florencia confused himself and was to confuse generations of students and readers.” *Mexican Phoenix,* 107.

140 *Descripción histórica,* 4 (“que el no tocar el punto de esta Imagen, de que sin duda no halló nada en los archivos escrito, ni quien le diese noticia invariable de ella, es crédito grande de la verdad de su Historia”).

141 Ibid., 5 (“Por una relación, no menos devota que ajustada a lo que obliga a creer la Religiosa entereza, y puntualidad del P. Fr. Juan de san Joseph, de su mismo orden”). I have been unable to locate this relation.

142 Ibid., 9 (“Papeles antiguos de los Indios dicen”).
concluded that “all of these conjectures, the tradition of the Indians, and what they
preserved in their papers makes it probable that the Crucifix appeared in the cave.”143

Another Indian manuscript played an important role in Florencia’s history of San
Miguel. After discovering that there was little written on the devotion, once again he was
forced to search for “a hidden treasure in the infertile field of writers.”144 He partially
found what he was looking for in the third set of juridical testimonies (1675/76). An
Indian man by the name of Juan Marcos was called upon as a witnesses and he “exhibited
a very old manuscript book, which he said contained reference to the apparition of the
Holy Archangel, and the year in which it took place.”145 Florencia claimed that the
manuscript was made up of sheets of quarto, lacked page numbers, was partially ripped,
and that it was covered with parchment. The text itself was written in Nahuatl, contained
a few songs, and ended with a chronology that started in 1510 and lasted until at least
1631, the year in which San Miguel was said to have appeared to Diego Lázaro.
Florencia cited the page that referenced the apparition in its original Nahuatl, and then
followed it with a Spanish translation.146 Since the manuscript placed the arrival of the
Spaniards to Yucatán in 1516, he had to explain an obvious chronological error because
Juan de Grijalva (the conquistador) had clearly explored the coastline one year later in
1517. Defending the credibility of the manuscript despite this minor mistake, Florencia

143 Ibid., 22–23 (“Todas estas conjeturas juntas con la tradición de los Indios, y lo que conservan en sus
papeles, hacen probable la milagrosa aparición de este Crucifijo en la cueva”).
144 Narración de la maravillosa, 3 (“Tesoro escondido: el campo estéril de Escritores”).
145 Ibid., 118 (“exhibió un libro muy viejo manuscrito, del cual dijo constaba la Aparición del Santo
Arcángel, y el año en que sucedió”). Two Nahua annalists from Tlaxcala, one anonymous and the other
Juan Buenaventura Zapata y Mendoza (d. 1688/89), referenced the apparition of San Miguel to Diego
Lázaro. Here in This Year: Seventeenth-Century Nahuatl Annals of the Tlaxcala-Puebla Valley, trans. and
ed. Camilla Townsend (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 177; and Historia cronológica de la
Noble Ciudad de Tlaxcala, trans. Luis Reyes Garcia and Andrea Martinez Baracs (Tlaxcala: Universidad
Autónoma de Tlaxcala, 1995), 253.
146 Florencia must have acquired this translation from the juridical testimonies, for he himself noted that
some of the men involved in the investigations were fluent in Nahuatl.
passionately argued that “if the record-keeping of the years in all of the annals of the most accurate writers of Europe were closely examined, very few would be free of errors and discrepancies in some of the months and days.”

In America archives were generally smaller than European repositories, which meant that they housed even fewer papers. This paucity and fragility of documentation was a problem, one that the creole Bishop Isidro Sariñana y Cuenca (ca. 1630–1696) observed when he dedicated the Metropolitan Cathedral of Mexico City in 1668. “And when in other parts we are impressed by very large volumes,” he noted, “we fear that this kingdom might be stigmatized by incredulity for its very small tomes.” As Florencia looked for papers in the archives of New Spain he must have come to a similar conclusion. Although ancient papers were indeed persuasive pieces of evidence for him, he knew that their provenance was generally untraceable. He was also aware that the circumstances in which some of these papers were penned caused certain minds to question their validity. For his doubters, Florencia argued that “the testimony of so many miracles has more weight” than any other form of evidence. Many of these miracles, however, were only known through local traditions that were passed on from one generation to the next.

---

147 Narración de la maravillosa, 121 (“y juzgo, que si en todos los Anales, aun de los Escritores más exactos de Europa, se examinan estrechamente los cómputos de los años, pocos habrá tan ajustados, que no discrepen en algunos meses, y días”).
148 Isidro Sariñana y Cuenca, Noticia breve de la solemne, deseada, última dedicación del Templo Metropolitano de México, Corte Imperial de la Nueva España, edificado por la religiosa magnificencia de los Reyes Católicos de España nuestros señores (Mexico City: Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio, 1668), 28r (“Y quando de las otras partes creemos volúmenes muy crecidos, llegamos a temer, si de las de este Reino tildará a la incredulidad renglones muy pequeños”).
149 La estrella del norte, 42r (“que para mi pesa más el testimonio de tantos milagros”).
The Tradition of Fathers to Sons

One of the most important pieces of evidence for Florencia was tradition. He was interested in the “common tradition[s]” of the religious provinces, most importantly those of the Jesuit Province of New Spain. But he was equally concerned with the “ancient, invariable, and constant tradition[s]” of the origins and miracles of Catholic images. He pursued these oral histories through conversations with his contemporaries in various settings. On other occasions, he was forced to resort to written documentation, because verbal testimony on the sacred was also recorded in histories or other official papers in diocesan archives. Although Florencia was clearly aware of the possibility of distortion when historical accounts were handed down in such a fashion, and that many important witnesses in New Spain came from a variety of socioracial backgrounds, he still maintained full confidence in the “constant tradition of fathers to sons.”

As a theologian Florencia had been taught that tradition—“news of something ancient that is spread from fathers to sons”—carried interpretive weight within the Catholic Church. He knew that there was an “immemorial tradition from the apostles” concerning the basic teachings of the Christian faith that had not always been immediately recorded. The Hieronymite friar, Gabriel de Talavera (1545–1620), explained in his history of the Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura that the early apostles transmitted doctrines orally instead of writing them down. After pointing to the work of

---

150 La milagrosa invención, 7v (“una tradición común entre los de su Provincia”).
151 La estrella del norte, 38r (“antigua, invariable, y constante tradición”).
152 La milagrosa invención, 2r (“la tradición continuada de Padres, a Hijos”).
153 Diccionario de la lengua castellana, 4:314 (“TRADICIÓN. Noticia de alguna cosa antigua, que se difunde de padres a hijos, y se comunica por relación sucesiva de unos en otros”). For tradition in the Catholic Church, see Poole, Our Lady of Guadalupe, 138–139.
154 La estrella del norte, 43v (“sólo por tradición inmemorial desde los Apóstoles hasta nosotros, sin que sus Historiadores Canónicos las hayan escrito”).
the church father Saint Jerome, he concluded that “the church has preserved many things by tradition, giving them the same crédito as writings.” In the same way, many other sacred traditions in ecclesiastical history were only documented many decades or even centuries later. Florencia noted that “in non-written traditions,” such as these, “there are always differences in wording; some are more concise and brief than others.” But he nevertheless agreed with Talavera that their veracity could be fully trusted: “Tradition is [enough]; do not search for more proof.”

To uncover some of these traditions, most specifically those of his religious province, Florencia drew upon some of the conversations he had with his coreligionists. It was common practice to interview older brethren for information about their early labours of evangelization. After years of service amongst the Tarascans of Michoacán, Diego de Basalenque (1577–1651), an Augustinan friar, was commissioned to write a chronicle of his religious Province of Tolentino. Since his first book was based upon events he had not participated in, Basalenque clarified that he had spoken with men “worthy of crédito” to complement what he himself had experienced in the second. In this way he reasoned that he had acted like the evangelist Saint Luke who “composed the first as he saw it, which are the acts of the apostles, and the other by what he had heard took place amongst the apostles.” Florencia was no different when he wrote about his Jesuit province, but unlike Basalenque, he was unable to speak with his founding fathers. It was possible, however, for him to converse with some of his contemporaries about

155 Talavera, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, 330r (“concluyan su probanza, el gran Jerónimo, testificando: Muchas cosas guardan la Iglesia por tradición, dándoles el crédito que a las escrituras”).
156 La estrella del norte, 18r (“en las tradiciones no escritas siempre hay diferencias en las palabras; en unos más concisión, y brevedad, que en otros”).
157 Ibid., 44v (“Tradición es, no busques más probanza”).
158 Basalenque, Historia de la Provincia, Al lector, n.p. (“todos dignos de crédito”) (“compuso el uno como lo vio, que son los hechos Apostólicos, y el otro como lo oyó haber sucedido a los Apóstoles”).
their experiences in the missionary field. When Florencia penned his life of Figueroa, he claimed that an “elderly father who managed to see him in the missions assured me” of various details of his life. On other occasions, he sent letters to fellow Jesuits to acquire the information he was lacking.

Other traditions were passed on throughout the province and eventually written down in histories and other relations. But as Florencia discovered, these accounts were not always consistent with each other. In the 1560s the Jesuits had established missions in La Florida where they witnessed a series of martyrdoms. Juan Bautista de Segura (1529–1571), in particular, was killed by the indigenous inhabitants of the province of Ajacán in the modern-day state of Virginia. In the first book of his provincial chronicle Florencia claimed, based upon the work of Pérez de Ribas, that after Segura’s death his quarters were ransacked by the indigenous men who killed him. They found a crucifix inside a chest, but after they opened it they all fell down dead. Alonso de Olmos, a young Spanish boy on the missions, retrieved the image and gave it to Juan de Rogel (1529–1619), amongst the first Jesuits in La Florida, who later placed it in the Jesuit College of Oaxaca. But after viewing other papers in Jesuit archives, Florencia concluded that Rogel was not the one responsible, hence it must have arrived with someone else. He also found reference to another tradition which claimed that the crucifix that Brother Marcos had received from San Francisco de Borja acquired the fame of being the cross from Segura’s chest. Of the three traditions, Florencia believed that the only thing certain was that the Indians died as punishment for their sacrilege. “Whether it is the one in Oaxaca,” Florencia confessed, “I do not know for certain; but nor would I dare to deny it, because a

159 Vida de Figueroa, 34v (“Otro Padre antiguo, y que le alcanzó en Misiones, me aseguró”).
tradition that has been passed on for so many years in a province should not be rejected if there are no obvious and convincing reasons.”

Florencia looked into other sacred traditions of local shrines while on pilgrimage. He chatted with *mayordomos* and *vicarios*, or with other men commissioned to take care of miraculous images. When he went to Chalma in the early 1680s, Florencia claimed that Juan de San José showed him around the sanctuary and surrounding caves. He talked with him about the general history and extent of devotion to the Crucified Christ venerated there. “I asked if the origin, progress, and growth of this holy place had been written about,” Florencia recalled, “because I desired to know its origin and spread knowledge of it to others.”

In other cases, he spoke with men of authority he met at local shrines to gather more information about some of the things he had witnessed. “I have seen on various occasions,” Florencia recalled from his many trips to Tepeyac, “the Indians washing their little children in this spring of water with great faith and devotion.” To corroborate what he had observed, he claimed that “a person of complete *crédito* told me that everyone who comes to visit the holy image, or passes by on the way, performs this same practice.”

There were other occasions when Florencia visited devotees in their homes, a common practice for those seeking out information on local devotions. When the Franciscan friar, Juan de Mendoza, began his research on the history of the Virgin of

---

160 *Historia de la Provincia*, 255 (“Que sea el que está en Oaxaca, no lo tengo por averiguado; ni tampoco me atrevo a negarlo, porque una tradición de tantos años recibida en una Provincia, no se ha de atropellar, si no es habiendo evidentes razones, que la convenzan”).

161 *Descripción histórica*, Ocasión de escribir, n.p. (“Pregúntele, si el principio, los progresos, y adelantamiento de aquel Santo lugar estaban escritos, porque deseaba saber su origen, y participar sus noticias a otros?”).

162 *La estrella del norte*, 5r (“He visto varias veces a las Indias, lavar en este manantial a sus hijuelos con gran fe, y devoción: y me afirmó persona de todo crédito, que todas cuantas vienen a visitar la Santa Imagen, o pasan por allí de camino, hacen esta diligencia”).
Tecaxique, he started by interviewing several informants. “I searched for different people,” Mendoza claimed, “so that they would communicate to me plain and truthful information about what they knew of the present matter.”\textsuperscript{163} Florencia performed a similar search when he prepared his history of Guadalupe. A citizen of Mexico City, María de Narváez, claimed that she had fallen down a well at her home after a spell of light-headedness. According to her account, which was narrated in a votive painting at the shrine, at the moment of her descent she cried out to the Virgin of Guadalupe and was saved from drowning. “I visited her and her husband,” Florencia carefully noted, “and they told me what has thus far been written.”\textsuperscript{164} Although he was convinced that her story was truly a miracle, he made sure his readers knew that she had not gone through the proper ecclesiastical channels to verify what happened to her for the “greater crédito of her most blessed sanctuary!”\textsuperscript{165}

Since the divine appeared mostly to Indians in the apparition narratives of New Spain, Florencia piously reasoned that they must have shared these stories with their family members and communities. It was also clear that many shrines had been built in rural regions that, during the early days of colonization, were primarily populated by indigenous peoples.\textsuperscript{166} This fact of human geography meant that sacred historians needed to depend rhetorically upon Indians in their narratives if they wanted their pious arguments to stand. In his history of the Crucified Christ of Chalma, Florencia informed

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Mendoza1684} Juan de Mendoza, \textit{Relación de el Santuario de Tecaxique, en que está colocada la milagrosa imagen de Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles} (Mexico City: Por Juan de Ribera, 1684), Señor Bachiller D. Antonio de Sámano y Ledezma, n.p. (“busqué a diferentes personas para que me participasen sencillas, y verdaderas noticias de lo que sabían en la materia presente”).
\bibitem{Florencia158r} La estrella del norte, 158r (“Yo la visité: y su Marido, y ella me contaron lo que va escrito”).
\bibitem{Florencia159r} Ibid., 159r (“y mayor crédito de su devotísimo Santuario!”).
\bibitem{Nolan2012} Mary Lee Nolan notes that shrines established in America and Europe between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries tended to be near hills and springs. She also suggests that there was a greater emphasis in America on sacred caves and grottos than in Europe. “The European Roots of Latin American Pilgrimage,” 34.
\end{thebibliography}
his readers that most of what was known about its origins was through the “tradition of fathers to sons, which has been spread throughout the neighbourhoods of this region, especially amongst the Indians of the pueblos of Chalma, Malinalco, and Ocuila.” Since its apparition was said to have taken place in the 1540s, the Spanish presence in the region was limited to primarily Augustinian friars who, as it was stated above, had failed to record anything on the image in the sixteenth century. Florencia concluded that since the Indians “were the blessed ones for whom God worked the marvellous apparition of the holy image, they were also the ones who, more than others, conserved its pious memory.”

But what kind of Indians had been responsible for maintaining these sacred traditions? More importantly for Florencia, could their oral histories be trusted?

To validate oral history amongst the Indians, Florencia turned to the pre-Hispanic past. He explained that Mexica priests composed canticles (cantares) for the “most able and capable” of their children to memorize. “Through these canticles,” Florencia confidently asserted, “they passed on memories of events from one century to the next that were five hundred to one thousand years old.” But he also claimed that one of these canticles, composed by Francisco Plácido, the Lord of Acazpotzalco, contained reference to the Virgin of Guadalupe. According to Florencia, his song had been performed the same day her image was said to have been placed in a new shrine at Tepeyac by Juan de Zumárraga. To clarify how he knew this, he stated that Sigüenza y Góngora had found Plácido’s song recorded in writing amongst the papers of the Nahua

---

167 Descripción histórica, 3 (“Poco hay escrito de este Santuario, lo más que de él sabe es por tradición, que de padres a hijos se ha ido derivando en los comarcanos de aquel lugar, en especial en los naturales de los Pueblos de Chalma, Malinalco y Ocuila, que como fueron los dichosos, por quienes obró Dios la aparición maravillosa de la Santa Imagen, también fueron los que más conservaron su piadosa memoria”).

168 La estrella del norte, 95r (“Por medio de estos cantares pasaron de siglos en siglos, memorias de sucesos de quinientos, y de mil años de antigüedad”). Becerra Tanco, Felicidad de México, 12v (“Por medio pues de estos cantares, pasaron de uno en otro siglo, tradiciones, y acontecimientos de quinientos, y mil años de antigüedad”).
chronicler Domingo Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin (1579–1660). Florencia claimed that his friend “guarded it like a treasure” and that he had personally lent it to him.\textsuperscript{169} Although he promised to publish the canticle at the end of \textit{La estrella del norte}, he changed his mind, leaving it out in the same way he had omitted the “ancient relation.”\textsuperscript{170} But he assured his readers that “crédito should be given to this canticle” because songs such as this one “were so sacred amongst them that they entrusted their composition only to priests and their singing only to elders of authority and importance.”\textsuperscript{171}

Florencia placed great weight on the fact that these songs amongst the Mexica had been composed by nobles. But in most cases, the Indian protagonists in the apparition narratives had been commoners (\textit{macehuales}), and without their testimony how could the finer details of these sacred events be known? Not only this, but what about other Indians who declared to have experienced miracles as a result of the favour of local devotions? Florencia piously reasoned that denying all prodigious events amongst the indigenous population was akin to negating the power of the Christian God. But he also knew that testimony from commoners was given “little or no crédito” because of the “dejected

\textsuperscript{169} \textit{La estrella del norte}, 95r (“El canto que compuso D. Francisco Plácido Señor de Azcapotzalco, y se cantó el mismo día, que de las casas del Señor Obispo Zumárraga se llevó a la Hermita de Guadalupe la Sagrada Imagen, pondré después. Debese este tan abonado, y calificado testigo a la diligencia de D. Carlos de Sigüenza, y Góngora, que hallándolo entres escritos de un D. Domingo de San Antón Muñón \textit{Chimalpahin} lo guardaba como un tesoro, y para ilustrar esta historia me lo dio”). For a fuller discussion of these songs and the \textit{guadalupana}, see Poole, \textit{Our Lady of Guadalupe}, 44–47.

\textsuperscript{170} \textit{La estrella del norte}, 241v. If Plácido’s song was ever recorded, Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci was not familiar with the manuscript. “Catálogo del museo histórico indiano,” in \textit{Idea de una nueva historia}, 87 (“El doctísimo P. Florencia refiere en su Historia de la Santísima Señora, como Don Francisco Plácido, Señor de Azcapotzalco . . . y mucho me contristó el que dicho Padre no lo hubiese puesto a la letra al fin de su Historia, porque corre riesgo de haberse perdido”).

\textsuperscript{171} \textit{La estrella del norte}, 96r (“Crédito, que se debe dar a este cántico”) (“y que estos eran entre ellos tan sagrados, que su composición sólo la fiaban de los Sacerdotes, y su canto de solos ancianos de autoridad, y peso”).
condition of the Indians.”¹⁷² He addressed this problem when he penned more recent miracles of the Virgin of Guadalupe. In one case an unnamed Indian boy went to place a candle in front of a copy of the image by the well of Tepeyac. Upon his return to the shrine he was met by three other boys who spoke with him briefly and then mysteriously disappeared. Florencia noted that the Indian boy told everything to the vicar of the shrine, and he concluded that he “does not deserve less crédito for being an Indian. Juan Diego and Juan Bernardino were both Indians and worthy of being trusted by the archbishop and visited by the Sovereign Queen of the Angels.”¹⁷³

Oral testimony from both noble and plebeian Indians was indeed important for Florencia. But he knew that the only way to officially recognize these sacred traditions was with a canonical investigation under the guidance of a delegate from the Holy See that followed a specific questionnaire drafted in Rome.¹⁷⁴ Local bishops in New Spain tended to start this process much more quickly, carrying out their own investigations through designated clerics from their cathedral chapters or other members of the religious orders. These men searched for relatives of the Indian protagonists of the apparition accounts and other witnesses who claimed to have experienced miracles by these devotions. Since these investigations were undertaken several years or even decades after the purported apparitions and miracles were said to have taken place, their major purpose was to establish an unbroken continuity of a given sacred tradition from its origin to the present. The juridical testimonies from these investigations list the questions used in the

¹⁷² Narración de la maravillosa, 4 (“y en la abatida condición de los Indios, y considerando el poco, o ningún crédito”).
¹⁷³ La estrella del norte, 147v (“El Indiesito, a quien sucedió, no desmerece el crédito por ser Indio; pues Juan Diego lo era, y Juan Bernardino, y merecieron ser creídos del Arzobispo, y visitados de la Soberana Reina de los Ángeles”).
¹⁷⁴ Poole, Our Lady of Guadalupe, 264, n. 7.
interviews and the responses of the witnesses. All of them were officially recorded and signed by public notaries, and when necessary, the translators used for non-Spanish speaking Indians. With a “lack of ancient writings,” Florencia considered the oral histories of these documents as important evidence that “gave crédito to the miraculous sanctuaries” of New Spain.¹⁷⁵

For his history of the Virgin of Guadalupe Florencia worked with the 1665/1666 capitular inquiry into its origin and miracles. These investigations took place under the direction of Francisco de Siles and primarily focussed on witnesses from Cuautitlan, the supposed birthplace of Juan Diego.¹⁷⁶ When Florencia was preparing his history of San Miguel he explained that three investigations had been made into the miraculous spring of the Archangel. Since the first one of 1632 was not completed in “proper juridical form nor written down,” when Juan de Palafox y Mendoza was bishop he ordered Gabriel Pérez de Alvarado, a local priest, to perform another one that took place between 1643 and 1644. A little over thirty years later a member of the cathedral chapter, Joseph de Salazar Varona, insisted that a third investigation be undertaken.¹⁷⁷ Although Florencia noticed some minor variations in the testimonies between 1675 and 1676, he concluded that “for these reasons of consistency it appears that there is no hindrance to the moral

¹⁷⁵ La estrella del norte, 46r (“la falta de escrituras antiguas”). Narración de la maravillosa, 83 (“dio crédito al milagroso Santuario”).
¹⁷⁶ La estrella del norte, 44v–75r. The original 1665/1666 juridical testimonies have not survived. A copy was made in the eighteenth century and has since then been published by Fortino Hipólito Vera, ed., Informaciones sobre la milagrosa aparición de la santísima Virgen de Guadalupe recibidas en 1666 y 1723 (Amecameca: “Imprenta Católica,” 1889); and by Ana María Sada Lambretón, Las informaciones jurídicas de 1666 y el beato indio Juan Diego (Mexico City: Hemes Impresores, 1991). For a discussion of some of the problems with these investigations, see Poole, Our Lady of Guadalupe, 128–143.
¹⁷⁷ Narración de la maravillosa, 72–149. I have been unable to locate the original copies of the second and third juridical testimonies.
crédito of so many witnesses, many of them ocular." His history of the Virgins of Zapopan and of San Juan de los Lagos was based upon a series of juridical testimonies he received from the diocesan archives of Guadalajara. Investigations into the former took place in 1653 and 1693, and in the case of the latter three were undertaken in 1632, 1668, and 1693.

Florencia summarized these juridical testimonies instead of quoting them verbatim. His abbreviated accounts demonstrate that those who were interviewed came from various socioethnic groups. Clerics spoke with Spaniards, creoles, Indians, and mestizos, specifically stating the “racial” status of their witnesses when they recorded their findings. In other cases, they discovered that mulattos and blacks had been the recipients of miraculous favours, which indirectly implied that other witnesses had listened to their stories of divine intervention. Although Florencia does not take the time to defend the testimony of casta and black devotees as he did with Indians, he was aware that their credibility was also questioned in the Spanish world. To assure his readers that the sacred traditions of New Spain were still reliable despite the multiethnic nature of their juridical testimonies, he stressed the involvement of Spanish and creole witnesses. When he discussed the capitular inquiry on the Virgin of Guadalupe, for example, Florencia claimed that Becerra Tanco’s statements held “more weight and authority,” so much so that “his [testimony] would be enough to give credence and authority to the

---

178 Narración de la maravillosa, 128 (“Concluyo, que por todas estas razones de congruencia parece no embarazan al crédito moralmente prudente de las deposiciones llanas, y sinceras de tantos testigos, las más oculares”).

tradition of the apparition of the holy image.”\textsuperscript{180} In other words, to disbelieve what the non-Spanish population testified to was akin to insulting all of the Spaniards and creoles who performed these investigations. Florencia assured his readers that they were “of the highest créditos of the clergy of New Spain in virtue, the arts, and for their special talent in the pulpit.”\textsuperscript{181}

The sacred traditions of religious provinces and local devotions were in large part based upon oral histories. Florencia was comfortable with this fact, especially when he considered that New Spain was by no means alone in the larger Catholic world. He noted on several occasions that “we see this in almost all of the sanctuaries of Europe, in which it is very rare to find someone who knows about their origins by another route than the tradition of fathers to sons.”\textsuperscript{182} Although Florencia primarily based the truth of his sacred histories on these “constant” traditions, to properly perform the sacred historian’s craft he needed multiple layers of evidence from various men of authority. Only then was he able to demonstrate the “crédito of the sanctity”\textsuperscript{183} of New Spain as a Catholic kingdom in the Spanish empire.

\textsuperscript{180} La estrella del norte, 51v, 53v (“Uno de los sufragios de más peso, y autoridad”) (“que cuando no hubiera otro, el sólo bastara a dar firmeza, y autoridad a la tradición del aparecimiento de la Santa Imagen”).
\textsuperscript{181} Narración de la maravillosa, 62 (“de los mayores créditos del Clero de la Nueva España en virtud, y letras, de escogido talento de púlpito”).
\textsuperscript{182} Descripción histórica, 5 (“vemoslo en casi todos los Santuarios de Europa, en que es muy raro el que se sabe de su origen por otro camino que el de la tradición de padres a hijos”).
\textsuperscript{183} Narración de la maravillosa, 118 (“aun de lejanas tierras, que es crédito de la santidad del lugar”).
Part III
The Creole Invention of America

Throughout the Spanish world men and women generally believed that the patria possessed powerful curative and spiritual influence over its native inhabitants. Doctors ordered their patients, if they had taken up residence in a foreign land, to return to the “airs of their patria” (aires patrios) to recuperate from debilitating illnesses.¹ And theologians argued that the patria, much like mothers and fathers, had the potential to pass on moral qualities to its children. Florencia recognized that one’s homeland played a significant role in the shaping of an individual, but he was convinced that righteous behaviour was also attainable by other means. “[T]he virtue of the patria does not always pass on [sanctity],” he tried to explain, but rather “the good training of parents and the obedience of children.” Although personal piety was certainly achieved through proper education, he still claimed that there was no reason to strip the patria “of the glory of being [a] mother, for a good son is the crown of his father and the glory of his mother, according to the Holy Spirit.”² Florencia believed that his patria was filled with saintly men and that it provided them with everything they needed to be virtuous.

In this final part I explore Florencia’s imagined vision of his patria in his multiethnicvidas, accounts of Marian devotions, and in his foundation narrative of the Society of Jesus in New Spain. I show how he used the rhetorical tools of the sacred historian’s craft, detailed in the previous part, to both address negative theories on the environment of the New World and to describe the natural and spiritual abundance of his

¹Relación de Guadalajara, 5v (“aires patrios”).
²Vida de Figueroa, 2r–v (“pues no siempre la da la virtud de la Patria, sino la buena crianza de sus Padres, y la docilidad de los hijos. Y porque no sería razón quitar a México la gloria de ser su Madre, pues el buen hijo es corona de su Padre, y gloria de su Madre, según el Espíritu Santo”).
kingdom. Several Spaniards, together with other Europeans, argued that the inhabitants of America lived in a land that was morally and spiritually degenerate. Already in the sixteenth century Bernardino de Sahagún had suggested, referring specifically to New Spain, that “the Spaniards who live [here], and more so those who are born [here], acquire these corrupt inclinations . . . and I think that the climate and constellations of this land is the cause.” Similar arguments were repeated throughout the seventeenth century, and Florencia was clearly aware of their larger implications. If all people throughout America were somehow depraved because of their environment, then the general sanctity of the region was in question. By charting the activity of exemplary men, the location of local shrines, and the limits of his religious province Florencia constructed a sacred geography of New Spain to demonstrate that it too was providentially favoured.

In his sacred histories Florencia claimed that “Northern America is that which runs from the equatorial to the northern parallel, and since the kingdom of New Spain forms the greatest part of it, we almost always understand Northern America as New Spain.” Throughout his life he had travelled from La Florida to Mexico City; he had traversed the royal road between Vera Cruz and Mexico City several times; and he had visited Jesuit colleges throughout Central Mexico, Oaxaca, and Guadalajara. Although Florencia had a general understanding of the geographic limits of his patria, he knew that its boundaries were still being determined, an ongoing process since the early stages of colonization. Edmundo O’Gorman has rightly argued, however, that America was not a

---

3 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* [1579] (Mexico City: Cien de México, 2000), 2:924 (“porque los españoles que en ella habitan, y mucho más los que en ella nacen, cobran estas malas inclinaciones . . . Y esto pienso que lo hace el clima o constelaciones de esta tierra”).

4 *Historia de la Provincia*, 6 (“La América Septentrional es la que corre desde la Línea Equinoccial hasta el Septentrion; y porque el Reino de Nueva España es la mayor parte de ella casi siempre por América Septentrional entendemos Nueva España”).
given entity waiting to be discovered by European explorers; instead, it was an idea that was invented through histories, relations, letters, and maps. But Europeans, of course, were not the only ones involved in this invention. Creoles, Indians, Africans, and castas imagined both the people and the physical contours of America in their own writings and cartographies. According to Florencia, “In two years a world was won for the crown of Spain that, if not greater than the other (as the Cartas Geográficas demonstrate), is at least not smaller than it.” He would spend the final decade and half of his life charting and describing the grandeur of New Spain.

---

5 Edmundo O’Gorman, La invención de América. Investigación acerca de la estructura histórica del Nuevo Mundo y del sentido de su devenir [1958], 3rd ed. (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003). Over the past few decades scholars have developed the “invention of America” further by demonstrating the integral role Iberian cartography played in Spanish colonization. Maps have been denied their seemingly objective and scientific status by being exposed as tools of empire designed to colonize the minds of non-European people. For a few examples, see Walter D. Mignolo, “Putting the Americas on the Map (Geography and the Colonization of Space),” Colonial Latin American Review 1 (1992), 25–63; idem, The Darker Side of the Renaissance, 259–314; Raymond B. Craib, “Cartography and Power in the Conquest and Creation of New Spain,” Latin American Research Review 35, no. 1 (2000), 7–36; and Ricardo Padrón, The Spacious Word: Cartography, Literature, and Empire in Early Modern Spain (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

6 Narración de la maravillosa, 69 (“En dos años se ganó para la Corona de España un mundo, si no mayor, que el otro (como muestran las Cartas Geográficas) por lo menos no menor”). For a discussion of the Cartas Geográficas or Relaciones Geográficas, see Barbara E. Mundy, The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).
Chapter 4
The Nobility of the Soul

This servant of God completely ignored his lineage, considering all nobility as ignobility, and esteeming only the power that God gave to make us his children of the spirit.
– Francisco Losa, 1613

The Lord does not view the accidents of colour, but the achievements of the individual.
– Bernardo Medina, 1663

True nobility is not only that which is acquired through bloodlines, but that which is cultivated and cared for through the acquisition of virtues.
– Pedro del Castillo, 1670

By the mid seventeenth century a new phase of “hagiography” emerged in Spanish America as more sacred biographies were dedicated to the lives of local “saints.”¹ Some important features of these newer vidas were the multiethnic origins and varying social positions of their subjects.² This chapter examines the intersection between nobility, race, and sanctity in Florencia’s lives of Spaniards, creoles, Indians, and mestizos. Like other creoles of his day, Florencia highlighted certain aspects of the multiethnic nature of New Spain with pride by pointing to examples of virtue from men who belonged to various

¹ Antonio Rubial García locates this new phase of “hagiography” in the 1640s as leaders in the novohispano Church were in search of renovation, and as those born in America were forming their own creole identities. “Imprenta, criollismo y santidad,” 46.
² Allan Greer suggests that colonial vidas merit scholarly attention because they were “sites” where socioracial hierarchies were discussed and either confirmed or challenged. “Colonial Saints: Gender, Race, and Hagiography in New France,” William and Mary Quarterly 57, no. 2 (2000): 324.
socioracial categories. But at the same time he also upheld the socially constructed hierarchy of the colonial caste system (sistema de castas) that organized the novohispano populace according to descent and lineage. Creole discourse was highly ambivalent, shifting back and forth between respect and admiration for Indians and castas and outright disgust and contempt. I argue that although Florencia provided his readers with pious examples to follow in his multiethnic vidas, he also sought to demonstrate that the climate of America was not a hindrance to achieving sanctity. In his sacred biographies he wanted to prove that New World “saints” were equally worthy of imitation as those in the Old World.

The nobility (nobleza) in New Spain, in its broadest conception, was made up of the descendants of conquistadors and early settlers, Indian nobles (principales), and Spanish dignitaries and churchmen. Privilege, rank, lineage, honour, and duty set the nobility apart from the plebeian masses, and based upon their social status nobles were

---


4 This manner of viewing the indigenous population is similar to the “variegated discourse” Paul Freedman describes for medieval peasants who were “regarded both as degraded and as exemplary, as justly subordinated yet as close to God.” Images of the Medieval Peasant (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 3.

5 Florencia’s corpus of vidas is comparable to casta paintings of the eighteenth century that pictorially organized the socioracial diversity of New Spain. Ilona Katzew argues that casta paintings reflect a larger discourse of creole pride that was “closely related to the desire to project an image of splendour in New Spain, which included even those perceived to be at the very bottom of the socioracial hierarchy.” Casta Painting, 70.
expected to be loyal to the crown, act virtuously, and support the work of the church.\(^6\)

Throughout the baroque era, nobility was so intimately connected to sanctity that the large majority of saints were of aristocratic origins.\(^7\) Creole churchmen often sought to establish the noble ancestry of their holy men and women, but in some cases lineage escaped them or was seemingly tainted by “impure” blood. Antonio Rubial García points out that under these circumstances “the conclusion is moral: there is no better nobility than that of virtue.”\(^8\) Together with other religious scholars in the early modern Spanish world, Florencia believed that divine grace was universal and the election of the Christian God an incomprehensible mystery. For these reasons Indian and mestizo commoners could achieve sainthood by virtue of the “nobility of the soul” (nobleza del alma).

---


\(^7\) Peter Burke notes that there were only thirty canonizations between 1500 and 1700 and that amongst this group the majority were of European origins and a noble fared better than a commoner. “How to Be a Counter-Reformation Saint,” 49. Fernando Iwasaki Cauti suggests that unlike medieval vidas, which tended to make a direct relationship between spiritual merit and social distinction, the figures of sanctity in Lima were known for their marginality in colonial society. “Vidas de santos y santas vidas. Hagiografías reales e imaginarias en Lima colonial,” *Anuarios de Estudios Americanos* 51, no. 1 (1994): 50. Although the same can be said for various novohispano cities, the direct relationship between nobility and sanctity was still widely entrenched in the colonial imagination.

\(^8\) Antonio Rubial García, “Espejo de virtudes, sabrosa narración, emulación patriótica. La literatura hagiográfica sobre los venerables no canonizados de la Nueva España,” in *La literatura novohispana. Revisión crítica y propuestas metodológicas*, eds. José Pascual Buxó and Arnulf Herrera (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Antónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Bibliográficas, 1994), 102 (“la conclusión es moraleja: no hay mejor nobleza que la virtud”).
Florencia eulogized the men of his patria—whether noble by blood or virtue—and held them up as important symbols of his creole and Catholic identities.9

The opening section of this chapter outlines how Florencia addressed theories of climatic influence by developing a theology of socioethnic inclusion. In the remaining three sections his multiethnic vidas are examined according to the most common categories of the colonial caste system. The first explores Florencia’s Jesuit vidas, which exalt creole and European men as models of virtue for both their nobility and sanctity. In the second section his Indian vidas of three protagonists from the apparition narratives of Catholic images are analyzed. Florencia defended their plebeian past and general piety to demonstrate that they too were worthy of imitation despite their poverty and ethnic past. And the final section looks at his hermitic vidas of two mestizo hermits who cared for the shrine dedicated to the Crucified Christ of Chalma. Florencia tried to show how the Christian God, at times, used the ignoble to teach the powerful.

The Eyes of God

According to Catholic doctrine all people—regardless of their “nation”—had equal access to salvation. This was a basic Pauline teaching, but one that could also be found in the mouth of the apostle Peter in the book of Acts. “God is no respecter of persons,” he said, “[for] in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”10 Florencia applied this article of faith to the socioracial context of America by representing the ignoble from different ethnic groups as pious examples

---

9 For studies that have analyzed the development of creole identities in the sacred biographies of Spanish America, see Hampe Martínez, Santidad e identidad criolla; Rubial García, La santidad controvertida; Morgan, Spanish American Saints; and Myers, Neither Saints nor Sinners.
10 Acts 10:34–35. See also Ro. 2:11 and Ep. 6:9 (all citations are from the KJV).
worthy of imitation. He stated that the colour of one’s skin was irrelevant to his/her sanctity because all were “beautiful in the eyes of God.” But given that sanctity and space were so intimately connected, Florencia was just as concerned with demonstrating that the divinity was not a respecter of places either.

In his sacred histories Florencia displayed a keen interest in the climate of the New World, especially considering that some Europeans felt that it had a debilitating effect on all of its inhabitants. Thomas Gage, for example, was surprised that he needed to eat two or three times as much while resident in New Spain. After discussing the matter with a physician, he was told that their pastures were drier and “hath not the change of springs which the pastures of Europe have.” Gage was also informed “that the Climate of those parts had this effect, to produce a fair shew, but little matter of substance,” leading him to conclude that as with “fruit there is this inward and hidden deceit, so likewise the same is to be found in the people that are born and bred there.”

Florencia was most likely unfamiliar with Gage’s travel narrative, but he clearly came across similar arguments on the American climate in his own travels and research. At one point he asked, “Where is this intolerable climate that they talked about in lands so full of everything?” Convinced by his own experience in the New World, Florencia clarified that he lived “in a region with such a benign climate [that] is very similar to the one that the writers of Genesis consider to be the garden of delight which God created for that blissful state without sin.”

---

11 La milagrosa invención, 17r (“aunque negro, blanco, y hermoso en los ojos de Dios”).
12 Gage, The English-American, 61.
13 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, ff. 3r–v (“¿Dónde aquel destemple intolerable que discurrían en unas tierras tan llenas de todo . . . en una región de tan benigno temple . . . muy parecido al que consideran los escritores del Génesis en aquel vergel de delicia que creó Dios para el estado feliz de la inocencia?”).
Florencia defended the climate of the New World in his sacred biographies because of its close relationship to the body. In the early modern period the body was understood to be highly malleable, which is why it was believed that new diets and environments had the potential to prompt unwanted physiological changes. Juan López de Velasco (ca. 1530–1598), a sixteenth-century royal cosmographer and chronicler, claimed that creoles “are of [Spanish ancestry] and considered in all ways to be Spaniards; but they clearly turn out differently in colour and stature, because they are all large with a slightly darker colour due to the condition of the land.”

Some Europeans went so far as to suggest that creole and Indian bodies—which were generally seen as phlegmatic and effeminate—were the same because of the degenerating influence of their natural environment. Based upon this assumption, they attempted to exclude creoles from noble status, the priesthood, and even the religious orders. Many responded, together with other resident Europeans in America, by arguing against traditional humoral theories and suggesting that there were innate differences between their bodies and those of the Indians. Others, however, claimed that the Christian God turned a blind eye to bodily characteristics altogether, especially when extending his divine favours.

---

14 López de Velasco, *Geografía y descripción*, 20 (“con la mutación del cielo y del temperamento de las regiones aun no dejan de recibir alguna diferencia en la color y calidad de su personas; pero los que nacen dellos, que llaman criollos, y en todo son tenidos y habidos por españoles, conocidamente salen ya diferenciados en la color y tamaño, porque todos son grandes y la color algo baja declinado á la disposición de la tierra”).


According to Florencia, New Spain was filled with “mixtures of people,” particularly “lots of Spaniards, blacks, mulattos, and mestizos.”

To clearly distinguish between the colonial aristocracy and the multiethnic masses, creoles and Spaniards devised an elaborate caste system that divided the people of New Spain into a plethora of invented socioracial categories according to culturally constructed theories of biological mixture. When Florencia described the inhabitants of the islands of the Marianas, for example, he claimed that the “men and women are of various colours: some are white and beautiful like Europeans; others with blond hair like northerners; others black like those from Ethiopia; others have the normal colour of the Indians; and still others resemble the mixtures that commonly arise from this type of people.”

This loose “pigmentocracy” roughly followed the socioracial pyramid of colonial society in New Spain; Spaniards and creoles naturally placing themselves on top, castas finding themselves somewhere in the middle, and Indians and blacks delegated to the bottom. But in Florencia’s sacred

---

17 Historia de la Provincia, 210, 257 (“Españoles, Indios, negros, y demás mixturas de gentes, de que hay mucho en el Reino”) (“y habiendo ya en la Nueva España muchisísimos Españoles, Negros, Mulatos, y Mestizos”).


19 Vida de Medina, 17v–18r (“y en ellas hombres, y mujeres de varios colores; algunos tan blanco, y hermosos como los Europeos; con cabellos rubios otros como los Septentrionales; otros negros como los de Etiopia; otros del color ordinario de los Indios; y otros finalmente de las mixturas, que de esta variedad de gentes comúnmente resultan”).

rhetoric all people had the same access to divine grace regardless of their socioracial origins. His brethren performed confession “to everyone, poor and rich, white and black, big and small,” and according to him the Virgin Guadalupe appeared for “everyone, Spaniards, Indians, blacks, and whites.”

Figure 4.1. Matias de Arteaga y Alfaro. Engraving of the fourth apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego before the first Archbishop of Mexico Juan de Zumárraga. The Virgin was said to have appeared for both Indians and Spaniards. Taken from Luis Becerro Tanco, Felicidad de México (Seville: Thomas López de Haro, 1685). Biblioteca Lorenzo Boturini, Basílica de Guadalupe, Mexico City, Mexico. Photograph by Jason Dyck.


21 Relación de Guadalajara, 11r (“a todos, pobres, y ricos, blancos, y negros, grandes, y pequeños”).

22 La estrella del norte, 206r (“se apareció, y quedó su retrato, para todos, Españoles, e Indios, negros, y blancos”).
Florencia took the universality of the Christian gospel one step further by arguing that select men and women from all socioracial categories were potential saints. He stated that the Christian God neither “accepts people nor looks at the quality of their nobility or riches, but instead the sanctity and virtues they possess; to bestow his favours he does not pay attention to whether one is white or black.”

The land was by no means an obstacle to their holiness. According to Florencia, New Spain was home to provinces such as Michoacán, which are “so good that no other surpasses it in terms of the quality of its climate, fertility, and the abundance of species that give crédito to the regions of the world.”

His sacred rhetoric was possibly informed by that of Bernardo de Sartolo (1654–1700), a Spanish Jesuit who penned a sacred biography of the Peruvian cacique Nicolás Puicón Faxollen (1632–1677), otherwise known as Nicolás de Dios. In the introduction to his vida, Sartolo declared that “God is not an accepter of places or people” because he extends his favours equally to all regions of the world, a sufficient reason to explain why “America has no need to complain or Europe [the right] to deny it.”

Confirming the truth of his statement, he concluded that although Nicolás was “born into the Indian nation . . . divine providence gave him America as his patria to demonstrate that any given country can be a noble house of the virtuous and of saints.”

In the sacred rhetoric of the Baroque members from all ethnic groups had the potential to lead virtuous lives and even arrive at canonization. Although Florencia

---

23 *La milagrosa invención*, 78v (“que no acepta personas, ni en ellas mira la calidad de nobleza, o riqueza, que tienen; sino la santidad, y virtudes que las adornan: no acata para repartir sus dones, si es blanco, o negro”).

24 *Historia de la Provincia*, 217 (“tan Buena, que ninguna la excede en las calidades de temple, fertilidad, y abundancia de los géneros, que dan crédito a las Regiones de el Mundo”).

25 Sartolo, *Vida de Nicolás de Ayllón*, Introducción, n.p. (“No es Dios acceptador de lugares, y personas . . . haciendo, que de la igualdad de sus favores no tenga porque quejarse la América, ni porque desvanecerse la Europa . . . Nicolás de Ayllón, Indio de Nación, y origen, a quien la providencia divina dio por patria la América, para mostrar, que cualquiera país puede ser solar de virtuosos, y de Santos”).
recognized that it was necessary for men and women to “recount the examples and lives of the saints,” he believed that New Spain was filled with its own exemplary figures. What Kathleen Myers writes about the creole nun María de San José (1656–1719) is equally true for the Spaniards, creoles, Indians, and mestizos in Florencia’s sacred biographies: they were “evidence of the New World’s ability to compete with Spain. No longer was America merely a producer of raw material; it was also a teacher for the Old World.” The New Spain Florencia imagined was abundantly fertile and blessed by a benevolent climate, home to saintly men and women who were noble by both blood and virtue. But unlike most Indians and castas, his religious brethren were able to claim both.

The Distinguished Sons of the Province

The Society of Jesus in New Spain was made up of primarily European (mostly Spanish) and creole men with either personal or familial connections to the colonial aristocracy. Jesuits demonstrated their sanctity as founding fathers, missionaries, martyrs, composers of indigenous grammars, and as teachers of Latin and theology to the sons of the novohispano elite. Florencia referred to all of his coreligionists, whether they were lay brothers or fully ordained members, as “distinguished sons” of his Province of New Spain. He believed that their “holy works” and “examples of virtue” were a result of their honourable ancestors whose noble blood they shared. In his Jesuit vidas he piously

---

26 Descripción histórica, 170 (“contar ejemplos, y vidas de Santos”).
28 Relación de Guadalajara, A la religiosa y venerable Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de la Nueva España, n.p. (“esclarecidos hijos”).
represented the men of his religious province as “illustrious heroes” who were worthy of imitation, but at times he singled out the noble lineages of his creole brethren.

As Florencia prepared his Jesuit *vidas* he surveyed some of the general histories and martyrologies of his order printed in both the vernacular and Latin. These works were disseminated within the global network of the Society of Jesus and included stories on the labours and lives of Jesuits from most local provinces. But given that their authors were mostly writing out of Europe, the mission fields of Asia, Africa, and America were not always sufficiently represented. Florencia addressed this issue in the *Historia de la Provincia* when he referenced the four-volume set of Jesuit lives that Juan Eusebio Nieremberg y Otin (1595–1658) compiled in the 1640s. When writing about Juan de la Plaza (1527–1629), one of the first Jesuits to arrive in New Spain, he noted that although Nieremberg included him in his fourth volume, he was missing details on his “heroic virtues” because he penned his work in Toledo. Since Plaza’s life was one “of the greatest histories that the Company had in his time,” Florencia felt that “it was unfortunate that Father Juan Eusebio wrote so little about him.” Through his Jesuit *vidas* he sought to draw attention to some of these gaps, especially considering that the lives of the men from his local province had limited circulation as they were mostly in manuscript form.

The first work of Jesuit *vidas* that Florencia compiled was his *Menologio de los varones más señalados en perfección religiosa de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús*

---

29 *Historia de la Provincia*, 97 (“estos inclitos Héroes de esta Provincia”).
30 Alonso de Andrade (1590–1672) and José Cassani (1673–1750) added five more volumes to Nieremberg’s work in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Alexandre Coello de la Rosa, “Criollismo, redes clientelares y la Compañía de Jesús. La familia Garavito-Illescas en el Perú virreinal (siglo XVII),” in *Familias y relaciones diferenciales. Género y edad*, coord. Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, Servicio de Publicaciones, 2010), 359.
31 *Historia de la Provincia*, 397 (“Habiendo sido de las mayores historias que tuvo en su tiempo la Compañía, fue desgraciado, en lo poco que del escribió el Padre Juan Eusebio”).
A menology was normally a listing of saintly figures arranged by the months of the year with brief biographic summaries, but the Society of Jesus compiled menologies for the most outstanding members of both their local provinces and general order. Florencia’s *Menologio* contains short accounts of sixty-six men from the Jesuit Province of New Spain and was primarily based upon the provincial and mission histories of Andrés Pérez de Ribas. After the *Menologio* was published in 1671 Florencia began to expand upon his original work, suggesting that it was “very small” because he wrote it while he was in Europe with insufficient documentation. Over a half century later Juan Antonio de Oviedo, a prolific Jesuit historian himself, discovered in one of Florencia’s notebooks that he only made it to the beginning of the month of February in his revised version. At the request of his superiors Oviedo amplified the *Menologio* and published it in 1747, placing asterisks beside the lives of the ninety-one Jesuits he added to distinguish his entries from those of Florencia.\(^\text{32}\)

On three different occasions Florencia wrote full-length sacred biographies on the men of his province. As it was noted in the first chapter, while he was acting as *procurador* in Seville, Florencia printed a life of Luis de Medina, *Exemplar vida y muerte por Cristo del fervoroso P. Luis de Medina*. With a few letters and relations he was able to piece together a narrative of the malagueño’s missionary work and martyrdom amongst the natives of Saipan. After returning home to New Spain, Florencia shifted his attention towards his creole brethren, beginning first with Nicolás de Guadalajara, a

\(^{32}\) Francisco de Florencia and Juan Antonio de Oviedo, *Menologio de los varones mas señalados en perfección religiosa de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España*, escrito por el Padre Francisco de Florencia y aprobado por N. M. R. P. Juan Paulo Oliva, Prepósito General de la misma Compañía (Mexico City: Francisco Retz, 1747), Prólogo, n.p. (“me apliqué a registrar el Archivo de la Provincia, y en él me hallé un Cuaderno del mismo P. Francisco de Florencia, en el cual comenzaba un Menologio más copioso, confesando, que el primero estaba muy diminuto por haberlo dispuesto, cuando se hallaba en Europa falto de los papeles, que pudiesen ministrarle materia más abundante para el intento. Pero en ese Cuaderno apenas llegó a los principios del mes de Febrero”).
citizen of Puebla who taught theology in his home city before being plagued by a series of debilitating illnesses. He based his *Relación de la ejemplar y religiosa vida del Padre Nicolás de Guadalajara* upon some of his own personal experiences and a biographic relation by the Jesuit Daniel Angelo Marras (1629–1689). In his third sacred biography Florencia concentrated on the life of Gerónimo de Figueroa, a creole from Mexico City with years of experience as a missionary amongst the Tarahumares and Tepehuanes of the Sierra Madre. To write the *Vida admirable y muerte dichosa del religioso P. Gerónimo de Figueroa* he collected letters and had conversations with several other Jesuit missionaries who personally knew Figueroa.

Since Florencia was rector of several Jesuit colleges he was responsible for writing letters of edification for his deceased brethren. Letters of edification were written in both the vernacular and Latin, the former stored within the archives of the local province and the latter sent to the *Padre General* in Rome.\(^3\) Some of these texts were extremely short and provided limited biographic information, while others were substantive narratives that were lengthy enough to be considered for publication and hence wider circulation. The information that rectors received in order to write these letters would have come from personal experience, oral history within the province, and perhaps from some of the surviving papers of the deceased. Two of Florencia’s letters of edification have survived, but it is safe to assume that he wrote several others. The first one concerns Andrés de Recalde, a lay brother from Vizcaya who worked on the hacienda of Guimares and in the sugar mills of Xalmolonga before his death from a stomach tumour in 1682.\(^4\) Joseph Vivas is the subject of the other, who was a creole

\(^3\) Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society*, 292–293.
\(^4\) AGN, Jesuitas I-10, caja 1, exp. 25, ff. 99–100.
from Cholula whose missionary work was cut short by illness and his eventual death in 1683.\textsuperscript{35}

The last group of Florencia’s Jesuit \textit{vidas} were those which he included in his three-volume provincial chronicle \textit{Historia de la Provincia}. In the first volume he recounted the life of Pedro Martínez (1533–1566), the first martyr of the La Florida missions, along with a few of the founding fathers of the Province of New Spain who arrived to Mexico City in 1572.\textsuperscript{36} Florencia mentioned in his prologue that “the second part of this history, which has yet to be printed, will recount the origins of the rest of the colleges of the Province, and in the third part the lives of the illustrious men of this Province.”\textsuperscript{37} Although neither of these two volumes was published during his lifetime or after his death, he had clearly drafted both of them. Florencia most likely included a few \textit{vidas} in the second volume of his \textit{Historia de la Provincia}, but only a few folios of this work have been preserved.\textsuperscript{38} The majority of the third volume, on the other hand, has survived and remains in good condition. Florencia recorded the lives of forty-six Jesuits, but those of the first two are missing from the manuscript.\textsuperscript{39} As with the \textit{Menologio}, his major source for these lives was Pérez de Ribas, but he also made use of the work of

\textsuperscript{35} AGN, Jesuitas II-11, exp. 14.
\textsuperscript{36} Florencia included the lives of Francisco Bazán (pp. 109–111), Diego López (pp. 265–287), Juan Curiel (pp. 287–296), Pedro Sánchez (pp. 367–389), Diego Trujillo (pp. 389–394), Juan de la Plaza (pp. 395–411), and Brother Marcos (pp. 411–414).
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Historia de la Provincia}, Prólogo, n.p. (“En la segunda parte de esta Historia, que resta por imprimir, se dará razón de los demás Colegios de la Provincia, y en la tercera parte . . . las Vidas de los Varones Ilustres, que en esta Provincia ha habido”).
\textsuperscript{38} BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, ff. 21r–22v. On July 28, 1696 the \textit{Padre General} Tirso González (1624–1705) wrote to the \textit{provincial} Juan Palacios “that the second part [of the \textit{Historia de la Provincia}] was still being examined to be sent to the press.” AHPM, Documentos Antiguos, caja 31, carpeta 1239, f. 2r (“que se quedaba reviendo la segunda parte para darse luego a la estampa”).
\textsuperscript{39} AHPM, Fondos Documentales, Fondo Decorme, caja 3, carpeta IX, doc. 1, ff. 1–201. It is possible that the manuscript is missing more than just the first two lives given that the Jesuit Juan Francisco López (1699–1783) referred to “a volume of \textit{vidas} of one hundred illustrious men of this Province that the Father Florencia had written.” BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta XVII, doc. 6, f. 1r (“un tomo de vidas de cien varones ilustres de esta Provincia que el P. Florencia había escrito”).
Nieremberg, a cluster of annual letters, and other manuscript histories he found in the Jesuit central archives of Rome.

Florencia’s menology and the vidas he included in his provincial chronicle focus on Jesuits from the first half century of the foundation of the Society of Jesus in New Spain. His letters of edification and sacred biographies concentrate on the lives of his contemporaries, most of whom he knew personally. All of Florencia’s Jesuit vidas, regardless of the genre and time period they cover, played an instrumental role in the formation of a religious provincial identity in New Spain within a larger institutional identity as the Society of Jesus. Together with his brethren he took pride in the exemplary men of his local province and the canonized members of his order, specifically with their founder San Ignacio and other early Jesuit saints. In his life of Juan de Tovar (ca. 1543–1626), a nephew of one of the kings of Texcoco and amongst the first to enter the Company in Mexico City, Florencia followed Pérez de Ribas by presenting him as a “Mexican Cicero” and faithful mirror of San Francisco Xavier (1506–1552). Tovar’s work, which was typologically compared to the Jesuit missionary par excellence, was so fruitful amongst the indigenous population that “they called him the Xavier of New Spain because he did in the west what the saint did with the Indians of the east.”

The same day that Xavier died in China, according to Florencia, Tovar was buried in New Spain.

Since Florencia was interested in the “glorious enterprises” of the Company around the globe, he freely incorporated the work of his predecessors into his Jesuit vidas with only minor modifications. He removed personal references that were not his own, shortened sections, cut out others, slightly rearranged word order, and normally cited the

---

40 AHPM, Fondos Documentales, Fondo Decorne, caja 3, carpeta IX, doc. 1, f. 113r (“llamábanle el Xavier de la Nueva España, porque hacia en el Occidente lo que el Santo hizo con los indios de el Oriente”). Pérez de Ribas, Crónica, 2:112.
sources he worked from. The lives of his Jesuit brethren belonged to the province and were collectively written, shared, and edited to address current needs and to edify its members. But there are a few cases in which Florencia strayed from the sacred rhetoric of his coreligionists to add a few commentaries of his own. Although he concentrated on the noble lineages of the entire Province of New Spain, he carefully inserted short vignettes on the creole aristocracy when addressing their *patrias* and parentage, specifically in the *vidas* of his third volume of the *Historia de la Provincia*. Florencia also drew attention to the indigenous nobility of the pre-Hispanic past, highlighted the military service of the early conquistadors, and boasted of the general wealth of noble families in New Spain.

In imitation of most Catholic writings on the saints, Florencia’s Jesuit *vidas* trace the virtues of his subjects chronologically from birth to death. He identified the birthplace of his brethren first, recognizing that each one was a source of pride to his local city and region. In a standard fashion he simply referenced the names of their *patrias* by stating that “he was born in” (*nació en*) or that “he was a natural of” (*fue natural de*). Although he normally avoided further geographic descriptions of these places, in a few cases he commented on their fame and importance. For instance, after mentioning the birthplace of Pedro López de Parra (1546–1602), one of the founders of the Jesuit Province of New Spain, he added that within the walls of his native city of Salamanca was the “celebrated university of Spain.”

In his life of Antonio Rincón (1556–1601), son of indigenous nobles and author of an important sixteenth-century Nahuatl grammar, Florencia went beyond Pérez de Ribas by claiming that his birthplace was an “imperial city in this

---

41 AHPM, Fondos Documentales, Fondo Decorme, caja 3, carpeta IX, doc. 1, f. 12r (“Nació en Salamanca, universidad célebre de España”).
kingdom in heathen times because it was the court of the kings of Texcoco, who were closely related to the emperors of Mexico, and thus they too were emperors.”

In all cases Florencia stressed that the men of his province were the offspring of “noble parents” (padres nobles), “honourable parents” (padres honrados), “good parents” (padres buenos), or “illustrious parents” (padres ilustres). He provided their full names and titles when they were available, and in a few cases he included additional information on their families to highlight the honour of their lineages. In his life of Bernardino de

---

42 Ibid., f. 105v (“Nació en Texcoco, ciudad imperial de este Reino en tiempo de la gentilidad, porque era corte de los Reyes de Texcoco, que estaban estrechamente emparentados, con los emperadores de México, y eran también emperadores, como ellos”). Pérez de Ribas, Crónica, 1:130. There is debate over whether Rincón was an Indian or if he was of mixed ancestry. Ignacio Guzmán Betancourt, “Antonio el Rincón (1556–1601). Primer gramático mexicano,” Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl 33 (2002): 255–257.
Llanos (d. 1639), Florencia followed Pérez de Ribas by noting that his parents, natives of the Villa de Ocaña in the Archbishopric of Toledo, were also “close relatives of Doña Marina de Escobar, who for her sanctity has been venerated in our times in all of Spain and in the whole world.”

But when he concentrated on the life of Gaspar de Carvajal (d. 1647), he included more details on his lineage than just his birth in Puebla to one of the “principal captains” in the conquest of Mexico-Tenochtitlan. Florencia briefly narrated the crucial role Carvajal’s father played in the final siege of the Mexica capital in 1521:

“His father was a captain of one of the brigantines with which they besieged Mexico from the lagoon, and the principal historian of Mexico [Bernal Díaz del Castillo] says that he put so much energy and force into smashing the walls . . . that he was the first to defeat them with all his effort.”

Florencia further developed the noble characteristics of his brethren’s parents by clarifying that they were also “good Christians” (buenos cristianos) who diligently raised their sons with “good customs” (buenas costumbres) and Christian doctrine. He sought to demonstrate, as he did with Agustín Cano (d. 1622) of Mexico City, that “according to their riches and lineage [his parents] raised him in prosperity and virtues worthy of their blood.”

Nobility and early childhood education were inseparable in Jesuit vidas because nobles were expected to have the economic means to send their children to the finest

---

43 AHPM, Fondos Documentales, Fondo Decorme, caja 3, carpeta IX, doc. 1, f. 129r (“Nació el Padre Bernardino de Llanos en la Villa de Ocaña en el Arzobispado de Toledo de padres ilustres en sangre, muy cercano pariente de la Señora Doña Marina de Escobar, cuya santidad ha sido venerada en nuestros siglos de toda España, y de todo el mundo”). Pérez de Ribas, Crónica, 2:140.
44 AHPM, Fondos Documentales, Fondo Decorme, caja 3, carpeta IX, doc. 1, ff. 157v–158r (“Su padre fue Capitán de uno de los bergantines, con que cercaron a México por la laguna, y de él dice el principal Historiador de México que puso tanto ahínco y calor en romper los vallados . . . que fue el primero, que las venció con su esfuerzo”). Pérez de Ribas, Crónica, 1:365.
45 AHPM, Fondos Documentales, Fondo Decorme, caja 3, carpeta IX, doc. 1, f. 152r (“El Padre Agustín Cano uno de los varones más insigne de esta Provincia nació en México de padres muy nobles, y de mucho caudal, que según su riqueza, y linaje le criaron con abundancia, y virtudes dignas de su sangre”).
schools to learn Latin grammar and the principal teachings of the Catholic faith. In his 
*vida* of Pedro Morales (d. 1614), native of the Villa de Valdepeñas and one of the 
founders of Espíritu Santo in Puebla, Florencia stated that his parents “raised him with 
virtue and devotion. He occupied himself from childhood in the study of humanities.”\(^46\) But when he wrote the life of Pedro Mercado, a native of Mexico City, instead of merely 
stating that his parents sent him to Salamanca to study as Pérez de Ribas had written, 
Florencia added that this was “a sign that they were able to [financially] sustain him in 
those kingdoms.”\(^47\)

The emphasis Florencia placed on different aspects of the creole aristocracy was 
designed, in part, to address larger concerns of “race” mixture. Since a large portion of 
creoles were descendants of early settlers and conquistadors who had united together with 
the daughters of Indian *principales*, there was no way of avoiding the fact that they were 
not “pure” Spaniards, as those from the Iberian Peninsula tended to remind them. Not 
only this, but the lines between creoles and other *castas* were not always easily defined. 
In his final report as viceroy, Antonio Sebastián de Toledo informed his successor that 
the nobility was “reverent and easy to govern.” But he was concerned with plebeians 
“whose variety of colours and large numbers” were ruled by an “imperfect nature, 
leisureness, and drunkenness.” Many “presumptuous” mestizos were amongst them “who 
boast of having our blood; and in some occasions they have demonstrated that they know 
how to obtain this obligation.”\(^48\) In an effort to distinguish themselves from aspiring

---

\(^46\) AHPM, Fondos Documentales, Fondo Decorne, caja 3, carpeta IX, doc. 1, f. 102r (“Nació en la Villa de 
Valdepeñas, de padres calificados y virtuosos, que como tales le criaron en virtud y devoción. Ocupose en 
su juventud en el estudio de las letras”). Pérez de Ribas, *Crónica*, 1:126.

\(^47\) AHPM, Fondos Documentales, Fondo Decorne, caja 3, carpeta IX, doc. 1, f. 17r (“Enviaronlo sus padres 
al mozo a estudiar a Salamanca, señal de que tenían posible para sustentarlo en aquellos Reinos”).

\(^48\) Antonio Sebastián de Toledo, *Informe que el Marqués de Mancera del comisión de guerra hace al 
Excelentísimo Señor Duque de Veragua su sucesor en el Virreinato de la Nueva España*, ANC, Fondo
castas, and to justify their mixed ancestry with the indigenous elite, creoles imagined the pre-Hispanic past as their own “classical antiquity” and argued that noble Indian blood was in fact “pure” and as a result an enhancement of their own lineages. It was the larger miscegenation amongst humble Spaniards and Indians, African slaves, and other casta commoners that many Spanish officials and creole elites found troubling.

Central to the colonial caste system were Iberian notions of blood purity (*limpieza de sangre*) that were incarnated into the multiethnic context of New Spain. Much like in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spain, Florencia and other creoles needed to provide proof (*probanza*) that they were “old Christians” (*cristianos viejos*) who were unsullied by Jewish or heretical blood for entrance into ecclesiastical and secular posts. Although a few Indian nobles joined the Company in the late sixteenth century, the majority of Jesuits in New Spain were Europeans and creoles. María Elena Martínez demonstrates that the creole aristocracy produced some of the most elaborate genealogies in the early modern Spanish world to separate themselves from those of mixed ancestry and to identify with a larger imagined community of “pure” Spaniards. She convincingly argues that the rhetoric of creole patriotism reinforced the ideology of blood purity “by...
redeploying the late medieval argument that blood was a vehicle through which all sorts of “natural” qualities were transmitted and by inserting the descendants of native people and especially blacks into the same category of impurity as conversos and moriscos.”

Nobility and sanctity were amongst the qualities that were believed to be passed on through bloodlines. Florencia, as a result, stressed that his brethren came from families “known for their purity of blood and for the nobility of their customs.”

Throughout his Jesuit vidas Florencia emphasized that the men of his province possessed “nobility of the heart” (nobleza de corazón) or “Christian nobility” (nobleza de los cristianos). In some cases, he concentrated on the ways they renounced their lineages in favour of the religious life, something which they confessed was far more honourable. Gabriel de Logroño, a natural of Málaga, did not talk much about his noble origins because he believed “that the greatest nobility he had was being a son of the Company.” Similarly, in his life of Nicolás de Guadalajara, Florencia claimed that although his parents were important members of the Pueblan elite, “he held in greater esteem the total renunciation of the world and its positions of authority than his illustrious lineage.” The remainder of his Jesuit vidas follow the sanctity of his brethren through their early education, noviciate, religious vows, ministries, spiritual disciplines, deaths,

---

52 Martínez, Genealogical Fictions, 220. Conversos were Jewish converts and moriscos were Muslim converts to the Christian faith (“new Christians”). According to notions of blood purity in the Iberian Peninsula, those with any trace of Jewish or Muslim blood were more susceptible to heresy and hence were barred from important religious and secular posts. David Nirenberg, “Race and the Middle Ages: The Case of Spain and Its Jews,” in Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires, eds. Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 75.

53 Vida de Medina, 1v (“tan conocidos por la limpieza de su sangre, como por la nobleza de sus costumbres”).

54 Vida de Figueroa, 3v. Relación de Guadalajara, 1r. Menelogio, 22r.

55 AHPM, Fondos Documentales, Fondo Decorme, caja 3, carpeta IX, doc. 1, f. 64r (“pero decía, que la mayor nobleza, que tenía era ser hijo de la Compañía”). Pérez de Ribas, Crónica, 2:56.

56 Relación de Guadalajara, 4v (“teniendo por mayor honra de su ilustre linaje esta total renunciación del mundo, y sus dignidades”).
and most importantly their virtues. With pride Florencia referred to several men of his province as “saints” who were worthy of canonization. “Saint Pedro Martínez [was] the first one in America to pour out his blood for Christ,” and Juan Esteban, a natural of Tepotzotlán, was “venerated as a saint” after his death. 57 When Francisco Bazán died, a native of Guadix and one of the founders of the Jesuit Province of New Spain, “the priests of Mexico honoured his body in the same way as that of a saint.” 58 And in his Menologio, Florencia further compared two of his creole brethren to the early desert fathers, suggesting that Alonso Guerrero knew “how to practice the solitude of the desert of Thebaid,” and that Martín Pérez (d. 1626) was “in solitude, silence, and contemplation much like Hilarion or Macarius.” 59

Since imitation was one of the goals of sacred biographers, it was normal to compare their subjects with canonized saints. But in Florencia’s case he had something more in mind than just rhetorically representing his brethren as faithful mirrors of Christ. Throughout his Jesuit vidas he freely moved back and forth between his pride in the men of his religious order and his pride in the men of his homeland. His religious province and the kingdom of New Spain covered the same geographical area, so European proponents of American degeneracy were indirectly suggesting that both were incapable of producing saints due to climatic influences. Florencia may not have been directly promoting his brethren to the altar with his Jesuit vidas, but he certainly wanted to show that they were “amongst the distinguished [men] that this kingdom has brought forth and

57 AHPM, Fondos Documentales, Fondo Decorne, caja 3, carpeta IX, doc. 1, f. 26r (“el Santo Pedro Martínez, el primero que en la América derramó su sangre por Cristo”). Menologio, 24v (“En su muerte lo veneraron por Santo”).
58 AHPM, Fondos Documentales, Fondo Decorne, caja 3, carpeta IX, doc. 1, f. 2r (“Honraron su cuerpo, como de Santo los clérigos de México”).
59 Menologio, 10v, 16r (“supo entre ellos practicar la soledad del yermo de la Tebaida”) (“fue en el retiro, silencio, y contemplación tenido por un Hilarion, o un Macario”).
that this Province of Mexico—a fertile mother of saints and learned men—has raised.”

Europeans and creoles made up the majority of these “distinguished men” because nobility and sanctity were believed to have flowed through the same bloodlines. But in order to properly establish the sanctity of novohispano shrines, Florencia had to concede that Indians outside of the nobility were also worthy of imitation.

The Three Fortunate Indians

Both noble and plebeian Indians earned reputations for their sanctity throughout the colonial era for their roles in the origins of novohispano shrines. Amongst the most celebrated were Juan de Tobar, Juan Diego, and Diego Lázaro. Florencia referred to these men as the “three fortunate Indians” because he believed they had been divinely chosen as instruments of the Virgin Mary or the Archangel San Miguel. But even though they had been devoutly represented in sacred literature, engravings, and paintings, none of them had been the subject of their own vida. Florencia was the first one to write lives of the “three fortunate Indians” in separate chapters of his devotional histories, and

---

60 Vida de Figueroa, 1r (“Varón esclarecido entre los que ha dado este Reino, y criado esta Provincia de México, Madre fecunda de Santos, y doctos hijos”).
61 For two important studies on colonial vidas of Indians, see Asunción Lavrin, “Indian Brides of Christ,” 231–241; and Antonio Rubial García, “La exaltación de los humillados. Indios y santidad en las ciudades novohispanos del siglo XVIII,” in Actas del III Congreso Internacional Mediadores Culturales. Ciudades mestizas, intercambios y continuidades en la expansión occidental, siglos XVI a XIX, coord. Manuel Ramos and Clara García (Mexico City: Condumex/Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2001), 139–156. A second and expanded version of this study was published as “La santidad indígena. Defensores y detractores durante el periodo virreinal,” in El santo Juan Diego. Historia y contexto de una canonización polémica, eds. Lourdes Celina Vázquez Parada, Juan Diego Ortiz Acosta, and Luis Rodolfo Morán Quiroz (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 2006), 81–124.
62 Not to be confused with the Jesuit Juan de Tovar mentioned in the second section of this chapter.
63 Narración de la maravillosa, 81 (“tres venturosos indios”).
64 For a discussion of the iconography of Juan de Tobar and Juan Diego, see Norman Fernández Quintero, “La figura del indio en las “apariciones” marianas,” in Imágenes de los naturales en el arte de la Nueva España, siglos XVI al XVIII, ed. Elisa Vargaslugo (Mexico City: Fomento Cultural Banamex, 2005), 320–353.
in so doing he provided them with a historical existence outside of their respective parts in the origin stories of Catholic images. His construction of Indian sanctity has led Jacques Lafaye to christen him as the “Godfather of Juan Diego,” a title that could just as easily be applied to him for his pious portrayals of Juan de Tobar and Diego Lázaro. In his Indian *vidas* Florencia tried to convince his European and creole readership that “we should not be embarrassed to imitate an Indian” even if he was of humble origins.

Through pilgrimage and research Florencia discovered that Indians were familiar actors in colonial apparition accounts, similar to the poor and the powerless in the discovery legends of Catholic images from the Iberian Peninsula. In his devotional histories of the Virgins of Remedies and of Guadalupe and the Archangel San Miguel he drew connections between the lives of the “three fortunate Indians.” Florencia narrated how Juan de Tobar, Juan Diego, and Diego Lázaro were all visited by divine intercessors and asked to tell men in positions of authority of their visions. The three Indian protagonists were like Moses before the burning bush and initially ignored the supernatural orders they received. But when they finally mustered up the courage to tell the bishop or the Franciscans of their revelations, they were rejected as “Indian[s],

---

65 Of the “three fortunate Indians,” Juan Diego is the only one who has received independent treatment of his own. He has been the subject of sacred biographers from Florencia to the present day, especially in the years preceding his canonization by Pope John Paul II (1920–2005) in 2002. Although he was raised to the altar by the Catholic Church, most modern scholars do not believe there is sufficient evidence to prove that he ever existed. For more on this debate, see Stafford Poole, *The Guadalupan Controversies*; and Brading, *La canonización de Juan Diego*. Scholars have also questioned the historicity of Juan de Tobar. See Miranda Godínez, *Dos cultos fundantes*, 166–167. The same, however, has not been true for Diego Lázaro due to existing copies of his baptismal record and testament. Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci had these documents in his possession and listed them in his “Catálogo del museo histórico indiano,” in *Idea de una nueva historia*, 78. A nineteenth-century copy of his baptismal record can be found in the AGN, Historia, vol. 1, exp. 8, ff. 170r–172v, and a 1639 copy of his testament (August 13, 1635) is available in the AHPSSMM, caja 41, Disciplinar, Testamentos.

66 Jacques Lafaye, “Cuestionada historicidad de Juan Diego,” in Vázquez Prada, Ortiz Acosta, and Morán Quiroz, eds., *El santo Juan Diego*, 73.

67 *La estrella del norte*, 205v (“No nos avergonzemos de imitar a un Indio”).

68 For Iberian discovery legends, see Christian, *Local Religion*, 75–91.
humble, and recent convert[s].” After returning home, dejected, they were visited once more and given signs with which they were successfully able to convince ecclesiastical officials of their stories. In the end shrines were erected at the very places where the Virgin or the Archangel had appeared to them. When Florencia compared these three accounts he concluded that the “three fortunate Indians” were not “looked down upon for being poor and for being Indian.”

In his telling of these apparition accounts Florencia provided biographic details on the “three fortunate Indians,” most of which he repeated in his chapter-length *vidas*. His chapter on Juan de Tobar is entitled “Tratase del cacique Don Juan de Tobar y de la casa en que hospedó” and was based primarily on the work of Luis de Cisneros and Juan de Grijalva. He followed Cisneros more closely, however, because his treatment of the Virgin of Remedies was much more extensive. The title of Florencia’s chapter on Juan Diego is “Quién fue Juan Diego, sus virtudes y dichoso fin” and his principal sources were Luis Becerra Tanco and the juridical proceedings of 1665/1666. Although he pointed to indigenous sources, his life of Juan Diego does not differ much from the biographic information Becerra Tanco had gathered a few decades earlier. And Florencia’s chapters on the life of Diego Lázaro are entitled “Escribe una suma de la vida de Diego Lázaro de San Francisco y su dichosa muerte” and “Una demostración prodigiosa, con que los Ángeles acreditaron su vida en su muerte; y otras cosas tocantes a sus virtudes.” His primary texts were a relation by Pedro Salmerón and the juridical

---

69 *La estrella del norte*, 7r (“por ser Indio, humilde, y recién convertido”).
70 *Narración de la maravillosa*, 18 (“a quienes escogió por instrumentos de aquellos dos célebres Santuarios; no le parecería despreciar por pobre, y por Indio a Diego Lázaro”).
testimonies of 1643 and 1676. Although Florencia did not have new information to share on the “three fortunate Indians,” his inclusion of moral discourses on their virtues set his work apart from his predecessors.

Figure 4-3. Luis Berrueco. Painting of Diego Lázaro in the Sanctuary of the Archangel San Miguel del Milagro, San Miguel del Milagro, Mexico. 1726. Photograph by Jason Dyck.

Florencia’s apparition accounts and Indian *vidas* were designed to further the cultus of the Virgins of Remedies and of Guadalupe and the Archangel San Miguel. He may not have been attempting to promote “the three fortunate Indians” to sainthood, but

---

73 Salmerón, “Relación de la aparición,” 101–113. Although Florencia referenced the second edition of Juan Eusebio Nieremberg’s *De la devoción y patrocinio de San Miguel, Príncipe de los Ángeles* (Madrid: María de Quiñones, 1643; Mexico City: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1643), his principal source was Salmerón.
he was involved in larger efforts to “canonize” the miraculous images with which they were associated. As it was noted in the first chapter, Florencia played a prominent role in the quest to proclaim December 12 the official feast day of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Similar campaigns were never organized for the Virgin of Remedies, but the Mexico City cabildo went to great lengths to promote the image as an important protectress of the viceregal capital. Although a case was never presented before the Sacred Congregation of Rites for the Archangel San Miguel in Tlaxcala, Pueblan bishops looked to officially recognize the miraculous spring that Diego Lázaro was said to have discovered with a series of ecclesiastical investigations. In all three cases, devotion to these images was increasing in the second half of the seventeenth century as pilgrimage patterns and cultic followings were expanding beyond local boundaries to other regions of New Spain. “To avoid comparison I will not place the three sanctuaries of Guadalupe, Remedies, and San Miguel side by side,” Florencia wrote in his vida of Diego Lázaro, “all three are heavens on earth: it is a glory to enter inside them.”

The three “heavens on earth” were all former centres of Indian “idolatry” before the Spanish invasion. Florencia observed that there had been a pre-Hispanic temple (cue) on the hill of Totoltepec where Juan de Tobar discovered the Virgin of Remedies beneath

74 For a discussion of the patronage of the Mexico City cabildo over the shrine, see Miranda Godínez, Dos cultos fundantes, 43–59, 73–90, 111–127.
75 Both Juan de Palafox y Mendoza and Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz were important patrons of the shrine. For Palafox y Mendoza, see Cayetana Álvarez de Toledo, Politics and Reform in Spain and Viceregal Mexico: The Life and Thought of Juan de Palafox 1600–1659 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 89. And for Santa Cruz, see Montserrat Gali Boadella, “El patrocinio episcopal en la ciudad de Puebla. El caso del obispo Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz, 1677–1699,” in Actas III Congreso Internacional del Barroco Americano. Territorio, arte, espacio y sociedad, ed. José Manuel Almansa et al. (Seville: Área de Historia del Arte, Departamento de Humanidades, Universidad Pablo de Olavide, 2001), 76.
76 Narración de la maravillosa, 81 (“De los tres Santuarios, de Guadalupe, de los Remedios, y de S. Miguel del Milagro, no hago careo por no compararlos. Todos tres son Cielos en la tierra: es gloria entrar en ellos”).
At Tepeyac he noted that before the Virgin of Guadalupe painted her image on the cape of Juan Diego with roses from the hill there was a “celebrated altar” for the “mother of the Gods” Tonantzin. And he claimed that some believed “the Indians practiced idolatry and had an altar” where they worshipped the demon on the hill of Tzopitoatl, the very place where the Archangel San Miguel removed the stone for Diego Lázaro to unveil a healing stream of water. In all three cases, Florencia expressed confidence that the places which were formerly used “for abominations and superstitious rites of idolatry [are] today sanctuaries dedicated to public worship, piety, and to the devotion of the faithful.”

Stressing the erection of Catholic shrines in mountainous regions with subterranean spaces directly addressed larger perceptions of Indian conversion to the Christian faith. Many Spaniards believed that they were clandestinely practicing their “superstitious” rites in hills and caves or masking their idols behind Christian altars.

The historical origins of the “three heavens on earth” were based upon the personal encounters the “three fortunate Indians” had with the sacred. Florencia had to 

---

77 *La milagrosa invención*, 9v (“que Torquemada llama Otomcapulco, y es hoy cerro de los Remedios; que era montuoso, especialmente el sitio, en que estaba su Cue”).
78 *La estrella del norte*, 3v (“En tiempo de su gentilidad tenían los Mexicanos en este cerro un célebre adoratorio, en que daban culto a un Ídolo llamado en su idioma Teotenantzin (dicen unos) que quiere decir: Madre de los Dioses: Tonantzín, o Tenantzin, otros, que es lo mismo, que Madre de las gentes, o Madre nuestra”).
79 *Narración de la maravillosa*, 58 (“que en ella idolatraban los Indios, y tenían adoratorio, en que a su bárbara usanza daban culto al demonio”).
80 Ibid., 59 (“y que el lugar, que sirvió a las abominaciones, y ritos supersticiosos de la idolatría, sea hoy un Santuario dedicado al Culto Divino, a la piedad, y devoción de los fieles”).
81 Throughout the colonial era churchmen from various regions of Spanish America sought to put an end to what they perceived as resurgent practices of ancient “idolatries.” For the Yucatán Peninsula, see Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatán, 1517–1570* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). For the Central Valley of Mexico, see Serge Gruzinski, *Man-Gods in the Mexican Highlands: Indian Power and Colonial Society, 1520–1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989). And for Peru, see Kenneth Mills, *Idolatry and its Enemies: Colonial Andean Religion and Extirpation, 1640–1750* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). Mills importantly points out that “idolatry” in the colonial era was not always used to describe pre-Hispanic religious practices, but was “a capacious concept, meaning whatever was deemed to be in error” (p. 189).
clear his Indian protagonists of all traces of idolatry, especially considering that the two “Juanes” were neophytes in the Christian faith when the Virgin Mary appeared to them, and that Diego Lázaro was a teenager when he was visited by the Archangel San Miguel.\(^{82}\) He justified their providential selection by arguing that “neither wisdom nor the mother of wisdom enters into malevolent souls or dirty hearts” and that “the subject whom the Holy Archangel chose as an instrument could not fail to be virtuous.”\(^{83}\) He also began his Indian \textit{vidas} by explaining his inclusion of them in his devotional histories. Juan de Tobar, he reasoned, was “worthy of eternal memory for the way the Virgin favoured him,” claiming that his “fortunate discovery” of the Virgin of Remedies provided New Spain with one of its greatest treasures.\(^{84}\) When focusing on Juan Diego, he suggested that he played “such an important role in the miraculous history of the Virgin of Guadalupe” that it was his obligation as an historian to write a separate account of his life.\(^{85}\) And he stated that “a strong argument for the truth of this history [of the Archangel San Miguel] is the life and virtues of the Indian Diego Lázaro.”\(^{86}\)

Although exemplary Indians fill the pages of early missionary reports and sacred literature, only a limited number of them were the subjects of colonial \textit{vidas}.\(^{87}\) Little or

\(^{82}\) Florencia emphasized that Diego Lázaro was of a “responsible age” (edad competente). \textit{Narración de la maravillosa}, 74. Information as to whether Juan Diego was of “mature age” (madura edad) was part of the fifth question of the 1665/1666 capitulary inquiry into the miraculous tradition of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Vera, \textit{Informaciones sobre la milagrosa aparición}, 20.

\(^{83}\) \textit{La estrella del norte}, 107v (“que ni la Sabiduría, ni la Madre de la Sabiduría entran en ánimas malévolas, ni en corazones manchados”). \textit{Narración de la maravillosa}, 74 (“No podía dejar de ser virtuoso, sujeto que escogió el Santo Arcángel para instrumento”).

\(^{84}\) \textit{La milagrosa invención}, 57r (“D. Juan digno de eterna memoria, por lo que la Virgen lo favoreció”) (“a cuyo venturoso hallazgo”).

\(^{85}\) \textit{La estrella del norte}, 106r (“Teniendo Juan Diego tanta parte en la Historia de la Milagrosa Imagen de N. Señora de Guadalupe de México”).

\(^{86}\) \textit{Narración de la maravillosa}, 72 (“Y porque uno de los admirables milagros, y fuerte argumento de la verdad de esta Historia, es la vida, y virtudes del Indio Diego Lázaro de S. Francisco”).

\(^{87}\) Only a few Indian \textit{vidas} were published in the seventeenth century. Toribio de Benavente Motolinia (ca. 1490–1569) wrote an account of the “Tlaxcalan Boy Martyrs” in his \textit{Historia de los indios de la Nueva España} [ca. 1541], ed George Baudot (Madrid: Historia 16, 1985), 264–274, which was later translated into
next to nothing was known about many of them because, as Allan Greer points out, “the pious Indian usually appeared as an actor in someone else’s drama.”

Through his Indian *vidas* Florencia textually provided the “three fortunate Indians” with their own dramas by highlighting specific details from their own personal histories. He pointed out that Juan de Tobar was from San Juan, something he corroborated through personal conversations with “his descendants.”

Through the juridical testimonies he was able to demonstrate that Juan Diego was from Cuautitlan, and that Diego Lázaro was born in San Bernabé. When he spoke of their parentage, however, he had less to draw upon and could only acquire the names of Diego Lázaro’s parents. Given this lack of ancestral information, Florencia mentioned María Lucía and Francisca Castillan Xuchil, the spouses of Juan Diego and Diego Lázaro. He also followed Cisneros in referring to Doña Ana, the daughter of Juan de Tobar, in an effort to demonstrate that these men were historical figures with traceable descendants.

In all colonial *vidas* ancestry was inseparable from status and hence Florencia addressed the social positions of the “three fortunate Indians.” The various ethnic groups

---

Nahuatl by Juan Bautista in 1601. The lives of these three Indian boys have been analyzed by Inga Clendinnen, “History through the Looking Glass,” Kathleen Fitzpatrick Memorial Lecture, University of Melbourne, 1999; Rubial García, “La santidad indígena,” 84–94; and Robert Haskett, “Dying for Conversion: Faith, Obedience, and the Tlaxcalan Boy Martyrs in New Spain,” *Colonial Latin America Review* 17, no. 2 (2008): 185–212. Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora penned lives of the Indian nuns Petrolina de la Concepción (d. 1666) and Francisca de San Miguel in *Paraíso occidental, plantado y cultivado por la liberal benéfica mano de los muy católicos, y poderosos reyes de España nuestros señores en su magnífico Real Convento de Jesús María de México* (Mexico City: Juan de Ribera, 1684), 171–177. These two women have been studied by Lavrin, “Indian Brides of Christ,” 233–237. And Bernardo de Sartolo wrote a full-length sacred biography of Nicolás de Dios in his *Vida admirable y muerte prodigiosa de Nicolás de Ayllón*. Different aspects of his life have been examined by Jaime Cuadriello, *Las glorias de la república de Tlaxcala o la conciencia como imagen sublime* (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México/Museo Nacional de Arte, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 2004), 238–252; and Juan Carlos Estenssoro Fuchs, *Del paganismo a la santidad. La incorporación de los indios del Perú al catolicismo, 1532–1750*, trans. Gabriela Ramos (Lima: IFEA, 2003), 468–492.


89 *La milagrosa invención*, 58r (“según me dijeron sus descendientes”).
of central Mexico were socially divided between a small group of nobles and a larger tax-paying body of commoners. Although Juan de Tobar was part of the nobility as “the son of a cacique,” Florencia emphasized how the Virgin of Remedies resided in the “poor hut of the Indian.”\footnote{Ibid., 57r, 61v (“como hijo de Cacique”) (“pobre choza del Indio”).} Juan Diego and Diego Lázaro, on the other hand, were both plebeians and had been born to “humble parents of the lowest standing amongst the Indians called \textit{macehuales}, who are their servants.”\footnote{La estrella del norte, 106v (“Nació de Padres humílides, de la categoría más ínfima entre los Indios, que llaman Mazehuales, que son los de servicio”). The caciques interviewed in the 1665/1666 juridical
considered ugly mirrors of their imagined glorious and industrious ancestors. When Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri passed through New Spain in the final years of the seventeenth century he observed that “the ingenuity of the Indians today is very different than that of the ancients.” His opinion was similar to that of the Spanish and creole aristocracy who viewed the plebeian Indian masses as a “miserable” bunch in the wake of conquest. Florencia, however, carefully pointed out that although the “three fortunate Indians” were amongst this group, they were examples of “how even the spirit of God is in choosing to manifest his greatness and announce his prodigies to the most abject, the most vile, and rejected of this world.”

Ancestry was also closely related to religion in colonial sacred biographies. Diego Lázaro may have been baptized as an infant, but Florencia could not ignore the fact that the two “Juanes” were heathens before their conversion to Catholicism. Depending on the eye of the beholder, all three would have fallen into the category of “new Christian,” much like the conversos and moriscos in Spain, and were potentially tainted by “impure blood.”

Diego Jaymes Ricardo Villavicencio, a local priest from Puebla, stated that in the “plebeian [Indians] of this kingdom” the “blood of their ancestors still boils, moves, and lives in their veins,” those who “in their heathenism blindly gave themselves over to idolatry.” Although the two “Juanes” had been raised as “idolaters,” Florencia argued

---

92 Gemelli Careri, Viaje a la Nueva España, 63 (“El ingenio de los indios de hoy es bien diferente del de los antiguos”).
93 La estrella del norte, 106v (“cuan uniforme es el espíritu de Dios en elegir para manifestar sus grandezas, y anunciar sus prodigios, los más abyectos, los más viles, y desestimados del mundo”).
94 Martínez, Genealogical Fictions, 207–220.
95 Diego Jaymes Ricardo Villavicencio, Luz, y método, de confesar idólatras, y destierro de idolatrías, debajo del tratado siguiente (Puebla: En la Imprenta de Diego Fernández de León, 1692), 20 (“y plebeyos
that their pagan past was of no fault of their own. He described Juan de Tobar as a “man
of arms” who had been present when the Virgin Mary and Saint James appeared on the
Noche Triste (Sad Night) fighting in favour of the Spaniards. The Virgin Mary singled
him out and looked upon him with “the eyes of mercy to make him a Christian” and
hence spared him from death. Juan Diego had lived for forty-eight years because there
was no one to “enlighten him with the light of faith in the darkness of his heathenism.”
According to Florenica, he had been selected by divine providence to be amongst the first
to be evangelized by the Franciscans, but beyond this he claimed there was nothing else
known about his customs before his Christian baptism.

Florenia noted how the “three fortunate Indians” had all been baptized by
Franciscans and given Christian names. He reasoned that Juan de Tobar and Juan Diego
were both christened John as a “sign of the grace and love that [they were] to have with
the Virgin.” Since Diego Lázaro was baptized as an infant, Florencia was able to follow
common sacred rhetorical models in claiming that as a boy he was always “inclined to
virtue and cuidadoso of the things of the church and public worship.” Reference to
baptism was common in colonial vidas, but in the case of Indian neophytes it was an
important moment to highlight given the early debates on Indian humanity and their
suitability for the sacraments. Juan Diego was an example for Florencia that “could
challenge and even convince those who in the beginning of the conquest of both western

del Reino, en cuyas venas todavía, bulle, se menea, y vive, la sangre de sus antepasados, que en su
gentilidad se dieron, tan ciegamente a Idolatría”).
96 La milagrosa invención, 57v (“fue haberlo mirado a él entre todos la Virgen con ojos de misericordia,
para hacerlo Cristiano”).
97 La estrella del norte, 106v (“Cuarenta y ocho años vivió por falta de quien le alumbrase con la luz de la
Fe en las tinieblas del gentilismo”).
98 La milagrosa invención, 57v (“Llamose Juan en el Baptismo, pronóstico de la gracia, y cariño, que había
de tener con la Virgen”).
99 Narración de la maravillosa, 73 (“inclinado a la virtud, y cuidadoso de las cosas de la Iglesia, y Culto
Divino”).
empires viewed the Indians as brutes.”

In 1537 Pope Paul III (1468–1549) declared Indians to be rational beings capable of the Christian faith and worthy of baptism in his papal bull *Sublimis Deus*, a point that was later reinforced by the Dominican friar Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474–1566) in his debates with the Spanish jurist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490–1573). Although seventeenth-century churchmen never seriously questioned Indian humanity, the optimism the early mendicant friars had of their spiritual potential had considerably waned.

The textual transition, then, that Florencia made between humble Indian protagonists in apparition accounts to exemplary figures worthy of their own chapter-length *vidas* was not something that most of his contemporaries would have easily accepted. In the early 1600s the Archbishop of Mexico, García Guerra (ca. 1560–1612), claimed that Indians were “weak” and had “little capacity” for the things of salvation.

His opinion was still shared by others near the end of the century, particularly by Agustín

---

100 *La estrella del norte*, 109r (“pudieran confutarse, y aun confundirse, los que al principio de la Conquista de ambos Imperios Occidentales, tuvieron a los Indios, o por fieras, como las que del todo carecen de entendimiento, o por tan incapas, que se podia poner en duda si lo tenían, o por hombres al menos, casi brutos). Patricia Seed argues that on an individual level some friars may have defended Indian humanity for moral reasons, but in the larger imperial picture of colonialism Spain’s political control in America rested upon their capacity for conversion to the Christian faith. “‘Are These Not Also Men’: The Indians’ Humanity and Capacity for Spanish Civilisation,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 25, no. 3 (1993): 629–652.


102 Stafford Poole reviews the changing opinions of Indian capacity amongst the mendicant friars in “The Declining Image of the Indian among Churchmen in Sixteenth-Century New Spain,” in *Indian-Religious Relations in Colonial Spanish America*, ed. Susan E. Ramírez (Syracuse: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 1989), 11–19. Magnus Lundberg points out that few Indians were ordained to the priesthood during the seventeenth century and that most of them were from the nobility or were sons of caciques. “El clero indígena en Hispanoamérica. De la legislación a la implementación y práctica eclesiástica,” *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 38, no. 1 (2008): 62.

103 García Guerra, “Licencia,” in Martín de León, *Camino del cielo en lengua mexicana, con todos los requisitos necesarios para conseguir este fin, con todo lo que un cristiano debe creer, saber, y obrar, desde el punto que tiene uso de razón, hasta que muere* (Mexico City: En la Imprenta de Diego López, 1611), n.p. (“que tanta ayuda han menester para salvarse según su flaqueza y poca capacidad”).
de Vetancurt, who stated that “due to their nature [Indians] are less capable than Spaniards” in matters of the Christian faith. But in order to firmly establish the credibility of the origin stories of the Virgins of Remedies and of Guadalupe and the Archangel San Miguel, it was necessary to demonstrate that the “three fortunate Indians” were more than just baptized neophytes. Florencia emphasized how they dutifully learned Catholic doctrine, and that they were extremely pious men who were steadfast in their faith. Juan de Tobar worked on the construction of a church in Tacuba and possessed a “good conscience and pure life” with a “soul that was very pure, very sincere, and devout.” Juan Diego had a “very sincere heart and a very pure conscience” and was engaged in mortification, fasts, and spiritual disciplines, taking communion with the licence of the archbishop three times a week. And according to the juridical testimonies Florencia cited on Diego Lázaro, he “was virtuous, of good and praiseworthy customs, [and] very diligent in [attending] public worship.”

Florencia built upon the piety of the “three fortunate Indians” by confirming their sexual purity. The early mendicant friars persistently complained about the difficulties they had in enforcing the sacrament of marriage amongst the indigenous population. Indians—both men and especially women—were represented as sexually licentious beings that lived in an age when “sensuality dominated so despotically without

104 Agustín de Vetancurt, Arte de lengua mexicana (Mexico City: Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio, 1673), Al lector, n.p. (“que por su naturaleza, son más incapaces, que los Españoles”).
105 La milagrosa invención, 58r (“Su buena conciencia, y pureza de vida”) (“Todo esto arguye en Juan una alma muy pura, muy sincera, y devota”).
106 La estrella del norte, 107v, 110r (“un corazón muy sincero, y una conciencia muy pura”) (“vivó ejercitándose en obras de mortificación, ayunos, y disciplinas: comulgando con licencia de el Arzobispo tres veces en la semana”).
107 Narración de la maravillosa, 74 (“fue virtuoso, de buenas, y loables costumbres, muy aplicado al Culto Divino”).
restraint.” But Florencia used his indigenous protagonists, together with their wives, as important exceptions to this rule by likening them to medieval Christians who entered into spiritual marriages. Juan Diego and María Lucía lived “like siblings” together after they heard a sermon on chastity by Toribio de Benavente Motolinía. “Yesterday pagans, idolaters, and without knowledge of true virtues because they did not know the true God,” Florencia described the former life of the Indian couple, “are today practicing the examples of those few who . . . lived in matrimony as if they were not married!”

Although there was a tradition that they had a son together, he reasoned that this may have been from another wife before their conversion or that the two adopted an orphan of war and piously raised him as their own. In a similar fashion, some believed that Diego Lázaro and his wife had children together, but Florencia argued that there was no proof for this, and that Francisca Castillan Xucil was “of pious customs like [her husband].”

Most of the feats of piety Florencia described were performed at the first shrines constructed to house the images of the Virgins of Remedies and of Guadalupe and the Archangel San Miguel. He represented the “three fortunate Indians” as both sacristans assisting local priests and as anchorites engaged in spiritual disciplines. Juan de Tobar had originally housed the Virgin of Remedies in the domestic altar (santocalli) of his home before it was transferred to the earliest shrine constructed on the hill of Totoltepec. He died soon thereafter, but Florencia argued that “if he would have lived he would have always had the same cuidado in looking after [the shrine] as he put into making it.”

---

108 *La estrella del norte*, 108v (“en que la sensualidad dominó tan despóticamente desenfrenada”).
109 Ibid. (“Ayer Paganos, Idólatras, sin conocimiento de las verdaderas virtudes, porque no lo tenían del Dios verdadero; y hoy practicando los ejemplos de aquellos pocos, que . . . vivieron en el Matrimonio como si no fueran casados!”).
110 *Narración de la maravillosa*, 74 (“Y se presume, que fue como él, de piadosas costumbres”).
111 *La milagrosa invención*, 58r (“Porque si él hubiera vivido, hubiera tenido siempre el cuidado de conservarla, que puso en hacerla”).
Juan Diego left his home soon after the first shrine was built to the Virgin of Guadalupe and he lived there for seventeen years. Florencia noted that he occupied himself with “humble tasks like sweeping and loading and bringing the necessary things to the church and the offices in the house of the vicar with humility, promptness, and devotion.”

Diego Lázaro looked after the cleaning and decoration of the original shrine dedicated to the Archangel San Miguel. He also acted as a nurse (enfermero) taking care of the pilgrims who arrived there with various ailments and infirmities. Florencia described how he took water and earth from the fountain, “washing the sick with his hands and anointing them with mud where it hurt the most.”

The “three fortunate Indians” were so intimately connected to the shrines they helped to found that their bodies were laid to rest within them. Florencia’s reference to their physical remains was a tangible testimony to the historical existence of Juan de Tobar, Juan Diego, and Diego Lázaro. So too were the other physical objects he claimed they left to posterity. Many believed that the house of Juan de Tobar was still standing when Florencia prepared his history of the Virgin of Remedies. After having been impressed by a personal visit to the remains of the building, he learned that “some would like . . . to have a shrine built in this place to preserve the [remaining] portion of the house as a relic.” Juan Diego, on the other hand, had supposedly left a copy of the Virgin of Guadalupe with his son. Although the image remained in the family for a few generations, Florencia cited a letter by the Jesuit Juan de Monroy to prove that it ended

---

112 *La estrella del norte*, 109v (“haciendo los humildes oficios, de barrer, de cargar, y traer las cosas necesarias para la Iglesia, y oficinas de la casa del Vicario de ella, con humildad, prontitud, y devoción”).
113 *Narración de la maravillosa*, 76 (“él mismo sacaba la santa agua, y la tierra de ella, lavando con sus manos los enfermos, y untándoles con el barro las partes más dolientes”).
114 *La milagrosa invención*, 59v (“Algunos quisieran . . . que en este lugar se fabricara una Hermita, en que se conservara el pedazo de casa, como reliquia”).
up in the possession of Juan Caballero y Ocio (1644–1707), a rich benefactor and priest from Querétaro. And to demonstrate that a portrait of Diego Lázaro had been placed at the foot of the image of the Archangel San Miguel, Florencia referenced the work of Salmerón and confirmed that “after so many years his memory amongst the faithful has not been forgotten.”

According to Florencia the lives of the “three fortunate Indians” had important moral lessons to teach his European and creole readership. The first was that the Indians of New Spain needed to be treated “with more compassion by the Spaniards.” In his vida of Juan de Tobar, Florencia reflected upon the lowly and dejected state of the “two fortunate Juanes,” using them as examples to prove that there were many others like them in New Spain. He explained that indigenous peoples were viewed as incapable, foolish, and stupid, and as a result were insulted and treated as lesser beings. “[W]e were the foolish and stupid ones in viewing them as such,” Florencia asserted, “for they did not deserve to be held as unworthy of estimation and honour amongst men.” The second moral lesson was that humble Indians were recipients of divine grace in the same way as nobles. As a theologian Florencia believed that the actions of the Christian God were infinitely beyond the human understanding, which is why he felt it was crucial to be open to the mysterious ways in which the divinity intervened in daily life. In his vida of Diego

---

115 La estrella del norte, 11r.
116 Narración de la maravillosa, 78 (“y en tantos años no se ha olvidado su memoria de los fieles”). Juan de Dios, the resident vicar of the shrine, wrote in a 1689 inventory that there were “two large paintings with their frames of the apparitions of San Miguel that hang and fill the two sides of the preysbter.” AHPSMM, caja 35, Disciplinar, Inventarios (1689–1928), ff. 1r–v (“Dos lienzos grandes con sus marcos de las Apariciones de S. Miguel que cogen y llenan, los dos lados del presbiterio”).
117 La milagrosa invención, 58v (“Consideración eficaz para que sean tratados los Indios con más conmiseración de los Españoles”).
118 Ibid. (“Nosotros fuimos los insensatos, y necios, en tenerlos por tales, pues no merecieron ser tenidos por indignos de estimación, y de honra entre los hombres”). Florencia may have been genuinely concerned with the fairer treatment of Indians, but he also knew that a significant decline in their population meant fewer tributaries for the Spanish crown. La milagrosa invención, 30r.
Lázaro he claimed that “the Archangel does not look at the lowly and despised condition of a person when he hands out his favours but to their virtues, which are the nobility of the soul . . . in his eyes nobles are those who are accepted before him because of their good works.”

These examples of Indian sanctity demonstrated to Florencia that the land did not have a debilitating effect on the indigenous populace, both principales and macehuales. The exemplary lives of the “three fortunate Indians” also allowed Florencia to firmly establish the historical origins and holiness of the shrines dedicated to the Virgins of Remedies and of Guadalupe and the Archangel San Miguel. He asked his readership to reflect on how the “three fortunate Indians” are “in eternal glory in heaven” even though “on the earth the world viewed them as a barbarous and ignorant people: look at them now and admire them, counted amongst the sons of God and enjoying the happy fortune of his saints forever!” Although Florencia recognized the “licentious, impertinent, and scandalous drunkenness amongst the Indians, mulattos, and blacks,” his sacred rhetoric was structured around the conviction that there was always a faithful “remnant.” He found similar examples of piety amongst a few commoners of mixed ancestry.

The Mestizo Hermits of Chalma

Amongst the ascetics living solitary lives in the mountainous regions of central

119 Narración de la maravillosa, 80 (“que el Soberano Arcángel no mira a la condición baja, y despreciable de las personas para repartir sus favores, sino a las virtudes, que son la nobleza del alma . . . y aquellas son en sus ojos nobles, que son aceptas delante del por sus merecimientos”).

120 La estrella del norte, 110v–111r (“Estos, que veis con inmortal gloria en el Cielo, son de aquellos a quienes en la tierra tuvieron, y tienen el mundo . . . por gente bárbara, e ignorante: Miraldos, y admiraldos, ahora, contados entre los hijos de Dios, gozando de la dichosa suerte de sus Santos, para siempre!”).

121 La milagrosa invención, 30r (“que la embriaguez licenciosa, descarada, y escandalosa en los Indios, Mulatos, y Negros”).

122 For Florencia’s notion of a “remnant” of pious Indians, see La estrella del norte, 174r.
Mexico were the mestizo hermits Bartolomé de Jesús Maria and his disciple Juan de San José. These Augustinian laymen lived in the hills of Chalma at different points between the 1620s and 1680s performing extreme acts of penance and other spiritual disciplines. They also promoted veneration to the Crucified Christ that was said to have miraculously appeared in one of the surrounding caves in the late 1530s.

Florencia declared that the two were “hermits of Saint Augustine” who did not search for Christ “in the cities, but in the mountains; not in the schools of philosophy, but in the caves of solitude.” Fray Bartolomé and Fray Juan, both mestizo commoners, were deemed worthy of imitation by the colonial aristocracy for their heroic acts of sanctity. Their pious examples were enough to convince Florencia that America had more resources to offer Europe than just precious metals.

In the Descripción histórica Florencia followed his narrative on the origins of the Crucified Christ of Chalma with vidas of Fray Bartolomé and Fray Juan. His full title suggests that these biographic accounts were going to be brief, but together they in fact form the major part of his devotional history. At the end of his work Florencia included a series of novenas that Fray Juan hoped would be published “so that devotion of the pilgrims to Chalma would be animated by them.” Since Chalma was under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Augustinian Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, leaders from the religious order requested that a proper investigation into his life and virtues be

---

123 It appears that their ascetic practices and dedication to the prodigious crucifix attracted attention from other likeminded souls. In January of 1680 Antonio Robles recorded in his diary that Carlos de Santa Rosa was amongst those who had “previously been in Chalma of the Augustinians.” Diario, 1:274 (“Era el dicho un hombre que estuvo antes en Chalma de los agustinos”).


125 Descripción histórica, 202, 53 (“los ermitaños de San Agustín”) (“buscando . . . a Cristo, no en las Ciudades, sino en los montes; no en las escuelas de la Filosofía, sino en las cuevas de los retiros”).

126 Ibid., 277 (“que las pusiesse, para que la devoción de los Peregrinos de Chalma se avivasse con ellas”).
performed for his beatification. Florencia recounted how José Sicardo (1643–1715), an Augustinian friar and historian, was commissioned as a procurador to perform a series of interviews with important witnesses that knew of or experienced Fray Bartolomé’s piety. Together with the judge (oidor) Juan de Valdés, and with the permission of the Archbishop of Mexico Francisco de Aguiar y Seijas (1632–1698), Sicardo published his findings in 1683 as the Interrogatorio de la vida y virtudes del venerable hermano fray Bartolomé de Jesús María, natural de Xalapa.

Florencia noted that Sicardo fully intended to write a sacred biography based upon the testimony he had gathered, but unknown “circumstances” prevented him from realizing the project. Although he sailed for Rome very shortly after he had finished the Interrogatorio, Sicardo’s departure did not put an end to the attempts to have Fray Bartolomé beatified. Creoles from the Mexico City cabildo raised money so that Fray Juan could further promote his case before the Sacred Congregation of Rites together with that of Bartolomé Gutiérrez (1580–1632), one of several Augustinian martyrs in Japan. One can assume that there must have been a significant amount of discussion about Fray Bartolomé within the cathedral chapter of the viceregal capital, given that Aguiar y Seijas personally went to his burial site in Chalma in December of 1684. He ordered that the tomb be opened so that he might view the state of the hermit’s corpse. To his surprise he discovered that after twenty-seven years it had not been corrupted.

According to Antonio de Robles, a priest and diarist of New Spain, in the following year

---

127 Ibid., 179.
128 José Sicardo, Interrogatorio de la vida y virtudes del venerable hermano fray Bartolomé de Jesús María, natural de Xalapa, religioso lego del orden de Nuestro Padre San Agustín de la Provincia del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús de la Nueva España (Mexico City: Juan de Ribera, 1683).
129 Descripción histórica, Ocasión de escribir, n.p. (“pero accidentes que sobrevinieron, le embarazaron la información, y el intento”).
131 Descripción histórica, 228.
Aguiar y Seijas commissioned Alonso Alberto, Francisco Romero, and Juan de Sagade to certify that that body of Fray Bartolomé was indeed incorruptible, as had been stated in the juridical testimonies prepared for his beatification.\footnote{Robles, \textit{Diario}, 2:86 ("Antes del aviso, día martes 13 del corriente, salieron los tres curas de la Catedral Dr. D. Alonso Alberto, Dr. D. Francisco Romero y D. Juan de Sagade, a dar fe del cuerpo de Fr. Bartolomé de Jesús María en el santuario de Chalma, lego de San Agustín, en orden a las informaciones para su beatificación").}

Sicardo’s \textit{Interrogatorio} was Florencia’s major source when he penned his own \textit{vida} of Fray Bartolomé, and it was one that he followed very closely. The two both affirmed that Fray Bartolomé was the son of Pedro de Hernández de Torres, a Spaniard from Alcalá de Guadaira, and Antonia Hernández, an Indian from Huejotzingo. At a young age he left his native town of Jalapa for Mexico City to learn the trade of a shoemaker. After he was treated poorly by his master he went to work for his brother-in-law as a muleteer and had great success in his new trade. But to his misfortune, Fray Bartolomé was robbed and beaten on several occasions as he transported goods between the capital and the coast. These unlucky circumstances forced him to reconsider his profession, instilling within him the desire to pursue a religious life. After hearing about Chalma he decided to spend the remainder of his days there performing ascetic practices in the caves. When he arrived he was quickly absorbed into the Augustinian order as a lay brother and was charged with the care of the shrine dedicated to the Crucified Christ. Sicardo claimed that after Fray Bartolomé passed away his cell, and the instruments he used to perform his penance, gave off a sweet smelling odour.

It appears that Fray Juan wrote his own biographic account of Fray Bartolomé to be included with the juridical testimonies destined for Rome. Florencia was able to acquire a copy of it during his stay in Xalmolonga in 1683. Since the Jesuit sugar mill
there was relatively close to Chalma, he made a visit to the shrine where he discussed the history of the Crucified Christ and the life of Fray Bartolomé with Fray Juan. Before he left, Fray Juan commissioned him to search for a benefactor to finance the publication of the work that he had started. “And I returned to this task many times afterwards,” Florencia recalled, “to which I did not turn a deaf ear because the veneration and devotion of the sanctuary, the appeal and beauty of the site, and the sanctity of Father Fray Juan obliged me to write this relation.” 133 Seven years later he fulfilled his promise by publishing the Descripción histórica, but before he sent off his manuscript to the printers he felt obliged to include an important addition to his devotional history. Florencia would have finished his narrative with the life of Fray Bartolomé “if the death of Father Fray Juan de San José, which took place after this relation was written, would not have obliged me to extend it.” 134

Beyond personal conversations, Florencia had very little information on Fray Juan to inform his vida, which is why he hoped that “a writer of his order . . . would elaborate on this matter some day, providing full light on the heroic sanctity of this venerable brother.” 135 And so, to make up for the limited amount of biographic data available, he corresponded with Juan de Ibarra, the superior of the sanctuary at Chalma. In a letter he received from him in June of 1690, Florencia learned that Fray Juan was born to Sebastián de Morales and María García in the town of Santa María in the jurisdiction of Santiago Calimaya. When he was eleven or twelve years old his parents entrusted him to

---

133 Descripción histórica, Ocasión de escribir, n.p. (“Y este encargo me volví a hacer muchas veces después, a que no me hice sordo, porque la reverencia, y devoción del Santuario, la amenidad, y hermosura del sitio, y la santidad del dicho P. Fr. Juan me obligaron a escribir esta relación”).
134 Ibid., 255 (“Aquí había de acabar de este libro, si la muerte del Padre Fray Juan de San José, que acaeció después de escrita esta relación, no me obligara a extenderlo”).
135 Ibid., 275 (“Espero, que algún Escritor de su Orden . . . llenará este asunto algún día, dando a luz por extenso la heroica santidad de este Venerable hermano”).
Fray Bartolomé, and then, when he was fifteen or sixteen, he became a lay brother of the Augustinian order. Beyond these basic personal details, Florencia added a brief sketch of Fray Juan’s noviciate, alms collecting for the shrine, acts of penance, and his eventual sickness and death. He felt no need to go into great detail about his many virtues because he believed that Fray Juan was “a copy and portrait of his teacher; to see Fray Bartolomé was nothing other than to be looking upon Fray Juan.”

Although Fray Juan was recognized for his sanctity he never attained the same measure of cultic popularity as Fray Bartolomé. Florencia still described the two of them as “saints,” however, in hope that “the Holy Roman Church will one day put forward the exemplary Anchorites of the Desert of Chalma [for canonization], so that the private devotion they receive today, from those who know of their virtues, will reach a larger audience.” But for all his efforts the Descripción histórica did not have the effect Florencia was hoping for. The veneration of Fray Bartolomé as a holy man remained local and the initiative to canonize him significantly declined with the death of Fray Juan in 1689. Not only this, but Florencia’s desire to promote Fray Juan as a co-saint with his master never gained widespread support. Even if there would have been a lasting campaign before the Sacred Congregation of Rites, these two lay Augustinian friars had

---

137 Ibid., 259 (“fue una copia, y un retrato de su maestro; que para ver a Fray Bartolomé, no era menester más que ver a Fray Juan”).
138 Ibid., 178 (“Y espero en Dios, que algún día nos lo ha de proponer la Santa Iglesia Romana, por ejemplar de Anacoretas del Desierto de Chalma, para que la devoción privada, que hoy le tienen los que saben sus virtudes, pueda pasar a público”).
139 Even the statues built to honour them were not enough to make them the major devotional attraction of Chalma by the end of the colonial era. Joaquín Sardo, *Relación histórica y moral de la portentosa imagen de N. Sr. Jesucristo Crucificado aparecida en una de las cuevas de S. Miguel de Chalma . . . Con los compendios de las vidas de los dos venerables religiosos legos y primeros anacoretas de este santo desierto, Fray Bartolomé de Jesús María y Fray Juan de San José* (Mexico City: Impresa en Casa de Arizpe, 1810), 97 (“En el rincón de cada una de estas capillas se halla una de las dos estatuas de buena talla, de los dos famosos ermitaños”). Sardo’s sacred history of Chalma follows Florencia’s with minor modifications.
four significant disadvantages of which Florencia was clearly aware: they were plebeian mestizo hermits from America.

Similar to his lives of humble Indians, Florencia used Fray Bartolomé and Fray Juan as examples to demonstrate the mysterious ways in which the Christian God used the weak to teach the powerful. He argued that “divine providence chooses simpletons as instruments to instruct the learned; it values the most ignoble and despised to humble those with the highest posts and positions of authority.” But this sacred rhetoric of equality in Christ that theoretically granted commoners the same opportunity to become saints was in reality next to impossible given the preferential option for nobles within the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Even if a person of humble origins attained a holy reputation, the nobility of his or her soul was only officially recognized when it was confirmed by the testimony of those who were noble by blood. Florencia, conscious of this association, was careful to provide a long list of bishops, religious men, and other officials who were able to testify to the sanctity of Fray Bartolomé. He concluded that those who “esteemed this venerable man as a saint [were] judges from the royal court, royal officials, chief treasurers, aristocrats, wealthy men, and dons and doñas of the highest nobility in Mexico [City] and New Spain.”

Florencia also applied this same sacred rhetoric of equality in Christ to people of all ethnic origins. Like other theologians in the early modern Spanish world, he upheld the Pauline doctrine in the Epistles to the Galatians and the Colossians which affirmed

---

140 Descripción histórica, 109 (“pues sabe, y usa su Divina providencia tomar por instrumento a los idiotas para instruir a los doctos; valerse de los más innobles, y contemptibles, para confundir a los más elevados en puestos, y dignidades”).
141 Ibid., 237 (“Los seglares de primera clase, que estimaron por Santo a este Venerable varón, los refiere el dicho Padre Fray Juan; Oidores de la Real Audiencia, Oficiales Reales, y Contadores Mayores, Caballeros, y hombres ricos, señores, y señoritas de la nobleza primaria de México, y Nueva España”).
that there were no distinctions within the church. Bernardo Medina, a creole Dominican friar, applied this teaching to the life of Martín de Porres (1579–1639), a mulatto servant of his religious order in Lima, who, for him, was an example of the “men of perfection that America has nurtured.” He claimed that even though he was born with darker skin (pardo), that “all are one, as the Apostle said, hence, with God, there is neither Hebrew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female.” But this imagined unity within the church did not match the grim reality for most mulattos and mestizos across Spanish America. They generally occupied lowly and intermediary places within the colonial caste system and had essentially been barred from the priesthood and religious orders because their ancestry was thought to be tainted by “impure” blood. Florencia, conscious of the mixed ancestry of Fray Bartolomé, confidently proclaimed that “in all times the Lord, who is the source of all sanctity, knows how to make saints out of the hierarchy of those who, from all estates, have flowered in his church.”

Although Florencia believed that castas had the potential to become saints, he was careful not to dwell on the mixed ancestry of Fray Bartolomé and Fray Juan. He clearly wanted to demonstrate that both men were legitimate children, belying for many of his readers the close association mestizos had with bastardy, deviance, and spiritual

---

142 Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11.
143 Medina, Vida de Martín de Porras, 3r–v (“uno de los más raros varones en perfección, que ha producido la América”) (“en quien todos son unos, como dijo el Apóstol, de suerte que no hay para Dios Hebreo, ni Griego, libre, ni esclavo, hembra, ni varón”). J. P. Tardieu argues that this message of equality before the Christian God was distorted by the emphasis Medina, along with other sacred biographers of Fray Martín, placed on his noble blood from his father’s side. “Genio y semblanza del santo varón limeño de origen africano (Fray Martín de Porras),” Hispania Sacra 45, no. 92 (1993): 571.
144 For a discussion of the ordination of castas, see Stafford Poole, “Church Law on the Ordination of Indians and Castas in New Spain,” Hispanic American Historical Review 61, no. 4 (1981): 637–650. It should be remembered, however, that some mestizos and mulattos were able to “pass” as Spaniards and hence did enter the religious orders. Antonio Rubial García, “Los conventos mendicantes,” in Gonzalbo Aizpuru, ed., Historia de la vida cotidiana en México, 2:173.
145 Descripción histórica, 78 (“que en todos tiempos sabe el Señor, que es la fuente de toda santidad, hacer Santos de la jerarquía de aquellos, que en todos los estados han florecido en su iglesia”).
ineptness. He did not follow Sicardo in specifically stating that Fray Bartolomé was a “legitimate son,” but he did stress that his parents raised him “with good customs” as in other *vidas* of noble men and women. But when he addressed the parentage of Fray Juan, he appears to have changed his “racial” status by claiming that he had been born in Toluca to “honoured parents, Spaniards, and very good Christians.” This information contradicts the letter he received from Ibarra, the same one he included verbatim at the end of his *vida*, which stated that he was born in the town of Santa María in the jurisdiction of Santiago Calimaya. Why did Florenica claim that Fray Juan was from the Spanish town of Toluca if Ibarra had specifically informed him that he was born in the Indian town of Santa María?

The acceptance of mestizos into the Augustinian order was a hotly contested issue by the second half of the sixteenth century. Sicardo noted that the superiors of his order in New Spain made the decision “that neither a mestizo nor the son of a mestizo or mestiza would be allowed to take up the habit of our religious order.” They reached this verdict based upon the orders they had received from Francisco Serrano, the *provincial* of Castilla, who stated in a letter dated June 3, 1567, that the offspring of

---

147 *Descripción histórica*, 256, 276 (“Nació en Toluca, población de aquel Valle, de padres honrados, Españoles, y muy buenos Cristianos”) (“Nació en el Pueblo de Santa María, jurisdicción de Santiago Calimaya”).
148 For the general population and settlement of Santiago Calimaya and Toluca, see Peter Gerhard *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 272–273, 331. James Lockhart discusses the sociocultural structure of the Toluca Valley in *Nahuas and Spaniards: Postconquest Central Mexican History and Philology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991). He notes that although Toluca was still an Indian municipality in the early seventeenth century, it was “in the essentials a “Spanish” town” with “618 families of Spaniards, mestizos, and mulattos, to 412 families of Indians” (pp. 240–241).
149 José Sicardo, *Suplemento crónico a la historia de la orden de N. P. S. Agustín de México*, ed. Roberto Jaramillo Escutia (Mexico City: Cronistas y Escritores Agustinos de América Latina, 1996), 206 (“También determinaron con precepto y penas, que no pudiese ser admitido al hábito de nuestra Religión, mestizo, ni hijo de mestizo o de mestiza”).
mestizos “are the grandsons of idolatrous Indians or the sons of idolaters.”¹⁵⁰ That this early prohibition was repeated once again with a royal decree in the mid seventeenth century suggests that mestizos still managed to take up the Augustinian habit.¹⁵¹ This practice, however, was seriously curtailed with the arrival of the visitador Juan Antonio de Herrera in 1675. One of his measures of reform amongst the Augustinians of New Spain was to strip seven mestizo and mulatto novices of their habits.¹⁵² Although Fray Juan was only a lay brother, he was not left untouched by these larger changes. Robles recorded in February of 1680 that he was brought to the viceregal capital by the provincial “to mortify him a little.”¹⁵³ Florencia recorded how he was tested for two years “to see if he was as they said,” making him believe that he would never return to his former life of solitude in Chalma.¹⁵⁴

The temporary removal of Fray Juan from Chalma put an end to his autonomous life as a hermit and paved the way for the establishment of an institutionalized cenobitical community. The man who took a leading role in these changes was Diego Velázquez de la Cadena, a creole friar and major promoter of devotion to both the Virgin of Guadalupe and the Crucified Christ of Chalma. In the 1670s he acquired a corrupt reputation in the internal politics of the Augustinian order as a new wave of reforms brought back the practice of the alternativa. To clear his name of all wrong doing, De la Cadena established houses of seclusion in both Culhuacán and Chalma to demonstrate his

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 207, fn. 8 (“que es recibir hijos de Mestizas, que son hijas de Indias y Españoles, de manera que los novicios son nietos de Indios idólatras, o hijos de idólatras”).
¹⁵³ Robles, Diario, 1:276 (“Este día trajo a México el provincial de San Agustín, al lego de Chalma para mortificarlo un poco”).
¹⁵⁴ Descripción histórica, 261 (“que probasen su virtud con muchas mortificaciones, para ver si era como decían; dándole a entender, que en aquel Convento había de vivir el resto de su vida”).
commitment to the hermitic spirit of his order. By 1683 the Crucified Christ of Chalma had been lowered from its cave to a new church that had been built together with a convent in the embankment below. In the following year De la Cadena was elected provincial, and at some point during his tenure he most likely approached Florencia to write the Descripción histórica. His devotional history reflects the many changes De la Cadena initiated at Chalma by demonstrating how the freedom Fray Juan once enjoyed was now properly controlled by Augustinian superiors. Florencia noted that the mestizo hermit was now secluded with “twelve religious men who live in community like angels, praising Christ in the choir at the seven canonical hours, and spending the remaining [hours] of the day in prayer.”

Although the institutionalization of the hermitic life in Chalma enhanced its fame as a devotional centre, some still associated the physical location with Indian idolatry. In both pre-Hispanic and colonial times indigenous people believed that an intimate relationship existed between caves and manifestations of the sacred. Florencia was aware that Chalma was a former pilgrim destination where the Ocuiltecas, Chamaltecas, and Malinaltecas venerated “Oztocteotl, which means God of the caves.” But he was

155 For Cadena’s relationship to Chalma, see Rubial García, “Fray Diego Velázquez de la Cadena,” 184–188; La santidad controvertida, 94; and “Imágenes y ermitaños,” 224–226. The Augustinians were not the only ones taking a harder stance on the relative autonomy of hermits, because by the second half of the seventeenth century the novohispano Church generally looked unfavourably upon the solitary life. For a further discussion of the hermitic life in New Spain, see Rubial García, “Tebaidas en el paraíso,” 355–383; and Profetisas y solitarios. Espacios y mensajes de una religión dirigida por ermitaños y beatas laicos en las ciudades de Nueva España (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2006), 17–29.

156 Descripción histórica, 265 (“doce Religiosos, que viven como unos Ángeles en Comunidad, alabando en las siete horas Canónicas a Cristo en el Coro, y en las demás del día en oración”).

deeply troubled by the continued association caves had with idolatry despite the fact that several of them had been converted into Catholic shrines. Some were even of the opinion, according to Florencia, that the caves of Chalma had been specifically carved out by the Indians to practice their “superstitious” rites. After providing several arguments to refute this theory he concluded that the size and shape of the caves proved that “they are the admirable work of Divine Providence, for since he made the world he purposely prepared this place for the solitary contemplation of the things of heaven.”

Europeans also believed that caves were favoured places that the Christian God chose to realize his divine purposes for humanity. In several discovery legends rural shepherds were said to have found images of the Virgin Mary in trees, wild plants, or

---

158 Descripción histórica, 51 (“que son obra admirable de la providencia Divina, que desde que hizo el mundo, previno este sitio tan a propósito para la contemplación retirada de las cosas del Cielo”).
caves. Many medieval shrines, as a result, were built close to subterranean places, a
pattern Florencia observed on pilgrimage throughout Europe. It was also common to find
several shrines that had once been near or were former hermitages, many of which were
initially established in or by caves.\footnote{Christian, \textit{Local Religion}, 111; and \textit{Apparitions}, 112. Pedro de Burgos described the life of the hermits at the shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Monserrate in \textit{Libro de Nuestra Señora de Monserrate}, 36r–39r. Mary Lee Nolan notes that shrines established in America and Europe between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries tended to be near hills and springs. She also suggests that there was a greater emphasis in America on sacred caves and grottos than in Europe. “European Roots of Latin American Pilgrimage,” in \textit{Pilgrimage in Latin America}, 34.} This close relationship that formed between caves, Catholic images, and hermits was carried over to Spanish America and was either
superimposed upon or coexisted with indigenous notions of the sacred. Since Chalma had
been cared for by two mestizo hermits, Florencia had to demonstrate to his readers that
their mixed ancestry did not mean that they were prone to idolatry. To address this issue
he included an extended section on Fray Bartolomé’s demonic struggles, a literary staple
for works on hermits and an important addition to Sicardo’s \textit{Interrogatorio}.\footnote{The life of Saint Antony by Athanasius (ca. 295–373) influenced all forms of hermitic \textit{vidas} from the medieval to the early modern period on both sides of the Atlantic. Athanasius warned his readers of the fourth century that “demons are hostile to all Christians, but they especially hate those who are monks and virgins of Christ.” “Life of Anthony by Athansius,” in \textit{Early Christian Lives}, trans. and ed. Carolinne White (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1998), 23.} Although
he had his struggles with the Devil like other saints, they were limited to temptations
instead of physical manifestations. “Maybe we can attribute this exemption of such
apparitions,” Florencia tried to explain, “to the almost continued presence of this
secluded hermit with the holy and venerable image of the Crucified Christ, which
destroyed the position of Chalma as one where idolaters worshipped for so many years,
[and where the Devil] has not dared to appear in this desert again.”\footnote{Descripción histórica, 182 (“Si no es que atribuyamos esta excepción de semejantes apariciones . . . a la casi continuada asistencia de este retirado Ermitaño a la Santa, y venerable Imagen de Cristo Crucificado, que como lo derribó del puesto de Chalma, en que tantos años estuvo de los Idólatras adorado, no se atrevería más a aparecer en aquel Desierto”).}

Through his sacred rhetoric Florencia transformed the “desert of Chalma” into a
cenobitical theatre of ascetic feats analogous to those of the early desert fathers. He claimed that “the seclusion, silence, solitude, contemplation, and the rigour of the asperity of penance of Egypt and Nitria” had been “transferred to the caves of Chalma.” In an important departure from Sicardo’s *Interrogatorio*, Florencia compared Fray Bartolomé to Saint Antony (ca. 251–356), Saint Paul of Thebes (ca. 235–ca.345), Saint Macarius (ca. 300–390), and Saint Hilarion (ca. 235–345), and he also likened Fray Juan to Simeon the Stylite (ca. 387–459). He tried to demonstrate that these two mestizo hermits prayed, fasted, and performed their spiritual disciplines with such rigour that they were “cop[ies] of all of the ancients of the desert in the imitation of their heroic virtues.” Although drawing parallels was a common practice amongst sacred biographers, Florencia’s connections between two mestizo commoners and the most celebrated anchorites of the Catholic Church was rather bold. But he encouraged his readers not to fall prey to the argument which suggested that “nature has weakened men so much that not enough strength exists to equal the rigours” of the ancient desert fathers. “In Chalma we see,” Florencia asserted with considerable pride, “in our own times equalled, and in part exceeded, the admirable asperities of those times.”

Florencia also modified Sicardo’s *Interrogatorio* by drawing comparisons between Fray Bartolomé and some of the most illustrious saints and theologians of the Catholic Church. At one point in his narrative he recounted how one gentleman went to see him and was so impressed by his wisdom that he asked if Fray Bartolomé would

---

162 Ibid., 101 (“vimos con nuestros ojos trasladado a las cuevas de Chalma el retiro, el silencio, la soledad, la contemplación, y rigor de asperezas de penitencia de Egipto, y de Nitria”).

163 Ibid., 78 (“una copia de todos los antiguos del yermo en la imitación de sus heroicas virtudes”).

164 Ibid., 94 (“Engañase nuestro amor propio, cuando dice, que ya la naturaleza se ha debilitado tanto, que no hay en ella fuerzas para igualar los rigores de aquellos ejemplares de penitencia que hubo antiguamente en el yermo; pues en el de Chalma vimos en nuestros tiempos igualadas, y en parte excedidas las asperezas admirables de aquellos tiempos”).
write a book. To this request he responded that it was not his profession to write books
and that there were already enough writers in the church. “I do not know if he
demonstrated with this response more humility than wisdom,” Florencia claimed, but “his
verdict is worthy of the wisdom of Saint Augustine and his modesty could be an example
of humility worthy of Saint Francis.”165 When he described Fray Bartolomé’s knowledge
of the mysteries of the Christian faith he said that it appeared as if he had studied with
medieval theologians such as Saint Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus (ca. 1265–
1308).166 Florencia also stated that Fray Bartolomé made him recall the “acts of
extraordinary courage and cruelty that some of the saints performed against their
bodies.”167 He claimed that he rolled around in thorns like Saint Benedict (ca. 480–547),
and that, like Saint Macarius, he placed his hands in the fire to kill his sensuous desires.

The mestizo hermits of Chalma were proof for Florencia that the climate of the
New World was not an impediment to achieving the greatest feats of sanctity. Fray
Bartolomé and Fray Juan, despite their humble backgrounds, were able to rise above their
social condition to become exemplary Christian men worthy of imitation. Florencia
viewed them as models of virtue, not only for those in America, but for the faithful
throughout all of Christendom. Their holy lives also demonstrated to him that the
locations of novohispano shrines, like the one dedicated to the Crucified Christ, had been
cleansed of ancient Indian “idolatries” and replaced with new spiritual riches. The other
side of the Atlantic, according to Florencia, needed to recognize that the land of New

165 Ibid., 97 (“No sé si mostró en esta respuesta más humildad, que sabiduría; digna es de la sabiduría de
San Agustín la sentencia; y su modestia pudiera ser ejemplo de humildad, digno de un San Francisco”).
166 Ibid., 160 (“parece, que estudió (sin haber cursado escuela ninguna, como su maestro) términos en las de
Santo Tomás, y de Escoto”).
167 Ibid., 191 (“algunos hechos de extraordinario coraje, y crueldad, que algunos Santos ejecutaron contra
sus cuerpos”).
Spain produced other resources of wealth beyond its abundance of mineral deposits. One day, he hoped, the world would come to know “how great a treasure of virtues New Spain had enclosed in a cave in Chalma with the venerable Fray Bartolomé, because it is richer and more opulent that the millions of silver and gold that its mines yield every year.”168 There was plenty more still waiting to be discovered.

Florencia lived in a society where the socioracial pyramid organizing human diversity was designed to reflect the angelic hierarchies of the heavenly court. In his multiethnic vidas he rhetorically played with what Irving A. Leonard (1896–1962) called a “Baroque profusion of ethnic detail.”169 He affirmed the medieval relationship between nobility and sanctity by acknowledging the purity of blood in the illustrious lineages of his Spanish, creole, and Indian brethren. But he also recognized that Indian and mestizo commoners were comparable to the most celebrated saints of the Catholic Church despite their humble origins. These seeming inconsistencies in Baroque spirituality mirror some of the larger contradictions inherent in the colonial enterprise in Spanish America where imperial subjects were frequently represented in a doubled way. What mattered most to Florencia, however, was that the Christian God was not a respecter of people or climates when dispensing his favours. “[I]n the genealogical books of God a noble is one who has

168 Descripción histórica, 255 (“cuan gran tesoro de virtudes tuvo la Nueva España encerrado en una Cueva de Chalma en el Venerable Fray Bartolomé, porque es más rica, y opulenta, que por los millones de plata, y oro, que cada año dan sus minas”).
his grace,” he explained, “even if he is a black or an Indian; and the ignoble is one who does not have [his grace] because of mortal sin, even if he is a prince.”\footnote{La estrella del norte, 228r (“Y sepamos, que en los nobiliarios de Dios, aquel es noble, que tiene su gracia, aunque sea un negro, o un Indio: y aquel es innoble, que por estar en pecado mortal, no la tiene, aunque sea un Príncipe”)}
Chapter 5
The Zodiaco Mariano

These salutary influences from heaven produce in the nation a great similitude and temperance of spirit, good nature, and good inclinations.
– Francisco de Pereda, 1604

Although she is placed in such majesty and glory she does not forget about our poverty and sorrow, acting as a mother of mercy, all of her works . . . will be like signs or constellations in the zodiac of this animated sky of Mary.
– Juan de Alloza, 1655

According to what Saint John informs me in the Apocalypse, all of the lights of heaven, the sun, the moon, and the stars were seen in the Most Holy Mary.
– Francisco de San Marcos, 1692

Colonial expansion into Spanish America contributed to the larger globalization of the Virgin Mary.1 By the end of the seventeenth century an extensive network of local shrines had been erected in her honour from the initial point of contact in the Caribbean to the expanding regions of the frontiers.2 In this chapter I shift my focus from “saints” to

---

1 For a fuller discussion, see Miri Rubin, Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary (London: Allen Lane, 2009), esp. 379–412.
2 William A. Christian Jr. points out that Marian devotion in Spain surged between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries in the wake of the reconquista. By the end of the fifteenth century the network of Marian shrines in present-day Spain was for the most part established. “De los santos a María. Panorama de las devociones a santuarios españoles desde el principio de la Edad Media hasta nuestros días,” in Temas de antropología española, ed. Carmelo Lisón Tolosana (Madrid: Akal, 1976), 50–103; and idem, Apparitions, 14. A similar pattern emerged in New Spain as the principal Marian shrines of Mexico were founded in the wake of conquest between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thomas Calvo talks about the “great expansion of Marian shrines” in “Santuarios y devociones. Entre dos mundos (siglos XVI–XVIII),” in Sigaut, ed., La iglesia católica en México, 370–374. And Mary Lee Nolan notes that of the 240 shrines founded in the colonial period with traceable origins, sixty-three percent were established by the end of the 1700s. “European Roots of Latin American Pilgrimage,” 25.
images to explore Florencia’s Marian geography of New Spain in his devotional histories of the Virgins of Remedies, of Guadalupe, of Loreto, of Zapopan, and of San Juan de los Lagos, and in his compendium of Marian devotions entitled the Zodiaco Mariano.3 Florencia sought to textually map the territorial limits of his kingdom by listing Marian images together with historical descriptions of their origins, shrines, and miracles.4 I contend that he imagined his Marian geography in astrological terms, both to expand upon other global compendiums of the Virgin and to address European theories which claimed that the Indies were under negative constellations that produced corruption in the sublunary world. In his devotional histories Florencia tried to demonstrate that New Spain was the Virgin’s territory and as a result was providentially protected like all other regions of global Christendom.

The word image (imagen) in the Spanish world was used to describe “figures that represent” Christ, Mary, the apostles, saints, and the mysteries of the Christian faith. But an image was also a celestial image (imagen celestial) that was a “given number of stars that together make up a constellation and form imaginary figures.”5 Catholic images were

---

3 I have borrowed the term “Marian geography” (geografía mariana) from Solange Alberro, El águila y la cruz, 189. Although this chapter concentrates on Florencia’s mapping of Marian images, it is important to recognize that images of Christ were just as prominent in the devotional landscape of New Spain. See William B. Taylor, “Two Shrines of the Cristo Renovado: Religion and Peasant Politics in Late Colonial Mexico,” The American Historical Review 110, no. 4 (2005): 945–947.


5 Covarruvias, Tesoro de la lengua, 500v, 501r (“IMAGEN . . . Comúnmente entre fieles Católicos llamamos imágenes las figuras que nos representan a Cristo nuestro Señor, a su benditísima Madre y Virgen santa María, a sus Apóstoles, y a los demás santos, y los misterios de nuestra Fe”) (“Imágenes
located in “houses” (casas), otherwise known as shrines or churches, but “houses” could also refer to the twelve “houses” or “signs” of the celestial zodiac (casas celestes). 6

David A. Brading suggests that “it was possible for pious authors to frame a spiritual geography of” a given region by “listing sanctuaries that possessed miraculous images.” 7 The Marian geography of shrines that Florencia imagined for New Spain mirrored the starry sky he believed was benignly influencing his patria. Although the Virgin Mary became associated with conquest and empire for her role in the territorialization of the New World, she was still infused with a multiplicity of alternative meanings by the multiethnic populace. 8 Florencia viewed the “Queen of Heaven” as a symbol of both his creole and Catholic identities by including painted, carved, and sculpted images from both sides of the Atlantic into his Zodiaco Mariano. 9

This chapter begins with a discussion of Florencia’s “patriotic astrology” by exploring the ways in which he engaged with theories of astral influence over the Indies.

6 Diccionario de la lengua castellana, 2:207, 206 (CASA DE DIOS, DEL SEÑOR, U DE ORACIÓN. Se entiende el Templo, por ser propiamente el lugar destinado a encomendarnos a Dios”) (CASAS CELESTES. Las doce partes en que dividen toda la esfera”).


9 Linda B. Hall suggests that the Virgin Mary was a “figure of identity and relation” throughout Spain and Spanish America in Mary, Mother and Warrior: The Virgin in Spain and the Americas (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004).
through celestial metaphors of Christ and the Virgin. The following three sections trace how he mapped Marian constellations in the civic and regional geographies of his devotional histories. Through the Virgins of Remedies and of Guadalupe, Florencia constructed a “moralized geography” of Mexico City which was fortified by Marian shrines at its four cardinal points. By following the imitation houses of the Santa Casa and other chapels dedicated to the Virgin of Loreto he envisioned a Lauretan geography of Christendom that was more inclusive of America. And through the Virgins of Zapopan and San Juan de los Lagos he visualized a diocesan geography of Guadalajara that was graced with vestiges of ancient Christianity. The final section of this chapter examines how Florencia wove all of these Marian geographies of New Spain together in his manuscript compendium the *Zodiaco Mariano*.

**The Sun of Justice**

According to traditional scriptural exegesis the “Sun of Justice,” whom the prophet Malachi foretold would “arise with healing in his wings,” was typologically interpreted as Jesus Christ.\(^\text{10}\) In a similar fashion theologians, from the fourth century onwards, believed that the Virgin Mary was the Woman of the Apocalypse who appeared in the heavens “clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.”\(^\text{11}\) Florencia followed these solar, astral, and lunar metaphors in biblical scholarship by imagining a *Zodiaco Mariano* through which the “Sun of Justice Jesus Christ” passed through spreading his material and spiritual benefits to all the

---

\(^{10}\) Mal. 4:2.  
\(^{11}\) Rev. 12:1.
faithful.\textsuperscript{12} He sought to prove that the skies of the New World—both celestial and Marian—were continuous with those of the Old.

Throughout his corpus of writings Florencia engaged with key developments in colonial science. He was particularly interested in the nature of the heavens and how the sun, moon, and the stars in their various movements, conjunctions, and eclipses influenced both natural elements and bodies in the sublunary world. Based upon his reading of José de Acosta’s \textit{Historia moral y natural de las Indias}, Florencia was convinced that the ancients were indeed wrong in arguing that the sky was not circular and as a result did not extend to the New World.\textsuperscript{13} But he was troubled by some of his European contemporaries who seemed to perpetuate similar theories in his own day. “[T]here is also a sky for those in the Indies,” Florencia stated with frustration, “and it is just as close to them as it is in Spain.”\textsuperscript{14} Drawing upon Acosta’s experience and expertise, he explained that the sky was spherical, which meant that it covered over more than just Europe, Asia, and Africa. By way of conclusion, Florencia declared that “those of us who live in the provinces of America are also beneath the canopy of heaven, and for those in the west the sun rises every day; the moon waxes and wanes every month; [and] every night the stars come out.”\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{La casa peregrina}, 87v (“el Sol de Justicia Cristo”). For more on the imagery of Mary as the sun, star, or the moon, see Marina Warner, \textit{Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary} (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), 255–269. And for a study of typology in its New World context, see Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, “Typology in the Atlantic World: Early Modern Readings of Colonization,” in Bailyn and Denault, eds., \textit{Soundings in Atlantic History}, 237–264.

\textsuperscript{13} For Acosta’s discussion of the heavens, see \textit{Historia natural y moral de las Indias}, 15–24.

\textsuperscript{14} BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 4v (“que también hay cielo para los de las Indias, y que tan cerca está de ellas como de España”).

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. (“que también nosotros los que vivimos en las regiones de la América estamos debajo de la capa del cielo, que también para los que están en el occidente nace el sol cada día; crece y mengua cada mes la luna; salen todas las noches las estrellas”).
Florentina considered it important to establish celestial parity between the New World and the Old given European theories of astral influence. Early modern scholars argued that the stars hovering over particular regions affected its inhabitants in distinct ways by instilling within them unique characteristics. The study of the cosmic sway over the four elements—water, earth, fire, and air—was placed under the larger banner of astrology, a highly esteemed and legitimate science, one that permeated most aspects of colonial culture in Spanish America. Since the Indies were under new skies unknown to the ancients, European navigators and other intellectuals took great care in charting the new constellations they “discovered.” But from the mid sixteenth-century onward a few men began to argue that these new stars had a corrupting influence on both the land and the people of the New World. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra argues that creoles, together with a few émigré Europeans, reacted by developing their own forms of “patriotic astrology in which the heavenly influences on America were consistently cast as having soothing and beneficial effects, revealing God’s providential design for Spanish America.”

Florentina advanced his own “patriotic astrology” in the form of devotional histories. When discussing the Virgin of Remedies he recounted the pestilence of 1576 that wiped out more than two million Indians. In an effort to explain the large death toll, he noted how some had reasoned that it was a punishment from the Christian God for their idolatrous ancestry. Others argued that it was due to a comet that passed through the sky predicting this terrible outbreak. But there were also some who contended that a large

---

number of them died as a result of the “great conjunction of Mars and Saturn that had been observed that year: that is to say, the Indians were subject to the influence of these stars.”

Although Florencia recognized the “vengeful hand of God” in the demographic decline of the indigenous population, he was unconvinced by the aforementioned arguments, claiming that one “should attribute it to another cause.”

In his mind the most important thing to remember was that if their people would not have “turned to the miraculous image of Remedies, the Indies would have been left without Indians.” She was a “beneficial star” that sent “beneficial winds against pestilence,” restoring their health and extending her favours to the rest of New Spain.

The Virgin of Remedies was one of many salubrious stars hovering over New Spain. Florencia referred to the Virgin of Guadalupe, for her part, as the “north star” of Mexico, to the Santa Casa as a tabernacle that housed “Jesus the sun and Mary the moon,” and to the Virgins of Zapopan and of San Juan de los Lagos as “two luminaries” of Guadalajara in the “sky of Mary.”

His pious imagination was significantly influenced by Juan de Alloza’s (1597–1676) Cielo estrellado de mil y veinte y dos ejemplos de María (1655), a work he consulted while preparing his devotional history of the Virgin of

---

18 *Historia de la Provincia*, 257 (“la Conjunción magna de Marte, y Saturno, que se había observado este año: por decir, que los Indios estaban sujetos a los influsos de estas estrellas”). Although Florencia does not cite the German cosmographer Enrico Martínez (ca. 1555–1632), he was clearly referring to his *Reportorio de los tiempos, y historia natural de esta Nueva España* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Henrico Martínez, 1606), 157–163. He added Martínez’s explanation for the 1576 pestilence to those that Pérez de Ribas put forward in chapter XXVI of the first book of his provincial chronicle. The chapter is missing from the 1896 transcription, but the original can be consulted in the BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 1, ff. 2v–4r.

19 *Historia de la Provincia*, 257 (“se debía atribuir a otra causa”).

20 *La milagrosa invención*, 30r (“Y a no haber acudido a la milagrosa Imagen de los Remedios, hubieran quedado sin Indios las Indias”).

21 Ibid., 31r, 38r (“astro Benéfico”) (“saludables aires contra las pestes”).

Guadalupe. Alloza was a Jesuit from Lima who, according to his biographer Fermín de Irisarri (1660–1742), was moved by “astrologers [who] know of 1022 stars,” hence he “put together a volume of 1022 examples” of the Virgin Mary’s virtues. In his prologue Alloza declared that “the Virgin is compared to the sky; her examples, virtues, and excellencies to the stars.” He attempted to compile a list of her festivals, mysteries, images, and principal shrines in one work that would bring together all the “precious jewels hidden in so many different books.” Since the earth thanked the heavens for the benefits it received, Alloza used the “metaphor of the starry sky” because the faithful were the “beneficiaries of the sky of Mary with so many continuous favours.”

Similar to the heavens, creole scholars were convinced that the sky of Mary extended to all regions of Christendom. Thanks to European colonization there were Marian shrines spread throughout New Spain and across the entire world. Florencia believed that these “houses of the Zodiac Mariano” were visited by “the divine Sun of Justice” who illuminated and consoled “the faithful with sparkling lights of so many favours that he has performed for them through several images of his Mother.” He based his idea on the two “houses” which astrologers imagined in the sky where the sun passes through “when the seasons of the year change in the zodiac” in its declination

---

23 La estrella del norte, 17v, 91v–92r. 
24 Fermín de Irisarri, Vida admirable y heroicas virtudes del serafín en el amor divino devotísimo hijo y capellán amante de María Santísima, el V. P. Juan de Alloza (Madrid: Diego Martínez Abad, 1715), 135 (“los Astrólogos conocen mil y veinte y dos Estrellas, dispuso el tomo con mil y veinte y dos ejemplos”). 
25 Alloza, Cielo estrellado, Prólogo al lector, n.p. (“se compara la Virgen al Cielo, sus ejemplos, sus virtudes, sus excelencias a las estrellas”) (“joyas preciosas escondidas en tantos y tan diversos libros”) (“la metáfora del cielo estrellado”) (“beneficiados del Cielo de María con tan continuos favores”). 
26 Zodiac Mariano, 30 (“Estas son las Casas del Zodiac Mariano, que . . . ha visitado el Divino Sol de Justicia . . . alumbrando, y consolando a los fieles con las resplandecientes luces de tantos favores como les ha hecho por medio de las diversas Imágenes de su Madre”).
towards the Tropic of Cancer. The first “house” is Virgo, a “benign sign” in the form of a maiden, which is why they “call it the sign of the Virgin.” Leo is the second “house,” an “ardent and intense sign” in the form of a Lion that was tamed by the soothing presence of Virgo. “If this were not mere imagination or a fiction of astrological images,” Florencia claimed that “I would say that it was a historical description of the houses or shrines of the Most Holy Mary that we venerate.” In order to chart the Marian sky it was necessary to map her “houses” upon the earth. Florencia began his Marian geography with the “houses” of the valley of Mexico.

The Bastions of Mexico

In the seventeenth century Mexico City and its periphery could boast of several miraculous images of the Virgin Mary. Amongst this group of Catholic icons, the Virgins of Remedies and of Guadalupe were arguably the most significant to its larger citizenry. Although they were not part of Mexico City proper—the former situated roughly eighteen kilometres to the northwest of the city centre near the Indian pueblo of Naucalpan and the latter located by the hill of Tepeyac about five kilometres to the north—they were viewed as Mexican (capitalino) devotions given their close relationship to both the secular and ecclesiastical cabildos. Florencia described the two Marian images as “bastions” of the viceregal capital protecting the urban centre from its enemies.

---

27 Los dos célebres santuarios, Reparos sobre las fundaciones, n.p. (“En aquella parte del Cielo . . . por donde el Sol camina, cuando alterna las diferencias del año en el Zodiaco, imaginan los Astrólogos dos Casas”).
28 Ibid. (“Si esta no fuera mera imaginación, o ficción de imágenes astrológicas, dijera yo que era descripción histórica de las Casas o Santuarios de MARÍA Santísima, que adoramos”).
29 Taylor notes that by the end of the eighteenth century there were sixty-six images in and around Mexico City, forty-eight of which were of the Virgin Mary. “Our Lady of Guadalupe,” 9.
and other natural disasters.\footnote{La estrella del norte, 177v (“Baluartes”). Mariano Fernández de Echeverría y Veitia (1718–1780) expanded upon Florencia’s idea with his Baluartes de México. Descripción histórica de las cuatro milagrosas imágenes de Nuestra Señora que se veneran en la muy noble, leal, e imperial ciudad de México, capital de la Nueva España [ca. 1789] (Mexico City: Imprenta de D. Alejandro Valdés, 1820). José Guadalupe Victoria points out how other cities, particularly Tlaxcala, had their own “Marian bastions” as well. See “De blasones y baluartes mexicanos,” in Historia, leyendas y mitos de México (XI Coloquio Internacional) (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1988), 109.} He developed his own “moralized geography” of the “very illustrious City of Mexico”\footnote{La milagrosa invención, 34v (“muy ilustre Ciudad de México”).} through the Virgins of Remedies and Guadalupe, one that he later amplified and inserted into his Zodiaco Mariano.

When Florencia published La milagrosa invención in 1685 he recorded that his desire was for “Mexico, and all of New Spain, to know the treasure they have in this venerable image of Remedies.”\footnote{La milagrosa invención, 1v (“Mi deseo es, que se conozca el tesoro, que tiene México, y toda la Nueva España en este Venerable Imagen de los Remedios”).} Lorenzo de Mendoza, the vicario of the shrine, was the one who approached him to write the devotional history, specifically requesting that a series of novenas be included for devotees. He wrote a dedicatory introduction to Gonzálo Suárez de San Martín, a judge from the audiencia of Mexico City, claiming that the Virgin of Remedies was a “treasure that rightfully belonged to . . . Mexico City.”\footnote{Lorenzo de Mendoza, “Al Señor D. Gonzálo Suárez de San Martín,” in La milagrosa invención, n.p. (“esta prodigiosa Imagen el tesoro más propio de la . . . Ciudad de México”).} Not long after, in 1688, Florencia printed La estrella del norte to remind his readers of “the many and great [wonders] the Lord has worked through this holy image [of Guadalupe], mainly in Mexico and New Spain.”\footnote{La estrella del norte, Prólogo al lector, n.p. (“los muchos, y grandes, que por esta Santa Imagen ha obrado el Señor, principalmente en México, y Nueva España”).} The mayordomo of the shrine, Gerónimo de Valladolid, financed the publication, and in his dedicatory introduction to Francisco de Aguiar Seijas y Ulloa, the Archbishop of Mexico, he wrote that the “glory is incomparable for the episcopal office . . . because the Queen of Angels chose Mexico and
the house of the first bishop” as the site where the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared. In both cases, Florencia was promoting devotion to Marian shrines under the patronage of powerful colonial institutions. According to his pious reasoning, the Virgin Mary “gave Guadalupe to the prelates of the church [and] Remedies to the city and its cabildo.”

---


36 Los dos célebres santuarios, 49 (“la de Guadalupe, dio a los Prelados de la Iglesia: la de los Remedios a la Ciudad, y a su Cabildo”).
Mexico City played an important role in the origin stories of the two Virgins, so much so that Florencia claimed that their histories were “well imprinted on the hearts of Mexicans.”

According to his sources on the Virgin of Remedies, Cortés had placed the wooden statue on a makeshift altar in the Templo Mayor of Mexico-Tenochtitlan. After they were forced to flee the city on the Noche Triste, the image was either retrieved by one of the conquistadors or miraculously transported to the hill of Totoltepec. Several years later, on this exact site, the Virgin appeared to the Indian Juan de Tobar and told him to build her a shrine. The cacique took the Virgin of Remedies, which he found in the prickly leaves of a maguey plant, and set up an altar for her in his home, but soon noticed that she continuously returned to Totoltepec because it was “from there that she desired to benefit Mexico and all of New Spain.”

In the sacred literature on the Virgin of Guadalupe, Florencia discovered that Mary had appeared to another indigenous man on the hill of Tepeyac by the name of Juan Diego. The Virgin told the commoner that she wanted a shrine built in her honour, which is why she sent him to Juan de Zumárraga. But he was told by the bishop that he was only a humble Indian and needed a sign, prompting Juan Diego’s return to the episcopal palace in Mexico City with a cluster of roses from Tepeyac. When he unfurled them from his clothing everyone present witnessed the Virgin of Guadalupe imprinted on his cape. At that moment, according to Florencia, Zumárraga and his prelates “asked for her protection and patronage for themselves, the whole city, and for the kingdom of New Spain.”

---


38 *La milagrosa invención*, 5v (“y desde allí quería hacer bien a México, y a toda la Nueva España”).

39 *La estrella del norte*, 15r (“pidieron su amparo, y patrocinio para si, para toda la Ciudad, y Reino de Nueva España”).
Florestina followed his narratives on the origins of Remedies and Guadalupe with descriptions of their shrines, lists of their miracles, and meditations for those wishing to perform novenas. He turned to the writings of Luis de Cisneros, Juan de Torquemada, and Juan de Grijalva for the former and to those of Miguel Sánchez and Luis Becerra Tanco for the latter. Of all these colonial authors, Florentina was particularly drawn to the work of Cisneros and Sánchez, not only because they were the first ones to pen histories of the two images, but for the Marian vision they had of Mexico City. In a separate
chapter of his *Historia del principio* (1621), Cisneros had included “a brief summary of the sanctuaries this city has dedicated to the Virgin” in order to demonstrate her favour for the urban centre.\(^{40}\) He presented the viceregal capital as a metropolis protected by a network of twelve Marian shrines both behind its walls and within its general vicinity. Sánchez had a similar view of Mexico City in his *Imagen de la Virgen María* (1648), suggesting that all of the “sanctuaries of Christendom” were “walls, defences, and fortresses”\(^{41}\) for the Catholic faithful. With experience as a chaplain at both shrines he later published *Novenas de la Virgen María Madre de Dios* (1665) for both the Virgins of Remedies and of Guadalupe. In his dedicatory introduction he described the two images as “watchtowers” “favouring and guarding the walls of Mexico, the noblest and royal city of this New World.”\(^{42}\)

In a similar fashion, Florencia proudly declared that the Virgin “loves Mexico City so much that she has placed, for its secure protection in the four corners of Mexico, four of her miraculous images.”\(^{43}\) In the east was Our Lady of Bala, an image housed in the hospital of San Lázaro, and towards the west was the Virgin of Remedies in her

\(^{40}\) Cisneros, *Historia del principio*, 19r (“breve suma todos los santuarios, que tiene esta Ciudad dedicados a la Virgen”).

\(^{41}\) Sánchez, *Imagen de la Virgen María*, 91r (“que en ellos tiene sus muros, defensas, y fortalezas; esto es común a todos los Santuarios de la Cristiandad”).

\(^{42}\) Miguel Sánchez, *Novenas de la Virgen María Madre de Dios. Para sus devotísimos santuarios de los Remedios y Guadalupe, dedicadas a los capitanes Joseph de Quesada Cabreros y Joseph de Retis Largacha* (Mexico City: Por la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1665), A los capitanes, n.p. (“atalayas”) (“dos Imágenes Vírgenes, asistiendo, y guardando los muros de México, Ciudad Nobilísima, y en este nuevo mundo la Imperial”).

\(^{43}\) *La estrella del norte*, 176v (“que quiere esta Señora tanto a esta Ciudad de México . . . que se ha puesto, como su amparo seguro en las cuatro partes de México, en cuatro Imágenes milagrosas suyas”). Martha Fernández argues that the imagery of the four bastions is reminiscent of various historical, legendary, and apocalyptic images of the Temple of Jerusalem. “La Jerusalén celeste. Imagen barroca de la ciudad novohispana,” in *Actas III Congreso Internacional del Barroco Americano. Territorio, arte, espacio y sociedad*, ed. José Manuel Almansa et al. (Seville: Area de Historia del Arte, Departamento de Humanidades, Universidad Pablo de Olavide, 2001), 1023–1026. For more on these images of the Holy City, specifically in novohispano paintings, see Antonio Rubial García, “Civitas Dei et novus Orbis. La Jerusalén celeste en la pintura de la Nueva España,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 72 (1998): 5–37.
shrine on the hill of Totoltepec. To the south was Our Lady of Piety, situated in the church of a Dominican convent, and to the north was the Virgin of Guadalupe in her sanctuary at the foot of the hill of Tepeyac. These “four stone castles” and “four poles” guarded Mexico City and “upon them the stability of this New World is [both] founded and reinforced.” Given the protection the Virgin Mary extended to Mexico City in her various advocations, Florencia argued that it was well fortified from the impious and all its enemies, both visible and invisible. “If God placed four images of Mary at the four corners as sentries to watch over us,” he inquired, “who could invade and cause harm to this city?” The viceregal capital was also well defended when the Christian God decided to punish them for their sins with natural disasters. “From where would the whip of divine justice come,” Florencia asked in relation to Mexico City, “that would not find his Mother who would take it from his hand and placate him?”

The urban images that Cisneros, Sánchez, and Florencia used to describe Mexico City were common throughout the Spanish world both textually and pictorially. Several devotional histories of Marian images served as chorographic descriptions of the cities in which they were housed and many city views featured Marian shrines. Richard Kagan points out that in both Spain and Spanish America the city was understood as both an architectural entity (urbs) and as a community (civitas). He refers to views of the former as “chorographic” and views of the latter as “communicentric,” suggesting that “Creole authors and artists alike endeavoured to create images that cast their communities in a

44 La estrella del norte, 177r (“sobre ellos se funda, y afirma la estabilidad de este Nuevo Mundo”).
45 Ibid., 177v (“si puso Dios por centinelas, que por nosotros velan, cuatro milagrosas Imágenes de MARÍA en los cuatro ángulos de ella, quien podrá invadir, y ofender a esta Ciudad?”).
46 Ibid. (“¿Por donde vendrá el azote de la Justicia divina, que no encuentre con su Madre, que se lo quite de la mano, y aplaque?”).
Christian mold” in response to European attacks on their wealth and vanity. They were interested in representing their cities as sacred communities rooted in a common history with shared customs and traditions. In order to do this they concentrated on their cities as centres of Christian civilization with pious populations of generous givers and faithful pilgrims. In many cases, the Virgin Mary was the focal point of their “moralized geographies” wherein shrines dedicated to her “appeared as the centerpiece of communicentric views.” Florencia imagined his own “moralized geography” in *La milagrosa invención* and *La estrella del norte* by linking the history and shrines of the Virgins of Remedies and of Guadalupe to Mexico City.

Similar to other Spanish chorographers, Florencia provided an account of Mexico City’s foundation by the Mexica before its conversion to the Christian faith, which most scholars believe took place around 1325. Drawing upon the “tradition of the Indians,” Florencia recounted how a series of families migrated from the north, guided by an oracle that was to lead them to a place “where they were to find an eagle perched upon a prickly pear.” After years of “pilgrimages” they arrived to the shores of Lake Texcoco where they witnessed the moon appear over the water. The Mexica believed that this was a “special demonstration and providence of their God Huitzilopochtli,” hence at this very place “they founded the city and gave it the name of the moon, *Metztli* [or] *Metzico* in their language, which means the place where the moon appeared.” This lunar apparition in pre-Hispanic times, however, was nothing but a “vain superstition,” which is why

---

48 Ibid., 205, 144.
49 *La estrella del norte*, 1v–2r (“tradición de los indios”) (“habían de hallar una Águila sobre un tunal”) (“tuvieron a especial demostración, y providencia de su Dios Huitzilopochtli”) (“fundaron la Ciudad, y le pusieron del nombre de la Luna, que en su lengua es *Metztli, Metzico*, que quiere decir donde se apareció la Luna”).
Florencia believed “the truth of this etymology was [only] fulfilled in the conversion of Mexico” when the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared on the cape of the Indian Juan Diego with her feet over the moon. He described the image as a “mystic moon” that broke through the heathen darkness of the indigenous population with the “light of the [Christian] faith.”

The eventual evangelization of Mexico City was only made possible through the conquest of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, something Florencia ultimately attributed to Remedies and Guadalupe. Throughout the colonial era the Virgin of Remedies was also known as the conquistadora, but since there was another image by the same name in the Franciscan convent of Puebla, there was controversy over their identities. Florencia sided with Cisneros, claiming that if Cortés would have given the image to the grey friars he would have placed it “in the convent of Mexico, which is the head of this New World.”

After reviewing how the Virgin fought alongside Saint James in both the Plaza of Mexico and on the hill of Totoltepec, he concluded that “[Our] Lady, which today is in the Sanctuary of Remedies, two leagues from Mexico, is the conquistadora of this Royal City and of New Spain, and the one who helped and favoured Cortés and his men.” Although the Virgin of Guadalupe did not appear in battle during the conquest, she played a special

---

50 Ibid., 2v (“vana superstición”) (“La verdad de esta etimología se cumplió en la conversión de México”) (“mística Luna”) (“luz de la fe”).
51 La milagrosa invención, 13r (“en el Convento de México, que es cabeza de este nuevo mundo”). Juridical testimonies were acquired in Tlaxcala in 1582 to prove that the image of the conquistadora in the chapel of the convent church of San Francisco in Puebla was the one Cortés gave to the Indian cacique Don Gonzálo Alxotecatlcozotzi. See Información jurídica, recibida en el año de mil quinientos ochenta y dos, con la que se acredita que la imagen de María Santísima, bajo la advocación de Conquistadora (Puebla: En la oficina de D. Pedro de la Rosa, 1804).
52 La milagrosa invención, 15r (“esta Señora, que hoy está en el Santuario de los Remedios dos leguas de México, es la Conquistadora de esta Imperial Ciudad, y de la Nueva España, y la que ayudó, y favoreció a Cortés, y a los suyos”). Amy G. Remensnyder demonstrates how “Mary was a military conqueror herself” in both the reconquista and the conquest of New Spain through the conversion of sacred space. “The Colonization of Sacred Architecture: The Virgin Mary, Mosques, and Temples in Medieval Spain and Early Sixteenth-Century Mexico,” in Monks & Nuns, Saints & Outcasts: Religion in Medieval Society, eds. Sharon Farmer and Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 189–219.
role in the final siege of Mexico-Tenochtitlan. Florencia cited a section from Bernardino de Sahagún’s revised version of the conquest, which references a whirlwind of fire from Tepeyac that encircled the Mexica.\(^\text{53}\) They were so frightened by the event that they immediately began negotiations with the Spaniards for their surrender. Florencia believed that it was the Virgin of Guadalupe who spared them, spurring on “the initial impetus and motion to surrender and hand over the city to the victorious conquistadors; from which followed the conversion of the entire kingdom.”\(^\text{54}\)

After the fall of Mexico-Tenochtitlan modest shrines were built to house the Virgins of Remedies and Guadalupe. Florencia followed Cisneros in placing the erection of the first structure at Totoltepec in 1553 by Juan de Tovar. The Virgin of Remedies remained there for “twenty-one years until Mexico City built [a] church,”\(^\text{55}\) which was erected under the patronage of the cabildo in 1574. Throughout this intermediary period Florencia claimed that every year, on the eve and day of Saint Hippolytus (ca. 170–ca. 235), a celestial vision of angels building a church could be seen. He determined that “God performed a miracle” during this celebration because it was on this day that Mexico was captured, demonstrating that “Our Lady wanted to enter during the part of the


\(^{54}\) La estrella del norte, 161r (“el primer impulso, y movimiento de entregarse, y entregar la Ciudad a los victoriosos Conquistadores; de que se siguió la conversión de todo este Reino”).

\(^{55}\) La milagrosa invención, 17r (“estuvo veinte y un años, hasta que . . . labró la Ciudad de México, la Iglesia”).
festival, which they have in Mexico, as the one responsible for the victory.”

The first shrine for the Virgin of Guadalupe, according to Sánchez, had been erected shortly after the apparition in 1531. Florencia based his own account on this assumption, claiming that the image had been carried from the cathedral, where it was housed temporarily, to the new structure at Tepeyac. The religious procession was performed with such pomp that “it was no less than the most illustrious cities of Europe today” with all of its “gala, lights, music, [and] dances.” Upon its arrival, Zumárraga placed the Virgin of Guadalupe in her new home, blessing the image and assuming patronage over the shrine. It was there that she “was worshipped and venerated by pious Mexicans for almost ninety years.”

Although the two “bastions” were housed in their own shrines, they occasionally made the metropolitan cathedral their home. Florencia referenced thirteen occasions between 1577 and 1685 when the Virgin of Remedies was ceremonially paraded into the viceregal capital to plead for rain during periods of drought. “Her movement to Mexico [City] is like the sun,” he said, “to give health and to assure life, from the east where she has her tabernacle, to the west where the cathedral church is.”

When describing these religious processions, Florencia detailed how both Spaniards and Indians decorated their homes and streets with arches of flowers, and how they performed novenas using pounds

---

56 Ibid. (“quería la Señora entrar a la parte de la fiesta, que en México se hacía, como quien había sido el todo de la victoria”).
57 La estrella del norte, 20v (“no rinde parias a las Ciudades más lucidas de Europa; galas, luces, músicas, danzas”).
58 Ibid., 21r (“En esta Iglesia la adoró, y veneró la piedad Mexicana casi noventa años”).
59 Florencia expanded upon Cisneros’s list in Historia del principio, 80r–112v. For a study of the relationship between the Virgin of Remedies and Mexico City that concentrates on its various entrances (venidas) into the viceregal capital, see Linda Curcio-Nagy, “Native Icon to City Protectress to Royal Patroness: Ritual, Political Symbolism and the Virgin of Remedies,” The Americas 52, no. 3 (1996): 367–391.
60 La milagrosa invención, 29v (“Su movimiento a México es como el del Sol, para dar salud, para asegurar vida, del poniente, donde tiene su tabernáculo, al oriente, que es la Iglesia Catedral”).
of candle wax. He claimed that everyone knows of “the piety that exists in all Mexicans for this miraculous image.”61 The Virgin of Guadalupe, on the other hand, was called upon to put an end to the floods that persistently plagued Mexico City. But on only one occasion, in 1629, was she taken from her shrine at Tepeyac when the viceroy, archbishop, and members of the cabildo left the city in canoes and gondolas and brought her to the metropolitan cathedral singing hymns and psalms. For the next five years Florencia noted how the religious prayed, fasted, and performed penance to appease the wrath of the Christian God. During this time the nun Inés de la Cruz had a vision wherein the Virgin Mary supplicated Christ “to show compassion for his extremely devout city, which had many churches, many altars, many images, many devotions, and extraordinary reverence.”62 Through her petitions the “abundant gulf of Texcoco receded [and] the serenity of the sky and security of Mexico was restored”63

The protection Mexico City received from these two “bastions” contributed to the growing number of pilgrims who performed novenas and left offerings along with other donations at both shrines. When Florencia observed the devotion offered to both images he concluded that “this sanctuary [of Remedies] and that one [of Guadalupe] have almost been equally attended to by the generous piety of devout Mexicans.”64 He conceded that the hill of Tepeyac was more trafficked by the faithful because “it is not as far as the other one from Mexico,” but he also pointed out that “Mexico is more visited by Our

---

61 Ibid., 45r (“los que saben la piedad que hay en todos los Mexicanos, para con esta milagrosa Imagen”).
62 La estrella del norte, 121r–v (“se apiadase de esta Ciudad devotísima suya, donde tenía tantos Templos, tantos Altares, tantas Imágenes, tantos cultos, y tan extraordinaria reverencia”). For more on Inés de la Cruz and the 1629 flood, see Santaballa, “Writing the Virgin of Guadalupe,” 93–97.
63 La estrella del norte, 122r (“minoróse el opulento golfo de Texcoco: volvió al Cielo la serenidad, y la seguridad a México”). When the Virgin of Guadalupe was finally returned to its shrine in 1634, the structure was in need of repair due to the flood. AHBG, Santuario de Guadalupe, Oficios de Arzobispo, caja 403, exp. 1.
64 La estrella del norte, 197r (“que aquel Santuario, y este han sido casi igualmente el empleo de la piedad generosa de los devotos Mexicanos”).
Lady of Remedies.” In a similar fashion, he noted a slight devotional disparity between Our Lady of Piety and Our Lady of Bala, the former “frequented by pious Mexicans” and the latter “deserv[ing] more visitation than it presently receives.” Although Florencia only made passing references to the history of these other two “bastions,” he assured his readers that “we should have complete confidence in the protection of this pious and powerful Lady in her four images (without excluding the many others throughout Mexico and the whole kingdom).” Amongst the many other images he had in mind for his *Zodiaco Mariano* were those of the Virgin of Loreto.

**The Pilgrim House of Loreto**

By the late 1690s a few imitation houses of the Santa Casa had been constructed in New Spain and many chapels had been dedicated to the Virgin of Loreto. Several of these Lauretan devotions were eventually included in the *Zodiaco Mariano*, most of them coming from Jesuit colleges in Mexico City and Puebla. Although the Santa Casa in Italy itself was privileged above all other Marian shrines in global Christendom, Florencia believed that its spiritual and material protection was not restricted to the people of Loreto. “In this way the greatest pilgrim house in the world,” he said, “went about performing pilgrimage from place to place.” Its final destination may have been along the Adriatic coast of Italy, but through replica houses its pilgrimages continued on across the Atlantic. By tracing the newer journeys of the Santa Casa in America, Florencia

---

65 Ibid., 198r (“estar a menos distancia que aquel de México. . . . México es más visitado de N. Señora de los Remedios”).
66 Ibid., 177r, 176v (“frecuentado de la piedad de los Mexicanos”) (“merecía más frecuencia de la que tiene”).
67 Ibid., 177v–178r (“Debe tener nuestra confianza por tan cierto el amparo de esta piadosa, y poderosa Señora por sus cuatro Imágenes (sin excluir muchas, que tiene México, y todo el Reino”).
68 *La casa peregrina*, 32v (“Así anduvo peregrinando la Casa más peregrina del mundo de lugar en lugar”).
developed a Lauretan geography that followed its “beneficence in the four parts of the world.”

Florenzia’s devotional history of the Santa Casa of Loreto was printed in Mexico City in 1689. He explained that La casa peregrina “was written and published at the invitation and request of the padres lenguas of the College of San Gregorio of our Company in order to promote and spread the cultus and devotion of Our Lady of Loreto.” San Gregorio had been established in 1573 to teach the children of Indian nobles Christian doctrine, music, and basic grammar. A little over a century later Juan Bautista Zappa arrived to the college with plans to construct a replica of the Santa Casa there, but he was soon called to serve in Tepotzotlán and as a result left the project in the hands of Juan de Salvatierra. The first stone of the imitation house was eventually laid in the summer of 1679 under Salvatierra’s leadership and was finally completed and solemnly dedicated in January of 1680. Roughly six years later, after Zappa had returned to San Gregorio as rector, he made some important modifications to the structure and continued to promote Laurtean devotion both in the viceregal capital and in the surrounding valley. La casa peregrina was part of these larger Jesuit efforts to expand the cultus of the Virgin of Loreto amongst both indigenous Christians and the colonial elite.

---

69 Ibid., 112v (“su beneficencia en las cuatro partes del Mundo”).
70 Ibid., 84v (“se ha escrito e impreso a instancias, y solicitud de los Padres Lenguas del Colegio de San Gregorio de nuestra Compañía, en orden a promover, y adelantar el culto y devoción de la Señora de Loreto”).
72 Throughout 1685 and 1687 Zappa performed missions in Tulancingo, Sultepec, and Tenancingo with holy cards of the Virgin of Loreto. ARSI, Mexicana 17, ff. 529v, 533r. For more on Jesuit promotion of Lauretan devotion in New Spain, see Alcalá, “Jesuits and the Visual Arts,” 172–247.
The Santa Casa, according to the pious tradition Florencia drew upon, was a
house on the move. It had been miraculously transported by angels in 1291 from
Nazareth to Tersatto in Dalmatia together with a small wooden statue of the Virgin
carved by Saint Luke. After a stay of roughly three years, the heavenly host divinely
carried it across the Adriatic Sea, making a few minor stops in the vicinity of Recanati
before placing it upon a hilltop in 1295 in a town that later became known as Loreto.
Although there were slight variations in the story, Florencia declared that the Santa Casa was without a doubt “the same in which the Sovereign Empress of Heaven, the Virgin Mary and true Mother of God, was conceived in Nazareth, was born, lived in for many years, [and where] she conceived the Word of God in her most holy womb.”

Sacred historians tried to connect other events in the life of Christ and important stages in the growth of the early church to the Santa Casa. In particular, Florencia pointed out that the house of Mary was where the apostles built the “first church and first altar of the Christian world” and hence it was the place where the first Christian mass was performed. But since Palestine later fell into the hands of “infidels,” Andrés Sanfaçon argues that the “Loretan tradition served to decentre the representation of the Holy Land.” Through the “pilgrim house” the early history of Christianity was made portable.

In the first three chapters of *La casa peregrina* Florencia reviewed the Santa Casa’s legendary pilgrimages. The remaining chapters survey the administration of the sacred house, mention the names of its most important benefactors, describe the interior, list its many donations and prominent visitors, and record some of the miracles worked amongst the faithful. At the end of the history there are a series of meditations for novenas that concentrate on the mysteries associated with the Holy Family. The primary sources that Florencia followed had been published between the 1590s and 1670s, all of

---

73 *La casa peregrina*, 106v (“es la misma, en que la Soberana Emperatriz de los Cielos María Virgen y Madre verdadera de Dios, fue concebida en Nazaret, nació, y vivió muchos años . . . concibió en sus purísimas entrañas al Verbo del Padre”).

74 Ibid., 13v–14r (“Y en esta primera Iglesia, y primer Altar, que hubo en el mundo Cristiano”).

them based upon the work of the Roman Jesuit Horacio Torsellino (1545–1599). His *Lauretanae Historiae*, published in Rome in 1598, was originally written in Latin but was later translated into several European languages. Although this history became popular amongst Jesuits worldwide, Karin Annelise Vélez notes that “Torsellino’s account is surprisingly free of rhetoric of global expansion.” Given that the *Lauretanae Historiae* was primarily rooted in Europe, several Jesuits throughout the 1600s felt it was necessary to widen its vision to include reference to Lauretan devotion on their missions in regions such as New France, New Spain, Paraguay, the Philippines, and China.

Florencia too was looking to move beyond the province of Ancona in *La casa peregrina*. He found inspiration in Juan de Burgos’s *Discursos historiales panegíricos de las glorias de la serenisima Reina de los Ángeles en su sagrada Casa de Loreto*, a translated, edited, and expanded version of the *Lauretanae Historiae* printed in Madrid in 1671. In the prologue to his history, the Pueblan Jesuit concentrated on the “special devotion our America has for the Most Holy Virgin” by listing several Marian shrines throughout the dioceses of Mexico, Puebla, Michoacán, Guadalajara, and Guadiana (Durango). Following his brief Marian geography of New Spain, he highlighted devotion to the rosary throughout “the most remote parts of these kingdoms and provinces of America,” because “every time the Ave Maria is recited the Santa Casa comes to mind.” Since he desired that his “patria and America would recognize how favourable this

---

76 The other authors Florencia cited were Bartolomé Zucchi de Monsa, who added a chapter and translated Torsellino’s work into Italian in 1601; Silvio Serallo, who recorded newer miracles and other reflections on the Santa Casa in his *Casa Abelita* in 1645 and 1659; and Antonio Salto, who penned a brief work on Loreto entitled *Santuario Lauretano* in 1647. For a discussion of Torsellino’s *Lauretanae Historiae*, see Vélez, “Resolved to Fly,” 47–57.

77 Vélez, “Resolved to Fly,” 50.

Divine Sanctuary was to the whole world,” Burgos included a chapter tracing various churches and chapels dedicated to the “metropolis of all sanctuaries” in both Europe and Spanish America.79 His Lauretan geography was based upon the idea that the “Queen of the Angels does not appear to have stopped her pilgrimages in Italy, according to the many churches of Loreto that there are in the whole world.”80

In imitation of the Discursos historiales, Florencia included his own chapter on the houses of worship dedicated to the Virgin of Loreto throughout Christendom. “Many nobles and rich men have taken the measurements of the Santa Casa and the Holy Madonna to their lands,” he claimed, “and in them they have constructed many others according to the design.”81 He began his list, like Burgos, with the Lauretan houses of Italy before describing others throughout various provinces of Germany, Flanders, France, Spain, Portugal, and Poland. After finishing with Europe, Florencia turned his attention to the many in “our America,” which were all “more distant from the site” but not so “in affection and devotion.”82 Although he only had notice of one imitation house in the Jesuit college of San Pablo in Lima, he claimed that there must have been many others because “I have many accounts of their intense piety for the Santa Casa and her miraculous image.”83 The port town of Cavite in the Philippines was next on his list, where he explained a replica or altar had been erected through the aid of an Italian

79 Juan de Burgos, Discursos historiales panegíricos de las glorias de la serenísima Reina de los Ángeles en su sagrada Casa de Loreto (Madrid: Joseph Fernández de Buendía, 1671), Prólogo, n.p. (“la singular devoción con la Santísima Virgen de nuestra América”) (“las partes más remotas de estos Reinos, y Provincias del América”) (“pues cada vez que se reza el Ave María va luego la imaginación a aquella Sagrada Casa”) (“que en mi patria, y en esta América se conozca este Divino Santuario, tan favorable a todo el mundo”) (“Metrópoli de todos los Santuarios”).

80 Ibid., 247 (“No parece que la Serenísima Reina de los Ángeles paró en sus peregrinaciones en Italia, según las muchas Iglesias de Loreto que hay en todo el mundo”).

81 La casa peregrina, 82v (“Son tantos los Señores, y hombres de caudal, que han llevado a sus tierras las medidas de la Santa Casita, y de la Santa Madonna, y en ellas edificado otras tantas al modelo”).

82 Ibid., 83r (“En nuestra América, aunque más distante en el sitio, no en el afecto y la devocion, hay muchas”).

83 Ibid. (“tengo muchas noticias de su extremada piedad para con esta Santa Casa, y su milagrosa Imagen”).
devotee. Then, Florencia added one more to Burgos’s list in Quito before concluding that he did “not have accounts on Chile, Paraguay, and New Granada.” He was persuaded, however, that “procuradores of the Company of Jesus and other religious orders who have gone to the Santa Casa would have attempted to build” churches to Loreto in these regions.

Florencia continued to follow Burgos by proceeding with Lauretan devotion in New Spain. He began with Mexico City, specifically with those of the Casa Profesa, which was said to possess a star from the roof of the original Santa Casa, and the College of San Pedro y San Pablo. In Puebla there were two chapels dedicated to Loreto in the Jesuit College of Espíritu Santo, one of which was built by Burgos himself. When treating those in Guatemala, Pátzcuaro, and two others from convents in Mexico City and Puebla, Florencia cited the Discursos historiales verbatim. He then explained that Burgos “left out a few chapels, [which are] very celebrated, because they had not been built when he printed his book.” To update his list, Florencia referenced a chapel in the parish church of San José in Puebla, two in Jesuit colleges in Mérida and Tepotzotlán, and another in the Dominican convent of the town of San Agustín de las Cuevas. He concluded with a chapter dedicated to the Santa Casa of San Gregorio which was “copied with such perfection to the plan and design of the original in Loreto . . . that when entering in it for the first time I thought I was looking at the original.”

---

84 Ibid. (“No tengo noticias del Chile, Paraguay, y Nuevo Reino, donde me persuado las habrán procurado fundar los Procuradores de la Compañía de Jesús, y de otras Religiones, que han ido a la Santa Casa”).
85 Ibid., 84r (“Algunas Capillas, y bien célebres, no puso, porque no estaban erigidas cuando imprimió su Libro”).
86 Ibid., 84v–85r (“imitada con tanta perfección, al modelo y traza de la Original de LORETO . . . que entrando en ella la primera vez, me pareció veía la Original”).
college had built a new church. “This relocation of the Virgin’s home from one place to another is not surprising,” he piously tried to explained, “because in this, as with all the others, it is like the original, made to change places, and to pass from one region to another.”

After having expanded upon Burgos’s Lauretan geography of America, Florencia concluded that “these are (although not all of them) the houses that the Virgin of Loreto has throughout the Christian world in the four parts of the globe.” Throughout his narrative he sought to demonstrate that one could experience the spiritual and material benefits of the Santa Casa “without sailing across seas, changing climates, or wandering about large distances.” Given that most people in America were unable to travel to Loreto, Luisa Elena Alcalá has rightly pointed out that “the copies of the House of the Virgin that were built in New Spain collapse not only historical but also geographical distance.” The Santa Casa had come to New Spain as a “pilgrim house,” which meant that the sacred landscape of both the Holy Lands and Europe extended into the New World. All of these imitation houses spread the “sovereign influence of her benefits without there being anyone in all the regions of the Christian world who does not experience the activity of her powerful beneficence.” Florencia believed that the Marian images of New Galicia had a similar lesson to teach the faithful of Europe.

---

87 Ibid., 87r (“No hay, que extrañar esta mudanza de la Casa de la Virgen de un sitio a otro, que en eso, como en lo demás se parece a su Original, hecho a mudar sitios, y a pasarse de unas partes a otras”).
88 Ibid., 87v (“Estas son (aunque no todas) las Casas, que la Señora de LORETO tiene en el orbe Cristiano en las cuatro partes del mundo”).
89 Ibid., 1v–2r (“sin navegar mares, ni mudar climas, ni trasegar inmensos caminos”).
91 La casa peregrina, 87v (“los soberanos infljos de sus beneficios, sin que haya a quien en todas las regiones del orbe Cristiano, no alcance la actividad de su poderosa beneficencia”).
The Celebrated Shrines of Guadalajara

Amongst the popular pilgrim destinations in the diocese of Guadalajara were Zapopan and San Juan de los Lagos. Zapopan was situated roughly nine kilometres away from the city of Guadalajara, the centre of political and ecclesiastical power in New Galicia (also known as the kingdom of Guadalajara), and San Juan de los Lagos was an important commercial hub that drew in thousands of people every year to its fairs by the mid 1600s. Bishops took great interest in these two towns, specifically in their Marian shrines. They became patrons of the Virgins of Zapopan and of San Juan de los Lagos, devotions that Florencia incorporated into his *Zodiaco Mariano*. Both images were at the centre of a growing network of “celebrated shrines” throughout the bishopric that was believed to possess traces of ancient Christianity. Florencia crafted a diocesan geography of Guadalajara that included these Marian devotions, claiming that the “vestiges of the Christian faith demonstrates the protection of the Virgin.”

At the request of the bishop Juan de Santiago y León Garabito, Florencia published his devotional history of the Virgins of Zapopan and of San Juan de los Lagos in Mexico City in 1694. But in order to write his *Origen de los dos célebres santuarios* he needed written documentation, hence at some point in the early 1690s he corresponded with León Garabito to obtain official papers from the diocesan archives. On a number of occasions throughout the seventeenth century juridical testimonies had been compiled on the origins and miracles attributed to the two Marian images. León Garabito promised to send Florencia copies of these investigations, but it took him a considerable amount of

---

92 The town was originally called San Juan Bautista Mezquititlan. For more on the fairs, see María Ángeles Gálvez and Antonio Ibarra, “Comercio local y circulación regional de importaciones. La feria de San Juan de los Lagos en la Nueva España,” *Historia Mexicana* 46, no. 3 (1997): 581–616.

93 *Los dos célebres santuarios*, 5 (“Vestigios de la fe de Cristo, que arguyen la protección de la Virgen”).
time to do so. He explained in a letter he wrote in May of 1692 that “the reason for not having sent these [documents] sooner has been to wait for the chaplains of the sanctuaries to investigate everything that took place in those times.”\textsuperscript{94} By September of the following year they were still not finished, so León Garabito decided to send the official papers to Florencia with the request that he would return them so that they could be placed back into the diocesan archives.\textsuperscript{95}

According to the episcopal documents Florencia received, the Franciscan missionary Antonio de Segovia had given an image of the Virgin to the community of Zapopan. It soon acquired a miraculous reputation, but the indigenous town made no serious effort to spread word of its prodigious wonders abroad. Florencia claimed that had the Indians of Zapopan not concealed these miracles “there would have been material for many writings about them.”\textsuperscript{96} The decades of silence were eventually broken in the early seventeenth century when the image emerged unscathed after the roof of its shrine collapsed. Tradition dictated that Segovia (or Miguel de Bolonia) had also given an image of the Virgin to the community of San Juan de los Lagos. But even though “the antiquity of the image is great,” Florencia claimed, “the fame of this sanctuary is recent.”\textsuperscript{97} In the juridical testimonies he discovered that the earliest miracle was dated 1630 when a family of acrobats passed through the town. After one of the daughters was killed during a stunt, an Indian woman by the name of Ana Lucía said that the Virgin would bring her back to life. She went to the sacristy of the shrine, pulled out the image

\textsuperscript{94} AGN, Jesuitas I-23, exp. 4, ff. 13–14 (“que el no haberlos enviado antes ha sido por aguardar a que los capellanes de los Santuarios averiguasen en todo lo sucedido en estos tiempos después”).

\textsuperscript{95} AGN, Jesuitas I-23, exp. 9, f. 44. The episcopal documents Florencia used to write his devotional history on the Virgin of Zapopan can be found in Palacio y Basave, ed., \textit{Interesantísimos documentos}.

\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Los dos célebres santuarios}, 12 (“hubiera materia para muchos escritos en la relación de ellos”).

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 52 (“El principio de la celebritad de este Santuario es moderno, aunque la antigüedad de la Imagen es mucha”).
of San Juan de los Lagos, and after having laid it on the chest of the child all who were present witnessed her resurrection from the dead.

In the *Origen de los dos célebres santuarios* Florencia included these juridical testimonies in abridged forms, with no separate sections describing their shrines or novenas for devotees. Since there were no published works on the two images in the 1600s, his devotional history is free of historiographic debates on their origins. What concerned him more was the living memory of “two years of an infertile climate that has afflicted us and has yet to cease its laborious effects.” An epidemic outbreak of 1691 saw many people die throughout the city of Guadalajara and its wider district. According to a letter Florencia received two years later, León Garabito “determined to take the miraculous image of Our Lady of the sanctuary of Zapopan” to the episcopal see where it was placed in the cathedral. A novena was performed and the Virgin was implored to stop the deadly pestilence, which subsided shortly after its entrance into the capital. Two doctors from Guadalajara, Ildefonso de Rojas and Domingo Guerrero, were interviewed and claimed that there was significant improvement in the health of the people after her arrival. Soon thereafter “the love and veneration of this Most Holy Image of Our Lady was ignited, not only in the inhabitants of the said city, but in many parts of this bishopric.” Given the healing powers of the image, León Garabito built his episcopal palace in Zapopan, a place where he sought to recuperate from illness in the final days of

---

98 Tello included short accounts of the Virgins of Zapopan and of San Juan de los Lagos in *Libro segundo de la crónica miscelánea*, 139–141, 855–859. His chronicle, however, was only published for the first time in the nineteenth century and hence was unavailable to Florencia for consultation.

99 *Los dos célebres santuarios*, Reparos sobre las fundaciones, n.p. (“donde ha sido general estos dos años la esterilidad del tiempo, que tanto nos ha afligido, y aun no cesa en sus efectos trabajosos”).

100 AGN, Jesuitas I-23, exp. 9, f. 41 (“Y después de este beneficio, que recibieron todos, se encendieron tanto en el amor, y veneración de esta Santísima Imagen de Nuestra Señora, no sólo los habitadores de dicha ciudad, sino los de muchas partes de esta obispado”).
his life.\textsuperscript{101} Although he did not invest the same amount of energy into the shrine of San Juan de los Lagos, he did establish a chaplaincy there out of his own finances.\textsuperscript{102}

Florence knew that the Virgins of Zapopan and of San Juan de los Lagos were devotional favourites of León Garabito and central to the identity of the diocese of Guadalajara. For these reasons he provided an overview of the kingdom of New Galicia and the bishopric as a preface to the origins and miracles of the two devotions. He based his introductory chapter on the \textit{Teatro eclesiástico de la primitiva iglesia de las Indias Occidentales} (1649), a text written by the royal chronicler Gil González Dávila (1570–1658) that surveyed the bishoprics of Spanish America. Each section includes the coat of arms of the cathedral city, a brief “historical description” of the diocese, a catalogue of its bishops, and a list of “illustrious men.”\textsuperscript{103} In some cases, as with the Bishopric of Michoacán, there were physical maps tracing the network of parishes subject to the episcopal see. Florence followed González Dávila’s diocesan geography of Guadalajara by briefly recounting the conquest of the region by Nuño de Guzmán, the civic and ecclesiastical institutions of the city, and the foundation of both the \textit{audiencia} and the cathedral. “All of this,” he concluded, “demonstrates the illustriousness of the city.”\textsuperscript{104} But after Florence moved outside of the urban borders of Guadalajara he expanded upon González Dávila’s diocesan geography by commenting on some of its natural features, Marian images, and traces of ancient Christianity.

\textsuperscript{101} AGI, Gobierno, Guadalajara 61.
\textsuperscript{102} Alberto Santoscoy, \textit{Historia de Nuestra Señora de San Juan de los Lagos y del culto de esta milagrosa imagen} (Mexico City: Tip. De la Compañía Editorial Católica, 1903), 130; and Pedro María Márquez, \textit{Historia de Nuestra Señora de San Juan de los Lagos y del culto de esta milagrosa imagen} (Mexico City: Impresores S. de R. L., 1939), 70.
\textsuperscript{103} For Gil González Dávila’s section on the diocese of Guadalajara, see \textit{Teatro eclesiástico de la primitiva iglesia de las Indias Occidentales, vidas de sus arzobispos, obispos y cosas memorables de sus sedes} (Madrid: Diego Díaz de la Carrera, 1649), 179–186.
\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Los dos célebres santuarios}, 3 (“Todo esto califica el ilustre de la Ciudad”).
To situate the reader in the bishopric, Florencia explained that it extended up to the city of Parral and covered the provinces of Sinaloa and Sonora before its ecclesiastical boundaries were divided and part of its jurisdiction was delegated to the Bishopric of Guadiana in 1620. But even though “today [the diocese] is not as big,” he claimed that “it is very extensive, that if it was divided into another bishopric it would still be very large.”

The remaining ecclesiastical territory of the diocese, according to Florencia, was abundant in wheat and maize with great varieties of cattle, birds, and fish. More importantly, however, it was filled with “silver and gold because the best and richest mines are in the kingdom of Guadalajara, like those of Zacatecas, Sombrete, Saltillo, Parral, Sonora, Los Frailes, Rosario, Oxtotipac, and many others that enrich it and all of New Spain.” The general fertility of the Bishopric of Guadalajara was abundant proof for Florencia that the Christian God had favoured the region.

Beyond the physical riches, Florencia made it clear that the Bishopric of Guadalajara was also providentially blessed with images of the Virgin Mary. “If it has Mary,” he asked, “how can it lack any measure of happiness for its joy since she is our good fortune!”

Much like with the Marian devotions of Mexico City and the Santa Casa of Loreto, Florencia compiled a list of shrines across the Diocese of Guadalajara, naturally beginning with the Virgins of Zapopan and San Juan de los Lagos. But “this kingdom [of New Galicia] has many other miraculous images” that he believed were

---

105 Ibid., 4 (“Hoy no alcanza tanto, pero es tan dilatada, que si se dividiera en otro Obispado aún quedara muy grande”).
106 Ibid. (“de plata y oro, porque las mejores, y más ricas minas están en el Reino de Guadalajara, como Zacatecas, Sombrete, el Saltillo, el Parral, Sonora, los Frailes, el Rosario, Oxtotipac, y otras muchas que lo enriquecen a él, y a toda la Nueva España”).
107 Ibid. (“Pero si tiene a MARÍA, como le puede faltar felicidad alguna para su dicha, pues ella es nuestra buena fortuna!”).
worthy of mention. He explained that within its borders in the Valley of Xuchil (Valley of Flowers) there was the Image of Our Lady of Aránzazu which had been discovered in a maguey plant. There was also the miraculous image of Zape, which Andrés Pérez de Ribas had described in his mission history and which Florencia cited in the side margin. And in the church of Sombrete the Virgin of the Pared had been found in the hollow of one of its walls. Florencia ended his brief description of Marian devotions in the Bishopric of Guadalajara by claiming that “there are many others that can be seen in the Zodiac Mariano when it is published.”

Of all these images Florencia claimed that “in none of them, although miraculous, has the Virgin demonstrated that she loves this kingdom as [she has] with the two of Zapopan and San Juan.” He then stated that the “following paragraphs” would prove this point, but instead of addressing the history of the two Marian devotions they focus on the vestiges of ancient Christianity in the Bishopric of Guadalajara. The belief that one of Christ’s apostles, most particularly Saint Thomas, had preached in the New World was an ongoing debate ever since Columbus’ return to Spain from his first voyage. A few conquistadors were intrigued by Amerindian crosses and some of the early mendicant friars diligently searched for signs of the Christian faith in Indian religion.

---

108 Ibid. (“Otras muchas Imágenes, y milagrosas, tiene este Reino”).
109 Ibid. (“y otras muchas que se pueden ver en el Zodiac Mariano, cuando salga a la luz”).
110 Ibid. (“Pero en ninguna de ellas, aunque milagrosas, ha mostrado la Señora lo que quiere a este Reino, como en las dos de Zapopan, y San Juan”).
111 Louis-André Vigneras explains that in the initial stages of colonization the Indies were taken to be part of Asia; hence it was natural to believe that Saint Thomas left traces of his preaching there. “Saint Thomas, Apostle of America,” Hispanic American Historical Review 57, no. 1 (1977): 82–90. As early as 1514 a German newsletter suggested that the indigenous people of Brazil “cherish the memory of Saint Thomas” and showed “the Portuguese his footprints in the hinterland.” Tidings Out of Brazil, trans. Mark Graubard (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1957), 30.
112 For a conquistador, see Díaz del Castillo, Historia verdadera, 7, and for a mendicant, see the Franciscan Pedro Oroz, The Oroz Codex, or Relation of the Description of the Holy Gospel Province in New Spain, and the Lives of the Founders and other Noteworthy Men of said Province, composed by Fray Pedro Oroz, 1584–1586, trans. and ed. Angélico Chávez (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History,
1540s the Jesuits of Brazil popularized the idea of an apostolic visitation in their mission letters while several travellers passing through different parts of America recorded local stories they heard of ancient Christianity. At various points throughout the seventeenth century, sacred historians, many of them creoles, appropriated these pious legends and included them in their devotional histories and provincial chronicles.

Florencia drew upon these traditions in two brief sections of the first chapter of his Origen de los dos célebres santuarios. The first describes the apostolic visitation of a disciple of Saint Thomas to the Bishopric of Guadalajara. Rodrigo de Cabredo, the provincial of the Jesuit Province of New Spain, recorded this story in an annual letter from 1614 that Pérez de Ribas later summarized in his provincial chronicle. Florencia learned from this account that two Jesuits from the college of Guadalajara had heard from the native inhabitants in the Valley of Flags a tradition about a man by the name of

---

113 The Jesuits in Brazil popularized this pious myth in their early letters, particularly Manuel da Nóbrega in the late 1540s. See Cartas do Brasil e mais escritos do P. Manuel da Nóbrega (opera omnia), ed. Serafim Leite (Coimbra: Universidade, 1955), 27, 49–50, 66. For travellers to Brazil, see Jean de Léry, History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, Otherwise Called America [1578], trans. Janet Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 148. For travellers to Peru, see Miguel Jaques de los Ríos de Manzanedo, Viaje de las Indias Orientales y Occidentales [Año 1606], eds. Ramón Clavijo Provencio and José López Romero (Salamanca: Espuela de Plata, 2008), 207–208; and Vázquez de Espinosa, Compendio y descripción, 2:807. And for travellers to New Spain, see Asunción, Itinerario a Indias, 108.


115 Pérez de Ribas' version is found in his Crónica, 2:225–227.
Mathias or Mateo. This mysterious figure was said to have come over the waters in ancient times preaching “the true God and his law,” but after he had condemned the “idolatries” of the local population they killed him. When the Spaniards eventually arrived to the region they discovered a series of crosses along the mountain range of Chacala, but close by there was one cross in particular “well made and in its pedestal [written] unknown ancient letters.” There was also a piece of rock with the imprints of the man’s feet in the very place he had preached from. Mathias or Mateo, so Florencia argued, “could have been the disciple of Saint Thomas, like the other one Calancha refers to . . . who left the Saint in Peru and was likewise killed by barbarians.”

In his second section on ancient Christianity, Florencia concentrated on the miraculous Cross of Tepic. He claimed that the footprints of the apostles had been found within the town, much like those Francisco de Burgoa had witnessed in the Villa Alta of Oaxaca and the Franciscan Diego López Cogolludo (1610–1686) had observed in Campeche of the Yucatán Peninsula. For two pages Florencia quoted from a manuscript by the Jesuit Antonio Covarruvias which referenced an image of the cross in the grass of a hillock at the foot of the Sierra Alta. Throughout the whole year the cross was green and neatly formed like other bushes in any given garden, even during the dry season. At its base there was a small chapel dedicated to the Holy Cross, but Covarruvias claimed that no one knew anything about its origin. Some asserted that a cross of wood

---

116 *Los dos célebres santuarios*, 5–6 (“Dios verdadero y su Ley”) (“una Cruz bien labrada, y en su peña ciertas letras antiguas incógnitas”) (“Este Varón pudo ser discípulo de Santo Thomas, como el otro que reﬁere Calancha lib. 2 cap. 4 que dejó el Santo en el Perú, y lo mataron los bárbaros también”).

117 See Francisco de Burgoa, *Geografía descripción de la parte septentrional, del polo ártico de la América, y nueva iglesia de las Indias Occidentales, y sitio astronómico de esta Provincia de Predicadores de Antequera valle de Oaxaca* (Mexico City: Juan Ruiz, 1674), 298v; and Diego López Cogolludo, *Historia de Yucatán* (Madrid: Juan García Infanzón, 1688), 95–97.

118 Covarruvias was in charge of the nearby Jesuit sugar mill of Santa Catalina in 1687, which means he most likely wrote about the cross during that time. Zambrano, *Diccionario bio-bibliográfico*, 5:238.
had fallen there and rotted and that on that very same spot the Cross of Tepic was born. The fame of the sacred site was widespread and although people were constantly taking dirt for relics, Covarruvias claimed that the earth never diminished.119 Florencia concluded that the Cross of Tepic “proves that this province is chosen by God with admirable vestiges of primitive Christianity.”120

Including these stories of apostolic preaching was a way for Florencia to thank Alonso Fernández de la Torre Guimaraez for his patronage. As a supporter of both the Cross of Tepic and the Company, the wealthy benefactor had built the chapel at the foot of the image and left the Jesuits with one of his sugar mills.121 But Florencia was also intent on placing New Spain on the same spiritual level as Spain, because as Jacques Lafaye points out, “belief in the apostolic evangelization of the New World is not so much a theological question as a question of national pride.”122 A pious tradition concerning the preaching of the apostle Saint James in the Iberian Peninsula had been firmly established by the sixteenth century, many believing that he had been commissioned by the Virgin Mary to establish a shrine in the town of her choosing when he set out on his missionary journey.123 In his history of Our Lady of the Pilar of Zaragoza, Antonio de Fuertes y Biota (ca. 1599–ca. 1660) explained that when the apostle arrived to Zaragoza he heard angels singing “Ave Maria” and was visited by the

119 Domingo Lázaro de Arregui recorded the same miraculous occurrence in his 1621 manuscript relation of New Galicia, Descripción de la Nueva Galicia (Seville: Consejo de Investigaciones Científicas, Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1946), 94–95.
120 Los dos célebres santuarios, 6 (“prueba que esta Provincia está señalada de Dios con vestigios admirables de la primitiva Cristiandad”).
Virgin. She told him that this was the place where he was to build a sanctuary in her honour, and with the help of some recent converts he began its construction immediately. Fuertes y Biota claimed that “this is the first church in the world in honour of the Virgin dedicated by the hands of the apostles.”

There was a close relationship between ancient Christianity and the Virgin Mary’s favour in the Spanish world. According to tradition all of the apostles—not just Saint James—received her blessing before they set out to evangelize “all nations.” If the New World had been on the itinerary of Saint Thomas, as Florencia and several other Spanish and creole scholars piously reasoned, then it had also been in the mind of the “Queen of Heaven.” An apostolic visitation was a way for them to demonstrate that America had a place on the map of global Christendom before the “discovery.” Florencia would have agreed with Antonio de la Calancha when he said that Europeans “desire for these lands the misfortune of not having been preached the [Christian] faith by an apostle. This is something that Europeans would not want for themselves, as if the preaching [of the apostles] was partial or as if the redemption of the world was restricted.” In the same way, Florencia argued that the Virgins of Zapopan and of San Juan de los Lagos show how Mary “does not extend her influence to only one kingdom or province, but to the entire church, and even to the whole world.” They were only two of several other images in the Zodiaco Mariano that reinforced this global message.

124 Antonio de Fuertes y Biota, Historia de Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Zaragoza (Brussels: Casa de Guillermo Schefbels, 1654), 4 (“esta es la primera Iglesia del mundo a honra de la Virgen dedicada por manos Apostólicas”).
125 Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15.
126 Calancha, Crónica moralizada, 2:710 (“pues quieren para estas tierras la desdicha de no haberse predicado la Fe por Apóstol. Cosa que los Europeos no quisieren para sí, como si la predicación fuese parcial o se limitase la universal redención”).
127 Los dos célebres santuarios, 46 (“como la Señora . . . no estrecha sus influjos a un Reino, y a una Provincia, sino que se extiende a toda la Iglesia, y aun a todo el Mundo”).
The Beauteous Churches of New Spain

The “bastions” of Mexico, “the pilgrim house” of Loreto, and the “celebrated shrines” of Guadalajara were amongst hundreds of other “houses” of worship in the ecclesiastical landscape of New Spain. There were chapels, hospitals, shrines, parish and convent churches, basilicas, and cathedrals throughout the kingdom that were either dedicated to the Virgin Mary or housed prodigious images of her various advocations. In his Zodiaco Mariano Florencia attempted to catalogue the network of Marian images in these “beauteous churches” from the Yucatán Peninsula to the kingdom of Guatemala to central Mexico to the northern stretches of New Vizcaya. He wove together his moralized, Lauretan, and diocesan geographies into one larger Marian geography that outlined the general borders of New Spain. All of the “houses” or “signs” of his Zodiaco Mariano formed a larger constellation of Marian stars over the kingdom which the “Sun of Justice” visited in order to benignly influence its land and people.

Florencia began to work on his Zodiaco Mariano by at least the early 1690s. Whether he was commissioned to write this compendium of Marian images or if he did so out of his own volition is unknown. In either case, his death in 1695 kept him from seeing it into print. Significant efforts were made to search for his manuscript after his passing, but according to Juan Antonio de Oviedo they were all in vain. Oviedo claimed that it had been ready for printing and was handed over to the appropriate censors for their approval, but it “remained in the possession of one of them [who] reasoned that since the author had died there was no one to promote and follow through with its

---

128 *Zodiaco Mariano*, 88 (“los muchos hermosísimos Templos”).
publication.” Roughly fifty years later, however, the original copy of the Zodiaco Mariano was found in an incomplete and tattered form in one of the rooms of the Jesuit College of San Pedro y San Pablo. Oviedo was given the manuscript, which he claimed was written in “the handwriting of Father Florencia.” He also noted that since it was a rough draft it had “many additional things in the margins and many deleted lines throughout the body of the text.”

After reviewing Florencia’s rough draft, Oviedo concluded that it would be to the glory of the Christian God if the “wonders that the Lord has worked through the images of Mary in all of New Spain” would be made public. But as he prepared the Zodiaco Mariano for publication he decided that it was necessary to make a few additions and changes to the text. Oviedo was impressed with the geographic coverage of the compendium, but he noticed that Florencia had overlooked a few images and that newer devotions had formed in the first half of the eighteenth century that were also worthy of inclusion. And so to distinguish his entries from those of Florencia he placed asterisks in the table of contents and within the margins, indicating those devotions he had added to the text. Oviedo also decided to trim what he believed were “digressions” and “panegyrics” in Florencia’s manuscript in order to achieve what he felt was a more “simple and historical” style. After making all of his revisions he published the Zodiaco Mariano in Mexico City in 1755. Although the full title suggests that it was “in large part added to,” only 21 of the 111 images were marked as additions (see Appendix A).

129 Ibid., Prólogo al lector, n.p. ("quedó en el poder de alguno de ellos, viendo que muerto el Autor no había ya quien instase, y solicitase su impresión").
130 Ibid. (“como borrador tenía de letra del mismo P. Florencia muchas cosas añadidas en los márgenes, y muchas borradas en el Cuerpo del Libro").
131 Ibid. (“Pero viendo de cuanta gloria de Dios, y de su SS. Madre podía ser el que se publicasen las maravillas, que el Señor había obrado por medio de las Imágenes de MARIA en toda esta nueva España”).
Oviedo’s modifications to the *Zodiaco Mariano* did little to change the general logic and organization of Florencia’s original work. Moreover, he indicated some of the changes he made. In the prologue, for instance, Oviedo stated that “I begin in the same way as Father Florencia with the images of the Province of Yucatán,” and when he treated the Virgin of Zape, the final image of the compendium, he claimed that he had...
followed his manuscript “until now.”

As it was noted in the previous chapter with the *Menologio*, Oviedo saw himself as a continuer of Florencia’s works. According to Francisco Xavier Lazcano (1702–1762), himself a Jesuit and Oviedo’s biographer, the *Zodiaco Mariano* was Florencia’s “extremely ingenious concept” that remained in an embryonic state until Oviedo later “perfected” it. Indeed, the 1755 publication of the work should be considered a coauthored text by two men who shared much in common. Florencia and Oviedo were born and spent the early years of their lives far from the centre of viceregal power in New Spain, the former in Saint Augustine of La Florida and the latter in Bogotá in the kingdom of New Granada. They were both sent to study at Jesuit institutions as young boys, Florencia in Mexico City and Oviedo in Lima and Guatemala, and both were rectors of the Jesuit colleges of San Ildefonso and San Pedro y San Pablo. The two Jesuits represented their religious province as *procuradores* in the courts of Madrid and Rome, both claiming to have performed pilgrimage in various regions of Europe. And it was in the Old World that both Florencia and Oviedo observed the lack of recognition for the “things of the Indies,” frustrating experiences they wove into the *Zodiaco Mariano*.

Florencia and Oviedo were also ardent devotees of the Virgin of Guadalupe. So it is not surprising that the *Zodiaco Mariano* had been handed over for licensing only a few months after the image had been proclaimed the patroness of the kingdom of New Spain by Pope Benedict XIV. The section dedicated to devotion at Tepeyac is a mixture of

---

132 Ibid., Prólogo al lector, n.p., 322 (“Y comienzo a imitación del mismo P. Florencia por las Imágenes de la Provincia de Yucatán”) (“al cual he seguido hasta ahora”).

abridged sections from *La estrella del norte* and newer observations by Oviedo on the 1737 plague and the events leading up to the 1754 papal pronouncement. Florencia and Oviedo emphasized the protection of the Virgin of Guadalupe over Mexico City, claiming that thanks to her “an epidemic disaster has not taken place over the span of several years [like the ones] that commonly infest the kingdoms of Spain, France, Italy, and others.” Although the two Jesuits recognized that “measles, smallpox, typhus, and others” had killed various people in their lands, they noted that “it has not happened with the same intensity as the pestilences in Europe that devastation their cities.” The idea that the viceregal capital was heavenly shielded by the Virgin of Guadalupe was the same vision Florencia and Oviedo had for all of New Spain. They were keen on demonstrating that “Divine Providence wanted to favour the kingdom of New Spain” with images defending every region from natural disasters.

The opening line of the *Zodiaco Mariano* states that “in all of the provinces and kingdoms of Northern America the great Mother of God Our Lady has manifested her beneficial and liberal favours.” Throughout the compendium Florencia and Oviedo imagined the Marian protection of New Spain in geographic terms, which is why Jaime Cuadriello has written that “our creole authors had represented in their Zodiaco a type of Marian cartography of the kingdom, “fortified” by the presence of the Virgin.”

---

134 *Zodiaco Mariano*, 46 (“debe ella, no haber padecido jamás en el espacio de tantos años la calamidad de la peste, que tan a menudo suele infestar los Reinos de España, Francia, Italia, y otros. Porque aunque se han padecido en ella muchas veces las epidemias de sarampión, viruelas, tabardillos, y otras, en que han muerto muchas personas, no ha sido con el rigor, con que las pestes en Europa asolan las Ciudades”).

135 Ibid., 302 (“quiso la divina Providencia favorecer al Reino de la Nueva España”).

136 Ibid., 1 (“En todas las Provincias, y Reinos de esta América Septentrional se ha mostrado la gran Madre de Dios, y Señora nuestra propicia, y liberal en sus favores”).

137 Jaime Cuadriello, “Zodiaco Mariano. Una alegoría de Miguel Cabrera,” in *Zodiaco Mariano. 250 años de la declaración pontificia de María de Guadalupe como patrona de México* (Mexico City: Museo de la Basílica de Guadalupe, 2004), 59 (“nuestros autores criollos, pues, habían figurado en su Zodiaco una suerte de cartografía mariana del reino, “fortificada” por la presencia de la Virgen”).
members of the Society of Jesus they belonged to a religious order that was on the

Also, the period between Florencia’s drafting of the \textit{Zodiaco Mariano} and Oviedo’s
publication of it witnessed significant developments in the general science of map
making in New Spain. Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, who was a royal cosmographer,
was the first creole to sketch a map of the viceroyalty in the latter part of the seventeenth
century, a drawing he may have shared with Florencia.\footnote{Florencia returned the maps of California that Sigüenza y Góngora had lent to Kino in the 1680s. \textit{Libra astronómica y filosófica}, 4.} His work was finally published
for the first time in 1748 by José Alzate y Ramirez (1737–1799), a creole scientist who
expanded on Sigüenza y Góngora’s cartographic vision to demonstrate the grandeur of
New Spain.\footnote{For a discussion of the cartographic labour of Sigüenza y Góngora and Alzate, see Codding, “Perfecting the Geography of New Spain,” 185–219.} These maps not only provided a visual picture of the borders and
topographic features of the kingdom, they expressed, in the words of Enrique Florescano,
“the diversity of an extensive territory; the agricultural, mineral, industrial, and
commercial abundance within its borders; and the impression that providential destiny
protected the creole \textit{patria}.”\footnote{Florescano, \textit{Historia de las historias}, 272 (“la diversidad de un territorio dilatado, la cornucopia agrícola, minera, industrial y comercial contenida en sus fronteras, y la sensación de que un hado providencial protegía a la patria criolla”).}

The Marian geography in the \textit{Zodiaco Mariano} mirrors this creole cartographic
vision of New Spain. When Florencia began to prepare his manuscript there was a
plethora of compendiums, catalogues, and atlases for him to follow. Several devotional
histories, like Francisco de Pereda’s 1604 work on the Virgin of Atocha, included chapters or lists dedicated to Marian images within urban contexts.\textsuperscript{142} Others were more regional in their focus, José de Castelví Coloma cataloguing seventy-eight images of the Virgin in the kingdom of Valencia in a manuscript compendium from the 1680s.\textsuperscript{143} Some religious scholars looked to the larger “composite monarchy” of Spain, Gerónimo de Quintana claiming in 1637 that of the 120,000 churches in Spain 84,000 were dedicated to the Virgin Mary.\textsuperscript{144} Still others, like Jaime del Portillo y Sosa in the 1620s, penned a “geography and compendium” of up to fifty Virgins throughout all of “Europe.”\textsuperscript{145} And finally, there were also works dedicated to the Marian shrines of Christendom, the most important of these projects being the \textit{Atlas Marianis sive de imaginibus deiparae per orbem Christianum miraculosi} (1657–1659). In this work the German Jesuit Wilhelm Gumppenberg (1609–1675) charted 1,200 sanctuaries housing images of the Virgin throughout the entire Catholic world.\textsuperscript{146}

These aforementioned texts map Marian “houses” through short descriptions of local devotions in specified geographic regions. Florencia and Oviedo applied this same methodology in the \textit{Zodiaco Mariano}, charting the cities, provinces, dioceses, and kingdoms of New Spain by either citing verbatim or abridging larger sections from the

\textsuperscript{142} Pereda, \textit{Nuestra Señora de Atocha}, 19v–30r.
\textsuperscript{143} José de Castelví Coloma, \textit{Catálogo de todas las santas imágenes de Nuestra Señora que dichosamente se veneran en la ciudad, villas y lugares en el Reino de Valencia con una breve descripción del modo, sitio y lugares en donde se hallaron y tuvieron el origen las santas imágenes con sus invocaciones}, Real Biblioteca, Manuscritos, II-2012.
\textsuperscript{144} Quintana, \textit{Nuestra Señora de Atocha}, 5r.
\textsuperscript{145} Jaime del Portillo y Sosa, \textit{Primera parte de la crónica general de los templos y casas famosas}, Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE), Sala Cervantes, MSS 12878, IIr ("geografía y compendio").
\textsuperscript{146} Since I have been unable to consult the \textit{Atlas Marianis} my information here is based upon the work of Miri Rubin, \textit{Emotion and Devotion: The Meaning of Mary in Medieval Religious Cultures} (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2009), 29–30; and Monique Scheer, “From Majesty to Mystery: Change in the Meanings of Black Madonnas from the Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries,” \textit{American Historical Review} 107, no. 5 (2002): 1421–1422. Vélez also discusses Gumppenberg’s work, together with that of Florencia, in “Resolved to Fly,” 304–316.
work of several other colonial historians. Those images which had their own devotional
histories were treated at greater length in either ten pages or more. The Virgins of Izamal,
of Guadalupe, of Remedies, of Texacic, of Defensa, and of Cozamalopan had all been
historicized at some point in the seventeenth century and as a result were available to
Florencia for consultation. He had written on the Virgins of Zapopan and of San Juan de
los Lagos, so these two images received significant coverage in the *Zodiaco Mariano* as
well. The Virgins of Ocotlán and of Salud were the subjects of devotional histories in the
first half of the eighteenth century, providing Oviedo with the opportunity to include
sections of these works in the compendium. Other Marian devotions, discussed within
between four and nine pages, normally came from provincial chronicles or mission
histories, the Virgins of Zitácuaro and of Zape being two prime examples. Of all the
Marian images in the *Zodiaco Mariano*, the Virgin of Guadalupe received the greatest
treatment with thirty-six pages.  

The remainder of the Marian devotions were discussed in either a paragraph or a
few pages. For these images Florencia and Oviedo retrieved some of their information
from passing references in the devotional histories or provincial chronicles mentioned
above. But they also found material in sacred biographies, confraternity books, novenas,
ex-votos, and juridical testimonies. On one occasion, Florencia and Oviedo turned to the
papers of the public scribe Juan Loría de Villegas for information on the Virgin of the
Immaculate Conception in the chapel of the Jesuit sugar mill in Xalmolonga. They
incorporated portions of the testimony he gathered from witnesses who claimed that the

---

147 For a list of the published works cited in the *Zodiaco Mariano*, see Rubial García, “Introducción,” in *Zodiaco Mariano*, 28–30.
image perspired at different times between 1649 and 1650. In other cases, Florencia and Oviedo included content from letters they received from their coreligionists or other members of the secular clergy. Oviedo explained that after the Jesuit missionary Joseph de Tapia acquired a copy of *La estrella del norte* he wrote Florencia to inform him of a “prodigious event” related to the Virgin of Guadalupe that had not come to his attention. It was this “letter from June 20, 1691” that “the said Father Florencia later included in his *Zodiaco Mariano.*”

In all of these published and manuscript sources Florencia and Oviedo were searching for specific data. Florencia’s correspondence with Mathias de Velasco, a beneficed priest from the town of Tonatilco, nicely illustrates this point. While preparing his entries for the *Zodiaco Mariano* Florencia sent a letter to Velasco requesting information on the Virgin of Tonatilco. In May of 1692 Velasco responded by sending a relation “according to the order that I have to do so from . . . Francisco de Florencia.”

Judging by the structure of the document, one can deduce that Florencia either had a set questionnaire that he handed out to several individuals or a series of specific questions for Velasco meant to address the following points: (1) the origin of the image, (2) the advocacion of the image, (3) the artistic type and size of the image, (4) a list of the miracles attributed to the image, and (5) a description of the town where the image was housed. The information Florencia sought for the Virgin of Tonatilco was, ideally, what he, and Oviedo after him, wanted for all of the Marian devotions of the *Zodiaco Mariano.*

---


149 *Zodiaco Mariano,* 50 (“se lo escribió en carta de 20 de Junio de 1691 y el dicho P. Florencia lo puso después en su Zodiaco Mariano”). Florencia also included a letter from León Garabito concerning some of the miracles attributed to the Virgin of Zapopan. *Zodiaco Mariano,* 295. For the original letter, see AGN, Jesuitas I-23, exp. 9, f. 41.

150 AGN, Jesuitas I-23, exp. 5, f. 16v (“según orden que tengo para hacerlo de este R. P. Maestro Francisco de Florencia”).
When addressing the origins of the images Florencia and Oviedo explained that some were donations while others were made known through divine intervention via revelations or apparitions. The actors in these pious dramas came from distinct socioracial categories, were of different ages and genders, and held various positions within the church.\footnote{For a study of the origin stories and their protagonists in the \textit{Zodiaco Mariano}, see Thomas Calvo, “El Zodiaco Mariano de la Nueva Eva. El culto mariano en la América Septentrional hacia 1700,” in \textit{Manifestaciones religiosas en el mundo colonial americano}, eds. Clara García Ayluardo and Manuel Ramos Medina (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Condumex, and Universidad Iberoamericana, 1997), 272–282.}

So, although the Jesuits were major promoters of Marian devotion in New Spain, the \textit{Zodiaco Mariano} does not concentrate solely on images under the care of the Society of Jesus.\footnote{For Jesuit promotion of Marian devotion, see Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, “Las devociones marianas en la vieja provincia de la Compañía de Jesús,” in García Ayluardo and Ramos Medina, eds., \textit{Manifestaciones religiosas}, 253–265.} The images of the Virgin referenced in the section on the Bishopric of Yucatán, for example, were mostly under the jurisdiction of the Franciscans, and several others in the Archbishopric of Guatemala were administered by the Mercedarians. Florencia and Oviedo certainly took advantage of the opportunity to highlight “the celebrated miraculous images of the Most Holy Virgin in the [religious] houses of the Company,” but they also wanted to incorporate Marian images from the provincial geographies of the mendicant orders into the \textit{Zodiaco Mariano}.\footnote{\textit{Zodiaco Mariano}, 96 (“las célebres Imágenes milagrosas de la Santísima Virgen que hay en las Casas de la Compañía”). For one example of a Marian provincial geography, see Agustín de Vetancurt, \textit{Chrónica de la Provincia del Santo Evangelio de México} (Mexico City: Doña María Benavides, Viuda de Juan de Ribera, 1697), 127–135.}

The advocations of the Virgin Mary were not always specified by Florencia and Oviedo. But in a significant number of cases they stated whether they were statues or paintings, providing details on their sizes and the ornamentation of the edifices in which they were housed. At least a dozen of the images were Spanish and another ten were Italian, but a large number were made in America “wherein the art of sculpture has
always flourished, and where,” the two Jesuits continued, “one can see great amounts of statues that in perfection and beauty can compete with the most celebrated of Naples and Rome.” Not all of the images are accompanied by lists of miracles in the *Zodiaco Mariano*, but for the ones that do there is reference to a great range of divine favours: protection from grave accidents with horses, freedom from demonic attacks, safety from torments at sea, and healing from various illnesses. In other cases, larger natural disasters affecting entire communities such as droughts, floods, and epidemics were averted through supplication to the Virgin Mary.

To address the location of individual images the *Zodiaco Mariano* is organized into sections according to the bishoprics of New Spain that, until the mid eighteenth century when Guatemala became an archbishopric, were all under the larger jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of Mexico. Although there were nine bishoprics and two archbishoprics when the *Zodiaco Mariano* was published in 1755, the text is divided into the following five sections: (1) the Bishopric of Yucatán with 8 images, (2) the Archbishopric of Mexico with 45 images, (3) the Bishoprics of Puebla and Oaxaca with 22 images, (4) the Archbishopric of Guatemala—which included the Bishoprics of Chiapas, Nicaragua, and Comayagua (Honduras)—with 23 images, and (5) the Bishoprics of Michoacán, Guadalajara, and Guadiana with 13 images. It is not surprising, first, that the majority of Marian images were concentrated in the central valley of Mexico, the centre of political and ecclesiastical power in New Spain and the most densely populated region of the kingdom, and, second, that there were fewer images of the Virgin on the frontier and other peripheral regions. The sections to which Oviedo

---

154 *Zodiaco Mariano*, 2 (“en que siempre ha florecido el arte de la escultura, y en que se ven muchísimas estatuas, que pueden competir en perfección, y hermosura con las más celebradas de Nápoles, y Roma”).
added the most images were those dedicated to the Archbishoprics of Mexico and Guatemala.

Florencia and Oviedo loosely followed the route of conquest and evangelization in the *Zodiaco Mariano* by providing cardinal directions between the various dioceses. They also briefly described some of the important features of these bishoprics together with their episcopal sees. The compendium begins in the Yucatán Peninsula because it was “the first in which the Most Holy Virgin set up camp against the idolatry in the cue [temple] of Cozumel.”\[^{155}\] The city of Mérida, so Florencia and Oviedo explained, was the capital of the entire province and was graced with a cathedral, a university that administered various degrees, and a well-ordered government. They concluded that it was of “the most populous and richest in this Northern America with mercantile activity and commerce of blankets . . . cochineal, brazilwood, and many other products in abundance.”\[^{156}\] From there, the trail of Marian images leads to Mexico City and the central valley which was surrounded “to the north by Guadalupe; to the west by Remedies; to the south by Piety; and to the east by Bala.”\[^{157}\] The “metropolis of New Spain” was an urban centre that had churches housing other images of the Virgin that “could shamelessly move Rome to [their] defence.”\[^{158}\] Florencia and Oviedo were

---

\[^{155}\] Ibid., 1 (“fue la primera, en que plantó la Santísima Virgen sus Reales contra la idolatría en el Cue de Cozumel”).
\[^{156}\] Ibid., 6 (“de las más populosas, y ricas de esta América Septentrional con el trato, y comercio que tiene de mantas . . . grana, palo de Brasil, y otros géneros de que abunda”).
\[^{157}\] Ibid., 82 (“por el Norte el de Guadalupe; por el Poniente el de los Remedios . . . por el medio día el de la Piedad; y por el Oriente el de la Bala”).
\[^{158}\] Ibid., 31, 88 (“la Ciudad de México metrópoli de la Nueva España”) (pudiera sin vergüenza sacar la cara en la misma Roma”).
convinced that the Virgin Mary “always shows herself to be a mother so inclined and favourable towards this city.”\textsuperscript{159}

The *Zodiaco Mariano* moves eastwards from the central valley of Mexico back towards the Bishopric of Puebla where “the first mass” and “first baptisms” were performed. In the diocese were urban centres such as Puebla, “a city very favoured by heaven,” and Tlaxcala, “the first to receive the Catholic faith when the illustrious hero Don Hernando Cortés conquered New Spain.”\textsuperscript{160} But to make it to the kingdom of Guatemala the conquistadors needed to pass through “the road that goes from Mexico to Oaxaca.”\textsuperscript{161} The capital of the province, so Florencia and Oviedo explained, was “Antequera, home to the episcopal see, one of the first to receive the light of faith in New Spain, and [a city that] has been very favoured by the Most Holy Virgin.”\textsuperscript{162} Next in line was the Bishopric of Chiapas, strewn with towns that are of “the best ordered in all of the Indies [with] streets that are very wide and straight.”\textsuperscript{163} And then the *Zodiaco Mariano* continues on to cover images in the kingdom of Guatemala and the provinces of Nicaragua and Comayagua. According to Florencia and Oviedo, “there are many and vast provinces that spread from Mexico to Guatemala, from the east to the west, and from Guatemala towards the north and south for more than 600 leagues.”\textsuperscript{164}

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 81 (“La gloria de todo sea a Dios, y a su Santísima Madre, que tan parcial, y benigna Madre se muestra siempre con esta Ciudad”).

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 153, 211 (“ha sido Ciudad muy favorecida del Cielo”) (“y fue la primera, que recibió la fe Católica, cuando el insigne Héroe D. Fernando Cortés conquistó la Nueva España”).

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 233 (“En el camino, que va de México a Oaxaca”).

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 228 (“la Ciudad de Antequera, en que está la silla Episcopal, fue de las primeras, que recibieron la luz de la fe en esta Nueva España, y ha sido muy favorecida de la Santísima Virgen”).

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 234–235 (“más bien ordenado de todas las Indias . . . sus calles son muy capaces, y derechas”).

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 234 (“En el Reino de Guatemala hay muchas, y dilatadas Provincias, que se extienden yendo de México a Guatemala de Oriente a Poniente, y desde Guatemala hacia el Norte, y Medio día por más de seiscientas leguas”).
“We return once again from the west to the east,” Florencia and Oviedo directed, “and from Mexico City, which is situated in the centre, we pass on ahead towards the east and to the north to treat the prodigious images of the Most Holy Virgin that are venerated in the Bishoprics of Michoacán, Guadalajara, and Guadiana.”165 The province of Michoacán was treated first, because after its inhabitants converted to the Christian faith they became so attached to the “Most Holy Virgin, that in no other province of this vast [land] of America has she been observed to be so firmly rooted since the conquest.”166 This region was also filled with mineral deposits, noted Florencia and Oviedo, commenting on how the “Royal Mines of Guanajuato in the province of Michoacán are of the richest and most abundant mines of New Spain.”167 After passing through the territory of New Galicia, with images that are “of the most celebrated and miraculous, not only in this Northern America, but in the entire world,” the Zodiaco Mariano concludes in the kingdom of New Vizcaya.168 On the final page of the compendium, one reads that without a doubt “there are many other miraculous images of Our Lady in the extremely vast [regions] of Northern America and kingdoms of New Spain.”169 The Marian geography of New Spain was still in a stage of expansion.

---

165 Ibid., 259 (“Volvamos otra vez del Poniente al Oriente, y de la Ciudad de México, que está situada en el medio, pasemos adelante hacia el Oriente, y el Norte a tratar de las Imágenes prodigiosas de la Santísima Virgen, que se veneran en los Obispados de Michoacán, Guadalajara, y Guadiana”).
166 Ibid. (“se esmeraron tanto en la devoción de la Santísima Virgen, que en ninguna de las otras Provincias de esta dilatada América se vio desde los principios más arraigada”).
167 Ibid., 282 (“El Real de Minas de Guanajuato de la Provincia de Michoacán es de los más ricos, y abundantes de la Nueva España”).
168 Ibid., 303 (“de las más célebres, y milagrosas, no sólo de esta América Septentrional, sino de todo el mundo”).
169 Ibid., 325 (Yo no dudo, que habrá otras muchas Imágenes milagrosas de nuestra Señora en esta dilatadísima América Septentrional, y Reinos de la Nueva España”).
When Florencia surveyed the early modern historiography on the Virgin Mary he noticed that Marian geographies from Europe included a handful of images from the Indies, if they included any at all. Works such as the *Atlas Marianis*, as Miri Rubin suggests, were “European compilation[s]” with a vision that “was less global than our own interests are now.” But these Marian compendiums, catalogues, and atlases were not as global enough for Florencia either. Through the *Zodiaco Mariano* he expanded the “Marian sky” of the “composite monarchy” of Spain and all of Christendom to include New Spain. At the same time he also highlighted the singular favour he believed the Virgin Mary had for his *patria* through constellations of “beneficial stars.” Florencia never denied that the Indies were visited by natural disasters and plagues because of the “judgements of God [which] are an incomprehensible abyss!” But he saw further, and was persuaded that there was “special hope for all of Christendom, and in particular for the Catholic Kingdoms of Spain, and for all those of the Indies, that they have for their protection many and very miraculous images of the Most Holy Virgin.”

---

171 *Historia de la Provincia*, 258 (“los juicios de Dios son un abismo incomprensible!”).
172 *La estrella del norte*, 131r (“especial confianza para toda la Cristiandad, y muy en particular para los Católicos Reinos de España, y de todos los de las Indias, que tantas, y tan maravillosas Imágenes de la Santísima Virgen tienen para su amparo”).
Chapter 6
The Errors of the Ancients

[T]he Torrid Zone is habitable, and very abundantly inhabited, even though the ancients believed that this was impossible.

– José de Acosta, 1590

[L]ittle by little men have been discovering the truth about many errors that to the ancients appeared to be true.

– Juan de Torquemada, 1615

There are other innumerable lakes abundantly filled with fish in all of America, such that it is impossible to number them, which demonstrates through the sight of the eyes the error of the ancients.

– Diego de Córdoba y Salinas, 1651

Throughout Spanish America both the mendicant friars and the Jesuits imitated the conquistadors by referring to their evangelical labour as a “spiritual conquest” of Indian souls. By the second half of the sixteenth century they began to pen chronicles of their missionary activity with detailed accounts of the indigenous inhabitants and the physical geography of their religious provinces.¹ This final chapter builds upon Florencia’s vision

of spiritual and material wealth through “saints” and images by analyzing his description
of the Indians and the land of New Spain in the first two books of his Historia de la
Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España. Florencia rewrote the sixteenth-
century foundation narrative of the Society of Jesus in both La Florida and Mexico City
by drawing upon and modifying manuscript histories of his Jesuit brethren. He also
appropriated arguments from other colonial texts to bolster his personal authority as an
eyewitness to the history of the New World. I argue that Florencia rhetorically linked his
defence of Indian capacity for the Christian faith to a “discourse of plenty” to highlight
both the Jesuit role in the “spiritual conquest” of America and to counter theories which
suggested that the land was degenerate and ruled by Satan. In his provincial chronicle he
sought to prove to the Spanish crown that New Spain had everything Spain had to offer
and more, both on the frontier and in its viceregal centre.

Many colonial historians spoke of the “errors of the ancients” in reference to older
opinions on both the existence and nature of the New World. Two words were used
interchangeably for error: (1) error, an “idea or opinion judged and held to be true which
is false,” and (2) engaño, the “lack and absence of truth in what is said or done.”

---

maya. Mesa redonda, XVII, 21–27 de junio de 1981 (San Cristóbal: Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología,
1984), 3:579–585; “Las crónicas provinciales de órdenes religiosas,” in Las fuentes eclesiásticas para la
historia social de México, eds. Brian F. Connaughton and Andrés Lira González (Mexico City: Universidad
Autónoma Metropolitana and the Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José María Luis Mora, 1996), 165–176;
and “Dos tipos de crónica. La crónica provincial y la crónica de evangelización,” in Historia e
historiografía comparadas, ed. Alicia Mayer (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México,
2009), 7–24. Elsa Cecilia Frost slightly departs from Camelo Arredondo’s classificatory system and posits
her own in “Cronistas franciscanos de la Nueva España. Siglo XVI,” in Franciscan Presence in the
Americas: Essays on the Activities of the Franciscan Friars in The Americas, 1492–1900, ed. Francisco
1 I follow Antonio Rubial García and Ilona Katzew in seeing the defence of the Indian as an important
element of creole patriotic rhetoric. “La santidad indígena,” 119; and “That This Should Be Published,” 74.
José Antonio Mazzotti develops the notion of a creole “discourse of plenty” in “El Dorado, Paradise, and
2 Diccionario de la lengua castellana, 3:546, 468 (“ERROR. Concepto o juicio de reputar y tener por
verdadero lo que es falso”) (“ENGAÑO. Falta y mengua de verdad en lo que se dice o hace”). According to
Although some of the opinions of ancient authors were put into question soon after 1492, early modern scholars continued to use their writings as models from which to describe both the lands and inhabitants of the Indies. Anthony Grafton suggests that the “encounter between Europe and the Americas juxtaposed a vast number of inconvenient facts with the elegant theories embodied in previously authoritative books.” He argues that ancient texts were both “tools” and “obstacles” for Europeans seeking to understand the difference they encountered in newly “discovered” lands.4 In the Historia de la Provincia Florencia accused some of his contemporaries of falling into the same errors as the ancients because they still used their theories to understand America. He believed that many of their “opinions on the land of the New World”5 were completely false because they were not based upon firsthand experience. All regions of New Spain, according to Florencia, were spiritually and materially ripe for the harvest, and as a result needed to be described according to new criteria.6

This chapter opens with an examination of Florencia’s critiques of demonological theories of indigenous depravity and natural degeneracy in the New World. The following three sections detail the changes he made to Jesuit manuscript histories in his Historia de la Provincia to promote the work of the Society of Jesus and to highlight Indian rationality and novohispano fertility. In the first section, Florencia’s call to humility when describing American realities is analyzed by concentrating on his

---


5 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 3r (“Opiniones de la tierra del Nuevo Mundo”).

6 The “harvest of souls,” as Daniel T. Reff explains, was one of many literary images from primitive and medieval Christianity that the Jesuits turned to in their missionary writings. Plagues, Priests, and Demons: Sacred Narratives and the Rise of Christianity in the Old World and the New (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 207–236.
interpretation of Charles V’s coat of arms in his dedicatory introduction to San Francisco de Borja. The second section focuses on Book I by examining his push for further colonization along the frontier in his version of the Jesuit missions in La Florida. To conclude, the last section explores the changes Florencia was required to make to his account of the arrival of the first Jesuits to Mexico City at the end of Book II. This final chapter, then, ends where this study originally began: on both the edges and within the heart of the Spanish empire. As a result of colonial censorship, Florencia was unable to publish everything he wanted to about his experiences in “Europe,” and hence his description of the grandeur of New Spain was significantly abridged.

The Land of Promise

In the Old Testament the Israelites were promised a new homeland by their God as they fled from slavery in Egypt: “And I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt . . . unto a land flowing with milk and honey.” Several authors from the colonial era applied this imagery to the New World, describing their own cities and regions as earthly paradises with flowing streams of water and richly fertile fields of crops and wildlife. Florencia claimed that Europeans who believed that nature was dominated by Satan in America were clearly in error given that the land was “truly of the promise, which flows with milk in abundance and honey of delight, [and] where manna rains from the sky.” Similar to the Israelites in Canaan, the conquest of Spanish America involved both a confrontation of Gods and a foreign occupation. Hence Florencia stressed

---

7 Ex. 3:17.
8 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, ff. 3v–4r (“esta tierra, verdaderamente de promisión, que corre leche de abundancia y miel de delicias, donde les llueve el cielo el maná”).
that the Spanish crown was indebted to both mendicant and Jesuit missionaries for “spiritually conquer[ing] the immense body of heathens in this kingdom” of New Spain and for the great wealth it acquired through its “temporal conquest.”

Florencia praised the beneficial qualities of the American landscape in his writings because the narrative of the “spiritual conquest” was not only about the final destiny of the Indian soul but about where those indigenous conversions were taking place. The early Franciscans had rhetorically described their evangelical labour in New Spain as a battle with Satan, observing demonic influence in indigenous temples, idols, human sacrifices, and other religious festivals. When Juan de Ovando, a representative of the Council of the Indies, visited New Spain in the late 1560s the Franciscans told him that little had been written on “the great feats they performed in the spiritual battle for the conversion of these people or of the victorious triumphs they achieved over our enemies the demons.” Florencia, who together with other Jesuits employed this same militant and triumphant rhetoric, was perturbed that some Europeans had claimed that New Spain “does not appear to be land from God, and that it appears that since the Devil reigned over it for so many centuries he is still the lord of it.” He also pointed out that some of his

---

9 La milagrosa invención, 12v (“a conquistar espiritualmente la inmensa gentilidad de este Reino”).
10 Vida de Medina, Señora, n.p. (“como debido tributo de aquella temporal conquista”).
11 Motolinía, Historia de los indios de la Nueva España, 68 (“unos templos al demonio”). Sahagún, Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España, 1:63 (“Es cierto, cosa de grande admiración, que haya nuestro señor Dios tantos siglos ocultada una silva de tantas gentes idólatras, cuyos frutos ubérrimos sólo el Demonio los ha cogido”). Andrés de Olmos, Tratado de hechicerías y sortilegios [1553], trans. Georges Baudot (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1990), 69 (“Hace muchos años, gentes del pueblo eran sacrificados ante los diablos”). Mendieta, Historia eclesiástica indiana, 1:134 (“y por estar tan acostumbrados a los ritos de su infidelidad, con que servían al demonio”).
12 “Copia y relación de la orden que se tiene en celebrar los capítulos provinciales de esta Provincia del Santo Evangelio, que es de la orden de San Francisco en la Nueva España,” in Joaquín García Icazbalceta, ed., Códice franciscano (Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1889), 143 (“las grandes hazañas que en la batalla espiritual de la conversión de estas gentes obraron, ni de los victoriosos triunfos que alcanzaron de nuestros enemigos los demonios”).
religious brethren returned “to Spain saying that in the Indies it was impossible to be saved because the land was so depraved and defective.”

The early modern period was saturated with such demonological theories, which is why Florencia exposed various demonic explanations of the “things of the Indies” to expound his own alternatives. His context, however, was quite different from the one in which the early Franciscan friars performed their ministries. Fernando Cervantes contends that even though there had been optimism in the initial stages of evangelization, by the mid-sixteenth century a “demonic view of Amerindian cultures had triumphed,” leading to “the wholesale ‘demonisation’ of Indian cultures” throughout the seventeenth century. For his part, Florencia recognized that the Devil was the “author of idolatry” and that the pesky father of lies had led those in pre-Hispanic times into “the errors (engaños) of heathenism.” He also explained that the Devil was responsible for introducing the consumption of pulque, a fermented drink made from the maguey plant, in which several Indians had “bowed their knees, and even their heads, to this dreadful idol of drunkenness.” But throughout his writings, as it was discussed in the fourth chapter, Florencia believed that there was always a faithful “remnant” of pious Indian Christians that was not under the idolatrous influence of Satan. New Spain may have been a “land so deeply entrenched in the superstition of idols,” but “ever since the faith

13 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 5r (“ésta no parece tierra de Dios, y que parece que como la poseyó el demonio tantos siglos todavía es dueño de ella”) (“iban a España diciendo, que en las Indias era imposible salvarse por ser tan viciosa y ocasionada la tierra”).
15 La estrella del norte, 127r (“al Demonio autor de la Idolatría”). Historia de la Provincia, 137 (“engaños del gentilismo”).
16 La estrella del norte, 174r (“que hincan las rodillas, y aun las cabezas, a este Ídolo infame de la embriaguez”).
entered . . . [there has not] been a demoniac or one possessed or obsessed with an evil spirit as there commonly are in other Catholic provinces.”

Although Florencia accepted that Indians were in error both before and after the conquest, he tried to demonstrate that the land had nothing to do with this. According to Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, several Europeans believed that Satan held dominion over nature in the New World, which is why creole “settlers came to see their new societies as providential “gardens”.” Cañizares further argues that creoles compared their “saints” and miraculous images to the natural world, “turning a demonic landscape into a sacred holy land.” Florencia piously transformed New Spain into a sacred place as well, comparing Nicolás de Guadalajara to a “precious flower” transplanted (transplantó) “to those of the holy ground of that spiritual campus (plantel)” in Tepotzotlán. He also referenced the fertility of novohispano shrines, specifically remembering how the one dedicated to the Crucified Christ in Chalma was filled with “banana trees with smooth trunks and outstretched leaves that are very large and always green, and that throughout the whole year they provide very large clusters of fruit—copious, tasty, fragrant, and delicious.” When describing the Marian shrine at Tepeyac, he encouraged his readers to meditate on its flowers that gave off a sweet fragrance “throughout the entire New

---

17 Ibid., 127r (“que desde que entró en ella la fe, habiendo sido esta tierra tan dada a la superstición de los Ídolos . . . haya habido en él algún endemoniado, ni poseído, ni obseso del mal Espíritu, como los hay comúnmente en otras Provincias Católicas”).
19 Vida de Guadalajara, 2r (“se transplantó esta preciosa flor a las de la Sagrada tierra de aquel plantel espiritual”).
20 Descripción histórica, 71 (“y de la tierra en particular plátanos, que son de un tronco liso, y de unas hojas muy extendidas, largas, y siempre verdes, y que todo el año dan en muy grandes racimos sus frutos, copiosos, gustosos, olorosos, y deliciosos”).
This Virgin of Guadalupe, according to Florencia, was indeed “the fruit of the land of promise of Mexico, which is our land: *Terra nostra dedit fructum suum.*

Florencia’s description of the fertility of New Spain went well beyond its holy figures and images. As was customary amongst most provincial chroniclers, he provided brief geographic surveys of the regions in which his order’s religious houses were located. When writing about Jesuit activity in Zacatecas he claimed that this place was “celebrated in New Spain for the great reputation it has throughout the whole world for its famous mines.”

The region surrounding Oaxaca was blessed with a “good climate” and with “fruit, meat, fish, sweets of all types, and on top of this, it is excessive, not only for [basic] sustenance, but also for the delights of human life.” And then when he turned to the Jesuit establishments of Michoacán, Florencia drew upon the work of Alonso de la Rea, confirming that the region was “the earthly paradise of this New World.”

With the natural splendour of New Spain before him, Florencia determined that the Christian God had created the New World to demonstrate the ignorance of human wisdom. Concerning the arguments of some of his European brethren on the land of New Spain, he concluded that “without the infallible light of faith to guide them, all of their premises are evidently false and their propositions clear errors (*errores*)!”

---

21 *La estrella del norte*, 230v (“y el buen olor que respira en todo este Nuevo Mundo”).
22 Ibid., 209v (“Es la Imagen de N. Señora de Guadalupe, fruto de la tierra de promisión de México, que es nuestra tierra: *Terra nostra dedit fructum suum*”). The Latin phrase was taken from Psalm 85:12 (“our land shall yield her increase”).
23 *Historia de la Provincia*, 210 (“Zacatecas es célebre de la Nueva España, por la grande opinión de riqueza de sus minas famosas en todo el mundo”).
24 Ibid., 235–236 (“El temple es bueno”) (“El regalo de frutas, carne, peces, dulces de todos géneros, y lo demás, no sólo para el sustento, sino para las delicias de la vida humana, es excesivo”).
25 Ibid., 217 (“el Paraíso terrenal de este Nuevo Orbe”). To compare, see La Rea, *Crónica*, 5v–7r.
26 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 3v (“sin la luz infalible de la fe que los guía, todas sus premisas son evidentemente falsas y sus consecuencias errores palpables!”).
There was an intimate relationship between the desire for a great “harvest” of indigenous conversions and the natural abundance of the land in the age of the Baroque. By the beginning of the seventeenth century the narrative of the “spiritual conquest” had fallen into the hands of primarily creole provincial chroniclers who delicately balanced their patriotism with the promotion of their religious orders. They repeatedly reminded the Spanish crown of its obligation to support the work of the church in the New World, specifically the regular clergy, which continued to be on the frontline of colonization in largely indigenous regions. But creole chroniclers also strategically emphasized the material potential of their religious provinces to demonstrate how their spiritual labour was enriching the Spanish crown with both new subjects and a wealth of natural resources. Through his sacred rhetoric Florencia was key amongst such writers, exorcizing nature of its demonic influence in New Spain by stating that the “Lord, who with his just providence wanted to rid the Devil from this kingdom, dispossess[ed] it of its pagan kings and [gave] it to our Catholic Monarchs to restore it to Christ.”27 He believed there was still more work to be done in provinces that were only nominally under Spanish control.

The Endless Provinces of New Spain

The Society of Jesus was founded almost a half century after Columbus’s first voyage to the Caribbean. Jesuits, as a result, joined the mission field in the New World only several decades after many of the other religious orders. They established

27 Ibid., f. 14v (“Aquel Señor, que con su justa providencia quiso quitar al demonio este reino, desposeyendo de él a sus paganos reyes y dándoselo a nuestros Católicos Monarcas para restituirselo a Cristo”).
themselves first in Brazil in 1549 and then later in New Spain and Peru in the 1560s. Within a few decades Florencia claimed that the Company had “discovered and conquered not only in the very expansive provinces of Peru and Santa Fe [New Granada], but also in the endless provinces of New Spain.” According to him, there was much more land to explore in the northern stretches of the kingdom and several other indigenous nations to convert to the Christian faith and to obedience to the Spanish crown. The role the Jesuits played in the global expansion of the Catholic Church was a constant reminder to Florencia of the errors of those who mistakenly gazed out into the Atlantic and still believed that there was nothing left to be discovered.

There was only one Jesuit province in New Spain and its jurisdiction extended from Guatemala all the way to their northern missions in California. It is not known when Florencia was named the official chronicler of his religious province, but he possibly received this post before leaving for Europe given that he collected various documents in their central archives in Rome. It was there that he uncovered the manuscript foundational histories that his coreligionists Diego de Soto (b. 1579) and Juan Sánchez Baquero (b. 1548) had written during the first decade of the seventeenth century. In the

---

28 Historia de la Provincia, Al gloriosísimo Padre S. Francisco de Borja, n.p. (“han descubierto, y conquistado, no sólo en las dilatadísimas Provincias de el Perú, y Santa Fe . . . sino también en las interminables Provincias de Nueva España”).
29 Diego de Soto, Historia de las cosas más dignas de memoria que han acontecido en la fundación, principios y progresos de la Compañía de Jesús en esta provincia y reinos de Nueva España [ca. 1601], ARSI, Mexicana 19, ff. 1–72; and Juan Sánchez Baquero, Relación breve del principio y progreso de la Provincia de Nueva España de la Compañía de Jesús [ca. 1609], ARSI, Mexicana 19, ff. 73–112. There is one more early Jesuit history from the seventeenth century at the AGN and it has been transcribed and published as the Relación breve de la venida de los de la Compañía de Jesús a la Nueva España, año de 1602, ed. Francisco González de Cossío (Mexico City: Imprenta Universitaria, 1945). The text has been attributed to Gaspar de Villerías (b. 1574), but Florencia does not appear to have been familiar with it. Dante Alberto Alcántara Bojorge provides an indepth analysis of these three histories in “La construcción de la memoria histórica de la Compañía de Jesús en la Nueva España, siglos XVI–XVII” (Master’s Thesis, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2007); and “El proyecto historiográfico de Claudio Aquaviva y la construcción de la historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la Nueva España a principios del siglo XVII, Estudios de Historia Novohispana 40, no. 1 (2009): 57–80. For more on the life and history of Villerías,
archives of New Spain Florencia also had access to the manuscript provincial chronicle
that Andrés Pérez de Ribas had finished around 1653. With these unpublished works,
together with other mission histories and Jesuit relations, Florencia appears to have begun

30 Jerome V. Jacobsen discusses this manuscript in “The Chronicle of Pérez de Ribas,” Mid-America 20, no. 2 (1938): 81–95. Another anonymous Jesuit expanded upon Pérez de Ribas’s provincial chronicle up until the year 1676, but Florencia shows no signs of familiarity with this work. Fundación de la Provincia de México, BNE, Sala Cervantes, MSS 22994.
writing his three-volume *Historia de la Provincia* around 1684 or perhaps even earlier. In the prologue to the first volume, which he published in 1694, he explained that there were eight books covering three general themes. Book I describes “the first of the Company to arrive to America” while Book II follows “the foundation of this Province” of New Spain. The remaining six books narrate the general “progress” of the province by concentrating on the establishment of its various institutions.

The *Historia de la Provincia* contains a frontispiece by the artist Miguel Guerrero that provides a visual picture of the Jesuit Province of New Spain. San Ignacio de Loyola hovers above the clouds celestially surrounded by cherubim, his head divinely illuminated by a crown of light. Two radiant beams protrude from his chest, shining towards both the orient and the occident. The first beam directly connects to the breast of San Francisco Xavier, the proto-missionary of the Company who redirects San Ignacio’s light to the people of Asia, below him on bended knee piously looking up to the heavens. The second beam is joined to the chest of San Francisco de Borja, the third Padre General of the Company who channels this same light to the people of America, down on their knees with their heads reverently inclined towards the sky. In the centre of the engraving is half a globe charting the cartographic boundaries of “Northern America,” the “South Sea” to the west and the “North Sea” to the east. Although various regions are

---

31 Florencia mentioned his provincial chronicle in *La estrella del norte*, 183v–184r (“que pondré en los Anales de la Provincia por extenso”). Although his devotional history on the Virgin of Guadalupe was published in 1688, he appears to have completed it roughly three years earlier when he published his work on the Virgin of Remedies. *La milagrosa invención*, 67v (“por que si saliere alguna vez a luz la Relación copiosa de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, que tengo acabada, y se había de haber impreso en España”).
32 *Historia de la Provincia*, Prólogo (“los primeros de la Compañía, que pasaron a la América”) (“la fundación de esta Provincia”) (“el progreso de ella”).
33 Paula Findlen argues that everyone who would have seen this engraving would have known that it was based upon the optics of the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher. “A Jesuit’s Books in the New World: Athanasius Kircher and His American Readers,” in *Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man Who Knew Everything*, ed. Paula Findlen (New York: Routledge, 2004), 344.
identified by name—California, Mexico, Cuba, Cartagena, and Peru—the principal area of interest on the map, and completely central, is New Spain and it extends without limit
into the “unknown” (*incognita*). The title of the chronicle forms part of the column that supports the aforementioned globe.

A similar message of global expansion is found in Florencia’s dedicatory introduction to San Francisco de Borja. He began by recounting the story of the Greek hero Hercules, who, guided by his lust for domination, desired to extend his name far beyond everything he had already conquered in Europe. After arriving at the Straits of Gibraltar he was confronted by the great expanse of the ocean and decided to elevate two columns with the inscription *non plus ultra* (“nothing further beyond”). The legendary hero would not venture forth because he believed there was no more land to conquer. Florencia explained that it “was a fiction of his haughty arrogance” to think that there was “no more land to subjugate or subdue.”

It was in this Herculean myth that he found the moral truth of his provincial chronicle. All of the “discoveries” in Asia and America by the Society of Jesus proved the *plus ultra* (“further beyond”) of their founder San Ignacio and the ultimate fiction of Hercules’ *non plus ultra*. San Ignacio, so Florencia reasoned, had elevated two columns of sanctity—San Xavier and San Borja—and through his Company went well beyond the ocean to the ends of the earth, discovering droves of gentile nations and illuminating them with the light of the Christian gospel. Describing their “spiritual conquests” throughout the world, Florencia concluded that “after so many discoveries and reductions they still move forward—*plus ultra*—without end or limits, amplifying the Kingdom of God and the empire of the church.”

---

34 *Historia de la Provincia*, Al Gloriosísimo Padre San Francisco de Borja, n.p. (“*no había más tierra que sujetar, ni que rendir. Ficción fue ésta de su altiva arrogancia*”).

35 Ibid. (“Pues después de tantos descubrimientos, y Reducciones van aun caminando más adelante, *Plus ultra*, sin fin ni término en ellas amplificando el Reino de Dios, y el imperio de la Iglesia”).
Florencia and Guerrero were clearly both influenced by the *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Jesu* (1640), a work written by a team of Jesuits under the leadership of Johannes Bollandus (1596–1665) to celebrate the centenary anniversary of the Society of Jesus. This Latin text, which narrates the global history of the Company, contains several emblems glorifying their overseas ministries and their prophetic role in the conversion of gentile nations. One emblem, in particular, displays the two columns of Hercules on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, the sun brightly shining over the horizon. The words *plus* and *oultre* (*ultra*) are imprinted on separate scrolls twisted around the two columns; the title “New World Missions” (*Missiones noui orbis*) appears at the top.

Although Florencia, guided by the visual record of the *Imago primi saeculi*, applied the *plus ultra* to the Society of Jesus, he was well aware that the Latin phrase was prominently displayed in the coat of arms of Charles V. Several emblematists and historians from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries interpreted the emperor’s personal shield as a providential sign of the Christian God. The royal chronicler Francisco López de Gómara, for example, dedicated his *Historia general de las Indias* (1552) to Charles V, claiming that the “Lord wanted to discover the Indies in your time,” which is why “you adopted PLUS ULTRA by letter [for yourself], understanding it to mean dominion over the New World.”

---

36 Florencia referenced the *Imago primi saeculi* in the *Historia de la Provincia*, 2.
37 For a reproduction of this emblem, see Lydia Salviucci Insolera, *L’Imago primi saeculi* (1640) e il significato dell’immagine allegorica nella compagnia di Gesù. Genesi e fortuna del libro (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2004), 286.
Much like López de Gómara, Florencia believed that the Spanish crown had been divinely elected to extend its rule across the Atlantic. But he was also convinced that the *plus ultra* had another moral lesson to teach his readers. Although he was not familiar with the work of Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa (ca. 1532–1592), a Spanish soldier who wrote a history of the Incas, he would have agreed with much of his commentary on Charles V’s coat of arms. After reviewing the columns of the *non plus ultra* in the Herculean legend, Sarmiento de Gamboa claimed that all human knowledge amounted to
ignorance because the Indies were both “very populous in souls to whom the road to 
heaven could be shown” and “very abundant in all kinds of inestimable treasures.”

Florencia wove a similar message of spiritual and material wealth into his provincial 
chronicle. According to him, if Europeans, without direct experience of the New World, 
had falsely claimed that it did not exist, then why could they not concede that they were 
in error concerning the character of its native inhabitants and the state of its natural 
environment? Amidst the “many provinces, many gentiles, [and] many nations . . . that 
members of the Company have discovered” was La Florida and the Indians who 
inhabited it. Florencia felt that its abundant resources were being unwisely overlooked.

The Fertility of La Florida

The Society of Jesus began its “apostolic conquest” of Spanish America with the 
establishment of the Vice-Province of La Florida in 1566. But its spiritual labour in this 
vast and loosely defined territory was short lived given native resistance, conflicts with 
the governor, and the untimely deaths of several Jesuits, prompting those who remained 
to abandon their work after only roughly six years of missionary activity. Given their 
hardships and general lack of success amongst the indigenous inhabitants, some tried to 
claim that Jesuit evangelizing efforts had been fruitless in La Florida. Florencia also 
observed that several of his brethren and other writers of the colonial era viewed the 
entire region as a barren wasteland that was generally unfit for colonization. Convinced

---

40 Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, Historia de los incas [1572] (Madrid: Miriguano Ediciones, 2001), 19 (“pobladísimas de ánimas a quien se pudiese mostrar el camino el cielo, y abundantísimas de todo género 
de inestimables tesoros”).
41 Historia de la Provincia, Al Gloriosísimo Padre San Francisco de Borja, n.p. (“Tantas son las Provincias, 
tanta la Gentilidad, tantas las Naciones . . . que han descubierto los de la Compañía”).
42 Ibid., 7–8 (“Apostólica conquista”).
that all of these opinions were clear errors, he argued that his coreligionists had planted important seeds of faith amongst the “barbarians” of La Florida, a land, which in his mind, was “very fertile.” Given the daily encroachment of other European powers in the Atlantic world, he was hopeful that the Spanish crown would agree and take further action to fortify the frontier.

Florencia retold the history of the Vice-Province of La Florida in detail in Book I of the *Historia de la Provincia*. After an opening chapter on a series of prophecies foretelling the foundation of the Society of Jesus in New Spain, he explained how Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, the first governor of La Florida, made a request to the Spanish crown for Jesuits to assist him in the conversion of the indigenous population. San Francisco de Borja chose Pedro Martínez, Juan Rogel, and Francisco de Villarreal for the task and they promptly set sail for America in the summer of 1566. When the three arrived off the coast of La Florida near Cumberland Island (Georgia), Martínez accompanied a group of Flemish sailors ashore where he was killed in a skirmish by a group of Timucua Indians. Rogel and Villarreal, who had remained onboard their ship according to Florencia, returned to Cuba with a brief stopover in Santo Domingo. Relatively soon thereafter the two Jesuits returned to La Florida, the former to the fort of San Carlos and the latter to the southern part of the peninsula near Miami (Florida) amongst the Tequesta Indians. By the summer of 1568 a new group of Jesuits arrived under the leadership of Juan Bautista Segura. Five months after establishing a mission in the province of Ajacán near Chesapeake Bay (Virginia), Segura and his seven companions were all killed by a group of Powhatan Indians. Florencia ended Book I by

---

43 Ibid., 8 (“Toda la tierra firme es tan feraz”).
explaining how, after these beginnings, the remaining Jesuits in La Florida were incorporated into the newly formed Province of New Spain.  

The narrative structure Florencia adopted in Book I is based upon the work of De Soto. In his foundational history De Soto began his account on the origins of the Society of Jesus in New Spain with a lengthy review of the martyrdoms of Martínez and Segura and the ministries of Rogel and Villareal. His version of the Jesuit missions in La Florida is quite descriptive, a stark contrast to the writings of Sánchez Baquero and Pérez de Ribas. Sánchez Baquero only provided an abridged section on this phase in the history of Jesuit expansion, treating it as a digression in the “thread” of his larger narrative of the foundation of the Company in Mexico City. Pérez de Ribas, on the other hand, omitted the proselytizing episode altogether because he had already dealt with Jesuit missionary activity in La Florida in his Historia de los triumphos de nuestra santa fe entre gentes las más bárbaras, y fieras del Nuevo Orbe. Florencia, then, had three general models before him when he penned Book I of his provincial chronicle. He had the option of

---


45 De Soto, Historia, ARSI, Mexicana 19, ff. 3v–27r.

46 Sánchez Baquero, Fundación de la Compañía, 23–33.

47 Pérez de Ribas, Historia de los triumphos, 744–751.
writing a detailed or condensed account of the Vice-Province of La Florida or ignoring it altogether. Why did he decide to imitate De Soto’s narrative model?

Florencia followed De Soto in Book I because he wanted to firmly establish the connection between the La Florida missions and the Jesuit Province of New Spain. The relationship was not as self-evident as it appeared, especially given the early provincial organization of the Society of Jesus in Spanish America. San Borja had originally placed the Jesuits of La Florida under the leadership of Jerónimo Ruiz de Portillo, the first *provincial* of the Province of Peru. In September of 1567 Portillo named Segura the *vice-provincial* of the Vice-Province of La Florida, but by the end of 1570 he counselled his *Padre General* to place the region under the administration of another province given the difficulty of governing at such a large distance. Since the members of the Vice-Provence of La Florida were eventually incorporated into the Province of New Spain, Florencia, in contrast to De Soto, both began and ended Book I by emphasizing this point. To clarify the administrative connection, he argued that since the Jesuits of the La Florida missions belonged to a vice-province they “would always have to recognize the *provincial* and the Province of Mexico.” Florencia then explained that this is “what happened much later to the Vice Province of the Philippines, which is much farther away.

---

48 When Francisco Javier Alegre wrote his provincial chronicle in the 1760s he felt the need to justify the inclusion of the La Florida missions. *Historia de la Provincia*, 1:39–40.
50 That the La Florida missions were technically part of the Province of Peru appears to have been a sensitive issue. In the second half of the seventeenth century an anonymous Jesuit writing on the missions of Sinaloa claimed that the first Jesuits in America came “one year before the apostolic Father Jerónimo Ruiz Portillo and seven of his companions left Spain to found the prestigious and holy Province of Lima in the kingdoms of Peru.” *Historia de Sinaloa*, BNAH, carpeta IX, doc. 7, f. 15v (“fueron los primeros religiosos de nuestra Compañía que pusieron los pies en el Nuevo Mundo un año antes que el apostólico Padre Jerónimo Ruiz Portillo con sus siete compañeros saliese de España a fundar la docta y santa provincia de Lima en los Reinos de Perú”).
from New Spain than La Florida, and since it forms part of the continent it should be considered amongst those subject to it.”

Using the history of the Vice-Province of La Florida as an extended prelude to the Historia de la Provincia allowed Florencia to draw attention to Jesuit labour on the frontier more generally. Unlike De Soto, who penned his foundational history when the Jesuits had only started to establish missions in northern New Spain, Florencia was writing as they were expanding into California. Although their missions continued to play important roles as “frontier institutions” in the 1680s, Florencia would have been aware of changing policies in the metropolis which challenged Franciscan and Jesuit missionary practice. David J. Weber has noted that in the late seventeenth century the Spanish crown began to doubt the “defensive function” of missions in both La Florida and New Mexico. He suggested that they started to rely more heavily upon soldiers because native rebellions had become extremely costly and had “rolled back the entire Spanish frontier.” Although the Jesuits supported the protective role of the presidios (military garrisons), similar to the early mendicant friars, many of them also insisted that the Indians under their care needed to be shielded from Spanish influence. Florencia added the following to De Soto’s narrative to explain why Segura had denied military protection: “many times soldiers are more of an obstacle and impediment for the religious
than they are a security and peace given the way they harass and mistreat the Indians.”\(^\text{54}\) Their bad examples, according to Florencia, undid everything missionaries had worked so hard to accomplish.

At first glance it appears strange that Florencia chose to promote Jesuit missions in his provincial chronicle with what seems to have been a clear missionary failure in La Florida. But missionaries and their supporters saw things quite differently. When their brethren died at the hands of “barbarians” they transformed them into heroes of the Christian faith. As Maureen Ahern notes, “Martyrs play a crucial role in times of crisis, especially in the establishment of new frontiers, as they gain power from their acts—those incandescent instants of the supreme sacrifice.”\(^\text{55}\) The Jesuit martyrs of La Florida became important symbols of missionary heroism in other regions of New Spain and throughout the Catholic world. Pérez de Ribas claimed that divine providence used the deaths of Martínez and Segura to open “the road and the door for the religious of the Company to preach the gospel and convert so many gentile nations, like the ones that are now Christians in the province of Sinaloa.”\(^\text{56}\) Florencia could not have agreed more. In a departure from De Soto he gave the theme universal weight, referring to Tertullian’s maxim that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. This move allowed him to conclude that the “fathers of San Francisco,” who began to establish their own missions

\(^{54}\) Historia de la Provincia, 46 (“los Soldados muchas veces más son de embarazo, y perturbación, que de resguardo, y quietud a los Religiosos: por las molestias y malos tratos, que hacen a los Indios”).


\(^{56}\) Pérez de Ribas, Historia de los triumphos, 744 (“y divina providencia se les abriese el camino, y puerta a los Religiosos de la Compañía, para predicar el Evangelio, y dejar convertidas tantas Naciones de Gentiles, como las que quedan ya Cristianos en la Provincia de Sinaloa”).
in La Florida in 1573, had “gather[ed] together the fruit of those [Jesuits] who spilt their blood.”

The “fruit” that the Jesuits had produced “in both Spaniards and Indians, in both Christians and gentiles” was Florencia’s “evident argument throughout the discourse of the Historia.” In Book I he was specifically interested in the “conversion of the Indians amongst the infinity of gentiles there were in La Florida.” During the colonial era “Indian” was a legal term that placed the vast diversity of indigenous people into one all-encompassing socioracial category to establish systems of taxation, rights, privileges, and duties. But “Indian” was also a rhetorical construct in colonial texts, a highly malleable one that was unstable and hence shifted according to the needs of the one employing it.

For his part, Florencia imagined the native inhabitants of La Florida in much the same way as other colonial writers by interchangeably referring to them as Indians (indios), gentiles (gentiles), pagans (paganos), natives (naturales), and barbarians (bárbaros). In particular, he called all indigenous people in the region “Floridians,” noting that they were known for their “bravery” and “ferocity.” The major distinction that Florencia made between different groups of “Floridians” was that some were “gentile Indians, but friends” while others were “barbarian enemies.” And in terms of social organization, he

57 Historia de la Provincia, 63 (“Los Padres de S. Francisco cogen el Fruto de los que derramaron su sangre”).
58 Ibid., 2 (“donde tanto ha fructificado así en los Españoles, como en los Indios, en los Cristianos como en los gentiles; de que será argumento evidente todo el discurso de la Historia”).
59 Ibid., 42 (“la conversión de los Indios, de la infinidad de Gentiles que había en la Florida”).
60 Guy Rozat Dupeyron demonstrates how the “Indians” in conquest histories and missionary chronicles were “imagined” and not descriptions of “real” indigenous people. See Indios imaginarios e indios reales en los relatos de la conquista de México (Mexico City: Tava Editorial, 1993); and América, imperio del demonio. Cuentos y recuentos (Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana, Departamento de Historia, 1995). More recently, Rebecca Earle has studied how the “Indian” was used by Latin American elites to construct national identities in the post-independent period in The Return of the Native.
61 Historia de la Provincia, 41, 10 (“conversión de los Floridanos”) (“valentía de los Floridanos”) (“ferocísimos Floridanos”).
62 Ibid., 25, 26 (“Indios Gentiles, pero amigos”) (“Bárbaros enemigos”).
identified caciques as tribal leaders and shamans (*hechiceros*) as their priests “who are in all parts an obstacle to conversions.”

The “Floridians” were indeed barbarians to Florencia, but they were no different than the other “barbarous Indians” along other frontiers he surveyed in his other sacred histories. His manner of classifying them was similar to many other members of a larger Christendom from roughly the twelfth century onwards. Anthony Pagden explains that by this time “barbarian” was “applied broadly to all non-Christian peoples, and more loosely might be used to describe any race, whatever its religious beliefs, which behaved in savage or ‘uncivil’ ways.” But more particularly, Florencia’s understanding of the “Floridians” was based upon the synthesizing observations of José de Acosta. The Indians of La Florida, according to Acosta, were much like the “Chiriguanas and Brazilians and many other nations” who lived nomadically as free groups without kings or any form of organized government. But even though these “barbarians” were descendants of “savages,” he believed, similar to Bartolomé de las Casas, that all people were capable of salvation regardless of their level of civilization. This belief in soteriologic equality was the same message that Florencia wove into his *Historia de la Provincia* and in his other writings on Jesuit missionaries. Similar to Pérez de Ribas, who

---

63 Ibid., 29 (“resistencia de los Hechiceros, que en todas partes son el embarazo de las conversiones”).
64 *Menologio*, 7v (“bárbaros Xiximes”). *Vida de Figueroa*, 21r (“bárbaros Taraumares, y Tepehunaes”).
66 Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, 64 (“como ahora los floridos y los chiriguanas, y los brasiles y otras naciones muchas”).
67 José de Acosta develops his tripartite understanding of civilization in the preface of *De procuranda Indorum salute* [1688], ed. and trans. L. Pereña et al. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1984), 1:55–71.
stated that no one was “excluded from the redemption of Christ,”\textsuperscript{68} he concluded that his brethren produced “fruit that is known amongst the many barbarous nations they have reduced, indoctrinated, pacified, and made capable of understanding, in greater depth, the mysteries of our holy faith.”\textsuperscript{69}

Highlighting the capacity of “barbarians,” particularly the “Floridians,” was not an easy task for Florencia. Although Las Casas had presented them as “innocent and harmless natives,”\textsuperscript{70} the indigenous people of La Florida had earned a reputation for being amongst the most savage along the northern frontier. In his \textit{Historia general y natural de las Indias} (1535) Gonzálo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés wrote that when Juan Ponce de León arrived to the peninsula in 1513 the natives were “a very austere and very savage and belligerous and fierce and untamed people.”\textsuperscript{71} Several explorers in the region came to similar conclusions and the martyrdoms of Dominican and Franciscan friars fostered an image of unbridled barbarity.\textsuperscript{72} Jesuit historians, in particular, stressed their penchant for brutality, De Soto claiming that La Florida was “inhabited not by men but by wild and cruel savages” and Francesco Sacchini stating that armed soldiers “restrained the natives as wild beasts.”\textsuperscript{73} Florencia never denied that the “Floridians”

\textsuperscript{68} Pérez de Ribas, \textit{Historia de los triunfos}, 8 (“no fueron excluidas de la redención de Cristo”).

\textsuperscript{69} \textit{Vida de Figueroa}, 13r (“y hacen los demás Misioneros el fruto que se sabe en tantas Naciones bárbaras, que han reducido, que han doctrinado, que han hecho mansas, y ya capaces de entender con más profundidad los misterios de nuestra Santa Fe”).

\textsuperscript{70} Bartolomé de las Casas, \textit{Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias} [1542], ed. André Saint-Lu (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 1999), 154 (“aquellos inocentes y a nadie dañosos indios”).


\textsuperscript{72} Luis Jerónimo de Oré wrote about the martyrdoms of the Jesuits and the Franciscans in a short relation he published around 1612. The text has been republished as \textit{Relación histórica de la Florida escrita en el siglo XVII}, ed. Antanasio López (Madrid: Imprenta de Ramona Velasco, Viuda de P. Pérez, 1931–1933), vol. 1.

\textsuperscript{73} De Soto, \textit{Historia}, ARSI, Mexicana 19, f. 4r (“habitada, no de hombres mas de fieros salvajes, y crueles”). Francesco Sacchini, “Borgia, The Third Part of the History of the Society of Jesus,” in Clifford
were “barbarians,” but he modified his brethren’s language, specifically De Soto’s, by making the “barbarians” in his provincial chronicle less barbarous while emphasizing their capacity for the Christian faith.

Florencia went to even greater lengths than De Soto had done to prove that Martínez was the “Protomartyr of these Western Indies for having been the first one to pour out his blood in them.” To show that he had died in odium fidei (for hatred of the faith) he needed not only “barbarous” Indians, but “barbarous” Indians who both understood and rejected the Christian gospel. Although few details surfaced in early Jesuit letters, De Soto had piously imagined a conversation between Martínez and the cacique he claimed was responsible for the Jesuit’s death. In his account the cacique pretended to be interested in a brief explanation of Christian doctrine that Martínez offered him through an interpreter. After asking a few questions on the nature of the Trinity and the fall of humankind, the cacique, filled with rage, took the Jesuit’s life. Florencia followed De Soto’s version very carefully, but he stressed how Martínez recognized “the capacity of the cacique by his questions.” His addition here was possibly influenced by Agustín Dávila Padilla’s account of the martyrdom of Luis Cáncer Barbastro, a Dominican friar who was killed by the Indians of Tampa Bay in 1549. After describing the circumstances of his death, Dávila Padilla emphasized that “the Indians

---


74 *Historia de la Provincia*, 15 (“Protomartyr de estas Indias Occidentales, por haber sido el primero, que...derramó en ellas su sangre”).

75 Juan Rogel and Alonso López de Almazán made no reference to this conversation in the letters they wrote in November and December of 1566. “Pater Ioannes Rogel Patri Didaco Avellaneda, Prov.,” and “Alphonsus Lopez de Almazan Patri Didaco Avellaneda, Prov.,” in *Monumenta antiquae Floridae*, 101–140, 143–154.

76 *Historia de la Provincia*, 13 (“Holgabase el Padre de reconocer la capacidad del Cacique por las preguntas”).
were not that barbarous that they were ignorant to the fact that these people were dedicated to God amongst Christians and that they teach and preach his law.”

Florencia made a similar change to De Soto’s account of the Jesuit martyrs in the province of Ajacán. After Segura and his brethren had been killed by the Powhatans, De Soto explained that Alonso de Olmos, a Spanish boy who had accompanied the Jesuits, buried their bodies in the church they had built in their mission. Although Florencia cited

---

77 Dávila Padilla, *Historia*, 187 (“No eran los Indios tan bárbaros que ignorasen ser aquella gente la dedicada a Dios entre los Cristianos, y la que enseña y predica su ley”).
the versions of other Jesuit historians, his retelling of the event was for the most part the same as De Soto’s except for an important personal inclusion he placed at the end of his account. Seeking to prove that the place where the Jesuits were buried was hallowed ground, Florencia recalled a conversation he had with Andrés González in Mexico City sometime in the 1640s. González was a ship captain from Saint Augustine, a “trustworthy man from La Florida” who, according to Florencia, most likely visited Ajacán personally or at least a place nearby. Florencia reasoned even further that he was old enough to have known some of the soldiers who were still alive when Segura and his brethren were
killed. “[T]he place where their holy bodies are buried,” he tried to explain based upon what he had heard from González, “was until that time venerated and reverenced by those barbarians, and they frequented [the site] in times of need.”

Beyond the “barbarians” Florencia rhetorically used to highlight the pious deaths of his coreligionists were others who were said to have converted to the Christian faith. Two baptisms by Villarreal amongst the Tequesta Indians were of particular interest to him, one being of a small girl and the other of an aging cacica (feminine form of cacique). Florencia followed the details in De Soto’s account very closely, but he added two of his own commentaries to emphasize the role divine election played in their conversion. When referring to the baptism of the Indian girl, Florencia claimed that Jesus Christ “had predestined her ab aeterno amongst so many reprobates!” And then after he had finished recounting the baptism of the cacica he declared that “in extraordinary ways [God] providentially looks after his chosen ones, and in the midst of the thorns of paganism, destined for the fire, he cuts two white lilies to place and transplant them in his celestial garden.” Florencia consistently modified De Soto’s narrative to demonstrate that the “Floridians” were indeed capable of the Christian faith. In his conclusion to his section on the La Florida missions De Soto explained that the reason for why the Jesuits were forced to abandon the region was for the “incapacity, inconstancy, and savagery of

78 Historia de la Provincia, 53 (“persona de crédito de la Florida”) (“que el lugar donde están enterrados sus benditos cuerpos, estaba hasta aquel tiempo venerado, y reverenciado de aquellos bárbaros, y que acudían a él en sus necesidades”).
79 Ibid., 26–27 (“que desde ab aeterno la tenía predestinado entre tantos réprobos!”).
80 Ibid., 27 (“que por modos tan raros, tiene providencia de sus escogidos; y en medio de las espinas de un paganism diputadas para el fuego, corta dos azucenas, para ponerlas, y trasplantarlas en su jardín celestial”).
the natives in these wide and vast provinces.”81 Florencia wrote much the same, but he left out the word “incapacity” from his list.82

During the colonial era the presumed incapacity of the indigenous peoples of La Florida was rhetorically linked to the supposed infertility of the region. Daniel S. Murphree notes that several colonial writers “highlighted the natural setting and its likely benefits for European empires.” But as soon as things went poorly for explorers and colonists, he suggests that they either viewed “the land as a distant mythical paradise . . . to overlook failed colonization attempts” or they blamed the Indians for the “land’s insufficiency.”83 The picture Florencia rhetorically painted of La Florida falls into the first category given that he represented it as the “the best region of Northern America.”84 His vision of his homeland, however, also fits into the second category, but instead of blaming the Indians for the seeming lack of infertility he argued that they had failed to properly exploit the bounty of the land. Those on the coast, Florencia explained, were “fishermen who sustain themselves with what they fish, and for this reason they have done little to cultivate the fields because the sea is so abundant.”85 Others in the hinterland were able to take advantage of so many varieties of livestock that “even the barbarous Indians have free access to meat in abundance in any part.”86

In almost an entire chapter of Book I Florencia elaborated on the fertility of his patria in a geographic description that was far more detailed and favourable than the brief

---

81 De Soto, Historia, ARSI, Mexicana 19, f. 26v (“la incapacidad, inconstancia y fiereza de los naturales de aquellas anchas y espaciosas Provincias”).
82 Historia de la Provincia, 65 (“que los Naturales de aquellas Provincias eran sumamente inconstantes, crueles, y dados a sus vicios”).
84 Historia de la Provincia, 9 (“la mejor Región de la América Septentrional”).
85 Historia de la Provincia, 8 (“son pescadores, que se sustentan de lo que pescan, y así cuidan poco de la cultura de los campos; porque el mar abundante de todo género de pescados”).
86 Ibid., 9 (“ya hasta los Indios bárbaros tienen a su voluntad en cualquiera parte carne en abundancia”).
survey De Soto had offered in his narrative. Although La Florida was said to have been “discovered” on the Easter of the Flowers by Ponce de León, De Soto claimed that it was “hyperbolically named this way, by fortune, in contrast to what it truthfully is, because it is a province exceedingly barren and dry, deprived of all provision of birds, meat, bread, fruit, [and] without foliage and any cultivation whatsoever.” Florencia was displeased with his coreligionist’s unflattering commentary and left it out of his provincial chronicle. He addressed De Soto and others who held similar opinions by stating that they “sinisterly interpret [La Florida] as an antiphrasis, saying that it suffers from infertility and that it lacks flowers and fruits; but being uncultivated is not the same as being infertile: the one is the fault of the inhabitants and the other of the land.” Drawing upon his personal experience, Florencia argued that La Florida was filled with unlimited natural resources waiting for the Spanish crown to take advantage of. Hence those who believed that the region was infertile “deceive themselves (se engañan) completely because this land is of the most fertile and fecund of all America, of which I am a witness, along with all others who have lived there.”

To bolster his personal authority, Florencia turned to the work of the mestizo humanist El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539–1616), suggesting that “the truth concerning this sinister opinion [on the land] will be revealed (se desengañará) to the one

\[\text{} \]

---

87 De Soto, Historia, ARSI, Mexicana 19, f. 3v (“llamada así hiperbólicamente, por ventura, y al contrario de lo que en la verdad pasa porque es Provincia sobremanera, estéril, y seca, privada de toda Provisión de Aves, carnes, pan, frutas, sin sépalo, y cultura alguna”). For a similar commentary on the name of La Florida, see Dávila Padilla, Historia de la fundación, 190 (“Debió de haber quien informase a su Majestad más largamente que la tierra y gente permitía, y con el engaño del nombre de Florida debieron de prometer más felicidad que había”).

88 Historia de la Provincia, 8. (“Siniestramente interpretan por antífrasis, por la esterilidad, que dicen, padece ajena de flores, y frutos; pues no es lo mismo ser inculta, que estéril: lo uno es falta de los moradores, lo otro de la tierra”).

89 Ibid. (“porque los que así lo discurren, o se engañan totalmente; porque la tierra es de las más féraces, y fecundas de toda la América, de que soy testigo; y lo son todos, cuantos en ella han vivido”).
who has read the *Historia de la Florida*.”^{90} Garcilaso was born in Cuzco to an Incan princess and Spanish conquistador, but in his early twenties he travelled to Spain where he lived in Montilla and Cordóba writing about the history of America. After sifting through a series of relations and conversing with a few soldiers who had returned from La Florida, Garcilaso published an imaginative account of Hernando de Soto’s expedition.\(^91\) In his preface to *La Florida del Inca* (1605) he tried to convince the Spanish crown that the “bad name that this land has for being infertile and swampy” was unfounded, which is why he encouraged “Spain to subdue and populate” La Florida “because it is a fertile land and abundant with everything necessary for human life.”^{92} Garcilaso’s inviting portrait, here, was in part a strategic response to the increasing encroachment of French and English settlers and pirates along the northern frontier. Although the Spanish crown subsidized soldiers in military forts along the coast, maintaining these garrisons, so far away from the core zones of imperial interests, was a costly affair. Already in the 1570s members of the Council of the Indies debated the possibility of abandoning its defensive position in La Florida altogether. By the end of the sixteenth century Saint Augustine was the only fort left in the region and it struggled to survive.\(^93\)

---

^{90} Ibid., 8 (“y se desenganará de esta siniestra opinión, quien hubiere leído la Historia de la Florida”).


^{92} El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, *La Florida del Inca* (Lisbon: Pedro Crasbeeck, 1605), Proemio al lector, n.p. (“el mal nombre que aquella tierra tiene de estéril y cenagosa . . . se esfuerce España a la ganar y poblar”) (“porque es tierra fértil y abundante de todo lo necesario para la vida humana”).

When Florencia penned the *Historia de la Provincia* La Florida was still in a vulnerable situation. In the 1680s the frontier was not only being “rolled back” by “barbarous” Indians but by the French and the British as well.94 Sensing the urgency of the situation, Florencia claimed that the ports of Cuba and in the province of Ajacán were “the best that the Spanish Monarchy has” and that they were “very large, very capacious, and very secure from all winds.”95 Not only this, but he wrote that it was “more than eighty years ago that the English populated” the very place where Segura and his companions had been buried.96 Was Florencia concerned about the wellbeing of his family in Saint Augustine when he penned these words? Did he shutter at the thought of losing his hometown to foreign invaders? Whatever the case, Florencia went out of his way to employ *La Florida del Inca* as a tool to promote further colonization in a region that had earned a bad reputation despite some of the positive descriptions of early explorers. Diego de Soto claimed, for example, that Villarreal suffered for “many months of the year” without “anymore than a little wild fruit, in small quantity, and other roots and herbs.”97 When the Franciscans arrived in La Florida Juan de Torquemada said that many “held the opinion that the land was poor.”98 And by 1673 the governor of Cuba, Francisco de Ledesma, stated that it “is hard to get anyone to go to St. Augustine because of the horror with which Florida is painted.”99

---

95 *Historia de la Provincia*, 22, 45 (“el mejor de los que tiene la Monarquía Española”) (“tan grande, tan capaz, y tan seguro a todos vientos”).
96 Ibid., 45 (“más de ochenta años ha, que lo poblaron Ingleses”).
97 De Soto, *Historia*, ARSI, Mexicana 19, f. 8r (“que por muchos meses del año no pasaban con más regalo que con algunas pocas frutas silvestres, en muy poca cantidad, y otras raíces y hierbas”).
In order to present La Florida as an attractive destination for colonists, Florencia
drew heavily upon the natural descriptions of Garcilaso.  

Similar to the mestizo historian, he compared La Florida to Spain, stating that the earth brings forth “many fruits that those of the most abundant lands of Castile bear” and that there were “other fruits that are very seasoned, of good taste, and typical of the land that are not found in Castile.” He further explained that once people began to cultivate the fields of La Florida they yielded “all kinds of fruits from Spain” that were “so good that the Spaniards themselves put them before those of their own lands.” But he also believed that even without large scale cropping the land was a generous provider to its inhabitants. Turning to an example from the surviving members of Hernando de Soto’s expedition, Florencia concluded, as Garcilaso had before him, that the fact that an army of almost eight hundred men had lacked nothing to eat in more than three years was “proof (and I include this objection in passing to those who observe without reason the infertility of the land) of the abundance of provisions that La Florida offers.”

Florencia recognized that more than anything else bullion was the principal “magnet” that brought people to the Indies. Although mining was never profitable in La Florida, James Axtell notes that the “Floridians’ reworking of salvaged gold and silver

---


101 Historia de la Provincia, 8–9 (“muchas frutas, de las que llevan las tierras más abundantes de Castilla”) (“otras frutas muy sazonadas, y de buen gusto propias de la tierra, que no las hay en Castilla”). Carlos de Siguenza y Góngora also drew upon the work of Garcilaso when he compared La Florida to Castile after having visited the region in 1693. Documentos inéditos de Don Carlos de Siguenza y Góngora, ed. Irving A. Leonard (Mexico City: Editorial Founier, 1963), 73.

102 Historia de la Provincia, 9 (“Y después que los Españoles, la han cultivado, se dan en ella todos los géneros de frutas de España . . . tan buenas que los mismos Españoles las anteponen a las de sus tierras”).

103 Ibid., 11 (“Y es prueba (y vaya de paso este reparo para los que notan sin razón de estéril la tierra) de la abundancia de bastimentos, que da la Florida, el no haber faltado de comer en más de tres años, que anduvo por ella un ejército de casi ochocientos hombres”).
led Spanish conquistadors and sailors to conclude that [it] was a land rich in precious metals, ripe for the picking.”\footnote{James Axtell, \textit{The Indians' New South: Cultural Change in the Colonial Southeast} (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 13.} Garcilaso helped to foster this image of mineral wealth in \textit{La Florida del Inca} and Florencia followed suit in the \textit{Historia de la Provincia}. “The fact that the Spaniards have not returned to this province nor made the efforts to discover mines of silver and gold is not a defect of the land,” the Jesuit strategically and patriotically reasoned, “simply the time has not yet arrived in which God wants to make use of these treasures for the ends of his service and the profit of the Catholic Monarchy.”\footnote{Historia de la Provincia, 9–10 (“El no haber vuelto los Españoles a aquella Provincia, ni haber hecho diligencias por descubrir minas de plata, y oro . . . no es defecto de la tierra; sino que no ha llegado el tiempo, en que quiere Dios, se aprovechen estos tesoros, para los fines de su servicio, y utilidades de la Monarquía Católica”).} Even if his readers remained unconvinced by his Floridian “discourse of plenty,” Florencia knew that these aforementioned treasures had been mined in abundance in other regions of New Spain. When he turned his attention to the arrival of the Jesuits to Mexico City he criticized the Spanish crown for its failure to properly bolster and administer them.

\textbf{The Greatness of Mexico}

The Jesuits were amongst the last religious orders to arrive to Mexico City when they officially founded their Province of New Spain in 1572. It was only after they had established several colleges in the viceregal capital and other urban centres that they returned to their “spiritual conquest” along the frontier. Given their emphasis on education in the first few decades, Florencia had to address mendicant critiques that the
Society of Jesus concentrated exclusively on the social elite. He also noted that even though all of the “opinions the ancients had imagined of the Indies” had been dispelled when his brethren entered Mexico City, there were still a few of his “contemporaries who wanted to apply [these opinions] to the Indians.” To expose these erroneous claims about both his religious order and his homeland, Florencia described “the greatness of Mexico” and “the greatness of this kingdom in heathen times.” In his detailed account of the viceregal capital he passionately reminded the Spanish crown of the wealth it had received from New Spain and its duty to spread the Catholic faith.

In Book II of the Historia de la Provincia Florencia turned his attention to the official establishment of the Jesuit Province of New Spain. He began by recounting the failed attempts of Vasco de Quiroga, the Bishop of Michoacán, and Alonso Villaseca, a wealthy landowner, to bring the Society of Jesus to New Spain. He then explained how the cabildo of Mexico City, together with the viceroy Martín Enríquez, sent letters to the Spanish crown requesting Jesuits for the education of their young people. After San Francisco de Borja was informed of the king’s decision he elected Pedro Sánchez as the founder of the Province of New Spain. Florencia provided a list of the Jesuits chosen to accompany Sánchez and he detailed their works of charity before they eventually

---

106 Already in the early sixteenth century Sánchez Baquero felt the need to explain why the Jesuits focused their initial attention on the education of Spaniards. Fundación de la Compañía, 149–151. Later Pérez de Ribas complained that an unnamed “heretic” accused the Company of only labouring amongst the rich and the powerful in places like China and Japan to the exclusion of the poor and the “barbarous.” Historia de los triumphos, 408–410. For more of Jesuit responses to their critics throughout Spanish America, see Brading, The First America, 166–183.

107 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 6r (“Ya cuando los de la Compañía llegaron a México, habían desvanecido la experiencia de los ojos y las demostraciones de la razón, todas estas opiniones que imaginaron de las Indias los antiguos, y quisieron introducir de los indios algunos modernos”).

108 Florencia, Historia de la Provincia, 98, 100 (“de la grandeza de México”) (“de la grandeza de este Reino en el tiempo de su Gentilidad”).

109 Alcántara Bojorge argues that Quiroga’s petition was an early Jesuit invention that has not been substantiated with other sources beyond the early foundational histories. “La construcción de la memoria histórica,” 3.
departed from Seville in the summer of 1572. Upon arrival to Veracruz the group, after a short stay in the port, headed inland with a brief stop in Puebla before venturing on to Mexico City. They entered the viceregal capital at night by canoe and were given lodging in the hospital that Hernán Cortés had founded after the conquest. Florencia concluded his version of the foundation narrative with a brief description of the political leaders of Mexico City and a review of the sequence in which the religious orders had arrived to New Spain.

Once again Florencia turned to De Soto for the general structure of his narrative in Book II. But he noticed that De Soto had failed to provide a description of Mexico City in his account, something that both Sánchez Baquero and Pérez de Ribas had included in theirs. The former offered an extremely concise summary of the urban centre while the latter dedicated a lengthy chapter to the various “honours” (títulos) of the viceregal capital.\footnote{Sánchez Baquero, Fundación de la Compañía, 41. Pérez de Ribas, Crónica, 25–44.} Although Florencia ultimately followed Sánchez Baquero in Book II with his brief sketch of Mexico City, he had originally imitated Pérez de Ribas with a remarkably detailed and patriotic record of the novohispano metropolis. The change is worth investigating. Before obtaining his printing licence from the viceroy Gaspar de Sandoval Silva y Mendoza, Florencia was obliged to submit his provincial chronicle to his provincial for revision. Although the censors who eventually read through his draft are unknown, they determined that his provincial chronicle was in need of several modifications before it could be sent to the printers. In 1695 the Padre General, Tirso González de Santalla (1624–1705), wrote to Diego de Almonacir, the provincial of New
Spain, and reported that Florencia had “removed and changed” all of the indicated parts in his manuscript “with great diligence.”

Amongst the sections that Florencia was ordered to remove from his provincial chronicle was his description of Mexico City. The manuscript has fortunately survived and is housed in the Jesuit collection of the Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia “Dr. Eusebio Dávalos Hurtado.” This document is archived in one folder and is bound together with three others that were also written by Florencia. The contents can be described as follows: (1) a section from his devotional history of San Miguel (1r–2v); (2) nine chapters dealing with Mexico City that were extracted from the first volume of his Historia de la Provincia (3r–20v); (3) the first chapter and the titles for the following two of Book IX of the second volume of his Historia de la Provincia (21r–22v); and (4) a few of his notes on the Jesuits and their relationship to the University of Mexico (23r–v). “P. Florencia” appears at the top left hand corner of the first folio, and although the other three manuscripts are unsigned, the handwriting is clearly Florencia’s when compared to his letters. Even though the foliation that the archivists assigned to the four manuscripts is continuous, Florencia provided his own numeration for the section censored from his Historia de Provincia. There are no signs that his censors made any textual changes, but Florencia crossed out a few words and wrote in some of his own minor corrections both within the body of the text and in the side margins.

Although González never explained why Florencia’s provincial chronicle was censored, he authorized its printing so that the memory of “distinguished people who in the beginning favoured us with exceeding benefits and love” would be preserved. He

---

111 AHPM, Documentos Antiguos, caja 31, carpeta 1230, f. 1v (“Llegaron las censuras, que dieron de la Historia de la Provincia del Padre Francisco de Florencia los revisores señalados, y habiéndose el Padre ajustado con tanta puntualidad a quitar y mudar las cosas en que repararon”).
believed that Almonacir “did well in not allowing [these memories] to be removed for the fussy objections that a few zealous censors make.”

Almonacir licenced a revised version of Florencia’s work for publication because he knew his province had experienced some economic difficulties in the mid seventeenth century, so much so that they even had to consider closing down a few colleges. Although things looked much better in the 1680s, acquiring charitable donations, as noted in the second chapter, was far more competitive in an increasingly urban environment. Hence it was common practice for provincial chroniclers, regardless of their religious habit, to recognize the financial support of their principal benefactors. In Book II Florencia followed De Soto, Sánchez Baquero, and Pérez de Ribas in highlighting the Jesuits’ early patrons, most particularly Villaseca. He even named four of the wealthiest citizens of Mexico City who had dominated public banking in the mid seventeenth century, a few of whom had donated funds to the Society of Jesus.

Devoting more space in his narrative to the viceregal capital, then, provided Florencia with an opportunity to thank past supporters and encourage new ones in the present. As Pérez de Ribas explained, writing about Mexico City allowed him to pay the “debt that the Company recognizes it owes to such an illustrious city in which it was received with great devotion, love, and benevolence.”

---

112 Ibid. (“hizo V. R. conforme a mi orden en dar luego licencia para que se conservase a imprimir el que quedasen en ella las memorias, que hace de personajes señalados, que en los principios nos favorecieron con sobresalientes beneficios y amor es atención muy debida de nuestra gratitud y así V. R. hizo bien en no permitir se quitasen para el escrupuloso reparo que hace unos celos revisores”).


115 Pérez de Ribas, *Crónica*, 44 (“la deuda que reconoce nuestra Compañía a tan ilustre ciudad, de la cual fue recibida con tan grande devoción, amor y benevolencia”).
But paying tribute to Mexico City also gave Florencia the chance to rhetorically carve out a space for the Society of Jesus in the “spiritual conquest” of New Spain. In their provincial chronicles the mendicant orders emphasized their entry into the viceregal capital to highlight their apostolic antiquity. The general reception they received in Mexico City became symbolic of their larger acceptance in the kingdom of New Spain as a whole. Their specific date and order of arrival established their position in ecclesiastical processions and formed part of their arsenal to combat the power and prestige of other religious orders. Florencia addressed the status of the Jesuits as “recent arrivals” by turning to the parable of the workers in the vineyard from the gospel of Matthew. After listing the dates on which the mendicants had arrived to Mexico City, he stated that after them came “the Company in their turn, late in the evangelical day to earn their reward of the daily denarius, confessing that it was preceded by the other religious [orders], to whose zeal and labour the conversion of this extensive kingdom is due.” In the gospel parable every worker, whether he began in the morning or late afternoon, received the same pay. Florencia incorporated this message into his description of Mexico City by persistently emphasizing their date of arrival and contributions to the “spiritual conquest.”

---

116 Baltasar de Medina provides a list of the order in which the religious orders arrived to Mexico City in his Crónica, 9v–12v. Pedro de Salmerón mentions how the mendicants joined the procession of Corpus Christi in Puebla according to their “antiquity” in Relación breve de la consagración del real, y suntuoso templo de la Catedral de la Puebla de los Ángeles (Puebla: n.p., 1649), 4v. And Antonio Rubial García notes that during the celebration of Corpus Christi in 1699 in Mexico City there was a fight between a few Augustinians and Discalced Franciscans because their order in the religious procession was changed. “Los conventos mendicantes,” 169. Although there was competition between the religious orders, as Karen Melvin points out, they also worked together in many cases to defend their privileges, specifically the mendicants. “Urban Religions,” 33.

117 Historia de la Provincia, 99 (“Después de ellas vino la Compañía a su respecto, a la tarde del día Evangélico, a ganar el premio del Denario diurno, la cual confiesa lo adelantado de las otras Religiones, a cuyo celo, y trabajo se debe la conversión de este Reino tan dilatado”). For the parable, see Mt. 20:1–16.

118 Florencia peppered his description of Mexico City with time markers such as “when the Company arrived to Mexico.” BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, ff. 6r, 10r, 12v, 20r (“Ya cuando los de la
If Florencia used his description of Mexico City to acknowledge important benefactors and to address mendicant antiquity, what, then, did his “zealous censors” find so objectionable? By the second half of the seventeenth century creoles began to outnumber Europeans in Jesuit institutions throughout New Spain. Some of the early tensions discussed in the first chapter resurfaced while Florencia was preparing his provincial chronicle for publication. In 1683 the Padre General, Charles de Noyelle, received notice that “creoles do not demonstrate much kindness with Europeans.” This is the same type of attitude Florencia took in his description of Mexico City. Although he drew upon the general structure of Pérez de Ribas’s account of the viceregal capital, his version is very distinct and expresses both his annoyance with his European brethren and his love for his patria. By conjuring up older debates on the nature of the New World and Indian rationality, Florencia made a direct relationship between the errors of the ancients and those of his contemporaries. He drew upon his personal experiences and the writings of José de Acosta, Juan de Torquemada, and Bernal Díaz del Castillo to silence some of his European coreligionists. His censors may have viewed his aggressive rhetoric as far too controversial with the potential to incite further conflicts within the Company.

“We now see with our eyes,” Florencia declared in the opening lines of the censored section, “touch with our hands, discover, and tread upon with our heels the error (engaño) that was so authoritative amongst the ancients.” He challenged his readers, perhaps even taunting some of them, to demonstrate to him the supposed dryness,

---

119 ARSI, Mexicana 3, Epistolum General (1668–1688), f. 232r (“escribe que ha notado, que los criollos muestran tener poca caridad con los europeos”).
120 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 3r (“Vemos ya, con nuestros ojos, tocamos con nuestras manos, y, hallamos, y pisamos con nuestras plantas; el engaño tan autorizado de los Antiguos”).
infertility, and unbearably hot living conditions the ancients had imagined. “[W]e see and experience the complete opposite,” Florencia responded confidently, “[and] we have not seen anything else since we entered New Spain but springs . . . various flowers, diverse fruit . . . animals in the forests . . . that we would not have believed it without seeing it.” He built many of his personal observations upon the synthetic work of Acosta. In the first two books of his Historia natural y moral de las Indias Acosta had criticized ancient theories on the existence and shape of the heavens; the presence of land and sea at the earth’s two poles; and the true properties and living conditions of the Torrid Zone. At one point he even laughed at their mistaken opinions, but he was forgiving of the early church fathers who were preoccupied with more “important” things such as theology. Florencia used Acosta’s arguments as evidence to “put a lid on the mouths of laymen” from Europe who made similar claims in his present. Emphasizing the limitations of “human wisdom,” he called his European brethren to humility when discussing the “things of the Indies.”

Couched within Florencia’s discourse on the errors of the ancients was a defence of indigenous errors before European contact. He reasoned that if the wisest of men were mistaken in their views on the New World then the Indians could be forgiven for their “great errors (errores)” because “before their discovery they were more distant from the faith of Christ than Europe.” To substantiate his claims Florencia turned to the work of Torquemada. In his Monarquía indiana the Franciscan had compiled together an account

---

121 Ibid. (“vemos y experimentamos todo lo contrario . . . No vemos otra cosa desde que entramos en la Nueva España, sino fuentes . . . sino flores varias, sino diversas frutas . . . sino animales en los bosques . . . que no lo creyéramos a no verlo”).

122 Acosta, Historia natural y moral de las Indias, 15–85. Other critiques of ancient errors can be found in Torquemada, Monarquía indiana, 1:3–20, and Ojea, Libro tercero, 3–5.

123 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 4v (“solemos tapar la boca a los seglares”).

124 Ibid., f. 3v (“Disculpa tienen los errores tan grandes . . . de quienes estaban antes de su descubrimiento más distante la fe de Cristo que la Europa”).
of Indian culture and religion based upon a wealth of indigenous codices and the work of other colonial historians, most particularly Las Casas. What Florencia found particularly appealing about Torquemada’s research was his desire to demonstrate the sophistication of Mexica civilization. “One should not attribute their errors (engaños) to barbarity nor to a lack of government,” Florencia claimed, “for as the Monarquía indiana proves very well, one will find neither idolatry, rite, nor superstition amongst the Mexicans that the wise Greeks and civilized Romans did not commit!” It was not a lack of capacity but faith that drove them into these heathen practices. “[T]his is what sensible and spiritual Europeans reason and infer,” Florencia concluded, “when they come to these regions and see the goodness of the land . . . [and] the opulence of Mexico and other cities even in their paganism.”

Florencia also defended the rationality of the Mexica by conjuring up the early sixteenth-century debates on their capacity to receive the sacraments. Those who believed that they were intellectually inferior and hence unfit for heaven only “supported the error (engaño) of the ancients that there was no sky . . . for these miserable Indians.” Referencing the 1537 papal bull Sublimis Deus of Pope Paul III, he pointed out that they, like others in the Indies, were officially declared rational human beings and “capable of

125 Miguel León-Portilla surveys the sources Torquemada used in “New Light on the Sources of Torquemada’s Monarchia Indiana,” The Americas 35, no. 3 (1979): 287–316. David A. Brading argues that the Monarquía indiana was offensive to creole patriots because of his emphasis on the Devil’s dominion over the Mexico empire. The First America, 275–292. Although Florencia did not agree with Torquemada concerning the extent of demonic influence in pre-Hispanic times, he freely drew upon those portions in his history that were most useful to him.

126 BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 4v (“No hay que atribuir sus engaños a barbarie ni a falta de policia; pues, como prueba muy bien la Monarquía Indíana, ¡no se hallará idolatria, ni rito, ni superstición de los mexicanos que no las cometiese la sabia Grecia y la política Roma!”).

127 Ibid. (“Y esto es lo que los europeos cuerdos y espirituales discurren y sacan . . . cuando vienen a estas regiones y ven la bondad de la tierra . . . la opulencia de México y otras ciudades, aún en su paganismo”).

128 Ibid., f. 5r (“apoyaban el engaño de los antiguos, que no habia cielo . . . para los miserables indios”).
Christian doctrine and baptism and hence created for heaven.” He found further support for his argument in the *De procuranda Indorum salute* (1588), a missionary manual that Acosta had prepared for priests working amongst indigenous people.\(^{130}\) Florencia was convinced that this text proved “that to receive the gospel and understand the highest mysteries of the faith and to be instructed in Christian customs, the Peruvians and the Mexicans are no less capable than the Greeks and the Romans and other nations of Europe and Asia.”\(^{131}\) Based upon these conclusions, he determined that those who claimed that the Indians lacked rationality were in the end the ones who were irrational. Clearly speaking to his European brethren, Florencia added that “we are observing and experiencing in them such sagacity and ingenuity . . . that only those without reason, intelligence, and understanding would deny them understanding, intelligence, and reason.”\(^{132}\)

But more than anything it was Mexico-Tenochtitlan itself that made manifest the “superior capabilities”\(^{133}\) of the Mexica. To gain a picture of the grandeur of the city in “heathen times,” Florencia cited various passages from the *Historia verdadera de la conquista* by Bernal Díaz. In his history the conquistador described, with mystical allure, the plazas, markets, buildings, temples, and causeways connecting the city to the mainland of the valley. He imaginatively detailed the palaces of Moctezuma II by focusing on his collection of animals, gardens, elaborate meals, and his stores of silver.

---

\(^{129}\) Ibid. (“que declara y define que son racionales como los demás hombres, capaces de la doctrina cristiana y del bautismo, y como tales creados para el cielo”).

\(^{130}\) Anthony Pagden provides a detailed study of Acosta’s “comparative ethnology,” with particular emphasis on the *De procuranda*, in *The Fall of Natural Man*, 146–197.

\(^{131}\) BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 5v (“prueba que para recibir el evangelio, y apprehender los misterios altísimos de la fe, y para ser instruidos en las costumbres cristianas, no son menos capaces que los griegos y los romanos, y las demás naciones de Europa y Asia, los peruanos y mexicanos”).

\(^{132}\) Ibid., ff. 5r–5v (“Porque estamos viendo y experimentando en ellos tanta sagacidad de ingenio . . . que sólo les negara entendimiento, discurso y razón quien no tuviere ni razón, ni discurso, ni entendimiento”).

\(^{133}\) Ibid., f. 6r (“eran hombres de muchas letras y de superiores capacidades”).
and gold. Florencia concluded, based upon Bernal Díaz’s account, that it was worthy to ponder how “in a place where antiquity did not believe that there was habitable land the Spaniards would find (similar to how the Old World admires Venice) not only land but water in which to live and in the midst of it a city as great as Mexico.”\textsuperscript{134} Not only this, but in a region that the ancients claimed was depopulated there was “a kingdom so opulent and rich, a republic of such civility, [and] a king of such capacity.”\textsuperscript{135} In Florencia’s estimation, there was no other “heathen monarch” who had learned the art of governance better than Moctezuma II, neither in America nor anywhere else in the world. His assessment of the Mexica king is significant. “Settle it amongst yourselves over there those of you who judged a man to be a barbarian,” he challenged his European brethren, “who knew how to give more than two million, most of it in gold and silver!”\textsuperscript{136}

The capacity of Moctezuma II as a statesman became a reflection of the general fertility of the Mexica empire. Florencia reasoned that the opulence of any given kingdom is measured by its king and the wealth of a city by its master. He was impressed with how the tribute of silver and gold collected by Mexica kings “remained in Mexico and did not leave for any other part (as it goes out today) . . . in more than five hundred years that the monarchy endured.”\textsuperscript{137} It may have been at this point in his provincial chronicle that Florencia’s “zealous censors,” sensitive to the politics of empire, realized that he was criticizing more than just the views of his European brethren on the

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., f. 8r (“Digno es de ponderación, que en un sitio donde la antigüedad no creyó que hubiera tierra en que vivir, hallasen los españoles (lo que en Venecia admira el Mundo Antiguo) no sólo tierra sino agua en que morar, y en medio de ella una ciudad tan grande como México”).
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid. (“Y que en una región reputada por despoblada de gentes hubiese un reino tan opulento y rico, una república de tanta policía, un rey de tanta capacidad . . . dado haya habido otro rey monarca gentil, no sólo en la América, sino fuera de ella, que se le haya aventajado en el arte de gobernar”).
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., f. 12r (“¡Resuélvanlo allá los que tuvieron por bárbaro a un hombre, que supo dar . . . más de dos millones, lo más de ello en oro y plata!”).
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., f. 10v (“y esto se estancaba en México y no salía de ella para ninguna parte (como hoy sale) . . . que en más de quinientos años que duraba la monarquía”).
inhabitants and nature of the New World. Given that the Inquisition only concerned itself with the censorship of published books, the printing press was rigorously controlled by the state.\textsuperscript{138} King Philip II issued a royal decree in 1556 stating that no one could publish anything on America without the direct permission of the Council of the Indies.\textsuperscript{139} Acosta had been influenced by these editorial restrictions because the Padre General, Claudio Aquaviva (1543–1615), made sure that the De procuranda was thoroughly examined between 1577 and 1588. Rolena Adorno notes that the text was significantly modified, so much so that gone “was every single reference or critical judgement that could harm, in the opinion of the censors, the prestige of Spain in Europe.”\textsuperscript{140} The Historia de la Provincia was revised in a similar fashion.

Writing about Amerindian civilizations in a favourable light, as Florencia had done, was controversial throughout the colonial era because it placed into question the justice of Spanish conquest and dominion in the New World. After the publication of the Monarquía indiana few religious scholars, with the exception of Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, studied the pre-Hispanic past with the same zeal as the early mendicant friars. Benjamin Keen (1913–2002) has argued that the “baroque vision of the Aztecs” was generally characterized by hostility as the “indigenist movement with Las Casas had disappeared as a political force.” The economic, military, and political weakness of the


\textsuperscript{139} Mohler, “Publishing in Colonial Spanish America,” 262. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries religious men such as the Franciscan Pedro Aguado, the Mercedarian Martín de Murúa, the Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún, and the Jesuit José de Acosta were all forced to remove sections from their histories. For Aguado, see Juan Friede, “La censura española del siglo XVI y los libros de historia de América,” \textit{Revista de Historia de América} 47 (1959): 45–94. For Murúa, see Rolena Adorno, “Estudiosos y censores de la Historia General del Perú (1611–1613) de fray Martín de Murúa,” \textit{Letras} 75, nos. 107–108 (2004): 47–72. And for Sahagún and Acosta, see Rolena Adorno, “Literary Production and Suppression: Reading and Writing about Amerindians in Colonial Spanish America,” \textit{Dispositio} 11, nos. 28–29 (1986): 8–15.

Spanish crown during the seventeenth century “tended to harden these anti-Indian attitudes and to discourage criticism of the Conquest and Spain’s Indian policy.”\textsuperscript{141} Even though Florencia’s description of the Mexica was in some points similar to that of Las Casas, he never once questioned the presence of the “Christian monarchy of our Catholic kings and lords” and the “Catholic empire in this New World.”\textsuperscript{142} His allegiance to his monarch, however, did not mean that Florencia was shy when criticism was warranted, something his “zealous censors” dutifully noted.

After Florencia had finished discussing the “greatness of Mexico . . . in its antiquity” he turned his attention to the “greatness of New Spain and Mexico after it was made Christian by divine mercy.”\textsuperscript{143} His first order of business was to explain why the kingdom under the former monarchy of Moctezuma II had been officially renamed New Spain after conquest. “What is certain,” Florencia argued with pride, “is that they did this because they experienced that it produced everything the fertility of Europe provides, not only in the same measure but in many cases much more.”\textsuperscript{144} He noted the urban markets throughout the kingdom, specifically Mexico City, which were filled with livestock, wild game, birds, and fish “in such abundance!”\textsuperscript{145} Engaging in transatlantic comparisons of seed time and harvest, he explained that there were no plants grown in America that did not produce either similar or higher yields than those of Europe. The “fruits, whether

\textsuperscript{141} Benjamin Keen, \textit{The Aztec Image in Western Thought} (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1971), 173, 174.
\textsuperscript{142} BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, ff. 12v, 13r (“la monarquía cristiana de nuestros católicos reyes y señores”) (“en este Nuevo Orbe el imperio católico”).
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., ff. 6r, 12v (“La grandeza de México . . . de su antigüedad”) (“De la grandeza de la Nueva España y México después que por la misericordia divina se hizo cristiano”).
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., f. 13r (“Lo cierto es que lo hicieron porque experimentaron que en ella se daba todo lo que lleva la fertilidad de España, no sólo con igualdad sino en lo más de ella con ventajas”).
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., f. 13v (“en tanta abundancia”).
native to the land or foreign like those from Spain, are so many and very good” and the fields of wheat and maize produced crops with “such fertility” that “those who come from Europe” look on in admiration.\textsuperscript{146} In order to capture the general agricultural productivity of New Spain, Florencia concluded that “everyone ate bread in abundance” that there was still some “left over for other kingdoms after the great sack of Campeche, Habana, and the other islands of the Barlovento.”\textsuperscript{147}

Florencia also detailed the profitability of mining, stating that large quantities of gold and silver were concentrated in Mexico City, the “head of this empire and centre of

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid. (“las frutas, así las naturales de la tierra como de las peregrinas de España, son tantas y tan buenas”) (“se da con tanta feracidad . . . y los que vienen de Europa lo admiran”).

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., f. 14r (“y que todos comían pan en abundancia, ¡y sobraba para otros reinos después de la grande saca para Campeche, para la Habana y demás islas de Barlovento”).
all the riches of New Spain.” ¹⁴⁸  He tried to demonstrate that the northern kingdom was “just as fertile as Peru,” pointing out how some even believed that its subsoil yielded greater amounts of mineral deposits. ¹⁴⁹ The land was so rich that Florencia claimed to have heard from a few miners that one “will not find in all of New Spain a stone so poor that some sort of metal cannot be extracted from it.” ¹⁵⁰ This truth was confirmed for him in the mines of Pachuca, Guanajuato, Huautla, and Taxco that “have not decreased in their abundance” ¹⁵¹ after more than a century of activity. Other newer mines in San Luis Potosí, Parral, Sombrerete, and Sonora “have yielded so much that it cannot be expressed in words, although some invent and imagine bridges made out of bars and plates of silver from Veracruz to Spain.” ¹⁵² But the ship loads exporting these metals from the gulf coast to Spain, Florencia noted with concern, were at risk of being intercepted in the Caribbean by “foreign heretics, enemies of the crown of Castile.” ¹⁵³ He referenced one case from 1628 when a fleet under the direction of Juan de Benavides was captured by pirates off the coast of Havana. To their delight they “found such immense riches that they began to hold New Spain in high esteem, and with these [riches] they enriched themselves and were so driven [for more] that they have placed the power of Spain in the state that we lament today.” ¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., f. 16v (“cabeza del imperio y centro de todas las riquezas de la Nueva España”).
¹⁴⁹ Ibid., f. 14v (“es tan fértil como el Perú, y algunos quieren que más”).
¹⁵⁰ Ibid., f. 15r (“que he oído afirmar a algunos mineros en el conocimiento de los metales, bien entendidos que no hallarán en toda la Nueva España piedra tan pobre que no se pueda sacar de ella algún metal”).
¹⁵¹ Ibid. (“que en más de ciento cincuenta años que ha que se labran, no ha descaecido su abundancia”).
¹⁵² Ibid. (“han dado tanto que no se puede significar, aunque se hagan o imaginen puentes de plata de sus barras y tejos desde la Veracruz a España”).
¹⁵³ Ibid., f. 16r (“los herejes extranjeros, enemigos de la corona de Castilla”).
¹⁵⁴ Ibid. (“en que hallaron tan inmensa riqueza que hicieron más alto concepto de la Nueva España, y con ella se enriquecieron y animaron tanto, que han puesto el poder de España en el estado que hoy lamentamos”).
There were other means by which novohispano silver found its way into the hands of other nations. Mining production significantly increased in the final three decades of the seventeenth century, but as Henry Kamen points out, the “bulk of the silver coming to Europe really belonged to foreigners.” The Spanish crown had several military costs to cover, and with a limited amount of resources it used American bullion to purchase goods from foreign merchants. Although Kamen argues that “Spaniards stubbornly refused to recognize that their wealth had to be shared in order to be productive”\(^{155}\) in an increasingly “globalized” economy, it was difficult, at times, for creoles to accept this from their vantage point on the other side of the Atlantic. After years of working in the seaports of the Spanish empire, Florencia concluded that “in Spain only the smallest part is seen, to its misfortune, of what leaves”\(^{156}\) from New Spain. He discussed this matter with a “very knowledgeable person” of European affairs and was told that the wealth of Mexico City and all of New Spain “should not be measured by the greatness of its imports, as in other cities and kingdoms, but instead by the countless number of its exports.”\(^{157}\) Drawing upon some of his own observations, Florencia judged that other European kingdoms developed political structures to insure that the gold and silver entering their realms was preserved within. Although the “greatness of Spain and the wealth of the Indies”\(^{158}\) maintained the empire afloat, he argued that it was necessary to adapt some of the practices of other nations to avoid its economic ruin.

\(^{155}\) Kamen, *Empire*, 436.

\(^{156}\) BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 8, f. 15v (“¡que en España sólo se ve por su desgracia la menor parte de lo que va!”).

\(^{157}\) Ibid., f. 16v (“que decía una persona bien entendida, y de muy buenas noticias de otros reinos, que la riqueza de Nueva España ni la opulencia de México, no se habían de medir como en otras ciudades y reinos por la grandeza de sus entradas, sino por las cantidades sin cuanto de sus salidas”).

\(^{158}\) Ibid., f. 17r (“la grandeza de España, y la riqueza de las Indias”).
Regardless of the amount of wealth that flowed out of New Spain, Florencia still believed that Mexico City was home to “everything good and the best of Spain in abundance.” But given that the viceregal capital had been persistently plagued by inundations from pre-Hispanic to colonial times, these natural disasters “could have been an occasion for its ruin.” Specifically concentrating on the flood of 1629, Florencia typologically compared Mexico City to Noah’s ark in the great deluge of Genesis, claiming that the Christian God preserved within its walls “a clergy so exemplar, religious orders so holy, virgins so pure, a republic so pious, [and] a people so inclined to what is good.” They came out purified by the tribulations of so many floods as “settlers of another New World Christendom” amongst the “immense body of heathens in New Mexico, New Galicia, New Vizcaya, Sinaloa, Sonora, Topia, and amongst the Tepehuanes, Tarahumares, and other innumerable nations that today acknowledge God as Catholics but before worshipped the Devil as barbarians.” The censored section ends abruptly at the beginning of a new chapter. In it Florencia declared that through its many conversions Mexico City and all of New Spain were chosen by God to repair the damage to the church in the Old World caused by Martin Luther. The “spiritual conquest” of Spanish America was indeed of global significance and only moved forward through the proper preservation of precious metals.

159 Ibid., f. 18v (“en ella concurre todo lo bueno y lo mejor de España con abundancia”).
160 Ibid., f. 19v (“una grandeza de México que pudiera haber sido ocasión de su ruina”).
161 Ibid., f. 20v (“de un clero tan ejemplar, de unas religiones tan santas, de unas vírgenes tan puras, de una república tan piadosa, de un pueblo tan inclinado a lo bueno”).
162 Ibid. (“De donde, purificados con las tribulaciones de tantas inundaciones, habían de salir tantos pobladores de otro Nuevo Mundo de cristianidad, como se ha fundado sobre lo que ya era de Cristo en la inmensa gentilidad del Nuevo México, Nueva Galicia y Nueva Vizcaya, de Sinaloa, Sonora, Topia, tepehuanes, tarahumaras y otras innumerables naciones que hoy reconocen católicos a Dios, y antes adoraban bárbaros al demonio”).
After surveying manuscript histories in Jesuit archives, Florencia determined that the foundation narrative of the Society of Jesus in New Spain was in need of revision. Although his brethren had dutifully promoted their participation in the “spiritual conquest,” their religious province had gone through significant changes throughout the seventeenth century, inspiring him to emphasize contemporary needs in his Historia de la Provincia. But as he wrote about the arrival of the Jesuits to La Florida and Mexico City, Florencia did not conceal his love for his patria and his general concern of what he perceived to be the declining state of the Spanish empire. By engaging with his own experiences of America and early colonial historiography, he challenged the idea that Indians were incapable of the Christian faith and that New Spain was a degenerate land handed over to Satan. His patriotic rhetoric, however, should not be interpreted as an early cry for independence. Florencia remained loyal to his monarch and desired that Spanish dominion and the Christian faith be spread even further into uncharted territory. When he surveyed his homeland from the viceregal centre to the frontier he concluded that the “greatness of the land is such, that up until today its northern end has not been reached, from which it extends without limit; this is New Spain.”

163 Historia de la Provincia, 10 (“La grandeza de la tierra es tanta, que hasta ahora no se le halla fin por la parte del Norte, por donde se extiende sin término, lo que la Nueva España”).
Conclusion

Francisco de Florencia, glory and honour of the Sacred Company of Jesus, celebrated historian of the principal images of Our Lady that are venerated in this kingdom, whose fame endures and will endure immortally in all those who have read his writings.

– Manuel Joachin de Egüíara y Eguren, 1757

The sacred historian’s craft, as this study has shown, was far more creative than just the rote compiling of manuscript and printed works. Creole scholars exercised their pious imaginations in the selection of their sources by making strategic changes to older texts. They added their own personal interpretations of the sacred past to reflect their own needs as well as those of their religious institutions and patrons. To properly preserve in writing the virtues of their “saints,” images, and religious provinces they searched for trustworthy evidence across a diverse range of documents scattered in libraries and archives on both sides of the Atlantic. Given that they wrote as subjects of the Habsburg monarchy, they used their sacred histories as a political medium to both criticize the Spanish crown and negotiate their status within the Spanish empire. It was through the sacred that creole scholars imagined their multiple patrias and constructed their own local, imperial, and Christian identities.

I have concentrated on the religious career of Francisco de Florencia to examine creole ideas of history because his experiences in the Spanish and Catholic worlds so richly demonstrate the interconnections between the New World and the Old. Throughout this study I have emphasized how Florencia’s travels and pilgrimages in “Europe”—both as a continent and as an idea—were central to how he constructed his identity as a member of the “creole nation” in his sacred histories. But his observations as a traveller
and pilgrim in the Atlantic and Mediterranean worlds also confirmed his sense of belonging to a larger spiritual kinship of believers that transcended “national” differences. What John H. Elliott wrote more than forty years ago still holds true today. “America and Europe,” he rightfully pointed out, “should not be subjected to a historiographical divorce, however shadowy their partnership may often appear before the later seventeenth century.” The New World transformed the Old as much as it was transformed by it. Creoles such as Florencia drew upon customs, materials objects, and the sacred from both sides of the Atlantic to both define themselves and their many spiritual and political communities.

Many of Florencia’s research habits as a sacred historian are representative of religious scholarship more generally throughout the early modern Spanish world. I have analyzed his sacred histories as an inter-related and cumulative body of work to uncover the reading habits and investigating logic of creole scholars in New Spain during the seventeenth century. It has been my contention that modern binaries between history and hagiography obscure one’s understanding of baroque historical sensibilities in Spanish America. Since men like Florencia freely moved back and forth between what today is considered medieval and early modern forms of historical practice, I have intentionally described sacred historians as “scholars” and their work as “investigations.” I agree with Simon Ditchfield when he states that “one must be careful not to confuse the emergence of a recognizably ‘modern’ historical method with that of modern historical

EPIGRAPH: Manuel Joachín de Eguíara y Eguren, “Parecer,” in Francisco de Florencia, Origen de los dos célebres santuarios de la Nueva Galicia (Mexico City: Imprenta de la Bibliotheca Mexicana, 1757), n.p. (“el R. P. Francisco de Florencia, lustre y honor de la Sagrada Compañía de Jesúis, Historiador celeberrimo de las principales Imágenes de Nuestra Señora, que se veneran en este Reino, cuya fama dura, y durará inmortal en cuantas han leído sus Escritos, y son sabidores de sus hechos”).

1 Elliott, The Old World and the New, 7.
consciousness.” Florencia, along with other sacred historians, searched after archival evidence and cited many of his sources, as is still the case today, but his notion of historical “truth” and “facts” guiding his interpretation of these sources was rooted in the supernatural, a foreign concept for most contemporary historians concerned solely with human actions.

The vision of New Spain that Florencia put forward in his corpus of sacred histories reflects the multiple layers of creole patriotism in the colonial historiography of Spanish America. Although he incorporated large portions from the work of other creole and European scholars into his own, what sets Florencia apart from his contemporaries was his ambitious desire to collect and connect sacred traditions from all over New Spain. In this study I have moved beyond the central valley of Mexico in my analysis of creole patriotism to include large portions of what today is the southern United States and Central America. Sacred historians of the early modern Spanish world were of course not confined to the national borders of modern countries—both geographically and historiographically—that have guided the historian’s craft throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra appropriately explains that there are “powerful ideologies and epistemologies that cause scholars to believe that the United States and Latin America are two ontologically different spaces, the former belonging to the “West” and the latter to the “Third World.”” When the work of sacred historians, particularly Florencia, is understood in the context of their own geographic concepts it becomes clear that the frontier was just as much a part of their New Spain as the viceregal centre.

---

Although the sacred historian’s craft was, for the most part, restricted to a small sector of the colonial populace, everyone—Europeans, creoles, Indians, Africans, and castas—contributed to the origins of sacred traditions and the development of local Catholicisms. I have presented sacred histories in this study as shared narratives crafted not only by Europeans and creoles but by members of all socioracial groups. This collective process, which is representative of the larger cultural and political negotiations characteristic of colonial societies, is nicely illustrated in Florencia’s description of the “pilgrim image” of the Virgin of Remedies. A “pious person of confidence” went forth with this image together with a few Indians to various pueblos in the surrounding region of the shrine at Totoltepec, announcing the Virgin’s arrival so that the faithful had sufficient time to properly prepare for her entrance. When she finally arrived, the inhabitants at each stop came out singing and sounding their bells; they carpeted the ground with sedges, offered up arches of flowers, and burned candles and incense. After the “pilgrim image” was placed on the altar of the local church or chapel “everyone came out, Spaniards, Indians, blacks, and all other types of people to pray before her and to entrust her with their personal affairs and needs.”

***************

Antonio de Robles recorded the following in his diary on June 29, 1695: “This day Father Francisco de Florencia, a religious of the Company of Jesus, died in San

---

4. La milagrosa invención, 62r (“donde acuden todos, Españoles, Indios, y Negros, y demás fuertes de gente, a rezar delante de ella, encomendar cada uno sus negocios, y necesidades”).
Pedro y San Pablo of a very old age; he wrote and printed various works.” Florencia was seventy-five years old when he passed away in Mexico City and he appears to have been busy preparing other manuscripts for publication. His travel and pilgrim experiences in both the New World and the Old significantly influenced how he wrote about the sacred of New Spain in the final decade and a half of his life. But his physical and religious peregrinations also inspired him, together with the Christian faithful in all other regions of Christendom, to view life itself as a spiritual journey. “[It was] for heaven that we were created,” Florencia piously stated, “pass[ing] from the desert of this sad life to that happy patria of eternal rest.” Although he believed that social distinctions and “national” differences would be erased in Christian paradise, he knew that this would never be accomplished on the earth. The “love of the patria” was indeed a “powerful magnet” attracting Florencia to the “things of the Indies.”

---

5 Robles, Diario, 3:20 (“Este día murió en San Pedro y San Pablo el padre Francisco de Florencia, religioso de la Compañía de Jesús, de muy crecida edad; escribió e imprimió diversas obras”). His death was recorded in another diary of the seventeenth century. BNAH, Fondo Jesuita, carpeta IX, doc. 11ª (“El P. Francisco de Florencia murió miércoles 29 de junio en S. Pedro y S. Pablo de crecida edad”).

6 Descripción histórica, 77 (“del Cielo, para donde fuimos criados; y excitando a servir a Dios, para pasar del desierto de esta triste vida a aquella alegre Patria, donde todo es descanso”).
Appendix A
The Zodiaco Mariano

The following table is based upon the Marian images from New Spain that Francisco de Florencia and Juan Antonio de Oviedo included in their Zodiaco Mariano. Oviedo put asterisks beside the images that he added to Florencia’s manuscript, both within the table of contents and in the body of the text. I have done the same in this table, but with one addition. Oviedo did not place an asterisk beside Nuestra Señora de Santa María la Mayor (24), an image he claimed that Florencia was unfamiliar with. The page numbers in the third column correspond to those in the 1755 edition and are generally in the numerical order in which they appear in the text. But given that Oviedo obtained information on Nuestra Señora de los Dolores (98) after he had finished his manuscript, he included this image at the end of the Zodiaco Mariano as an appendix. I have placed this Virgin at the end of the section on Guatemala instead of at the end of the table. And Florencia and Oviedo did not provide titles for a few of the images in their Marian compendium (6, 32, 90, 104), which is why they appear as Nuestra Señora.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Devotion</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part I: Bishopric of Yucatán</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Nuestra Señora de Izamal</td>
<td>Izamal</td>
<td>1–21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción</td>
<td>Colomul</td>
<td>21–22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nuestra Señora del Misterio de la Natividad</td>
<td>Becal</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reina de los Ángeles</td>
<td>Tiz</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Nuestra Señora de la Concepción</td>
<td>Mani</td>
<td>22–23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Nuestra Señora</td>
<td>Yabí</td>
<td>23–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Nuestra Señora de la Purificación o Candelaria</td>
<td>Vaimas</td>
<td>24–25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part II: Archbishopric of Mexico</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe</td>
<td>Tepeyac</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Nuestra Señora de los Remedios</td>
<td>Naucalpan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Nuestra Señora de la Piedad</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Nuestra Señora de la Bala</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Nuestra Señora de la Merced</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Nuestra Señora del Rosario</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Nuestra Señora de Santa María la Redonda</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Nuestra Señora de la Consolación</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Nuestra Señora del Tránsito</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Nuestra Señora de la Paz</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Nuestra Señora del Convento de Santa María de Gracia</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Nuestra Señora del Buen Suceso</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Nuestra Señora de la Asunción</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Nuestra Señora de la Concepción</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. *Nuestra Señora de la Fuente</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Nuestra Señora de Santa María la Mayor</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Nuestra Señora de los Dolores</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Nuestra Señora de la Antigua</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Nuestra Señora de la Luz</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Nuestra Señora de la Concepción</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Nuestra Señora de Loreto</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Nuestra Señora de la Purísima</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Nuestra Señora de Loreto</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Nuestra Señora</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Nuestra Señora de Loreto</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Nuestra Señora de las Angustias</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Nuestra Señora del Coro</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. *Nuestra Señora de las Lágrimas</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. *Nuestra Señora del Socorro</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. *Nuestra Señora del Sagrario (Macana)</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Nuestra Señora de los Remedios</td>
<td>Tepepan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Nuestra Señora Tecaxic</td>
<td>Toluca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Nuestra Señora de la Concepción</td>
<td>El Cardonal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Nuestra Señora de la Asunción</td>
<td>Zoquizoquipan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Nuestra Señora del Monte o Virgen de la Candelaria</td>
<td>Xomultepec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria</td>
<td>Chalma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Nuestra Señora de Tonalá</td>
<td>Tonalá</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Nuestra Señora de Loreto</td>
<td>Tepotzotlán</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Nuestra Señora de Pópulo</td>
<td>Tepotzotlán</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de la Escalera</td>
<td>Tepozotlán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe</td>
<td>Querétaro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>*Nuestra Señora del Pueblito</td>
<td>Querétaro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Part III: Bishoprics of Puebla and Oaxaca</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>La Conquistadora</td>
<td>Puebla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora del Carmen</td>
<td>Puebla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora del Pópulo (Santa María del Mayor)</td>
<td>Puebla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de Loreto</td>
<td>Puebla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de la Defensa</td>
<td>Puebla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de la Soledad o Manga</td>
<td>Puebla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>*Nuestra Señora de la Soledad</td>
<td>Puebla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>*Nuestra Señora del Refugio</td>
<td>Puebla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>*Nuestra Señora del Rosario</td>
<td>Puebla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de Cosamaloapan</td>
<td>Cosamaloapan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de la Escalera</td>
<td>San Juan de Ulúa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>*La Divina Pastora</td>
<td>Veracruz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de los Dolores</td>
<td>Acacingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de Ocotlán</td>
<td>Ocotlán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de la Soledad</td>
<td>Antequera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora del Socorro</td>
<td>Oaxaca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora del Carmen</td>
<td>Oaxaca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe</td>
<td>Oaxaca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora del Pópulo (Santa María del Mayor)</td>
<td>Oaxaca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora del Rosario</td>
<td>Oaxaca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora del Rosario</td>
<td>Tlapaltepeque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de la Piedad</td>
<td>Jayacatlán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Part IV: Archbishopric of Guatemala</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de la Santísima Virgen del Rosario</td>
<td>Ciudad Real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de la Merced</td>
<td>Ciudad Real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de Sosozoltenango</td>
<td>Sosozoltenango</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de Tlacuazintepeque</td>
<td>Tlacuazintepeque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora del Rosario</td>
<td>Chipacaque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de la Merced</td>
<td>Chiantla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de la Merced</td>
<td>Ostuncalco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>*Nuestra Señora del Socorro</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>*Nuestra Señora de la Merced</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>*Nuestra Señora de (Alcántara) Loreto</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora de la Concepción</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Nuestra Señora del Coro</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>*Nuestra Señora la Pobre</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>*Nuestra Señora de la Concepción</td>
<td>Xalmolonga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>*Nuestra Señora</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91. *Nuestra Señora de los Dolores</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>254–255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92. Nuestra Señora de la Asunción</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93. Nuestra Señora de la Natividad</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94. Nuestra Señora del Rosario</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95. Nuestra Señora del Viejo</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>255–258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96. Nuestra Señora del Buen Suceso</td>
<td>León</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97. Nuestra Señora de la Concepción</td>
<td>Colama</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98. *Nuestra Señora de los Dolores</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>326–328</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part V: Bishoprics of Michoacán, Guadalajara, and Guadiana (Durango)**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100. Nuestra Señora de la Salud la Peregrina</td>
<td>Pátzcuaro</td>
<td>264–267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101. Nuestra Señora Zitácuaro</td>
<td>San Juan Zitácuaro</td>
<td>276–282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102. *Nuestra Señora de Guanajuato</td>
<td>El Real de Minas</td>
<td>282–286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103. Nuestra Señora del Misterio de la Purísima Concepción</td>
<td>Celaya</td>
<td>286–287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104. Nuestra Señora</td>
<td>Pátzcuaro</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105. Nuestra Señora de la Santa María la Mayor</td>
<td>Pátzcuaro</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106. Nuestra Señora de Guaniqueo</td>
<td>Guaniqueo</td>
<td>287–288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107. Nuestra Señora de la Concepción</td>
<td>Cuitzillo</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108. Nuestra Señora de la Escalera</td>
<td>Tarímbaro</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109. Nuestra Señora de Zapopan</td>
<td>Zapopan</td>
<td>288–302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110. Nuestra Señora de San Juan</td>
<td>San Juan de los Lagos</td>
<td>302–321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111. Nuestra Señora del Zape</td>
<td>Zape</td>
<td>321–325</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography

Archives and Manuscript Collections

Archivo del Venerable Cabildo Metropolitano de la Catedral de Puebla (Puebla, Mexico)

Archivo Histórico Parroquial de San Miguel del Milagro (San Miguel del Milagro, Mexico)
  -Disciplinar

Archivo General de Indias (Seville, Spain)
  -Contratación
  -Gobierno

Archivo General de la Nación de México (Mexico City, Mexico)
  -Archivo Histórico de Hacienda
  -Bienes Nacionales
  -Historia
  -Jesuitas
  -Indios
  -Misiones
  -Reales Cédulas Duplicadas

Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado de México (Mexico City, Mexico)
  -Fondo Episcopal

Archivo Histórico de la Basílica de Guadalupe (Mexico City, Mexico)
  -Santuario de Guadalupe
  -Secretaría Capitular

Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de México de la Compañía de Jesús (Mexico City, Mexico)
  -Fondos Documentales
  -Documentos Antiguos

Archivo Nacional de Chile (Santiago, Chile)
  -Fondo Jesuita
  -Fondo Varios

Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (Rome, Italy)
  -Baetica
  -Mexicana
Biblioteca Eusebio Francisco Kino (Mexico City, Mexico)
  -Fondo Reservado

Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia “Dr. Eusebio Dávalos Hurtado” (Mexico City, Mexico)
  -Fondo Jesuita

Biblioteca Nacional de México (Mexico City, Mexico)
  -Fondo Reservado
  -Manuscritos

Biblioteca Nacional de España (Madrid, Spain)
  -Sala Cervantes

Biblioteca Palafoxiana (Puebla, Mexico)
  -Manuscritos

Hubert H. Bancroft Library (Berkeley, USA)
  -Mexican Manuscripts

Huntington Library (San Marino, USA)
  -Huntington Manuscripts

Nettie Lee Benson Library (Austin, USA)
  -Genaro García Collection
  -Edmundo O’Gorman Collection

Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid, Spain)
  -Jesuitas

Real Biblioteca (Madrid, Spain)
  -Manuscritos

Saint Augustine Historical Society (Saint Augustine, USA)
  -Cathedral Parish Records

Bibliographic Catalogues, Dictionaries, and Encyclopaedias


_______.

Franciscus de Florencia.” In Bibliotheca Hispana Nueva, o, de los escritores
españoles que brillaron desde el año MD hasta el de MDCLXXXIV [1783–1788].
Edited and translated by Miguel Matilla Martínez. 2 vols. Madrid: Fundación
Universitaria Española, 1999.

Asselbergs, Florine. “Florencia, Francisco de.” In The Oxford Encyclopedia of

Beristain y Souza, José Mariano. “Florencia, Francisco de.” In Biblioteca
hispanoamericana septentrinal [1816]. Edited by Fortino Hipólito Vera. 2nd ed.

Bibliógrafo americanista. Lima: Centro Nacional de Documentación e

Decorme, Gerardo. “Florencia, Francisco de.” In Menologio de los varones más
señaladas en virtud y letras, de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva
España (preparado para la celebración del IV Centenario de la fundación de la
Compañía) [1934]. Biblioteca Francisco Eusebio Kino, Fondo Reservado.

________. “Florencia, Francisco de.” In Mi Fichero. Breve guía bibliográfica de los
jesuitas mexicanos en la época colonial [1943]. Biblioteca Nacional de México,
Fondo Reservado, Manuscritos, MS1804.

“Florencia, Francisco de.” In Diccionario Porrúa de historia, biografía y geografía de

“Florencia, Francisco de.” In Enciclopedia de México. 12 vols. Mexico City:

Medina, L. “Florencia, Francisco de.” In Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús.
4 vols. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu; Madrid: Universidad

Orozco y Berra, Manuel et al. “Florencia, Francisco de.” In Diccionario Universal de
Historia y de Geografía. 7 vols. Mexico City: Tipografía de Rafael, 1853–1856.

Osores y Sotomayor, Félix. “Florencia, Francisco de.” In Noticias de algunos alumnos o
colegiates del seminario más antiguo de San Pedro, San Pablo y San Ildefonso de
México, insignes por su piedad, literatura y empleos. Nettie Lee Benson Library,
Genaro García Collection, G109.

________. “Florencia, Francisco de.” In Noticias bio-bibliográficas de alumnos
distinguidos del Colegio de San Pedro, San Pablo y San Ildefonso de México, hoy
Escuela N. Preparatoria. 2 vols. Mexico City: Librería de la Vda. de Ch. Bouret,
1908.
Sedano, Francisco. “Florencia, Francisco de.” In Noticias de México, recogidas por D. Francisco Sedano, vecino de esta ciudad desde el año de 1756, coordinadas, escritas de nuevo y puestas por orden alfabético en 1800. Edited by Joaquín García Icazbalceta. Mexico City: Imprenta de J. R. Barbedillo, 1880.


**Published and Manuscript Works by Francisco de Florencia**


Florencia, Francisco de. Casos decididos en materia de penitencia [1668], Biblioteca Nacional de México, Fondo Reservado, Manuscritos, MS688.

________. Menologio de los varones más señalados en perfección religiosa, de la Compañía de Jesús de la Provincia de Nueva España, presentado de orden de la Congregación Provincial, que se juntó en México por noviembre del año de 1669. Barcelona: Jacinto Andreu, 1671.

________. Exemplar vida, y gloriosa muerte por Cristo del fervoroso P. Luis de Medina de la Compañía de Jesús de la religiosa Provincia de Andalucía pasó a la conquista espiritual de las Islas de los Ladrones, que hoy se llaman Marianas, el año de 1667 y en ellas coronó su predicación con su martirio el año de 1670. Seville: Juan Francisco de Blas, 1673.

________. Sermón, que predicó el P. Francisco de Florencia de la Compañía de Jesús en la Santa Iglesia Catedral de la Ciudad de los Ángeles, a la solemne festividad del príncipe de los ápostoles N. P. S. Pedro, a quien lo dedica, y consagra, y como a su milagrosa bienhechor, y patrón antigo de su casa y antepasados el Capitán D. Gabriel Carillo de Aranda, alcalde ordinario de primer voto la
segunda vez, de la cesarea, y augusta ciudad de la Puebla. Mexico City: Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio, 1680.

_______. Sermón, en la solemne dedicación del templo, que costeó, y erigió P. Pedro de Medina a Picazo de la Compañía de Jesús en el Colegio, y Casa de Probación del Pueblo de Tepotzotlán a 9 de septiembre de este año de 1682. Mexico City: Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio, 1682.

_______. Sermón a la festividad del bienaventurado San Luis Gonzaga de la Compañía de Jesús, Marqués de Castellón, príncipe del imperio, predicado en el Colegio Máximo de San Pedro, y San Pablo de México. Mexico City: Juan de Ribera, 1683.

_______. Relación de la ejemplar, y religiosa vida del Padre Nicolás de Guadalajara, profeso de nuestra Compañía de Jesús a los reverendos padres, y charísimos hermanos de la venerable y religiosa Provincia de Nueva España. A quienes la dirige, y dedica el P. Fransisco de Florencia de la misma Compañía de Jesús. Con cuatro breves tratados espirituales, para las almas, que tratan de virtud, compuestos por el mismo Padre Nicolás de Guadalajara. Mexico City: Juan de Ribera, 1684.

_______. Sermón, que predicó el Padre Francisco de Florencia de la Compañía de Jesús en el concurso del octavario de la dedicación del sumptuoso Templo de la gloriosa Madre Santa Teresa, que con el título, y advocación de N. Señora de la Antigua, fabricó, y dedicó el Capitán Esteban de Molina Moxquera el séptimo día 17 de septiembre de 1684. Mexico City: Juan de Ribera, 1685.

_______. La milagrosa invención de un tesoro escondido en un campo, que halló un venturoso cacique, y escondió en su casa, para gozarlo a sus solas. Patente ya en el santuario de los Remedios en su admirable imagen de Nuestra Señora; señalada en milagros; invocada por patrona de las lluvias, y temporales; defensora de los españoles, abogada de los indios, conquistadora de México, erario universal de las misericordias de Dios, ciudad de refugio para todos los que a ella se acogen. Noticias de su origen, y venidas a México; maravillas, que ha obrado con los que la invocan; descripción de su casa, y meditaciones para sus novenas. Mexico City: María de Benavides, Viuda de Juan de Ribera, 1685.

_______. La estrella del norte de México, aparecida al rayar el día de la luz evangélica en este Nuevo Mundo, en la cumbre de el cerro de Tepeyacac orilla del mar Tezcucoano, a un natural recién convertido; pintada tres días después milagrosamente en su tilma, o capa de lienzo, delante del obispo, y de su familia en su casa obispal. Para luz en la fe a los indios; para rumbo cierto a los españoles en la virtud; para serenidad de las tempestuosas inundaciones de la laguna. En la historia de la milagrosa imagen de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de México, que se apareció en la manta de Juan Diego. Mexico City: Por María de Benavides, Viuda de Juan de Ribera, 1688.
Descripción histórica, y moral del yermo de San Miguel, de las cuevas en el reino de la Nueva España, y invención de la milagrosa imagen de Cristo Nuestro Señor Crucificado, que se venera en ellas. Con un breve compendio de la admirable vida del venerable anacoreta Fray Bartolomé de Jesús María, y algunas noticias del Santo Fray Juan de San Joseph su compañero. Cádiz: Imprenta de la Compañía de Jesús, por Cristóbal de Requena, 1689.

La casa peregrina, solar ilustre, en que nació la Reina de los Ángeles; albergue soberano, en que se hospedó el Rey Eterno hecho hombre en tiempo; cielo abreviado, en que el Sol de Justicia puso su thalamo, para desposarse con la humana naturaleza la casa de lazar[, hoy de Loreto, trasladada por ministerio de ángeles, primero a Dalmacia, después a Italia.]. Mexico City: Herederos de la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1689.

Vida admirable, y muerte dichosa del religioso P. Gerónimo de Figueroa, profeso de la Compañía de Jesús en la Provincia de Nueva España, misionero de cuarenta años entre los indios taraumares, y tepehuánes de la Sierra Madre, y después rector del Colegio Máximo, y preposito de la Casa Profesa de México. Mexico City: María de Benavides, Viuda de Juan de Ribera, 1689.

Narración de la maravillosa aparición, que hizo el Árcangel San Miguel a Diego Lázaro de San Francisco, indio feligrés del pueblo de San Bernardo, de la jurisdicción de Santa María Nativitas. Fundación del santuario, que llaman San Miguel del Milagro; de la fuente milagrosa, que debajo de una peña mostró el Príncipe de los Ángeles; de los milagros, que ha hecho el agua bendita, y el barro amasado de dicha fuente en los que con fe, y devoción han usado de ellos para remedio de sus males. Seville: Thomas López de Haro, 1692.

Historia de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España, dividida en ocho libros, dedicada a San Francisco de Borja, fundador de la provincia, y tercero general de la Compañía. Mexico City: Iván Joseph Guillena Carrascoso, 1694.

Biografías de jesuitas ilustres de la Provincia de México [ca. 1693–1694], Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de México de la Compañía de Jesús, Fondos Documentales, caja 3, carpeta IX.

Origen de los dos célebres santuarios de la Nueva Galicia obispado de Guadalajara en la América Septentrional. Noticia cierta de los milagrosos favores, que hace la Virgen Santissima, a los que en ellos, y en sus dos imágenes la invocan. Sacada de los procesos auténticos, que se guardan en los archivos del obispado de orden de el Illustísimo, y Reverendísimo Señor Dr. Don Juan de Santiago, León Garabito. Mexico City: Iván Joseph Guillena Carrascoso, 1694.

Origen de los dos célebres santuarios de la Nueva Galicia obispado de
Guadalajara en la América Septentrional. Noticia cierta de los milagrosos favores, que hace la Virgen Santísima, a los que en ellos, y en sus dos imágenes la invocan. Sacada de los procesos auténticos, que se guardan en los archivos del obispado de orden de el Ilustrísimo, y Reverendísimo Señor Dr. Don Juan de Santiago, León Garabito. Mexico City: En la Imprenta de D. Felipe de Zúñiga y Ontiveros, 1706.

Meditaciones de los principales misterios de nuestra santa fe, que obró el poder de Dios en la Santa Casa de su Madre, y suya, en Nazaret, hoy de Loreto. Reimpresas a devoción de D. Joseph Mariano Loreto de la Canal, caballero del orden de Calatrava. Mexico City: Imprenta del Superior Gobierno y del Nuevo Rezado de María de Rivera, 1738.

Narración de la maravillosa aparición, que hizo el Árccangel San Miguel a Diego Lázaro de San Francisco, indio feligrés del pueblo de San Bernardo, de la jurisdicción de Santa María Nativitas. Fundación del santuario, que llaman San Miguel del Milagro; de la fuente milagrosa, que debajo de una peña mostró el Príncipe de los Ángeles; de los milagros, que ha hecho el agua bendita, y el barro amasado de dicha fuente en los que con fe, y devoción han usado de ellos para remedio de sus males. Seville: Imprenta de las Siete Revueltas, 1740.

La estrella del norte de México, aparecida al rayar el día de la luz evangélica en este Nuevo Mundo, en la cumbre de el cerro de Tepeyacac orilla del mar Tezucano, a un natural recién convertido; pintada tres días después milagrosamente en su tilma, o capa de lienzo, delante del obispo, y de su familia en su casa obispal. Para luz en la fe a los indios; para rumbo cierto a los españoles en la virtud; para serenidad de las tempestuosas inundaciones de la laguna. En la historia de la milagrosa imagen de nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de México, que se apareció en la manta de Juan Diego. Barcelona: Antonio Velázquez, 1741.

La milagrosa invención de un tesoro escondido en un campo, que halló un venturoso cacique, y escondió en su casa, para gozarlo a sus solas. Patente ya en el santuario de los Remedios en su admirable imagen de Nuestra Señora; señalada en milagros; invocada por patrona de las lluvias, y temporales; defensora de los españoles, abogada de los indios, conquistadora de México, erario universal de las misericordias de Dios, ciudad de refugio para todos los que a ella se acogen. Noticias de su origen, y venidas a México; maravillas, que ha obrado con los que la invocan; descripción de su casa, y meditaciones para sus novenas. Seville: Imprenta de las Siete Revueltas, 1745.

Origen de los dos célebres santuarios de la Nueva Galicia, obispado de Guadalajara en la América Septentrional. Noticia cierta de los milagrosos favores que hace la Santísima Virgen, a los que en ellos y en sus dos imágenes la invocan, sacada de los procesos auténticos, que se guardan en los archivos del
obispado, de orden del Illustísimo y Reverendísimo Sr. D. Juan de Santiago León Garabito. Mexico City: Imprenta de la Bibliotheca Mexicana, 1757.

________. Origen de los dos célebres santuarios de la Nueva Galicia, obispado de Guadalajara en la América Septentrional. Noticia cierta de los milagrosos favores que hace la Santísima Virgen, a los que en ellos y en sus dos imágenes la invocan, sacada de los procesos auténticos, que se guardan en los archivos del obispado, de orden del Illustísimo y Reverendísimo Sr. D. Juan de Santiago León Garabito. Mexico City: Felipe de Zúñiga y Ontiveros, 1766.

________. Origen del célebre santuario de Nuestra Señora de San Juan, de obispado de Guadalajara en la América Septentrional, y noticia cierta de los milagrosos favores que hace la Señora de los procesos auténticos, que se guardan en los archivos del obispado, de orden del Illustísimo y Reverendísimo Sr. D. Juan de Santiago León Garabito. Mexico City: Felipe de Zúñiga y Ontiveros, 1783.


________. La estrella del norte de México, aparecida al rayar el día de la luz evangélica en este Nuevo Mundo, en la cumbre del cerro de Tepeyacac orilla del mar Tezucano, a un natural recién convertido; pintada tres días después milagrosamente en su tilma, o capa de lienzo, delante del obispo, y de su familia en su casa obispal. Para luz en la fe a los indios; para rumbo cierto a los españoles en la virtud; para serenidad de las tempestuosas inundaciones de la laguna. En la historia de la milagrosa imagen de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de México, que se apareció en la manta de Juan Diego. Madrid: Lorenzo de San Martín, 1785.

________. Origen del célebre santuario de Nuestra Señora de San Juan, de obispado de Guadalajara en la América Septentrional, y noticia cierta de los milagrosos favores que hace la Señora de los procesos auténticos, que se guardan en los archivos del obispado, de orden del Illustísimo y Reverendísimo Sr. D. Juan de Santiago León Garabito. Mexico City: Felipe de Zúñiga y Ontiveros, 1787.

________. Origen del célebre santuario de Nuestra Señora de San Juan, de obispado de Guadalajara en la América Septentrional, y noticia cierta de los milagrosos favores que hace la Señora de los procesos auténticos, que se guardan en los archivos del obispado, de orden del Illustísimo y Reverendísimo Sr. D. Juan de Santiago León Garabito. Mexico City: Mariano de Zúñiga y Ontiveros, 1796.

________. Origen del célebre santuario de Nuestra Señora de San Juan, de obispado de
Guadalajara en la América Septentrional, y noticia cierta de los milagrosos favores que hace la Señora de los procesos auténticos, que se guardan en los archivos del obispado, de orden del Ilustrísimo y Reverendísimo Sr. D. Juan de Santiago León Garabito. Mexico City: Mariano de Zúñiga y Ontiveros, 1801.

La estrella del norte: Historia de la milagrosa imagen de María Santísima de Guadalupe, escrita en el siglo XVII por el P. Francisco de Florencia, de la Compañía de Jesús. Edited by Dr. D. Agustín de la Rosa. Guadalajara: Imprenta de J. Cabrera, 1895.

Narración de la maravillosa aparición, que hizo el Ángel San Miguel a Diego Lázaro de San Francisco, indio feligrés del pueblo de San Bernardo, de la jurisdicción de Santa María Nativitas. Fundación del santuario, que llaman San Miguel del Milagro; de la fuente milagrosa, que debajo de una peña mostró el Príncipe de los Ángeles; de los milagros, que ha hecho el agua bendita, y el barro amasado de dicha fuente en los que con fe, y devoción han usado de ellos para remedio de sus males. Puebla: Tip. Del Colegio Pio de Artes y Oficios, 1898.


Las novenas del Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de México, que se apareció en la manta de Juan Diego. Mexico City: Editorial Cultura, 1945.


Origen del célebre santuario de Nuestra Señora de San Juan, de obispado de Guadalajara en la América Septentrional, y noticia cierta de los milagrosos favores que hace la Señora de los procesos auténticos, que se guardan en los archivos del obispado, de orden del Ilustrísimo y Reverendísimo Sr. D. Juan de Santiago León Garabito. San Juan de los Lagos: Alborada, 1966.
La milagrosa invención de un tesoro escondido en un campo, que halló un venturoso cacique, y escondió en su casa, para gozarlo a sus solas. Patente ya en el santuario de los Remedios en su admirable imagen de Nuestra Señora; señalada en milagros; invocada por patrona de las lluvias, y temporales; defensora de los españoles, abogada de los indios, conquistadora de México, erario universal de las misericordias de Dios, ciudad de refugio para todos los que a ella se acogen. Noticias de su origen, y venidas a México; maravillas, que ha obrado con los que la invocan; descripción de su casa, y meditaciones para sus novenas. Edited by Teresa Matabuena Peláez and Marisela Rodríguez Lobato. Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana, 2008.

Menologio de los varones más señalados en perfección religiosa de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España, nuevamente añadido a petición de la Congregación Provincial, que se celebró en México a principios del mes de noviembre del año de 1773 por el P. Juan Antonio de Oviedo. Mexico City: Francisco Retz, 1747.

Compendio histórico de la milagrosa imagen de Nuestra Señora del Refugio, que se venera en su santuario en los suburbios de Puebla. Puebla: J. N. del Valle, 1851.

Historia de la milagrosa imagen de Nuestra Señora de los Dolores que se venera en una capilla de la Santa Iglesia Parroquial de San Juan de Acatzingo, tomada de la que se imprimió en el Zodiaco Mariano el año de 1755. Puebla: J. María Rivera, 1861.

Published and Manuscript Works Reviewed by Francisco de Florencia

Errada Capetillo, José de and Antonio de Vieyra. *Heráclito defendido por el M. R. P. Antonio Vieyra de la Compañía de Jesús*. Mexico City: Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio, 1685.

Herrera, José de. *Sermón funeral en las honras de la muy noble señora Doña Augustina Picazo de Hinojosa, viuda de el Capitán Luis Vásquez de Medina, celebradas en el convento imperial de Predicadores de México, el día 17 de mayo de 1684*. Mexico City: Juan de Ribera, 1684.

Kino, Eusebio Francisco. *Exposición astronómica de el cometa, que el año de 1680 por los meses de noviembre, y diciembre, y este año de 1681 por los meses de enero y febrero se ha visto en todo el mundo, y le ha observado en la ciudad de Cádiz, el P. Eusebio Francisco Kino de la Compañía de Jesús*. Mexico City: Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio, 1681.

López de Avilés, José. *Debe recuerdo de agradecimiento leal a los beneficios hechos en México, por su dignísimo, y amadísimo prelado el Illmo. y Exmo. Señor Maestro D. Fr. Payo Enriquez, Añan de Ribera*. Mexico City: Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio, 1684.

Mendoza Ayala, Juan de. *Sermón de la milagrosa aparición de la imagen santa de Aránzazu que en la dominica infraoctava de la Asumpción de nuestra Señora. Predicó el R. P. Fr. Juan de Mendoza Ayala predicador general jubilado, cronista de esta Provincia del Santo Evangelio, y definidor en acto de dicha provincia*. Mexico City: Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio, 1685.

Millán de Poblete, Juan. *Patrocinio de María Santísima discurrido propio, y especial para la Católica Monarquía Española, en día de la fiesta deste título en la Santa Iglesia Cathedral Metropolitana de México*. Mexico City: Herederos de Bernardo Caldreón, 1693.

Montoro, Joseph. *Sermón, que en la dedicación de la capilla de la venerable e ilustre tercera orden sita en el Convento de N. P. S. Francisco de la ciudad de Oaxaca*. Mexico City: Por Doña María de Benavides, Viuda de Juan de Ribera, 1685.

Olivares, Joseph de. *Oración panegírica que a la fiesta solemnidad de la nueva capilla que se consagró a N. Señora de Guadalupe y translación de la peregrina y milagrosa efigie de Cristo Crucificado que por tiempo inmemorial se adora y venera en las cuevas y santuarios de S. Miguel de Chalma del orden de N. P. San Agustín*. Mexico City: Por la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1683.

Ortiz, Francisco Antonio. *Sermón, que predicó el P. M. Doctor Francisco Antonio Ortiz, prefecto de la ilustre Congregación de el Salvador en la fiesta de la Purificación de la Purísima Virgen María Nuestra Señora en cuyo día hizo su profesión de
cuarto voto el Padre Juan Baptista Zappa rector de los naturales de San Gregorio. México: Juan de Ribera, 1685.


Ramírez de Vargas, Alonso. Sagrado pardo y panegiricos sermones a la memoria debida al sumptuoso magnifico templo y curiosa Basílica del Convento de Religiosas del glorioso Abad San Bernardo que edifice en su mayor parte el Capitán D. Joseph de Retes Largache. Mexico City: Por la Viuda de Francisco Rodríguez Luperco, 1691.


Robles, Juan de. Sermón que predicó el P. Juan de Robles, teólogo de la Compañía de Jesús, en la ciudad de Santiago de Querétaro, su patria, el día doce de diciembre de 1681 en la iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, a la anual memoria de la milagrosa aparición de su prodigiosa imagen, que se venera en el cerro de Guadalupe mexicano, y celebra aquí en su trasunto la ilustrísima congregación de rededores, que se honran con su título, y militan con su amparo. Mexico City: Juan de Ribera, 1682.

________. Sermón del gloriosísimo patriarca, padre existimado del Hijo Unigénito de Dios, esposo dignísimo de la Madre del Eterno Verbo humanado, Nuestro Señor San Joseph. Mexico City: Por Doña María de Benavides, Viuda de Juan de Ribera, 1687.

________. Sermón de la Purísima Concepción de María Señora libre en su primer instante de la común deuda de la culpa. Mexico City: Por Doña María de Benavides, Viuda de Juan de Ribera, 1689.

Sariñana y Cuenca, Isidro. Sermón de N.S.P.S. Francisco, que en su día, y Convento de la Descalçes Seráfica de la ciudad de Antequera, valle de Oaxaco, predicó el Illmo. y Rmo. Señor Dr. D. Isidro Sariñana, y Cuenca, del Consejo de Su Magestad, y obispo de la misma ciudad, este año de 1687. Mexico City: María de Benavides, Viuda de Juan de Ribera, 1688.

Sigüenza y Góngora, Carlos de. Triunfo Parthenico que en glorias de María, Santísima inmaculadamente concebida, celebró la pontífica, imperial, y regia Academia Mexicana en el biennio, que como su rector la gobernó el Doctor Don Juan de Narváez, tesorero general de la Santa Cruzada en el Arzobispado de México, y al presente catedrálico de prima de Sagrada Escritura. Mexico City: Juan de Ribera, 1683.
Tapia, José de. *La mina rica de Dios en un sermón, que predicó el P. Joseph de Tapia de la Compañía de Jesús, misionero de veinte años en la Misión de San Joseph de Toro. A las fiestas de la Concepción Purísima de María Santísima Señora Nuestra que celebran en el Real de Minas de la Concepción de los Alamos, entre la Provincia de Sinaloa, y Sonora el año de 1691.* Mexico City: María Benavides, Viuda de Juan de Ribera, 1692.

Velasco, Alonso Alberto de. *Renovación por si misma de la soberana imagen de Cristo Señor Nuestro Crucificado, que llaman de Itzmiquilpan (vulgarmente Ismiquilpa, y Esmitquilpa). Colocada en la iglesia del Convento de San Joseph, de religiosas carmelitas descalzas de esta imperial ciudad de México. Narración histórica, que la refiere, con fundamentos de hecho, y derecho, para que se declare por milagrosa, y los demás sucesos, antecedentes, y subsecuentes.* Mexico City: Por la Viuda de Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio, 1688.

Valtierra, Manuel. *Sermón panegírico, en la fiesta titular de los cinco mejores señores, Jesús, María, y Joseph, Joaquín, y Ana, que celebra anua su devota esclavitud, fundada con autoridad apostólica, en el Colegio de Espíritu Santo, de la Compañía de Jesús, de la Puebla de los Ángeles.* Mexico City: Por Doña María de Benavides, Viuda de Juan de Ribera, 1689.

**Primary Sources**


_______. *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* [1590]. Edited by Edmundo O’Gorman. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1940.

Alloza, Juan de. *Cielo estrellado de mil y veinte y dos ejemplos de María: Paraíso espiritual y tesoro de favores y regalos con que esta gran Señora ha favorecido a los que se acogen a su protección y amparo.* Madrid: Librería del Carmen Calzado, 1655.


_______. *Bibliotheca Hispana Nova, sive, Hispanorum scriptorum qui ab anno MD.* ad


Arce, Diego de. De las librerías, de su antigüedad y provecho, de su sitio, de la estimación que de ellas deben hacer las repúblicas [1608]. Madrid: Marcial Pons, 1998.


Barrantes Maldonado, Francisco. Relación de la calificación y milagros del Santo Crucifijo de Zalamea, desde trece de septiembre del año de seiscientos y cuatro hasta el de seiscientos y diez y seis, dividida en dos libros. Madrid: Viuda de Alonso Martín, 1617.


Becerra Tanco, Luis. Origen milagroso del santuario de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, extramuros de la ciudad de México. Fundamentos verídicos con que se prueba ser infalible la tradición, que hay en esta ciudad, acerca de la aparición de la Virgen Maria Señora Nuestra, y de su prodigiosa imagen. Mexico City: Por la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1666.

_______. Felicidad de México en el principio, y milagroso origen, que tuvo el santuario de la Virgen Maria N. Señora de Guadalupe, extramuros en la aparición admirable de esta Soberana Señora, y de su prodigiosa imagen. Mexico City: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1675.

_______. Felicidad de México en el principio, y milagroso origen, que tuvo el santuario de la Virgen Maria Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, extramuros en la aparición admirable de esta Soberana Señora, y de su prodigiosa imagen. Seville: Thomas López de Haro, 1685.


Boturini Benaduci, Lorenzo. *Idea de una nueva historia general de la América Septentrional. Fundada sobre material copioso de figuras, símbolos, caracteres, y jeroglíficos, cantares, y manuscritos de autores indios, últimamente descubiertos*. Madrid: Juan de Zúñiga, 1746.

Burgoa, Francisco de. *Geográfica descripción de la parte septentrional, del polo ártico de la América, y nueva iglesia de las Indias Occidentales, y sitio astronómico de esta Provincia de Predicadores de Antequera valle de Oaxaca: En diez y siete grados del Trópico de Cancer, debajo de los aspectos, y radiaciones de planetas morales, que la fundaron con virtudes celestes, influyéndola en santidad, y doctrina*. Mexico City: Juan Ruiz, 1674.

Burgos, Juan de. *Discurso historiales panegíricos de las glorias de la serenísima Reina de los Ángeles en su sagrada casa de Loreto. Adornos de escritura sacra, y santos padres a la Historia Lauretana, que escribió el Padre Oracio Turselino, de la Compañía de Jesús. Con los sucesos, y aumentos hasta el año de mil y seiscientos y cincuenta y nueve*. Madrid: Joseph Fernández de Buendía, 1671.


Castillo, Pedro del. *La estrella del occidente, la Rosa de Lima que lo regió del lugar se erigió de las flores. Vida y milagros de la Santa Rosa de Santa María del sagrado instituto de la tercera orden y hábito de nuestro gran padre y patriarca Santo Domingo de Guzmán*. Mexico City: Bartolomé de Gama, 1670.

Cisneros, Luis de. *Historia de el principio, y origen, progresos, venidas a México, y milagros de la santa imagen de nuestra Señora de los Remedios, extramuros de México. Dirigida al insigne cabildo de la nobilísimia ciudad de México, patrona de su santa hermita.* Mexico City: Juan Blanco de Alcázar, 1621.

Cordóba Salinas, Diego de. *Crónica de la religiosísima Provincia de los Doce Apóstoles del Perú, de la orden de N. P. S. Francisco de la regular observancia. Dispuesta en seis libros, con relación de las provincias que dellas han salido, y son sus hijas. Representa la piedad y celo con que los Reyes de Castilla, y de León gobiernan el Nuevo Mundo, dilatando la fe católica, y conocimiento del verdadero Dios por innumerables reinos y naciones de indios, y lo mucho que para esto han servido y sirven las religiones sagradas con las acciones más memorables de los predicadores evangélicos, que con celo apostólico acabaron sus vidas en tan gloriosa empresa. Hacese una breve descripción de todas las tierras del Perú, la entrada en ellas de nuestros españoles, la riqueza, poder, culto, y politica de los Reyes Incas.* Lima: Impreso por Jorge López de Herrera, 1651.


Dávila Padilla, Agustín. *Historia de la fundación y discurso de la Provincia de Santiago de México, de la Orden de Predicadores, por las vidas de sus varones insignes, y casos notables de nueva España.* Madrid: Pedro Madrigal, 1596.


*Diccionario de la lengua castellana, en que explica el verdadero sentido de las voces, su naturaleza y calidad, con las phrases o modos de hablar, los proverbios o refranes, y otras cosas convenientes al uso de la lengua.* Madrid: Imprenta de Francisco del Hierro, 1726–1739.


Enríquez, Martín. “Instrucción y advertimientos que el Virrey D. Martin Enríquez dejó al
Conde de la Coruña (D. Lorenzo Suárez de Mendoza) su sucesor en los cargos de Nueva España.” In Instrucciones que los virreyes de Nueva España dejaron a sus sucesores: Añádense algunas que los mismos trajeron de la corte y otros documentos semejantes a las instrucciones, 242–250. Mexico City: Imprenta Imperial, 1867.

Fernández de Echeverría y Veitia, Mariano. Baluarte de México. Descripción histórica de las cuatro milagrosas imágenes de Nuestra Señora, que veneran en la muy noble, leal, e imperial ciudad de México, capital de la Nueva España, a los cuatro vientos principales, en sus extramuros, y de magníficos santuarios, con otras particularidades. Mexico City: En la Imprenta de D. Alejandro Valdés, 1820.


García, Gregorio. Historia eclesiástica y seglar, de la India Oriental y Occidental, y predicación del Santo Evangelio en ella por los apóstoles. Baeça: Pedro de la Cuesta, 1626.

García Icazbalceta, Joaquín, ed. Códice franciscano. Siglo XVI. Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Diaz de León, 1889.


Gómez de la Parra, Joseph. “Relación de lo que hizo y obró el illustísimo y excelentísimo Señor Doctor Don Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz en su Obispado de la Puebla de los Ángeles, en poco más de veinte y dos años que lo gobernó.” In Panegyrico funeral. La vida en la muerte de el ilmo. y excmo. Señor Doctor Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz Obispo de la Puebla de los Ángeles en la Nueva España, 59–82. Puebla: Por los Herederos del Capitán Juan de Villa Real, 1699.


*Historia general de la Compañía de Jesús en la Provincia del Perú*. Crónica anónima de 1600 que trata del establecimiento y misiones de la Compañía de Jesús en los paises de habla española en la América meridional. Edited by F. Mateos. 2 vols. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas and Instituto Gonzálo Fernández de Oviedo, 1944.

*Información jurídica, recibida en el año de mil quinientos ochenta y dos, con la que se acredita que la imagen de María Santísima, bajo la advocación de conquistadora, que se venera en su capilla del convento de religiosos observantes de San Francisco de la Ciudad de la Puebla de los Ángeles, es la misma que el conquistador Hernando Cortés endonó al gran capitán Gonzálo Alxotecatlcocomitzi, indio del Pueblo de Atlihuetzian de la feligresía de San Dionisio, en jurisdicción de Tlaxcalan*. Puebla: En la oficina de D. Pedro de la Rosa, 1804.

Irisarri, Fermin de. *Vida admirable y heroicas virtudes del serafin en el amor divino devotísimo hijo y capellán amante de María Santísima, el V. P. Juan de Alloza de la Compañía de Jesús, natural de Lima, Ciudad de los Reyes, en los Reinos del Perú. Sacada del informe jurídico, que hizo el ordinario de la Metropolitana de Lima, y por el texto, o memorial que dejó escrito de su mano el venerable padre*. Madrid: Diego Martinez Abad, 1715.


Kino, Eusebio Francisco. *Exposición astronómica de el cometa, que el año de 1680 por los meses de noviembre, y diciembre, y este año de 1681 por los meses de enero y febrero, se ha visto en todo el mundo, y le ha observado en la Ciudad de Cádiz.* Mexico City: Por Francisco Rodriguez Lupercio, 1681.


León, Martín de. *Camino del cielo en lengua mexicana, con todos los requisitos necesarios para conseguir este fin, con todo lo que un cristiano debe creer, saber, y obrar, desde el punto que tiene uso de razón, hasta que muere.* Mexico City: En la Emprenta de Diego López, 1611.


Libro de los milagros del Santo Crucifixo de San Agustín de la Ciudad de Burgos. Burgos: Pedro de Huydobro, 1622.

López Cogolludo, Diego. *Historia de Yucatán.* Madrid: Juan García Infanzón, 1688.


Losa, Francisco. *La vida que hizo el siervo de Dios Gregorio López, en algunos lugares de esta Nueva España, y principalmente en el pueblo de Santa Fe, dos leguas de la ciudad de México, donde fue su dichoso tránsito.* Mexico City: Juan Ruiz, 1613.


Martínez, Enrico. *Reportorio de los tiempos, y historia natural de esta Nueva España.* Mexico City: Imprenta de Henrico Martínez, 1606.

Medina, Baltasar de. *Crónica de la Santa Provincia de San Diego de México, de religiosos descalzos de N. S. P. Francisco en la Nueva España. Vidas de ilustres, y venerables varones, que la han edificado con excelentes virtudes.* Mexico City: Juan de Ribera, 1682.

________. *Vida, martirio, y beatificación del invicto protomártir del Japón San Felipe de Jesús, patrón de México su patria, imperial corte de Nueva España en el Nuevo Mundo, que escribe, y consagra al mismo inclito protomártir.* Mexico City: Juan de Ribera, 1683.

Medina, Bernardo. *Vida prodigiosa del venerable siervo de Dios Fray Martín de Porras, natural de Lima, de la tercera orden de Nuestro Padre Santo Domingo* [1663]. Lima: Juan de Quevedo y Zarate, 1673.


Mendoza, Juan de. *Relación de el santuario de Tecaxique, en que está colocada la milagrosa imagen de Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles. Noticia de los milagros que el Señor ha obrado en gloria de esta santa imagen, devoción grande con que se frequenta este santuario.* Mexico City: Por Juan de Ribera, 1684.

Nieremberg y Otin, Juan Eusebio. *De la devoción y patrocinio de San Miguel, Príncipe
de los Ángeles, antiguo tutelar de los Godos, y protector de España, en que se proponen sus grandes excelencias, y títulos que hay para implorar su patrocinio. Madrid: María de Quiñones, 1643.

________. De la devoción y patrocinio de San Miguel, Príncipe de los Ángeles, antiguo tutelar de los Godos, y protector de España, en que se proponen sus grandes excelencias, y títulos que hay para implorar su patrocinio. Mexico City: Por la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1643.


Ojea, Hernando. Libro tercero de la historia religiosa de la Provincia de México de la orden de Santo Domingo [ca. 1608]. Mexico City: Museo Nacional de México, 1897.

Olivares, Joseph de. Oración panegírica que a la fiesta solemnidad de la nueva capilla que se consagró a N. Señora de Guadalupe y translación de la peregrina y milagrosa efigie de Cristo Crucificado que por tiempo inmemorial se adora y venera en las cuevas y santuarios de S. Miguel de Chalma del orden de N. P. San Agustín. Mexico City: Por la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1683.


Ortega Montañés, Juan de. Instrucción reservada que el Obispo-Virrey Juan de Ortega Montañés dio a su sucesor en el mando el Conde de Moctezuma [1697]. Edited by Norman F. Martin. Mexico City: Editorial Jus, 1965.


Pereda, Francisco de. *Historia de la santa y devotísima imagen de Nuestra Señora de Atocha Patrona de Madrid, y de sus milagros y casa y de las veces que Nuestra Señora Soberana Reina de la gloria ha visitado a España viviendo por su persona a ella, y de las más insignes imagines, y templos que Nuestra Señora tiene en España*. Valladolid: Sebastián de Cañas, 1604.

Pérez Ribas, Andrés. *Historia de los triumphos de nuestra santa fe entre gentes las más bárbaras, y fieras del Nuevo Orbe. Conseguídos por los soldados de la milicia de la Compañía de Jesús en las misiones de la Provincia de Nueva España. Refíranse asimismo las costumbres, ritos, y supersticiones que usaban estas gentes: sus puestos, y templos; las victorias que de algunas de ellas alcanzaron con las armas los católicos españoles, cuando les obligaron a tomarlas; y las dichosas muertes de veinte religiosos de la Compañía, que en varios puestos, y a manos de varias naciones, dieron sus vidas por la predicación del santo evangelio*. Madrid: Alonso de Paredes, 1645.

________. *Crónica y historia religiosa de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de México en Nueva España, fundación de sus colegios y casas, ministerios que en ellos se ejercitan y frutos gloriosos que con el favor de la divina gracia se han cogido, y varones insignes que trabajando con fervores santos en esta viña del Señor pasaron a gozar el premio de sus santas obras a la gloria: Unos derramando su sangre por la predicación del santo evangelio, y otro ejercitando los ministerios que el instituto de la Compañía de Jesús profesa, hasta el año de 1654*. 2 vols. Mexico City: Imprenta del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, 1896.


Relación histórica de la admirable aparición de la Virgen Santísima Madre de Dios bajo del título de Nra. Sra. de Guadalupe, acaecida en México el año de 1531. Translated from the Latin into Italian by Anastasio Nicoselli and then into Spanish by a presbyter from the Archbishopric of Mexico. Mexico City: Calle de la Palma, 1781.


Ruiz de Montoya, Antonio. Conquista espiritual hecha por los religiosos de la Compañía de Jesús en las provincias del Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay y Tape [1639]. Bilboa: Imprenta del Corazón de Jesús, 1892.


Salmerón, Pedro. Relación breve de la consagración del real, y suntuoso templo de la Catedral de la Puebla de los Ángeles, que hizo el Exc.mo y Rev.mo Señor Don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Obispo desde Obispado, del Consejo de su Majestad, y del Real de las Indias, Virrey, y Visitador General que fue de esta Nueva España. Puebla: n.p., 1649.

_______. Vida de la venerable madre Isabel de la Encarnación, carmelita descalza, natural de la Ciudad de los Ángeles. Mexico City: Francisco Rodríguez, 1675.

_______. “Relación de la aparición que el Arcángel San Miguel, defensor y patrón de esta iglesia militante y de la Monarquía de España, hizo en un lugar del Obispado de la Puebla de los Ángeles llamado de Nuestra Señora de la Natividad el año de 1651, escrita por el Licenciado Don Pedro Salmerón, clérigo presbítero.” In


Sánchez, Miguel. Imagen de la Virgen María Madre de Dios de Guadalupe, milagrosamente aparecida en la Ciudad de México. Celebrada en su historia, con la profecía del capítulo doce del Apocalipsis. Mexico City: Imprenta de la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1648.

________. Novenas de la Virgen María Madre de Dios. Para sus devotísimos santuarios de los Remedios y Guadalupe, dedicadas a los capitanes Joseph de Quesada Cabreros y Joseph de Retis Largacha. Mexico City: Por la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1665.


Sardo, Joaquín. Relación histórica y moral de la portentosa imagen de N. Sr. Jesucristo Crucificado aparecida en una de las cuevas de S. Miguel de Chalma, hoy real convento y santuario de este nombre, de religiosos ermitaños de N. G. P. y Doctor S. Agustín, en esta Nueva España, y en esta Provincia del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús de México. Con los compendios de las vidas de los dos venerables religiosos legos y primeros anacoretas de este santo desierto, F. Bartolomé de Jesús María, y Fr. Juan de San José. Mexico City: Impresa en Casa de Arizpe, 1810.


Sariñana y Cuenca, Isidro. Noticia breve de la solemne, deseada, última dedicación del
Templo Metropolitano de México, Corte Imperial de la Nueva España, edificado por la religiosa magnificencia de los Reyes Católicos de España nuestros señores. Mexico City: Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio, 1668.


Sicardo, José. Interrogatorio de la vida y virtudes del venerable hermano fray Bartolomé de Jesús María, natural de Xalapa, religioso lego del orden de Nuestro Padre San Agustín de la Provincia del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús de la Nueva España. Mexico City: Imprenta de Juan de Ribera, 1683.


Sigüenza y Góngora, Carlos de. Paraíso occidental, plantado y cultivado por la liberal benéfica mano de los muy católicos, y poderosos reyes de España nuestros señores en su magnífico Real Convento de Jesús María de México, de cuya fundación, y progesos, y de las prodigiosas maravillas, y virtudes, con que exalando olor suave de perfección, florecieron en su clausura la V. M. Marina de la Cruz, y otras ejemplarísimas religiosas. Mexico City: Juan de Ribera, 1684.


Talavera, Gabriel de. Historia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe consagrada a la soberana majestad de la Reina de los Ángeles, milagrosa patrona de este santuario. Toledo: Thomas de Guzmán Petrus Angelus, 1597.

Tello, Antonio. Libro segundo de la crónica miscelánea, en que se trata de la conquista
espiritual y temporal de la Santa Provincia de Xalisco en el Nuevo Reino de la Galicia y Nueva Vizcaya y descubrimiento del Nuevo México [ca. 1652]
Guadalajara: Imprenta de “La República Literaria,” 1891.


Tobar, Pedro de. Verdadera histórica relación del origen, manifestación, y prodigiosa renovación por sí misma, y milagros de la imagen de la sacratísima Virgen María, Madre de Dios Nuestra Señora de el Rosario de Chinquinquirá, que está en el Nuevo Reino de Granada de las Indias, a cuidado de los religiosos del Orden de Predicadores. Madrid: Juan García Infanzón, 1694.


Urtassum, Juan de. La gracia triunfante en la vida de Catharina Tegakovita, india iroquesa, y en las de otras, así de su nación, como de esta Nueva España. Parte traducido de francés en español, de lo que escribe el P. Francisco Colonec, parte sacado de los autores de primera nota, y autoridad, como se verá en sus citas. Mexico City: Joseph Bernardo de Hogal en el Puente del Espíritu Santo, 1724.


Vega, El Inca Garcilaso de la. La Florida del Inca. Historia del adelantado Hernando de Soto, gobernador y capitán general del reino de la Florida, y de otros heroicos caballeros españoles e indios; escrita por el Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, capitán de su Majestad, natural de la gran ciudad del Cuzco, cabeza de los reinos y provincias del Perú. Lisbon: Pedro Crasbeeck, 1605.

Veitia Linaje, Joseph de. Norte de la Contratación de las Indias Occidentales. Sevilla:
Juan Francisco de Blas, 1672.

Venegas, Miguel. *El Apóstol Mariano representado en la vida del V. P. Juan María de Salvatierra, de la Compañía de Jesús, fervoroso misionero en la Provincia de Nueva España, y conquistador apostólico de las Californias. Escrita difusa, y eruditamente por el P. Miguel Venegas, profeso de cuatro votos de la misma Compañía. Y reducida a breve compendio por el P. Juan Antonio de Oviedo, rector del Colegio San Andrés de México, y calificador del Santo Oficio*. Mexico City: Doña María de Ribera, Impresora del Nuevo Rezado, 1754.

________. *Vida, y virtudes del V. P. Juan Bautista Zappa de la Compañía de Jesús, sacada de la que escribió Padre Miguel Venegas de la misma Compañía, y ordenada por otro padre de la misma sagrada religion de la Provincia de México*. Barcelona: Por Pablo Nadal, 1754.


Vetancurt, Augustín de. *Arte de lengua mexicana dispuesto por orden, y mandato de N. Rmo P. Fr. Francisco Treviño, predicador teólogo, padre de la santa provincia de Burgos, y comisario general de todas las de la Nueva España, y por el reverendo, y venerable difinitorio de la Provincia del Santo Evangelio*. Mexico City: Francisco Rodriguez Lupericio, 1673.

________. *Crónica de la Provincia del Santo Evangelio de México*. Mexico City: Doña María Benavides, Viuda de Juan de Ribera, 1697.

________. *Teatro mexicano. Descripción breve de los sucesos ejemplares, históricos, políticos, militares, y religiosos del nuevo mundo occidental de las Indias*. Mexico City: Por Doña Maria de Benavides, Viuda de Juan de Ribera, 1698.

Villavicencio, Diego Jaymes Ricardo. *Luz, y método, de confesar idólatras, y destierro de idolatrías, debajo del tratado siguiente. Tratado de avisos, y puntos importantes, de la abominable secta de la idolatria; para examinar por ellos al penitente en el fuero interior de la conciencia, y exterior judicial. Sacados no de los libros; sino de la experiencia en las averiguaciones con los rabbies de ella*. Puebla: En la Emprenta de Diego Fernández de León, 1692.


Zapata y Mendoza, Juan Buenaventura. *Historia cronológica de la Noble Ciudad de*


Secondary Sources


________. “Remedios y Guadalupe. De la unión a la discordia.” In Manifestaciones


Bastian, Jean-Pierre. Historia del protestantismo en América Latina. Mexico City:
Ediciones CUPSA, 1986.


Bushnell, Amy. ““That Demonic Game”: The Campaign to Stop Indian Pelota Playing in


———. *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and


________. “Zodíaco Mariano: Una alegoría de Miguel Cabrera.” In *Zodíaco Mariano*. 


Decorme, Gerardo. La obra de los jesuitas mexicanos durante la época colonial, 1572–1767. 2 vols. Mexico City: Antigua Librería Robredo de José Porrúa e Hijos, 1941.


Dunkle, John R. “Population Change as an Element in the Historical Geography of St.


Greer, Allan and Kenneth Mills. “A Catholic Atlantic.” In *The Atlantic Global History,*


Harris, A. Katie. “Forging History: The *Plomos* of the Sacromonte of Granada in


López Camara, Francisco. “La conciencia criolla en Sor Juana y Sigüenza.” *Historia Mexicana* 6, no. 3 (1957): 350–373.


Martínez-Serna, J. Gabriel. “Procurators and the Making of the Jesuits’ Atlantic


Maza, Francisco de la. “Los evangelistas de Guadalupe y el nacionalismo mexicano.” *Cuadernos Americanos* 8, no. 6 (1949): 163–188.


Mundy, Barbara E. The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps


Norton, Marcy. “Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of


———. *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz o las trampas de la fe*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982.


______. “The Colonization of Sacred Architecture: The Virgin Mary, Mosques, and


______. “Martin Luther and Hernán Cortés: Their Confrontation in Spanish Literature.” *Hispania* 42 (1959): 66–70.


________. “Los conventos mendicantes.” In Historia de la vida cotidiana en México,


Tardieu, J. P. “Genio y semblanza del santo varón limeño de origen africano (Fray Martín


Valenzuela Rodarte, Alberto. “El padre Florencia y las informaciones guadalupanas.”


______. *La Florida. La misión jesuítica (1566–1572) y la colonización española.* Rome: Institum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1941.
