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CREATING THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE: THE CLOTH, THE ARTIST, AND SOURCES IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY NEW SPAIN

It was in 1531 that, according to the apparition legend first recorded over a hundred years later in 1648, Juan Diego's visionary experience of the Virgin of Guadalupe was miraculously mapped onto his *tilma* (*tilmatli* in Nahuatl) or woven cloak. This painted cloth, hereafter referred to as the tilma image, is said to be the same relic venerated today in the basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico City (fig. 1). However, no sacred image is invented from whole cloth, to use a highly appropriate metaphor here, and the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe is no exception. Moreover, its very materiality makes it vulnerable to the passage of time, the laws of physics and human intervention. As an object of human craft produced post-Conquest, it has a traceable genealogy within the combustible mix of art modes, mixed media and theological tracts found circulating in early colonial New Spain.

The stunning lack of any visual similarity between the cult images of the two preeminent Guadalupes, the diminutive Romanesque sculpture of a black madonna in Extremadura, Spain, and the two-dimensional painting on cloth in Mexico, has forced scholars to look elsewhere for prototypes. The fashioning of the American Guadalupe is squarely situated in a nexus of European artistic and iconographic conventions, including those emanating from the workshops of the Spanish monastery of Guadalupe that produced exquisite embroidered liturgical garments and manuscript illuminations. In representing the Virgin Mary in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe, artists were inspired by a multitude of small portable artworks capable of ready transmission overseas. By the 1550s, Marcos Cipac (de Aquino), the putative native artist of the Guadalupe painting, was working in the fertile cross-currents of viceregal visual culture. As one of many indigenous artists whose skills were nurtured within a Franciscan curriculum in New Spain, the painter Marcos would have been inspired by an array of Marian images such as woodcuts, illustrated books, painted panels, textiles and monumen-



Figure 1
 Virgin of Guadalupe: tilma image
 Anonymous, 16th century
 Oil and tempera on cloth; 172 × 109 cm.
 Basílica de Guadalupe, Mexico D.F.

tal murals that were beginning to adorn the walls of newly constructed mendicant monasteries. The sources, authorship, dating, and motivations for the creation of a new Mexican Guadalupe under the patronage of the archbishop, Alonso de Montúfar, are here explored.

THE TILMA IMAGE

The Mexican Guadalupe one sees today is a prayerful Virgin without Christ Child who bears no physical resemblance to her Spanish namesake, a carved twelfth-century madonna and child. The cedar sculpture in the Extremaduran monastery to the Virgin of Guadalupe stands less than 3 feet (59 cm.) high, holding a scepter in her right hand and the Christ child in her left, both figures encased in a triangulated gown and both with blackened skin. In marked contrast, the much larger Mexican Guadalupe displays an oval face and regular features that are decidedly those of a Renaissance Virgin Mary and her skin tonality is an ashen olive, a complexion referred to

as light brown or wheat-colored in most later chronicles.¹ Guadalupe's skin color and black hair mark important ethnic signifiers which, I will argue, were intentional and help to verify the indigenous authorship of the painting. The youthful figure is doubly framed, on the outer margins by a scalloped cloud bank and more immediately by an oval mandorla composed of gilded solar rays, alternately rigid and undulant in their form. The body-length aureole backlights Mary, who appears more intensely luminescent at the borders of her clothing. Her voluminous dress, an aquamarine shawl over a rose tunic, protectively shields the woman, eliding her sex and reinforcing her demure virginal state. The sleeves of her embroidered tunic are fur-trimmed; the robe and mantle cascade luxuriantly down the Virgin's length, accumulating at the base in impractical folds. The Virgin rides on the arc of a blackened crescent moon, a single shoe resting on its surface, while a winged angel supports not the upright points of the moon, but, in a departure from precedents, holds in his clenched hands the corners of the mantle's hem.

THE CLOTH

Contesting the claims of supernatural authorship, a physical and visual analysis of the painting on cloth reveals it to be a human product fashioned with materials easily obtained in mid sixteenth-century New Spain.² The measurements of the tilma conform to the almost life-sized stature of a youthful Mary, approximately 5' 8" in length and 3' 7" in width, having been trimmed on all sides over the course of its history due to the colonial practice of gluing the canvas to its wooden stretcher and perhaps also to the snipping of cloth "relics" from the edges.³ The material support is in fact two separate woven strips sewn up the center with cotton thread, the stitches that suture the textile lengths easily visible and in places somewhat frayed (fig. 2).

¹ Miguel Sánchez, *Imagen de la Virgen María Madre de Dios de Guadalupe* (México: Bernardo Calderón, 1648), fol. 39.

² José Sol Rosales, at the time director of the Centro de Registro y Conservación in Mexico city, conducted a microscopic exam of the tilma painting in November of 1982 and concluded that the Virgin of Guadalupe image was the result of human craft. The report he submitted was suppressed by church officials who were fearful that it would derail the canonization proceedings of Juan Diego. Part of Rosales's conclusions appeared in the popular press in spring of 2002 when the canonization was confirmed. Much of the following information on the condition and materials of the tilma painting was derived during a personal conversation with Sol Rosales (July, 2003) and articles by Rodrigo Vera citing the Rosales report (*Proceso*, 2002, number s 1332, 1333, 1334). On the long polemic surrounding the canonization process, see Manuel Olimón Nolasco, *La búsqueda de Juan Diego* (México: Plaza y Janés, 2002).

³ Rosales, personal communication, 2003. In 1766, 51 cm. of the cloth were cut off in order to fit the tilma image into a new frame. Published measurements of the tilma vary from 1.75 × 1.09 m at its largest down to 1.72 × 1.05 m. The textile is slightly trapezoidal, measuring ca. 109.7 cm. at the bottom and 109.5 cm. at the top.



Figure 2
 detail: Head of Virgin of Guadalupe
 Basílica de Guadalupe, Mexico D.F.

The use of two or more sections of fabric was not uncommon in a period where good canvas was in short supply and expensive. However scarce, the finely woven *cáñamo*, a canvas-type fabric comparable to sail cloth and commonly used for early colonial paintings, is indeed the fabric utilized in the tilma painting, as concluded by the conservator, José Sol Rosales. The painter carefully adjusted his composition to the paired cloths, moving the axis of the figure left of center and tilting the Virgin's head to avoid the disruptive seam and keep it flawless.

To buttress their indigenist agenda, seventeenth-century defenders of the apparition story identify the cloth as native in origin, variously woven from maguey or palm leaf, in keeping with its humble origins as the garment of the Indian seer, Juan Diego. Along with the loincloth (*maxtlatl*), the mantle or *tilma* (*tilmatli*) was the diagnostic item of clothing worn by all indigenous males in central Mexico, a large rectangular textile generally tied over the right shoulder. For the elite the tilma was typically woven of cotton, of a longer length, and often decorated; the commoner's tilma was more frequently of maguey, yucca or palm fiber, shorter in length (above the knee) and plain.⁴ Throughout the apparitionists' accounts one senses the tension between the reality of a flat painted cloth and the symbolic need for the Juan Diego narrative to focus on an item of clothing. Often in the same sentence, the tilma image is referred to as a cape (*capa*) or mantle (*manta*), the closest Spanish equivalent to the tilma garment, but also as a cloth (*lienzo*), an

⁴ Patricia Rieff Anawalt, *Indian Clothing Before Cortés* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), pp. 27-31; Diego Durán, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España [1581]*, Angel Ma. Garibay K., ed. (México: Ed. Porrúa, 1967), volume 2, pp. 211-213.

undifferentiated textile that Spaniards used to refer to a painter's canvas.⁵ Lienzo was also the word used to describe the large sheets of woven cotton on which native artist-scribes recorded their genealogies and histories in picture-writing. "Tilma" had an equally ambivalent usage in the sixteenth century, referring both to a mantle and to a painted canvas,⁶ a conjunction that may have helped shape the formulation of the apparition narrative.

Sol Rosales also asserts that over the cáñamo, the artist applied a coat of underpaint, a sizing of *blanco de España*, whose varying thickness and white droplets are still visible on some edges of the tilma cloth.⁷ On this foundational sizing, there is evidence of preparatory sketch lines (still visible near the moon and the angel's right wing) over which the sixteenth-century artist used four variants of the tempera technique. One of techniques isolated by Sol Rosales is an "*aguazo*" in which the fabric is slightly dampened before the application of the pigments, a painting method primarily used on the areas of Guadalupe's shawl and tunic. A second perceptible technique involves a tempera with agglutinate (*temple al cola*) in which the pigments were laid over a preparation of painter's size and lime, primarily visible on the background and solar mandorla. For the Virgin's face and hands, Sol Rosales states that the tempera was mixed with *resina* or oil brushed on thinly to give a luminous appearance as the olive flesh tones were reflected off of the white background (fig. 2). The gilded areas of the metallic sunburst, stars and mantle trim were the final coats using an application of rather thick gold leaf; these areas show some of the greatest deterioration and overpainting. The degree of fading and cracking here and in other background areas is so disturbing to those who believe in a prodigious creation, that these sections are generally segregated as human additions, made "long after the original" image, by which they mean the Virgin's face, hands, robe and mantle.⁸ The restricted palette of black, white, a green-blue as well as the earthen colors of brown and red tones, are identified by Sol Rosales as mineral- and vegetable-based pigments, typical for their time.⁹ Interestingly,

⁵ Sánchez, *Imagen*, fol. 43.

⁶ Luis Reyes García, *Anales de Juan Bautista* (México: Biblioteca Lorenzo Boturini, Insigne y Nacional Basílica de Guadalupe, 2001), numbers 24, 77, 278.

⁷ This was, and is, a common preparatory stage for paintings on textile that pro-apparition scholars repeatedly deny in order to distance the work from traditional artistic practices and human manufacture. In addition, Jorge Guadarrama concludes that colored underpaints were used in places (in Garza-Valdes, *Tepeyac*, chap. 20).

⁸ Philip Serna Callahan, *The Tilma under Infra-Red Radiation*, CARA: Vol. II Guadalupana Studies, No. 3 (Washington D.C., 1981), pp. 6-7, 18-19.

⁹ These include the black soot from burnt pine, copper (blues/greens) and iron (browns) oxides, and a combination of vermilion and the native-derived *cochinilla* for the reds, all pigments commonly available to sixteenth-century artists.

one or another of these materials had been suggested from the earliest written descriptions of the tilma image.¹⁰

Equally in defiance of its putative incorruptibility, yet appropriate for a painting on cloth of 350 plus years, Rosales' report includes the damage and subsequent overpaintings suffered by the canvas through years of human interventions and adverse environmental conditions. Even an empiric exam of the tilma image reveals a canvas that is spattered with water and wax and covered with a film of dirt and candle soot. Although the painting was protected by double crystal panes at least by 1647, and a case with triple panes (one locked under key) by 1688, these were opened for sessions of several hours to allow hundreds of rosaries, metals, prints and painted canvases to come into contact with the original icon and absorb its numinous power.¹¹

Horizontal crease lines are apparent, two at the level of Guadalupe's sleeves and a second set at her bent knee, the result of pressure from the cross beams of an original wooden stretcher that was supplanted by a silver plate soon after 1666 (fig. 1). Over time modifications have been made to the Virgin's forehead and facial profile, the cheeks have been darkened, some flesh has been removed around the neck (a double curved outline giving the appearance of a double chin as in fig. 2), sections of the background, cloak, and seam line are overpainted with both watercolor and tempera, and the fingers have been shortened, by a 1/2" on the left hand, as visible to the naked eye. The tilma image has undergone several additions and subtractions, such as the insertion of an angelic host in the cloudbank¹² and the painting out of Guadalupe's original crown leaving today only the dark overpainting to mark the crown's lower horizontal edge.¹³ The crown

¹⁰ Miguel Sánchez (*Imagen*, fol. 49), for example, indicated the use of tempera (*al temple*) in the painting method. In 1751, the famed artist Miguel Cabrera and his investigative team of six other painters detected four different techniques in the Guadalupe work, including oil, tempera with agglutinates, an "aguazo," and a type of fresco-like tempera. In spite of their findings, as devout Guadalupanos they ultimately decreed that the work was not by human hands but was an "American wonder" (Miguel Cabrera, *Maravilla americana y conjunto de Raras Maravillas...en la prodigiosa Imagen de Nuestra Sra. De Guadalupe de México* [1756], México: Editorial Jus facsimile edition, 1977, pp. 28-29).

¹¹ Cayetano de Cabrera y Quintero, *Escudo de Armas de México: celestial proteccion . . . Ma. Santissima en su portentosa imagen del Mexicano Guadalupe* (México: Vda. De D. Joseph Bernardo de Hogal, 1746), number 721, III, ch. XVIII; Sánchez, *Imagen*, fol. 82; Francisco de Florencia, *La Estrella de el Norte de México* (Barcelona: Antonio Velázquez, 1741 ed.), fol. 193v.; Cabrera, *Maravilla*, fols. 2-3. Flaking paint in the marginal areas was already noted in the second half of the seventeenth century but always contrasted with the incorruptible holy figure herself (Florencia, *Estrella*, fols. 26v., 30v).

¹² Unnamed sixteenth-century caretakers doctored the image by "adorning it with cherubims" that encircled the solar mandorla (Florencia, *Estrella*, fol. 30v.); poorly painted they soon deteriorated and were erased.

¹³ Sánchez (*Imagen*, fol. 39v) notes the "royal crown which rests on the mantle, with points and merlons of gold on the blue," and Florencia (*Estrella*, fol. 29) places a crown on Guadalupe's head shawl

needed to be erased from the tilma image in order to avoid rendering redundant the elaborate pontifical crowning ceremony of the Virgin of Guadalupe as Queen of the Americas on October 12, 1895.¹⁴

THE “APPEARANCE” OF GUADALUPE IN NEW SPAIN

The Jeronymite order in charge of the mother house of Guadalupe in Spain joined the rush to establish new missions overseas. Although devotion to the Spanish Virgin of Guadalupe never had the lasting presence in New Spain as it did in South America, she was one of an impressive army of saints that accompanied the European explorers as spiritual armament, shielding their owners and ensuring the success of the endeavor. Not only was the Virgin Mary emblazoned on Hernan Cortés’ banner, as the Spanish Guadalupe had been during the Reconquest from the twelfth century forward, but her image, inscribed on paper prints, was used to reclaim pagan spaces for Christianity and justify the military conquest. Along with wooden crosses, small-scale effigies and engravings of the Virgin Mary were mounted over altars formerly dedicated to pre-Hispanic deities.¹⁵ To express the triumph of the Christian faith both physically and symbolically, new shrines were typically erected on or near the foundations of Pre-Columbian temples. One such shrine at Tepeyacac (Tepeyac), just north of Tenochtitlan/Mexico City, was dedicated to “Our Lady” from its inception.

Historians have long scoured the early sixteenth-century documents for evidence that would confirm or discount the apparition legend of Guadalupe, said to have taken place in 1531. Although there is no need to rehearse the apparitionist and anti-apparitionist scholarship on the early

“with golden points,” a description that endures through the eighteenth century (Cabrera, *Maravilla*, p. 25) until the late nineteenth century, both in texts and consistently in the visual arts. It is possible that Guadalupe’s crown was first painted out sometime in the late seventeenth century (Francisco de Florencia, *Zodiaco Mariano*, edited and added to by P. Juan Antonio de Oviedo, México: Colegio de San Ildefonso, 1755, p. 41).

¹⁴ As recently confirmed by Jaime Cuadriello (*Zodiaco Mariano*, México D.F.: Museo de la Basílica de Guadalupe, 2004). The most dramatic modifications are proposed by the microbiologist, Dr. Leoncio A. Garza-Valdés (*Tepeyac: cinco siglos de engaño*, México, D. F.: Plaza y Janés, 2002, pp. 22-27), who posits three superimposed paintings on the tilma image. He claims that the earliest was a Madonna and child which, according to his interpretation of photographs taken with ultraviolet filters, includes a date of 1556 and the initials M.A., presumably for Marcos Aquino. The second overlaid painting dates to 1625 and may be the work of Juan Arrua Calzonzi and, he suggests, the third and final painting bears a faint date of 1632. However, these latter layers postdate the first exact copy (signed and dated) of the Virgin of Guadalupe executed in 1606 by Baltasar de Echave Orio. Photographs of these overpaintings are not available in the Garza-Valdés 2002 publication.

¹⁵ Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (México: Ed. Porrúa, 1960), volume 1, pp. 36, 119-20, 223-24.

sources, there is general agreement on the disquieting silence from 1531 to mid century on the nature of the devotion to a Virgin of Guadalupe, whether Spanish or Mexican.¹⁶ It would be another century yet before the apparition legend to Juan Diego was formulated and published.¹⁷ By 1555-56, however, evidence clearly points to the inauguration of a new cult at Tepeyac revolving around a recently fashioned image and an enlarged shrine. We may never be able to verify an initial installation of a Marian effigy in the Tepeyac shrine, nor to support the hypothesis that sometime between 1555 and 1556 a *second* image of the Virgin Mary was housed there, a duplication of Marian images not uncommon in Spanish sanctuaries. However, based on conflicting accounts of the type of devotional image(s) that may have been in the shrine, it is possible that, in addition to a sculptural image of the Virgin Mary, perhaps the Spanish Virgin of Guadalupe, a painting of a Virgin Immaculate was installed in the Tepeyac shrine at least by 1556, when a larger chapel was built and the devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe was reoriented from her Spanish roots to a distinctly novel American offshoot. Abbreviated entries in several chronicles, both native and European, and a reconstructed sermon, support the midcentury dating and native authorship of the Guadalupe painting.

ANALES DE JUAN BAUTISTA

Three annals-style native histories have succinct one-sentence entries dating to the years either 1555 or 1556 for the “appearance” or manifestation of Guadalupe at Tepeyac. In its language and intent, the entry on Guadalupe in the *Anales de Juan Bautista* is characteristic of the other records.¹⁸ With its Nahuatl text recently available in a new transcription by Luis Reyes García, I will concentrate on the valuable evidence provided by this underutilized

¹⁶ See Edmundo O’Gorman, *Destierro de Sombras* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1986), pp. 15-20; Stafford Poole, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Origins and Sources of a Mexican National Symbol: 1531-1797* (Tucson and London: The University of Arizona Press, 1995), pp. 15-99.

¹⁷ On the initial “invention” of the Guadalupe apparition story in two important creole treatises of 1648 and 1649 by Miguel Sánchez and Luis Lasso de la Vega, see Francisco de la Maza, *El Guadalupe mexicano* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1981 [1953]); Jacques Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe: The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness, 1532-1815*, translated by Benjamin Keen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 242-53; Ernesto de la Torre Villar and Ramiro Navarro de Anda, *Testimonios históricos guadalupanos* (México: Fondo de cultura económica, 1982), pp. 74-99; Jeanette Favrot Peterson, “The Virgin of Guadalupe: Symbol of Conquest or Liberation?” *Art Journal*, 51:4 (Winter 1992), pp. 39-47; Poole, *Our Lady*, pp. 100-155; David A. Brading, *Mexican Phoenix: Our Lady of Guadalupe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 54-95.

¹⁸ Three native texts are generally cited, the *Anales de Juan Bautista*, the *Historia* of don Domingo de Chimalpahin and the so-called Annals “Anonymous A” which are analyzed and compared by Poole, *Our Lady*, pp. 49-68; and O’Gorman, *Destierro*, pp. 27-29.

document.¹⁹ The details in the *Anales de Juan Bautista* paint a vivid picture of the bustling market in sacred artworks in New Spain's capital, both within and outside of the mendicant, especially Franciscan, workshops, and of individual artists whose contributions were far from anonymous or unappreciated. They amplify our understanding of this crucial stage in the making of the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe, her image and cult.

Only the signature of Juan Bautista, a native alguacil or tax-collector, entitle the small manuscript which he signed and dated in 1574 but never used. According to Reyes García, the *Anales de Juan Bautista* is the product of multiple authors, at least one feather worker and several scribe-painters, who wrote in the Aztec language of Nahuatl some eight or nine years after 1574, in places identifying themselves by writing in the first person.²⁰ This composite diary-like chronicle was, in turn, copied by one scribal hand who jumbled some of the entries chronologically and made errors. Focusing on the five-year period from 1564 to 1569, the events in the *Anales* include official commemorations of city-wide importance, from the pomp and circumstance of a viceroy's arrival or funerary cortege to the reading of royal proclamations. What raises the *Anales de Juan Bautista* above the tedious inventory-style of many historical annals is the indigenous authors' heightened observational sensibilities. Attentive documentarians, they bring the heterogeneous and dynamic interplay of cultures in Mexico City to life, their trained eyes capturing both the splendid and grotesque.

Beyond demonstrating their journalistic acumen, however, the authors were artists themselves in the tradition of the pre-conquest *tlacuilo* or scribe-painter, as can be found in the mindful care with which they record the hands-on techniques and tools of their profession in more detail than would have been of interest to someone outside the artisanal field. In addition to their familiarity with the varied media and themes favored by sixteenth-century artists is what I would call a pervasive "brag factor," a tendency toward self-representation that underscores the artists' illustrious heritage as

¹⁹ The *Anales de Juan Bautista* is a small (10.5 by 31 cm) manuscript on vellum currently housed in the archives of the Basilica of Guadalupe, Mexico City. The material I cite is a compilation of notes taken from the original manuscript, a transcription and translation by Don Vicente de Paul Andrade (Col. Gomez de Orozco number 14, BNAH, Mexico City), as well as those portions used by Primo Feliciano Velázquez, *La Aparición de Sta. Maria de Guadalupe* (México: Patricio Sanz, 1931), pp. 55-58 and Angel Ma. Garibay K., "Temas Guadalupeños," *Abside* 9 (1945, number 1), pp. 35-64 and "Temas Guadalupeños: El Diario de Juan Bautista," *Abside* 9 (1945, number 2), pp. 155-69. Most complete is the recent Spanish translation from the Nahuatl of the *Anales de Juan Bautista* in the edition by Reyes García. It is his system of paragraph numeration that I adopt in this paper when citing the *Anales*.

²⁰ Reyes García, *Anales*, pp. 19, 23-25; number 215.

Tolteca, a prestigious term given to skilled artisans of elite goods by the Aztecs. In the *Anales de Juan Bautista* native artwork is foregrounded and lavishly praised, as the time when the friar Miguel de Navarro compliments the painters, “What you are doing is so admirable, in many ways superior to the work of Spaniards.”²¹ The inclusion of specific biographical data also reveals an ethnocentric perspective, including the deaths and specific ages of indigenous artists.²²

Many observations reflect a strong bias regarding artisanal activities city-wide, but especially within the Franciscan environment in which the authors/artists were educated and trained. The names of sixteenth-century Franciscan luminaries, such as their beloved teacher, the Flemish lay-brother, Pedro de Gante (Peter of Ghent), the grammarian Alonso de Molina, and the famed ethnographer Bernardino de Sahagún, are liberally sprinkled throughout the annals.²³ A frequent venue for the narratives in the *Anales* is the school for the teaching of crafts adjacent to San José de Belen de los Naturales (St. Joseph of Bethlehem of the Natives), the Indian chapel of the primary Franciscan monastery in Mexico City. It is here that Pedro de Gante and his assistant Diego de Valadés supervised the instruction of manual arts or *oficios*, the visual arts, such as painting, and more practical trades, such as carpentry and blacksmithing, as part of their campaign to have their native charges live *en policía*, in a civilized manner.²⁴ From the schools of arts and crafts directed by all of the mendicant orders a new generation of native and mestizo artists emerged, creating liturgical furnishings and sacred art not only for the countless monasteries and churches in the metropolitan area but also for the ambitious building program in the outlying provinces. Of particular

²¹ Reyes García, *Anales*, number 223. In the *Anales* (number 158) artists are called *toltecase*. On the importance of the Tolteca artistic heritage both for the Aztecs and post contact, see Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain*, translated and edited by Arthur J. O Anderson and Charles Dibble (Santa Fe and Salt Lake City: The School of American Research and The University of Utah, 1950-82), Book 10:27, 167, 176; and Jeanette Favrot Peterson, “Crafting the Self: Identity and the Mimetic Tradition in the *Florentine Codex*,” In *Sahagún at 500: Essays on the Quincentenary of the Birth of Fr. Bernardino de Sahagún, OFM.*, edited by John Schwaller (Berkeley, CA: Academy of American Franciscan History, 2003), pp. 237-43.

²² Recorded are the deaths of the painters Hernando Tlacacochi (on 1/30/1565), Martin Mixcohuatl (on 2/26/66); and the age of Marcos Tlacuilo as 52 years in 1565 (Reyes García, *Anales*, numbers 19, 350, 352).

²³ Reyes García, *Anales*, numbers 69, 79, 84, 130, 133, 136, 169, 216, 220.

²⁴ See Jeanette Favrot Peterson, *The Paradise Garden Murals of Malinalco: Utopia and Empire in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993) pp. 19-22, 50-52. On the architectural history of the mosque-like chapel of San José, see George Kubler, *Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), volume 2, pp. 466-68; John McAndrew, *The Open-Air Churches of Sixteenth-century Mexico* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 368-99.

interest to us in the *Anales* is the description of artworks created for the multimedia spectacles that crowded the liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church. Naturally, sculptors, painters and gilders played an important role as the creators of the many religious images that were displayed or processed on the streets of Mexico City in the course of these festivities.

It is in this context that we need to understand the single-line entry on Guadalupe's "appearance" in the *Anales*. On folio 9r. we read, "Then in the year 1555 Santa Maria de Guadalupe *appeared* there in Tepeyacac" or, in the Nahuatl, *Yn ipan xihuitl mill e qui-os 55 a[no]s yquac monextitzi[no] in sancta maria de guatalupe yn ompa tepeyacac* [emphasis mine]. The crucial Nahuatl verb here is *monextitzino*, a reverential form of the root verb *neci* (preterite *nez* or *nezqui*), meaning "to appear."²⁵ It should be noted that sixteenth-century usage did allow for more latitude in the understanding of the nature of the "appearance." Molina translates *neci* rather ambivalently as "to appear before our eyes" or "to discover."²⁶ Yet, as Reyes García makes abundantly clear, "to appear" in this and other contexts within the *Anales de Juan Bautista* does not carry a supernatural meaning but rather should be understood as "to show publicly" or "to manifest," sometimes for the first time.²⁷

In the *Anales de Juan Bautista*, the non-miraculous significance of the verb *neci* is endorsed by a similar use of the same verb at least fourteen additional times to indicate that holy images were put on display or made their "appearance" for a public viewing, some only recently completed and with their patrons explicitly named. For example, a sculpture of the Virgin "appeared" (*nez*) during the feast of the Assumption; similarly, during the feast day to St. Michael on September 29, 1564, two images "appeared," a St. Michael Archangel that was being shown publicly for a second time and a figure of St. Paul that made his debut as a devotional image; both of these appearances are indicated with the verb *neci*.²⁸

²⁵ Reyes García, *Anales*, number 56. Chimalpahin similarly uses the verb *neci* (*monextitzino*) when he notes in his history that the year 12 flint or 1556 was the year "when our precious mother Saint Mary of Guadalupe appeared at Tepeyacac" [*ypan in yhuac monextitzino yn totlaçonantzin Sancta Maria Guadalupe yn Tepeyacac*] (cited in Poole, *Our Lady*, p. 52).

²⁶ Alonso de Molina, *Vocabulario en lengua Castellana y Mexicana, y Mexicana y Castellana [1555]* (Mexico: Ed. Porrúa, 1977), fol. 64v.

²⁷ Reyes García, *Anales*, pp. 53-54. See also O'Gorman, *Destierro*, p. 29, and Poole, *Our Lady*, p. 51. I am grateful to James Lockhart for assistance with this translation (personal communication, December 12, 1996). Apparitionists have used this ambivalent significance of *neci* to maintain the earlier 1531 date for the supernatural appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe and justify 1555 as only one public occasion among several in which the *tilma* image was physically displayed (Velázquez, *La aparición*, pp. 51-58; Garibay K., *Temas guadalupanos*, p. 57).

²⁸ Reyes García, *Anales*, numbers 220, 262.

Some of the “appearances,” or ritual presentations of holy figures, acknowledge the patrons who underwrote the costs of constructing and maintaining them. In addition to the patronage of a collective group, a confraternity, trade guild, or an entire community, a wealthy individual could also sponsor images, as is recorded in the splendid gift made by don Alonso de Villaseca to the shrine of Guadalupe on September 15, 1566 to mark the octave of the Virgin’s nativity. Since Alonso de Villaseca had amassed a fortune in the mines near his hacienda in Ixmiquilpan and had seen to his creature comforts, he was now investing in the salvation of his soul. Again the verb *neci* is employed in the *Anales de Juan Bautista* to indicate the first public viewing of Villaseca’s sculpture, “There [in Tepeyacac] Villaseca *displayed (quinexti)* the image of Our Mother made completely of precious metal” [emphasis mine].²⁹ Villaseca’s sculpture of the Virgin Mary, not specifically identified as Guadalupe but assumed to be so, was accompanied by elaborate festivities and a procession of lords, judges, the archbishop, and “all of us commoners (*macehuales*),” clearly betraying the Indian identification of the authors. We will return to Villaseca’s gift of a sculpture of “precious metal,” but the use of the verb *neci* embeds the significance of its appearance in the inaugural festivities of this lavish sculpture.³⁰

The conventional uses of the verb *neci* elsewhere in the *Anales de Juan Bautista* to refer to the manufacture and display of other cult images corroborate that the “appearance” of Guadalupe in 1555 was more of a physical, than an extra-terrestrial, manifestation. However, this distinction was not clear-cut in the sixteenth century but open to a multivalent interpretation based on the early colonial conflation of the representation and the holy personage that blurred boundaries between the real and the unreal, the visible and invisible. As Poole has noted, the installation of an image was thought of as the Virgin herself “entering her home.”³¹ Since the image was personified as a living being, it was but a short step for the devotee to believe that the carved wood or painted canvas was infused with the power of the holy. This potential for slippage appears to have been similarly embedded in the Nahuatl category of *ixiptla* or god-representation, whether as deity sculptures or living individuals dressed to impersonate the gods in Aztec rituals.

²⁹ Reyes García, *Anales*, number 32: “*Tlama in Villaseca quinexti yn ixiptlatzin tonantzi[n] ça[n] moch teocuitlat;*” or in the Spanish translation, “*Allá hizo ofreda Villaseca, mostró la imagen de nuestra madre que hizo toda de metal precioso.*”

³⁰ Villaseca’s beneficence to the Guadalupe shrine is also manifest by his philanthropic construction of a hospice (“dormitory for the ill”) and the hosting of a dinner for officials from both Spanish and indigenous communities, to let it be known that he was “taking the church at Tepeyac for himself” (Reyes García, *Anales*, number 32)—in other words, that he was intending to sustain the shrine and its good works.

³¹ Poole, *Our Lady*, p. 58.

Attracted by specific attributes of insignia, headdresses and body designs, sacred forces were lured to the *ixiptla* where they “invaded the form.”³² Christian replacements would not likely have lost that same ability to absorb and perform the numinous, particularly when animated on a processional *paso* or when they were shrouded in the evocative clouds of incense and flickering candlelight on an altar. Thus, in the *Anales*, when the carved Mary displayed during the feast of the Assumption is called an *ixiptlatzin*,³³ a reverential form of god-impersonator, it is likely that new converts to the Catholic faith, as well as European believers, may have confused the likeness or surrogate with the actual presence of the Virgin Mary. This helps explain the ambivalent meaning of another sixteenth-century Nahuatl entry tracing the arrival or creation of the Virgin of Guadalupe to 1556. Instead of *neci*, the verb *temohui* (to come down) is inserted to read that in 12 flint 1556, “The Virgin came down here to Tepeyac,” suggesting both animation and intentionality on the part of the Virgin Mary.³⁴

The tendency to vivify the fabricated images, and then to worship them rather than their celestial prototypes, was among the most pressing dilemmas for a colonial church working with an enormous non-Christian population. The proliferation of figural images in the cult of saints, already a target of the Reformists’ charges of idolatry, was one of the practices being reviewed by the Tridentine council.³⁵ Both Christian saints and indigenous deities in Mesoamerica were represented in figural form and ritually revered in interactive, humanized contexts: dressed, petitioned, processed and honored with offerings that were often edible. In fact, the plurality of anthropomorphic objects used in a ritual context was one of the most potent commonalities between Catholicism and the pre-Hispanic pantheons. It caused many church authorities, but particularly the Franciscans, to object to the unchecked spread of new devotions for fear of further undermining the fragile faith of their charges. It is in this anxious climate that we best understand the famous sermonized debate between an archbishop and a Franciscan over a shrine at Tepeyac with a freshly minted image of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

³² Inga Clendinnen (“Ways to the Sacred,” *History and Anthropology*, v. 5: 1990, p.122), however, also makes the inscrutably nuanced distinction that the *ixiptla* or god-representations did not “contain sacred power.”

³³ Reyes García, *Anales*, number 220.

³⁴ In the sixteenth-century annals called the *Anales antiguos de México y sus contornos* or “Anónimo A” the entry reads as follows: “1556: 12 *tecpatl*. *Hual temohui cihuapilli tepeyacac, ça ye no yquac popocac citlallin*” (cited in Poole, *Our Lady*, p. 53).

³⁵ The Council of Trent (1545-63) dealt with the seductive potential for “false worship” of images in its 25th or last session, when it issued a brief but very influential statement on the proper role of sacred images within the Church.

THE SERMONS OF 1556

Two sermons, one recorded from eyewitness testimonials, pit the Franciscan provincial, Francisco de Bustamante (1555-1562), against the archbishop of New Spain (1553-72), a Dominican named Alonso Montúfar.³⁶ In the first sermon, on September 6 of 1556, Montúfar effusively promoted the devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe and her miraculous reputation having, sometime during the previous year, enlarged the shrine to which he assigned a full-time priest. This endorsement prompted a heated response from Bustamante two days later on September 8, an important Marian celebration of Our Lady's Nativity and also the feast day of the Spanish Guadalupe in Extremadura. With typical mendicant skepticism and a particular dislike of Montúfar, Bustamante was said to have denounced the cult's image, a painting that was falsely miraculous and that would only further erode the orthodoxy of Indian neophytes already confused between adoring what was on the altar made of "cloth, paint or wood" and the "true Mother of God who is in heaven," as stated by one of the attendees of Bustamante's sermon, Francisco de Salazar.³⁷

Bustamante's sermon, delivered in the chapel of San José, was considered so inflammatory and potentially insubordinate by Montúfar that the archbishop called for an investigation to determine its true content. Nine witnesses were interrogated (on the following day September 9, 1556, and on September 24th) and asked to confirm, deny or amplify on thirteen leading questions in an attempt to reconstruct Bustamante's exact words. Question three, for example, asked whether the friar had charged that the cult was detrimental to the natives because they had been led to understand that "a cult image painted by an Indian was miraculous," emphasizing the incongruity of so empowering a product of human artifice.³⁸ The composite testimonies in the investigation confirmed the recent renaming of the shrine from its early more generic dedication to the "Mother of God" to that of "Our Lady of Guadalupe," a change that appeared to be associated with a newly installed image, called "Guadalupe" by the witness, Francisco de Salazar.³⁹ Almost all of those who testified confirmed that the devotion was flourishing among Spaniards and natives who were visiting the shrine. Most importantly, the attendance at the shrine, according to the witness Juan de

³⁶ The transcribed interrogation is found in its entirety with a commentary, as "*Información por el sermón de 1556*" in Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, pp. 43-72.

³⁷ Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, p. 59.

³⁸ Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, p. 45.

³⁹ Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, p. 58.

Masseguer, was rising because of the “fame of that image painted yesterday by an Indian which was miracle-working.”⁴⁰ However, nowhere is the miraculous origin of the image alluded to and Poole concludes that the apparition legend was unknown by midcentury.⁴¹

In his sermon, Bustamante referred to the cult object in the shrine of Guadalupe as an “image,” but more frequently as a painting, and never as a sculpture. Four witnesses relayed Bustamante’s charge that the image was painted by “an Indian” and Alonso Sanchez de Cisneros specifically recalled the name of the artist as Marcos.⁴² By dismissing the painting as recent [painted “yesterday”] and as the work of an Indian whom he identified simply as “Marcos,” the friar-provincial was not demeaning the indigenous nature of the artwork, since Franciscans encouraged native crafts adjacent to the very chapel in which he was preaching. Rather he was discounting the miracles attributed to Guadalupe by focusing on the absurdity of imputing power to a cult image that, lately painted, lacked altogether the authenticity of a time-worn tradition.

THE NATIVE ARTISTIC CIRCLE AND MARCOS CIPAC DE AQUINO

Before returning to the intriguing identity of the “Marcos” mentioned by Bustamante, it is important to contextualize the painter’s status and skill by describing the great productivity and wide-ranging activities of native artists in the metropolitan area as represented in the *Anales de Juan Bautista*. They sold their paintings in the open market and accepted secular commissions outside of monastic patronage, working individually as well as collectively in workshops where an apprenticeship system of teaching was in place. The *Anales* describes at least twelve different commissioned artworks, ranging from large cloth paintings done for the refectory of San José de los Naturales, a sculpture of St. Sebastian with his hands tied to a *nopal* cactus, portraits of the Aztec rulers, and the well-known six-part *retablo* or altarpiece for the chapel of San José. To avoid heretical images as well as to maintain quality picture-making, painters were subjected to oversight from the Church and civil servants, a censorship that included the burning of works deemed poorly executed.⁴³ Although artists were broadly regulated in 1555 at the First Church Council, the first official ordinances for the painters’ and gilders’ guild in 1557 established a hierarchy based on

⁴⁰ Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, p. 71.

⁴¹ Poole, *Our Lady*, pp. 62-63; see also Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, p. 106.

⁴² Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, p. 63.

⁴³ Reyes García, *Anales*, numbers 253, 278, 327, 342.

ethnicity, skill and tenure.⁴⁴ Fearful of the competition the Indian artists were posing, Spaniards attempted to exclude them from the higher echelons. However, these ordinances were unenforceable in the marketplace and monasteries; in fact, already in the sixteenth century the guilds were in the hands of the creoles, mestizos and Indians.⁴⁵ So “exquisite” were the crafts of Indian artists,⁴⁶ that native products consistently took business away from the Europeans. Moreover, the demand for works was such that even native painters complained of their inadequate numbers, “if they were 400 painters they could not finish.”⁴⁷

The shadowy identity of the “Marcos” mentioned by Bustamante has been linked to two documented indigenous artists with different surnames. The first was Marcos Aquino, one of three indigenous artists singled out for commendation by Bernal Díaz del Castillo as described below, and the second, Marcos Cipac, was prominent among the 36 native artists listed in the *Anales* from all four of the Indian districts in Mexico City. Although mentioned ten times in the *Anales* where he is variously called Marcos, Marcos the painter (*tlacuilo*) and Marcos Cipac, Reyes García posits this Marcos as one and the same individual from the district of San Juan Moyotlán.⁴⁸ It is his Franciscan context and, I will argue, his notable reputation, that explains Bustamante’s familiarity with Marcos Cipac’s name and work.

RETABLO OF SAN JOSÉ, 1564

Marcos appears to have been one of the master painters, if not the principal artist in charge of the team who created one of the most celebrated early colonial artworks, the altarpiece for the Indian chapel of San José de los Naturales. Marcos Tlacuilol was the first and consistent member of a team of four painters throughout the final stages of the project, when the make-up of

⁴⁴ Francisco del Barrio Lorenzot, *Ordenanzas de gremios de la Nueva España* (México: Dir. de Talleres Graficos, 1921), pp. 21-25.

⁴⁵ Peterson, *Paradise*, pp. 43-44; Manuel Carrera Stampa, *Los Gremios Mexicanos, 1521-1861* (México: Ibero-Americano, 1954), pp. 225-26. In the *Anales de Juan Bautista* several native artists were singled out as masters in the painters’ guild. Moreover, certain responsibilities were allocated to different officials, such as selecting the head painter (*tlacuillo* or *capitán de los pintores*) in 1568 (Reyes García, *Anales*, p. 48, number 116; pp. 180-181).

⁴⁶ Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1975), volume 5, p. 317.

⁴⁷ Reyes García, *Anales*, number 261.

⁴⁸ Reyes García, *Anales*, p. 205, note 94. Specific entries where he is named in the *Anales* (citing the Reyes García edition) include as Marcos Cipac (numbers 159, 294); as Marcos Tlacuilol (numbers 169, 265, 352); and as just Marcos (numbers 169, 172, 177, 178, 261).

the team shifted slightly.⁴⁹ Although artwork at San José was generally assigned through a system of equal representation from the four districts (*parcialidades*) of Mexico city, the painters for the altarpiece were primarily from San Juan Moyotlán, perhaps handpicked by the leading artist, Marcos, from his own district.⁵⁰

In an unusually detailed glimpse into the production of a single early colonial work of art, seven entries in the *Anales de Juan Bautista* chart the often sputtering progress on this ambitious retable from its inception on May 16 of 1564 when paint for this “great panel painting” (*la gran tabla*) is purchased from merchants, to the first week in December when friar Miguel Navarro visits the workshop to observe the painters at work and pronounces the retable “very good, very admirable.” Finally, on December 23, 1564, seven months after its inception, the great altarpiece of San José is inaugurated.⁵¹ The program of the San José retable included the patron saint of the chapel, St. Joseph, several of the major saints in Franciscan hagiography (St. Buenaventure, St. Louis Obispo, St. Anthony of Padua) and two scenes from Christ’s life, the Crucifixion and Last Supper. These subjects were distributed over six large panels arranged in two tiers and a seventh painting, that may have been a predella for the altarpiece.⁵²

Not only did Marcos play a significant role in coordinating and fabricating the San José altarpiece, but he also acted as the group’s spokesperson in matters concerning the Spanish civil authorities. Marcos’ independence is verified by one incident when, in September of 1564, during the height of the work on the altarpiece, a Franciscan who visits the painting atelier is told that Marcos is absent because he is “pursuing his own work.”⁵³ This ability to free-lance is an indication that his reputation went beyond the walls of the Franciscan monastery to generate outside commissions.

⁴⁹ In addition to Marcos tlacuilo, the team of four included Pedro Chachalaca, Francisco Xinmamal and Pedro Nicolás; to complete the retable, Marcos Cipac and Francisco Xinmamal were joined by Martín Mixcohuatl (an *alguacil*) and Pedro Cocol (Reyes García, *Anales*, numbers 169, 294).

⁵⁰ Reyes García, *Anales*, number 327 and p. 47. With one exception: Martín Mixcohuatl from San Pablo Teopan. Two artists are not included in Reyes García’s list by *parcialidad*.

⁵¹ The progress of the altarpiece is recorded in multiple entries found in Reyes García, *Anales*, numbers 157, 160, 169, 189, 292, 294, 327. In the Codex Aubin, the entry records Christmas Day of 1564 as the day on which the retable was inaugurated: *ynic XXV deziembre yn lonestica omoma yn table sant Joseph manse* (Charles E. Dibble, editor, *Codice de 1576 or Codice Aubin [Historia de la Nación Mexicana]*, Madrid: Ed. José Porrua Turanzas, 1963, pp. 76, 105). When a new altarpiece was made for the main altar of San José in 1608, either the old retable was disassembled or it was moved to one of the side altars. It is no longer extant nor is the chapel of San José, both victims of earthquake damage and urban renewal (McAndrew, *Open-Air Churches*, pp. 397-99).

⁵² Reyes García, *Anales*, number 327; Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, pp. 133-134.

⁵³ Reyes García, *Anales*, number 261.

It is generally assumed that this is the same Marcos who is praised lavishly as the native painter, Marcos de Aquino, by Bernal Diaz del Castillo in his “True History” of the Conquest of New Spain. To make the point that high-level crafts were being maintained by gifted native Americans, Bernal Diaz interjects three colonial native artists of great talent, “There are three Indians today in the city of Mexico, named Marcos de Aquino and Juan de la Cruz and el Crespillo, who are so outstanding in their craft of engraving and painting, that if they had lived in the time of that ancient and famed Apelles, or of Michelangelo or Berruguete, who are contemporaries, they would also be counted among their number.”⁵⁴ In an almost identical passage later in his history, Bernal Diaz again singles out “three master Indians . . . Mexicans who are called Andrés [sic] de Aquino and Juan de la Cruz and el Crespillo.”⁵⁵ The author reveals a typically Eurocentric mode of aesthetic judgment in appraising the indigenous mastery of fine arts by inserting the Mexican artists into an illustrious lineage stretching from ancient Greece to the Renaissance, thereby referencing the familiar classical canon.

It is his professional status that is important in considering the possible conjunction between the Marcos de Aquino described by Bernal Diaz, the Marcos Cipac in the *Anales de Juan Bautista* and the Marcos of Bustamante fame who reputedly created the Virgin of Guadalupe painting. All three individuals share the correct parameters of ethnicity, time and space, as native painters who achieved prominence in Mexico City during the years 1555 to 1568. If the three “Marcos” were indeed one and the same Marcos Cipac de Aquino, he would have been a seasoned 45 year-old painter in 1555, an appropriate age for attaining the height of his artistic powers.⁵⁶ The habit of double naming was not unique and allowed the artist to cross linguistic and cultural lines, in this case as Marcos Cipac within his own Nahua community and as Aquino among the European constituency.⁵⁷ In his close ties with the Franciscan community, Marcos tlacuilo (or Cipac), one of the chief painters of the San José retablo, would certainly have been well known to the Franciscan provincial, Bustamante.

⁵⁴ Diaz del Castillo, *Historia*, volume 1, p. 275.

⁵⁵ Diaz del Castillo, *Historia*, volume 2, p. 362. Which of the two famed Spanish artists named Berruguete is being invoked remains moot, either Pedro (ca. 1450s-1503) or more likely, his son, Alonso (ca. 1485-1561), a sculptor of note and royal painter in the court of Charles V who would have been active during Bernal Diaz’ two trips back to Spain. It is possible too that for Bernal Diaz the name “Berruguete” carried an aura that transcended father and son.

⁵⁶ Responding to a census question from a *visitador* in the *Anales de Juan Bautista*, Marcos cites his age as 52 in 1565, thus placing his birth prior to the conquest in 1513 (Reyes García, *Anales*, number 352).

⁵⁷ Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, p. 131.

Scholars have for so long speculated on the theory that Marcos Cipac de Aquino painted the *lienzo* of Guadalupe that it has moved from lore to fact.⁵⁸ Poole cautions that the linkage remains tenuous, based only on the word of a single witness to Bustamante's sermon; others object not only to the fragile hearsay of the identification but to the fact that at the time the church hierarchy did not trumpet the creator of "such a famous painting."⁵⁹ First, it should be noted that almost all of the Bustamante witnesses concurred with the Indian attribution of the Guadalupe painting and that while only one actually named a specific painter, no one disputed it. Second, while the *Anales de Juan Bautista* has certainly shown us that native painters were well known in their own day, and thus esteemed works of art were not anonymous, it was not in the indigenous tradition to single out individual artistic achievement nor to autograph and date works, cultural habits that would arrive in New Spain with the larger influx (and egos) of European artists in the 1560s. It is also possible that it was in the best interest of the ecclesiastical patron, probably archbishop Montúfar himself, to suppress the identity of the creative hand in order to prevent the very criticism so vehemently expressed by Bustamante. And finally, in 1556, the destiny of the Guadalupe cult image as a "famous painting" was not yet apparent. However circumstantial the evidence, there can be no doubt that Marcos, like other native painters at mid century, had the necessary talent for the task, skills polished for the colonial market by extensive training in European styles and Christian symbolism.⁶⁰ The remarkable accomplishments of painters like Marcos de Aquino constantly amazed Europeans and caused Bernal Diaz to remark that "if one had not seen them [the artworks] one would not believe that Indians had made them."⁶¹

⁵⁸ The attribution of the Guadalupe tilma painting to Marcos Cipac de Aquino began in the late nineteenth century around the time Bustamante's sermon was first published (1884-88), most conspicuously in Joaquín García Icazbalceta ("Carta acerca del Origen de la Imagen de Nuestra Sra. De Guadalupe" of 1883), and the historian Francisco del Paso y Troncoso ("Noticia del indio Marcos. . ." of 1891) both republished in Torre Villar and Navarro (*Testimonios*, pp. 1106-1107 and pp. 129-41 respectively). Thereafter, the linkage was frequently cited, notably by the pioneer and influential art historian of Mexican colonial art, Manuel Toussaint (*La pintura en México durante el siglo XVI* (México: Mundial, 1936), p. 13, and, among many others, by John McAndrew (*Open-Air Churches*, p. 386) who attributes "the most celebrated and beautiful of Mexican sixteenth-century pictures: the Virgin of Guadalupe" to Marcos Cipac de Aquino.

⁵⁹ Poole, *Our Lady*, p. 63; Mariano P. Cuevas, *Historia de la iglesia en Mexico* (México: Ed. Patria, S.A., 1921-28), volume 4, p. 21; Velázquez, *La aparición*, pp. 51-55, 402, 409.

⁶⁰ For an opposing view, see Velázquez, *La aparición*, p. 55; Poole, *Our Lady*, p. 252:n. 70.

⁶¹ Díaz del Castillo, *Historia*, volume 2, p. 362. For another of the many chroniclers who lauded native artistry, see Fray Toribio (de Benavente) Motolinía, *Memoriales e Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*. In: *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles* (Madrid: Ed. Atlas, 1970), ch. 60:97; ch. 33:49; ch. 59:95.

Thus I am positing that Marcos Cipac (de Aquino) was the artist of the Mexican Guadalupe, capable of executing a large Marian painting on cloth within a professional milieu that was abundantly stocked to stimulate his innate artistry. In the San José school of arts and the San Francisco library, Marcos had at his fingertips an assortment of literary and visual materials from many European venues. Given Pedro de Gante's Flemish heritage, certainly a large number of didactic sources were of Northern European origins. Diverse artistic models inspired the new Mexican Guadalupe iconography, Marian types that were reproduced in European graphics and in other portable media, some emanating from the Spanish monastery of Guadalupe. That the composite Guadalupe image painted on the tilma was not unprecedented is suggested by Bustamante in his sermon when he commented that there were "similar images of Our Lady in the cathedral [*iglesia mayor*] of Mexico City and in the monasteries like that one," i.e., like the new painting by Marcos in the Tepeyac shrine.⁶² We can corroborate Bustamante's observations with evidence from extant prints, illustrated books, liturgical garments, and wall paintings within the milieu of Marcos.

THEOLOGICAL AND ARTISTIC SOURCES

Although in its iconography the Mexican icon can be largely understood as a streamlined version of the apocalyptic woman, the Tepeyac Guadalupe is a hybrid image, showing affinity with not only St. John's vision in Revelation but also with the Assumption of the Virgin and other biblical and artistic sources which extol symbolically the purity of Mary. To understand this synthesizing process requires a retroactive look at European models in wood, paper and cloth from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Ingredients of all of these overlapping Marian types went into the visualization of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as it was slowly standardized during the course of the sixteenth century.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception has had a tortuous history in Christianity, a subject of fierce debate and theological parsing. Among the dilemmas Mary's immaculacy posed for theologians was the need to reconcile her humanity, and thus her subjugation to original sin, with the idea that she had been conceived free from concupiscence and was therefore unsullied or "spotless" in nature (in Latin, *non-maculata* or immaculate). Of all women, Mary was singled out to embody the unique combination of divin-

⁶² Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, p. 66.

ity and personhood, a dual nature that expressed itself simultaneously as pure virgin and fecund mother.⁶³ A tenacious act of faith among the popular Catholic constituency, the Immaculate Conception preceded doctrinal rationalizations, that in any case were not clearly formulated in writing until the twelfth century. Fervent devotion to the Virgin Immaculate flourished, vocalized in sermons and performed in popular local feasts celebrated as early as the thirteenth century in Spain.⁶⁴

Without a fixed doctrinal point to rely on, artists fell back on a mix of traditional Marian iconographies which they adapted, combined and enhanced as prefigurations of the Virgin Immaculate.⁶⁵ The sinlessness of Mary was not a narrative but a challenging concept, eluding simple visual solutions. Well into the sixteenth century no single image was unequivocally read as the Immaculate Conception. In the end, as Levi d'Ancona notes, the most popular of these traditional themes, St. John's Apocalyptic woman and Mary surrounded by symbols of her purity, fused visually and symbolically with the Assumption of the Virgin to depict the Immaculate Conception.⁶⁶ In all three types Mary is shown between heaven and earth, neither wholly earth-bound nor remotely transcendental, as a bodily figure who mediates both spheres. It is a trio of overlapping Marian themes, the *Mulier Amicta Sole*, Assumption of the Virgin, and the *Tota Pulchra* that may have impacted the making of the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe.⁶⁷

⁶³ Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), pp. 236-54.

⁶⁴ Mirella Levi d'Ancona, *The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance*. Monographs on Archaeology and Fine Arts, VII (New York: College Art Association of America and Art Bulletin, 1957), pp. 6, 50; Suzanne L. Stratton, *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 2. Two major theories developed that would presage a split among Catholics for centuries. The first, the theory of Sanctification, was espoused by a Dominican, St Thomas Aquinas (c. 1226-1274), who advocated the idea that while Mary had been conceived carnally she was cleansed and sanctified in the womb of her mother, Anne. Somewhat later in the thirteenth century the Franciscan, John Duns Scotus (c. 1266-1308) developed what would become the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, that Mary was preserved from sin from the moment of conception and thus had always enjoyed a state of original grace. However, only in 1480 was an Office and Mass to the Immaculate conception proclaimed by Pope Sixtus IV, a Franciscan himself, and not until 1854, when the doctrine was recognized as dogma, did the ecclesiastical officialdom certify the deeply entrenched beliefs of millions.

⁶⁵ Older representations that were handily adapted included the Tree of Jesse (to insert Mary into Christ's genealogy was to indicate that the Virgin too from the beginning was exempt from sin), the Meeting of Jesse and Anne at the Golden Gate, the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin, the Virgin of Mercy and the Annunciation (Levi d'Ancona, *Iconography*, pp. 15 ff.). On the varied themes, including the Santa Ana Triple, that slowly evolved to construct the pictorial representation of the Immaculate Conception in fifteenth-century Spain, see Stratton *Immaculate*, pp. 10-34.

⁶⁶ Levi d'Ancona, *Iconography*, p. 15.

⁶⁷ I derive these typologies from Stratton's study of the Virgin Immaculate in Spanish art, although in a different order and with different emphases.

MULIER AMICTA SOLE

When applied to the Virgin, the *Mulier Amicta Sole* (or *Virgo amicta sole*), the “Woman clothed with the sun,” was the earliest and most basic building block in a cluster of interrelated biblical and artistic representations that ultimately shaped the pictorial expression of the Immaculate Conception. The phrase “Woman clothed with the sun” is a direct quote from Revelation (12:1) when John “sees” the apocalyptic woman: “*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars*” [emphasis mine]. As interpreted by the German artist Albrecht Dürer in 1498, the winged apocalyptic woman is wafted skyward by angels while her newborn child is also lifted to the safety of heavenly arms, both escaping the danger of the seven-headed dragon of satanic forces. In other variations, the apocalyptic woman (with or without a child) is consistently “clad” with solar raiment in the form of a body-sheathing mandorla and is shown standing on a lunar pedestal, ingredients that are paralleled in the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe who is enveloped in a flaming glory and with the moon at her feet. Rather than the “crown of twelve stars” that encircles the head of Durer’s apocalyptic woman, however, the stars are strewn over the surface of Guadalupe’s cloak and, in her original representation, she was crowned with a queen’s diadem.⁶⁸

Although she is derived from, and is best known as, the apocalyptic woman, the *Mulier amicta sole* was freely adapted to serve other Marian advocations widely depicted in Northern European graphics. The virgin “clothed” with spokes of sunlight from John’s apocalyptic vision became a foundational genre for a dispersed model that was creatively modified in Europe in the second half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Typical of these woodcuts and engravings is an anonymous rendering of the “Virgin in Glory” set against a sunburst (fig. 3). The madonna is being crowned by one angel overhead and supported by another winged angel under her crescent moon footrest. Interestingly, this graphic is based on an earlier fifteenth-century Netherlandish graphic but was slightly revised for Hispanic consumption, as indicated by the Spanish texts inscribed in the corners.⁶⁹ It is impossible to date this rather generic “Virgin in Glory” with any

⁶⁸ Elisa Vargas Lugo (“Iconología guadalupana,” *Imágenes Guadalupanas: Cuatro Siglos*. México: Centro Cultural Arte Contemporáneo, 1988, p. 60, fig. 20). As the woman who brought forth a man-child to rule all the nations (Revelation 12:5), the Apocalyptic woman was soon interpreted to be Mary, the mother of Christ for whom the archangel St. Michael defeats the dragon (or serpent) to vanquish evil, sin, and heresy. On this see Levi d’Ancona, *Iconography*, p. 22.

⁶⁹ Vargas Lugo (“Iconología guadalupana,” p. 61, fig. 22) suggests an analogous early fifteenth-century Dutch graphic as an antecedent for the Mexican Guadalupe. See also a 1480 Augsburg print of the



Figure 3
 Madonna and Child in Glory
 Anon.
 Woodcut, Flemish (with Spanish inscriptions)
 Mid 15th century

degree of precision for blocks and plates were recycled endlessly and it may have been reused well into the seventeenth century especially at a popular level. Moreover, although perhaps adapted in the Netherlands, it may also have been printed in Spain, an excellent example of the peripatetic nature of prints and their widespread influence.

Among the multitude of small artworks in other media that were equally dependant on apocalyptic imagery and could readily have traveled in the luggage of someone destined for the New World were the products from the workshops in the monastery of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Extremadura,

“Madonna of the Rosary,” a standing Virgin Mary and Christ Child encircled by a floral chain symbolic of the Rosary and in the corners are scrolls that can be read as the winged creatures seen by St. John, the four attributes of the evangelists.

The Spanish texts on the scrolls in figure 3 include (from upper left and clockwise):

- “Quien es esta Reina? El consuelo del mundo.
- “Dime cual es su nombre? Maria, Madre y Virgen.
- “Cómo se podrá llegar á Ella? Invocándola y imitándola.
- “Cómo obtuvo tanta gloria? Por su caridad y humildad.

Spain. The self-sufficient monastery supported a center for the manufacture of liturgical vestments and a famed scriptorium, one of the most important in Europe by the end of the fifteenth century.⁷⁰ For several centuries the scriptorium produced Bibles, missals, and devotionals; the scribes, illuminators, vellum makers and book binders were among Guadalupe's gifted Jeronymite friars. When their numbers were insufficient to meet the demand, secular illuminators were hired by the monastery, including the talented Flemish painter, Guilberto de Flandes,⁷¹ all of whom would have brought Northern European prints with them.

In an early sixteenth-century choir book or *cantoral* produced in the Guadalupe scriptorium is a delicate embellishment of an Initial "O" whose oval form contains a Virgin in Glory on a sickle moon (fig. 4). In the molten color of her saffron mantle, the Virgin Mary appears not only as if she is wearing solar raiment, but as if she is being consumed by her solar cocoon. Painstakingly hand painted, this illumination was certainly based on one of the many Flemish and German prints used in the Spanish monastery as models for their fine artwork.⁷² As reflected in the Guadalupe miniatures, the graphic output of Albrecht Dürer and his fellow printmakers, Martin Schongauer and Lucas Cranach, as well as mannerist graphics from the Antwerp school, were immensely influential on the Iberian peninsula and were subsequently exported to the Americas.⁷³

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN

Although an iconographic relative of the Virgin *amicta sole*, the representation of the Assumption of the Virgin was independently developed, one of the most popular and visually ubiquitous of the Marian themes to be treated in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spain, from miniature illuminations to carved vignettes in towering altarpieces. Scenes of the Assumption

⁷⁰ Sebastian García, *Los Miniados de Guadalupe* (Guadalupe: Ed. Guadalupe, 1998), pp. 53-55.

⁷¹ Joaquín Yarza Luaces, *Los Reyes Católicos: Paisaje Artístico de una Monarquía* (Madrid: Ed. Nerea, 1993), pp. 166-67.

⁷² García, *Los Miniados*, pp. 117-120; Yarza Luaces, *Los Reyes*, p. 167; Pilar Mogollón Cano-Cortés, "El Scriptorium Guadalupense." In *Guadalupe: Siete Siglos de Fe y de Cultura*, edited by Sebastián García (Guadalupe: Ediciones Guadalupe, 1993), p. 390.

⁷³ The Virgin "clothed with the sun" traversed the Atlantic as single woodblocks or as illustrations in published books reused in Mexican publications. One excellent example is found in the Christian Doctrine (*Doctrina christiana en lengua mexicana*) written in 1553 by Pedro de Gante, the Flemish lay brother who, in the *Anales de Juan Bautista*, ministered to a large native constituency in Mexico City. On Gante's work, see Louise M. Burkhart, *Before Guadalupe: The Virgin Mary in Early Colonial Nahuatl Literature* (Albany: Institute for Mesoamerican Studies and University of Texas Press, 2001), pp. 58, 116-18.



Figure 4

Madonna and Child in Glory

Anon.

Manuscript illumination in Choir Book 33

Monastery of Guadalupe, Extremadura, Spain

Early 16th century

From Sebastián García, *Los Miniados de Guadalupe*, Ediciones Guadalupe, 1998, p. 99.

pictorialize the tradition that Mary is translated to heaven, body and soul, after her death. Theologically linked to the Virgin's purity, the Assumption doctrine concluded that if she was free from corruption, she was free from bodily decomposition after death.⁷⁴ The many Spanish churches and cathedrals dedicated to the Assumption, such as that of Sevilla and Toledo, prominently displayed this scene in Mary's life on the second and third tiers of their main retables erected around 1500. The artists relied on the *mulier amicta sole* category for some, but not all, of the compositional elements in representing the Assumption, though the influence was neither uniform nor wholesale. In art, the conflation of the apocalyptic woman and the Assumption of the Virgin was confusing, as both had veiled allusions to the still uncoded doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in this time period.⁷⁵ The

⁷⁴ Warner, *Alone*, pp. 92-92.

⁷⁵ Yarza Luaces, *Los Reyes*, p. 162.

international collaborative team of these impressive altarpieces brought with them multiple foreign styles, and the influx of Northern European panel paintings in the second half of the fifteenth century was another indication that Spain was becoming an artistic crossroads.⁷⁶

In step with the visual ubiquity of the theme, the scriptorium in the Spanish monastery of Guadalupe also produced illustrations of the “Assumption of the Virgin” rising from her empty tomb with her four angel-companions. These illuminated scenes borrow elements from the Virgin *amicta sole* with her radiant aureole but without a crescent moon at her feet. An early sixteenth-century illumination of the same theme displays a calm disposition of the weighty apostle figures who witness the event. Both the Virgin’s orant gesture and passive stance betray the concept that she is assumed to heaven because of God’s infinite grace, propelled on the powerful updraft of the angels’ extended wings.⁷⁷

Without the prop of an empty tomb, the Assumption iconography is more ambivalent in the embroidered renderings produced by the Jeronimites. In an early sixteenth-century *capillo* from the Guadalupe monastery, the decorative textile that formed part of a priest’s cowl or hood, the heaven-bound Virgin is assisted by four fluttering angels, two of whom hold a crown over her head while a fifth putto’s head offers a pedestal for her feet (fig. 5). The fuller treatment of both anatomy and drapery and the ease of human movement all executed in precision stitchery reveal the growing impact of the Italian Renaissance in Spain. This embroidered Assumption also acts as an ideal transition for understanding sixteenth-century mendicant murals in New Spain and it offers further parallels with the design of the Mexican Guadalupe, without her glowing sunburst.

The popularity of the Assumption of the Virgin witnessed in Spain was equally fervent in the overseas territories where soon after the conquest of the Americas an abundance of shrines and churches were dedicated to this posthumous event in Mary’s life.⁷⁸ Indigenous receptivity to the Assumption

⁷⁶ Michel Sittow, for example, was one of a group of Flemish artists who were brought to work in Spain; his elegant “Assumption of the Virgin,” is today in the National Gallery, Washington, D.C. Responding to the Northern European influences were also Spanish painters such as Pedro Berruguete who completed the “The Assumption of the Virgin” in 1485 in the Hispano-Flemish style. On this, see Melissa R. Katz, *Divine Mirrors: The Virgin Mary in the Visual Arts* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 97-98, 165-68.

⁷⁷ Garcia, *Los Miniados*, p. 124; Katz, *Divine Mirrors*, p. 99.

⁷⁸ As one example, the city-state of Tlaxcala, strategic ally in the Spanish victory, took the Assumption as patron, as depicted within the opening scene of the Lienzo de Tlaxcala (c. 1550), a pictorial document that sought to validate and secure their privileged status.



Figure 5
 The Assumption of the Virgin
 Embroidered capillo
 Fray Diego de Toledo
 Monastery of Guadalupe, Extremadura, Spain
 Early 16th century
 Courtesy of Sebastián García

of the Virgin was also manifest in the theatrical reenactments of the event and the number of native confraternities dedicated to it.⁷⁹ That both Franciscans and Augustinians embraced the theme can be seen in two extant murals of the Assumption painted on their monastery walls by teams of native muralists. The earlier wall painting (executed between 1555 and

⁷⁹ The August 15th feast day of the Virgin's Assumption was elaborately celebrated with processional sculptures of Mary fabricated for the occasion, as described in the *Anales de Juan Bautista*. An indigenous confraternity had responsibility for the corner chapels or *posas* in the courtyard of the Franciscan monastery of San Andrés Calpan, where one of the chapels was dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin (ca. 1550-55). The nearby Franciscan monastery of Huejotzingo also had the SW *posa* dedicated to the Assumption as visible in the remnants of interior murals over the altar. On the Huejotzingo program, see McAndrew, *Open-Air Churches*, pp. 324-27.

1565) in the Augustinian monastery in Tlayacapan, Morelos, is featured within a portrait gallery of patriarchal church history, the four evangelists and four church fathers, that enliven all walls of the chapter room or *sala de profundis*. The grisaille treatment of the Assumption, the rigid stance of the Virgin Mary, and the fluttering drapery of her angel sextet betray its graphic model. A more robust Virgin Mary, in a slightly later mural of the Assumption, tilts her head and clasps her hands prayerfully in a pose remarkably reminiscent of the Guadalupe tilma (fig. 6). Dated to the 1560s, this mural is located in the central niche of five in the upper cloister of the Franciscan monastery of Huaquechula, Puebla. Three pairs of full-figure angels accompany Mary's triumphant ascent with trumpets, swords and incense burners while her lunar footrest is sustained from below by a winged angel's head. Her glorious reception is witnessed by a crowd of heads below and anticipated by God the Father above as He peers down, orb and cross in one hand and the other raised in benediction, confirming that the Virgin was indeed the recipient of His grace.

THE VIRGIN *TOTA PULCHRA*

In the interlocking iconographic complex that went into formulating the Immaculate Conception, and ultimately the composite image of the Mexican Guadalupe, a third type needs to be considered, the Virgin *tota pulchra* or "all beautiful." Because of the abstract nature of the Virgin's sinlessness, defenders of the Virgin immaculate not surprisingly depended heavily on textual sources. Old Testament verses lifted from Marian litanies, prayers and poems symbolically extolled her beauty and most importantly, her purity. Ironically, descriptions of the bride or lover in the Song of Songs (Canticles or Song of Solomon), the most voluptuous love poem in the bible, were appropriated to convey the proof of Mary's impregnable virginity and innocence.⁸⁰ To the question asked about the woman in Song of Songs, "who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon [*pulchra ut luna*], clear as the sun [*electa ut sol*], and terrible as an army with banners?" comes the answer, "All fair art thou, my love, and there is no spot (or flaw) in thee" (Song of Songs 4:7). The latter phrase, "*Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te*" became the most frequent label attached to Immaculate imagery, and, as *Tota pulchra*, designates the typology of the Virgin Mary surrounded by symbolic litanies. The earliest *Tota*

⁸⁰ Levi d'Ancona, *Iconography*, pp. 24, 65-70; Stratton, *Immaculate*, pp. 39-46. On the hidden mystical meanings of spiritual love in the Song of Songs between the bride (as *ecclesia* or the Virgin Mary) and the bridegroom (as Christ), see Ann W. Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 1-16, 42-50.



Figure 6
 The Assumption of the Virgin
 Anon. Mural painting
 Upper cloister, north wall, Franciscan monastery
 San Martin Huaquechula, Puebla
 c. 1560
 Author's photo

Pulchra located by Stratton from a French Book of Hours published between 1500 and 1503 is a young girl with unbound hair placed against the heavens on which are strewn visual metaphors for her purity, textually identified by inscribed phylacteries.⁸¹ This French graphic spread rapidly, to be recycled in early sixteenth-century Spanish books and as an illustration of the Immaculate Conception through the seventeenth century and long after in popular prints.⁸²

It is in the New World that the expression of the *tota pulchra* theme in mural paintings made early and explicit references to the Immaculate doc-

⁸¹ Stratton, *Immaculate*, fig. 23.

⁸² Stratton, *Immaculate*, p. 44. The early French engraving had a very long shelf life, with graphic offspring used as frontispieces by Jacome Cronberger in Sevilla in the 1530s, in 1531 in Valencia; 1534 and 1537 in Zaragoza (the *Hortus passionis*, Juan Millan); and in Toledo (*Relación de San Juan de los Reyes*, 1615). See Francisco Vindel, *Manual gráfico-descriptivo del bibliófilo hispano-americano: 1475-1850* (Madrid: Góngora, 1930-34) volume IV: 245; volume VIII: 25, 42, 193; and volume X: 74.

trine.⁸³ Two examples, one from the cloister walk of the Franciscan monastery of Huejotzingo, Puebla (fig. 7) and a second on a *portería* wall in the Augustinian monastery of Metztlán, Hidalgo, display the full symbolic vocabulary of the Marian litanies rotating around the Virgin Mary. As in the print models, the *tota pulchra* theme from the Song of Songs (4:7) is declared on the uppermost phylactery. Graphic prototypes are also followed in the inclusion of God the father (with papal tiara) holding the orb and cross blessing the Virgin below, a motif of glorification that likewise appears in many Assumption depictions, as in the Huaquechula mural (fig. 6). In the upper left and right corners of the Huejotzingo mural seen in figure 7, are references to Song of Songs 6:10, “clear as the sun” and “fair as the moon” that not only reiterate the solar and lunar attributes of the apocalyptic woman but also put the Virgin’s immaculacy in a cosmic context. Paradoxically, side by side with images that reinforce the Virgin’s chaste nature, such as the Fountain sealed or the garden enclosed (*Hortus conclusus*; both from Song of Songs 4:12), are the signs of her fecundity, such as the Well of Living waters (Song of Songs 4:15). The Virgin in the Huejotzingo murals appears to gaze down to the most consistent symbol of her immaculacy, the Spotless mirror (*Speculum sine macula* from Wisdom 7:26) seen on her left.⁸⁴

Like the Assumption scene at Huaquechula, the Huejotzingo mural depended on a graphic source that featured an ample configuration of the Virgin Mary with similar treatment of clothing and posture. These stylistic and compositional features must have been available in print form by 1550 to serve as sources not only for the murals just examined but also for the Virgin of Guadalupe tilma image. Of the many artistic models that served to

⁸³ Stratton (*Immaculate*, pp. 46, 54-55, 59-63) argues that an orthodox iconography for the Immaculate Conception, one that forges the *tota pulchra* with the apocalyptic woman of St. John, did not appear until the end of the sixteenth century in the Flemish engravings of Martin de Vos (ca. 1585-1600), the influential prints of the Wierix brothers and the paintings of El Greco. Yet, there can be no mistake that the Huejotzingo *tota pulchra* mural makes explicit historical links to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. On either side of the Virgin Mary, as wings on a triptych, are the two staunch defenders of the doctrine, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus.

⁸⁴ A typical assemblage of symbols in the Huejotzingo mural include architectural metaphors such as the *Civitas Dei* (City of God from Ps. 87:3) or the Tower of David (*Turris David cum propugnaculis*, Song of Songs 4:4) both of which make references to Mary as the church; the *Porta coeli* (Gate of heaven from Genesis 28:17) expresses her mediating status to assist in attaining salvation Her virginity and purity are expressed with floral symbols represented to the right, including the *Sicut lilium inter spinas* or Lily among thorns, with thorns representing sins (Song of Songs 2:2), the Rose of Sharon and below, the Lily of the valleys (both from Song of Songs 2:1). Other symbols in the Huejotzingo mural include the *oliva speciosa* (Ecclesiastes 24:1) referring to a classical symbol of peace, the olive branch; the *Stella maris* or Star of the Sea from a medieval liturgical hymn and perhaps also from Revelation 22:16 (“the bright morning star”) [Stratton 1994, 42]; and a tree on right that could refer to the cedar of Lebanon (Song 5:15), Cypress of Zion or *cedar exaltata* (Eccles. 24:17).



Figure 7
 Virgin “tota pulchra”
 Anon. Mural painting
 Lower cloister, Franciscan monastery
 Huejotzingo, Puebla
 c. 1558
 Author’s photo

inspire mendicant wall paintings, including panel painting and tapestry, certainly the most important and prevalent were the graphic sources, both single-sheet graphics and illustrated books, especially religious texts such as bibles.⁸⁵ Although to my knowledge the precise engraving or painting that Marcos used as his inspiration has not yet surfaced and may no longer be extant, the cluster of murals on Marian themes just examined offer strong proof that such a print or group of prints did exist. That Guadalupe was based on one or more Netherlandish or German-inspired graphics seems certain; the fine fur cuffs on her sleeves surely reflect northern, not Mediterranean, climes. Within an evolving iconography that implicitly suggested the theme of Mary’s immaculacy, the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe is an

⁸⁵ Peterson, *Paradise*, pp. 57-82.

incipient composition that anticipated at mid century a melding of concepts and typologies. Before leaving the theological and artistic sources that together acted to motivate the painting of the tilma image, one final Spanish model must be considered.

THE “VIRGEN DEL CORO”

Many have, erroneously I believe, concluded that the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe was a direct copy of the so-called *Virgen del Coro* or Choir Virgin, a late fifteenth-century relief sculpture located on a back wall in the choir loft of the Extremaduran sanctuary (fig. 8).⁸⁶ The wood polychrome relief is suspended under an architectural arch and above the prior’s own choir stall. In size and general configuration, the Choir Virgin does resemble the painted tilma image, but to assess this comparison one needs to visually erase the elaborate canopy and tasseled curtains being parted by two ebullient angels, the result of a 1743 restoration by Manuel de Lara y Churriguera.⁸⁷ Stripped of its gilded ornamentation, the relief sculpture depicts the Virgin Mary with radiating solar rays, both straight and undulant, and she stands on a sickle moon supported by a single cherub. The front-facing Virgin, with arms caressing a nude and active Christ Child, is however, in distinct contrast to the Mexican tilma image.

The original relief sculpture was hung during the renovation of the choir loft under the prior Pedro de Vidania (1498-1501)⁸⁸ in late 1498 or 1499, and was the work of a Flemish sculptor, who may have been a certain Guillemín Digante. Perhaps a member of the workshop of Enrique Egas (or Anequín) who was active at Guadalupe over a twenty year period, Digante is recorded working in the monastery during the years 1498-99, and the authorship of the Choir Virgin is attributed to him based on this chronological congruency rather than explicit documentation.⁸⁹ The initial commission from the Jeronymite chapter of the monastery called for a choir sculpture as a “Mulier

⁸⁶ On the use of the Choir Virgin as the prototype for the Mexican Guadalupe, see Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl*, pp. 235-37; Vargas Lugo, “Iconología Guadalupeña,” p. 63, Pl. 25; Poole, *Our Lady*, pp. 74-75; George L. Scheper, “Guadalupe: Image of Submission or Solidarity?” *Religion and the Arts*, 1999, 3:3/4, p. 363.

⁸⁷ Carlos Villacampa Gracia, *Grandezas de Guadalupe* (Madrid: Cleto Vallinas, 1924), pp. 25, 31; German Rubio, *Historia de Nra. Sra. de Guadalupe* (Barcelona: Industrias Gráficas, 1926), p. 229.

⁸⁸ Diego de Ecija, *Libro de la invención de esta Santa Imagen de Guadalupe [1514-34]*, introduction and transcription by Arcangel Barrado Manzano (Cáceres: Departamento Provincial de Seminarios, 1953), p. 341

⁸⁹ Rubio, *Historia*, pp. 386-89. The Spanish Guadalupe archives preserves a signed pen drawing by Enrique Egas of one of his three elaborate sarcophagi; his extant sculptures in the monastery include a beautiful alabaster Madonna and child intended for the Velasco sarcophagus.



Figure 8
 Virgen del Coro
 Polychrome wood relief in choir
 Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Extremadura, Spain
 Attributed to Digante Guillemín
 1499
 Author's photo

amicta sole,” securely referencing verse 12:1 of Revelation.⁹⁰ In other words, if Digante was the sculptor, he was asked to execute a Virgin in glory.

Most scholars who point to the *Virgen del Coro* as the progenitor of the tilma image of Guadalupe rely on a 1743 history of the Spanish monastery of Guadalupe by the friar-chronicler, Francisco de San José, in which he elevates this Virgin to an importance unequalled by earlier chroniclers.⁹¹ Prior

⁹⁰ Monastery of Guadalupe, *Actas capitulares*, fol. 3v.; Francisco de San José (Joseph), *Historia Universal de la Primitiva y Milagrosa Imagen de Nra. Señora de Guadalupe, Fundación y Grandezas de su Santa Casa* (Madrid: Antonio Marin, 1743), p. 145.

⁹¹ The earliest sixteenth-century history, written about the time of the conquest of Mexico, does not mention the Choir Virgin at all (Ecija, *Libro*) and Gabriel de Talavera (*Historia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* (Toledo: Thomas de Guzman, 1597, fol. 204v.) allots two sentences to

to the eighteenth century, the exclusive supernatural powers of the much older Black Madonna were jealously protected as they had immense financial consequences in attracting donations. Although the duplication of different advocations of the Virgin Mary was not uncommon in a Catholic sanctuary, for a pilgrimage site whose fortunes rested on an unequivocally powerful image, nothing could be allowed to distract the devotee from its principal icon. Thus, it is highly unlikely that the *Virgen del Coro* in the sixteenth century was anything more than one sacred image among several adorning the magnificent altars and chapels of the sanctuary. Moreover, the choir loft Virgin would have been all but unknown to most worshippers since her perch high on the rear wall of the elevated choir occluded her from the viewer standing at ground level in the nave.

However, by the eighteenth century much was changing to challenge the hold of the Spanish Virgin of Guadalupe even on her own turf, and to highlight the significance of the Choir Virgin. As the Spanish cult was waning, the ascendant Mexican cult was making uncomfortable inroads. Not only was the apparition legend of the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe becoming better known, but imported replications of her miraculous appearance to Juan Diego were flooding Spain and many other European countries. It is in an effort to confront this competition that, in his 1743 *History*, San José greatly expands the importance of the Choir Virgin, claiming that she too has miraculous powers as an equally resplendent celestial body in the Extremaduran sanctuary.⁹² Most importantly for our purposes, for the first time San José affiliates the Choir Virgin's iconography with that of the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe who he categorically states is a copy of the Spanish Virgin in Glory.⁹³

San José exploited the nominal and visual parallels to secure precedence for at least *one* of the Spanish Guadalupes for the Tepeyac painting, and if it could not be the black enthroned Madonna on the main altarpiece, it was

"the sovereign figure of Our Lady, carved with a marvelous sense of design [*traça*] and proportion. She has the moon under her feet, is crowned with 12 stars, and her vestments are covered by the sun." In contrast, Talavera spends four entire folios minutely describing the titular, miracle-working Black Madonna found on the main altarpiece of the Spanish sanctuary and then devotes the remainder of his text numerating her 300 miracles.

⁹² San José, *Historia*, p. 147.

⁹³ San José, *Historia*, pp. 147, 140. San José devotes three chapters to the Mexican Guadalupe. Increasingly, pilgrims and visitors from New Spain recognized the visual resemblance of the relief sculpture in the choir to their own Tepeyac Guadalupe (San José, *Historia*, p. 145). This became so commonplace that the Virgin of the Choir is alternatively referred to in subsequent histories as "Our Lady of Concepción" or "Nra. Sra. De Guadalupe" meaning of course the "Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe" (Villacampa, *Grandezas*, p. 31).

conveniently the Virgen del Coro. In San José's long exegesis of their correspondences, he includes the star-studded mantle of the Choir Virgin; however, this was an untenable link in the sixteenth century as the blue mantle with stars was a late feature, the outcome of the 1743 restoration (an effort to look more like her Mexican cousin?) which, rather shoddily in fact, over-painted the earlier damask-like mantle.⁹⁴ In San José's eagerness to connect the Spanish and Mexican devotions to Guadalupe, he made some inaccurate parallels and downplayed their inconvenient differences. Scrambling to reverse the growing strength of the Mexican following and reinforce financial support for the Mother House, San José locates the originary source for the New World figure of Guadalupe in his own Extremaduran monastery.⁹⁵

Two centuries earlier the Spanish cult was riding the high tide of favorable opinion and seemingly in control of its financial backing. The establishment of new shrines in the Americas was intended to operate like franchises, whose license depended on a similar product line, a simulacrum of the Guadalupe cult image and the title attached to this image, from which emanated certain expectations of royalties. For the Spanish Mother House to have invoked the Choir Virgin as a model for a new Guadalupe in the early period of active evangelization would have appeared utterly unnecessary, if not sacrilegious. If the Choir Virgin did not serve as the *direct* model for the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe, it seems clear that both the relief sculpture and the tilma image relied on similar sources for their compositions. We have already reviewed the fertile artistic climate in early modern Spain from which artists drew images that conflated moments in the Marian cycle and borrowed elements to express new themes, such as the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. This same spirit of eclectic experimentation and innovation prevailed in colonial Mexico.

THE TEPEYAC SHRINE: CULT IMAGES AND PATRONAGE

Not only does the Choir Virgin appear to neatly resolve the disjunction between the Romanesque black madonna from Guadalupe Spain and the tilma image of Guadalupe in New Spain, but by invoking the Choir Virgin as the genitrix model, scholars also claim to have solved the problematic statement that the image in the Tepeyac shrine was like "that of the Spanish Guadalupe." To further complicate this avowed visual relationship are the contradictory statements about the exact nature of the early cult image referred to as both a sculpture and a painting. Discrepancies in the handful

⁹⁴ Villacampa, *Grandezas*, p. 25.

⁹⁵ San José, *Historia*, pp. 145-47.

of sixteenth-century descriptions are as troubling as the allusion to “an image” in the Mexican shrine, without specifying its form. A more likely scenario, I suggest, is that two or more Marian images occupied the shrine in various media, at least one of them a sculpted effigy, perhaps of the Spanish Guadalupe, that was installed from the beginning and that was then displaced from the main altar (and ultimately, from the shrine) by a post-1555 painted cloth of the Mexican Guadalupe.⁹⁶ It was not uncommon for a Spanish sanctuary to have multiple Marian effigies, even within a single altarpiece, each commanding overlapping fealties.

As a new and, until 1556, marginal shrine, Tepeyac appears to have had no outstanding advocacy, but was dedicated simply to “Our Lady.” In the Bustamante interrogation, witnesses claimed that from the outset the shrine was dedicated to “Our Mother of God” but otherwise had no traditions, existing “without a foundation” and only at the time of his 1556 sermon was it and the image entitled “Our Lady of Guadalupe.”⁹⁷ In spite of its supposed anonymity, for the shrine to have been perceived as a Marian one it certainly housed at least one image of the Virgin Mary as a tangible focus for prayers and petitions. It is unlikely that any Marian effigy of substance would have remained nameless since most images were patterned after specific advocations. If this Madonna held a Christ, she resembled the countless images of “Our Lady” that were dispersed by the Spaniards along the Conquest route according to Bernal Diaz, or perhaps the small “saddle virgins” that were also disseminated throughout the New World. Moreover, this common type of Marian figure camouflaged under her triangular vestments also mimicked the configuration of the titular Spanish Guadalupe. Although not initially known as a shrine to the Virgin of Guadalupe, it is possible that one image at Tepeyac may have been a European copy of the dark Spanish Guadalupe or used her widely shared iconography as a model.

Thus, the first option is that while a carved image and perhaps multiple prints may have crowded Tepeyac’s altar, none gave the shrine itself an identifying sobriquet or definitive title. A second alternative is that the name of Guadalupe was early on associated with both a specific image and the shrine but was suppressed to avoid the strict copyright controls imposed by the

⁹⁶ Other scholars to suggest multiple images in the Tepeyac shrine and the presence of a replica of the Iberian Guadalupe, in particular, include, de la Maza, *El Guadalupanismo*, pp. 14-16; Wigberto Jiménez Moreno, *Estudios de historia colonia* (Mexico: INAH, 1958), pp. 120-21; Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl*, pp. 233, 237-38; O’Gorman, *Destierro*, pp. 9-15, and Scheper, “Guadalupe,” p. 362.

⁹⁷ Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, pp. 45, 58. See also Viceroy Enriquez’ letter of 1575 when he states that the Guadalupe name was only attached to the Tepeyac shrine after 1555/56 (Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, p. 149).

Iberian mother house on all satellite shrines, as discussed above. Indeed, there appears to have been some discomfort with the Guadalupe name even at mid century when the suggestion was made to localize the shrine, aligning it with its geographical setting and calling it instead by its toponym, “Our Lady of Tepeyac,” as was common practice.⁹⁸

That the name of Guadalupe was felt to be unsuitable may have been due either to the lack of conformity of the painted Tepeyac image to the Spanish sculpture of Guadalupe and/or to the desire to break with Old World precedents and escape the financial obligations to Spain. The need to keep alms under local control was true all over the Americas with many newly implanted cults.⁹⁹ Such were the financial concerns of the Spanish monastery of Guadalupe to ensure a steady income, that they sent at least one friar, Diego de Santa María, to Mexico, just as they dispatched a series of Jeronymite envoys to Andean South America to investigate upstart Guadalupe cults.

From a muddled early history, two points emerge with some clarity. At the very time that the painted image made its “appearance” in 1556, the name of Guadalupe was firmly attached to the shrine and one, or more, images. Clearly not a random selection, name recognition alone carried weight in attracting European devotees. Among the many European devotions that might have been invoked, it is tempting to conclude that motives for calling it “Guadalupe” persisted from an earlier replica of the Extremaduran black madonna in the Tepeyac shrine, a label which was conveniently retained or resurrected. Moreover, once the life-sized Virgin “clothed with the sun” was composed by Marcos in an iconography distinct from her Spanish namesake, there were fewer financial liabilities in publicly borrowing the name of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Second, whether one or more sacred images jostled for worshipful attention in the Tepeyac shrine, a painted image of the Virgin Mary graced its main altarpiece in 1556 when it was also endowed with miraculous powers. By then, pilgrims who traversed the shrine did so “on their knees from the door of the shrine to the altar where that image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is located. . . ,” and *that image* was specifically identified by the same witness as the one “painted by an Indian.”¹⁰⁰

Two decades later, Viceroy Martin Enríquez traced the “the image that is now in the church” back to the 1555/56 small shrine (*una ermitilla*) and ver-

⁹⁸ Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, pp. 61-62, 64-65.

⁹⁹ This is stressed by Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl*, pp. 233-38; see also Poole, *Our Lady*, pp. 71-72.

¹⁰⁰ The witness, Francisco de Salazar, in Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, p. 58.

ified that once it demonstrated its miraculous powers by curing a herder, “the people’s devotion began to grow.”¹⁰¹ Enríquez’s report to Philip II is important in confirming that it was the painted Virgin whose miracles were stimulating a devotion had been growing steadily enough to warrant a larger sanctuary, the establishment of a sizeable confraternity and the retention of a chaplain or priest.¹⁰² More perplexing is Enríquez’s comment that “they named the image Our Lady of Guadalupe because it was said that it resembled that of Guadalupe in Spain.”¹⁰³ This suggests that although by 1556 a painting, almost certainly the tilma icon venerated today, was the preeminent object of veneration on the main altar, it may not have been its sole occupant. A sculpture of the Spanish Virgin of Guadalupe that I have hypothesized was previously in the Tepeyac shrine may have been demoted but not discarded, perhaps sidelined to a secondary altar in the shrine. Reports that cite a sculpture in the shrine may reflect the bewilderment and selective remembrance of some visitors on encountering a constellation of images, fluctuating in number and kind as the dynamic cult evolved. On September 15, 1566, only a decade after the consecration of the painted Guadalupe relic and Montúfar’s enlargement of her home, the still modest Tepeyac shrine was considerably enhanced by an extravagant gift of “an image of Our Lady made completely of precious metal.”¹⁰⁴ Three feet in height and cast in silver, its importance was augmented by the elaborate festivities that accompanied its donation, entirely financed by the shrine’s wealthy patron, Alonso de Villaseca, as recited earlier.

It is this sculpture that so captured the dazzled eye of the English seaman, Miles Phillips, that he appears to have neglected the tilma image, a disconcerting omission. When Phillips visited the Guadalupe shrine in 1573, the Protestant sailor was impressed by the interior of “Our Lady’s Church” filled with the shimmering light of innumerable silver lamps. But it is Phillips’ ambiguity on the sacred image or images that is most striking. The author waxes eloquently not about a painting, which was the putative magnet for pilgrims seeking cures, but about “an image of Our Lady of silver and gilt, being as high and as large as a tall woman, in which church and before this image, there are as many lamps of silver as there be days in

¹⁰¹ Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, pp. 148-49. The report of Viceroy Martin Enríquez de Almansa on the foundation of the Tepeyac shrine was sent to the Spanish monarch on September 23, 1575. On Enríquez, see Poole, *Our Lady*, pp. 71-74.

¹⁰² Antonio Freyre, who calls himself “*clerigo presbitero capellan*,” commented in 1570 that Montúfar had founded the shrine fourteen years earlier (i.e., in 1556). In “*Descripción eclesiástica. . .*” Mexico 336A, Ramo 2, doc. 104, fols. 8r-8v.; Archivo General de las Indias, Sevilla.

¹⁰³ Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, p. 149.

¹⁰⁴ Reyes García, *Anales*, number 32.

the year. . . .”¹⁰⁵ The look of gilt recorded by Philips was almost certainly the sheen of the copper-plated screws used to attach the components of the silver sculpture.¹⁰⁶ Philips also claims that it is in front of “the image” (without specifying which) that Spaniards kneel and pray, and then he adds, “which image they call in the Spanish tongue ‘Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.’”¹⁰⁷ Although presumably Philips is now directing his attention to the tilma image, he may also be referring to the silver sculpture as Guadalupe, as the pair (sculpture and painting) took on that title. Moreover, it is also impossible to clearly discern which of the sacred images was the most venerated. Given their shared space, however, it is easy to understand any visitor’s confusion.¹⁰⁸

The invention of Guadalupe took place among the kaleidoscopic visual culture of early colonial Mexico. The painter of the tilma image, likely the native Marcos, was immersed in an array of iconographic, stylistic and material sources as well as biblical and theological texts. He could as easily draw from imported European prints and polychrome sculpture as exploit already familiar indigenous media, such as the use of fresco in monumental wall paintings that continued to embellish public buildings. Most of the Marian types were abundantly represented, some in highly visible venues but all featured white-skinned models. How then do we explain the Mexican Guadalupe’s deviance from these as well as from her black Spanish namesake, although in her olive-ash coloration she retains a darker skin pigmentation?

If Archbishop Alonso de Montúfar himself was the patron, as some scholars have suggested,¹⁰⁹ commissioning the painting from Marcos and hanging it surreptitiously in order to propagate her cult, then a racially corrected

¹⁰⁵ Miles Philips, “The Voyage of Miles Philips, 1568,” *The Principal Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation* [1589]” Richard Hakluyt, IX (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1904), p. 419.

¹⁰⁶ Although Florencia (*La Estrella*, fol. 183v.) describes an all-silver sculpture, Velázquez (*La Aparición*, p. 11, n.26) cites the inventories in the Mexican Guadalupe archives where the Villaseca sculpture is described as being of silver with copper, “una imagen de nuestra Señora, de plata, con tornillos y chapa de cobre en que está armada, que pesó cuarenta marcos y tres cuartos.” Inventories that include this silver sculpture of Guadalupe were repeated after 1698, until 1701 when an entry noted that the sculpture had been melted down to make a large candlestick (*blandón*). On this see also Poole 1995, *Our Lady*, p. 52.

¹⁰⁷ Philips, “The Voyage,” p. 419; Poole, *Our Lady*, pp. 69-70.

¹⁰⁸ This multiplicity of images persisted into the seventeenth century when three different reproductions of the Mexican Guadalupe herself are cited in a 1683 inventory of the basilica. In addition to Villaseca’s great silver statue the size of a woman and surmounted by a crown, a second silver image of Guadalupe even taller than Villaseca’s 1566 gift was displayed. Additionally, there was a small-scale “kissing image of Guadalupe” which was made accessible to satisfy the pilgrims’ need for physical contact with the holy. This Marian figure stood on a silver base that doubled as a reliquary by encasing a fragment of Juan Diego’s cloak (Florencia, *La Estrella*, fol.183v.; and citing an inventory of 1683, fols. 191-194).

Virgin Mary might have been envisioned as a way to lure the indigenous constituency. Montúfar was an early proponent of the cult, installing the first cleric at the shrine in 1555 and in the same year officiating at the First Church Council in which the attraction of native worshippers seemed more imperative than ever. However, it is just as conceivable that the Mexican image was independently adapted and adopted by the native artist, whose versatility, reputation and agency are endorsed in the *Anales de Juan Bautista*. In electing to give his Madonna an olive-grey skin and straight black hair, the painter “Marcos” reformulated the new Christian deity for reasons of self-identification.¹¹⁰ The native artist co-opted the European madonna image by converting other into self.

We have traced the formal and iconographic making of a new Virgin Mary for the New World. Guadalupe’s apocalyptic genesis from the Book of Revelation was not simply one of artistic inspiration or iconographic analogy, but took on a profound literary and political meaning with long-lasting implications. The far-reaching political significance of these apocalyptic meanings would be capitalized on in the writings of creole authors after 1648;¹¹¹ thereafter the salvific theme of Guadalupe would surface in sermons, polemical treatises and painting. However, it is important to keep in mind that, as early as the mid sixteenth century, these allusions accompanied the production of the tilma image and the heady utopian ambitions of the Regular orders who saw an opportunity to use New Spain as a laboratory for their reformist agenda. Marcos himself worked in a Franciscan context where the influence of the Book of Revelation was pervasive, helping to shape the millenarist agenda of the early mendicants. The apocalyptic woman’s victory over sin and heresy was translated into a utopic vision for the evangelization and colonization of the Americas, as a way to defeat paganism, to realize a New Jerusalem, and ultimately to endorse the formation of a Mexican nation.

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¹⁰⁹ O’Gorman, *Destierro*, pp. 39-40, 85-90, 146-148; Poole, *Our Lady*, pp. 58, 66-68.

¹¹⁰ Jeanette Favrot Peterson, “The Power of Darkness: Guadalupe and Black Madonnas from Spain to the Americas,” paper given at XXVIII International Colloquium on History of Art (2004), Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

¹¹¹ For example, in Sánchez, *Imagen*, fols 6-6v.