

Studies on Culture and Society
Edited by Richard M. Leventhal and J. Jorge Klor de Alva

- Volume 1. Gary H. Gossen
*Symbol and Meaning Beyond the Closed
Community: Essays in Mesoamerican Ideas*
- Volume 2. J. Jorge Klor de Alva, H. B. Nicholson and
Eloise Quiñones Keber
*The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún: Pioneer
Ethnographer of Sixteenth-Century Aztec
Mexico*

The Work of
Bernardino de Sahagún
*Pioneer Ethnographer of
Sixteenth-Century Aztec Mexico*

Edited by

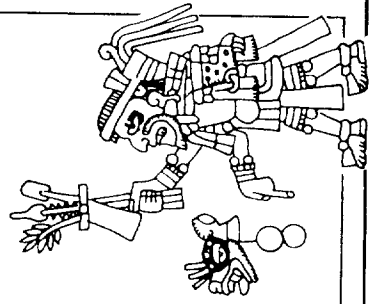
J. Jorge Klor de Alva, H. B. Nicholson
and Eloise Quiñones Keber

Studies on Culture and Society

Volume 2

Institute for Mesoamerican Studies
The University at Albany
State University of New York

Distributed by
University of Texas Press



7-31-52

7911 - 828 215

INTRODUCTION

J. Jorge Klor de Alva
State University of New York at Albany

H.B. Nicholson
University of California, Los Angeles

Eloise Quiñones Keber
Baruch College, The City University of New York

16 February [1965]
Difficult day. Class from noon to one (the Upanishads). At one thirty, lunch with Jiménez Moreno. Fortunately, he did the talking most of the time. (I listened to him with interest and I learned a good many things. When people are surprised that "I know so many things," I reveal my "secret": I know how to listen, I know especially what questions to ask specialists.)

Mircea Eliade
No Souvenirs Journal, 1957-1969

WIGBERTO JIMENEZ MORENO AND "THE WORK OF BERNARDINO DE SAHAGUN"

On April 21, 1985, a significant chapter in the history of Mexican scholarship closed with the death of Wigberto Jiménez Moreno, the outstanding historian and anthropologist. During his distinguished academic and administrative career he actively participated in the establishment and development of the social sciences in Mexico. While awakening the vocations of many young scholars as a teacher, as an indefatigable investigator he made many seminal contributions to the pre-Hispanic and colonial history of his country. His intellectual achievements and the extensive bibliography that covers his long career have been summarized by his colleague Ernesto de la Torre Villar (1985). Here we limit ourselves to recalling that, in the process of laboring to understand the reality of Mexico's past—initiated at the age of eight when he heard about the accomplishments of the philosopher-king Nezahualcoyotl—he developed a persevering interest in the life and work of Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, the greatest of those missionary-ethnographers of New Spain who diligently worked to introduce European scholarship to the New World while tirelessly piecing together the past of their new homeland. In 1938, "Fray Bernardino de Sahagún y su obra," written by Don Wigberto (as he was

known to his friends and colleagues), appeared as an introduction to the five volume Editorial Pedro Robredo edition of the *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*. This, the most thorough study published up to that time of the Sahaguntine corpus, focused particularly on the chronology and interrelationships of the various manuscripts that were incorporated, in whole or in part, in the final *Historia general*. A landmark in Sahagún scholarship, it became the point of departure for most subsequent studies of the surviving writings of "the father of modern ethnography."

Two of the editors of this volume, Eloise Quiñones Keber and H.B. Nicholson, were in the process of organizing a special session on Sahagún for the November, 1985, Chicago meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory when news of the passing of Don Wigberto came to their attention. They conceived the idea of dedicating the Sahagún symposium to the memory of this influential scholar and teacher who had made such a significant contribution to Sahaguntine studies and to Mesoamerican ethnohistory in general.

Accordingly, they invited a number of scholars who were known for their interest in the work of the famous Franciscan to participate in this session in honor of Jiménez Moreno. On November 8, twelve investigators (J. Jorge Klor de Alva, John Keber, Edward Calnek, Hanns Prem, Charles Dibble, S. L. Cline, Eloise Quiñones Keber, H.B. Nicholson, Nigel Davies, Arthur Anderson, Marc Eisinger, and Wayne Ruwet) presented papers in the Chicago symposium. The paper prepared by Arthur Anderson, who was recovering from an illness, was read by his long-time collaborator, Charles Dibble. Following the presentations and discussion, a memorial session was held, during which a number of former students and colleagues of Don Wigberto fondly recalled him as an exceptional scholar and teacher.

One of the symposium participants, Jorge Klor de Alva, a former student and colleague of Don Wigberto, had previously planned to edit a book in his memory through the Institute for Mesoamerican Studies he directs. Given this coincidence, he proposed that the two symposium organizers and he publish the papers in a volume dedicated to Jiménez Moreno. To help transform into a coherent book what might otherwise remain an anthology, additional papers by other interested scholars were solicited. As a result, five more contributions (Ellen Baird, Louise Burkhart, R. Joe Campbell and Mary Clayton, Jeanette Peterson, and Gordon Whittaker) were added to the set. Two other leading Sahagún scholars, Georges Baudot and Miguel León-Portilla, were unable to prepare original papers but authorized English translations, from French and Spanish respectively, of earlier articles on Sahaguntine themes the editors believed to be important to English-speaking readers. To give the book added bibliographic depth, Ascensión H. de León-Portilla, whose work (1987) on the Sahaguntine and Nahuatl bibliography and historiography is well known, was invited to prepare a relevant article. She kindly agreed and sent a detailed essay. Although she generously permitted the editors to consult it, due to space limitations it could not be included. Fortunately, her excellent essay will be published in Mexico in the near future.

Finally, to provide up-to-date coverage of the significance of Sahagún's life and work, the editors prepared three introductory articles. H. B. Nicholson reviewed the most important Sahagún-related publications that have appeared during the past decade and a half. Jorge Klor de Alva examined Sahagún's role as a pioneer ethnographer, and Eloise Quiñones Keber discussed the production and significance of the Sahaguntine illustrations.

SAHAGUNTINE THEMES: PAST AND PRESENT

Fray Bernardino de Sahagún's long (1529-1590) and active career as a Franciscan missionary in recently conquered New Spain and the complex history of the publication of the copious ethnographic, linguistic, and evangelical writings he and his trilingual native assistants prepared have been the subject of study by an impressive international array of scholars. In modern times the fundamental importance of this monumental contribution to our knowledge of the culture of the native peoples of Central Mexico at the time of the Conquest and of its dominant language, Nahuatl, was recognized as soon as the Spanish version of his major work, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, was published, almost simultaneously in England and Mexico in 1829-1830. Interest in Sahaguntine scholarship, that is, in Sahagún and the texts written by him and his various native colleagues working under his direction, was further stimulated when it was revealed, many years later, that the texts of earlier stages of the massive ethnographic/linguistic project (mostly in Nahuatl and including pictorial material) survived in manuscripts in two Madrid repositories. These additional materials were made available, at least in limited distribution, in the early years of this century. By the 1920s nearly all of the ethnographic/linguistic sections of the Sahaguntine corpus had been published in one form or another, as well as certain of the evangelical works. Only the capstone of the Sahaguntine ethnographic writings, the Laurentian Library's richly illustrated *Florentine Codex*, remained to be issued in a satisfactory fashion. This desideratum was remedied in recent years by three key publications: (1) the multi-volume Anderson and Dibble paleography and English translation of the Nahuatl text (1950-1982), (2) the color photoreproduction of the manuscript published by the Mexican government (1979a), and (3) the paleography of the Spanish text by Fomento Cultural Banamex (1982a).

The scholarly literature concerning Sahagún and the works written under his direction, already well underway during the nineteenth century, steadily grew in volume and quality during the present century. The most thorough bio-bibliography of the notable Franciscan—building on the landmark 1938 study by Jiménez Moreno—was published in 1952 by Luis Nicolau d'Oliver, the prominent Catalan-Spanish scholar and political figure in exile in Mexico. (An English translation of this classic monograph, with a foreword by Miguel León-Portilla, was published by the University of Utah Press in 1987.) A summary in English, with added material by Howard Cline, appeared in 1973

in volume 13 of *The Handbook of Middle American Indians*. In the same volume, Cline also contributed a useful review of the principal Sahaguntine literature, covering 1948-1971 and including much relevant material published earlier.

In 1972 an important international conference devoted to Sahaguntine studies, in which nine scholars participated, was sponsored by the School of American Research in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Two years later the collected papers, along with an introduction by Munro S. Edmonson, were published. In addition to general summaries of the life and work of Sahagún, the articles discussed a diversity of themes, including Sahagún's ethnographic research methods, the rhetorical orations (*huehuetlatolli*) he compiled, his struggles to maintain and continue the ethnographic project in his final years, the Sahaguntine texts as a source of sociological information, their contribution to our knowledge of indigenous medicine, the treatment of architecture in the illustrations of the *Florentine Codex*, the "Nahuatlization of Christianity" as exemplified in Sahagún's evangelical writings, and a specification of major Sahaguntine topics requiring additional investigation. These issues not only typified many of the major concerns in Sahaguntine studies up to 1972 but also have continued to inspire much of the work done during the decade and a half since the Santa Fe conference (H. B. Nicholson reviews and discusses these trends in "Recent Sahaguntine Studies," this volume). A number of the articles included in the present volume illustrate some of these ongoing preoccupations, while others introduce new approaches and discuss questions that have recently come to the fore.

Though scholarly conservatism characterizes most Mesoamerican ethnohistory, the theoretical and methodological influences of poststructuralism, semiotics, cultural critique, and literary theory are beginning to be felt. The instant popularity of Tzvetan Todorov's controversial *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (1984), wherein the texts of Columbus, Cortés, Durán, Sahagún, Las Casas, and others were subjected to a poststructural, semiotic analysis, suggests the interest of many scholars in seeing the literature on culture contact dissected with the sharpest critical tools available. In anthropology (and to a growing extent in history) this interest in cultural criticism, literary theory, and self-reflexive methodology has focused on two related questions. What is the "true" history of the discipline? And, what is the "real" meaning of the narratives generated by its practitioners? In order to answer the former, these new approaches are being used to uncover the obscure social, cultural, and political contexts that led to its development. To answer the latter, these tools are being applied to the analysis of the texts written by fieldworkers and others so as to discover the implications hidden in their rhetorical, narrative, and discursive forms. It follows, therefore, that in the last few years there has been increasing attention paid to the fundamental problems faced by Sahagún and his fellow missionary-ethnographers when, as sixteenth-century Europeans, they attempted to accurately represent and objec-

tively understand an indigenous New World culture structured quite differently from their own.

This problem is discussed in two papers in this volume. Jorge Klor de Alva ("Sahagún and the Birth of Modern Ethnography") attempts to locate the role played by Sahagún and his ethnographic project in the history of anthropology. Recognizing the pioneering importance of Sahagún's experiments in ethnography, he suggests that these included the (generally successful) application of the techniques of the confessional to elicit much of the extensive information he collected concerning "the native other." In so doing, he argues, Sahagún inaugurated many of the methods and narrative forms common to modern anthropology, thereby genuinely earning for him the title of "father of modern ethnography." On the other hand, John Keber ("Sahagún and Hermeneutics") challenges the idea that Sahagún was as self-conscious and as imbued with Spanish humanism as some modern scholars claim. Instead, he affirms that his Christian prejudices were essential intellectual components that made him both closed to some and open to other possibilities of understanding the native other. Keber concludes that Sahagún's prejudices must not be factored out if we are to avoid the error of attempting to overcome his otherness by (falsely) making him like ourselves.

Modern students have primarily focused on the ethnographic and historical aspects of the Sahaguntine corpus. However, his primary mission in New Spain was to replace the native "religion of the devil" with Christianity. To this end, he and his assistants composed a number of evangelical works in Nahuatl, one of which, the *Psalmody cristiana* (1583), was the only Sahaguntine text printed in his lifetime. These works were intended to convey the basic precepts and rituals of Christianity to the Indians in their own idiom and in a phrasing that would facilitate their understanding. Interest in this corpus of doctrinal texts is increasing, and three of the articles are relevant to this theme. Two are devoted to the watershed nature of the 1564 bilingual *Colloquios y doctrina christiana*, wherein the tenets of the Christian and native faiths are expressed in the context of the reconstruction of a debate that took place in 1524 between the first twelve Franciscan friars and a gathering of secular and religious native leaders. Louise Burkhart ("Doctrinal Aspects of Sahagún's *Colloquios*") compares the lexical and ideological aspects of the *Colloquios* with Sahagún's other evangelical writings, noting that its approach differs in that it downplays the concept of sin and stresses the refutation of idolatry and the benevolence of God—as would befit the initial explanation of the Christian faith to neophytes. She shows how the *Colloquios* represents a nostalgic, "final moment of glory" for the Franciscans as their political fortunes took a dramatic turn for the worse with the 1564 death of Viceroy don Luis de Velasco. Jorge Klor de Alva ("Sahagún's Misguided Introduction to Ethnography"), who had earlier published a transcription of the Nahuatl text with a direct English translation, examines the *Colloquios* from the standpoint of the evolution of Sahagún's understanding of the indigenous culture and his assessment of the results of the Franciscan proselytization effort. He concludes that

religiously oriented education of the sons of the aristocracy. The final article in this category ("Chimalpahin's Use of a Testimony by Sahagún") provides an English translation of Miguel León-Portilla's 1980 transcription of the original Nahuatl and Spanish versions of a passage—derived in part from a Sahaguntine text (quoted in Spanish translation)—found in the annals of the Indian chronicler, Chimalpahin. This passage was relevant to the early history of his native province of Chalco, located in the southeast Basin of Mexico.

Another major branch of Sahaguntine studies that has emerged in recent years is the examination and interpretation of the extensive pictorial imagery, contributed by native artists working under Sahagún's guidance, found in the *Primeros Memoriales* and *Florentine Codex*. Five of the articles deal primarily with this body of material. In the introductory article to this section, Eloise Quiñones Keber ("Reading Images") surveys the publication history of the Sahaguntine images, compares the illustrations in the two manuscripts, and reviews the most significant published studies on the subject. In her article ("The Artists of Sahagún's *Primeros Memoriales*"), Ellen Baird focuses on the problem of the identification of the artists of the *Primeros Memoriales*. Expanding on her earlier studies, she argues that they can be identified with Sahagún's trilingual native assistants, trained by him and others in the Colegio de Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco. H.B. Nicholson ("The Iconography of the Deity Representations") discusses the images of the deities represented in the *Primeros Memoriales*. Concentrating on Huizilopochtli and Chalchiuhtlicue, he concludes that their costume and insignia are reasonably typical of late pre-Hispanic Central Mexican iconography in general and that the accompanying Nahuatl labels can be reliably applied to these items wherever they appear. In her second article ("Deity Images and Texts") Eloise Quiñones Keber examines the similarities and differences between deity images and texts in the *Primeros Memoriales* and *Florentine Codex*, documenting the shift from the primacy of the essentially native tradition images in the former source to the predominance of the text in the latter, where the more Europeanized illustrations play a more secondary role. Jeanette Peterson ("The *Florentine Codex Imagery*") undertakes a comprehensive overview of the imagery of the *Florentine Codex*, devoting particular attention to composition, the identification of the indigenous and European sources, the analysis of the prototypes for the texts and images, and the identity and background of Sahagún's artists.

Three articles, which address the previously little-studied linguistic aspects of Sahagún's project, exemplify the directions being taken by those pioneers interested in the nature of the Nahuatl used in the texts. R. Joe Campbell and Mary Clayton ("Bernardino de Sahagún's Contributions to the Lexicon of Classical Nahuatl"), within the context of their preparation of a Classical Nahuatl dictionary, provide a broad overview of the lexical aspects of the Sahaguntine corpus. Their focus is primarily on the *Florentine Codex*, but they also review previous related studies involving Sahaguntine materials. In a brief historical note, Marc Eisinger ("The *Florentine Codex* and the Computer"), who has collaborated with Campbell and Clayton on the dictionary

INTRODUCTION

Sahagún's growing awareness of the continued popularity of the ancient faith led to the disillusionment of his later years, which in turn caused him to withdraw the optimistically phrased *Colloquios*, even though permission to publish it had been granted by the viceroy and the religious examiner. Charles Dibble ("Sahagún's Appendices"), examining prologues and appendices of the *Historia general* and a number of Sahagún's evangelical writings, stresses the determination of the Franciscan to refute the native religious beliefs and ritual practices and thus more effectively inculcate the Faith. He concludes that, if after 1570 he had had more support and less opposition, the *Historia general* would have included a major third part specifically dedicated to this end.

An ongoing preoccupation of students of the Sahaguntine corpus has been to determine the complicated history of this long-term ethnographic/linguistic/evangelical enterprise and the precise relationship between the diverse texts. Two contributions to this volume fit generally into this category. S.L. Cline ("Revisionist Conquest History") examines the 1585 revised version of the narrative of the Conquest transmitted to Sahagún by surviving Tlatelolca informants, which ultimately became Book XII of the *Historia general*. She studies the various factors, especially the political climate at the time, that moved Sahagún to undertake its revision during his last years. The English translation of Georges Baudot's 1969 article ("Fray Rodrigo de Sequera"), based in part on previously unpublished documents, attempts to reconstruct the efforts on the part of Sahagún's superior in New Spain to rescue and convey to Spain the monumental ethnographic/linguistic work coordinated by his fellow Franciscan.

The long-standing interest in the invaluable ethnographic and historical data provided by the native informants of the assiduous Franciscan is amply exemplified by five of the articles. Hanns Prem ("Calendrical Traditions in the Writings of Sahagún") examines and compares the different versions of native calendrics included in the Sahaguntine corpus, concluding that none reflects a genuine existing indigenous system and that Sahagún was unsuccessful in his attempts at correlations with the Christian calendar. Arthur Anderson ("Sahagún's Informants on the Nature of Tlalocan") investigates an important indigenous afterworld, Tlalocan, the paradise of the rain deity, translating into English various Sahaguntine Nahuatl passages relevant to this theme, including a fascinating account, albeit truncated, of the visit of a royal lady of Tlatelolco to Tlalocan shortly before the Conquest. Nigel Davies ("The Mexica Military Hierarchy as Described by Sahagún") discusses the Sahaguntine version of the Mexica military hierarchy, arguing that the officer cadre consisted of a mixture of nobles and commoners. Highlighting the fact that much in the Sahaguntine corpus is difficult to interpret and, therefore, is polemical, is the contrasting article by Edward Calnek ("The Calmecac and Teplochcalli in Pre-Conquest Tenochtitlan"), which examines the two principal types of schools described in the Sahaguntine texts, the *teplochcalli*, devoted primarily to the military training of the commoners, and the *calmecac*, stressing the more

project, describes the history and the process of putting into machine-readable form the entire Nahuatl text of the Anderson and Dibble edition of the *Florentine Codex*. He provides various descriptions of the kinds of computer applications that such a project makes possible. Gordon Whittaker ("Aztec Dialectology and the Nahuatl of the Friars") undertakes a wide-ranging survey of the Nahuatl dialectology of Central Mexico during the colonial period, relying heavily on the Sahaguntine corpus and related works by his fellow missionaries. His analyses suggest certain tentative correspondences between variant linguistic features in the texts and the political spheres of influence of the major Nahuatl-speaking groups at the time of the Conquest.

RESEARCH ADVANCES AND CONTINUING PROBLEMS IN SAHAGUNTINE STUDIES

At the 1972 School of American Research conference M. León-Portilla (1974:235-255) presented a paper titled "The Problematics of Sahagún: Certain Topics Needing Investigation." He summarized the following seven problematic areas: (1) the lack of an index or descriptive bibliography of the full Sahaguntine corpus, (2) the need to investigate the intellectual influences on Sahagún, (3) the need to specify the role of the native assistants and informants, (4) a clarification of the origins and categories to which the native data can be attributed, (5) an analysis of Sahagún's intention in writing the *Historia general* in Spanish and the relation of this version to the Nahuatl texts, (6) the questions raised by the use of the (Spanish version) Tolosa manuscript, and (7) the problems surrounding the translations of the Nahuatl texts into European languages.

Anderson and Dibble address several of these issues in the essays that are included in the Introductory Volume of their edition of the *Florentine Codex*. In this volume, other articles, especially Nicholson's introductory review, point to additional advances that have been made in these problematic areas. For instance, concerning the first topic, although we still do not have a full descriptive bibliography of the corpus, Quiñones Keber's appendix to this volume ("The Sahaguntine Corpus: A Bibliographic Index of Extant Documents") is an important step in this direction. With this appendix as a guide, an exhaustive survey of the Sahaguntine corpus can be undertaken, complemented by such published sources as the relevant articles in the *Handbook of Middle American Indians* (vols. 13-15), Ascensión H. de León-Portilla's bibliographic studies (e.g., 1987), and Fritz Schwallier's series of annotated itemizations of library holdings in Nahuatl (e.g., 1986).

The issues raised by the second to the fifth topic (first part) also have not been neglected, as can be seen, once again, in Nicholson's survey and many of the contributions to this volume. Nonetheless, the bulk of the research in this area still lies ahead. Unlike the compilation of a bibliographic index, questions concerning the influences on, the roles played by the participants in, the origins of, and the intentions surrounding the writing of the Sahaguntine

corpus are subject to fairly divergent answers. They call for the kind of interdisciplinary scholarship that includes both traditional historical sleuthing and, among other things, the application of critical tools of interpretation and analysis. While ethnohistorians working on Mesoamerican themes have excelled at the former, they are only now beginning to test the more recently developed analytical tools. Scholars who have employed some of the relevant approaches found in fields like semiotics, literary theory, and poststructural analysis, like Dennis Tedlock (1983, 1985), are showing that useful results can be expected from them. As these and other research instruments are experimented with in Sahaguntine scholarship, progressively more complete and critical answers to the interpretive and interdisciplinary questions will likely appear.

The movement towards more interdisciplinary research could also help meet needs not raised by León-Portilla. For example, the fact that the Sahaguntine images have not received the attention their importance merits has led scholars to analyze the textual materials apart from the images upon which they are sometimes based and to which they are frequently related. Similarly, the narrow focus resulting from the compartmentalization within which most Sahaguntine researchers work might be overcome through an interest in broader spectrums of investigation. These could permit more comprehensive connections to be made and more encompassing implications to be discovered within the corpus. In turn, these wider connections and implications need to be more integrally articulated with the multidisciplinary, non-Sahaguntine literature on sixteenth-century Central Mexico. Finally, mindful of these needs and building on all the work that has already been done—and with all relevant *Florentine Codex* materials (facsimiles, transcriptions, and translations) now at hand—it is reasonable to assume that the time has come for some scholar or team of researchers to undertake a thorough, in-depth, unified analysis of the full *Historia general*. This comprehensive study should take into consideration, among others, all the categories of interest raised by León-Portilla and the authors of the works in this volume.

The third and fourth topics in need of investigation raise a problem that the editors and many of the contributors have attempted to avoid: the tendency to overlook the implications of the extensive role played by Sahagún's native assistants in the preparation of the *Historia general* and other works from the Sahaguntine corpus. Though it is clear he is entirely responsible for much of the material and possibly all of the Spanish-language narratives, his trilingual assistants working under his guidance transcribed (and probably added much to) the Nahuatl text conveyed to him by the native informants. Sahagún was fluent in Nahuatl yet almost every time his hand appears in the corpus (mainly in editorial annotations, since the texts were, of course, written by the native scribes) the language he writes in is Spanish, suggesting that the editorial and authorial roles of the native assistants may have been greater than is commonly thought. However, just how much they shaped and edited the content of the Sahaguntine works is still unclear and will probably remain so until more scholars familiar with Nahuatl tackle the issue.

This last point alludes to what is probably the most serious problem plaguing Sahaguntine scholarship: the small number of Sahagún scholars fluent in Nahuatl. This problem must be overcome before some of the topics raised by León-Portilla and this introduction can be resolved. For instance, concerning the second part of the fifth problem, to date only piecemeal studies of the relations between the Spanish and the various Nahuatl texts have appeared, although Alfredo López Austin's work (e.g., 1980) has been conscientiously addressing this issue whenever relevant and has stressed the need for such comparative analyses.

It is well known that one of Sahagún's prime objectives was the compilation of extensive texts in Nahuatl. In addition to their obvious ethnographic value, he believed they would illustrate all of the subtleties and nuances of the language that were critical to the missionaries who sought to inculcate Christian beliefs through the medium of the indigenous communication system. As a consequence, by the end of his career Sahagún had assembled the single most valuable repository of Classical Nahuatl narratives. Fortunately, as is made evident by many of the articles in this volume and by the small but growing number of students and scholars studying Nahuatl today, more researchers can access the Nahuatl texts directly at this time than at any other period in the last two centuries. Consequently, many of the translation problems noted by León-Portilla in his seventh topic are well on their way to being resolved. Still, many scholars do not have sufficient knowledge of Nahuatl to read the original Sahaguntine materials that contain most of the data relevant to all the disciplines that study pre- and post-Contact Central Mexico. This language problem forces these investigators to rely either on modern translations — frequently polemical and always removed from the full range of meanings implied by individual words and phrases — or on Sahagún's paraphrastic and sometimes divergent Spanish versions. This situation, which one scholar equated with the attempt to study the *Iliad* without knowing Greek, remains as one of the most serious obstacles to the formation of a more critical, nuanced body of comparative, in-depth studies of the Sahaguntine corpus.

Fortunately, the publication of the reproduction of the *Florentine Codex* manuscript (1979a) and the paleography of the Spanish text (1982a) should contribute significantly to the resolutions of the fifth and the sixth topics noted by León-Portilla. Indeed, it is reasonable to expect that a complete, critical edition of the *Historia general*, including the Spanish and Nahuatl texts, can finally be undertaken now that all the necessary materials are available to scholars.

To conclude, much has been done in the last fifteen years to fill in the gaps pointed out in 1972, but much more still lies ahead. The maturing of the field of Sahaguntine studies, with improved language skills and increasingly employed interdisciplinary orientations, should make advances in the next fifteen years inevitable. Perhaps the survey that will follow this one will discern a considerably more unified, comprehensive, and broadly informed field of Sahaguntine studies. This goal certainly seems within reach, at last.

Assembling and editing a multi-authored volume of this size and complexity is a lengthy process that involves considerable effort on the part of many persons. We would like to express our appreciation to all those who contributed to this project. Special thanks go to Julie Goodson-Lawes, for her English translations of the articles by León-Portilla and Dibble, to Michel Besson for his English translation of the article by Baudot and for his drawings and charts, to James Lockhart for his useful observations and suggestions, and to Richard M. Leventhal for his assistance in seeing this project through to completion. Our intention has been to present a series of papers, dedicated to the memory of a great Mexican scholar, that will provide a useful updating of an active and significant subfield within Mesoamerican studies. They are offered in the expectation that they will enrich our understanding of the achievement of the remarkable Franciscan who provided one of the most accurate and comprehensive descriptions of a major non-Western culture until modern times.