THE EMBODIMENT OF THE NATIONAL IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY MEXICAN PAINTING

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA PRESS
TUCSON

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RESURRECTING THE PAST: THE EMBODIMENT OF THE AUTHENTIC AND THE FIGURE OF THE INDIAN

> It is urgent to bequeath to the capital of the republic an establishment exclusively charged with compiling, explaining, and publishing all vestiges prior to the conquest; our national wisdom should be erected on an indigenous foundation.[1]

The nineteenth century was by no means the first period when Mexico exploited the flexible possibilities of its ancient indigenous culture. A variety of studies has shown how both the narratives and objects of pre-Hispanic history have served since the sixteenth-century Spanish conquest as a seemingly limitless source for Mexico to justify, if not reinvent, its own history and shore up structures of power and strategies of social control.[2] In the early nineteenth century, especially the postindependence period, "indigenism," often a celebration or defense of ancient indigenous culture, irrupted in the face of foreign control and foreign intervention as well as when the state needed to cohere its citizens. Unlike the colonial government, postcolonial Mexico made legal citizens of everyone, including Indians. The issues of *indigenismo* were further complicated in the nineteenth century because the state and its intellectual-political elite effectively had to play off the ancient Indian against the contemporary Indian. Independence came almost exactly three hundred years after conquest, setting the process of indigenismo into motion on a larger scale. The effects of the conquest itself were used to give a pathetic personality to the contemporary Indian of nineteenth-century Mexico, thus configuring a new subaltern figure that required conquest once again.

Since the turn of the century, and especially with independence, liberals and their antecedents had celebrated the antiquity and complexity of indigenous culture. With the "second independence" of the Restored Republic, the figure of the Indian and Indian culture were ever more central to a discourse of the national and the authentic; after all, only Mexico could claim an indigenous, and especially Aztec, heritage.[3] Mexican liberals had most ardently promoted and defended Mexico's pre-Hispanic heritage as authentic. Around the turn of the century, Criollos—those of European descent born in Mexico—began to claim a fraternity with Mexico's pre-Hispanic past. Peninsulares—those of European descent born in Europe—claimed one with Europe's past. These claims of descent, more by culture than by blood, were part of other, more practical and more overtly political claims made during the struggle for independence. The Criollo and Peninsular factions, who would ultimately be transformed into the political factions of liberals and conservatives, employed cultural heritage as a means of legitimizing their claims to political, economic, and social power. When Mexico was once again rid of foreign domination, indigenism surged. As Ignacio Ramírez, a powerful radical liberal and close colleague of Ignacio Altamirano, argued in 1868, not only was indigenous culture essentially the basis of Mexican culture, but more important, it also should be investigated by Mexicans themselves; it should no longer be under the purview of foreigners.[4] As the state, intelligentsia, and Academy attempted to reclaim the power to represent national history in general after 1867, so Ramírez demanded that historians and antiquarians do the same for pre-Hispanic history in particular.

Just as Ramírez asked, interest increased in gathering and analyzing archaeological remains and texts to provide a tangible basis for Mexican culture and history. The collections of the Museo Nacional de México continued to grow in the second half of the nineteenth century.[5] And the museum began publication in 1877 of its scholarly journal, the *Anales del Museo Nacional,* to which a number of highly respected scholars contributed.[6] The major newspapers enthusiastically announced the appearance of major publications on the history and culture of ancient Mexico.[7] What Ramírez had demanded was protection of the physical traces and documents of indigenous cultures and public display of those artifacts. Such display would provide, once more, visual testimony to the equality and value of Mexican culture in relation to European culture. Europe had its glorious classical past. With the wresting of Mexico from the hands of European political domination, the nation set about representing its own ancient history, with the painted Indian as sign of the national and the authentic.

EUROPE INTRODUCES THE PRE-HISPANIC INDIAN TO MEXICO

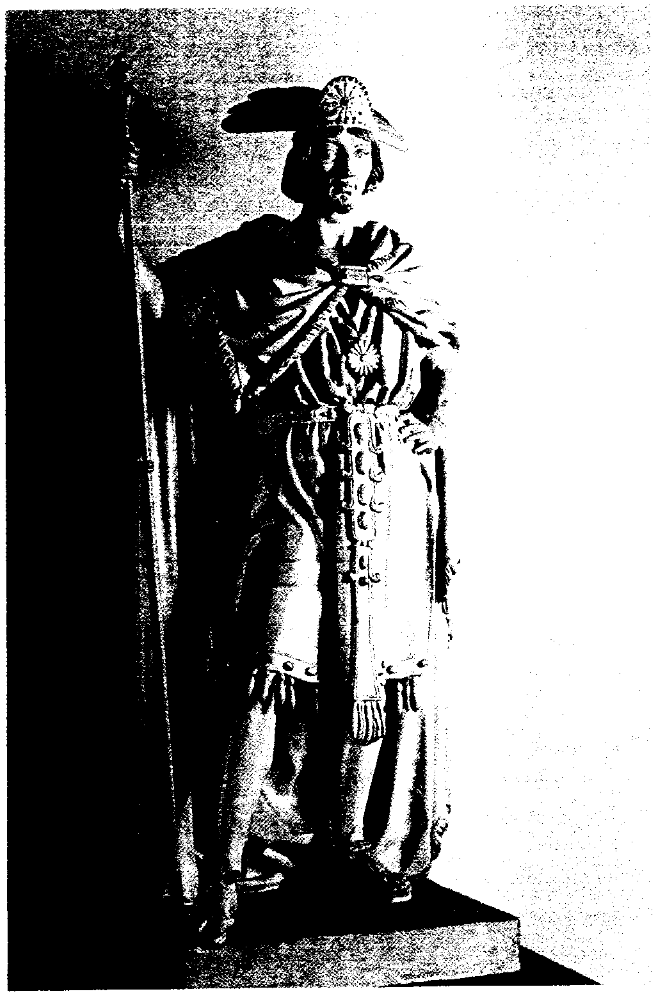
Certainly the representation of the figure of the Indian and of pre-Hispanic culture interested artists, not just historians. No doubt it was encouraged by Ramón Alcaraz's call for national art in 1869. Indeed, in the 1869 Academy exhibition, José Obregón exhibited his large canvas entitled *Discovery of Pulque* (fig. 12), a representation of the legend of the pre-Hispanic discovery of the fermented maguey cactus liquor, which will be discussed at greater length below. This painting, Monroy's *Allegory of the Constitution of 1857*, and Mendoza's *Battle of La Noche Triste*, seem to have been the major responses to Alcaraz's call for national history painting. The significance of Obregón's painting as a representation of national history is underscored by a critic who said: "Mr. Obregón's picture is entirely national and we believe that it will awaken the taste for this genre that it initiates, and that it offers such beautiful and new subjects to our artists."[8] The critic's characterization of the subject of the painting as new and beautiful is perhaps best understood as an indication of the level of enthusiasm with which such critics as well as artists approached the pre-Hispanic past in the context of a rejuvenated and Restored Republic.

It must be emphasized, however, that the representation of the pre-Hispanic Indian was not a new subject for academic artists, as Obregón's critic seems to have implied. Earlier academic representations suggest that the Indian had already been inscribed within a discourse of the authentic and the national, and that the Indian could be made, like a costume, to fit ideological needs. The pre-Hispanic Indian had, of course, been represented in various media since conquest. But it was not until the nineteenth century that it was elevated as a central subject and configured in the noble genre of history painting or in sculpture, rather than merely represented in book illustrations, screens, or as an ancillary allegorical figure. Already by mid-century, academic artists understood the power of the representation of the pre-Hispanic Indian to evoke notions of nationalism on the part of the viewing public.

There is no little irony in the fact that Spanish sculptor Manuel Vilar is considered to have introduced the "theme of the indigenous" to academic sculptural practice.[9] Vilar arrived in Mexico in 1846 and began teaching students at the Academy.[10] Among the works he produced in Mexico were four statues he clearly designed to ingratiate himself to his new audience: *Agustín Iturbide* (1850), *Moctezuma* (1850), *Tlahuicole* (1851), and *La Marina (Malinche)* (1852) (figs. 13, 14, 15).[11] Vilar's Indians were Moctezuma, Tlahuicole, and Malinche. Moctezuma was the ruler in power when Cortés invaded Mexico in 1519. Tlahuicole was a legendary Tlaxcaltecan warrior who fought to the death for his people against the domineering Aztecs. Malinche, also known as Marina, was the first Indian woman to be converted to Christianity and the person who acted as translator between Cortés and the Aztecs.[12] A letter of 1849 written by Vilar to his brother in Barcelona reveals a certain awareness about the reception of such figures. He wrote of his work on the Iturbide project and added that, when finished, he would make three pendant figures: *The Mexican Republic, Moctezuma,* and *Hernán Cortés.*[13] He stated that when they were finished he would make molds for hollow plaster casts: "since they are the heroes of Mexico I hope to sell some, and it will be the only means by which I can earn some money."[14] Vilar believed that these figures already had a market.[15]

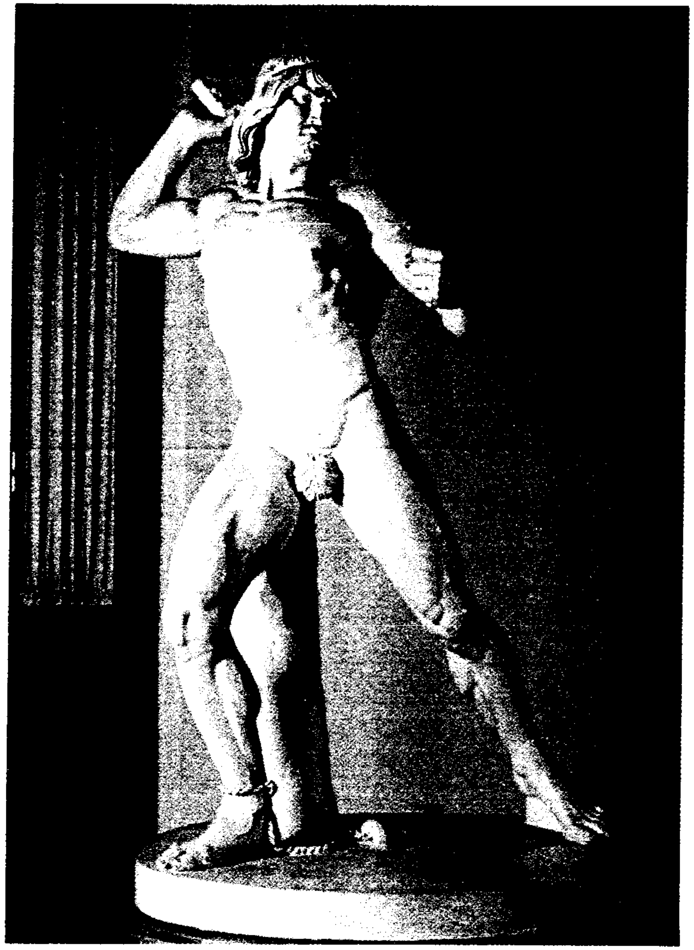
These figures conform to a particular vision and process of selection of the pre-Hispanic past. The contemporary criticism of the three pieces, taken as a whole, registers pleasure in the nobility and beauty of the figures; for the critics they were as significant for their Mexican-ness as for their embodiment of classical values.[16] Tlahuicole seems, in particular, to have been chosen as a subject because he allowed Vilar to show his prowess at sculpting a male nude; one can see that the "Indian" characteristics of the face are incidental to the muscular nude body.[17] *Moctezuma* and *La Marina* also allowed Vilar to present a kind of Indian equivalent to classical statues. There is little to commend them as representations of "Indians" per se. Rather, the fact that they attempted to present a convincing view of Aztec costume and the classical/anatomical figure was more important. Vilar studied existing pre-Hispanic artifacts, colonial-period manuscripts, and contemporary histories for his sculptures of pre-Hispanic figures.[18]

Marina and Moctezuma also seem to refract conservative values. Moctezuma was regarded as ruler of a vast and rich domain, and Marina,



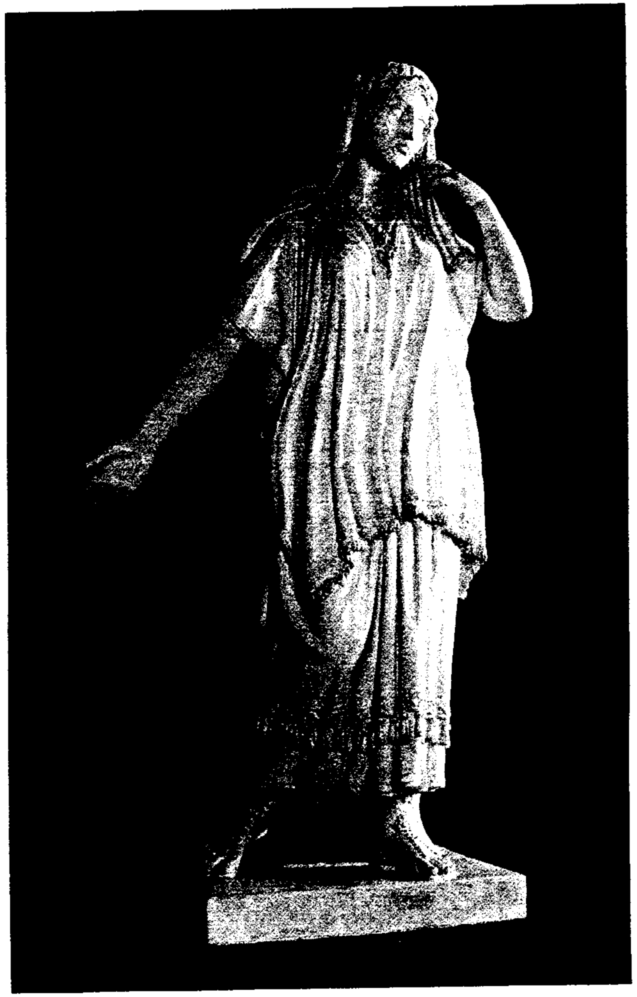
13 Manuel Vilar, *Moctezuma*, 1850, plaster, near life-size. Museo Nacional de Arte. Photo by Agustín Estrada.

wearing her cross as sign of her conversion to Christianity by the Spaniards, embodied the ideals of a Catholic, imperial state. Indeed, Vilar's choice of these national subjects, and particularly of these indigenous figures, is all the more striking because he was a Spaniard. The fact that he was a European immediately lent credibility and value to his sculptures. It was still, of course, Europeans who were expected to direct the teaching of Mexican students, as the 1843 Academy reform had decreed.



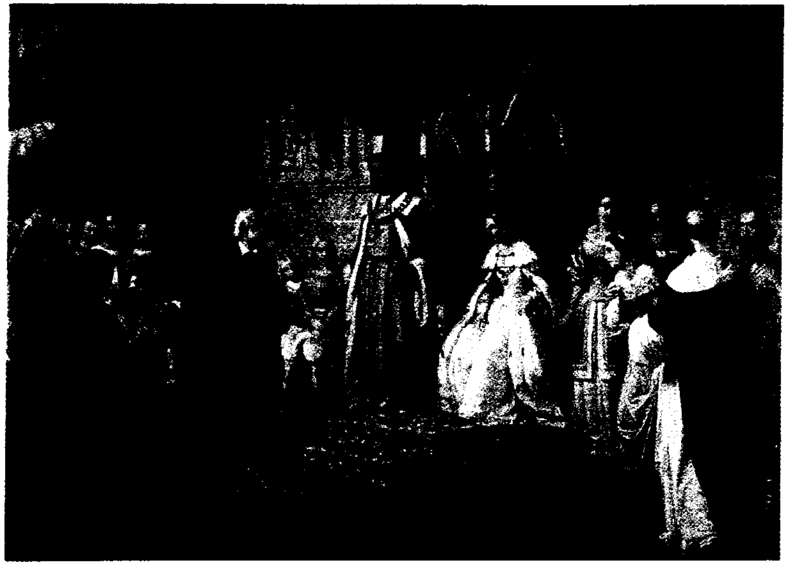
14 Manuel Vilar, *Tlahuicole*, 1852, plaster, near life-size. Museo Nacional de Arte. Photo by Agustín Estrada.

A different aspect of the representation of the Indian emerges in the production and reception of a history painting made and exhibited almost simultaneously with Vilar's sculptures. In this instance, the Mexican academic artist Juan Cordero portrayed Indians in his canvas entitled



15 Manuel Vilar, *La Marina/La Malinche*, 1852, plaster, near life-size. Museo Nacional de Arte. Photo by Agustín Estrada.

Columbus Before the Catholic Sovereigns (fig. 16). The painting is the centerpiece of a drama that seems to have clearly intertwined the personal and patriotic motives of the artist.[19] Cordero began work on the painting in Rome, when he was still on a pension from the Academy. He exhibited the finished work there in 1850 and then shipped it back to Mexico in 1851 for exhibition in that year's Academy exhibition. It is arguably the first secular history painting produced by an academic artist, standing in contrast to the plenitude of religious and mythological subjects encouraged by Pelegrín Clavé, the Academy's Spanish painting director.



16 Juan Cordero, *Columbus Before the Catholic Sovereigns*, 1850, oil on canvas, 68 in. × 96 in. (173 cm × 244 cm). Museo Nacional de Arte. Photo by Agustín Estrada.

Cordero, like most of his fellow students, followed the academic path, producing biblical scenes, the occasional genre painting of Italian types, as well as numerous portraits. Then, without a commission, he produced this secular history painting, generating a surprising amount of critical debate. Cordero's self-effacing commentary on the painting reveals a certain awareness about its potential impact. In a letter to the director of the Mexican Academy, he stated with exaggerated humility: "The subject matter that I chose to paint is of interest to the whole world and especially to Americans and Europeans; . . . though it may appear audacious coming from a beginner, I have pledged this meager tribute, made by a most inadequate brush, to the unending memory of this historical event."[20] The play between Spaniard, Italian, and Indian was a masterful stroke of diplomacy. The Italians hailed it, a Spanish diplomat wanted to buy it and bring it back to Spain, and Mexicans acclaimed it as a sign of Mexican cultural skill.[21] The painting was flexible enough to allow an affirmation of Italian nationalism, the celebration of Catholicism, the wisdom of Spain's enterprise in the New World, and a small but significant acknowledgment of the New World itself. How could Cordero go wrong with a painting that could please virtually everybody?

The contemporary Mexican press praised *Columbus Before the Catholic Sovereigns* and rarely forgot to acknowledge its European accolades. The painting's supporters were clearly aware of the importance of a Mexican's success in Italy. Prominent journalist and politician Francisco Zarco embraced the painting and the artist this way: Cordero, "with his impartial and generous works, works for the glory of his country, and with them gives incontestable testimony that Mexicans have double the intelligence and disproves the European notions that persist in believing our race inferior to the rest of humanity."[22] Mexicans saw Cordero's painting as important because of its critical success in Europe, proving that Mexican artists were at least as competent and as talented as European artists. But it was also Zarco who provided the ironic implication that the mute student was given the language to create, as Caliban was by Prospero, by the very culture that denigrated that student: "It was, in effect, worthy of an American brush that had been formed in Italy to honor the memory of the illustrious Genoan to whom America owes its civilization and whose name is a laurel of unfading glory for the Italians. The pleasure in a subject of American interest and the gratitude to Italy are the two sentiments that guided the valiant brush of Cordero."[23] Like Zarco, nineteenth-century Mexican intellectuals generally understood Columbus as the conduit between Old World and New, the mediating figure between the European and the indigenous, the bearer of the torch of civilization to the barbaric Americas. There was little question in this epoch of Columbus's heroic reputation; no question that without Columbus, the Americas, and specifically Mexico, would not have taken shape, would not have been, in essence, created.[24] Thus, *Columbus Before the Catholic Sovereigns* was viewed as a gesture of appreciation and acknowledgment of this Italian gift. It was also a payback for the Italians' proffering the gift of culture once again. The recipient was Cordero.

The predicament of national identity and culture is implicit in Zarco's writings. Italy gave the Americas, and hence Mexico, civilization and culture. It still retained the power to represent and re-create them as culturally inferior. Mexico required its cultural elite to be trained by Europeans,

especially Italians. It was still the only way a Mexican could prove himself as an equal creator. But what stands for and identifies itself as American or Mexican is the only possible sign of the authentic: the figure of the Indian. This was the originary barbarian just waiting for cultural deliverance. And the Indian was both real and a cipher of representation.

In the painting, Columbus is symbolically engaged in this momentous act of creation and deliverance, pointing out with his right hand the three Indians in the left-hand corner of the painting. The Indians are present and exist only as they complete the hierarchical chain of command. Cordero ordered the canvas around the pictorial hierarchy of the enthroned Ferdinand and Isabella located centrally, Columbus standing below the monarchs, gesturing toward the Indians, and the three Indians—two standing, one kneeling—in the dark lower left of the canvas. It is a reaffirmation of the symbolic hierarchy in which Mexico both placed itself and was placed in relationship to Europe, one in which Cordero apparently recognized his own place. This recognition relies specifically on the presence of the Indians in his painting.

Cordero's is apparently the only Mexican academic history painting of Columbus that included the representation of Indians in this period. Subsequent treatments of the Columbus narrative focused on other episodes that did not require the presence of Indians.[25] The Indians in Cordero's painting thus seem all the more remarkable. Yet the critics were far more interested in the figures of Columbus and the monarchs than they were in the Indians. The Indians were, in fact, never the first nor even a consistently discussed aspect of the painting in the contemporary criticism. There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that nineteenth-century Mexican intellectuals made a self-identification with the Indians per se. But the Indians did seem to provide a very specifically nationalist sign, helping to map Mexico's place in the European (civilized) grid. One critic singled out the kneeling Indian, whose profile is sharply illuminated against the armor of one of the Spanish soldiers in the background, referring to him as "this son of America" and as a memento of Cordero's homeland, a result of "patriotic inspiration."[26] Cordero referred to the Indians virtually as an emblem of place; in his catalog description he called them simply "natives of the new land."[27]

While Cordero seems to have made no other references to the significance of the Indians in writing, it is impossible not to notice that he emphasized the kneeling Indian's profile, just as the aforementioned critic did, as if to pictorially suggest a meaning greater than the identity of a native of the new land. Twentieth-century art historians have made much of this profile. In 1946 Jean Charlot was the first to propose that this was Cordero's self-portrait. He argued that it had to be the artist because, as his other self-portraits show, "he has the small well-groomed moustache, the bony nose, and thin nostrils that were Cordero's, and that are scarcely Indian characteristics."[28] By at least 1984 this identification of the Indian's profile as Cordero's self-portrait had become fact. As Elisa García Barragán states in her monograph on Cordero: "Cordero's identification with the theme is so powerful that he paints his self-portrait in one of the Indians who accompanied Columbus. Given, it is a romantic image, which at the same time could well signal a self-identification with the indigenous past of Mexico. Or perhaps it brings to him the nostalgia of his country."[29] Given the similarity between Cordero's self-portraits and the Indian profile in *Columbus Before the Catholic Sovereigns*, one could argue that the artist had used his own visage. Yet the contemporary criticism of the painting offers no indication that the public identified the Indian as Cordero. And if, indeed, Cordero identified with the indigenous past, the feeling was short-lived. In terms of history painting, he did represent Chateaubriand's story of Atala, in which the figures of Indian and European are noticeably distinguished by skin color. In addition, he certainly treated with care the physiognomy of his sculpture colleagues, Tomás Pérez and Felipe Valero, in his 1847 portrait of them. Apparently with these exceptions, Cordero produced primarily portraits and, less frequently, religious or allegorical images.[30] The inclusion of the Indians, self-portrait among them or not, must have been calculated to symbolically stand Mexico before Europe.

Cordero's *Columbus* was a well-engineered enterprise. The artist had the wit to ship off a painting highly acclaimed in Europe to Mexico by the end of 1850. The artist, with his reputation preceding him, arrived two years later, desirous of obtaining the directorship of the Academy. The legacy of the 1843 Academy reform was a Mexican institution whose key positions were staffed entirely by foreigners. Cordero wanted this to change, and he orchestrated a campaign to effect that change. Cordero, the Mexican, wanted Pelegrín Clavé, the Spaniard, out. In fact, what he was after was support from the public, from the Academy board, and from his fellow artists for his nomination to directorship. He had shown himself to be not only a painter with an international reputation but also

an artist who understood and would represent subjects relevant to the Mexican nation.

Although the terms of Cordero's pension required him to submit *Columbus* for exhibition at the Academy, his compliance seems to have been conveniently timed to garner as much public support as possible, at the very moment some critics were making noises about Clavé's refusal to comply with a similar contractual requirement. Clavé could not or would not submit a major history painting to the Academy.[31] Cordero, never having been directly taught by Clavé but by the teachers Clavé admired or himself worked with, stole the spotlight. And the battle in the press ensued. Several critics rebuked the mean-spirited and picayune attacks on Cordero's painting. It was understood that these attacks were coming from Clavé or his supporters. It was also quite evident that the issue of nationality was involved. Zarco, for example, understood the painting specifically in terms of a Mexican-European polemic: "In Mexico, certain people looked zealously for blemishes in the Columbus picture and one felt pity for the men who criticized Cordero and wanted to eclipse his glory for no other reason than that he is a Mexican."[32] In the end, Cordero was offered only subdirectorship of the Academy. He refused it as second best. His letter of rejection made quite clear that he would never accept a position subordinate to Clavé, as if he refused to take the place of the Indian he supposedly identified with. He cited two reasons: first, he had clearly proven his talent and stature, both of which he considered, of course, to be superior to Clavé's; second, he refused to work under a Spaniard.

Cordero's painting and the controversy and criticism surrounding it closely embrace the issues surrounding the painting of national history after 1867. Both Mexico and Cordero desired their own national identity and culture. Yet, it seems, the validation of this identity and culture was often sought from the colonizer. The predicament was underscored by Juan Cordero himself: in order to convince his Mexican colleagues he was a talented painter, he essentially had to get the approval of the Italians first; in order to prove his nationalist convictions, he may have chosen to reconfigure himself as an Indian. As Charlot pointed out: "A nationalist connotation, then, even allows the white Mexican [here, Cordero] to think of himself as an Indian."[33] This statement implies that Indians can be constructed from a group of selected physical and cultural traits that can be assembled and reassembled, making the Indian visible one moment and invisible the next. And, in fact, the pre-Hispanic Indian was virtually invisible in academic history painting until 1869.

MEXICO INTRODUCES THE PRE-HISPANIC INDIAN TO ITSELF

In 1869 three Indians hold public center stage. A full-blooded Zapotec Indian, Benito Juárez, is president.[34] For the first time, a pre-Hispanic Indian is the subject of a public sculpture; a bust of Cuauhtémoc, the martyred Aztec hero of the Spanish conquest, is inaugurated in the Paseo de la Viga. For the first time, pre-Hispanic Indians are the sole subject of an academic history painting; José Obregón exhibits his *Discovery of Pulque* in the Academy exhibition (fig. 12).

An Indian president was remarkable in the nineteenth century. Even Altamirano, himself an Indian, intoned upon Juárez's death how truly amazing it was that an Indian had made it to the National Palace. Indians still made up the bulk of Mexico's nineteenth-century population. Nineteenth-century geographer-cartographer Antonio García Cubas estimated that by 1881, Mexico had a population of eight to ten million people.[35] Indians comprised about four million, or roughly one-third to one-half of the total; mestizos and Europeans comprised the remainder. And increasingly both Indians and mestizos began to assume more powerful roles in the life of the nation—to wit, Indians Juárez and Altamirano and mestizos Ignacio Ramírez and Francisco Zarco.[36] Arguably, such figures began to separate themselves from their own actual Indian heritage and construct a nostalgic Indian past; real Indians and painted Indians would assume vastly different national and cultural roles.

On August 11, 1869, *El Siglo XIX* announced the program for the inaugural festivities in honor of the unveiling of the bust of Cuauhtémoc, to take place on August 13.[37] August 13 was the anniversary of the day Cuauhtémoc was imprisoned by the Spaniards. Cuauhtémoc, unlike Moctezuma, was revered as a hero, a warrior defending his country from invaders. He was later tortured by the Spaniards for the whereabouts of gold and ultimately was hanged.[38] Cuauhtémoc was the perfect Indian hero for the Restored Republic, a figure who could stand alongside liberal heroes of Mexican independence in the nineteenth century. The Ayuntamiento, or Mexico City city council, organized the construction of the statue, and chose the well-traveled, though not central, location of the Paseo de la Viga in the southeast corner of the city.[39] The president

and his cabinet were invited to attend the ceremonies; in addition, two prominent intellectual and political figures, Felipe Sánchez Solís and Guillermo Prieto, were invited to give speeches in honor of Cuauhtémoc.[40]

Sánchez Solís was an especially apt figure for addressing the significance of the bust of Cuauhtémoc. He was also an Indian and, like his colleagues Juárez and Altamirano, had left his native village to learn Spanish, literature, and law. Sánchez Solís eventually held a number of important political posts, among them the directorship of the Instituto Científica y Literario de Toluca, which was designed to educate Indian students in particular. At least as significant as his political activities was his interest in indigenous history and culture, as well as his patronage of art, particularly by academic artists. Indeed, the same year the bust of Cuauhtémoc was unveiled, a painting he had commissioned of José Obregón was exhibited at the Academy show. Obregón's painting, *The Discovery of Pulque,* combined Sánchez Solís's indigenous and artistic interests. Its subject was the legend of the presentation of pulque by a beautiful young Toltec woman, a drink supposedly "discovered" by her father.[41] The painting was a critical success that year, deemed by reviewers as a worthy contribution to the representation of national history. As the critic "L.G.R." put it, it was as if "the spirit of the Aztec people, desiring to defend themselves, guided the brush of this fortunate painter."[42] Critics were taken with the noble and romantic aspects of the painting: the king, Tecpancaltzin, and the young woman, Xochitl, whose parents present her and the cup of pulque to the king. L.G.R. was as consumed by the painting as Tecpancaltzin was by Xochitl: "We invite the intelligent to go taste one by one the innumerable beauties that this painting contains."[43] The image soon circulated in both academic and popular prints.[44]

Obregón's own catalog description suggests the painting was as much about lineage and royal appropriation of resources as it was a romantic love story: "The young Xochitl, led by her parents, offers to the king of Tula, Tecpancaltzin, the first pitcher of pulque, discovered by her; the prince, enamored of her beauty, takes her for his wife.[45] She marries a prince; the prince takes possession of Xochitl and the drink. As patron of this painting, Felipe Sánchez Solís was surely consumed with lineage, with audience and display. In 1875, the very year that the Mexican commission was organizing the content and display of the country's pavilion in the international arena of the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876, Sánchez Solís organized a salon of artists, poets, and literary figures. In a gallery done in neo-indigenous decor, Sánchez Solís displayed his collection of pre-Hispanic art and a series of paintings of pre-Hispanic subjects, including Obregón's, that he had either bought or directly commissioned. The artists included academic luminaries Rebull, Velasco, Pina, Felipe Gutiérrez, and Rodrigo Gutiérrez.[46] Sánchez Solís's salon had the effect of "reviving" and "resuscitating" Aztec art and culture. As one writer put it: "To resuscitate a civilization, to bring the elements of life that art had for our civilization, to excite patriotism with the memories of heroic acts and glory, that is what Mr. Sánchez Solís is attempting to do."[47]

The newspaper accounts of the salon pointed out that Sánchez Solís was a descendant of one of the most noble families of the ancient Aztec empire. He was not just the son of two indigenous parents from a poor town in the state of México, as an official twentieth-century biography recounts.[48] It is well known that after the conquest, Indians of noble birth were treated far better than those of commoner status.[49] And it was widely accepted that only the pre-Hispanic indigenous upper classes had access and could reproduce knowledge of the arts and sciences; in short, they were the keepers of civilization. The lineage of culture could come only through the noble line.

One review of the salon stands out for its use of the language of genealogy to describe not only of Sánchez Solís's own heritage, but also the objects he collected. The critic spoke of clay objects "conserved as a precious inheritance by Aztec families, which had passed from one generation to another" and a stone idol that revealed "the genealogy of one of the most beloved gods of that race."[50] Indeed, one of Sánchez Solís's commissions was a series of portraits of the ancient line of Chiconcuauhtli. This is the language of the construction of a national heritage.

Critics praised Sánchez Solís for contributing to this national heritage. He was in a financial position to do so, having, as one review noted, spent thirty years and more than one hundred thousand pesos to create his own museum and gallery.[51] Sánchez Solís's social position in nineteenth-century Mexico exemplifies the cleavage that Mexico created between the glorious, noble, and cultured Aztecs and the miserable, culturally bereft, contemporary Indians.[52] His own claims to noble Aztec descent and the significance of this status seem to be inscribed in Obregón's painting. Sánchez Solís exemplifies Indian intellectuals and political figures who were able to distance themselves from their own contemporary Indian predicament, to look up to the Aztec past and down on the

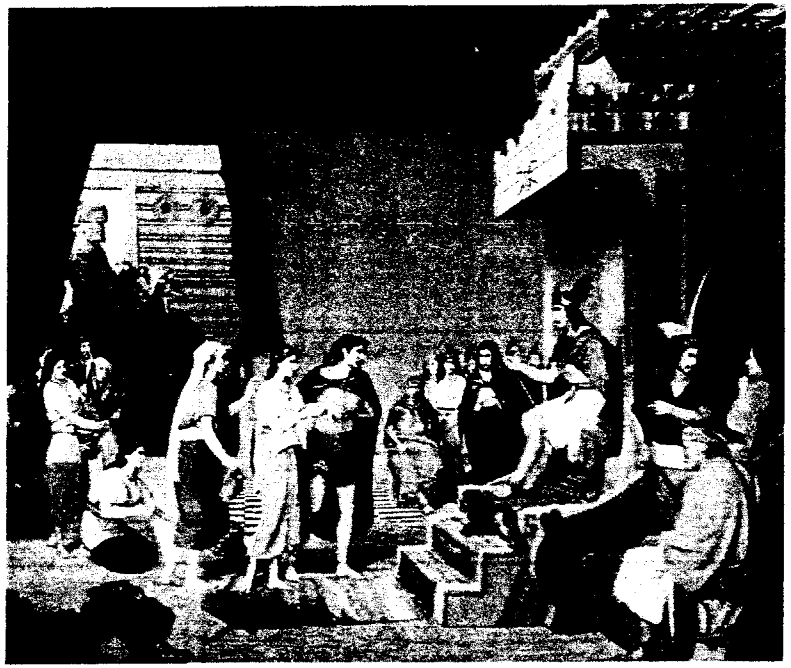
Indian present, or as a recent study of the Indian in the nineteenth-century Mexican press noted, "referred to the Indians as persons apart from the national society that, as idea and project, conceived of itself as European, white, and 'civilized.'"[53]

Julio Zárate, whose name has been mentioned in the context of the Philadelphia Exposition, published an essay in 1870 entitled "La raza indígena," in *El Siglo XIX*.[54] in it he lamented the abysmal state of contemporary Indians, who, as a result of the Spanish conquest, had lost even memory of their own history and traditions:

> Thus the conquered race lost even its historical traditions. Today the foreigner knows more than the Indian about the past glories of our grandfathers, and the coldness of slavery has paralyzed, to say it thus, intellectual life, the moral movement of a people that once had their own life, their glories, their history and customs, that revealed to the astonished eyes of the conqueror a stage of civilization quite advanced, even comparing it to the contemporaneous civilization in western Europe.[55]

Zárate revealed an ambiguous position toward the contemporary Indian, claiming a complete distance from the conquered race, on the one hand, and claiming familial bonds with *our* (italics mine) grandfathers, on the other. Like Sánchez Solís, who could apparently claim descent by blood, Zárate related himself only to the Indians who were capable of producing glories, histories, customs, civilization. Although no direct proof can be offered here, it is very likely that either Obregón or Sánchez Solís himself chose a narrative on which to base *The Discovery of Pulque* that could literally be read as the story of the patron's own grandfathers.

The most popular account of the story of the discovery of pulque and the concomitant love story between Xochitl and Tecpancaltzin is found in the chronicle of the seventeenth-century writer Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl.[56] Obregón's painting was reproduced as a lithograph to illustrate this version of the story in the multivolume work edited by Vicente Riva Palacio in the 1870s entitled *México a través de los siglos* (fig. 17). In this account, Alfredo Chavero, a prominent historian and antiquarian, refers directly to Ixtlilxochitl's account, saying that although he did not prefer this version on scholarly grounds, it was the best known; he chose this version particularly because it related "the popular legend of the queen Xochitl."[57] Ixtlilxochitl's works center around the pre-Hispanic



17 *Discovery of Pulque*, after Obregón, lithograph, 9 in. × 6 3/4 in. (23 cm × 17.3 cm). Reproduced in *México a través de los siglos*, vol. 1, edited by Vicente Riva Palacio (Mexico City: Ballesca and Comp., 1887–89), cover. Photo by Agustín Estrada.

royal line of the Acolhua Chichimeca, from which both he and Sánchez Solís claimed descent. It is the same line to which Obregón's figure of Tecpancaltzin belongs. Ixtlilxochitl's work is essentially genealogical, and the story of Tecpancaltzin and Xochitl centers strongly around the idea of marriage and prolongation of the royal line.

Obregón's painting also plays subtly around the polarity of barbarism and civilization, of nature and culture. The processional format of the painting is set up to allow a transformation of the barbaric and natural Indian into civilized and cultured Indian. The processional begins with three women servants who stand or kneel behind the central triad of Xochitl's mother, Xochitl, and her father. The key figure is the standing servant, who is the only bare-breasted figure but also the one that carries the actual maguey plant. She stands as the figure of the barbaric/natural Indian woman: her clothing, hair, her darker skin color, all collude to produce a figure far more "Indian-looking" than Xochitl. Xochitl is, by contrast, the Indian woman transformed, raised up. As Altamirano would remark in a discussion of the painting, Xochitl "elevated to the rank of queen" is "not precisely a young Indian girl with her bronzed color, but a very pretty mestiza.[58] She not only is fully clothed but now holds, not the wild maguey plant in rough cloth, but its consumable liquor in a ceramic bowl. She is far more Europeanized. Her skin is lighter, her hair tied back and decorated with flowers; her clothes are finer and now pastel instead of the drab brown-greens of the cloth of the servant behind her. In the manner of Pygmalion, Obregón has transformed the common Indian girl with coarse (read Indian) features and cactus into a refined, pretty maiden carefully holding the liquor—and fit for a king. The catalog description subtly underscores the idea of the transformation and appropriation of girl and cactus: Tecpancaltzin, taken by her beauty, "takes her for his wife."

Although no critic specifically mentioned the significance of pulque in Obregón's painting, it might be seen as the sign of transformation of Indian and Indian culture. Although pulque itself is drawn from the maguey cactus and is therefore a naturally occurring drink, it appears transformed from its natural state as it moves through, almost sequentially, from plant toward prince. The effect of transformation from nature into culture, from available natural substance into controlled drink, is not unlike the actual process of modernization the pulque industry was undergoing in the second half of the nineteenth century; the common scene of rough Indian or mestizo muleteers carting their skins full of pulque to Mexico City was replaced by the ultimate symbol of progress and civilization: the railroad.[59] Moreover, the major harvesters of pulque were the rural underclass, and the primary consumers of pulque were Indians of both the rural and urban lower classes; the profits, however, were enjoyed by the elite *hacendados* (hacienda owners), who though they did not toil in pulque, certainly commanded its control.[60] Perhaps not ironically, pulque passes through a parallel process as it moves toward Obregón's Toltec prince.

MAPPING THE INDIAN AND THE AUTHENTIC

In a very basic sense, Obregón's *Discovery of Pulque* helps to give a place to pre-Hispanic culture for its modern audience. Pulque was associated with a very specific region to the north and east of Mexico City proper. Moreover, the genealogical implications of the painting help to culturally situate the likes of Sánchez Solís and to enhance the cultural significance of this region. The representations of pre-Hispanic culture in such paintings helped to reconfirm the basin of Mexico and the capital as the center of civilization and high culture. Further, in his article on Sánchez Solís's salon, Pilades described at some length a group of pre-Hispanic artifacts in the patron's collection. He noted that some of the ceramic objects came from the bottom of Lake Zumpango in the state of México, the same district in which Sánchez Solís was born.[61] His own birthplace, then, was associated with the longevity of pre-Hispanic culture.

Felipe Gutiérrez's portraits of the family of the pre-Hispanic ruler Chiconcuauhtli, commissioned by Sánchez Solís, also assert a geographical/genealogical claim to this area. The importance of this figure and this location was made very clear in an unlocated historical landscape painting done by Luis Coto entitled *Xolotl Reigns in Texcoco*, which was exhibited, unfinished, in the 1873 exhibition. The long catalog description of the site and subject he painted, typical of academic landscape paintings of the period, specifically associates this ruler with the district of Zumpango de la Laguna and establishes Chiconcuauhtli as a noble landholder. The painting is undeniably about lineage and territorial claims. Coto's description states:

> Xolotl was reigning in Texcoco; the princes Chiconcuauhtli, Acolhua, and Tzontecomatl, coming from Teoculhuacan, presented themselves to the monarch in the year 1168, asking for land to establish themselves. Xolotl not only granted them what they asked but also wed the princes to his three daughters, Chiconcuauhtli getting for consort the princess Zihuaxochitl. Then Xolotl divided his kingdom among his three children and gave Xaltocan to Chiconcuauhtli, today the district of Zumpango de la Laguna. Chiconcuauhtli . . . [in the painting] presents himself in the capital of his empire, accompanied by Xolotl and his children; the cacique Tzompa, of Xaltocan, receives the new king, placing a necklace around his neck in testimony of obedience.[62]

Coto then brings the viewer back to the present, adding, "The landscape is taken from the northeast of Lake Xaltocan."[63] Historical landscape painting, practiced particularly by Coto, could conflate space, time, and

culture to help construct a culturally and historically significant site, helping to engender a new category of Indian nobility, to which Sánchez Solís, among others, belonged.

Coto painted several other historical landscapes that contributed to a cultural mapping of Mexico through the representation of the pre-Hispanic past, including *La Noche Triste* (1881), *The Origin of the Foundation of Mexico-Tenochtitlán* (1879), and the *Capture of Guatimoc [Cuauhtémoc] in Lake Texcoco* (1881). All three of these were subjects painted by other artists in both historical landscape and history paintings. As mentioned in chapter 2, for example, Velasco did a straightforward landscape version of *The Ahuehuete of La Noche Triste* (fig. 8). Both the themes of the foundation of Mexico-Tenochtitlán and the capture of Cuauhtémoc were rendered by history painters and were, in fact, themes for subsequent Academy painting competitions. Cuauhtémoc, as we have seen, provided the figure of the heroic fighter, the leader of resistance against the Spaniards.

The representation of the foundation myth reaffirmed the cultural significance of the site of Mexico City itself. According to traditional accounts, the Mexica, one of seven major tribes that left their mythical northern homeland of Aztlán, were providentially guided by their tribal deity to the site where they would establish their new homeland and build an empire. Huitzilopochtli, their deity, prophesied that in A.D. 1168 the Mexica would be able to end their wanderings when they came upon an eagle with a serpent in its mouth. The eagle and serpent became, even in the early colonial period, the emblem of the origin of Mexico. Coto's version of this legend, in which the landscape is clearly dominant, shows a small band of Indians in the lake region as they approach a rather crudely rendered eagle and serpent.

Coto's painting was applauded for its national historical subject but criticized for its inability to render, clearly and hierarchically, the actual subject of the painting, namely, the moment of discovery of the eagle and serpent by the Mexica.[64] The mapping of pre-Hispanic high culture and history was more successfully done by Coto's colleague, José María Velasco. To begin with, his *Valley of Mexico* of 1875 presents a sharply realistic view of the valley, identified in the painting's long catalog description by specific landmarks. Although contemporary critics did not register this, the sign of time and pre-Hispanic culture seems to be embodied in the eagle that swoops down on a serpent in a cactus in the foreground. In the 1879 exhibition Velasco exhibited two small, rapidly done oil sketches of the ruins of the pre-Hispanic site of Teotihuacán, entitled *Pyramid of the Sun* and *Pyramids of Teotihuacán*.[65] These were among several landscapes of pre-Hispanic ruins commissioned by Gumersindo Mendoza, director of the National Museum. In these sketches the massive archaeological ruins, though at this point still unexcavated, emerge from the encroachment of the landscape. These enormous stone structures were already a well-known tourist attraction in nineteenth-century Mexico.

The paintings were evidently designed for display in the National Museum. Critics wished for the ruins to be projected on a grander, larger scale but were appreciative of the representation of "two very important monuments of Mexican antiquity."[66] These were especially important to represent because the major Aztec structures remained as buried rubble underneath Mexico City itself. Velasco's images thus began to contribute to the picture of the material remains of ancient Mexican culture.

But the most significant ruins could be said to be those that fixed a place for the figure of Nezahualcoyotl, a fifteenth-century ruler. Nezahualcoyotl had become the high priest of pre-Hispanic culture, a figure that could be divorced from violence and paganism. He was viewed in the nineteenth century as poet, statesman, warrior, philosopher, and wise ruler, as well as the only ruler to be associated with what had come to be described as a form of monotheism, separating him from worship of the vast pantheon of Aztec deities. He was the namesake of at least one literary society and the subject of poems, essays, and images, in short, a culture hero. In September 1877 the town of Texcoco in the state of México, with which Nezahualcoyotl was associated, proposed to erect a statue in his honor. Instead of saluting his prowess at war, the town would honor him for his contribution to the progress of civilization: "The thought is great. Monuments are the houses of heroes, and heroes are not only those who conquer a glory with a sword; they are heroes, and more worthy of the people's appreciation, who with very noble effort of intelligence are able to advance the society in which they live even one step on the roads to progress."[67] He was the "poet-king," as contemporary writers called him, whose rule of law was culture.[68]

Nezahualcoyotl could also be directly associated with a center of nineteenth-century Indian culture, the ruins of the so-called baths of Nezahualcoyotl near Texcoco, which had already been commemorated in painting. Velasco painted a version of this archaeological site in 1878, and Alfredo Zaffira submitted a painting to the 1881 Academy exhibition entitled *Nezahualcoyotl in the Gardens of Texcoco*. Its subtitle was "Afternoon Prayer to the God of the Heavens."[69] Although the painting has yet to be located, the contemporary criticism suggests that it was the image of a benevolent and pious ruler meditating in his royal surroundings of cultivated nature.[70]

The site of Nezahualcoyotl's baths and gardens was near the modern town of Texcoco. Texcoco was also the birthplace of painter Felipe S. Gutiérrez, one of the most successful nineteenth-century Mexican painters. Gutiérrez, in turn, was also the protégé of Sánchez Solís, who in 1850 asked him to teach painting at the Instituto Científico y Literario in Toluca. It is impossible not to conclude that Sánchez Solís was trying to establish a very direct relationship between himself and Nezahualcoyotl and between the ancient site of Texcoco and the cultural center he was trying to make out of the state of México. The importance of Nezahualcoyotl's own genealogy had to be more than coincidentally significant to Sánchez Solís. Nezahualcoyotl's father was Ixtlilxochitl, from whom the colonial writer Fernando Alva de Ixtlilxochitl was descended. It is very likely that Ixtlilxochitl provided the texts on which Sánchez Solís's stable of history painters relied for their tableaux of elite pre-Hispanic culture.

According to the *Trait d'Union* of June 25, 1875, Sánchez Solís commissioned academic artist José Pina to paint a canvas representing "a banquet given by Nezahualcoyotl for the kings of Azcatpotzalco and Culiacan on the occasion of the inauguration of his palace in Texcoco."[71] The salon that Sánchez Solís organized with renowned artists, writers, and musicians "will be inaugurated," said the *Trait d'Union* with musical compositions based on the songs of Nezahualcoyotl.[72] And *El Siglo XIX* published the text of a speech given in honor of Nezahualcoyotl at the salon.[73] There was no other pre-Hispanic figure that could provide such overwhelming testimony to the level of civilization reached by the Aztecs. Such a cultural construction literally gave a privileged status to the sites of nineteenth-century cultural production in both Texcoco and Toluca. This web of elite culture, both past and present, configured the state of México as a kind of classical archive of indigenous culture, very different from outlying states such as Guerrero, Oaxaca, or especially Sonora, with its *indios bárbaros*, who in nineteenth-century Mexico were most associated with the "Indian," not with indigenous culture.[74] Even in his own day, Ignacio Altamirano, born to poor Indian parents in the state of Guerrero, associated himself specifically with the state of México and with the Instituto Literario.[75] The institute was then a place of transformation and assimilation of Indians like Altamirano and Sánchez Solís, where, Altamirano said, language could transform the "rustic and semisavage timidity" of an Indian.[76]

THE CLASSICAL ASSIMILATION OF THE PRE-HISPANIC INDIAN ELITE

When speaking of the pre-Hispanic Indian, of ancient indigenous culture, the nineteenth-century Mexican culturati rarely passed up the opportunity to compare them to the cultures of the Old World and especially to classical antiquity. The point of comparison was always there, whether Indian ceramics were being likened to Greek amphorae or deities were being re-created as the New World Zeus or Apollo. Ironically, the model for comparison was itself a culture, an art, that already inscribed values and offered a visual language that could only speak in terms of the conquest of the pre-Hispanic culture. Vilar creates Moctezuma and Marina as Greco-Roman figural armatures dressed up in Indianlike garb; Tlahuicole twists in space like a Hellenistic sculpture. It was a matter not so much of representing the Indian as some twentieth-century scholars have proposed, but of representing civilization and ancient culture to combat the image of ancient barbarism and contemporary lawlessness.

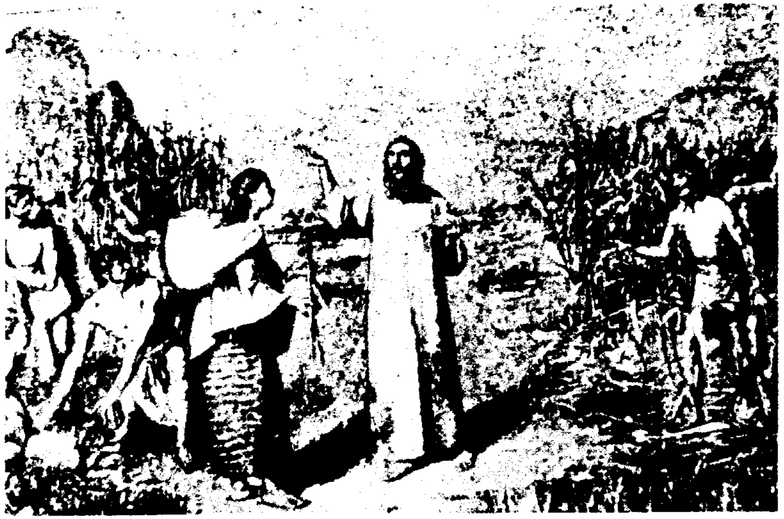
Individual figures like Cuauhtémoc and Nezahualcoyotl could easily be likened to classical heroes; the literature on these two attests to that. But painting the pre-Hispanic past posed a different problem: how to celebrate and elevate pre-Hispanic Indians as authentic in visual terms and at the same time construct them as representations of the vaunted language of civilization and classicism. Painting also posed an inherent problem of representation of the Indian, namely, the need to render a physical authenticity, a problem inscribed in the remark made by Altamirano's biographer in his comment that Altamirano's "face [was] far from being of the Grecian mold."[77]

Obregón's *Discovery of Pulque* stands out as an example of molding Greeks from Indians.[78] This picture performs the service of assimilation of pre-Hispanic elite culture through classical construct. It has the feel of a stage set with a dramatic throne scene, with actors dressed up as Indians, assembled from the signs of Indian-ness: range of skin color, bare feet, costumes that resemble or echo togas or peplums more than pre-Hispanic *quechquemitls* or *huipiles*. The key players of Xochitl and Tecpancaltzin are significantly Europeanized and stand out from their more Indian-looking counterparts. This device makes elite Indian culture more like European/classical culture. And it is very clear that critics were drawn to the painting not because of its simulation of some "real" or "true" Indian-ness but because it conveyed and reaffirmed European standards of beauty, particularly for women.

Unlike Altamirano's biographer, the history painter could diminish the physical traces of the Indian by lightening skin color and anglicizing facial features. There is no recognition of Xochitl as Indian; instead, she is somewhere between the Virgin and Venus: enchanting, modest, timid, irresistible, elegant, and slender.[79] And, as already mentioned, Altamirano himself specifically addressed the issue of Xochitl's race as signified by her skin color. Indeed, Xochitl is more classicized than Tecpancaltzin, which suggests gender issues at play. While these will be taken up at length in the next chapter, it is worth noting here that Xochitl had been transformed into a domestic model for contemporary readers. Obregón's painting was reproduced as a lithograph to illustrate the cover of an 1872 edition of *El Hogar (The Hearth)*, a women's magazine whose content focused on *"conocimientos útiles"* (practical knowledge). The journal was published by none other than the Instituto Científico y Literario del Estado de México.[80]

The transformation of pre-Hispanic culture through European pictorial constructs is also well exhibited in Antonio Ruiz's image entitled *Quetzalcoatl Discovers Corn* (fig. 18). This was one of the themes of the Academy's painting class competition in 1880; the oil sketches and cartoons were exhibited in the 1881 Academy show.[81] The exhibition catalog states that the students based their paintings on the nineteenth-century chronicle by Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Historia de las naciones civilizadas*.[82] Narrated in this version is the story of Quetzalcoatl, the legendary Toltec philosopher-priest who set out to discover sustenance for mankind; he found corn, the ancient staple of Mexico.

To date, only Ruiz's sketch is extant, but only in the form of a small black-and-white lithograph from the 1881 catalog.[83] While this small-scale image lacks the depth and detail of the 53 × 83-cm (20 7/8 × 32



18 Antonio Ruiz, *Quetzalcoatl Discovers Corn,* exhibited 1881, lithograph based on 32 5/8 in. × 20 7/8 in. (83 cm × 53 cm) oil sketch. Reproduced in Vigésima Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes (Twentieth National Exposition of Fine Art), *Catálogo ilustrado,* 1881, p. 1. Photo by the author.

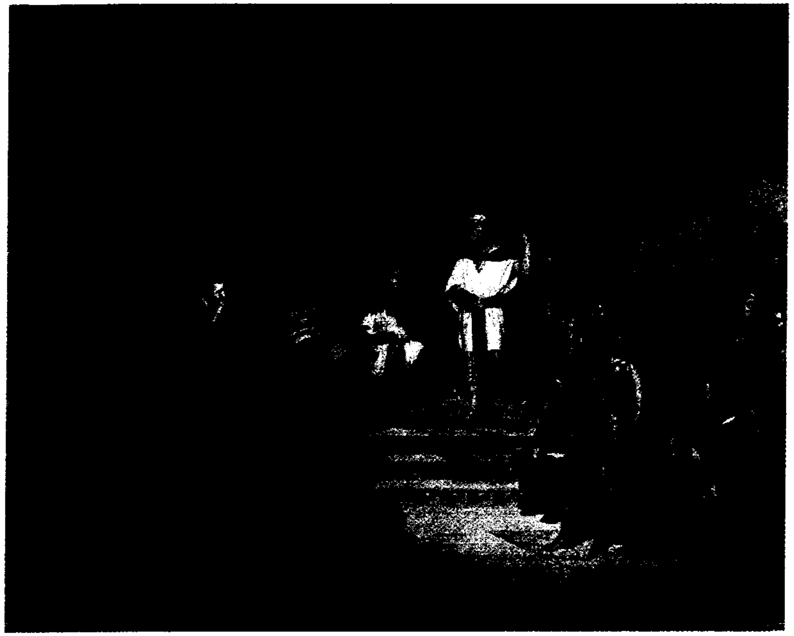
11/16-inch) original, it must certainly retain the major features. In the lithograph Quetzalcoatl stands in the center of the picture. In his left arm, bent at the elbow and held close to his body, he holds an ear of corn. His right arm is bent and raised, with palm held skyward. He looks upward, as if toward heaven. Quetzalcoatl stands in a clearing, apparently surrounded by a field of corn. Four Indians, three men and a woman, surround him, and are in various poses of gathering ears of corn.

This painting is striking for its very obvious distinction between Quetzalcoatl and the four Indians around him and for its emphasis on divine creation. Quetzalcoatl is bearded, long-haired, and wears a long, light-colored gown. The Indians are clearly configured as commoners in meager indigenous dress. The effect is of a white European man among dark-skinned Indian people, a European figure that stands above them, not with them. Ruiz has specifically configured Quetzalcoatl as a Christ figure, his followers as Indians. To be sure, Quetzalcoatl was already intertwined with the tale of a mythical bearded white man, a Toltec priest, who is forced to abandoned his people, prophesying his own miraculous return as savior by boat. The tale of Quetzalcoatl is the self-fulfilling prophecy written into Europe's version of the pre-Hispanic past, which predicted and then established the rightness of the Spanish conquest.[84]

Brasseur de Bourbourg's version of the story of Quetzalcoatl establishes him as a singular creator figure, the divine discoverer of the bounty of corn. The painting confirms a hierarchical relationship between this Christ figure and the receivers of bounty and blessing. And with it Quetzalcoatl, originally a pre-Hispanic Indian, is already converted to Christianity through the pictorial construct of the European picture of Christ. The painting offers, at the very least, a picture of the assimilation of the Indians and the divine origins of corn. It shares with Obregón's *Discovery of Pulque* the noble appropriation of what was once accessible to all. Like pulque, corn is to be harvested by the Indian commoners and redistributed to them.by that nobility, a nobility whose Indian-ness is visually effaced. While the figure of Christ-Quetzalcoatl is not a classical inscription of the pre-Hispanic past, it exemplifies a similar process of assimilation of the pre-Hispanic Indian into a cultural construct familiar to those of European cultural formation.

Rodrigo Gutiérrez's *Deliberation of the Senate of Tlaxcala* (fig. 19) effects a form of assimilation more through allusion to a classical institution than through the Europeanizing of Indian garments or faces. The painting stages a classicized drama of pre-Hispanic Indian politics. One of the works commissioned by Sánchez Solís and exhibited in his salon in 1875, Gutiérrez's painting re-creates a tense moment during the Spanish conquest. Unlike other episodes from the narrative of the conquest, this scene is peopled entirely by Indians; no European figure is present. It is a representation of the debates by leaders of Tlaxcala, an area to the east of the capital of the Aztec empire (and present-day Mexico City) that was never conquered by or integrated into the web of the Aztec empire. It had come to be seen in the nineteenth century as a zone of resistance. Yet the device of the Roman senate keeps the Indians orderly and lawful within that zone.

Four Tlaxcalan leaders are placed on a dais, surrounded by an audience. The issue at hand is Tlaxcala's relationship with the Spaniards: to ally with them against their Aztec enemies or to ally with the Aztecs against the Spanish invaders. This debate was recorded and represented in numerous accounts of the conquest. All emphasize the heated debate by these senators from the Tlaxcalan republic. The very terminology of the narratives configures a picture of a nativized Roman senate.[85] Tlaxcala



19 Rodrigo Gutiérrez, *Deliberation of the Senate of Tlaxcala*, ca. 1875, oil on canvas, 74 in. × 94 7/8 in. (188 cm × 241 cm). Museo Nacional de Arte. Photo by Agustín Estrada.

is seen as a democratic republic, politically organized as a senate, in contrast to the imperial Aztec polity, much less to that of Spain. And there is no little irony in the fact that the Mexican public was debating the establishment of a senate in the mid-1870s.[86]

Although Gutiérrez sharpened the tangible signs of Indian-ness: dark skin color, clothing of hides, feathers, and cloth, as well as short, stocky bodies, the scene is still an academic tableaux of actors dressed up to present a compellingly familiar classical scene. What stands out most in Gutiérrez's painting are the obvious classical references: the very title of "senate" given to represent a pre-Hispanic political configuration, as well as the dais on which the four chairs are placed. In addition, the Tlaxcalans are seated, as if they are indeed participating in a senatorial debate, and Xicotencatl's gestures contrive a pose of oration.

The effect of the history paintings of the pre-Hispanic Indian was the transformation of the alien into the familiar, of the Indian into images

measurable against European classical models. With the classicizing of visual and literary representations, ancient Mexican history could enter "universal" history. This classicizing discourse is well exemplified by contemporary nineteenth-century texts about another Tlaxcalan warrior, Tlahuicole. In 1873 Eduardo Gallo initiated the publication of his multivolume work, *Hombres ilustres mexicanos*. In the second volume, which deals with Xicotencatl and the episode of the deliberation of the senate of Tlaxcala, Tlahuicole is described as a faithful and patriotic servant of his homeland. His deeds, however, had not been "justly appreciated because he was not born in Greece or Rome."[87]

REAL INDIANS AND REALISM

Paintings such as Obregón's, Gutiérrez's, and Ruiz's were transformative. They remade Indians into Europeans and reaffirmed the genealogical attachment of Mexico's contemporary indigenist intelligentsia to the pre-Hispanic elite. When Sánchez Solís commissioned his paintings and built his own museum, both displayed in an "Aztec-style" salon, he was concretely inserting himself into this tradition of cultural nobility. In the same manner, he, Altamirano, Ramírez, and others had themselves been transformed, in a manner of speaking, through a classical education, learning Latin and law. They, like the interiors of Obregón's and Gutiérrez's paintings, were decorated by the past. The salons, especially the literary salons, or *veladas*, and the societies that burgeoned after 1867, were institutions and sites of such intellectual and cultural re-creation.[88] Even the salons themselves were held in spaces that reconstituted the values of the cultural elite in the seemingly interchangeable neoclassical or neo-Aztec style. Altamirano would wax effusively about the re-creation of Pompeiian decoration in the townhouse in which one of the literary salons was held in 1868.[89] And one suspects that Sánchez Solís's own salon looked much like the interior of the Tlaxcalan senate chamber and Tecpancaltzin's throne room.

The idea of the transformation of the pre-Hispanic Indian into some other figure presupposes knowledge of some authentic and originary pre-Hispanic Indian. The ancient Indian seems to be definable only in terms of the real Indian of contemporary nineteenth-century Mexico. This contemporary figure comes into view when, for example, Altamirano can look at pictures of Indians and see someone other than himself or when critics cannot help but chastise academic painters for inaccuracies of detail in their representations of Indians. It also comes into view when the numerous essays about the degenerate state of the contemporary Indian are contrasted with the high culture of ancient Indian civilization, as we have seen, for example, in Julio Zárate's lament in *El Siglo XIX*. So, as much as one could speak of the representation of the pre-Hispanic past in the history paintings of the post-Maximilian epoch, one could just as easily speak of the representation of the contemporary Indian in the same paintings.

The issue of the contemporary Indian versus the pre-Hispanic Indian seems to have been most intensely represented in a pair of paintings by academic artist Felix Parra. In the 1875 and 1877 exhibitions, he showed *Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas* and *The Massacre of Cholula*, respectively (figs. 20 and 21). Both are scenes from the conquest of Mexico, based on the chronicles of Las Casas himself. And in both cases, Indians and Spaniards are present, thus permitting the inevitable contrast between what each might represent. In addition, both images raise the issue of the meaning of the conquest of Mexico itself.

In *Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas*, Parra placed Las Casas as the central, vertical axis of the painting. His arms are crossed over his chest, and in his right hand is a crucifix. Las Casas stands in front of the entrance to a pre-Hispanic stone temple. To his right is a stone statue of a kneeling Aztec-inspired deity on a pyramidal base.[90] To his left are the remnants of a cylindrical stone column, resonant of actual cylindrical columns in certain Mexican and Mayan sites. At his feet lies the sprawled body of a dead Indian, and clinging to his legs is a bereft Indian woman. Parra's own catalog description contributes to the reputation of the benevolent Las Casas, the "defender of the Indians," as he had come to be known:

> This venerable priest, who always deplored the cruel system employed by the Spanish *conquistadores* to dominate the ancient inhabitants of Mexico, is found in the middle of a destroyed building where the father of a family has been sacrificed; [the family] had come peacefully to place flowers on the tomb of its ancestors. The abandoned wife takes refuge in the protection of the generous defender, who, with diligent care, always tries to mitigate the sufferings of the conquered.[91]

Parra's painting and catalog description construct first and foremost an image of Las Casas, and the church that he represented, in contradistinction to the brutal and cruel conquistadors who murdered the Indian man.

Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas provided a public opportunity to redeem the conquest itself, for as critic Felipe López López argued in his review of the painting, the conquest, while brutal, did have its benefits: "Among the bloody and desolate traces that the conquest left in our country, there emerged also some benefits that the administration of a people more civilized ought to inlay in a new nation. . . . One of the benefits, perhaps the only one of excellence, was the seed of Christian charity."[92] The interpretation of the Spanish conquest was a topical issue for historians in the nineteenth century. The publication of primary sources, the sixteenth-century chronicles of Indian culture and history, by Europeans, including Las Casas, attests to the interest in this subject. While few would argue that the physical violence of the conquest was commendable, few would argue against the conquest's good side: the conversion of heathens to Christianity, their Europeanizing. Certainly this cultural-religious assimilation is refracted to various degrees in Obregón's *Discovery of Pulque*, Gutiérrez's *Deliberation of the Senate of Tlaxcala*, or Ruiz's *Quetzalcoatl Discovers Corn;* it works primarily, if not completely, at the level of elite culture, not that of the common Indian. That is what makes the issue of assimilation differently refracted in Parra's paintings. His paintings approach not only the common pre-Hispanic Indian but the contemporary common Indian as well, for whom assimilation was still an issue.

One of the clues that the contemporary Indian is present, so to speak, in Parra's paintings is the way in which critics approached the issue of realism. Realism was an increasingly important issue for critics and artists alike in nineteenth-century Mexico. As Ida Rodríguez Prampolini reasoned in her seminal article "La figura del indio en siglo XIX," "The idealism of the painters begins to appear doubtful, and a more convincing, more 'realist' art begins to be requested by the critics as well as the public."[93] Thus, Parra's Indians more "accurately" resemble indigenous types. Indigenous types in either nineteenth- or twentieth-century Mexico meant real, contemporary Indians, more specifically, the Indians of the underclass, not the elite of Sánchez Solís or Altamirano.

The painting operates on the basis of what Barthes called the reality effect.[94] It does not share the pastel interiors of Tecpancaltzin's throne room or the Tlaxcalan senate chamber, about which nineteenth-century scholars could only surmise; instead, it relies on very tangible and clearly presented ruins. As Eloísa Uribe has noted, the small statue to Las Casas's left was well known as a part of the collection of the National Museum and was used by several artists to establish the archaeological fiction of the real.[95] Critics did not tamper with Parra's representation of the ruins, only with the details of physiognomy and clothing of Las Casas and the two Indians. For example, Felipe López López complained that Las Casas looked too old but at the same time unweathered, his face too clean, too shiny.[96] But most telling were the comments about the two Indians. Both López López and Felipe Gutiérrez registered that the costume and hair of the woman were too modern, the former stating that "the cloth and accessories were a faithful copy of the natural; [they showed] the impropriety of exhibiting those of the present epoch."[97] Gutiérrez noted comments he had heard about the painting "that the Indian showed a modern hairdo through the headdress, and that she was too clean."[98] The critics were very attentive to details that dislocated Parra's Indians from their pre-Hispanic context.

It is not difficult to imagine a certain displacement of Parra's ancient Indians into the nineteenth-century present. The Indians were viewed as the pathetic victims of their own barbaric culture and the barbaric practices of the Spanish conquistadors. Las Casas's redemptive reputation lay precisely in his ability to give the lowly Indians the gift of civilization, to bring them into the Judeo-Christian fold, to make up for the brutality of the raid that had just murdered the male Indian at Las Casas's feet. The conversion to Christianity was to the sixteenth-century Indian what education—in Spanish, national history, and other discourses—was to the nineteenth-century Indian: a way of converting and civilizing them. Christianized Indians were a benefit to the welfare of the new colony, just as educated Indians were to the progress of the modern Mexican nation. In other words, the process of assimilation and of civilization had been going on since the Spanish conquest.[99]

Both the colonial government and its supporting military and ecclesiastical institutions effected policies and practices that incorporated the subaltern population for the economic and political success of the colony. The range of practices of assimilation, effected by ecclesiastical, military, and civil agencies, often worked in tandem with indigenism. The object of control and assimilation, the Indian, received attention. And in the nineteenth century, Mexican intellectuals continued to argue for universal education in order to better these people, who were "without reason." Newspaper articles continued to bemoan the "miserable" state of the Indians, arguing that they needed to be made into productive citizens, into producers and consumers of goods.[100]

Indeed, contemporary Indians were being archived more than ever before. Scholars increasingly contributed to projects that documented the distribution of Indian languages, as well as what were referred to as the customs of the various Indian groups in nineteenth-century Mexico. They often included detailed color lithographs of Indian "types." For example, Antonio García Cubas of the Sociedad de Geografía y Estadística compiled several illustrated works that included the representation of contemporary Indians, including Spanish and English editions of *La República de México* of 1875–76.[101] Such texts were part of the push for documenting the real Indians, to which Parra's Indians were undoubtedly being compared.

But costume was only one element of the real that caught the critics attention. Color was another, specifically, skin color. Color obviously was a key element in painting and could provide a detail of realism that was absent from sculpture in bronze or marble or plaster. It was unavoidable as a sign of race. Color was addressed by the critics of Parra's painting, although couched in the language of correct practice. An anonymous critic said that Parra's painting was "a picture worthy of all praise, for its drawing and the boldness of its color."[102] It is hard to imagine that the critic was referring to anything but the color of the Indians' skin; there is no other image of an Indian as dark and as present as Parra's. His Indians stand out against the cool tan of the temple ruins, against the white robe of Las Casas, against the loin cloth of the dead male Indian, and against the white, European face of Las Casas. The contrast between races is dramatic. And it is this element, color, that helps the displacement of Parra's Indians into the present. It is an element that since conquest had been a marker, physically, symbolically, or metaphorically, that identified and placed people in Mexican society. Its visual representation is most evident in, for example, images of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the dark-skinned virgin (fig. 35), or in the colonial caste sheets that displayed the effects of racial mixing beginning with the standardized Indian woman and the

European male (fig. 28), and even in nineteenth-century provincial painting, which clearly displays a correlation between social caste and heritage marked by skin color.

López López's evaluation of the dead male Indian conjures up more than the pre-Hispanic. He argued that the anatomy needed more work, especially the lower extremities. True enough, the body was conveniently laid out as a crucified figure, causing an extreme foreshortening. And the critic was examining the student painter's ability to construct the male nude. He also admonished that "he is graceless, this person lying in compete nudity, without the accessories characteristic of his race."[103] On the one hand, this was a reaffirmation of the ideal standards of beauty to which artists should aspire. On the other, it offered a picture of an unidealized and almost generic nude. It seems especially critical that López López remarked about the lack of "accessories of his race." He was evincing the realist demand for truth and accuracy. But what would have been the affect of the presence of such accessories? To make the Indian figure fit securely into a pre-Hispanic picture. Instead, the figure looks too much like a really dead, real Indian. The artist's inability or refusal to provide a coherent set of details — hairdo or accessories — that allowed a secure identification of the Indians as pre-Hispanic forced the critics to reveal a certain insecurity about just who the Indians really were. One suspects that the dead Indians, particularly the male, were images too close to experience.

The same newspapers that sent journalists to cover the exhibitions at the Academy of San Carlos also published piece after piece about the ongoing problem of the indios bárbaros. The state readily and brutally put down their rebellions. In his 1878 state of the union address, for example, President Porfirio Díaz advocated the establishment of military colonies as the only way to keep the Yaqui of Sonora under control. What a vastly different view of pre-Hispanic Indians at the same time: in 1877 the government proposed the erection of a new statue of Cuauhtémoc for the Paseo de la Reforma; José María Vigil, director of the National Library, published a series of essays arguing for the teaching of national history, including pre-Hispanic history, and edited Las Casas's *Historia de las indias y de tierra firme*. These passive and gentlemanly pursuits were apparently impervious to the reality of the violent world of the indios bárbaros and to the scorn and contempt much of modern Mexican society held for contemporary Indians in general. Contemporary Indians

were always in need of control. Pre-Hispanic Indians, the elite and cultured pre-Hispanic Indians, were in control themselves, at least in paintings.

THE INDIAN IN GENRE PAINTING, THE INDIAN IN HISTORY PAINTING

Criticism of other paintings of the Indian, both pre-Hispanic and contemporary, suggests that the place, the control, of the Indian was an issue even in representation. Just two years after he submitted *Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas*, Felix Parra submitted his *Massacre of Cholula* to the 1877 exhibition. For the most part, the reviewers were favorably impressed with the work, as they had been with the first. As good liberals, they applauded the rather overt denouncement of the brutality of the Spanish conquest, an inescapable message in the painting. It was, after all, a scene of incontestable violence.

Parra's painting presents a well-known episode from the conquest period. His narrative was derived, as the catalog description clarifies, from Las Casas's *Historia general de las indias o bien sea historia apologética*. In short, the story tells of Moctezuma sending messengers to the Pueblan site of Cholula to warn the people that Spanish soldiers were on their way. Moctezuma and the Cholultecans plotted to welcome the Spaniards and then ambush them. The Spaniards learned of this treachery, however, and promptly proceeded to attack the city. They murdered thousands. They also burned temples and idols and pilfered any precious items, whether of stone, metal, or cloth. Las Casas vividly narrated this attack, focusing on the greed and viciousness of the murders. He claimed, exaggeratedly, that the Spaniards killed more than thirty thousand Cholultecans.[104] Parra himself increased the number of dead, stating in the catalog description that his work was an "original painting representing one of the bloody attempts which the Spaniards committed during the conquest because they were not given all the treasures that they asked for, and which, according to Las Casas, occasioned the loss of more than four million people."[105]

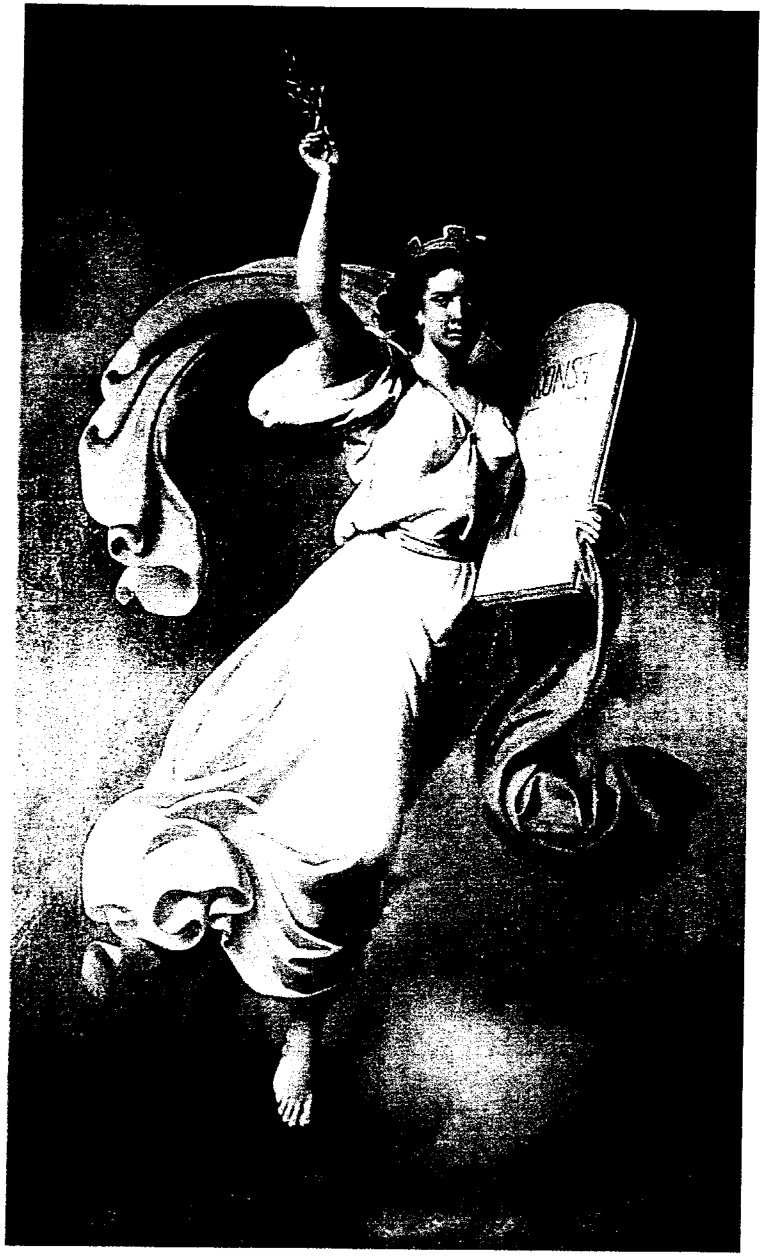
Parra's image shows us the aftermath of the massacre. Architectural ruins structure the space of the painting. It is a cramped space with rather dramatic shifts in perspective between foreground and background. In the central courtyard Cortés stands above a dead male Indian. He is positioned almost exactly like the figure in Parra's *Las Casas;* the martyred status of both figures is clear. The body, foreshortened and positioned slightly perpendicularly to Cortés, covers the central courtyard area. To this group's right and farther back lie two more Indians, sprawled in a heap on the ground; a woman stretches out her left arm to protect the young child lying on the ground next to her. To the left of the central group sit two Indian women, one clutching a baby to her chest, the other on her knees, leaning on a wooden staff for support. Bolts of cloth, ceramic pots, and an overturned stone idol lie to their left. Behind this group stands a soldier holding up a necklace to the light. In the background, between the recesses of two buildings, walk two more soldiers, carrying spears.

It is a condensed, compellingly realistic depiction of slaughter. The objects and people are bathed in a clear, almost silver light, with forms depicted in virtual photographic clarity. But it is a tidy, sanitized brutality, reducing the carnage of the supposed four million to a few figures crammed into an architectural setting almost too small for them to inhabit. Like the image of *Las Casas,* Parra's *Massacre of Cholula* relies on an unforgiving confrontation with the conquest.

The critic L. Agontía considered the painting "the most important of all those that have been exhibited."[106] Even though the general subject was as welcome as that of the earlier painting, the critics found the presentation icy and dispassionate. Agontía continued:

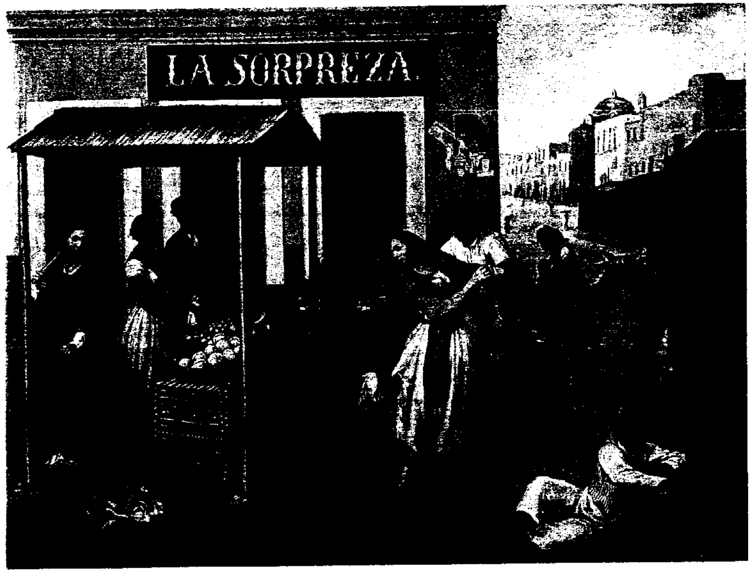
> In one and the other there is a main idea: the devastation, the extermination, the horror of the conquest. . . . [In *Las Casas*] the entire composition is a poem. . . . [The *Massacre]* excites in the soul no other sentiment but indifference . . . the complete lack of expression of the warrior who one supposes has just put the Aztec to death; neither in his facial expression nor in his posture is the ferocious passion revealed that should have animated him at the moment of committing the atrocity.[107]

Felipe Gutiérrez considered Cortés to be expressionless and "nearly inert."[108] There was, apparently, very little to emotionally inspire the viewer. The frigid picture did little to create a drama for the spectator; instead, it showed a matter-of-fact massacre, with nothing to learn from it. It is as if the critics were saying that the painting offered no redeeming qualities, nothing that could help make sense of the devastation.

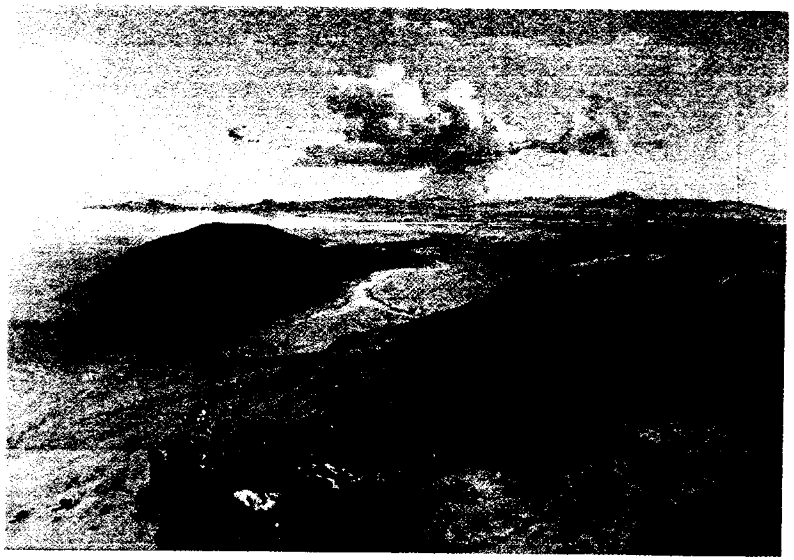


3

Petronilo Monroy, *Allegory of the Constitution of 1857,* exhibited 1869, oil on canvas, 66.9 in. × 35.4 in. (1.7 m x .9 m) approx. Palacio Nacional.


LA SORPREZA.

29
Agustín Arrieta, *Market Scene: La Sorpresa,* 1850, oil on canvas, 35 in. × 45 in. (90 m × 115 m). Museo Nacional de Historia. Reproduced by permission of CNCA. – INAH. – MEX.



22 José María Velasco, *The Valley of Mexico,* 1877, oil on canvas, 63 in. × 90 in. (160 cm × 229 cm). Museo Nacional de Arte. Reproduced by permission of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura. Photo by Agustín Estrada.

Agontía went so far as to suggest that Parra should have chosen a subject completely different from Las Casas, "as we do not want our artists to plagiarize."[109] This remark resonates with the predicament of Ocaranza's *Denial of Pardon to Maximilian,* a subject deemed by the critics to be of undeniable historical importance to Mexico but not one worth repeating within the didactic context of national history painting. Plagiarism, even of one's own ideas, seems thin as an excuse for admonishing Parra to choose another subject. In the same exhibition, by contrast, José María Velasco submitted a second version of *The Valley of Mexico,* just two years after his success with the 1875 version (fig. 22). Velasco's reputation was still aglow from his prize-winning submission of the subject at the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876. In the 1877 version the same valley presented what critic Francisco Diéz de Bonilla saw as a completely new subject; he claimed enthusiastically, "Truly, I know of nothing more spontaneous, more bold; and who knows, more novel, in the light of our tropical sky and in the nature of our valley."[110] True, the public was accustoming itself to seeing landscapes with the help of detailed catalog descriptions provided by the painters themselves. Perhaps subtleties of point of view and light of day provided enough differences between one *Valley of Mexico* (fig. 22) and the next, since Velasco did many more. To see the differences in these alluring, shimmering landscapes takes a better trained eye than to see the differences between Parra's two paintings. Both sets of images had a certain photographic, documentary quality. The "truthfulness" of each was reaffirmed by the very specific catalog descriptions.

But there was a very major difference between Parra's two Las Casas–based paintings, one the critics did not explicitly articulate. In *Massacre of Cholula,* unlike in *Las Casas,* Parra presented no hope for the future, no mechanism for progress in the state of the Indians. He presented only destruction, greed, and conquest. In *Las Casas,* Parra represented the idea of the conversion of the Indians to a more advanced, civilized state; the critics explicitly recognized this. But there was no redemptive message in *Massacre of Choluca,* which portrayed Indians realistically; it is a picture of utter devastation, without any socially redeeming consequence to it. Life and material culture were stripped from the Indians, exactly as it seemed to be from contemporary Indians, who were degenerates as a result of conquest, still waiting to be saved by the nineteenth-century religion of universal public education. Like the Indians in the image of *Las Casas,* the Indians in the *Massacre* seem to slip between categories of pre-Hispanic and contemporary.

One begins to suspect that acceptable images of Indians had to inscribe or represent the mechanism of salvation and, ultimately, social control of the Indians. Comments on genre paintings of Indians in the exhibitions of 1875 and 1877 suggest this. This category of painting became increasingly popular among critics, artists, and patrons in the second half of the nineteenth century. Although artists represented various subjects—we noted some of the precious titles of Ocaranza's genre paintings earlier—a portion of them seem to be representations of contemporary Indians. Librado Suárez exhibited a genre painting in the 1875 exhibition (as yet unlocated), to which López López addressed himself. The criticism reaffirmed the patronizing attitude toward contemporary Indians and implied that they could be viewed sympathetically only when structures of social control contained them. Suárez's little genre painting was quaint, picturesque, and even pious: "The composition of Járez [*sic*] is humble but sympathetic as a national subject, and it promotes interest in costume and customs: he copies with truth the types, combining with grace the garments and tones. This little picture of indigenous women at the edge of the spring and Tepeyac in the background, if it is not of luxury, it is of tenderness."[111] The terms López López used are striking: humble, sympathetic, little, grace, tenderness. Suárez's little gem of Indian types was a far cry from Parra's depiction of common Indians. This painting redeemed the Indians not only by diminishing their actual visual scale, thus reducing the viewer's confrontation with them, but also by representing them at the shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Situating them on the edge of the legendary miraculous spring conflates two qualities that the elite wanted contemporary Indians to have: cleanliness and Christianity.

Particularly popular were the genre paintings of Indians done by the Cuban artist José Carbó, who exhibited his works in the shows at the Academy of San Carlos. *A Little Indian Woman Taking Holy Water in Santiago Tlaltelolco* proved to be especially engaging. Agontía said of this painting: "In effect, there is a certain simple poetry that does not cease to move one, such as a scene of a mother and child belonging to our primitive race, who in their actual [state of] degeneration offer few subjects for poetry and the ideal."[112] Realism was not an issue here but rather idealism and the ability to move the viewer. What, after all, could be compelling about the actual state of the "primitive race" to which Agontía directly referred? It is remarkable that, for Agontía, the poetic also characterized Parra's *Las Casas,* whereas the *Massacre* excited nothing but indifference. Both Carbó's painting and the image of Las Casas share the controlling structure of religion. Felipe Gutiérrez made note of the pious act in which the Indian woman is engaged: "The little Indian woman who puts holy water on the forehead of her child is a beautiful and original idea."[113] Carbó's and Suárez's Indians offered sentiment and emotion; they offered images of tamed, converted, content Indians.

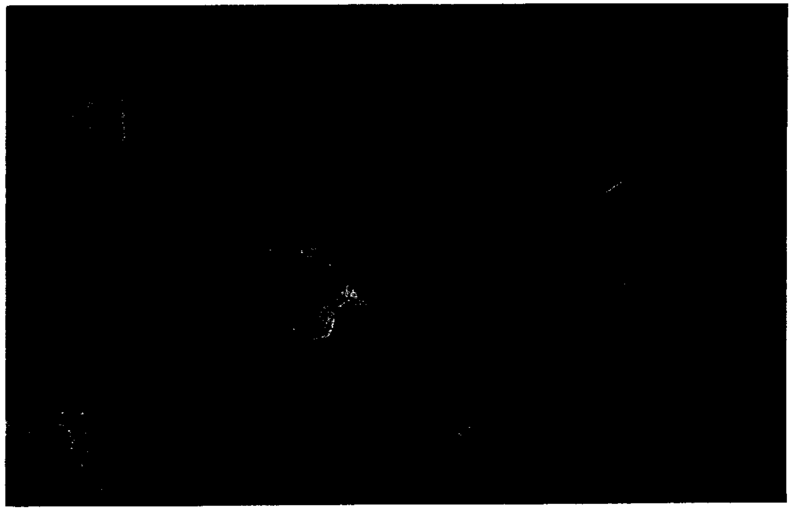
These genre paintings offered an idealized vision of contemporary Indians, a picture of what the lot of degenerate Indians should be in modern Mexico. The realism that critics and artists seemed to be going after in history painting was not especially desirable in this small-scale and quite consumable category of painting. As the Cuban critic José Martí put it: "Reality is almost always monotonous."[114] And it is worth noting that Parra's *Massacre of Cholula* was, in terms of its size, categorizable as a genre painting. Its apparent pendant, *Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas,* dwarfs the *Massacre.* Felipe Gutiérrez actually referred to it with the diminutive, calling it *"un cuadrito original."*[115] But it evidently portrayed a monotony of brutality unexpected in this category of painting.

We know that Alejandro Casarín, for example, successfully represented pre-Hispanic Indians in his unlocated genre paintings, *The Sacrificial Stone* (ca. 1873) and *The Visit of Cortés to the Temple of Huitzilopochtli*, exhibited in 1873. Casarín's work was compared to that of the French genre painters Girardon, Decamps, and Meissonier. L.G.R. claimed that Casarín's works were "proving that in Mexico one can follow the school of Meissonier with benefit."[116] Artists were expected to be dramatic and take liberties with their constructions. *La Iberia* reported on Casarín's two pre-Hispanic paintings, noting that they had been sold for two or three thousand pesos to a buyer who was going to take them back to Europe; the writer lamented that there was not more time for the Mexican audience to see them.[117]

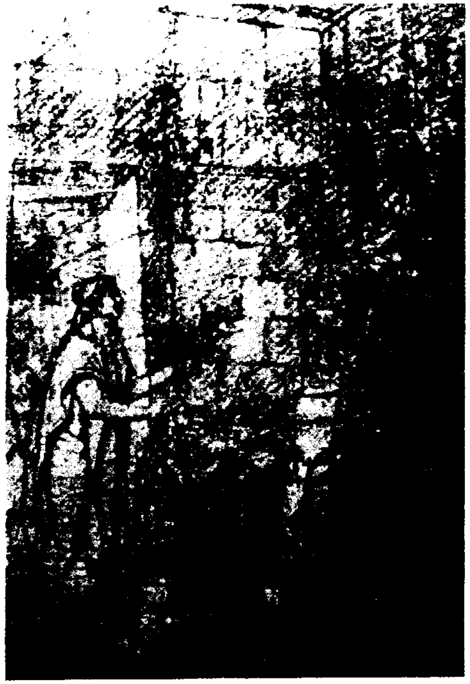
The Sacrificial Stone was described as a representation of "the terrible ceremony of pulling out the hearts of victims."[118] This was a particularly ironic subject matter for a Mexican artist in an epoch in which the Aztecs were in constant need of defense against such associations. But the jewel-like presentation and the diminutive scale allowed the bloody Aztec scene to be acceptable and popular. It was accepted at the level of the tantalizing, dramatic, and gory historical genre scenes of Mexican or European history, exemplified by Santiago Rebull's *Death of Marat*, which focuses on the very theatrical stabbing of Jean Paul Marat by Charlotte Corday, and Petronilo Monroy's *Sacrifice of a Colhua Princess*, also a dark drama on a small scale (fig. 23).[119] The realism increasingly demanded of history paintings was not demanded of these portable little dramas. It was precisely in the context of Rebull's *Death of Marat* that José Martí commented on the monotony of realism; he added that "fantasy's fine defect is that a suspicious criticism will have minimal scruples in pardoning."[120] No need to second-guess such things as the accuracy of hairdo or accessories of one's race, as López López and Gutiérrez did in Parra's paintings.

Parra's paintings of *Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas* and the *Massacre of Cholula* have no parallel in subsequent history paintings of the pre-Hispanic Indian. No academic history painter exhibited scenes as chillingly violent as these. Violence against Indians was virtually absent from Mexican history painting for the remainder of the nineteenth century. What the Academy encouraged was a group of stock scenes of pre-

23 Petronilo Monroy, *Sacrifice of a Colhua Princess*, n.d., oil on canvas, 14 1/2 in. × 22 1/2 in. (37 cm × 57 cm). Museo Nacional de Arte. Photo by Agustín Estrada.



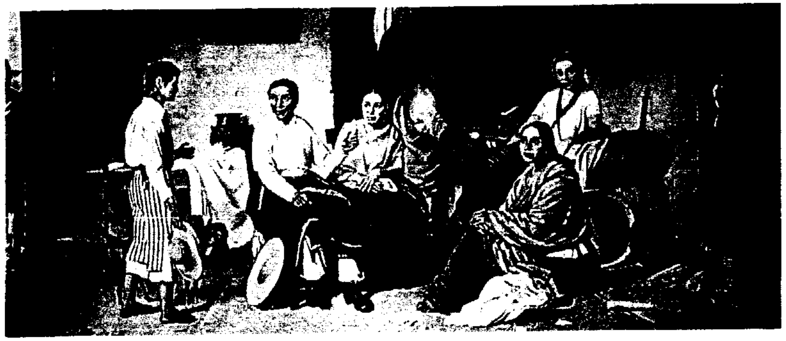
24 Leandro Izaguirre, *The Torture of Cuauhtémoc*, 1892, oil on canvas, 116 in. × 179 1/2 in. (295 cm × 456 cm). Museo Nacional de Arte. Photo by Agustín Estrada.



25 Librado Suárez, *Offering to the Gods*, exhibited 1881, lithograph based on 22 in. × 32 5/8 in. (56 cm × 83 cm) oil sketch. Reproduced in Vigésima Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes (Twentieth National Exposition of Fine Art), *Catálogo ilustrado*, 1881, p. 20. Photo by the author.

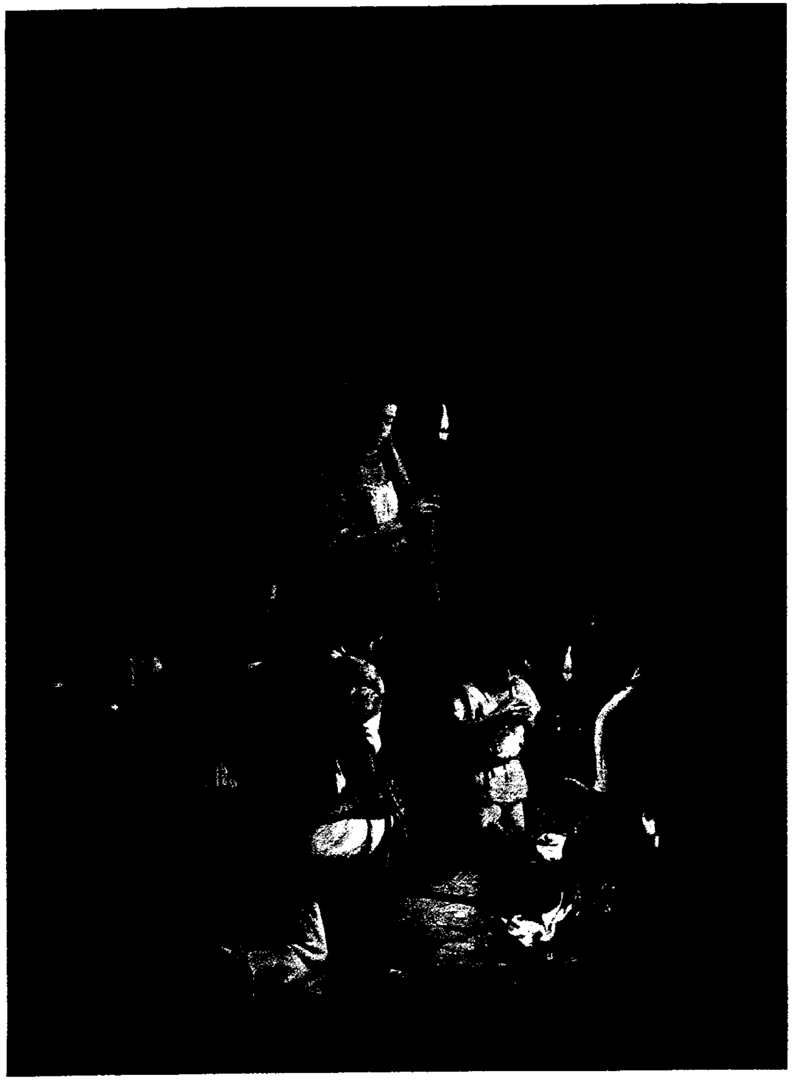
Hispanic and conquest period narratives: in the 1881 exhibition, Quetzalcoatl's discovery of corn and the capture of Cortés in Xochimilco; in the 1886 exhibition, Cortés and Moctezuma at the market in Tlatelolco and the visit of Cortés to the palace of Moctezuma; in the 1891 exhibition, the foundation of Mexico; and in 1898, the year of the final exhibition of the century, Moctezuma in Chapultepec, Cuauhtémoc being brought to Cortés, and the torture of Cuauhtémoc.

Pre-Hispanic history had been distilled into a small number of events requiring the presence of, and often confrontation between, the essential figures of the Aztecs and the Spaniards. Equal adversaries were plentiful; massacres were scarce.[121] These paintings were comments not only on the course of the conquest but on the nobility of Aztec culture. In addition, the images were often based on narratives from well-known chroniclers such as Diego Durán, the Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg, Francisco Xavier Clavigero, and William H. Prescott. Their distinguished narratives of invention shored up the worthiness of representing such subjects. In fact, judging by the subjects given to painting students from 1880 to 1898, pre-Hispanic Indian history had become, in a sense, institutionalized, standardized. Students were as likely to be assigned pre-Hispanic Mexican themes as biblical and European historical ones to paint. In 1881, for example, students exhibited their competition sketches for *Quetzalcoatl Discovers Corn* and *The Capture of Cortés in Xochimilco* along with *The Return of the Prodigal Son* and *Roman Gladiators Gathered in a Tavern on the Eve of Combat.*



26 Felipe S. Gutiérrez, *A Young Indian Bids Good-bye to His Parents to Make a Long Journey*, 1881, oil on canvas, 32 1/2 in. × 75 5/8 in. (82 cm × 192 cm). Private collection. Photo by Agustín Estrada.

Violence against pre-Hispanic Indians was reduced to the glorification of Cuauhtémoc, embodying both nobility and resistance to the invader. In 1892 Leandro Izaguirre exhibited an enormous canvas entitled *The Torture of Cuauhtémoc* (fig. 24), a life-sized scene of the Aztec martyr having his feet oiled and burned by the Spaniards, who wished to extract from him the whereabouts of gold. A bronze bas-relief of this same scene adorns one side of the base of the monumental bronze sculpture of Cuauhtémoc, proposed in 1877 and finally erected in 1887. The scene of torture dredges up not only the horrific crimes of the Inquisition but also scenes of well-known representations of martyrs such as Saint Lawrence, who was himself grilled.[122] He shares nothing with Parra's brutalized Indians except his dark skin. The common Indian, by contrast, was shifted to genre scenes that could reinforce notions of family that were bound by



27 José Jara, *The Wake*, 1889, oil on canvas, 70 in. × 52 3/4 in. (178 cm × 134 cm). Museo Nacional de Arte. Photo by Agustín Estrada.

humility, tradition, and religion. Scenes such as Parra's could conjure up images of brutally treated, nameless, and faceless contemporary Indians, Indians in an abject state of culturelessness too close to the real thing.

Indeed, history painters began to take on the practice of genre painting. Unlike Ocaranza, who was chastised for his move from genre to history painting, later history painters were successful with their move to genre painting. No doubt a thorough study of these genre paintings, increasingly painted in a larger format, would show that the pre-Hispanic Indian commoner and the contemporary Indian were in some ways almost indistinguishable. They appear in paintings such as *Offering to the Gods* by Librado Suárez of 1881 (fig. 25), *A Young Indian Bids Good-bye to His Parents to Make a Long Journey* by Felipe Gutiérrez of 1881 (fig. 26), and José Jara's *The Wake* of 1889 (fig. 27).[123] These images pictorially bracket the social spaces (and practices) of good, nonthreatening Indians: home and church. Although I do not want to minimize the differences in specific composition, style, or even scale, I would like to suggest that, on balance, these types of representations seem to consistently revolve around the redemptive and socially controlling social structures of family and religion. These worked in consort with the rarely realized ideals of nineteenth-century educational reforms directed toward the indigenous population.

The Indian could thus be refracted and resurrected in multiple representations: noble ruler, martyr, warrior, exotic princess, pathetic victim, or picturesque national detail. What all of these images share is the inscription of a process of assimilation into modern Mexican culture. Not one can be argued to be a finished, true, or real picture of an Indian; rather, they are pictures of what Indians should be. They are the simulacra of the authentic in the picture of the nation itself, which was slowly recognizing its own indigenous heritage at the same time that it was asserting its presence in, and kinship to, a universal, European order. This web of assimilation is pictured in the next chapter.

reputation was not religious. For a summary of this issue, see Piolle Altamirano, "El primer gran paisaje," pp. 163–93.

106. *"Con excepción de dos o tres obras de artistas jóvenes, todo manifiesta un atraso incontestable."* Altamirano, "El salón en 1879–1880," p. 58.

107. *"Es rarísimo encontrar en una casa opulenta de México una galería de pinturas . . . un mármol notable, siquiera un grabado de mérito."* Ibid., p. 14.

108. See Leal, "El estado y el bloque," pp. 700–21, and Perry, "El modelo liberal y la política práctica," pp. 646–99.

109. On this subject, see, for example, Knowlton, *Church Property and the Mexican Reform*, and Niblo, "Political Economy of the Early Porfiriato."

110. By the end of the 1870s, the United States became the largest foreign investor in Mexico; see Niblo, "Political Economy of the Early Porfiriato,"pp. 261–64.

111. Plans for the 1881 show are in ASC drawer 55, file 7277, and AGN MJIP box 3, 320-bis (1879).

112. Altamirano spoke directly to the issue of renewed relations between Mexico and France in a speech given on Bastille Day 1881 in the Gran Salón del Círculo Francés. "En el gran salón del Círculo Francés," Altamirano, *Discursos*, pp. 357–66.

113. *"Una verdadera cruzada contra la barbarie."* Gutiérrez, "La exposición artística de 1881," p. 82.

114. See ibid., esp. pp. 98–100, and "El centenario de la fundación," *La República*, esp. p. 133.

115. *"Suponiendo como es, una persona de educación y conocedora de los deberes de la urbanidad, permanezca sentado a la presentación de los jefes extranjeros sin dignarse dirigirles siquiera una ligera caravana, ni mucho menos ponerse en pie para recibirlos."* Gutiérrez, "La exposición artística de 1881," pp. 98–99.

116. *"Para dar más interés al asunto y a la composición artística."* Ibid., p. 99.

117. *"Y el único con quien quiso tratar de igual a igual el general francés, siendo de notar que a su vez el jefe mexicano puso, para celebrar el canje, la ineludible condición de que no se abrirían conferencias más que con el ejército francés, que se consideraba como beligerante."* "El centenario de la fundación," *La República*, p. 133.

118. See Robina, *Reconciliación de México y Francia.*

CHAPTER 3

1. *"Es urgente dotar a la capital de la República de un establecimiento exclusivamente encargado de recopilar, explicar y publicar todos los vestigios anteriores a la conquista de la América; la sabiduría nacional debe levantarse sobre una base indígena."* I. Ramírez, "Antigüedades mexicanas," p. 87.

2. The question of the conquest and indigenism has been discussed by a number of scholars. See, for example, Gruzinski, *The Conquest of Mexico;* Keen, *The Aztec Image;* Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe;* and Villoro, *Los grandes momentos de indigenismo.*

3. For an analysis of the interest in indigenous culture since the end of the eighteenth century and its connection to the issues of nationalism, see especially Bernal, *A History of Mexican Archaeology;* Phelan, "Neo-Aztecism," pp. 760–77; and Brading, *Los orígenes del nacionalismo mexicano.*

4. Much has been written about the position of different liberals on the Indian and the indigenous. I do not mean to imply that every liberal regarded such issues identically. For a discussion of Ignacio Ramírez's position in particular, see Maciel, *Ignacio Ramírez.* For an overview, see Powell, "Mexican Intellectuals and the Indian Question," pp. 191–230.

5. For a contemporary history of the Museo Nacional in the nineteenth century, see Mendoza and Sánchez, *Catalogo de las Colecciones.*

6. Many of the scholars, such as Alfredo Chavero, Manuel Orozco y Berra, José María Vigil, and Fernando Ramírez, were very much involved in the political life of the nation as well. For one analysis of the interest in Aztec culture in particular, see Keen, *The Aztec Image.*

7. For example, *El Siglo XIX* announced the publication of Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta's sixteenth-century chronicle *La historia eclesiástica indiana*, December 28, 1869, p. 3; and the publication of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas's *Historia de las indias*, June 4, 1878, p. 3. In the notice about Las Casas's work are references to other recently published sixteenth-century texts, such as Hernando Alvarado de Tezozomoc's *Crónica mexicana* and the *Códice Ramírez (Relación del origen de los indios que habitan esta Nueva España).* It should be noted that although written in the sixteenth century, both Mendieta's and Tezozomoc's works were first published in the seventeenth century.

8. *"El cuadro del señor Obregón es enteramente nacional y creemos que despertará el gusto por el género que él inicia, y que ofrece a nuestros artistas asuntos tan hermosos y tan nuevos."* L.G.R., "La escuela de bellas artes," pp. 143–44.

9. Uribe, *Problemática de la producción escultórica*, p. 69.

10. For analysis of Vilar's works, see Moreno, *El escultor Manuel Vilar*, and Uribe, *Problemática de la producción escultórica.*

11. All three remained as plaster casts in the nineteenth century. The Tlahuicole was cast in bronze in 1967.

12. Malinche is the center of remarkable controversy even today. See, for example, Paz, "The Sons of Malinche," and Cypress, *La Malinche in Mexican Literature.*

13. Manuel Vilar to José Vilar, October 13, 1849. In Moreno, *El escultor Manuel Vilar*, pp. 152–53.

14. *"Pues siendo los héroes de México espero vender algunas y será el único modo de que pueda ganar algún dinero."* Ibid., p. 153.

15. No doubt Vilar also hoped to sell a little classicism to his public as well. In earlier correspondence he lamented the fact that many Mexicans seemed only to be satisfied with polychromed wood sculpture and resistant to figures in white plaster or marble. Ibid., p. 45.

16. See Vilar's correspondence and the contemporary criticism of his works in Moreno, *El escultor Manuel Vilar*, app. 1, pp. 97–190, and app. 3, pp. 197–212.

17. Uribe, *Problemática a de la producción escultórica*, p. 69, emphasizes the importance of the nude study from life to Vilar's academic pedagogy.

18. In a letter to his brother, Vilar stated in regard to the statue of Moctezuma, *"La tendrá mucho más adelantada si no fuese por la gran dificultad que he tenido en buscar el traje, pues no existe, ni las muchísimas historias que he visto me dan una idea terminante de como era; así tendré que imaginármelo ayudándome con los pocos fragmentos de antigüedades que esisten, y una y otra insignificante descripción de los historiadores."* Moreno, *El escultor Manuel Vilar,* p. 156; see also plate 49.

19. Major works on Cordero include Charlot, "Juan Cordero," pp. 248–65; Cordero y Salinas and Charlot, *Juan Cordero, exposición-homenaje;* García Barragán, *El pintor Juan Cordero;* and Villarrutia, "Juan Cordero pintor mexicano."

20. *"El asunto que elegí para mi cuadro, tanto por el alto interés que inspira al mundo, y principalmente a americanos y europeos . . . y aunque sea demasiada audacia en un principiante, me decidí, al fin, aconsagrar el pobre tributo de mis más pobre pincel a la memoria imperecedera de ese punto histórico."* In Zarco, "D. Juan Cordero," p. 142.

21. For a summary of the criticism of Cordero's painting, see García Barragán, *El pintor Juan Cordero,* pp. 26–31.

22. *"El con sus obras, desinterasado y generoso, trabaja por la gloria de su país; y con ellas da un testimonio incontestable de que los Mexicanos tienen doble inteligencia y desmiente las preocupaciones europeas que se empeñan en creérnos raza inferior al resto de humanidad."* Zarco, "D. Juan Cordero," p. 143.

23. *"Era, en efecto, digno de un pincel americano que se había formado en Italia, honrar la memoria del ilustre genovés á quien la América debe su civilización, y cuyo nombre es un lauro de inmarcesible gloria para los Italianos. El gusto de un asunto de interés americano, y la gratitud a la Italia, son los dos sentimientos que guían el valiente pincel de Cordero."* Ibid., pp. 142–43.

24. The representations of Columbus increased dramatically from the mid-nineteenth century on in Latin America; dozens of public monuments and not a few paintings celebrated his arrival. Even as late as 1892, Columbus was hailed as the great discoverer, the figure who literally placed Mexico on the map, as suggested by the 1892 speeches given in honor of the statue of Columbus by French artist Charles Cordier; see García Pimentel, *El Monumento a Cristóbal Colón,* and Sosa, *El Monumento de Colón,* as well as the 1892 speech given by Joaquín Baranda as the inauguration speech for the bronze version of Manuel Vilar's *Colón* at the Buenavista railroad station. Baranda, *Discurso y poesía á Cristóbal Colón.*

25. Jesús Corral exhibited his *Cristóbal Colón* in the 1855 exhibition. According to a contemporary account, the artist represented Columbus in the act of taking possession of the island of Hispaniola ("Bellas artes," *El Universal,* p. 406). The description in this account gives few details; it mentions the figure of Columbus, the caravelles, and the ocean, as well as the fact that there were smaller figures behind Columbus. No mention is made of the presence of Indians. José Obregón exhibited his *Inspiration of Christopher Columbus* in the 1856 exhibition; it represents the single figure of Columbus; and Juan Urruchi showed his *Christopher Columbus at La Ravida* in 1856 as well; this episode takes place in Spain before the first voyage.

26. *"El pincel del señor Cordero, al representar ese hijo de América, se hizo sin duda el intérprete de los vivísimos recuerdos de su patria: debió entonces el pintor experimentar aquellas sensaciones que consigo trae siempre la imagen del país natal para aquel que en lejanas regiones suspira por las delicias del suelo que lo viera nacer: en esos momentos, el artista hace abstracción de lo ideal, y la realidad viene a estamparse en la tela bajo el impulso de la patriótica inspiración."* "Bellas artes, exposición de la academia de San Carlos," *El Daguerrotipo,* p. 310.

27. *"D. Juan Cordero. Pensionado en Roma por esta Academia, #25; Cristóbal Colón en la corte de los reyes católicos. De vuelta Colón del nuevo mundo que acaba de descubrir, presenta a los príncipes católicos. Da. Isabel y D. Fernando, varios naturales de la nueva tierra y ricos regalos de los productos de aquel suelo. Sentados los reyes debajo de un rico dosel, se levanta D. Fernando para honrar al afortunado marino, que acercándose a los soberanos, indica con una mano los presentes de la tierra descubierta: muchas damas de honor y caballeros están presentes a esta escena gloriosa para España."* RdeT, p. 77, no. 25.

28. Charlot, "Juan Cordero," p. 251, note 17.

29. *"La compenetración de Cordero con el tema es tan poderosa que se autorretrató en uno de los indios que acompañaban a Colón. Romántica imagen, hecho que a la vez bien pudo significar la autoidentificación de Cordero con el pasado indígena de México; o quizá lo llevó a ello la nostalgia de su país."* García Barragán, *El pintor Juan Cordero,* p. 30.

30. For a detailed discussion of Cordero's easel paintings and murals, see Charlot, "Juan Cordero," and García Barragán, *El pintor Juan Cordero.*

31. He eventually submitted *The First Youth of Isabel* in 1855, in which Queen Isabel is overcome by a delirium, or *locura,* and watched by her family, including the young Isabel, who would eventually send Columbus on his way. It was clearly a response to Cordero's painting, although it was only tangentially related to the Columbus narrative. Critics could not even accept it as a history painting. An example is J. M. Roa Bárcena's remark, *"el cuadro, más bien que* histórico *debe llamarse* de sentimiento" (italics in original), in "Bellas artes: una visita a la academia nacional de San Carlos," p. 434.

32. Quoted in Charlot, *Mexican Art and the Academy,* pp. 99–100.

33. Charlot, "Juan Cordero," p. 253, note 17.

34. Juárez was proclaimed president by his supporters in 1858, when President Ignacio Comonfort resigned; as chief justice of the Supreme Court, he was next in line for the office of president. Meanwhile, the Mexican army declared Félix Zuloago president. Juárez was actually elected president in 1861. Then in 1863, with the French capture of Mexico City, he and his administration withdrew to San Luís Potosí, returning to power in 1867; he was narrowly re-elected that year, holding office until his death in 1872.

35. See, for example, García Cubas, *Cuadro geográfico.* Davies, "Tendencias demográficas urbanas," has calculated population statistics for the nineteenth century and relies on García Cubas's statistics.

36. Mestizos began to assume greater political reforms; they played a significant role in the reform in the 1850s. See Sinkin, *The Mexican Reform,* esp. chap. 3, "The

Reform Leadership," pp. 31–54. The issues of mestizaje will be taken up at greater length in chap. 4 in this volume.

37. *El Siglo XIX*, August 11, 1869, p. 3.

38. See García Quintana, *Cuauhtémoc en el siglo XIX*.

39. Schavelzon notes that the bust of Cuauhtémoc was moved to the atrium of the cathedral in Mexico City in August 1922. "El primer monumento a Cuauhtémoc" (1869), p. 111.

40. In 1880–83, Manuel Rivera Cambas published a three-volume work entitled *México pintoresco, artístico y monumental*, which included a lithograph and short discussion of the bust of Cuauhtémoc and its inauguration. In the account Rivera Cambas ridicules the bust for being so small on such a large pedestal; he criticizes the Ayuntamiento's unwillingness to pay for a better site and presentation.

41. The Toltecs were a powerful military empire that ruled the Valley of Mexico in the so-called Early Post-Classic period from the site of Tula, Hidalgo. See Davies's works *The Toltecs: Until the Fall of Tula* and *The Toltecs: From the Fall of Tula to the Rise of Tenochtitlán*.

42. *"El espíritu del pueblo azteca, deseando revindicarse guiaba el pincel del afortunado pintor."* L.G.R., "La escuela de bellas artes," p. 143.

43. *"Invitamos a los inteligentes que vayan a saborear, una a una, las innumerables bellezas que encierra esta preciosa composición."* Ibid.

44. See, for example, *La Reina Xochitl*, done in woodcut by Miguel Portillo, Agustín Ocampo, and Jacinto Enciso and exhibited in the 1875 Academy exhibition; RdeT, p. 468. Ocampo's version is reproduced in Carrillo y Gariel, *Galerías de pintura*, fig. 23. It was also reproduced in *El Hogar* 6 (1872) (see "El Hogar," *El Correo del Comercio*, pp. 171–72); *El Artista* 3 (1875); and Riva Palacio, ed., *México a través de los siglos*.

45. *"La joven Xochitl conducida por sus padres ofrece al rey de Tula, Tecpancaltzin, la primera jícara del pulque descubierto por ella; el príncipe prendado de su belleza la toma por esposa."* RdeT, pp. 410–11, no. 6.

46. See "En honor de Nezahualcoyotl," *El Siglo XIX*, p. 3; "Antiquités aztéques," *Trait d'Union;* and Pilades, "Boletín, reunión artística," pp. 269–71.

47. *"Resucitar una civilización, traer los elementos de la vida que tenía el arte y a la civilización nuestra, exictar el patriotísmo que con los recuerdos de heroicidades y de gloria se exalta, es lo que el señor Sánchez Solís intenta."* Pilades, "Boletín, reunión artística," p. 271.

48. Oficina del Patrimonio Cultural, "Biografía del Lic. Felipe Sánchez Solís."

49. In this light, it is interesting to note that Moctezuma's descendants still received a government pension at least as late as 1868. See Dublán and Lozano, comps., *Legislación mexicana*, p. 305, no. 6327.

50. *"Algunos conservados como preciosa herencia por familics aztecas, que habían ido pasando de una a otra generación"* and *"la genealogía de uno de los dioses más queridos de aquella raza."* Pilades, "Boletín, reunión artística," p. 270.

51. Ibid., p. 271.

52. The contemporary Indian was a consistent topic of discussion in the nineteenth-century Mexico City press. See Ramos et al., *El indio en la prensa nacional.*

53. *"Se refirió a los indios como personajes ajenos a la sociedad nacional que, como idea y como proyecto, se concebía europea, blanca y 'civilizada.'"* Ramos et al., *El indio en la prensa nacional*, vol. 1, p. iii.

54. Zárate, "La raza indígena."

55. *"Así la raza vencida perdió hasta sus tradiciones históricas; hoy el extrangero sabe más que el indio las glorias pasadas de nuestros abuelos, y el frio de la esclavitud ha paralizado, por decirlo asi, la vida intelectual, el movimiento moral de un pueblo que tuvo un día su vida propia, sus glorias, su historia y sus costumbres, que revelaron a los ojos atonitos del conquistador un grado de civilización bastante adelantado, aún comparándose con la misma civilización de la Europea occidental."* Ibid., p. 1.

56. For a synopsis of Ixtlilxochitl's works, see Gibson and Glass, "Census of Middle American Prose Manuscripts," pp. 337–38. See also nineteenth-century popular accounts that specifically refer to the Ixtlilxochitl account, such as Roa Bárcena, *Catecismo de la historia de México*, pp. 107–14, or "Historia y antigüedades," *Boletín de la Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística*, pp. 231–34.

57. *"Por más que prefiramos las noticias que sobre los tolteca nos da el códice de Cuauhtitlán, no debemos dar al olvido la versión de Ixtlilxochitl sobre la destrucción de Tóllan, no solamente porque es la más conocida, sino porque se relaciona con la popular leyenda de la reina Xochitl."* Chavero, "Historia antigua y de la conquista," p. 385.

58. *"Fue elevada al rango de reina . . . no precisamente a una joven india con su color bronceado, sino a una mestiza muy linda."* Altamirano, *Primer almanaque histórico*, p. 223.

59. There is a certain irony in Obregón's representation of pulque in 1869. It had been but a few years since the pulque industry had experienced a major boom. By 1866 a railroad line had been established between Mexico City and the pulque-producing areas, one of which was Sánchez Solís's home state of México. And between 1866 and 1880 there was a major increase in the consumption of pulque—the poor man's tequila—especially in Mexico City. Pulque *hacendados* (hacienda owners) were an extremely important and powerful group, having begun to modernize the industry. See Leal and Rountree, "La compañía expendedora de pulque," pp. 78–133.

60. The question of pulque—as opposed to the distilled liquor, tequila, derived from a different type of agave cactus—in a cultural sense is complex. In the mythohistory of pre-Hispanic Mexico, it is tied to the downfall of Quetzalcoatl in Tula; he is enticed by the evil priest Tezcatlipoca into drinking pulque and then publicly humiliates himself, resulting in his self-exile. Pulque was also seen as the great vice of the underclasses in colonial and postcolonial Mexico, viewed as evidence of an inherent weakness of this group. At the same time, it was viewed as a characteristically national drink and a component of a colorful neighborhood practice. Descriptions of *pulquerías* and of the *pulquero* as quaint social type abound in nineteenth-century *costumbrista* imagery and text. For a study of the culture of pulque, see Guerrero Guerrero, *El pulque*, p. 612.

61. Pilades, "Boletín, Reunión Artística," p. 270.

62. *"Reinando Xolotl en Texcoco, se presentaron a este monarca en el año de 1168,*

los principes Chiconcuauhtli, Acolhua y Tzontecomatl, procedentes de Teocolhuacan, pidiendo terrenos para establecerse; Xolotl no sólo les concedo lo que deseaban, sin que casó a estos principes con sus tres hijas, tocando por consorte a Chiconcuauhtli la princesa Zihuaxochitl. En seguida Xolotl dividió su reino entre sus tres hijos y dio a Chiconcuauhtli el de Xaltocan, hoy del Distrito de Zumpango de la Laguna. Chiconcuahutli, al presentarse en la capital de su imperio acompañado de Xolotl y sus hijos; el cacique Tzompa de Xaltocan, recibe al nuevo rey colocándole un collar al cuello, en testimonio de obedencia." RdeT, p. 458, no. 274.

63. *"El paisaje está tomado al noreste del lago de Xaltocan."* Ibid.

64. See especially Altamirano, "El salón en 1879–1880," pp. 34–35.

65. See RdeT, p. 483, no. 28.

66. *"Sería de desearse, sin embargo, que fuesen de mayor tamaño, porque justamente tienen por objeto presentar a la vista del público del Museo, dos importantísimos monumentos de la antigüedad Mexicana."* Altamirano, "El Salón en 1879–1880," p. 30.

67. *"El pensamiento es grandioso. Los monumentos son las casas de los héroes, y héroes no son solamente los que conquistan una gloria con la espada; son héroes, y mas dignos del aprecio de los pueblos los que, con el esfuerzo nobilísimo de la inteligencia, logran hacer avanzar a la sociedad en que viven, un paso siquiera en los caminos del progreso." El Siglo XIX*, Sept. 18, 1877, p. 3.

68. Sosa, *Biografías de los mexicanos distinguidos*, p. 724.

69. *"Nezahualcoyotl en los jardines de Texcotzingo. Plegaria de la tarde al Dios de los cielos."* RdeT, p. 532, no. 65.

70. *"Nezahualcoyotl orando en un terrado vecino a su oratorio."* Gutiérrez, "La exposición artística de 1881," p. 107.

71. *"Une toile représentant le banquet donné par Netzahualcoyotl aux rois d'Atzcapotzalco et de Culiacan a l'occasion de l'inauguration de son palais de Texcoco." Trait d'Union*, June 25, 1875.

72. *"Le jour où ce précieux musée sera inaguré, un excellent orchestre exécutera des morceaux de musique composés par MM Melesio Morales et Aniceto Ortega, sur des chants de Nezahualcoyotl."* Ibid.

73. "En honor de Nezahualcoytol," *El Siglo XIX*, pp. 3–4.

74. One gets a sense of the "place" of contemporary Indians from the headlines of nineteenth-century newspapers. The categories of *indios bárbaros* and *indios en general* littered the press in this century. See Ramos et al., *El indio en la prensa nacional.*

75. See Altamirano's *Biografía de Ignacio Ramírez.*

76. Altamirano described himself this way: *"Yo, muy joven, pues apenas tenía quince años, y acabando de llegar del Sur, comprendiendo con trabajo la lengua española, y casi incomunicado por mi timidez rústica y semisalvaje, tenía poquísimo conocimiento acerca de los hombres de los sucesos de México."* Ibid., pp. 5.

77. I. Paz, *Hombres prominentes de México*, p. 70.

78. It was, I believe, Justino Fernández who first used the construction of "molding" the figure of the Indian. In regard to such works as Obregón's' *Discovery of Pulque*, he wrote: "Nothing could give a better idea of what an epoch's vision of the past is than these and other pictures of interpretation of the ancient indigenous world of Mexico; and it is the academic classicist vision of the nineteenth-century that was a poor mold for that world so distinct from this sweet classicism." (*"Nada podrá dar mejor idea de lo que es la visión de una época acerca del pasado, come éste y otros cuadros de interpretación del antiguo mundo tan alejado del dulzón clasicismo."*) *Arte moderno y contemporáneo de México*, pp. 88–89. This work is a revised edition of his *El arte moderno en México.*

79. *"La joven que acaba de descubrir el pulque es encantadora: tiene un aspecto de modestia y de timidez tan verdadero, que atrae irresistiblemente por el interés que el artista supo comunicarle. . . . Es de lamentar además que la bellísima figura de la protagonista pierda un poco de su elegancia y esbeltez por lo prolongado del talle."* L.G.R., "La escuela de bellas artes" p. 143.

80. See "El Hogar," *El Correo del Comercio.*

81. The terms of the competition were *"un pequeño croquis dibujado en el término de seis horas; de un pequeño boceto pintado igualmente en seis horas; de un cartón y del cuadro."* RdeT, p. 539.

82. See the original French edition, Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoires des nations civilisées du Mexique*, vol. 1, pp. 58–60.

83. Academia de San Carlos, *Vigesima exposición nacional.*

84. See Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe.*

85. See, for examples, García Cubas, *The Republic of Mexico in 1876*, p. 55; González, "Xicotencatl"; Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, vol. 1, pp. 410–13, 420–21, and vol. 2, pp. 404–7; and Zamacois, *Historia de Méjico*, vol. 2, chaps. 25 and 30.

86. The Senate chamber was established in November 1874. It was an extremely controversial issue in the 1870s because it affirmed centralized power over the rights of states.

87. *"Solo que sus hazañas no han sido apreciadas justamente porque no nació en Grecia ó Roma."* In Gallo, *Hombres ilustres mexicanas*, vol. 2, p. 32.

88. See the comments by Martínez in "Concordia Nacionalista, 1867–1889."

89. See Altamirano, "Revistas literarias de México," pp. 164–74.

90. For a discussion of the significance of this statue to the nineteenth century, see Uribe, "Más allá de lo que el ojo ve."

91. *"Este venerable sacerdote que siempre deploró el sistema cruel que los conquistadores españoles empelearon para dominar a los antiguos habitantes de México, se encuentra en medio de un edificio destruido donde había sido inmolado un padre de familia que venía pacíficamente a colocar unas flores en la tumba de sus antepasadaos. Su esposa abandonada se acoge a la protección de este generoso defensor que tan solícitas diligencias procuró siempre mitigar los sufrimientos de los conquistados."* RdeT, p. 475, no. 53.

92. *"Entre las huellas sangrientas y desoladoras que dejó en nuestro país la Conquista, surgieron también las de algunos beneficios que la adminstración de gente más civilizada debía incrustar en una nación nueva . . . uno de esos beneficios, quizá el único por excelencia, fue la semilla de caridad cristiana."* López López, "Exposición de la academia nacional," p. 355.

93. *"El idealismo de los pintores comenzaba a aparecer dudoso y un arte más convincente, más 'realista,' empezaba a ser pedido tanto por la critica como por el público."* Rodríguez Prampolini, "La figura del indio en la pintura," p. 213.

94. Barthes, "The Reality Effect," pp. 141–48.

95. Uribe, "Más allá de lo que el ojo ve."

96. *"Tiene el protagonista mucha vejez para la época de su mision . . . el cutis . . . perdió el atezamiento del misionero y adquirió el brillo que da un baño."* López López, "Exposición de la academia nacional," p. 356

97. *"Sus paños y accesorios son fiel copia del natural, y no obstante la impropiedad de exhibir los de la época presente."* Ibid.

98. *"Que la india manifestaba a través del paño de la cabeza, tener un peinado moderno, y también que estaba muy aseada."* Gutiérrez, "La exposición de bellas artes," p. 379.

99. The question of assimilation in the colonial period is highly complex. For various aspects of this process, see, among others, Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule,* and Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico.*

100. Ramos et al., *El indio en la prensa nacional,* records two interesting articles pressuring Guillermo Prieto to address this issue; see entries 023 and 025 from *El Monitor Republicano,* June 2 and 4, 1870, in vol.1, p. 254.

101. García Cubas, *The Republic of Mexico in 1876.*

102. *"Es un cuadro de todo elogio, por su dibujo y su valentía del colorido."* "La exposición de bellas artes," *El Eco de Ambos Mundos,* p. 321.

103. *"Está desairado ese personaje yaciendo en completo desnudo, sin accesorios que caractericen su raza."* López López, "Exposición de la academia nacional," p. 356.

104. See Las Casas, *Tratados,* vol. 1, pp. 67–71.

105. *"Cuadro original que representa uno de los atentados sangrientos que cometieron muchos españoles, en la conquista, porque no se les daban cuantos tesoros pedían, y que, según 'Las Casas,' ocasionaron la pérdida de más de cuatro millones de personas."* RdeT, p. 491, no. 135.

106. *"La composición más importante de todas las que se hayan exhibidos."* Agontía, "La academia nacional," p. 412.

107. *"En uno y otro hay una idea capital: la devastación, el exterminio, los horrores de la conquista . . . no excita en el alma otro sentimiento que el de la indiferencia . . . la falta completa de expresión del guerrero que se supone acaba de dar muerte al azteca: ni en la expresión de su fisonomía, ni en su actitud se revela la feróz pasión de que debería estar animada en el momento de cometer aquella atrocidad. . . . Toda la composición es una poema."* Ibid., pp. 412–13.

108. Gutiérrez, "Revista de la exposicón de San Carlos," p. 436.

109. *"Como no quisieramos que los artistas plagiasen, ni a sí mismos las ideas."* Agontía, "La academia nacional," p. 412.

110. *"De veras, no hay sé que más espontáneo, más atrevido, y quien sabe que de novedad en la luz de nuestro cielo tropical, y el de la naturaleza de nuestra valle."* Diez de Bonilla, "Academia de bellas artes, colaboración," p. 444.

111. *"La composición del señor Juárez es humilde, pero simpatiza como asunto nacional y promueve interés por trajes y costumbres: copia con verdad los tipos, combina con gracia las telas y los tonos. Este cuadrito de mujeres indígenas al lado del Pocito, y su Tepeyac en retiro, si no es de lujo, sí es de cariño."* López López, "Exposición de la academia nacional," p. 355.

112. *"Hay en efecto cierta sencilla poesía, que no deja de conmover, es esa escena en que figuran una madre y un niño pertenecientes a nuestra primitiva raza que en su actual degeneración ofrece pocos asuntos de poesía y de idealidad."* Agontía, "La academia nacional," p. 410.

113. *"La indita que pone agua bendita en la frente de su hijo, es una bonita y original idea."* Gutiérrez, "Revista de la exposición de San Carlos," p. 428. Carbós's painting was also chosen to be raffled off to the Academy public in 1878, along with twenty-two other works, including Velasco's *Valley of Mexico;* see ASC 53:7236.

114. *"La realidad es casi siempre monótona, y la fantasía tiene como buen defecto el que una critica recelosa tendrá nimio escrúpulo en perdonar."* Martí, "Una visita a la exposición," p. 337.

115. *"El alumno Félix Parra ejecutó un cuadrito original."* "Revista de la exposición de San Carlos," p. 435

116. *"Están allí probando que en México se puede seguir con provecho la escuela de Meissonier."* L.G.R., "La escuela de bellas artes," p. 141.

117. "Cuadros notables," *La Iberia,* pp. 221–22.

118. *"La terrible ceremonia de arrancar el corazón de las víctimas."* Ibid., p. 222.

119. F. Ramírez, "Para construir un México nuevo," briefly notes the increasing popularity of such paintings, which he refers to as *tableautin,* among nineteenth-century collectors.

120. *"La fantasía tiene como buen defecto el que una crítica recelosa tendrá nimio escrúpulo en perdonar."* Martí, "Una visita a la exposición," p. 337.

121. In the 1898 exhibition a former academy student, J. García Coromina, exhibited *El Tzompantli (Torre de las Calaveras),* which, as the exhibition catalog states, was a scene in which Spanish prisoners were sacrificed by Aztec priests in a *teocali* (temple). RdeT, p. 620, no. 3.

122. See Riva Palacio and Payno, *El Libro Rojo, 1520–1867.* See also, for example, José Juárez's seventeenth-century version of *The Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence.*

123. Moyssén, *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries,* p. 514, points out that Felipe Sánchez Solís commissioned Gutiérrez's painting, and that it is this liberal politician who bids good-bye to his family; the scene is set in a peasant home in the lake district of Zumpango, Sánchez Solís's birthplace.

CHAPTER 4

1. This poignant phrase was written by Justino Fernández, *Arte moderno y contemporáneo,* p. 89, and was directed specifically to academic paintings such as Obregón's *Discovery of Pulque.*

2. See F. Ramírez, "Vertientes nacionalistas en el modernismo." Ramírez notes the