

Rethinking the Baroque

To Mike and Bardy, barocchisti both

Edited by Helen Hills

ASHGATE

39. One may also speculate that this may have been an aspect of an earlier departmental ethos at Princeton, because I was similarly relieved of teaching as a preceptor in David Coffin's class on gardens, in which I had also raised questions. It is also noteworthy that the titles of Coffin's classes eschewed the use of the term 'baroque', which was promoted by his long-time colleague Martin: he taught on what he explicitly called 'Renaissance and Post-Renaissance' architecture. This may be regarded as an expression of one of his many differences from Martin, which were never to my knowledge revealed in public. Significantly, no public questioning was ever entertained after public departmental lectures.
40. Alpers, *The Art of Describing*.
41. See, for example, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister, and City: The Art and Culture of Central Europe, 1450–1800* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 576 pp.; paperback edition, 1997.
42. My approach to art at Rudolf's court in publications of the 1980s is most fully represented in Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *The School of Prague: Painting at the Court of Rudolf II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).
43. See Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Central European Drawings 1680–1800: An Introduction', in *Central European Drawings 1680–1800: A Selection from American Collections* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), especially pp. 21–4 ('Problems of Style').
44. See Khouri, 'Os Modernistas de São Paulo e a (re)descoberta do barroco'; another good example is provided by the work of the modernist critic Lourival Gomes Machado, *Barroco Mineiro*, 4th edn (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2003) (1st edn 1967). See also, for this tendency, Afonso Ávila, *Barroco Teoria e Análise* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1997).
45. For the monuments of architecture in Antigua mentioned here, see Sidney David Markman, *Colonial Architecture of Antigua Guatemala* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1966), particularly for the churches here discussed, pp. 172–6, figs 140–144, and pp. 190–96, 198–202; and Verle Lincoln Annis, *La arquitectura de la Antigua Guatemala 1543–1773* ([Guatemala City]: The University of San Carlos of Guatemala, 1968), pp. 169–72, ill. pp. 194–201; pp. 282–5, ill. pp. 291–8.
46. See Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America*.
47. See Myriam Andrade Ribeiro de Oliveira, *O Rococó Religioso no Brasil e suas antecedentes europeus* (São Paulo: Cosac and Naify, 2003).
48. Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, *Entwurf einer historischen Architectur* (Vienna: [Publisher: probably Erlach], 1725) (1st edn, 1721).
49. See further James Elkins (ed.), *Is Art History Global?* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007); Kitty Zijlmans and Wilfried van Damme (eds), *World Art Studies: Exploring Concepts and Approaches* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2008); and the papers in the section 'The Idea of World Art History', in Jaynie Anderson (ed.), *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence (Acts of the 32nd Congress of the International Committee of the History of Art)* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne Press, 2009).
50. See, for example, Alexandra Kennedy and Marta Fajardo de Rueda (eds), *Barroco de la Nueva Granada: Colonial Art from Colombia and Ecuador* (New York: Americas Society, 1992); Marie-Claire Adès, *Baroque du Paraguay* (Paris: Musée-Galerie Seita, 1995); *Brésil baroque: entre ciel et terre* (Paris: Union latine, 1999); *El Barroco Peruano*, 2 vols (Lima: Banco de Crédito, 2002 and 2003). The term has of course often been used to refer to the larger phenomenon of baroque art in Latin America: see, among many others, Santiago Sebastian, *El barroco iberoamericano: mensaje iconográfico* (Madrid: Encuentro, 1990).

Reframing the Baroque: On Idolatry and the Threshold of Humanity*

Claire Farago

For man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all.

Aristotle, *Politics* (1253a31–33)

Provocation

Extensive disciplinary critiques have issued from the field of art history for the past two decades and more. Yet it is one thing to revise disciplinary practices within existing disciplinary and sub-disciplinary formations, and quite another to question the formations themselves. Institutions ignore systemic calls for reform that put into question the geographical, chronological and cultural formations on which the field is premised since its professionalization in the nineteenth century, during the formative era of modern nation-states.¹ Should art historians who contribute to baroque studies reflect on the epistemological underpinnings of the field? What is at stake in participating in the historiographical and theoretical critiques that have swept the field as a whole, yet left every institutional configuration within it more or less intact? The following essay is addressed to the 'framing' of the baroque, in particular to the cycle of critiquing, re-enacting and sustaining old practices.² The main question regarding the future configuration of our subdisciplines is an ethical one: to what extent is it our responsibility as scholars operating in today's global society to feel responsibility for the manner in which our archives came into possession of their materials and for the state in which we pass them on to future generations?

In a lecture written in 1934 and presumably still relevant to current disciplinary debates when it was finally published in 1995, Erwin Panofsky

argued that the baroque is an extension of the Renaissance.³ Panofsky's understanding of periodization in this belated publication was directly in line with what were then ongoing attempts to relabel the Renaissance and baroque as 'early modern', a term that has met with only limited success.⁴ In the past decade and more, many Renaissance and baroque art historians have moved away from taxonomic concerns with the definition of a period altogether. Of late, Renaissance art historians have been emphasizing problems that Panofsky and his predecessors never considered, notably the fact that 'Renaissance art' was exported from various locations on the Italian peninsula and circulated globally during the early modern period, and meanwhile works of art and other cultural products from all parts of the world were imported into Europe, where they formed prize specimens in early modern collections and made an impact on European ideas of art and on the practices of European artists.⁵ The history of baroque scholarship is different, in that the term 'baroque' has always been associated with the strange, the exotic, the abstruse, making it an excellent (if problematic, since a fascination with the exotic is not necessarily an open-minded gesture) candidate for including the art of other cultures highly admired by European collectors.⁶ For this reason it is all the more surprising that historians of baroque art have responded to calls for subdisciplinary reconfiguration far less enthusiastically or frequently than their Renaissance counterparts. Who, we might ask, benefits from maintaining the traditional outlines of baroque art, chronologically and geographically bound to a certain body of European art, and who does not?

Even historians of art and culture who have ostensibly moved away from concerns with the definition of a period – and there are many – nonetheless continue their debts to problematic schemes of periodization at the meta-critical level. Michel Foucault famously re-conceptualized the baroque as the classical age, an era with its own episteme, which he described as having an all-consuming interest in documentation, in the problematic of classification governed by the trope of resemblance.⁷ Foucault described the classical age's concern with differences as opposed to the Renaissance era's concern with similarities, discrimination between meanings as opposed to the discovery of meaning, an age of the catalogue as opposed to an age of the theatre.⁸ In the same breath, however, Foucault still divided history into periods of time – periods that moreover coincide exactly with the stylistic/chronological divisions traditionally employed in histories of art. Foucault never justified his reliance on periodization *per se*. His mode of analysis, conducted in terms of empirically derived differences to discriminate between two categories that are mutually defined by this process, imitates the characteristic behaviour and form of cultural production that he attributes to his subject.

Ann Stoler, writing in 1995, was one of the first to take Foucault to task for his inadequate treatment of the history of racism.⁹ Her objections bear

directly on Foucault's reliance on the structure of periodization. Foucault pointed to a fundamental paradox of racial discourse in that it recasts prior representations in new forms. Stoler faults his narrative for not considering patterned shifts in worldwide imperial labour regimes, of which the European discourses on which he exclusively focused formed only a part. His account left no room for the fact that the discourse that surrounded the fear of 'internal enemies' within Europe was played out repeatedly in extra-European settings in specific ways – those who were 'white but not quite', for example, became various targets for 'internal purification' in a variety of colonial settings beginning in the seventeenth century.¹⁰ Foucault offered a genealogy of racism with 'Europe' as an unproblematic entity, whereas in fact that entity forged its 'changing and porous parameters around the biopolitics of race' in a global arena over several centuries.¹¹ Neatly packaged periods of history lose their discrete boundaries once this global setting is taken into account.

If baroque art specialists as a whole began showing an interest in the context of the style's dissemination and use, locally within Europe as well as globally, racial and ethnic contingencies would likewise come to the fore to disrupt the neat chronological sequences on which the European high style is based. Currently, Rome is regarded as the springboard of 'baroque style', producing a hierarchy of 'early' and 'late', or 'centre' and 'periphery' occurrences. People, art and culture are consequently judged against a single standard that might be considered otherwise, just as Stoler recommends doing for the history of racial discourse *per se*. Foucault's most striking theoretical contributions are his descriptions of the tension between rupture and re-inscription in the discourse of history and the implications it carries for practices predicated on it, yet his own genealogies suffer from the same unacknowledged re-inscription.¹² Moreover, this recursive process raises fundamental questions about the status of chronology as an analytical category.¹³ If the historian's brief is to identify historical continuities and differences, such as the discourse of sexuality to which Foucault devoted his most sustained analytical energies, then should not the life of such discourses take precedence over formations defined by chronology and geography, such as categories of style restricted to an arbitrarily privileged set of data? Why not consider all manifestations of the baroque on equal footing? This is one line of institutional critique that deserves more attention than it has yet received.

Theoretical support for such a project is found in the writings of Gilles Deleuze, who redefined the baroque as a dynamic structure – as an always differentiating process. The concept of the fold retains the long-standing association of the baroque with seventeenth-century Europe through Deleuze's analysis of Leibniz's philosophy, but Deleuze's point of departure is that the structure/process defined in terms of the baroque 'fold' became portable –

Deleuze's baroque has an abstract identity independent of a particular time and place.¹⁴ His English translator, Tom Conley, tells us that Deleuze took his lead from Henri Focillon, who re-used a concept associated with the art and poetics of one period to describe another, medieval architecture in Focillon's case.¹⁵ When Focillon retained the term 'baroque', the meta-metaphor was born. And with this re-birth, the entire notion of periodicity previously implied by the term was destabilized.

Focillon wrote about his reasons for rethinking the history of Western art in terms of the baroque in *Vie des formes* (*The Life of Forms in Art*) (1934), where he sought to distance himself from racial theories of style. He maintained that style exists only insofar as it is form, and form signifies only itself – despite the temptation to confuse form with image and sign, that is, with representation or with the signification of an object. Focillon's text in turn resembles the writings of Alois Riegl, whose study of ornament, *Stilfragen* (*Problems of Style*) (1893), similarly maintains that the meaning of form is entirely its own specific value that must not be confused with the attributes we impose upon it.¹⁶ Form, in Focillon's retelling, has a mobile life in a changing world, and style is the principle that co-ordinates and stabilizes the endless metamorphoses of form.

What then, according to Focillon, constitutes a style? Its formal elements, which have a certain index value and make up its repertory, or vocabulary, and its system of relationships, or syntax. And forms, above all in the realm of ornament, evolve according to their own internal logic, originating in 'spiritual families of the mind' that 'cut across the best defined "races"'.¹⁷ That the discourse on race enters through the back door of Focillon's attempt to extricate himself from racial theories of culture is as clear in this statement as is his lingering debt. He intended that the concept of 'spiritual families of the mind' should be an explicit corrective to racial theories of collective identity when he stated that forms exist in a highly concrete world diversified not in terms of race, environment or time, but in terms of a 'certain kind of spiritual ethnography'. Like Riegl, he was highly critical of the application of Social Darwinism to art history.¹⁸ Yet neither Focillon nor Riegl divorced themselves entirely from biological schemes for the explanation of stylistic change, encapsulated in Focillon's phrase 'the life of forms'. The examples could be multiplied, for the way out of the hall of mirrors that constitutes art-historical discourse is not easy.¹⁹

But we can hammer another nail into the coffin of periodization, because 'periods' of style imply a developmental scheme that is not only artificially maintained by attending to a narrow geographical range, but the idea of stylistic development is, inevitably, a biological, evolutionary construct applied to culture, where it does not belong. Yet there is a way out. Deleuze adapted Focillon's strategy to his own, different purposes. Deleuze's notion of de-territorialization does not consider any 'centre' more important than any other in a network of nodes. This analytical scheme replaces cause and effect

models, and is also a structure that supports subaltern readings of hegemonic structures, such as postcolonial readings of colonialism. The topology that Deleuze describes is like the inside of a conch shell – its repetitive patterns happen at different scales, and the nature of their resemblance can be described as fractal, but there is contiguity between the planes, as Deleuze puts it – just as the spiralling layers of a conch are connected. Such a model offers a productive scheme for thinking historically and concretely about human agency and the circulation of material culture, including works of art, through time, without falling back on untenable racial constructs that assume a direct connection between the mentality of a person or a people and their cultural productions.

Let us imagine a subfield of 'baroque art' or 'baroque sensibility' constructed along Deleuzian lines that pivots the scholar's ethical responsibility toward the future of the discipline. Critical understanding of the institutional history of the discipline of art history calls for integrated attempts to define the issues that produced the narratives of our current disciplinary formations. The Aristotelian legacy establishing criteria for what it means to be human and, ultimately, what it means not to be human, is at the root of theories of racial difference. Such a problematic is a topic of major historical and theoretical consequence that bears on significant contemporary preoccupations with the nature of cultural difference. Instead of the historian projecting his or her own understanding of the 'mentality' of a people, place or time derived from studying the material culture of a particular past place, we can investigate how that past place construed its own understanding of 'mentality'. In keeping with Deleuze's recursive structure (what I have described as the spiralling conch shell model), the following discussion is organized as a series of nested case studies of art that might have once been considered idolatrous. The purpose of this discussion is to understand how historians have played into this history of racial ideas and how we might position ourselves differently as a result of understanding the complicity of past historians. The discourse on idolatry from the early modern period is thus intended to provide a test case for construing a different history of the baroque, not as a free-floating category or a historical projection backwards, but as a linked series of events from the past to the present that places the historian in the same continuum as his or her subject of study.

The recursive organization of the following material is intended to highlight the problematic nature of established stylistic formations, both contiguous to and contemporaneous with the baroque, as currently defined within the discipline of art history. While Protestant Reformation theologians denounced lavish religious displays and material aids as idolatrous, their ecclesiastic counterparts in New Spain levied charges of idolatry against their newly colonized subjects.²⁰ At present, however, when we study the theology of idolatry, we usually segregate the primary texts and their historical

contexts as religious history from the role of art, the data of which belongs to the field of art history. As for interactions across longer times and distances, art historians isolate the peripatetic histories of both objects and texts from broader considerations of historical relatedness concerning the formation of modern subjects. In keeping with entrenched routines, despite extensive critical interest in the institutional history of art history for the past three decades, the profession of art history routinely treats theories of images as if the historical discussion of art somehow did not belong to the same sphere as the objects themselves.

European missionaries proselytizing in the Americas attached the term 'idols' to ritual practices and material culture that they regarded as grotesque signs of the moral corruption and demonological possession of their potential converts. However, it was also possible at that time to regard the same 'idols' still in terms of their appearance, as signs of the subtle creative power of the human imagination – that is, it was possible for the very same grotesque imagery to testify in opposite ways, either as evidence of moral corruption or as evidence of the artist's unlimited ability to invent things out of his imagination.²¹ Upon entry into the early modern *Wunderkammer*, what European collectors also called 'idols' continued to both attract and repel, but only as phantasms of their former selves: in the context of collecting, idols were experienced 'in the comfort and safety' of the studiolo or the drawing room as exotic curiosities, as the following case study examines. In this manner, artefacts of non-European origin became part of a larger European category of objects about which to have interesting conversations.²² By the end of the nineteenth century, as the final case study will show, when artefacts such as Mexican painted manuscripts became the subject of modern scholarly attention, this controversial and contradictory past was largely occluded from view.

Aristotle, Slavery and the Work of Art

In the Aristotelian tradition to which the sixteenth-century discussion of idolatry is indebted, property and justice are themes closely linked to the distinction between man, the political animal 'who alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust' (1253a16), and other animals, who are simply beasts. The principle of order in society, Aristotle continues in the text cited at the beginning of this chapter, is the determination of what is just (1253a39). And since the state is made up of households, and households are in turn made up of property, the determination of justice inevitably turns on who has a right to own property. A number of discussions scattered elsewhere in the Aristotelian corpus have historically been associated with this key text in the *Politics*, which continues to discuss the threshold of the human

by distinguishing between possessors of property (mental and physical) and slaves. Chief among related discussions is Aristotle's account of the mental capacity to recollect – that is, to draw a series of inferences, as he and a long history of commentators defined the distinction between the human faculty of memory and the retentive memory of animals (*De anima*; *De memoria et reminiscentia*).

We are currently living through an acute crisis in the history of defining what constitutes the humanity of human beings, and engaged intellectuals such as Giorgio Agamben and Judith Butler, among many others, have articulated what is at stake in lucid terms.²³ However, despite the extensive attention to the epistemological underpinnings of deeply disturbing trends, the insidious role of the visual register in reproducing and maintaining the now untenable values of another era deserves still far more attention. With the current situation in mind, the following discussion deals with the relationship emerging in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries between the appearance of works of art and new developments in a long-standing Aristotelian discourse on what it means to be human. What my discussion aims to do is demonstrate why and how historical questions of 'race', understood as the outward expression of collective mentality, are inseparable from questions of style, that is, the formal appearance of works of human manufacture – what we loosely call art.

The Aristotelian understanding that the difference between men and animals is based on their mental and material 'possessions' is directly cited and indirectly implied throughout sixteenth-century discussions of art taking place in Europe and the Americas. Among the most important events that precipitated discussions of the Amerindians' mental capacities in particular was a papal decree issued on 9 June 1537 by Pope Paul III against enslaving the Amerindians and seizing their property. The bull, *Sublimus Deus*, pronounced 'Indians and all other people who may later be discovered by Christians' to be endowed with the 'nature and faculties' necessary to receive the Christian faith solely by 'preaching of the word of God and by the example of good and holy living'.²⁴ In the 1537 Bull, Paul III had sided with the Dominican missionary Bartolomé de las Casas and others who defended the Amerindians' capacity to be converted by teaching rather than conquered by force.²⁵

The philosophical, if not juridical, basis of discussion was the *Politics*, where Aristotle distinguished between two types of enslavement: through capture and through being born 'slaves by nature', constitutionally incapable of the fully human powers of reasoning. As described in Books I and 3 of the *Politics*, natural slaves are, like animals, lacking in the higher faculties of the human soul.²⁶ These historical circumstances are important to bear in mind regarding the European reception of works of art produced in a colonial context that they considered exotic, bizarre, capricious and, above all, marvelous to behold.

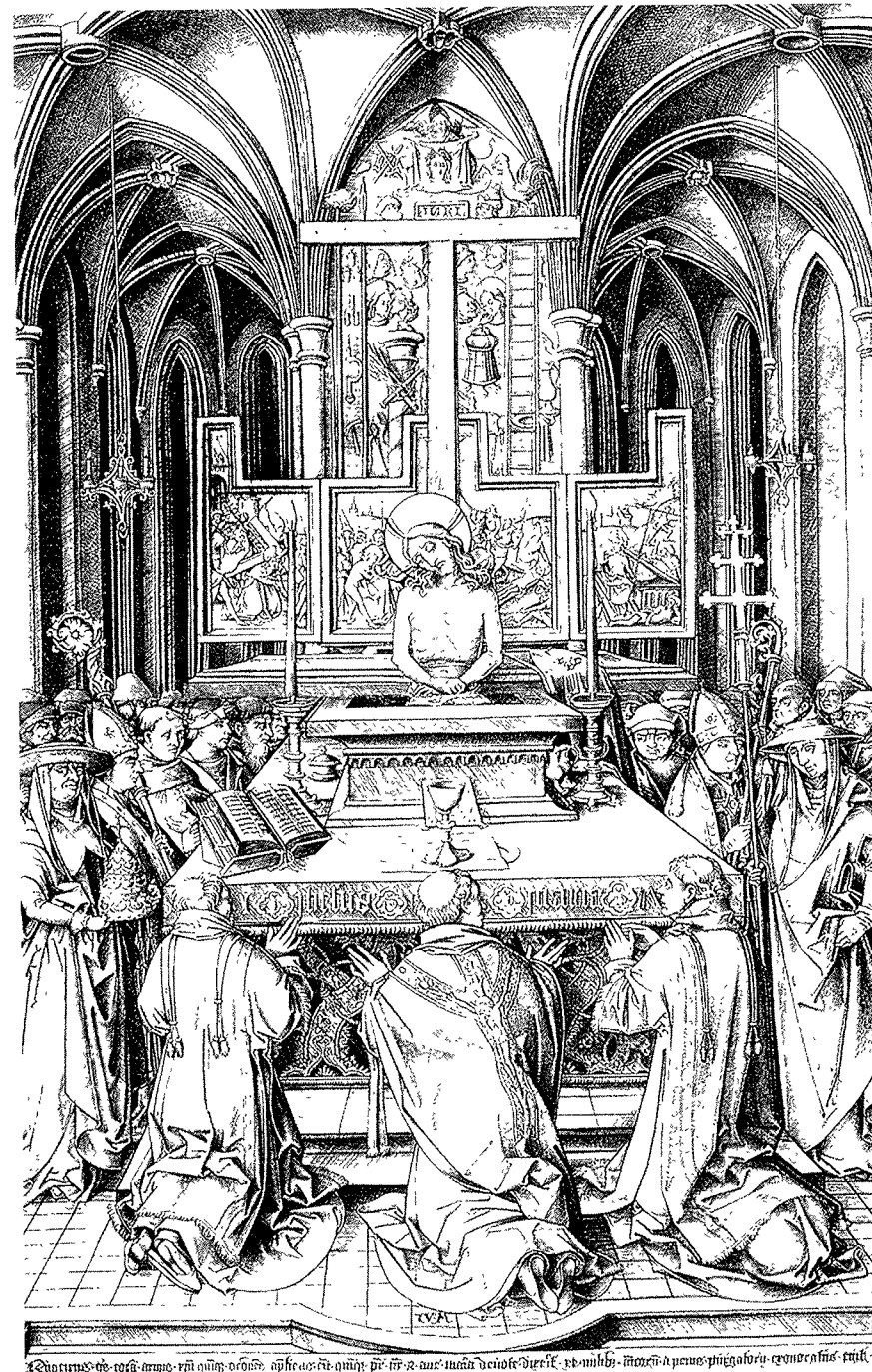
Case Study #1: *The Mass of St Gregory*

One of the most extraordinary surviving documents of sixteenth-century discussions of the thresholds of the human is a feather mosaic (*amantecayotl*) depicting the *Mass of Saint Gregory*, made in 1539, as a Latin epigraph dating this remarkably well-preserved object testifies (Plate 10). The inscription makes the *Mass of St Gregory* the earliest dated work of art surviving from New Spain: 'PAVLO III PONTIFICI MAXIMA/EN MAGNA INDIARV[M] VRBE MEXICO/CO[M]POSITA D[OMI]NO DIDACO GVBERNA/TORE CVRA FR[ATR]IS PETRI A GANTE MINORITAE AD 1539' ('Made for his excellency Pope Paul III in the great city of the Indies, Mexico, during the governorship of Don Diego [?], under the supervision of the Minorite Brother Peter of Ghent, 1539 AD'). Although the Latin contains minor errors, the inscription clearly states that the object was made in Mexico City under the supervision of Pedro de Gante (1486–1572), the Franciscan lay brother who in 1524 established the famous mission school of San José de los Naturales, where the mechanical and liberal arts were taught to Amerindians. Many of its students came from families of high social rank, continuing in this transformed Christian setting the Aztec custom of selecting artist/scribes (*tlacuilos*) from the nobility and training them at state expense.

On the basis of the inscription, it has been suggested that the mosaicist (*amanteca*) responsible for this featherwork was Don Diego de Alvarado Huanitzin, nephew and son-in-law of Moctezuma II who was appointed governor (*tlatoani*) of Tenochtitlan/Mexico City in 1538 by the viceroy Don Antonio de Mendoza.²⁷ While it is unlikely that Don Diego would have been a student at the Franciscan convent school during his tenure as governor, as Aztec royalty and the ranking native government official in the Republic of Indians, he was in a good position to offer this extraordinary gift to Paul III, the pope who had recently published a series of declarations protecting the rights of Amerindians.

The subject of the Gregorian Mass was depicted many times in the early years of the Spanish Conquest, when it was painted on convento walls and depicted on ceremonial objects, including gifts of state such as a featherwork mitre that is still in the Escorial Palace.²⁸ Among Augustinians and Franciscans in Mexico, it is a motif that can be associated with a utopian concept of the universal Christian church. The imagery on the 1539 featherwork painting was directly derived from a European print similar to, or perhaps even identical with, an engraving by Israel van Meckenem, c. 1480–85 (Figure 5.1), one of ten versions of the Gregorian Mass by the same artist.²⁹

According to a legend popular in the fifteenth century, as Gregory was celebrating Mass in the Basilica of Santa Croce in Rome, one of his assistants expressed doubt that Christ was actually present in the host. At that moment, Christ miraculously appeared rising from the altar, surrounded by the



5.1 Israel van Meckenem, *Mass of St Gregory*, engraving, c. 1480–85. Lehrs IX.288.353.

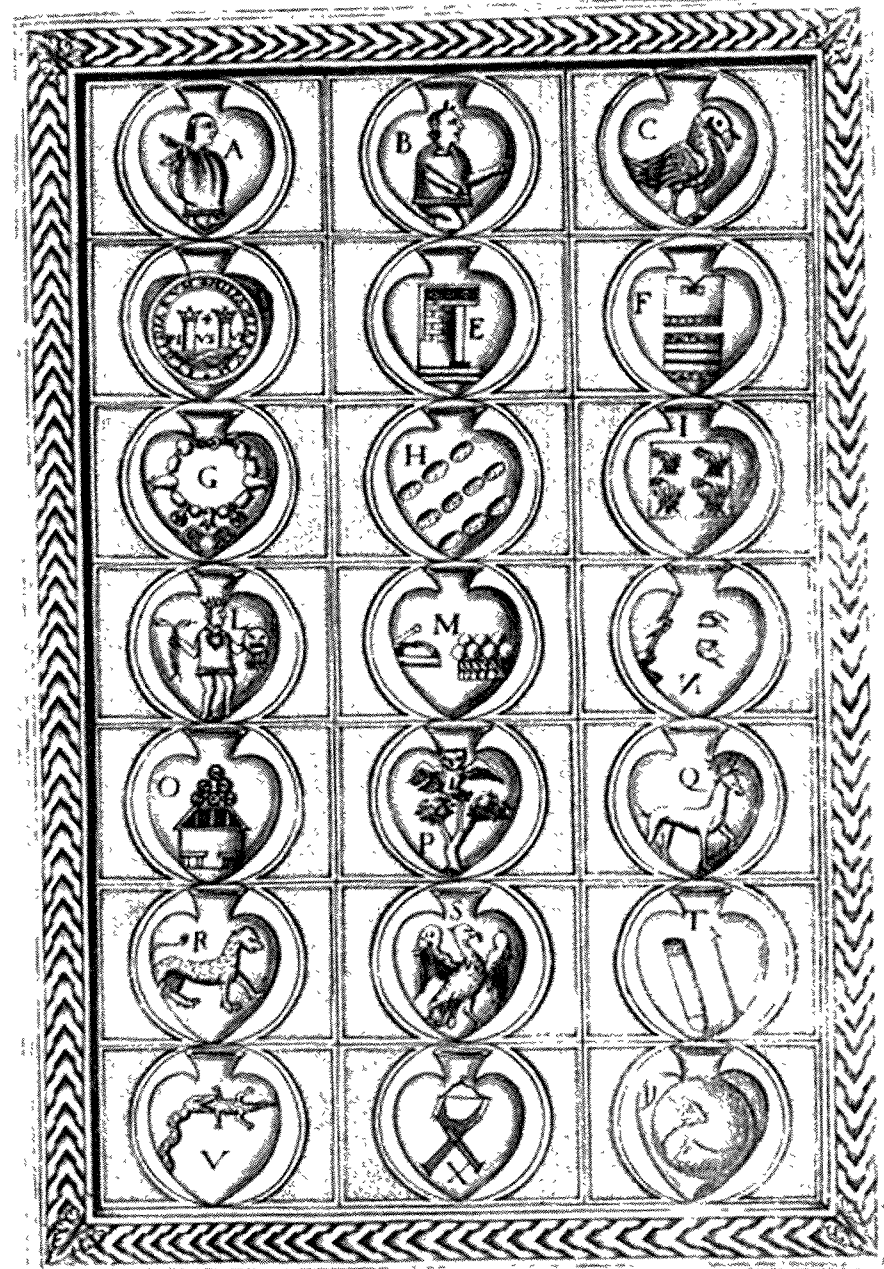
instruments of the passion and displaying his five wounds, including the stigmata.³⁰ A Latin inscription in the European engraving indicates that the sheet was intended as an indulgence granted to whoever recites the requisite prayers to the instruments of Christ's Passion.

St Gregory the Great, a sixth-century pope and one of the four Latin Church Fathers, defended the religious use of images because they function as a 'Bible for the illiterate'.³¹ There are significant differences, however, between an inexpensive broadsheet issued to pilgrims and a unique gift of state crafted in precious, exotic materials, intended for the chief representative of Christ on earth. Given the timing of the gift, the choice of subject suggests that Pope Paul III was to be praised as a latter-day St Gregory, no doubt for his strong defence of the Indians' fully human capacities. Viewed in this context, this featherwork painting is a magnanimous gesture, eloquently rendered in a medium well established in pre-Columbian times as a form of tribute, that both the Amerindians and their European conquerors considered the most elevated form of Mexica art.³²

Whatever the story behind the *Mass of St Gregory*, there is no doubt that Pedro de Gante established innovative methods for teaching Christian doctrine to his Amerindian neophytes.³³ De Gante and other missionaries used visual images extensively during the early years of the Conquest when language was an extreme barrier to communication, as is known from numerous sources including the 1579 Italian publication of an important pedagogical text, *De rhetorica christiana*, written and illustrated by de Gante's pupil Diego Valadés, another Christianized, assimilated Aztec nobleman like Don Diego. From his testimony, and from other material evidence such as the atrial cross that stood in the forecourt of the Capilla de los Indios of the Basilica de Guadalupe in Mexico City, we know that rebus-like signs, specifically the arms of Christ, were used to teach the catechism.³⁴ In his book, Valadés provided engraved illustrations of catechism classes being taught in the open-air atrium of the Franciscan mother church at San José, using similar visual signs. He also introduced a sort of pictographic syllabary of his own (Figure 5.2), involving signs in the shape of sacred hearts, a symbol with connotations on both sides of the cultural and linguistic divide.

Some of Valadés' heart signs include recognizable elements from Nahuatl pictograms. Although their exact meaning has never been deciphered, the manner in which they function in his text makes the important point that they are a culturally hybrid means of communication.

The Franciscans in particular were interested in Indian hieroglyphics to the extent that they invented a hieroglyphic system of their own based on the pre-Conquest rebus-style script of Aztecs and Mixtecs, believing that Amerindians would be more receptive to Christian catechism communicated in pictures and symbols. The arms of Christ are visual signs of the sort that missionaries widely understood as a pictorial language comparable to Nahuatl



5.2 Diego Valadés, syllabary containing recognizable elements of Nahuatl pictograms combined with European symbols, from Diego Valadés, *De Rhetorica Christiana*, Perugia, 1579, engraving. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.

pictograms.³⁵ This in itself is perhaps less significant in the present context than the theory of cognition that they imply. In the feather mosaic, the rebus-like signs known as the arms of Christ are mnemonic devices intended to initiate a series of associations in the mind of the beholder. Each sign, whether it be the coins of Judas signifying his treason, the crowing cock of Peter signifying his betrayal, the instruments of the Passion alluding to the crucifixion and to major points of Christian doctrine (for example, the three nails remind the beholder of the Trinity), serves as an object of sustained contemplation. Just as a person learned in Latin might ruminate over the many senses of scripture, attaching in turn literal, tropological and anagogical significance to the same words, so the visual representation of St Gregory's Mass was intended to enable an illiterate audience to contemplate the richness of Christian doctrine by visual means.³⁶

The mnemonic devices attest to the mental capacity of their users to 'recollect', that is, to remember the central mysteries of the Christian faith by contemplating the mnemonic signs which refer to them. Mnemonic signs initiate the inferential process of recollection that is uniquely human, according to Aristotle and elaborated by his commentators. The crucial task of recollection is retrieval: a memory image, wrote Aristotle in *De memoria* (450b11–20), is like an imprint or drawing, causing us to remember what is not present: a memory drawing, like a painted panel, is an object of contemplation, a sort of copy and a reminder. Thomas Aquinas described memory as the faculty responsible for the conversion of images into abstractions or universals, and reserved the term recollection to describe a kind of human reasoning, a 'quasi-syllogistic search'.³⁷ In his account of the human arts in *De quantitate animae*, St Augustine defined the third degree of the human soul as *memoria*, requiring *anima adversio* ('attention'), proper to man and distinct from the sense memory of animals.³⁸

In the fifteenth century, the Archbishop of Florence, Dominican St Antonine (1389–1459), whose *Summa theologica* (Venice, 1477) was among the earliest books recorded in New Spain, urged his readers to learn the art of projecting sacred concepts into memory figures.³⁹ Valadés described and illustrated the basic tenets of medieval faculty psychology, focusing on the role played by the art of memory in teaching sacred doctrine to neophytes at San José de los Naturales, where images were placed in strategic locations along liturgical procession routes.

The significance of this language of signs in a gift destined for Pope Paul III is clarified by the historical context of the pontificate's *Sublimus Deus* issued 13 years after the opening of San José de los Naturales. In 1539, Paul III would have been ideally well disposed to understand what was implied by the choice of both the subject and the artistic medium. Indeed, for any beholder attuned to the debate, this *Mass of St Gregory* testifies to the truly human nature of Amerindians in terms that predate, by at least a decade, the 1550

debates on the subject held in Valladolid, Spain. It is perhaps not overstated to claim that, by 1539, the terms on which the Indians' mental capacities were judged were part of an international, transcultural discourse in which the 'culturally dispossessed' also participated – at least to the limited extent of a few assimilated members of the Amerindian elite. In one of history's greatest unintended ironies – and one that went unrecognized until 1987, when this featherwork mosaic appeared on the art market for the first time – this erudite gift offered by a bicultural colonial subject in the language of the conqueror, in a medium prized by the colonizer, as evidence of his own humanness, never reached its intended destination in the sixteenth century.⁴⁰

European Discourse of the Grotesque

Featherwork mosaics were among the most highly prized possessions of European *wunderkammern*. Their capacity to arouse wonder in European viewers begins to look very different, however, once the signifying chain linking discussions of the threshold of humanness to material culture is reconstructed in its Spanish colonial context. To understand the construction of the early modern subject in the bicultural terms that become available when the material record is considered in this European epistemological context, it is also important to bear in mind the discourse on the grotesque and monstrous that developed in Protestant Reformation writings. The most significant theological contribution was Ulrich Zwingli's analysis of the psychological roots of false worship couched, like Francis Bacon's discussion a century later, in terms of 'inner' and 'outer' idols.⁴¹ Zwingli defined the idol as a 'portrait of a strange god' that is established in man's heart before it is expressed externally in a work of art.⁴² According to Zwingli, the inner idol, or 'Abgott', is anything that displaces God, be it money, glory or another deity: as man becomes reliant on these 'strange gods' within, they inevitably lead to some specific external form because of the human need to comprehend reality through material means. What the mind of man grasps is always made into an image: externalization of the inner gods inevitably finds expression in a physical idol.⁴³ For Calvin, too, the root of idolatry is located in man's efforts to domesticate God: man transferred the honour due to God to material objects. One of Calvin's most popular published works against idolatry, *The Inventory of Relics* (1543), compares idolators to unreasoning beasts and considers idolatry an ever-present danger because men are by nature metaphysically deranged.⁴⁴

Zwingli's condemnation of idolatry as first an inner monstrosity leading to outward manifestations is one extreme position in the critical spectrum. Other, mostly Italian, writers discussed the artist's inventive powers in positive terms, using the same metaphors connoting the difference between

the rational intellect and the sub-rational powers of the imagination. For example, Gian Paolo Lomazzo, writing in the 1580s, considered *grotteschi* synonymous with invention and the highest test of the painter's powers: 'because in the invention of *grotteschi* more than in anything else, there runs a certain furor and a natural *bizarria*, and being without it they are unable to make anything, for all their art.'⁴⁵

Most of Lomazzo's contemporaries, however, were more cautious in their assessment of the artist's productive imagination, following the Council of Trent's 1563 decree on images. Invoking the same contrast between reasoned imagination and the capricious fantasy, Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, author of an influential treatise on painting (1582; Latin edition of 1594), introduced extensive new qualifications drawn from the standard authorities. He constructed a theory of style that, in effect, favoured the scientific embellishments of optical naturalism, but retained the artist's right to depict *grotteschi* as long as these vivid representations were not capricious figments of the imagination.

The central point in Paleotti's considerations of *grotteschi*, and similar considerations of the time by Federico Borromeo, Carlo Borromeo, Lomazzo, Pirro Ligorio and other Italian writers, is the distinction between the delusions of a dissolute person and the true visions of a prophet.⁴⁶ This distinction is also the pivotal point in a wide variety of sixteenth-century discussions of art and idolatry by Protestants and by Catholic missionaries. Thomas Aquinas provided the terms of discussion when he differentiated the eternal substance of an object from its accidental, external appearance: the mutation in appearance was external to the visionary's eyes, but the imagination of the dissolute person caused him to mistake the image for the thing itself, thus he was captivated by demonic illusions (*Summa theologica* 3.76.8).⁴⁷ Writing in 1582, Paleotti condemned the representation of monstrous races, of infernal rites and demonic gods, idol worship and human sacrifice for the same reasons: they are evidence of the imagination of a dissolute person.⁴⁸

The significant difference in the sixteenth-century text is that the grotesque sign refers to the maker of the image. Bartolomé de Las Casas, the most famous European apologist for the Americans in the sixteenth century, was acutely aware of the problem of classifying his converts and potential converts as lacking in the higher faculties of the human soul. Though he believed that Amerindians possessed the full potential for civility, he still imposed Christianized norms. The faint but distinct echo of ideas recorded by Vincenzo Borghini, Benedetto Varchi, Vasari and others who contributed to the rising status of painting, sculpture and architecture as liberal arts in Italy, can be heard when Las Casas, citing Paolo Giovio, writes that the Indians possessed skill in the mechanical arts which were a function of the rational soul ('habitus est intellectus operativus') (Las Casas, chapters 61–65). Yet with the same words, Las Casas helped to construct an inferior collective identity

for the indigenous cultures of the 'New World' when, following the neo-Aristotelian distinction between natural slaves and children, he argued that the Amerindians were capable of assimilating European culture only under European guidance.

Case Study #2: The Codex Veytia⁴⁹

There is probably not another surviving example of a work of art that brings together neo-Aristotelian theories of cognition and their visualization in the early modern era as clearly as the featherwork *Mass of St Gregory* discussed above. In most cases, what survives is not evidence of the colonial subject's self-defined rationality but its opposite, the European definition of Amerindians as irrational. Reading these discourses out of the material record is not always easy or obvious. The following brief case study is a diachronically organized investigation into the historical fiction that art offers concrete evidence of the threshold conditions of what it means to be human – and what it means to be less than fully human – understood on European terms. Again, we are dealing with works of art that exemplified the quintessentially baroque qualities of the capricious, the absurd, the delightfully monstrous and strange, in the eyes of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European viewers. And again, period distinctions of style begin to lose their neutrality (and innocence) once the entire chain of signification from the artwork's point of origin to its final destination is reconstructed.

Nearly all the Mexican painted manuscripts known today are located in European collections, where they were originally valued as trophies, gifts, souvenirs – exotic items sought by European collectors. These colonial productions derived from pre-contact screenfold books, a format known in a few copies, none of which are indisputably pre-Columbian in date. Recent scholarship has stressed that the body of Mexican pictorial manuscripts documents a process of transculturation, not simply acculturation.⁵⁰ This process is readily seen in the evidence internal to the manuscripts, which are based on a combination of Nahuatl and European models. These hybrid compilations document the operations by which 'idolatrous' content unacceptable to Christian compilers was isolated from 'scientific' content admired by the same missionary audience and their European patrons. In the process of reframing the indigenous material, not only was the 'idolatry' singled out and objectified, it was gradually eliminated entirely from the reader's consciousness.

Although indigenous manuscripts were produced in a wide variety of formats, they had in common the use of images as a form of writing in themselves. The pictorial material was less intended to be looked at than read: the pictographic and ideographic symbols referred to today as

'glyphs' communicated the names of gods, places, dates, even some abstract concepts, all requiring proficient interpreters to decipher the esoteric images. The Codex Veytia was compiled in 1755 by the Creole nobleman Mariano Fernandez Veytia, an attorney and amateur historian living in Mexico, for his friend the Italian collector Lorenzo Boturini, who requested a copy of the Codex Ixtlilxochitl, a copy of earlier manuscripts partly originating with Book Two of Sahagun's *Historia general*.⁵¹ The Codex Veytia has been universally discounted by modern scholars as a relatively unimportant documentation of pre-Columbian beliefs and practices, due to the manuscript's late date and obviously Europeanized text and illustrations. For the same reason, however, the Codex Veytia serves as a strategic example of the manner in which the discourse of idolatry was silenced, yet insidiously reproduced, destabilizing both European and indigenous forms of knowledge.

The main parts of the Codex Veytia are: (1) an illustrated *veintena* calendar; (2) an unillustrated Spanish account of the same calendar; (3) an account of the daily lives of the people (excerpted from Carlos de Sigüenza y Gongora's 1681 *Chronology of Mexico City*); and (4) additional illustrations including a calendar diagram of the solar year (its astronomical calculations) and three representations of supernaturals and sacred buildings. Veytia and his predecessors misrepresented Mexica culture by Christianizing their genealogical history, translating their cultural narratives into words in the Spanish language, and materially reconfiguring native *amoxtili* formats to European-style bound codices. Above all, the correlation of the native ritual calendar with the Julian calendar and the incorporation of Amerindians into a biblical narrative of cultural origins expropriated and transformed native knowledge into a European frame of reference. However, while its form of presentation was distorted by European values and procedures – for example, the divinatory almanac was transformed into a costume book of gods with descriptions of their attire and attributes – the order, structure and message of the ritual calendar were not of European origin.⁵²

Veytia systematically played down the 'idolatrous' aspects of his sixteenth-century sources, including details of ritual sacrifice and allusions to demonology that the missionaries had introduced, to express a historical vision consistent with Enlightenment critiques of religious superstition.⁵³ In a few cases an entire text has been changed; for example, the third feast, Vgueytocozlituy, eliminates all reference to the sacrifice of breastfed children to 'the demon in whose honor this feast was dedicated'.⁵⁴ Instead, the children are described as taking part in the feast. Veytia eliminated references to human sacrifice, systematically suppressed the words 'devil' and 'demon' (eliminating 22 occurrences from his source), and transformed narratives of ceremonies into etymologies of words and descriptions of costumes.⁵⁵

Veytia's editing of the Codex Ixtlilxochitl to produce the Codex Veytia cannot be evaluated apart from contemporary political circumstances. It is

likely that he eliminated words and information from his immediate source because there were restrictions on material produced, reproduced, sold or exported to Spain that made references to idolatry.⁵⁶ However, the discourse on idolatry preserved in Mexican pictorial manuscripts is complex. Figures alone could pass unnoticed by the censors as mere curiosities. Veytia's verbal descriptions of idolatrous practices overlay indigenous knowledge originally provided to Sahagun by informants whose own memories and knowledge were compromised by distance from the pre-Conquest culture they described. Reframed as phobic projections of European fears, native information was not returned to its indigenous state by successive generations of copying and editing. As the case of the Codex Veytia demonstrates, native knowledge became increasingly attenuated and divorced from its cultural context as it was successively reformatted in conformity with European modes of knowledge production. As Walter Mignolo observes, indigenous, pictorial forms of record-keeping gradually lost their authority to European forms of textual documentation.⁵⁷

The images, however, preserved some elements of the pre-Columbian system of pictorial representation. The correlation between Mexica figures and Spanish text functions most effectively in the Codex Veytia in the representation of the first feast, Xilomalistli, in its *veintena* almanac (Plate 11). The text refers at once to artistic practices and to the false god signified in the accompanying image. The depiction also retains many glyphs, ornaments and details of dress from which the Mexica 'read' their figures. Veytia considered important aspects of his indigenous pictorial source: that the figures function as signs rather than mere illustrations of costumes; that there is a phonetic correlation between the name of the feast and the figure depicted; and that the combination signifies metaphorically. For example, Veytia's text informs the reader that the word *xilotl* means tender ear of corn, thus *Xilomalistli* means 'he who has in his hands *xilotes* or tender ears of corn'. The accompanying figure is represented holding an ear of corn in his left hand. The metaphorical meaning of the word *Xilomalistli* is given as 'like saying that they left the water'.⁵⁸

Unlike the lengthy, detailed account of ritual practices in Sahagun's *Historia general*, however, the Codex Veytia refers only to particular features of the depicted figure. Despite Veytia's revisionist reading of the manuscript tradition to which his copy belongs, for European viewers, two signifieds are still collapsed into one visual sign: the mental capacity of the Amerindian is degraded both for the beliefs recorded and for the artist's limited ability to render an image, considered ingenious yet irrational from a European perspective. At the same time, the otherness of Nahuatl beliefs is neutralized in the mediated process of passing from a native artefact to its European imitation to a thoroughly Europeanized format. Otherness is domesticated and familiarized, the grotesque 'idol' is transformed into intriguing exotic

decorations, which are at the same time objects of ridicule, as a note written on the very first page of the Codex Veytia attests.⁵⁹

The process of successive copying and editing of Mexican painted manuscripts provides a clear case of the manner in which Europeans misrepresented Mexica culture by reframing it within a Western system of beliefs. Veytia himself recognized subtleties of the Mexica semiotic system that his predecessors did not, writing that their pictorial representations 'served them as letters and characters'.⁶⁰ Yet his editorial practices make it clear that he was not interested in preserving accounts of prehispanic beliefs, but in determining the etymology of Nahuatl words, establishing correspondences between their monthly feasts and the Julian calendar, and eliminating all references to idolatry. Perhaps it would be more accurate to describe Veytia's treatment as a self-conscious re-presentation than a slippage or misrepresentation.

Serge Gruzinski argues that the category of 'the grotesque' enables indigenous pictorial traditions to co-exist comfortably with ancient European mythological signs.⁶¹ Yet it is important to bear in mind that this 'co-existence' positions indigenous truth values in a subaltern relationship to European knowledge. The same hierarchical, two-way process of cultural interaction can be discerned in the hybrid style of all Mexican painted manuscripts. They are all culturally hybrid documents, compilations of ideas, statements and representations functioning in an 'enunciative network', to borrow Michel Foucault's formulation, driven by the political importance of defining Amerindians.⁶² The Mexica regarded the figures of their ritual calendar as sacred, while the Spanish inscribed them as false. The use of the category 'grotesque' has traditionally served to label cultural differences, but as this example suggests, the category imposes the ideology of the European observer and occludes from a European point of view at least other cultural meanings. The Codex Veytia, as a strategically chosen case study, is historically significant because it preserves material traces of an Amerindian system of signs at odds with the interpretative studies that frame it internally within the colonial text. The 'cause' or origin of the Codex Veytia as the record of idolatry is erased through editing. What is left in the material record reveals both the compiler's desire to understand Mexica religious practices and his need to disavow them. The Codex Veytia is a site of cultural translation in which two types of semiotic systems, one native American and the other European, are combined. Central to the eighteenth-century compiler's ambivalent attitude is the multivalent, shifting presence of the grotesque figured in its various guises of the ridiculous, the laughable, the monstrous, the abhorrent, the repulsive, the fabulous and the fantastic so familiar to European lovers of baroque art. Far from providing insight into cultural differences as Veytia asserts, projections of conflicting European ideas of the monstrous or grotesque co-exist within the compromised ethnographic record.

Back to the Baroque

Attempts to integrate the parallel trajectories of modern disciplinary formations inevitably lead to questions of whether and how a different historical understanding might re-organize research protocols at the institutional level. Consider in this context the statement by Walter Benjamin in a letter to Max Horkheimer in which Benjamin offered a corrective to his colleague's view of the closure of the past: 'History is not simply a science but also and not least a form of remembrance [*Eindenken*].'⁶³ For Benjamin, the manner in which art and cultural history were to be integrated was the subject of investigation rather than its methodological premise.⁶⁴ Benjamin argued that the work of art is never complete because it is by virtue of its after-history that the work of art's fore-history is recognizable. Since the process of embodying and distinguishing itself from the world is continued in the interpretations of the work, the work of art is never completely present. Consequently, objects of the past cannot be fully possessed and they will always disrupt the efforts of the present to contain them within its categories or forms of narrative. This condition of the artwork's dynamic ongoing production makes the work of art an exemplary case of the impossibility of ever definitively reconstructing or 'owning' the past. For Benjamin, the possibility of a dialectical cultural history depends on utilizing the 'destructive element' of the past's effect on the present. The 'reserve of the past' enables the past to destroy aspects of the present and open it to the future.⁶⁵

Benjamin was responding to a state of emergency – Nazi Germany – but I would argue that our disciplinary formations and protocols are in their own state of emergency today. In the final analysis, the movement of 'supplementarity' includes not only the 'objects' we write about, but also our writing about them. The critique of art first mounted by Reformation writers noted that inanimate material objects might replace human understanding of the world rather than enhance it. If we forget that the discipline is our own creation, we produce a world of dead relations instead of the living conditions that made our objects of study possible in the first place. Left with a magnificent but inert treasury of inherited objects, historians who do not interrogate their inherited categories are consequently unlikely to articulate complex questions of self–other relationships that produced this treasury in the first place. Nor are they likely to develop an interest in the marginal position of the culturally dispossessed and the politically disempowered who leave no provenances of ownership or even their names in the historical record. Let us consider the future of baroque art history in these ethical terms: the cycle of critiquing, re-enacting, and sustaining old practices can lead to amnesia, as suggested by the history of re-making the content of Mexican painted manuscripts so that these complex records of cultural collision remained palatable to succeeding generations of readers. Or it can lead to what Benjamin envisioned as a truly

dialectical cultural history – and what I have suggested can be configured using Deleuze's concept of the baroque 'fold' in its meta-metaphorical sense: a history that accounts for the ways in which we came into possession of our archives from point of origin to our present point of reception.

Notes

* Case study 2 of this chapter is indebted to the work of Carol Komadina Parenteau.

1. The current status of art history among the human sciences, and the status of humanities programmes within universities more generally, might be an occasion for reform or creative rethinking of the discipline, though administrators usually have their sights on the bottom line, not programme building or even intellectual concerns. See the issues discussed cogently by Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1996), especially chapter 2, 'The Idea of Excellence', pp. 21–43; and Samuel Weber, *Institution and Interpretation* (1987), expanded edition (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); and with specific reference to art history, Catherine M. Soussloff and Mark Franko, 'Visual and Performance Studies: A New History of Interdisciplinarity', *Social Text* 20:4 (Winter 2002), pp. 29–46. I have also discussed these issues elsewhere, 'Remaking Art History: Working Wonder in the University's Ruins', in Elizabeth Mansfield (ed.), *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and Its Institutions* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 157–72.
2. As historian bell hooks addresses the crucial issue of self-reflexivity to the field of cultural studies: 'Participants in contemporary discussions of culture highlighting difference and otherness who have not interrogated their perspectives, the location from which they write in a culture of domination, create a field of study where old practices are simultaneously critiqued, re-enacted, and sustained.' (My emphasis.) bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990), p. 125.
3. Erwin Panofsky, 'What is Baroque?', in Irving Lavin (ed.), *Three Essays on Style* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).
4. See discussion in Heather Dubrow and Frances E. Dolan, 'The Term Early Modern', *PMLA* [Publications of the Modern Language Association] 109:5 (October 1994), pp. 1025–7.
5. See my edited volume, *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450–1650* (London and New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995); and, among the burgeoning bibliography since then, a social history approach by Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000). Some of the most significant recent contributions are the result of collaborations undertaken by museums, such as *Venice and the Islamic World, 827–1797*, ed. Stefano Carboni, trans. Deke Dusinberre, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2007).
6. See Joy Kenseth (ed.), *The Age of the Marvelous* (Hanover, NH: Hood Museum of Art, 1991), for a significant contribution, but such studies are relatively isolated and most are restricted to the investigation of collecting practices along the lines of *Wunderkammern* or curiosity cabinets. On the circulation of extra-European objects in Europe, see Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998); Barbara Stafford and Frances Terpak, *Devices of Wonder: From the World in a Box to Images on a Screen*, Getty Research Institute (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2001); Pamela H. Smith and Paula Findlen (eds), *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Science and Art in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2002).
7. This was a central hypothesis of Foucault's first major work, *Les Mots et les Choses: Une Archéologie des Sciences Humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), translated into English as *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970).
8. Citing Elizabeth Cropper, 'Introduction', in Elizabeth Cropper, Giovanna Perini and Francesco Solinas (eds), *Documentary Culture: Florence and Rome from Grandduke Ferdinand I to Pope Alexander VII* (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1992), p. 9.
9. Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995).

10. See the excellent essay on the Spanish Colonial foundations of racism by Walter Dignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Malden: Blackwell, 2005). For visual examples, see Joseph Rishel with Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt, *The Arts in Latin America, 1492–1820*, Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), and my review essay, in *Winterthur Portfolio* 41 (Winter 2007), pp. 305–10.
11. Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, pp. 207–8, reports that when Foucault was asked in an interview of 1978 why he could be so meticulous in periodizing history and remain so sloppy about place, he responded that: 'there is indeed a task to be done in making the space in question precise, saying where a certain process stops, what are the limits beyond which one could say "something different happens" – though this would have to be a collective undertaking.' Collaborative work and collective undertakings are exactly what are needed today and, beyond this, implementing the project invalidates Foucault's and other European assessments of periods, as Stoler demonstrates. She argues that at only one point did Foucault explicitly tie the discourse of internal colonialism within Europe to the fact of its external expansion: at the end of the sixteenth century, one sees a return effect that provided a template for conceptualizing social inequities in Europe. Hence, the inherent 'national duality of French society at war with itself, challenging and reclaiming the universality reserved for the sovereign state for the popular nation'. Foucault located the development of a new technology of biopower in the mid-eighteenth century: the new racism is not tied to mentalities (as cultural production exemplified different peoples in sixteenth-century cultural geographies and art histories produced since the nineteenth century), but linked to the technology of power that manages life in all modern states.
12. As Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, p. 88, also argues.
13. The neutral status of chronology was famously questioned in another context by Hayden White, 'The Fictions of Factual Representation', in *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore, MD and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 121–30.
14. Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (London: The Athlone Press, 1993).
15. Tom Conley, 'Introduction', in Deleuze, *The Fold*, pp. ix–x.
16. Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*, trans. Evelyn Kain, intro. David Castriota, preface Henri Zerner (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).
17. Henri Focillon, *Vie des formes* (Paris: Quadrige & Presses Universitaires de France, 1934); translated as *The Life of Forms in Art* by Charles Beecher Hogan and George Kubler (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1942).
18. In this respect, Focillon's language recalls not just Riegl, but also E.B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, widely disseminated after its 1871 publication, claiming that 'spiritual progress' encompasses technology and the crafts as well as the fine arts. I have discussed the inter-generational attempts of art historians to eliminate lingering traces of Social Darwinism more fully in Farago, 'Vision Itself Has Its History': Race, Nation, and Renaissance Art History', in *Reframing the Renaissance*, pp. 66–88, with additional bibliography. See further the more recent study by Christopher S. Wood (ed.), *The Vienna School Reader: Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s* (New York: Zone Books, 2000).
19. Focillon's famous student (and translator of *The Life of Forms in Art*), the pre-Columbianist George Kubler, was sensitive to the issue of race when he insisted that terms such as *mestizo* and *mestizaje* conflated cultural production with racial content: the transmission of cultural traditions is not a genetic trait. Kubler considered most formal survivals to be 'extinct beyond recall', insisting that what he called the *tequitqui* style of Mexican architecture incorporated only formal residues of pre-Columbian culture. See George Kubler, 'On the Colonial Extinction of the Motifs of Precolumbian Art', in Samuel K. Lothrop et al. (eds), *Essays in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 14–34. Yet the problem of race remained embedded in his labelling of all native elements as 'ornament' lacking symbolic content – for what is strictly ornamental from a European perspective may be meaningful in an indigenous context. Kubler discounted the possibility that contemporary scholars focus on, namely recuperating the complex processes of indigenous resistance and participation. Their studies are aimed at partial and provisional recovery of indigenous contributions to colonial culture. In another frame of reference, still on the topic of making sense of formal elements, E.H. Gombrich was one of the first art historians to criticize the assumption that the mentality of artists, ages or places in which works of art are made can be read from the forms of the works themselves. The gist of his arguments spanning several decades from the 1950s on is that the meanings we simply see in works of art require historical understanding. Gombrich's own notion of cultural schemes – according to which artists 'make' representations of the world that 'match' pre-existing representations – has been

- criticized for its bias toward representational art that does not explain non-naturalistic traditions of image making. Beyond this, even though Gombrich is sensitive to the manner in which cultural choices appear naturalized, he still assumes that his own account of schemes is the 'correct' one. He never examines his own vested interest as a cultural authority. See further discussion in Claire Farago and Donna Pierce, *Transforming Images: New Mexican Santos in-between Worlds* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), pp. 38–9 on Gombrich; pp. 160–61 and *passim* on Kubler.
20. On the synchronistic Catholic religion of the later colonial period regarded as idolatrous practices in Spanish America awkwardly expressed, see Carmen Bernard and Serge Gruzinski, *De l'idolâtrie: une archéologie des sciences religieuses* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1988).
 21. Albrecht Dürer recorded in his diary entry of 27 August 1520: 'Fore I have seen therein wonders of art and have marveled at the subtle *ingenia* of people in far-off lands. And I know not how to express what I have experienced thereby.' As cited in Erwin Panofsky, *The Art and Life of Albrecht Dürer*, 2 vols (Princeton, NJ, 1971), vol. I, p. 209.
 22. On the poetics of *meraviglia*, see E. Tesauro, *Il Cannocchiale Aristotelico* (Bologna, 1675; reprint, Savigliano (Cuneo): Artistica piemontese, 2000); and the excellent discussion by James V. Mirollo, 'The Aesthetics of the Marvelous: The Wondrous Work of Art in a Wondrous World', in Peter G. Platt (ed.), *Wonders, Marvels, and Monsters in Early Modern Culture* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1999). On collecting practices, see Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (eds), *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century Europe* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); and Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (eds), *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).
 23. Although the connections of his arguments to the discourse of idolatry have disappeared from view, Heidegger's widely influential discussion of the origin of the world as picture and Benjamin's contemporary urgent questioning of cultural history, discussed briefly at the end of this essay, both constitute responses to an acute crisis in the history of defining what constitutes the humanity of human beings. Another crisis is being forged on the same anvil of race and aesthetics now. Martin Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art' (1935–36), in *Poetry, Language, and Thought*, trans. and intro. Albert Hofstadter (New York and London: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 15–88. On the current situation evolving out of prison torture in Abu Graib, Guantanamo Bay, Afghanistan and elsewhere, see Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), and Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York and London: Verso Books, 2004).
 24. Lewis Hanke, 'Pope Paul III and the American Indians', *Harvard Theological Review* 30 (1937), pp. 72–3. Hanke notes that the Pope rescinded the penalty of excommunication the following year, but apparently this was not widely reported in New Spain.
 25. Hanke, 'Pope Paul III', pp. 68–71.
 26. See Hanke, 'Pope Paul III'; Robert Schaifer, 'Greek Theories of Slavery from Homer to Aristotle', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 47 (1936), pp. 165–204; Anthony Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination: Studies in European and Spanish-American Social and Political Theory 1513–1830* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), and *The Fall of Natural Man: The Amerindian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 27–56.
 27. Elena Isabel E. De Gerlero and Maria Martínez del Río de Redo, 'Mass of St Gregory', in *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries*, exh. cat., intro. Octavio Paz (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990), p. 260.
 28. See De Gerlero and Martínez del Río de Redo, 'Mass of St Gregory', pp. 159–60, citing earlier bibliography. The iconography includes the arms of Christ, a favourite devotion of the earliest Franciscans in Mexico.
 29. Alan Shestak, *Fifteenth-Century Engravings of Northern Europe*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1968), Cat. No. 214, discussing the present image, Lehrs IX.288.353.
 30. J.A. Andres, 'Die Darstellung des Gregoriusmesse im Mittelalter', *Zeitschrift für Christliche Kunst* 30 (1917), pp. 145–56; see further, Alexander Nagel, *Michelangelo and the Reform of Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 51; and Sonia Pérez Carrillo, 'Aproximación a la iconografía de la misa de San Gregorio en América', *Cuadernos de arte colonial* 4 (1988), pp. 95–106, citing p. 104, n. 1.
 31. Georges Didi-Huberman, *Fra Angelico: Dissemblance and Figuration* (1990), trans. Jane Marie Todd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 25, citing Migne, 78, col. 1128.
 32. See Arthur Anderson in Fray Bernardino De Sahagun, *The Florentine Codex: A General History of the Things of New Spain*, Books 1–12, trans. Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble, Santa Fe, School of American Research (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1950–81), 2nd rev. edn, 1970, discussing Book 10, where Sahagun describes the technique of featherworking in detail. Since I wrote this article I learned that the featherwork technique used in the *Mass of St Gregory* is very different from methods of using whole feathers in Pre-conquest times. See Teresa Castelló Yturbe, *The Art of Featherwork in Mexico* (Mexico City: Fomento Cultural Banamex, 1993). Thanks to Aubrey Wilder for this information.
 33. See Jeanette A. Peterson, *The Paradise Garden Murals of Malinalco: Utopia and Empire in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), pp. 50–65.
 34. De Gerlero and Martínez del Río de Redo, in *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries*, pp. 250–52.
 35. See the excellent discussion in Samuel E. Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001).
 36. I have discussed the iconography in greater detail in my catalogue entry, 'Mass of Saint Gregory', in Donna Pierce, Rogelio Ruiz Gomar and Clara Bargellini, *Painting a New World: Mexican Art and Life 1521–1821*, exh. cat. (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2004), pp. 98–102.
 37. Thomas Aquinas, St. Ia, Q. 78, a.4, response; see Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 62–3, on his source in Aristotle's system of images.
 38. See David Summers, *The Judgment of Sense: Renaissance Naturalism and the Rise of Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 248.
 39. On the presence of St Antonine's books in New Spain, see Donna Pierce, in *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries*, pp. 260–63.
 40. The whereabouts of this object before it appeared on the art market in 1987 are unknown, leading to unlikely speculation that it was captured by pirates on its way to Europe; on which, see de Gerlero and Martínez del Río de Redo, 'Mass of St Gregory', in *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries*, p. 259.
 41. Carlos M.N. Eire, *War against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 84, citing *Huldreich Zwingli's Sämtliche Werke*, eds E. Egli, W. Köhler, F. Blanke, et al. (Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke und Sohn, 1905), vol. 4, p. 96. Zwingli's successors developed his two-fold discussion of idolatry. W.J.T. Mitchell, 'The Rhetoric of Iconoclasm: Marxism, Ideology, and Fetishism', in *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 164, citing Francis Bacon, *The New Organon* (1620).
 42. Zwingli, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4, p. 133. The clearest, most detailed exposition appears in Zwingli's *Commentary on True and False Religion* (1525); see Eire, *War against the Idols*, p. 85.
 43. Eire, *War against the Idols*, p. 84.
 44. *Ibid.*, pp. 211–20.
 45. Gian Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'arte de la pittura* (Milan, 1584), p. 424, cited with further discussion in David Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 62. On *grotteschi* as emblematic of artistic licence to invent, see further David Summers, 'Michelangelo on Architecture', *Art Bulletin* 54 (1972), pp. 146–57; and David Summers, 'The Archaeology of the Modern Grotesque', in Frances S. Connelly (ed.), *Modern Art and the Grotesque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 20–46. Bizarria in Lomazzo's use of the term refers to the artist's idiosyncratic powers to invent using his *fantasia* or imagination, understood in a praiseworthy sense.
 46. In the 1570s, Pirro Ligorio wrote at great length about *grotteschi*, arguing for their allegorical significance, yet he also condemned 'errors against nature'. On Ligorio, see David Coffin, 'Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 27 (1964), pp. 191–210.
 47. See Sabine MacCormack, 'Calderás *La Aurora en Copacabana*: The Conversion of the Incas in Light of Seventeenth-century Spanish Theology, Culture, and Political Theory', *Journal of Theological Studies* 33 (1982), pp. 448–80, on use of the same arguments and sources in Spanish America.
 48. Gabriele Paleotti, in Paola Barocchi (ed.), *Trattati d'arte del cinquecento*, 3 vols (Bari: Laterza, 1961), vol. II, p. 425 (Book 2, chapter 37); see also pp. 382–9.

49. Carol Komadina Parenteau's master's thesis on the Codex Veytia forms the basis for the information and argumentation set forth below. See 'The Codex Veytia (1755): Site of Cultural Translation', MA thesis, University of Colorado-Boulder, 2002; and further, see Farago and Parenteau, 'The Grotesque Idol: Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real', in Michael Cole and Rebecca Zorach (eds), *The Idol in the Age of Art* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 111–37.
50. I follow the terminology introduced by Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahuatl-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989).
51. See Parenteau, 'The Codex Veytia'; José Alcina (ed.), *Códice Veitia: 'Modos que tenían los indios para celebrar sus fiestas en tiempos de la gentilidad recopiladas e expensas del leido Mariano Echeverría y Veitia'* (Madrid: Editorial Patrimonio Nacional, 1986).
52. See Carolyn Dean, *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ: Corpus Christi in Colonial Cuzco, Peru* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 166; Dean makes a similar argument regarding the use of representational realism by Inka caciques (priests) in their costumes, portraits and other colonial artefacts: 'The style may have been partially non-Andean, but the order, structure, and message were not.'
53. Marc Thouvenot, 'Sahagún and the Florentine Codex: An Example of the Non-Discovery of Aztec Writing', in Eloise Quiñones Keber (ed.), *Chipping Away on Earth: Studies in Prehispanic Colonial Mexico* (California: Labyrinthos Press, 1994).
54. Alcina, *Códice Veitia*, p. 130.
55. See further Parenteau, 'The Codex Veytia', pp. 77–81.
56. Roberto Moreno, *Ensayos de bibliografía Mexicana* (Mexico: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Bibliográficas, 1986), p. 52, citing *Indice ultimo de los libros prohibidos* (1790).
57. Walter Mignolo, 'Literacy and Colonization: The New World Experience', in René Jara and Nicholas Spadaccini (eds), *1492–1992: Re/Discovering Colonial Writing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp. 510–96.
58. Translation by Carol Parenteau.
59. The first page of writing in the bound notebook dated 1755 is usually described as its title page, even though the writing may have been added later, not by the compiler but by an unknown person, perhaps his widow, after Veytia's death in 1780: 'The Way that the Indians had of celebrating their feasts in heathen times and the ridiculous figures they used.' The tension that constitutes this manuscript is thus stated at the very point of encounter with the reader at the entrance to the bound notebook: on the one hand, the sacred activities of the Mexica are the subject of the compilation; but on the other hand, embedded in the grammar itself, is the reframing of those beliefs in derogatory terms as 'heathen' activities and the introduction of the indigenous art used to represent them as 'ridiculous figures'.
60. Veytia, 'Discurso preliminar', a prologue to his *Historia* published in 1848: Lord Kingsborough, *Antiquities of Mexico*, 9 vols (London: Robert Havell and Colnaghi, Son and Co, 1848), vol. 8, pp. 160–70.
61. Serge Gruzinski, *La pensée métisse*, translated as *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization*, by Deke Dusinberre (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 206–8.
62. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), p. 91.
63. Howard Caygill, 'Walter Benjamin's Concept of Cultural History', in David S. Ferris (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 76–8.
64. Caygill, 'Walter Benjamin's Concept', p. 79.
65. Walter Benjamin, 'Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian' (1937), *Selected Writings Volume 3, 1935–1938*, eds Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al., 4 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 268.

SECTION IV

BAROQUE TRADITIONS