

# 10

## ***Alia Herculanea:* Pre-Hispanic Sites and Antiquities in Late Bourbon New Spain**

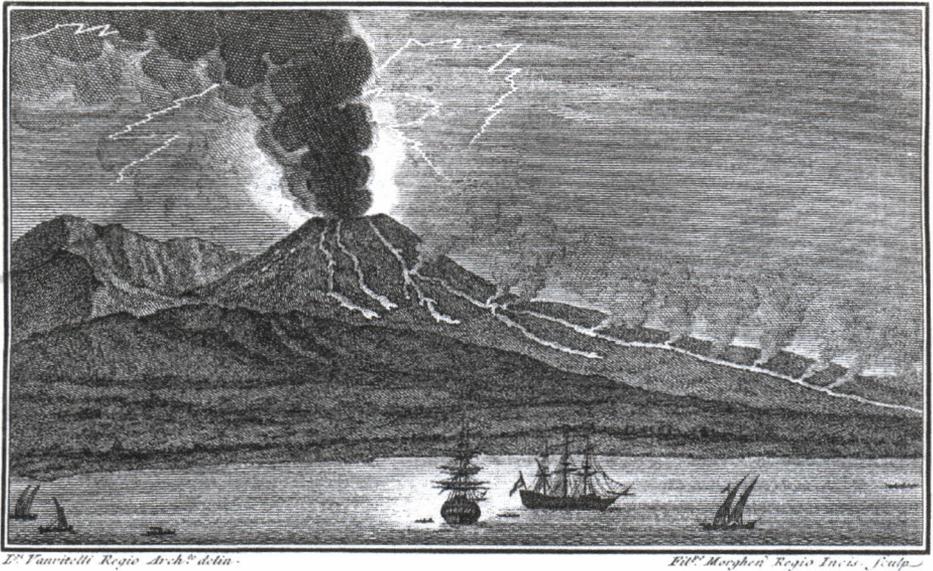
**Leonardo López Luján**

**P**ompeii and Herculaneum are symbols of the archaeologist's bliss, certainty in the discovery of almost the totality of vestiges of ancient life...a veritable dream! These cities are also at the source of the privileged place occupied by archaeology in our civilization. Their spectacular discoveries amazed all civilized men from the last two centuries. There one could see the parade of European arts and letters:

For generations, archaeologists there have refined their methods and modified their objectives. At the start, only small paintings were pulled from the walls and only statues, important objects, gems, and jewels were collected. Today, everything is recovered right down to a dead fly from 1979, and even the roots of bushes

in gardens are excavated to conduct a detailed contextual, computerized record. Pompeii and Herculaneum continue to be the laboratory for archaeological methods, the field of privileged experimentation.

With these words, Tony Hackens (1993:15), vice president of the Archaeology Program of the European Community (PACE), inaugurated academic sessions to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the first explorations at the Roman cities buried in A.D. 79 by the ashes and mud spewed by Mount Vesuvius (Figure 10.1).<sup>1</sup> This meeting took place on October 30, 1988, in the beautiful Italian town of Ravello. That day, in a packed room overlooking the sea, the supreme luminaries of Classical archaeology and art history were gathered together: Luisa



**Figure 10.1.** The eruption of Mount Vesuvius. (Accademia Ercolanese di Archeologia 1757–1792:volume 1)

Franchi, Christopher Parslow, Elisabeth Chevalier, Giuseppe Guadagno, Richard Brilliant, and many others.

Amid great anticipation, the room went silent as the lights were dimmed for the opening presentation to begin. However, the guest speaker did not say a word about Charles of Bourbon (Carlo di Borbone, later Charles III of Spain)—the memorable sovereign of the Two Sicilies—or that in 1738 he entrusted Spanish engineer Roque Joaquín Alcubierre to unearth the marbles beneath his palace at Portici (Figure 10.2). Far from it; the speaker described in detail the discovery of the sculpture of a moon goddess named Coyolxauhqui and how 10 years earlier, in 1978, work had begun to unearth it at the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan.

Clearly, the speaker was Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, who spoke with great knowledge and pride of the past glories of other Moctezumas before him (Hackens 1993:16–17; Matos 2003:15; personal communication 2006). You might ask: Why was he bestowed with this apparently incongruent honor? Why was a Mexican opening celebrations marking the birth of Italian archaeology? The answer might seem obvious: The transcendent significance of archaeological work at the Templo Mayor that revolutionized our knowledge of Mexica civilization certainly merited such a distinction. What is interesting about this event is how it mirrors other connections—much more remote in time—between the archaeology of Italy and that of Mexico.



**Figure 10.2.** Portrait of Charles of Bourbon, king of the Two Sicilies. In the lower right corner, a pick, shovel, and Roman antiquities allude to the Herculaneum excavations. (Accademia Ercolanese di Archeologia 1757–1792: volume 1)

### Two Old Publications

Much earlier, in 1748, the widow of José Bernardo de Hogal from Andalusia published a small but unusual pamphlet at her printing press on the street of Las Capuchinas (today known as Venustiano Carranza), in what is now the historic center of Mexico City (Figures 10.3–10.4).<sup>2</sup> It is a work in quarto format with numbered sheets; it originally had four pages (Anonymous 1748b; see Medina 1989:5:98). In the opinion of historian Roberto Moreno de los Arcos (1970:95),

this was the first publication expressly devoted to archaeology that appeared in New Spain. But this work, significantly, did not deal with a moon goddess decapitated by her own brother; nor was it about a pyramid with two temples on top. Instead, it dealt with the productive excavations at Herculaneum, which had begun a decade earlier, in 1738. The baroque title of the pamphlet was *Relación del maravilloso descubrimiento de la ciudad de Heraclea, o Herculanea, hallada en Portici, casa de campo del Rey de*

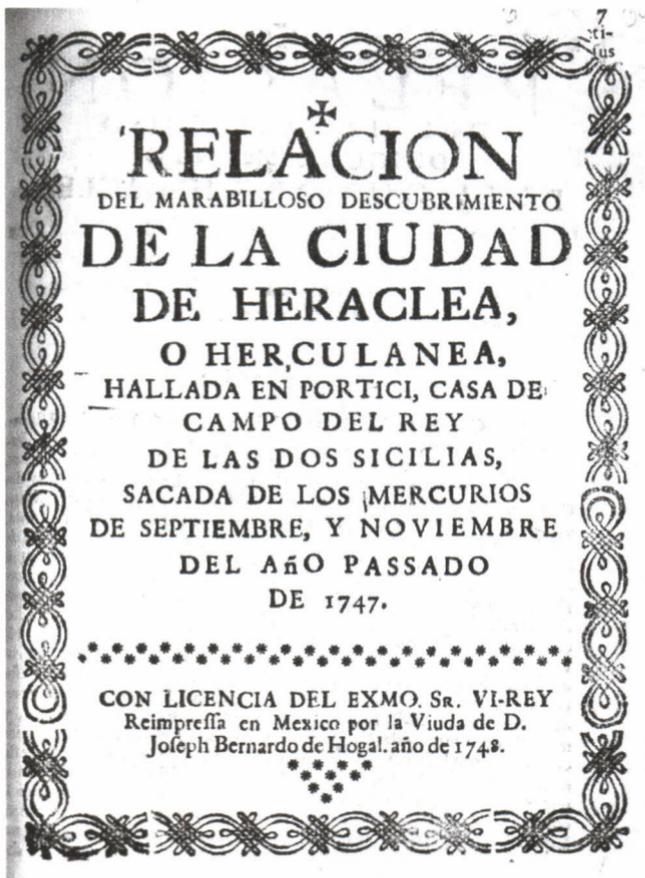


Figure 10.3. Cover of the booklet on Herculaneum published by Hogal's widow (Anonymous 1748b).

*las Dos Sicilias, sacada de los Mercurios de septiembre, y noviembre del año pasado de 1747* (Account of the Marvelous Discovery of the City of Heraclea, or Herculaneum, found in Portici, Villa of the King of the Two Sicilies, Taken from the *Mercurio* of September, and November of Last Year 1747).

As the title states, Hogal's widow used the content of two earlier articles from the Madrid newspaper *Mercurio Histórico-Político*.<sup>3</sup> Today we know that these, in turn, were a translation of two quarto sheets in circulation on the streets of Paris under the title *Relation d'une découverte*

*merveilleuse faite dans le Royaume de Naples* (Account of a Marvelous Discovery Made in the Kingdom of Naples), apparently in July 1747 (Grell and Michel 1993:137–138). Closer examination reveals that the publication contained extracts from apocryphal letters, presumably written by a nonexistent gentleman from Malta and by a fictitious abbot from Orval. These letters describe visits to totally furnished residences, in perfect condition, in an underground city. One even mentions a table set with bread, cheese, and wine that, despite their seventeen centuries of antiquity,

✠

# RELACION

DEL MARABILLOSO  
DESCUBRIMIENTO  
DE LA CIUDAD DE HERACLEA,

Hallada en Portici, Casa de Campo del Rey de las Dos  
Sicilias, Sepultada muchos años há, en muchos pies de  
Ceniza, por una Erupcion del Monte Vesubio,  
Sacada de los Mercurios de Septiembre.  
y Noviembre del año  
passado de 1747.

**A** Qui corren dos Cartas (escriben de Napoles) por dos Estrangeros, tocante à un maravilloso descubrimiento, hecho en este Reyno, que deben dàr mucho gusto à los Sabios, y particularmente à los Antiquarios. La primera de estas dos Cartas està escrita por un Caballero de Malta, en Portici, Casa de Campo del Rey de las dos Sicilias, en 24. de Junio, y contiene en proprios terminos, He visto lo que es unico en la Historia, La Ciudad de Heracles, de que habla Plinio en sus Cartas, y que una erupcion del Monte Vesuvio ( que està situado en Italia, à distancia de cinco, ò seis leguas de Napoles ) entrò en muchos pies de Cenizas se descubre sucesivamente en un parage, que se llama Portici, Casa de Campo del Rey de las Dos Sicilias. Esta Ciudad està entera, y todas las Casas alhajadas, y los Muebles bien conservados. He visto todo lo que estubo preparado para comer al tiempo de la erupcion, como Pan, Vino, Quezo, &c. muy frescos: los Utensilios, la forma de los Vasos de Tierra, muchos utiles, Hilos de Seda para la pesca, muy poco diferentes de los que usamos. Hallase alli un Theatro entero, sus Estatuas de bronze, y marmol, de la mas bella Antiguedad; Pinturas al fresco, sumamente bien cõservadas, con la sola diferencia de que no son mas q de dos colores. Pero esto no parecerà extraño à los que tienen conocimiento del origen de la Pintura, pues es constante, que los primeros Pintores solo usaron desde luego en la confeccion de sus obras de un color solamente, que no era mas que un simple Lapiz; que despues usaron de dos; que luego hallaron el medio de unir to-  
dos

Figure 10.4. Frontispiece of the booklet on Herculaneum published by Hogal's widow (Anonymous 1748b).

continued to be "very fresh"! The abbot took some of these foods with him as a souvenir of his visit, as well as some bits of mural painting. This apocryphal publication made such an impact that the *Mercure de France* republished the letter from the gentleman from Malta, also in July (Anonymous 1747a). However, six months later, a French traveler published in this periodical a missive placing the letter's veracity in doubt (Anonymous 1748a),<sup>4</sup> and shortly thereafter, philosopher Charles De Brosses wrote a series of commentaries on its questionable authenticity in a letter addressed to the

Académie des Inscriptions (Grell and Michel 1993:138).

Hogal's widow's very modest pamphlet, just as all leaflets sold to passersby and clients who frequented the bookshops in Mexico City, fulfilled the brief mission of spreading the latest news. Through the centuries, its ephemeral nature has turned it into an exceptionally rare publication. Fortunately, after months of searching databases and libraries in Mexico and abroad, I was able to locate a copy in the reserve holdings at the Biblioteca Nacional de México, bound in Volume 604 of the vast Lafragua Collection.<sup>5</sup>

Given its enormous importance for the history of Mexican archaeology, I translate it into English in its entirety, as follows (Anonymous 1748b):

Here are spread two letters (They write from Naples) by two Strangers concerning a marvelous discovery, made in this Kingdom, which shall please the Wise, particularly Antiquarians. The first of these two Letters is written by a Gentleman from Malta, in Portici, Country House of the King of the Two Sicilies, on June 24, and it contains as follows:

I have seen what is unique in History. The City of Heraclea [Herculaneum], of which Pliny speaks in his Letters, and that an eruption of Mount Vesuvius (which is located in Italy, at a distance of five or six leagues from Naples) buried in many feet of Ashes[;] a place that is called Portici, Country House to the King of the Two Sicilies, is gradually being discovered; This City is complete and all of the Houses adorned, and the Furnishings very well preserved. I have seen everything that was being prepared to eat at the time of the eruption, such as very fresh Bread, Wine, Cheese, and so forth: the Utensils, the shape of earthenware vessels, many of them useful, Silk Thread for fishing, not very different from what we use [today]. An entire theater was found there, its Statues of bronze and marble, of the most beautiful Antiquity; frescoed paintings extremely well preserved, with the only

difference that they are not more than of two colors. But this will not seem strange to those who are aware of the origin of Painting, for it is shown that the first Painters naturally used in the creation of their works of only one color, nothing more than a simple Pencil; [and] that later they used two [colors], which they then found the means to blend all together.

The text is truncated here, because the copy in the Lafragua Collection contains only the first sheet (pages 1 and 2). Nevertheless, for the reader's benefit, I fill in the missing portion by including the following English translation of the original French publication, a copy of which may be found today in the Bibliothèque Mazarine in Paris (côte A 1519 6e pièce; see Grell and Michel 1993:143–144):

to make their paintings more attractive and to make them more expressive both in clothing and in flesh tones.

This confirms how valued they are for their antiquity.

The King has several Halls of a new palace that he is decorating paved with these rarities, in Parquets & in Mosaics that have been found complete there.

Extract from the Letter from the Abbot of Orval, written in Rome in the month of June of 1747, upon his return from Naples and from Portici.

*This is what he says.* What we have found to be marvelous from there,

& what is the most incredible in the world is an underground City, ruined in the ashes of Mount Vesuvius, during the reign of Titus, around thirty years after Jesus Christ.

This City, of which the historians of that time tell of the destruction, was called Heraclea; the King of Naples made its discovery two or three years ago, & he had it exhaustively excavated; he took and continues to take from there every day ancient Statues of inestimable value, of the most valuable marble, & riches of all sorts, which he uses to decorate his Palaces, & that are of the supreme beauty.

I, who have visited this City, was content to take wheat and bread from that time, which still survive in the houses, & fragments of a painting from a Room.

As for the domestic utensils, furnishings, ornaments of personal adornment, tools that serve in Sacrifices, all of this ordered within the King's cabinets as they are taken from there; because this quest is only conducted very slowly, given the precautions that are taken there to avoid losing anything, because everything there is extremely valued. No mention has yet been made if any manuscripts have been found there: but there should not for a single instant be any doubt that they would have existed, & I am deeply convinced that among all the treasures that will be found in this City, these will be seen as the ones of the greatest esteem.

I have not mentioned anything of the bays of Pozzuoli, Capri, the entrance

of the Cumaen Sibyl, Lake Averno, of the Elysian Fields, & of all of the places consecrated by Fable & by History, no more than Gaeta, Capua and other enchanting spots throughout the Sea, where Cicero's House was located, where he was trapped by Mark Anthony's Soldiers, & whose respectable ruins still survive.

I have visited all of this, judge by what delights you: but detailing it would take up considerable space. Farewell.

Read & approved on July 26, 1747.

CREBILLON

Approval Seen, permission to print, under the registration of the Guild Chamber, on July 26, 1747,

BERRYER.

Registered under the Registry of the Community of Booksellers-Printers of Paris, No. 3166, in accord with the Regulations, & notably to the Council Degree on July 10, 1745, in Paris, on July 18, 1747. CAVILIER, Official Receiver.

At the GONICHON presses, street of La Huchette, the day of Abraham's sacrifice. M.DCC.XLVII.

Hogal's widow decided to make known the consequences of this pamphlet in 1749 (Anonymous 1749). She then published a leaflet with an amusing article containing an equally lengthy title: *Copia de carta del emperador de la China, escrita a nuestro santissimo padre Benedicto XIV, pidiendo a su santidad una princesa de Europa en matrimonio con la solemne Promessa (entre otras) de establecer una*

*mutua correspondencia con su Santidad* (Copy of a Letter from the Emperor of China, Written to Our Most Holy Father Benedict XIV, Requesting from His Holiness a Princess from Europe in Marriage with the Solemn Promise [among Others] of Establishing a Mutual Correspondence with His Holiness). On the back side of this sheet, she included an addendum entitled “Parrapho, que se deve añadir a la Relacion que se imprimió el año pasado de la Ciudad de Heraclia, sacado del Mercurio del Mes de Marzo” (Paragraph That Should Be Added to the Account Printed Last Year on the City of Heraclia, Taken from the *Mercurio* of the Month of March) (Figure 10.5).

In the following, I translate into English the complete text from this leaflet. This document is also bound in Volume 604 in the Lafragua Collection (Anonymous 1749):

The discoveries of Antiquities, as curious as they are well preserved, continued in the ruins, or underground at the ancient City of Heraclia, six miles from this Capital on the part of Mount Vesuvius on the Portici plain, concerning which we have received the following Account. It had been believed naturally that there was nothing more than a Theater at the place that was being dug: that is, in the place that according to the Historians was submerged in an Earthquake, that took place during the Reign of Emperor Titus; but after some time, every day they found fragments of other Buildings, which proved, it was

not merely a simple Theater, but rather an entire City, confused by the fire and the ashes that Vesuvius had vomited on that Country from time to time. This is, without doubt, the ancient Herculanium, or Herculanium (sic), that Anthony in his Itinerary places six miles from our Capital, which corresponds to two leagues in France; and precisely it is this distance that can be seen today. And what is even more convincing are the inscriptions that have been found at the same spot and that read Herculanenses, the name of the inhabitants of the buried City.

It would take a very long time to give a detailed Account of all of the pieces that have been discovered, and so we will be content with speaking of them in general. They consist of large and small fresco Paintings; many Columns and Statues; a set of Kitchen equipment, and wooden Dishes, and an infinite range of other antiquities. Two Colossal Seated Statues are of the greatest perfection. There is a nude Statue of Nero holding the Caduceus in his hand. A large number of liquid measuring tools have been found, that will be of great use in explaining the ancient Writers; a quarto Book or six copper sheets; glass Bottles found full of a thick, black substance believed to be Balsam from Egypt, with which the dead were embalmed. They have even uncovered a Cake in its Oven that was completely reduced to ashes; but despite the ashes one can still see the shape of this Cake. We have in the Architrave of the Theater the name of

*PARRAPHO, QUE SE DEVE AÑADIR A LA RELACION  
que se imprimió el año pasado de la Ciudad de Heraclea, sacado del  
Mercurio del Mes de Marzo.*

SE continúan los descubrimientos de Antigüedades, tan curiosas como bien conservadas, en las ruinas, ó subterranos de la antigua Ciudad de Heraclea, à seis millas de esta Capital por la parte del Monte Vesuvio en la llanura de Portici, sobre que hemos recibido la Relación siguiente.

Se havia creído desde luego, que no havia otra cosa que un Theatro en el parage en donde se profun diza; esto es, en el q̄ segun los Historiadores, fue sumergido en un Temblor de Tierra, sucedido baxo el Reynado del Emperador Tito; pero despues de algun tiempo se encuentran todos los dias fragmentos de otros Edificios, que prueban, que no es solo un simple Theatro, sino una Ciudad entera, confundida por el fuego, y las cenizas que el Vesuvio ha vomitado sobre aquel País de tiempo en tiempo. Este es fundada la antiguo Herculanium, ó Herculanium, que Antonio en su Itenerario pone à seis millas de nuestra Capital, que corresponden à dos leguas de Francia; y y justamente es esta la distancia que se advierte oy. Y lo que mas nos convenice, las inscripciones, que se han sacado del mismo parage, en que se lee Herculaneses, nombre de los habitantes de la Ciudad sumergida.

Seria muy dilatado el dár una Relación circunstanciada de todas las piezas que se han descubierto, y así nos contentaremos con hablar de ellas en general. Consisten en Pinturas al fresco, grandes, y pequeñas; muchas Columnas, y Estatuas; batería de Cocinas, y Vagilla de madera, y una infinidad de otras antigüedades. Dos Estatuas Colosales sentadas, son de la mayor perfección. Hay una Estatua de Nerón, toda desnuda, con el Caduceo en la mano. Se ha recogido una gran porción de medidas de liquidos, q̄ seran de un grande uso para explicar los antiguos Escritores; un Libro de quatro, ó seis hojas de cobre; Botellas de cristal, que se encuentran llenas de una materia espesa, y negra que se cree ser el Balsamo de Egipto, con que se embalsamaban los muertos. Se ha desenterrado hasta un Pastel en su Honro, que estaba todo reducido à cenizas; pero sobre la ceniza se veia aún la figura del Pastel. Tenemos en la Architrave del Theatro el nombre del que le hizo edificar, como tambien el de el Architecto. Se lee en letras grandes: THEATRUM ORCHESTRANI DE SUO.... L. RUFUS L. FILIUS, y poco despues en letras mas pequeñas UMILIUS P. J. ARCHITECT. Pero lo mas superior de todas estas Antigüedades es un Cavallo, Estatua equestre de marmol, trabajada con una delicadeza, q̄ quasi excede à la de Antonino de Roma.

El descubrimiento de esta Mina inagotable de Antigüedades en todas especies se hizo por casualidad, havrá 50. años, cabando para abrir los Cimientos de un Palacio que se iba à edificar.

El Rey ha hecho venir de Roma un Hombre muy habil para gravar en talla dulce las piezas mas singulares que se han encontrado, y se encontraren, por cuyo medio se darán al Público, y los Estrangeros se hallarán en estado de ver de una vez lo que nosotros no descubrimos sino sucesivamente.

Impressa en Madrid, y por su Original en Mexico, con licencia del Superior Gobierno, por la Viuda de D. Joseph Bernardo de Hogal año de 1749.

Figure 10.5. Leaflet on Herculaneum published by Hogal's widow (Anonymous 1749).

the man who had it built, as well as that of the Architect. It reads in big letters: THEATRUM ORCHESTRANI DE SUO... L. RUFUS L. FILIUS, and a little after in smaller letters UMILIUS P. J. ARCHITECT. But the greatest of all of these Antiquities is a Horse, a marble Equestrian statue, worked with a delicacy that almost exceeds that of [Marcus Aurelius]

Antoninus of Rome. The discovery of this inexhaustible Mine of Antiquities of all sorts was made by accident, some fifty years earlier, while digging to make the Foundations of a Palace that was going to be built.

The King summoned to Rome a Man highly skilled to make intaglio prints of the most singular pieces that

have been found, and that may be found, through which they will say to the Public, and to Foreigners who will be in a position to see at once what we discovered gradually.

Printed in Madrid, and through its Original in Mexico, with the permission of the Higher Government, by the Widow of D. Joseph Bernardo de Hogal in the year of 1749.

### **Expanding Awareness of the Herculaneum Excavations**

How is it possible that the first “news” of Herculaneum to reach New Spain was actually apocryphal letters? First we should take into account the fact that the excavation of this site—regarded as the supreme archaeological operation of the eighteenth century—served to bolster the image of Charles of Bourbon as a sovereign as sensitive to the arts as he was powerful. Following a clever strategy of political propaganda, Charles identified his government (1734–1759) with the glorious imperial past of Rome: he promoted the recovery and exhibition of antiquities, erected archaic-style buildings and monuments, published the Latin classics, and had himself portrayed in the style of Roman emperors or of recently found sculptures (Allroggen-Bedel 1993:38–39; Mora 1998:48, 62; 2001:27–40).<sup>6</sup>

In this context, the ruins of Herculaneum were treated as overflowing treasures, ripe to be flaunted before one’s own and foreigners alike (Figure 10.6). In fact, in swift, changing undertakings, galleries in the solidified pyroclastic flows were perforated to exhume the greatest possible

number of frescoes, marbles, and bronzes to adorn Portici Palace. Unfortunately, in the first years of the excavation, field records were limited to inventories of objects and to cursory drawings of the contexts in which they were found (see Fernández Murga 1964, 1989; Parslow 1995).

To be expected, rumors of the spectacular discoveries soon spread, which attracted aristocrats and men of letters from Germany, France, and England. These outsiders were seen with mistrust by the court, because the king wished to monopolize the publication of artworks that were coming to light day by day. Therefore, he deployed a double strategy (Allroggen-Bedel 1993:35–37). On the one hand, teams of local scholars and illustrators were organized to prepare luxurious volumes sponsored by the Crown. On the other, the time allowed for visits to the museum and the humid underground galleries was restricted, and carefully examining objects, taking notes, and doing drawings were prohibited. Visitors skirted these obstacles by setting inscriptions, sculptures, and pictorial compositions to memory and reproducing them graphically and textually as soon as they left the premises.

And so a true black market of archaeological information was produced. In it, real news circulated on par with imprecise or distorted accounts and even outlandish lies (Chevallier 1993:58; Fernández Murga 1989:32; Gordon 2007; Grell and Michel 1993:133–134). The consequence was the publication of unauthorized missives and descriptions, some of them apocryphal, in

the *Nouvelle Litterarie* from Florence, the *Philosophical Transactions* from London, and the *Mercure de France* from Paris, among others.

The luxurious official publications of the Regia Stamperia of Naples appeared many years later. In 1752 five volumes of the *Prodromo delle antichità d'Ercolano* (Prodrome of the Antiquities from Herculaneum), written by Ottavio Antonio Bayardi, were released.<sup>7</sup> In 1755 the *Catalogo degli antichi monumenti dissotterrati dalla discoperta città di Ercolano* (Catalog of the Ancient Monuments Unearthed at the Discovered City of Herculaneum), by the same author, appeared. Finally, from 1757 to 1792, the eight-volume in-folio series *Le Antichità di Ercolano esposte* (The Antiquities Discovered in Herculaneum), prepared by

the Accademia Ercolanese, was published (Figure 10.7). Lavishly illustrated, beginning with the image of the archaeologist-king on the frontispiece (Alonso Rodríguez 2010a: figure 2), this series was given by Charles to members of the European aristocracy, scientific institutions, and a small number of other individuals.

Because they were not available on the market, few copies of these series reached the Americas. One of them was requested from New Spain on August 26, 1785, by engraver Gerónimo Antonio Gil, who wished to have a copy for the library of the Academy of the Three Noble Arts of San Carlos (Angulo Iñiguez 1935:21–22; Báez 1974:107–110; 2003:42–45; Fuentes 2002:54).<sup>8</sup> However, the professors and students of the budding academy had to wait until November 1790,

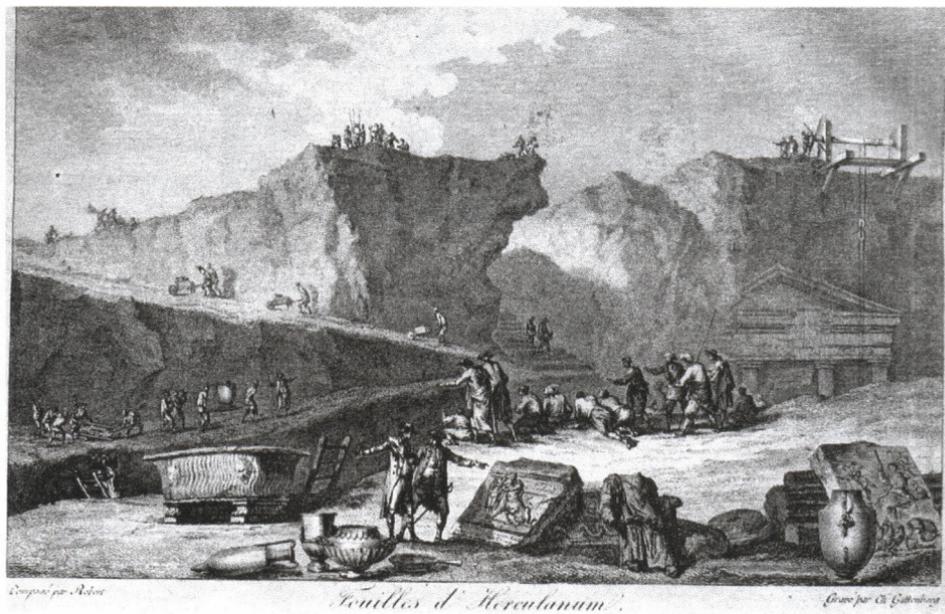


Figure 10.6. The Herculaneum excavations, according to a vignette from Saint-Non (1782).



**Figure 10.7.**  
Frontispiece of the  
first volume of *Le  
Antichità di Ercolano  
esposte*, 1757.

when three crates containing books, prints, mathematical kits, drawing instruments, and an archaeological piece reached New Spain, all sent from the port of La Coruña under the orders of Ignacio de Hermosilla (Angulo Iñiguez 1935:27; Báez 2003:46–48).<sup>9</sup> The second of these crates included, among other contents, “5 volumes of Herculaneum” in a large format, bound and with a nominal value of 2,800 pesos, while the third crate had “3

volumes of Herculaneum;” *Les édifices antiques de Rome* by Antoine Desgodetz, valued at 520 pesos; and an “Etruscan” vessel with an estimated value of 450 pesos. Fortunately, these specimens are still preserved and may be consulted in the reserve holdings of the Biblioteca Nacional de México.<sup>10</sup> Another copy of the series, it is worth mentioning, was in Thomas Jefferson’s library at Monticello in Virginia (Winkes 1993:127).

### Herculaneum in the Imaginary of New Spain and Guatemala

The two apocryphal publications of Hegal's widow, together with the books from the royal presses in Naples, had a major impact on enlightened individuals in New Spain, awakening or reviving their interest in local archaeological vestiges and the pre-Hispanic past. This renewed interest is evident in the writings of local scholars and men of the cloth, who praise the antiquarian work of Charles, who by that time had become Charles III of Spain (1759–1788).

For example, the multifaceted Mexican writer José Antonio Alzate y Ramírez (1777–1778:title page) referred to the excavations at Herculaneum at the beginning of his *Descripción de Xochicalco*, dedicated to Viceroy Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa. There he states:

The conservation of antiquities is one of the highest of every government in which the sciences flourish; the wealth that was distributed, and the will that was established to extract and preserve the [antiquities] of Herculaneum at the time our Sovereign reigned in Naples confirm this truth and highlight it even more if we heed the public notoriety, which then, the wise Monarch was to serve to Reign in Spain, he generously gave up a small ring embellished with a precious stone found in those ruins so that nothing be separated from the precious cabinet.

Alzate refers here to an event described by all historians in different

versions. (See Allroggen-Bedel 1993:37; Colleta 1975:124–125; Fernández Murga 1989:145–146). When Charles boarded the ship that took him to Spain to ascend the throne of his brother Ferdinand VI in 1759, it was noted that he still wore a ring with a precious cameo found in the excavations that he had worn for seven years. At that instant, he decided to turn it over to his minister Tanucci, so it could be returned to the museum of Portici, demonstrating that archaeological relics were the property of the state and not the king.<sup>11</sup>

Alzate again referred to the cities destroyed by Vesuvius and their rebirth in several articles in his *Gazeta de Literatura* in 1792 and 1793. In them he mentioned the “frescoes, which have resisted time, [and] humidity” (Alzate 1831a [1792]:411), and he expressed surprise over the “fruit, blackened wheat, and two whole loaves of bread” that had managed to be preserved because they had not come into contact with air (Alzate 1831c [1793]:81). He also spoke of the aim of “a certain subject” to excavate at Otoncalpulco, near Mexico City, dismissing it by saying that it did not deserve to be recorded by an individual “but by the magnificence of the Bourbons, sovereigns who have drilled Herculaneum and Pompeii, opulent cities, to show us what men executed two thousand years ago, and that nature has hidden with the aid of arms more powerful than our artillery” (Alzate 1831b [1792]:459).

In 1792 the astronomer and antiquarian Antonio de León y Gama published his *Descripción histórica y cronológica*

*de las dos piedras* (Historical and Chronological Description of the Two Stones), in which he considers the explorations of Alcubierre as worthy of being imitated in Mexico. León y Gama (1792:1–2) states:

I have always thought that in the main plaza of this city, and in the neighborhood of Santiago Tlatelolco, many precious monuments of Mexican antiquity should be found. . . . If excavations were carried out, as they have done for this purpose in Italy to find statues and fragments that recall the memory of ancient Rome and are currently being carried out in Spain, in the Villa [small town] of Rielves, three leagues from Toledo, where they have discovered several ancient pavements. How many historical monuments would be found from Native antiquity? . . . And how many treasures would be discovered?

Later, León y Gama (1792:4) confessed that he had written his treatise on the Calendar Stone and Coatlicue:

to shed some light on antiquarian literature, which is promoted to such a great extent in other Countries, and that our Catholic Monarch Charles III (may he rest in peace) being King of Naples promoted with the celebrated Museum that he founded at Portici, at the cost of immense amounts of money, of the excavations

he ordered be conducted in the discovery of the ancient cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, buried for so many centuries beneath the ashes, stone, and lava from the eruptions of Vesuvius.

The fame of the Bourbon excavations went beyond academic circles in New Spain. An interesting case in point is that of canon Gaspar González Cándamo, who raised the subject in a sermon he gave to parishioners in the Cathedral of Guadalajara in 1789, when he finally heard the news of the death of Charles III. Archaeology occupied center stage in the praise he bestowed on the monarch's legacy (González Cándamo 1789:7; see Estrada de Gerlero 1993:62–65):

What new and unforeseen school of thought does not open to the Arts in the Herculaneum Museum? The renowned cities of Heraclea and Pompeii, buried for so many centuries in the abysses of the earth, offer the most outstanding examples of the magnificent simplicity of antiquity. What costs can be skimmed from this glorious enterprise? Or what work can be denied to bring to light those precious monuments that have contributed so much to the advancement of the Arts and that will be preserved in glory to the end of time in the illustrious name of their august discoverer?

Five years later, on December 12, 1794, Fray Servando Teresa de Mier gave his

celebrated sermon in the Colegiata de Guadalupe, in which he declared that Saint Thomas had evangelized the indigenous population prior to the arrival of the Spaniards in the New World. As proof of such a controversial idea, he referred to the meaning of the Sun Stone and the Coatlicue (Teresa de Mier 1997:28–29):

But before beginning to prove my four propositions, to proceed with clarity, we need to establish who were the Mexican Indians, when and where did they come from, if some of the apostles preached the Gospels to them, and which [apostle] it could have been. Do not think, sirs, that I am going to become tangled up in the intricate and interminable disputes printed on this, all [of them] are in vain, since those monuments from the time of public paganism and accredited [and] excavated in the earlier viceroyalty and much more precious than all of those from Herculaneum and Pompeii have given us Ariadne's thread to emerge from the labyrinth. Especially that large rock that is in the patio of the university, and that teaches amply about the ruin of the ancient capital of the Indians in the earthquake of the death of Jesus Christ and the foundation of Mexico four hundred years later, and that other large rock that is at the base of the new tower of the cathedral is even more interesting, and it contains the true *teomoxtli* or book of God that Mr. Gama has recently wished to rake up in his periodicals after having seen

it so many times that he needed to try to explain it.

This assessment is highly significant at a time in which the creoles, in their desire for independence, imbued the indigenous past with new value.

News of Herculaneum and Pompeii also featured prominently among the inhabitants of the captaincy general of Guatemala. Italian architect Antonio Bernasconi clearly had the catastrophe caused by Mount Vesuvius very much in mind when he visited the ruins of Palenque (Cabello Carro 1992:36). In the report he sent to Governor José Estachería on June 13, 1785, he wrote that the Maya city did not succumb to an eruption but rather to other causes (Bernasconi 1992 [1785]:114):

At none of the hills and Hillocks where I traveled in that ancient Place have I observed any sign of volcanic eruption, nor any other indication that suggests violent destruction, and thus it seems more likely that the abandonment of the inhabitants produced its decline, which may very likely be attributed to the Indians based on the shape of the statues, the way of making the mounds, and the lack of order of streets and blocks; nevertheless the construction of the buildings is not completely uncivilized in the art with which they were built.

Similarly, Domingo Juarros (1808:14), in his *Compendio de la historia de la ciudad de Guatemala* (Compendium on the

History of the City of Guatemala), also noted similarities and differences between Palenque and Herculaneum:

STO. DOMINGO PALENQUE. Town of said Province of *Tzendales*, in the confines of the Intendancy of Ciudad Real, and Yucatan. . . . It has become famous for the vestiges of a very opulent city, that has been given the name of the *City of Palenque* found in the lands of its jurisdiction: undoubtedly the court of an Empire, although of unknown Histories. The mentioned Metropolis was another *Herculaneum*, although not like this buried under the ashes of Vesuvius, but rather hidden in a vast desert: until the mid-eighteenth century [when] some Spaniards entered that aforementioned solitude, they found themselves, with great wonder, before the façade of a magnificent city of six leagues in circumference.

### **The True Impact of the Herculaneum Excavations**

This compilation of references to Herculaneum makes it clear that the enlightened thinkers of New Spain and Guatemala were well aware of what was happening in southern Italy. Their writings show their surprise at the richness and excellent preservation of the archaeological contexts, as well as their great admiration for the king's undertakings in the recovery and safeguarding of Roman antiquities. However, it's worth asking if these excavations, beyond their presence in the collective imagery of the time,

had any other type of repercussion in the rest of the Spanish Empire. According to Gloria Mora (1998:108–115, 122) and Jaime Alvar (2010:315–322), the impact was null in Spain in terms of archaeological methodology and the antiquities salvage projects organized by the Crown or the academies. Paradoxically, Charles III did not undertake any similar initiatives when he ascended the Spanish throne: he never sponsored the archaeological explorations under way at sites such as Mérida, Sagunto, Segóbriga, and Itálica (see Mora 1998:89–106). In reality, the only significant influence that can be perceived is in literary allusions to the discoveries in Italy and in news on the donation of the volumes of *Le Antichità* to academies and important individuals.<sup>12</sup>

In the case of Peru, Joanne Pillsbury and Lisa Trever (2008:205–210) noted suggestive similarities between the innovative archaeological plans of Chan Chan contained in the 1781–1789 work of Baltasar Jaime Martínez Compañón y Bujanda, the bishop of Trujillo, and the precise drawings of Herculaneum done by military engineers Roque Joaquín de Alcubierre, Pierre Bardet de Villeneuve, and especially Karl Weber. The authors recall, however, that the first plans of the Roman site were published in 1797 and that specifically those done by Weber did not come to light until the nineteenth century (Pillsbury and Trever 2008:206; see Parslow 1995:7, 197). Even though they do not dismiss the possibility that an original plan of the Bourbon excavations might have been seen in Spain by Martínez Compañón or by the Spanish

engineers who worked for him at Chan Chan, they are of the opinion that such similarities could well have been the result of the use of generalized cartographic conventions in European military engineering and mining. After a lengthy discussion, Pillsbury and Trever (2008:214) reach the important conclusion that “the Vesuvian excavations ultimately had a limited impact on New World archaeology.”

In the case of New Spain, there do not seem to be any direct connections: drawings and copper engravings that illustrate the descriptions of pre-Hispanic monuments owe little or nothing to the plates from volumes printed in Naples. It seems clear that artists trained in the traditional guild system and in the Academy of San Carlos represented the monuments of Xochicalco, El Tajín, Tenochtitlan, and Teotihuacan following graphic conventions taken from scientific and technical disciplines such as medicine, botany, geography, metallurgy, and industry, through the constant flow of publications from Europe and the United States.

Nor is there any attempt to emulate the objectives, techniques, and archaeological methods employed at Herculaneum. In New Spain, for example, one never sees what Alain Schnapp (1993:242–247) has rightly defined as “the tradition of hunting objects, of swiftly unearthing the largest possible number of ancient works.” To a good measure, this is due to the fact that vestiges equivalent to the highly coveted Roman marbles, bronzes, and murals did not exist in pre-Hispanic archaeological contexts. Similarly, at

Mesoamerican sites, mining techniques used to excavate galleries more than 24 m deep were useless. The science of numismatics, which sought coins and medals, dates, places, genealogies, areas of political domination, and historical events, was inapplicable. And it was impossible to undertake epigraphic repertoires of inscriptions recorded on monuments through a complex writing system as was the case for Roman antiquities.

In New Spain there was no clear-cut state policy when it came to antiquities. With the exception of the very late Royal Antiquarian Expedition (1805–1809) led by Captain Guillermo Dupaix from Luxembourg, the viceregal government never planned or oversaw archaeological undertakings (Fauvet-Berthelot et al. 2012).<sup>13</sup> However, we cannot deny a certain interest in monuments from the pre-Hispanic past on the part of the local authorities, such as that resulting from the accidental discovery of the Calendar Stone and the Coatlicue. Through a series of legal documents that we have recently published, we know that Viceroy Revillagigedo ordered an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the discovery of these monuments in the Plaza de Armas, that he personally promoted the preservation of the monoliths in the university atrium and at the cathedral, and that he had the monuments drawn, measured, and weighed (López Luján 2011b; Matos and López Luján 2012). Unlike the king of Spain, however, Revillagigedo did not finance the study of the sculptures; nor did he sponsor their publication through the Academy of San Carlos.

Now that we have already mentioned this institution, this is a good time to point out that students there were inculcated with an education that went against the religious aesthetic of the baroque; instead they were instilled with expressions inspired by Graeco-Roman antiquity (Fuentes 2002:17–22; Lombardo 1986:1248–1249). For this purpose, the academy used its spectacular didactic collections of paintings, prints, medals, plaster casts, and books brought from Europe (Angulo Iñiguez 1935:19–21; Uribe 1990:91, 125–126). Besides the volumes on the excavations at Herculaneum mentioned earlier, the library also contained books on the antiquities of Rome and Palmyra, as well as works by Vitruvius, Serlio, Vesalius, Piranesi, and Winckelmann. Among the plaster casts were copies of the Laocoön, the Venus de' Medici, the Castor and Pollux group, and the gladiator, among many others.

Today, the academy's archives house hundreds of drawings done by students from that time (Fuentes 2002). Many of them are exercises in which students copied reproductions of sculptures from Herculaneum. There are also many copies of plates from Palladio's treatise on architecture and Vignola's work on the canon of the five Classical orders of architecture. Within this rich body of images is a rather clumsy ink sketch of a Roman temple in ruins drawn by José María Caballero in 1805 (Fuentes 2002:113, cat. 68).

In this seminal environment, what is highly significant is that members of

the academy had reappraised major material works from the indigenous past that were unearthed in Mexico City at the end of the eighteenth century. I am referring specifically to the so-called *Indio Triste*—the fantastic animal known as the *ahuizotl*, a serpent, and a toad—sculptures that are today located in the Museo Nacional de Antropología and in the Museo de Escultura Mexicana at Santa Cecilia Acatitlan (López Luján 2012:97–98; 2015:94–121). An album of antiquities produced by Dupaix included ink and gouache drawings of these sculptures, accompanied by glosses indicating that they were exhibited in the academy alongside plaster casts of Graeco-Roman sculptures (López Luján 2011a; 2015).

Before concluding, I would like to briefly examine the case of Pedro José Márquez, a Jesuit, who, together with his fellow members of the order, was expelled from New Spain in 1767 (Flores 2014; Gutiérrez Haces 2010). During his exile in Italy, Márquez became a well-known expert in ancient Roman architecture, particularly the work of Vitruvius (Márquez 1972:17–20; Romani 1998:132). His research led to eight treatises, some of which were published.<sup>14</sup> What is interesting for the present discussion is that Márquez, after receiving the descriptions of El Tajín and Xochicalco published in Mexico City, set about the task of composing the essay entitled *Due antichi monumenti di architettura messicana* (López Luján 2008a, 2012; Márquez 1804, 1972; Romani 1998:137–153). There he

explained the function and significance of the Pyramid of the Niches and the Temple of the Feathered Serpents based on analogies drawn with Egyptian, Hebrew, Greek, and fundamentally Roman antiquity. The objective of these comparisons was to disavow the differences between ancient peoples, sustaining that all of them sprang from a common origin and reaching the conclusion that they therefore possessed the same historical dignity. Based on this logic, Márquez often attempted to reduce the pre-Hispanic world to the categories of Graeco-Roman civilization (Gutiérrez Haces 1988:194; Romani 1998:144–149). For example, he identified the balustrades of the Pyramid of the Niches as two narrow stairways that flanked a wide central stairway (Márquez 1804:7). Based on this error in perception, the

Jesuit proposed that the supposed lateral stairways were used to go up and down the pyramid, while the central stairs were interpreted as wide stands for seating, as in Roman theaters, amphitheaters, and temples (Figure 10.8).

Márquez also dealt with the significance of the niches, calculating a total of 380 based on data published in the *Gazeta*. Using this total, he proposed that 365 niches represented the days of the year, that 13 equaled days of leap year corrections that would exist in a 52-year cycle, and that the 2 remaining niches alluded to a pair of 52-year cycles (Márquez 1804:11–12). In this way, he concluded the calendrical function of the pyramid, similar to the one that Italian architect Giovanni Marliano da Nola (1478–1559) attributed to the Arch of Janus in Rome. The four facades of

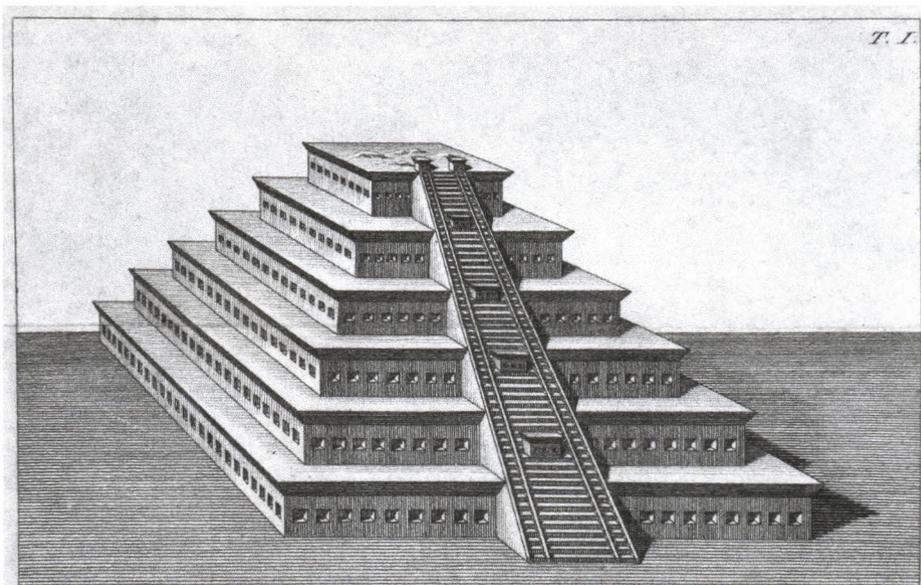


Figure 10.8. Copperplate engraving of the Pyramid of the Niches, El Tajín (Márquez 1804:plate i).

this triumphal arch inspired Marliano to interpret them as symbols of the seasons, while the 12 niches on each side were seen as the months.

When it came to Xochicalco, Márquez (1804:19–20) believed the Temple of the Feathered Serpents was a setting for human sacrifice (Figure 10.9). However, he clarified his statement by adding that the pre-Hispanic people never reached the exorbitant number of victims recorded in the Spanish chronicles and that the Romans also committed the same acts to honor Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill in Rome. Márquez (1804:22–24) ended by saying that one should not underestimate the grandeur of pre-Hispanic civilizations based on the state of degradation of their modern descendants, for the same phenomenon was recorded in Greece.

### Final Considerations

We can conclude that, at the end of the viceregal period, the enlightened creoles of New Spain set about the task of exalting pre-Hispanic civilizations, often comparing them to the Classical world. This reappraisal of the past should be understood as a strategy full of political meaning, for it promoted the creation of a national spirit and instilled the desire for independence. It should be mentioned, however, that Spaniards born in Spain were always there to show Spaniards born in the Americas who the true heirs to ancient Rome were. A well-known event confirming this took place in 1794: Michele La Grua Talamanca, Marqués de Branciforte, who was originally from Sicily, came to Mexico City as the new viceroy (Ciaramitaro

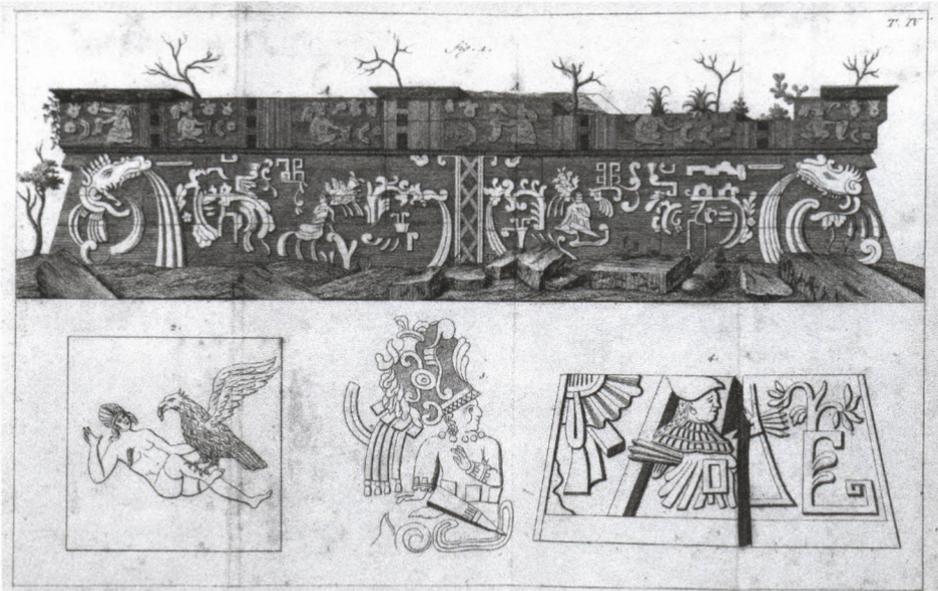
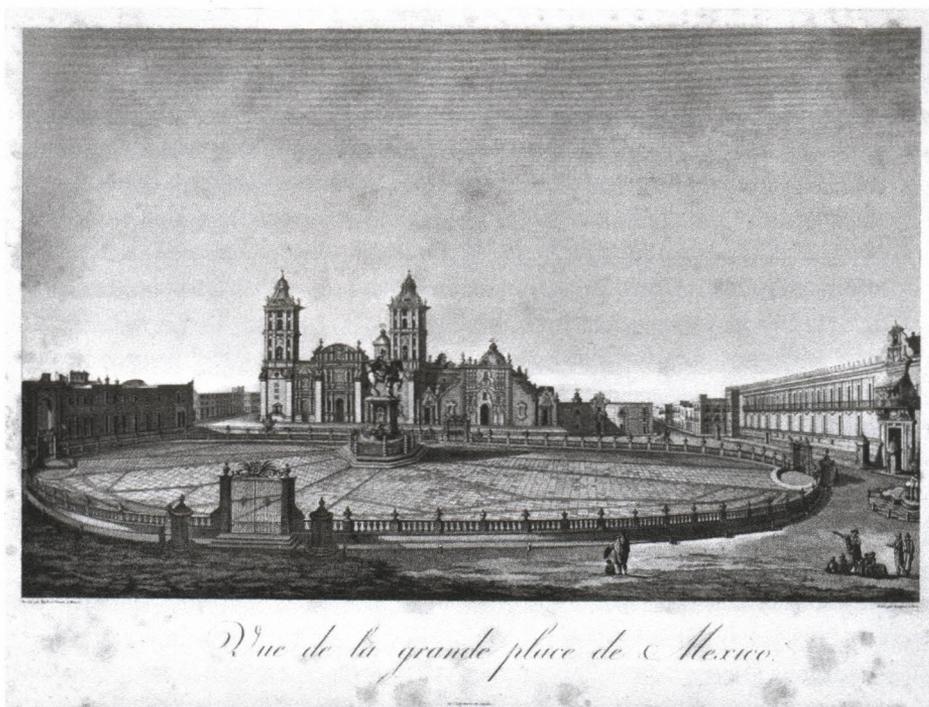


Figure 10.9. Copperplate engraving of the Temple of the Feathered Serpents, Xochicalco (Márquez 1804:plate iv).



**Figure 10.10.** Copperplate engraving of the plan of main plaza of Mexico City (Humboldt 1810).

2008:151). Among his new provisions, he set about again modifying the Plaza de Armas (Figure 10.10). For this end, he commissioned architect Antonio González Velázquez to build an enormous ellipse with a railing to emulate the one in the plaza of the Capitoline Hill in Rome (Uribe 1990:62–64).

Then Manuel Tolsá was commissioned to create an equestrian statue of the king of Spain inspired by the portrait of Marcus Aurelius, also on the Capitoline Hill.<sup>15</sup> After years of delays, the monument was cast in August 1802 and finally inaugurated in November 1803. The *Gazeta de México* said that this was a statue worthy of the golden age of Greece and Rome (Escontría

1929:55). Alexander von Humboldt (1986:338–340; see Holl and Fernández Pérez 2002:188), who had struck up a friendship with Tolsá and attended the ceremony, recorded his opinion in his travel diary: “The animation and beauty of the horse is indescribably beautiful—a genuine Andalusian breed, and stepping forward so gallantly, so naturally and nobly. The king commanding, dominating, and at the same time as clement and generous as Marcus Aurelius.” In this sculpture, 16 feet high, the figure of King Charles IV appeared dressed as a Roman emperor, while his spirited horse trampled the quiver and eagle that symbolized the subjugated native population of New Spain.<sup>16</sup>

## Notes

- 1 A summary of this research has been published in López Luján (2008b).
- 2 José Bernardo de Hogal founded his printing press in 1721. He soon earned a reputation for himself and was honored by being named *impresor mayor* of the city. After his demise in 1741, his wife ran the establishment until 1755 (Medina 1989:1:clix–clxv, clxx).
- 3 The *Mercurio Histórico Político* appeared without interruption from 1738 to 1830, although it changed its name to *Mercurio de España* in 1784. Founded by Salvador José Mañer, this periodical based its content on translations to Spanish of articles taken directly from the *Mercure de France*.
- 4 This Parisian periodical was founded in 1672 by Donneau de Visé under the name *Mercure galant*. In 1724 it changed its title to *Mercure de France*, and it was published regularly until 1832. It is worth mentioning that in the issue corresponding to October 1747, three additional articles were published on the Herculaneum excavations (Anonymous 1747b, 1747c, 1747d).
- 5 Bound in parchment, this volume brings together different printed matter that for the most part measures 21 cm (8¼ inches) in height.
- 6 For a similar strategy pursued in southern Italy some 400 years earlier by Alfonso V, see John Pohl's essay in this volume.
- 7 Considering the long delay of this publication, Bayardi's descriptions and interpretations are disappointing and insufficient (Fernández Murga 1989:123).
- 8 In 1778 Gil was entrusted with establishing and directing a school of engraving in the Real Casa de Moneda de México (Mint of Mexico). For this purpose, the Castilian engraver left Spain, bringing with him several manuals and works by Spanish and Italian treatise writers; 26 bas-reliefs, heads, and small figures cast in plaster; 80 drawings of heads, hands, and feet; more than 1,000 prints; and thousands of medals and coins, many of them Greek and Roman (Angulo Iñiguez 1935:3–4; Bargellini and Fuentes 1989:25; 1990:19; García Melero 1992:271). This collection, which in 1783 went on to form part of the patrimony of the recently established Academy of San Carlos, increased noticeably in the colonial capital—for example, with publications seized from convents as a result of the expulsion of the Jesuits. Faced with the imminent opening of the Academy in November 1785 and regarding these didactic materials as insufficient for teaching purposes, Gil made an ambitious new request from the Spanish Crown in his capacity as director of the new institution (Angulo Iñiguez 1935:21–22; Báez 2003:42–45; Bargellini and Fuentes 1989:26). As for publications, he asked for “the set of Herculaneum and Pompeii from Naples,” the “Antiquities of Rome by Piranesi and other works that he has published,” *The Ruins of Palmyra* by Robert Woods, and the book of the travels of Antonio Ponz, among others. In addition, among the plaster casts, he requested the shipment of “the *Seated Mercury* that came from Herculaneum,” “the Ganymede from Herculaneum,” and the “castings of the urns and bas-reliefs that exist in the Academy of Herculaneum.” This request has its antecedent in 1782 (Báez 1974:107–110; Bargellini and Fuentes 1989:25–26; Fuentes 2002:54).

- 9 As is widely known, the sculptor from Valencia Manuel Tolsá set sail from Cadiz the following year, in 1791, with a much more important cargo for the Academy of San Carlos in Mexico (Alonso Rodríguez 2010b:241–242; Angulo Iñiguez 1935:25–27; Bargellini and Fuentes 1989:26–28, 59, 65–66, 77–78, 81; Escontría 1929:61–66). It consisted of 73 crates containing mainly plaster casts (192 according to the inventory), including copies of at least 11 bas-reliefs and 10 three-dimensional sculptures found in the ruins at Herculaneum. Furthermore, there were prints, art materials, instruments, and to a lesser extent books.
- 10 Marked as from the Academy of San Carlos, the following were preserved: the *Catalogo* by Bayardi (1755); a set with volumes 1–7 of *Le Antichità* of the Accademia Ercolanese di Archeologia (1757–1779); another set with volumes 1–5 and 7; and a book on Rome by Desgodetz (1779 [1682]). Other treasures in the reserve holdings in the Biblioteca Nacional de México include the five volumes of the *Prodromo* by Bayardi (1752) and Volume 8 of *Le Antichità* (1792), although their origin is unknown. On the other hand, the Biblioteca Palafoxiana in Puebla possesses Bayardi’s *Catalogo* and volumes 1–7 of *Le Antichità*. However, it is possible that these copies might have entered the library around 1850 as part of the collections of Bishop Francisco Pablo Vázquez. The bishop could have acquired them in Rome in the 1820s, when he was negotiating with the Holy See for recognition of the independence of Mexico (Jesús Joel Peña Espinosa, personal communication 2006). As for the “Etruscan” vessel, its present whereabouts are unknown.
- 11 According to Gloria Mora (1998:113), this anecdote can be refuted by taking into account that in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid there are several objects cataloged as from the collection of antiquities from Herculaneum and Pompeii that Charles III had brought from Naples. Among them there are portable mosaics, carbonized fruit, and Greek vases. (See also Alonso Rodríguez 2010b:238–240; Alvar 2010:316, 319.) Documentation also attests to the fact that Camillo Paderni sent antiquities to Charles III in Madrid. It is worth adding that in the Academy of San Fernando in Madrid, there was a great collection of drawings and plaster copies from Herculaneum given by the king (Alonso Rodríguez 2010b:241; Bargellini and Fuentes 1989:26; García Melero 1992:270–271). According to Urrea (1989:116), Charles III donated a similar collection to the Academy of San Carlos in Valencia in 1776.
- 12 Mora (2001:50) emphasized that while the excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii were widely publicized by Charles De Brosses in France, Sir William Hamilton in England, and Johann Winckelmann in Germany, in Spain the drawings of Abbot Antonio Ponz and those of Fray José Ortiz y Sanz were never made known. Curiously, none of the Spanish travelers who visited the works described the ruins in detail.
- 13 We know now that most of Dupaix’s archaeological expeditions in New Spain, his famous *correrías particulares*, took place between 1791 and 1804 and were self-financed. (See López Luján and Gaida 2012; López Luján and Pérez 2013; López Luján and Sánchez 2012.)

- 14 Márquez's publications on ancient Roman architecture are *Delle case di città degli antichi Romani, secondo la dottrina di Vitruvio* (1795); *Delle ville di Plinio il giovane* (1796); *Dell'ordine dorico ricerche* (1803); *Esercitazioni architettoniche sopra gli spettacoli degli antichi* (1808); and *Illustrazioni della villa di Mecenate in Tivoli* (1812). Márquez also published a treatise on astronomy (*Tavole nelle quale si mostra il punto del mezzo giorno e della mezza notte, del nascere e tramontare del sole, secondo il meridiano di Roma*, 1790) and an Italian translation (1804) of Antonio de León y Gama's *Descripción histórica y cronológica de las dos piedras . . .*
- 15 Although rather unconvincingly, Bérchez (1989:45) has proposed that Tolsá's sculpture was inspired by a small-scale equestrian statue of Charles III carved in wood, today held in the Academy of San Fernando in Madrid and attributed to Manuel Álvarez, Juan Pascual Mena, or Juan Adán. Other authors have proposed, in contrast, that Tolsá's sculpture was modeled after the bronze of Louis XV of France by François Girardon (Uribe 1990:106).
- 16 For this reason, the statue was on the point of being destroyed in 1824—three years after the consummation of Mexico's independence. Everything was resolved when the decision was made to eliminate the eagle by hammering it off, which could not have been done with the quiver because it was positioned at one of the points of support for the horse's leg. The statue was then moved to the patio of the university (Escontría 1929:58).

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# **Altera Roma**

**Art and Empire from Mérida to Mexico**

**Edited by**

**John M. D. Pohl and Claire L. Lyons**

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