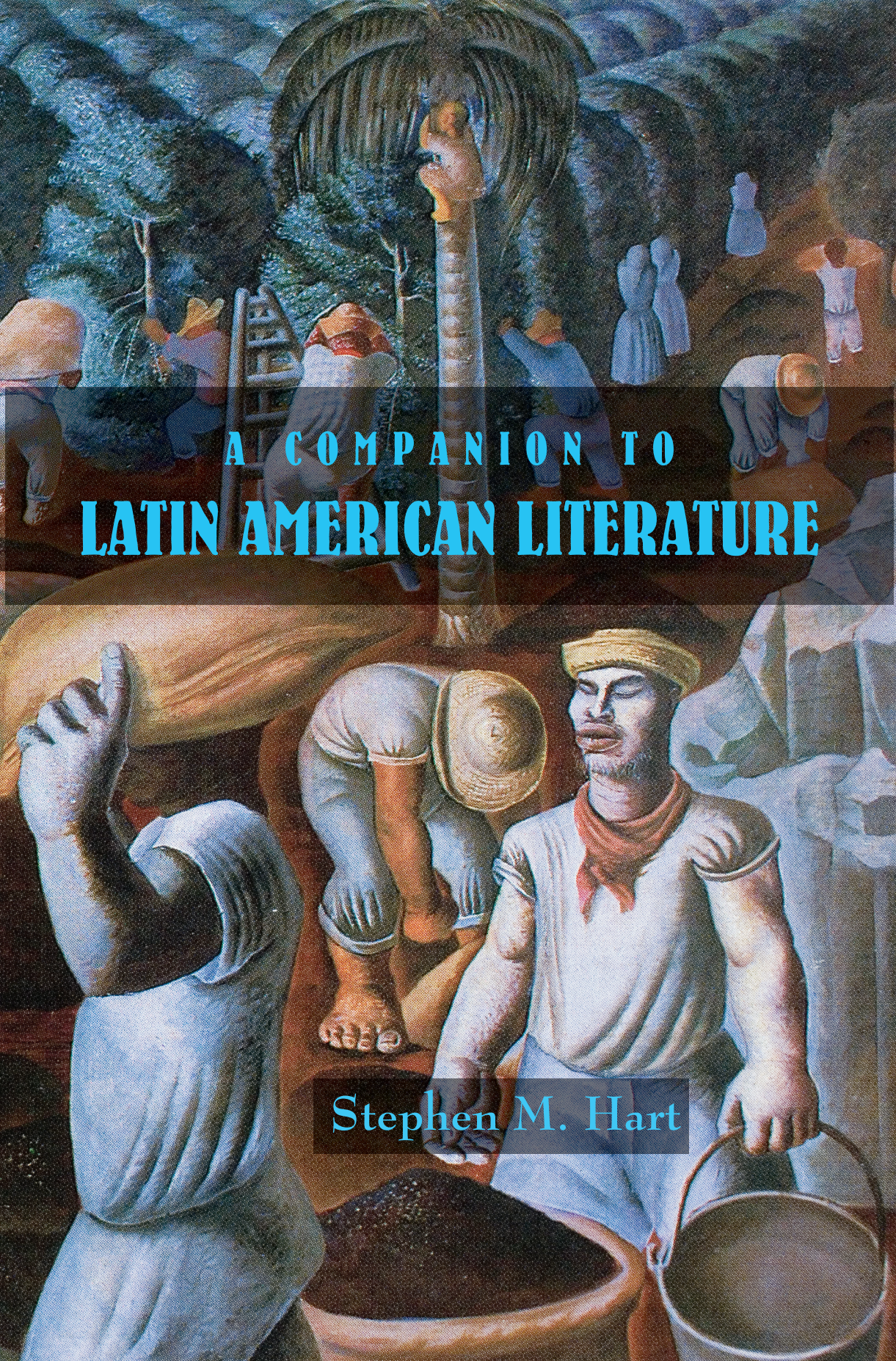

A COMPANION TO LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Stephen M. Hart

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TAMESIS

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For Jordan

FOREWORD

I take this opportunity to thank the librarians at the libraries I visited while conducting the research on which this book is based, at the Fondo Reservado, in the Biblioteca Nacional, Mexico City, the Biblioteca Nacional in Bogotá, Colombia, the Bodleian, Oxford, the University Library, Cambridge, the British Library, London (and particularly Barry Taylor), the Stetson Collection in the University of Florida Library, and the National Libraries in Buenos Aires, Lima and Rio de Janeiro. Special thanks to my former colleagues in the Department of Spanish and Italian, University of Kentucky, whose willingness to discuss some of the concepts explored in the first edition of this book helped me to make fewer errors than would otherwise have been the case, and allowed me to appreciate the value of Colonial literature which, by and large, is not studied in Britain. I also express my gratitude here to those scholars who guided me in the preparation of this second edition. Thanks are due to Jason Wilson for advice about recent developments in Latin American literature, to João Cezar de Castro Rocha, John Gledson, David Treece, Claire Williams, Aquiles Alencar Brayner and Else Vieira, for their advice on trends in contemporary Brazilian literature, and especially to Maria Aparecida Ferreira de Andrade Salgueiro for her hospitality during my research trip to Rio de Janeiro in the spring of 2006. I am grateful to the Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, and to João Candido Portinari, President of the Portinari Project for permission to reproduce Portinari's *Coffee* as the jacket illustration. I gratefully acknowledge the support of my research trip to work in the archives of the National Library in Rio provided by the University of London Central Fund, the UCL Graduate School, the Arts and Humanities Dean's Fund and the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies. Thanks too are in order for the generous assistance of the editorial team at Boydell and Brewer, especially Ellie Ferguson. Lastly, I thank the anonymous reviewers of the manuscript whose wisdom saved me from many an error; the others, of course, are mine.

S.M.H.

INTRODUCTION

Unpacking the Canon

This book is designed for the moderately specialised reader of Spanish and Portuguese who wants an introduction to the main works of the Latin American literary canon. It takes its point of departure from an historical coincidence, namely that the discovery and colonisation of the area of the earth now called Latin America largely coincided with the birth of a new technology for the transmission of knowledge, namely, printing. The world has never been quite the same since Johann Gensfleisch zum Gutenberg printed his forty-two-line Bible in Mainz, Germany, in 1452–56 (Steinberg 21). Gutenberg's discovery of movable type spread like wildfire in the Europe of his day; as Steinberg suggests, '[w]ithin fifteen years after Gutenberg's death in 1468 printing presses had been set up in every country of western Christendom from Sweden to Sicily and from Spain to Poland and Hungary' (Steinberg 27). Twenty-five years after Gutenberg's death, the American continent was discovered and it is no exaggeration to state that the discovery, conquest and colonisation of that land took on a unique quality in the imagination of the West precisely because of the recent discovery of print. The newly-created presses of Europe printed copies of Christopher Columbus's letters to the Catholic Monarchs, they circulated printed versions of Hernán Cortés's letters, as well as Theodor de Bry's images of Brazilian cannibals, which were eagerly bought by the new mercantile classes then emerging in Europe. An earlier age had to be content with the Bayeux Tapestry. As this work hopes to show, the printed word was a crucial component in the cultural configuration that Latin America would gradually create over the next five centuries.

The present study is different from previous studies in three main ways. The typical survey of Latin American literature published in the last twenty-five years fails to address two issues which recent research in adjacent disciplines has discovered to be central to the notion of canon formation that underpins, consciously or not, any literary survey. The first issue concerns the treatment given to pre-1900 literature and, in particular, the indigenous cultural tradition in a study of the Latin American literary canon. For example, in her important study, *An Introduction to Spanish-American Literature* (1969), Jean Franco devotes her introduction to literature of Spanish America written between the conquest and *c*.1750 (Franco 1–27), and, within that, gives barely four out of 390 pages to the treatment of indigenous literature (Franco 5–8). Most critics agree that, in its ability to combine general sweep with detailed discussion, Franco's study is unmatched. Since the publication of *Spanish-American*

Literature, however, our notion of the Spanish-American literary canon has drastically altered and the importance of colonial and indigenous literature has increased accordingly. The present study reflects that trend and gives more space to literature written before the nineteenth century and, in particular, before the conquest. It also attempts to integrate a discussion of a period of literature (the post-Boom novel, poetry and theatre in the 1970s and 1980s) which was not treated in Franco's book simply because of its time of publication, as well as giving more space to significant women writers, especially in the modern period.

The second point of difference between the present study and previous works concerns the issue of evaluation. In this study I have not been exhaustive in selecting works for inclusion. Enrique Anderson-Imbert, in the introduction to his major study, *Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana* (1954, 1966, and 1982) has identified two of the main dangers which an historian of literature risks, namely, of writing on the one hand 'a history of literature containing very little history' or, on the other, 'a history of literature containing very little literature' (Anderson-Imbert, vol. 2, 441). Especially in the modern period, Anderson-Imbert, in his desire to be all-inclusive, discusses writers whose work is of minimal literary value; he mentions, after all, in his introduction that he has included a 'farrago' of secondary writers. I have decided not to follow that path in the present study, preferring to limit the number of writers included in order to give them the space they deserve. For the benefit of the general reader, I have also included a very brief plot summary of the novels discussed in order to clarify the subsequent analysis. The list of canonical authors studied here is based on a survey conducted in 1995 of the main literary works taught in departments of Spanish in United States research institutions.

The third point of difference between my analysis and previous studies concerns the social value of the literary work, the way in which it functioned within the society which gave it life, and (to the extent that it is possible) the role that the writer played in that society. What the present study attempts to do is provide a continuous, brief narrative about the main writers and works of the Latin American canon, and frame that historical narrative in the context of literary print culture (for further discussion see Stephen Hart, 'Literary Print Culture in the Spanish Colonies', 'Literary Print Culture in Spanish America 1880–1910', and '"El oficio de escribir"'). Footnotes and reference to the criticism have been kept to a minimum, while some indication of the main bibliographical trends has been made in the Suggestions for Further Reading. It is hoped that this overview of Latin American literature will be useful as a refresher course for the student preparing for masters and doctoral exams in Spanish – especially if he or she also minors in Portuguese – as well as the general reader.

Some words here about the term 'literature' as used in this study are necessary. A number of manuals do tremendous injustice to the proper understanding of the term 'literature' when they define it in universal, anti-historical terms. The entry on literature in the *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europea-Americana*,

for example, begins by stating that literature is a work of art written for aesthetic effect only ('Género de producciones del entendimiento humano, que tienen por fin próximo o remoto expresar lo bello por medio de la palabra'; 1076), but then contradicts itself by giving space in the same article to ecclesiastical literature, judicial literature, and even military literature (1076–87). Through its recurrence to universalisms (for example, literature is a 'medio universal de expresión de todas las ideas'; 1077), the article in effect remains blind to the premise on which its argument is built. A more historicised approach to the meaning attached to the term literature clearly becomes necessary. In effect, the idea of literature changed during the Romantic period in Europe as much as in South America and, as a result, the term itself came more and more to signify a literary work written for aesthetic effect, a meaning which has remained with us until the present day. As Terry Eagleton has pointed out, literature, before the nineteenth century, meant 'the whole body of valued writing in society: philosophy, history, essays and letters as well as poems' (Eagleton 17). However, 'by the time of the Romantic period, literature was becoming virtually synonymous with the "imaginative"; to write about what did not exist was somehow more soul-stirring and valuable than to pen an account of Birmingham or the circulation of the blood' (Eagleton 18). The first recorded example of literature used in this sense in English was in 1812, although the term itself was in existence by at least the fourteenth century.[1] A similar situation exists for Spanish and Portuguese. Though 'literatura' is recorded as in use by 1490, it was in the nineteenth century that its more narrow, specialised sense of 'literary work written for aesthetic effect' came to replace the earlier more inclusive meaning of 'something written'.[2]

The three main differences mentioned above – reference to pre-Columbian literature, emphasis upon representativeness at the expense of all-inclusiveness, and the use of literary print culture as a paradigm to contextualise individual works – should not detract from the fact that the present book is offered as a complement to other studies (in particular the *Cambridge History of Latin*

[1] The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines literature as 'writing which has claim for consideration on the ground of beauty of form or emotional affect', noting that this sense is 'of very recent emergence both in English and French' (VIII, 1029). The older original meaning of literature as 'acquaintance with letters or books' is recorded as early as *c*. 1375 (VIII, 1029).

[2] 'Literatura' appears in Alonso Fernández de Palencia's *Universal Vocabulario en latín y en romance* (1490); see Corominas and Pascual, III 636. 'Letras' to mean 'carta misiva' is recorded in Spanish as early as 1250, and 'letrado' is already found in medieval texts by Berceo (1220–50) (Corominas and Pascual, III 636); a similar development is evident in Portuguese. This more narrow notion of literature emerged during the nineteenth century as a direct consequence of the specialisation of other fields of knowledge; the social sciences, for example, were born in the nineteenth century and, as a result of their mapping out their territory, literature was forced to retreat into a smaller, more cramped, domain. The term most frequently used in Spain, Portugal and Latin America during the pre-Romantic period ('letras') meant anything printed and included what we now understand by the term literature (i.e. writing normally published and written for aesthetic effect), as well as other disciplines such as law, history, religion and science.

American Literature, in three volumes, edited by Enrique Pupo-Walker and Roberto González Echeverría, and published in 1996, and the *Encyclopedia of Latin American Literature*, edited by Verity Smith and published in 1997) on that complex protean creature, Latin American literature.

The aim of this second edition has in the main been to supplement the original narrative of the history of Spanish American literature with an analysis of the most significant works of Brazilian literature. The sections as arranged in the first edition have largely been retained, but – as a result of the synergy produced by juxtaposing the analysis of certain key authors – the arrangement of the sections changed. In a number of sections the decision was taken to include discussion of important Spanish American works which, for reasons of space, could not be addressed in the first edition. Many of these additions were based on recommendations which surfaced in the various reviews that the first edition received. My hope is that the new sections will persuade the reader of the wealth and beauty of the best works of Brazilian literature. If it inspires future scholars to take up and critically test some of the ideas expounded here, in the classroom or elsewhere, its purpose will have been well served.

1

The Amerindian Legacy and the Literature of Discovery and Conquest

Christopher Columbus, on behalf of the Spanish monarchy, landed in the Bahamas on 12 October 1492, and Pedro Álvares Cabral, on a charge from the Portuguese throne and with plans drawn up by Vasco da Gama, sighted the eastern coastline of mainland South America on 22 April 1500; thus began the discovery and conquest of the New World. While neither man was aware of the nature and extent of the land they had discovered – they were both seeking the spices of the East – their respective governments were quick to claim these territories. Since the land discovered by Álvares Cabral was well within the zone assigned to Portugal by the papal Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494, it was claimed for Portugal and baptised Vera Cruz, a name which was soon abandoned in favour of Brazil, after the red dyewood (*pau-brasil*) which grew abundantly there. The first descriptions of these new lands appear in Columbus's famous letter of 1493 to Luis de Santangel and Vaz de Caminha's equally famous letter of 1500 (both of which are discussed in more detail below), and it is striking how similar their accounts are, particularly with regard to the notion of the primitiveness of the inhabitants of this newly discovered world. Both Columbus and Vaz de Caminha comment on their lack of clothing, their docility and the facility with which they might be Christianised (itself predicated on the notion of their cultural bereftness). While the suggestion that the Amerindians were somehow bereft of human culture would be revised substantially in the case of the later Spanish discoverers and conquistadors – particularly when they came into contact in the 1520s and 1530s with the Mayas, the Aztecs and the Incas whose cultures were highly developed (in terms of cultural memory, social organisation and scientific knowledge [i.e. of astronomy]) – it remained a hermeneutic benchmark in Brazil. Indeed there was one feature of Amerindian culture which appeared to many of the European observers who came to the New World to confirm its 'primitive' condition, and this was the prevalence within the New World – from the Tupi Indians of the east to the Incas of the west – of cannibalism.

The most substantial difference between the various ethnic groups of Amerindia concerned their level of competence in the area of cultural memory which, in Europe at least, was epitomised by the book. While none of the Amerindian cultures possessed an alphabetic script some did have cultural artifacts that resembled the European book in some respects. The codices of

the Mayas and the Aztecs, for example, were sacred books which dealt with the ritual calendar, divination and the actions of the gods; their notation was a combination of pictography, ideograms and phonetic symbols. They were kept in temples and used by the priestly caste in their divine ceremonies. Some indication of the hermetic nature of the knowledge they encapsulated is suggested by the following passage in the *Cantares mexicanos*:

> Yo canto las pinturas del libro
> lo voy desplegando
> cual florido papagayo,
> hago hablar a los códices.
> (quoted in Oviedo, *Historia*, vol. 1, 35)

Because of their religious content only a small number of the codices escaped destruction by the Spanish. In 1562, for example, Bishop Diego de Landa held a triumphalist *auto-da-fé* in Maní, Yucatan, in which he burned all the Maya books with hieroglyphic writing that he was able to capture. As Landa recalled in chapter LXI of his *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*: 'Hallámosles gran número de libros de estas sus letras [hieroglyphs], y porque no tenían cosa en que no hubiese superstición y falsedades del demonio, se los quemamos todos, lo cual sintieron a maravilla y les dio mucha pena' (Diego de Landa 117–18). There are only three Maya codices and a handful of pre-Columbian Aztec codices now in existence (for more information see 'The Codices' below). As a result of the brutal rupture brought about by the conquest, many of these repositories of cultural knowledge – ranging from the *quipus* (Incan accounting tools made of rope) to Maya texts – remain undeciphered to this day.

Much of what we now know about Amerindian culture comes down to us filtered through a vast enterprise of transliteration by the Portuguese and Spanish invaders. This process can be compared to that of the last will and testament taken from a dying man whose language is imperfectly understood by the scribe: the testimony is meant to summarize the whole of the individual's previous life and, given the circumstances, it is inevitably characterized by gaps. Add to this the role of the scribe who transliterates the testimony and who – unconsciously or not – moulds the narrative to fit his own view of the world, and we can see how difficult it becomes to separate out the various strands within this process of transculturation. When considering the texts below, we must bear in mind that all were created in the process of transliteration which occurred after the conquest and produced what might be described as a 'negative transparency' of Amerindian culture. Even the sacred verbal texts, such as the *Popol Vuh*, were transliterated *after* the conquest, though their textualisation was based on an oral account which had been passed down through the generations.

The best example of this transliteration process is the work of Bernadino de Sahagún (1499–1590) who was one of the first Franciscans to arrive in New Spain. Soon after his arrival there in 1529 he quickly learned Nahuatl, the

language of the Aztecs, and, with the help of twelve chieftains from the town of Tepulco and four interpreters, he began to write the *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* (1569). The chieftains provided him with a verbal as well as a pictographic account of the history of their people; Sahagún incorporated the images into his text, transliterated the Nahuatl account and provided a translation into Spanish in an adjacent column. A vast encyclopedia about the history and customs of the Aztecs, the *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* is particularly valuable since, in the final chapter, it describes the conquest of Tenochtitlan from the Aztec point of view, and it has been used by León-Portilla to good effect in his compilation *Visión de los vencidos* (see 'The Amerindian View of the Conquest' below). Given its hybrid nature – it is a chronicle since it has an historical narrative, and a codex since it has illustrations (thus it is also known as the *Codex Florentino*) – the *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* offers an unparalleled glimpse into the transculturation process which occurred in Spanish America after the conquest.

The *Popol Vuh*

The most important of the Amerindian sacred verbal texts is the *Popol Vuh*, literally 'Book of the Community', but customarily known as the Sacred Book of the Quiché Maya. The original Quiché manuscript of the *Popol Vuh* had been transliterated probably by one Diego Reynoso, a member of the Maya priestly caste, possibly between 1554 and 1558, and was discovered by Father Francisco Ximénez in the late seventeenth century while he was serving as parish priest of the village of Santo Tomás Chichicastenango in the highlands of Guatemala. He copied it and then produced his own dual-language version (Quiché original with Spanish translation) of the original manuscript. From that point Ximénez's manuscript lay dormant in the library of the university of San Carlos in the city of Guatemala until discovered by Carl Scherzer, a Viennese doctor, who published the Spanish text in Vienna in 1857. This book was followed four years later by the publication in Paris of the original Quiché text together with a French version, introduction and notes by Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg entitled *Popol Vuh, Le Livre Sacré et les mythes de l'antiquité américaine, avec les livres héroïques et historiques des Quichués* (1861).[1] Any hope that the *Popol Vuh* might be a completely pre-Columbian text is dispelled in the introduction in which the (unknown) author refers to writing 'under the Law of God and Christianity' (*Popol Vuh* 79–80). The text has, since Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg's suggestion, been divided up into four parts and, although there is nothing in the text to indicate that this is necessary, this

[1] The original copy of the manuscript – i.e. that probably transcribed by Diego Reynoso – has been lost but Father Ximénez's original handwritten text is now held in the Edward E. Ayer collection in the Newberry Library of Chicago.

division clarifies its structure. Part I begins like the Old Testament book of Genesis with the creation of the human race, although in the *Popol Vuh* this is only successful on the third attempt; the first two attempts, with mud and wood respectively, do not produce the desired result, and it is only when ears of corn are used that the creation is to the satisfaction of the gods (I, i–iii, 81–93; III, i–ii, 165–69). As with Genesis, the *Popol Vuh* stresses the continuity between the first examples of mankind, in this case the four men Balam-Quitzé, Balam-Acab, Macutah and Iqui-Balam, and the Quiché people of which the author is a member, mainly through the genealogy lists given in III, iii, 170–73, and IV, xii, 228–35. These creation stories are mixed freely with stories from individuals of the principal houses of the Quiché peoples such that the empirical and the supernatural, history and religion, are merged to form one narrative. The world of the Quiché is presented as coming to an end with the invasion of the Spaniards. The arrival of Pedro de Alvarado, called Donadiú, the sun, by the Quiché since he burned their kings (IV, xii, 230), coincided with the twelfth generation and, as the narrative concludes,

> this was the life of the Quiché, because no longer can be seen [the book of the *Popol Vuh*] which the kings had in olden times, for it has disappeared. In this manner, then, all the people of the Quiché, which is called Santa Cruz, came to an end. (IV, xii, 234–35)

As the penultimate sentence makes quite clear, the *Popol Vuh* is not to be understood simply as a symbolic transcription of the laws of the Quiché people but rather as an outward sign of the inter-generational continuity of a living community. Though we have the book (*Vuh*), the community (*Popol*) to which it testifies is no more.

The Codices

The codices are a unique Latin American art-form; they were often made of deer-skin, covered with a chalk-like varnish to preserve them, and, typically, folded like a screen (*leporello*). Some were drawn on *amatl*, a native paper made from the inner bark of trees belonging to the genus *Ficus*, and they are normally read from right to left, backwards and forwards in a zig-zag motion (Caso 10). The codices, as mentioned above, are partly ideographic, partly phonetic. They are normally divided into three distinct types: those which focus on the annals of a people and/or their gods and divine rituals; the Techialoyan books, that is, petitionary documents used to defend lands and communities against changes in the law; and the Testerian manuscripts whose main purpose was Christian instruction (Brotherston, *Mexican Painted Books*, 3). What follows will concentrate in the main on the first category of codex (both the Mayan and the Mexican), although some mention will be made of the second type. It would, of course, be a mistake to see the codices as offering

unmediated access to the truth about Amerindian culture since, ironically enough, many owe their very existence to the Spanish invasion and, for that reason, demonstrate a hybrid character.

There are only three known Mayan codices in existence, the *Codex Dresden*, the *Codex Pérez* and the *Codex Madrid*, all named after the city in which they are now held. The *Codex Pérez* is exemplary; it was named after the Yucatecan Don Juan Pío Pérez (1798–1859) who collected, collated and copied a number of Maya manuscripts which he came across in Ticul (Craine and Reindorp xv–xvi). It is a compilation of various 'books' authored by different Jaguar priests, but it does have a unified focus; the Maya notion of time (with its combination of the 365-day 'vague' year and the 260-day ritual almanac) around which all else orbited in the thought-universe of the Mayas. It also contains a version of the important sacred text *The Book of Chilam Balam of Maní* (literally, 'The Book of the Jaguar Priest of Maní'), and a charming short narrative entitled 'The Maiden Teodora', which recounts how a young beautiful girl enchants the court of the King Almanzor with her unrivalled intelligence and good looks (*Codex Pérez* 59–62). A close reading of the *Codex Pérez* suggests that the narrative which predicted the return of the Mayan culture-hero, Kukulcán, was tampered with to produce a text which predicted 'the coming of the Spaniards and Christianity, both of which should be welcomed with enthusiasm' (*Codex Pérez* 69, n. 21).

The Aztec codices, many more of which survived, reveal similar evidence of transculturation. One of the most famous of these, the *Codex Mendoza*, which derives its name from the first Viceroy of Spain, Antonio de Mendoza, who commissioned it, is divided into three parts: the first concerns the Mexican annals from the founding of Mexico (1324) until Moctezuma II's death (1520) (fols. 1–18r); the second describes the tributes paid to the Mexican lords (fols. 18v–71v), and the third part concentrates on the social and political life of Mexico (fols. 56v–71v) (Madan and Craster, entry 3134). It was compiled some twenty years after the conquest by native scribes under the supervision of missionary priests; while it appears that the document as a whole was prepared for the Spanish crown, there is little doubt that Parts 1 and 2 were copied from earlier pictorials dating from pre-contact times (Berdan and Anawalt vol. 1, xiii). Some of the codices are clearly revisionist, post-conquest documents. The *Codex Aubin* (or *Codex 1575*), for example, portrays the Mexican gods as devils ('salieron llevando al diablo a quien adoraban como un dios'; *Códice de 1576* 5); it is significant that the only Castilian word to appear consistently in the Nahuatl portion of the text is 'diablo'.

There are also a number of codices which were composed some time after the conquest and which document the harshness of colonial rule. The *Codex Kingsborough*, for example, drawn in the middle of the sixteenth century in watercolours and accompanied by a narrative in Spanish, was first published by Lord Kingsborough (1795–1837) in a volume entitled *Various Papers* (1831); the original of the *Codex Kingsborough*, now separated into two separate

codices, is held in the British Museum.[2] In this codex the Spaniards are depicted as malevolent, almost out of place in the mental universe of the Tepetlaoztoc Indians with its abundance of natural symbols (fish, frogs, etc.). The scene on page 250 is typical, showing two Spaniards standing on top of two reclining figures wrapped in funereal robes, and a severed head on top; the symbolism could not be more brutal. One of the most intriguing of these later more politicised codices is the *Codex Osuna* which documents the early municipal life of the indigenous population of Mexico City. Originally published in 1878 from the library of the Duque de Osuna as a forty-page document, it is now known to be part of a longer document of over four hundred folios which is, in essence, a lawsuit dated 2 March 1564, brought by the Indian governor, mayors and chieftains against the Viceroy and *oidores* (judges) of New Spain on the occasion of Don Gerónimo de Valderrama's visit to New Spain as official *visitador* of the crown (1563–66). The document accuses the Viceroy and others of legal malpractice, greed, cheating, and immorality (frolicking naked with naked women in the steam baths in full sight and knowledge of all and sundry). The first folio, for example, accuses the Viceroy Luis de Velasco, with drawings as evidence, of having received 215 'cargas' of lime to repair his residence but without returning just recompense (Chávez Orozco 264); it also records how the *Oidor* Doctor Vasco Puga was given lime for which he did not pay, as did the *Oidor* Villalobos (fols. 465–3v; fol. 466–4r). It was usual for legal documents of this kind to contain drawings since Indians during trial proceedings often needed interpreters and relied on pictography to present their case. The *Codex Osuna* therefore offers invaluable insight into the conflict between Spanish and Amerindian culture, as well as the interplay between written text and pictography during this period.

Quechua Runasimi

Any expression of Amerindian culture was expressly prohibited during the colonial era by viceregal decree. Thus a council in Lima in 1583 ordered that all *quipus* be destroyed, and, in 1613, Father Arriaga rejoiced at the destruction of musical instruments and religious icons; the following year festivals and indigenous dances were prohibited, especially those in which Quechua was spoken or sung. After the 1780 rebellion of Tupac Amaru, Quechua was outlawed in the viceroyalty of Peru; a good example of the excessiveness of this prohibition is that even Garcilaso de la Vega's *Comentarios Reales*, which in the final analysis supported Catholicism, was banned (Aybar xxvii–xxviii).

[2] Its original reference was MS Add. 13964. The *Codex Kingsborough* has subsequently been disbound, since it was seen to contain two different texts, the Tepetlaoztoc Codex and a Cochineal Treatise (*Relación de lo que toca a la Grana Cochinilla*), which, in the exhibition 'Mexican Painted Books before and after the Spanish Conquest', held in the British Museum 4 June to 6 September 1992, were listed separately; see Brotherston, *Mexican Painted Books* 29.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, to learn that Quechua literature was not 'discovered' until the nineteenth century and then by foreign scholars such as Markham, Tschudi, Middendorf and Trimborn (Aybar xxviii).

Referring to a body of knowledge passed on from generation to generation by oral means – as happened with Quechua, its language and its culture – in terms of 'literature' is, of course, problematic. Literature was understood as *runasimi* by the Incas, that is, verbal art, rather than 'literature' in the Western sense of the term (written, normally printed, designed to have an aesthetic effect). *Runasimi* was used by the Incas in their religious ceremonies of communication with the Sun God, Inti, in a ceremony called Inti Raymi. Edmundo Bendezú Aybar mentions a number of ways in which the *runasimi* could be expressed: the *hayllis* (a joyful war song), the *hauri* (a mournful, nostalgic song), a theatrical performance in a public space called a *mellquis*, and the recitation of short songs or stories of a fabulous nature and usually told to children (Aybar xxiii). During the colonial period, Quechua literature went into a state of what Aybar calls *ukupacha* (the underground world), although some works emerged during this period, such as *Yauri Tito Inca*, *Usca Páucar* and, most famous of all, *Ollantay*. Some of these texts expressed a terrible vision of the collapse of Incan civilisation, such as *La Tragedia del Fin de Atahuallpa*, discovered in Bolivia by Jesús Lara. The two genres which survived during the colonial era and, indeed, surfaced, were poetry and short narrative.

Some of the most interesting material is the poetry. It is difficult to tell of those poems which have survived from the Incan period whether they are truly untouched by the influence of the Spanish. Certainly those poems which express non-Christian sentiments ('Beberemos en el cráneo del enemigo / haremos un collar de sus dientes / haremos flauta de sus huesos / de su piel haremos tambores / y así cantaremos'; Aybar 18) may be safely seen as pre-Columbian. Those which emphasise the Christian notion of sin and penance ('Tú, el que previene y manda / ¿lejos estás o cerca / del pecador? / Sálvame de esta cárcel, / tú, gobierno del hombre, dios'; Aybar 21) appear to be post-Columbian. Although it would be foolish to discount the role of acculturation (some of the poems we know of come, after all, from Garcilaso de la Vega), the poems collected by Aybar constitute a good collection, and offer a fair indication of the main themes of Quechuan verse. The first thing that needs to be underlined is that the typical Incan poem is performative, not only in the sense that it exists in performance in a social context with an audience in attendance, but also in the sense of being an enactment of the community's desire, rather than the description of a personal emotion. Many of the poems, after all, ask Viracocha for his guidance (normally in the form of advice), and for his protection from want and from war. A good example is the poem 'Wiraqocha', perhaps the oldest of the Incan hymns, which opens as follows:

Es Wiraqocha
señor del origen,
'sea esto hombre',

> 'sea esto mujer'.
> De la fuente sacra
> supremo juez,
> de todo cuanto hay
> enorme creador.
> ¿Dónde estás?
> ¿No te veré acaso? (Aybar 5)

One other characteristic of these poems, evident in this hymn, is their emphasis on the separation of the sexes. Viracocha created man and woman deliberately, and this sense of separation is very distinctly carried over in the communal songs in which the men and women of the community recite their lines antiphonally and sequentially. In '¡Ea, el triunfo!' for example, the men speak of their work in the fields ('¡He aquí el arado y el surco! ¡He aquí el sudor y la mano!') while the women spur them on in recalling their prowess. The penultimate 'estribillo' ('¡He aquí la infanta, la hermosa!') brings to mind the notion of the commerce of love after the work has been done. Other poems which emphasise the commerce of love ('Morena mía …' 20–21, 'Canción amorosa' 28 and 'Canción' 31) likewise underline that these poems were written for specific social ends such as building a sense of community and expressing the religious urge to petition Viracocha's protection. The language of love and courtship here becomes pragmatic and performative.[3]

Aztec Poetry

The corpus of extant Aztec poetry is based on four main sources, which are (i) the twenty sacred hymns collected by Bernardino de Sahagún, (ii) the songs scattered in various testimonies of the 'ancient word' or *huehuehtlahtolli*, (iii) the *Cantares mexicanos* held in the National Library in Mexico, and (iv) the *Romances de los señores de Nueva España* housed in the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American collection, University of Texas Library at Austin (León-Portilla, *Fifteen* 18).[4] The major bulk of these songs were transcribed alphabetically in Nahuatl soon after the conquest from oral performances given by indigenous singers or poets, which were inspired by pictoglyphic books. As one singer put it: 'I sing the pictures of the books, / and see them widely known, / I am a precious bird / for I make the books speak, / there in the house of the painted books' (quoted in León-Portilla, *Fifteen* 5). These poems fall into a number of genres which are as follows: *xopancuicatl* (songs of springtime), *xochicuicatl* (flowery songs), *totocuicatl* (songs of birds), *michcuicatl* (songs of fish),

[3] For a brief discussion of literature written in Guaraní, see Oviedo, *Historia*, vol. 1, 69–70.

[4] I have focused in this section on Aztec poetry since it is the genre of Aztec literature about which most is known; for a discussion of pre-Columbian drama, see the Theatre section of this chapter.

icnocuicatl (songs of orphanhood), *cozcacuicatl* (necklace songs), *teuccuicatl* (songs of the lords), *tlaocolcuicatl* (songs of suffering), *cuauhcuicatl* (songs of eagles), *yaocuicatl* (songs of war), *atequilizcuicatl* (songs of pouring water), *cihuacuicatl* (songs of women), *cococuicatl* (songs of doves), *cuecuechcuicatl* (provocative songs), and *huehuehcuicatl* (songs of old people) (*Fifteen* 28). León-Portilla has identified and named fifteen Aztec poets, reconstructing their biographies and works painstakingly, based on the scant evidence available. While their work clearly demonstrates individual features, the similarity of the themes treated in their poetry is overwhelming. Perhaps most noticeable is the obsessive preoccupation with the brevity of life. A good example is the 'Song of the Flight' by Nezahualcoyotl of Tezcoco (1402–72) which begins as follows: 'In vain was I born, in vain have I come forth / to earth from the house of the Lord' (*Fifteen* 90). The gloominess of the poetic emotion expressed is reinforced by the parallelism. 'Sad Song of Cuacuauhtzin' by Cuacuahtzin of Tepechpan (mid-fifteenth century) offers a similar lesson in fatalism: 'Where would we go / that we never have to die?' (*Fifteen* 109). A striking feature of these poems is their sense of metaphysical uncertainty, for example in the 'Song of Axayacatl, Lord of Mexico' by Axayacatl (1449–81): 'Will there perhaps be an end to pain? / Perhaps they will come again? / Who can teach me about this?' (*Fifteen* 169). At times this metaphysical uncertainty is borne out of distressing historical events such as the loss of material power. In the 'Song of Axayacatl' quoted above, for example, the loss of leaders is expressed in terms of orphanhood (*Fifteen* 168). Yet, at other times, this uncertainty is transformed into an eerie sense of loss of identity: 'Am I perchance a shield of turquoise, / will I as a mosaic be embedded once more in existence? Will I come again to the earth?' (*Fifteen* 145), and also of life being no more than a dream: 'We only rise from sleep, / we come only to dream, / it is not true, it is not true, / that we come on earth to live' (*Fifteen* 153).

In terms of style, the overriding feature of Aztec verse is its consistent use of an interlocking mesh of images, as when one image is related to another, painted books to song, song to music, music to birds, birds to flowers, flowers to intoxication, intoxication to spring, spring to earth, and earth to (fleeting) life. Typically these images are constructed paratactically (which is to be expected, perhaps, given the grammar of Nahuatl which works 'by the process of compounding and derivation' [Campbell and Kartunnen vol. 1, 10]), and are treated as a woven artifact to be offered as a sacrificial offering to God the Giver of Life. A good example of this is the 'Song of Springtime' by Nezahualcoyotl of Tezcoco which progresses through a series of images (painting–singing–music–flowers–birds–intoxication), and yet does so by weaving backwards and forwards in a gentle see-saw motion in which 'singing' becomes the axial image.

One other striking feature of Aztec poetry is its ludic, sexual side, the best example of which is 'The Song of the Women of Chalco' by Aquiauhtzin of Ayapanco (*c*. 1430–*c*. 1500). This poem teases its addressee, Axayacotl, challenging him to make love to its female author, sometimes bluntly ('Do it

in my warm vessel, much / light on fire./ Come, put it in, put it in'; *Fifteen* 274) and sometimes poetically ('Look on my flowering painting: my breasts./ Will it fall in vain, / your heart, / little man, Axayacatl? / Here are your small hands, / now take me with your hands. Let us take pleasure'; *Fifteen* 279).[5] The sexual explicitness of this female Aztec writer offers a vivid contrast with the displaced, polite rhetoric used by colonial poets such as Bernardo de Balbuena who were writing at around this time.

The Legacy

As is clear from the analysis above, the legacy of Amerindian culture, though rich, comes down to us in chequered form. Linguistic-oral culture such as the *Popol Vuh*, the 'Song of Springtime' by Nezahualcoyotl of Tezcoco, and the Inca poem dedicated to Viracocha, show us a world in which oral culture and religious ritual are mutually porous. The codices, for their part, offer a fascinating glimpse into the Amerindian world. They range from the ritualistic (namely, a pictorial, non-linguistic representation of the activities of the gods of the Mayan and Aztec pantheon), to part-illustration, part-verbal description of the history of a particular people, to an account – from the Indian's point of view – of the excesses of Spanish colonial administration; they are immeasurably valuable in providing insight into the vitality of Amerindian culture. While it is only right to discuss them before analysing the literature of discovery and conquest, it is important to remember that these texts were not historically evident to the Spaniards who arrived in the New World from 1492 onwards. They were, indeed, deliberately ignored or, in the case of Bishop Diego de Landa, wilfully destroyed. (It is naive to assume any other type of reaction from a colonizing culture, perhaps.) It was only in the era of independence, and particularly the middle of the nineteenth century, that a receptivity to these texts emerged. As already noted, Juan Pío Pérez began collecting Maya manuscripts in about 1835, the *Popul Vuh* was rediscovered in the 1850s, and many of the Mexican codices were discovered and published for the first time in the nineteenth century, often by French and British scholars. The ideology of the discoverer as much as of the conquistador, was one which required the New World to be a blank page on which they would write their exploits and their destiny.

The Amerindian legacy in Brazil is at first glance distinctly unimpressive when compared to that found in Spanish-speaking America. Most of what we know about the cultural customs of the sixteenth-century Tupi Indians, for example, comes to us via the writings of Jesuits such as José de Anchieta, Manoel da Nóbrega and Fernão Cardim (see discussion below, pp. 20–2); Brazil

[5] There are some similarities between Aztec verse and Mayan verse, particularly in the choice of imagery; see Oviedo's discussion of *Libro de los Cantares de Dzitbalché* (Oviedo, *Historia*, vol. 1, 59–60).

lacks an independent Amerindian archive equivalent to the codices discovered in Spain's American colonies discussed above. Indeed, knowledge about their community narratives is also patchy; Nóbrega, for example, drew attention to the fact that the Tupi Indians appeared to have knowledge of the flood described in the Book of Genesis, although the individual who escaped was not Noah but an old woman who climbed up a tree. As a result of their cannibalism and their polygamy the Indians were accused by the early Jesuits of being savages, and this view proved to be remarkably resilient over time – despite Montaigne's remarkably prescient essay on cannibalism, 'Des cannibales', published in his *Essais* (1595) – even underpinning the hostile sociology of an influential essayist such as Gilberto Freyre in the 1930s, as we shall see (pp. 186–7). It was only with the advent of artists and writers associated with Modernism in the first half of the twentieth century that the view of the Amerindian as monstrous was upturned; for writers such as Oswald de Andrade, whose 'Manifesto Antropófago' called for the rejection of Father Vieira as well as an emotional identification with cannibalism, a new assessment of the value of Amerindian culture was paramount. Perhaps curiously it was the anthropological research of a foreigner which ignited an interest in the Brazilian Amerindians' world-view. Claude Lévi-Strauss, a French anthropologist, worked as a visiting professor at the University of São Paolo from 1935 until 1939, and during this period he carried out fieldwork in the Matto Grosso and the Amazon Rainforest. In a series of brilliant studies – including *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté* (1949), *Tristes Tropiques* (1955) and *La Pensée sauvage* (1962) – Lévi-Strauss revolutionised not only the world's awareness of the Brazilian Amerindians' world-view but also the field of anthropology itself. Indeed it is possible to argue that it was in Lévi-Strauss's work that for the first time the voice of the Brazilian Amerindian subaltern was audible (for further discussion of Lévi-Strauss's work in Brazil, see Pace).

Discovery and Conquest

The conquest of the Americas by the Spanish and the Portuguese was first and foremost a military event, but it was accompanied by a massive intellectual conquest through the written word. Literacy and military conquest, indeed, went hand in hand during this period since, as C. M. Cipolla has pointed out, 'after the fifteenth century, technological progress in warfare required, and at the same time was based on, an adequate supply of literate soldiers … Societies which produced an increasing number of literate soldiers had a decisive advantage over those that failed to do so' (quoted in Cruickshank 812). We have already noted that New World culture was seen by the European invaders as a 'blank page' on which they would write their own exploits, and the book played an important role in this process given the authority and power invested in print during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Printing came to Spain in the early 1470s (Cruickshank 800) and to Portugal in 1487 (the first book

published in Portugal, specifically in Faro, was the Pentateuch translated by Samuel Porteiro), and as we shall see, the printed word was used by the conquistadors and their accomplices as a means of asserting ownership of land in the New World.[6] The literature examined in this section consists in the main of chronicles, treatises and letters which focus on the conquest and discovery of the New World; some of these texts were published in Spain or Portugal soon after composition, but many only came into the public domain many years later (following in the footsteps of Vaz de Caminha's letter which lay undiscovered for nearly 320 years). No work, religious or otherwise, was published in the New World before 1535, and the book, or intellectual, industry, was heavily dependent on Spain and Portugal for many years after that date. Intellectual traffic was, like trade, minimal between the viceroyalties and was normally one-way from Europe; the average edition of this period, the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century, involved a print-run of about two hundred copies (Steinberg 140).

Some of the texts examined in this section could arguably be seen as examples of Spanish or Portuguese rather than Latin American literature, but given precedent and the undeniable logic of analysing these texts, they are here presented as an integral part of the roots of Latin American literature. These works specifically mark themselves as part of the print-language of Spanish and Portuguese, in contradistinction to the oral-vernacular diversity of the Indian languages, which Nebrija refers to in his *Gramática castellana* as 'peregrinas lenguas' as opposed to the 'language of empire' of, for example, Spanish ('siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio', he notes in his opening words of justification to the Catholic Monarchs; Nebrija 11, 5). Much of the writing of the early chronicles is based on the European medieval tradition of recording historic events for the benefit of the national collective memory. The mood of many of the authors of these early texts has been aptly described by Greenblatt (9):

> The Europeans who ventured to the New World in the first decades after Columbus's discovery shared a complex, well-developed, and, above all, mobile technology of power: writing, navigational instruments, ships, warhorses, attack dogs, effective armor, and highly lethal weapons, including gunpowder. Their culture was characterised by immense confidence in its own centrality, by a political organisation based on practices of command and submission, [and] by a willingness to use coercive violence on both

[6] In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Spain, the printed word was held to possess great authority. This is suggested by an exchange in Lope de Vega's play, *La octava maravilla*, written in about 1609, in which a master and servant are discussing printed ephemera. As Cruickshank elucidates: 'The servant has come across a pamphlet which states that in Granada a man has given birth. The master is scornful. The servant, surprised, asks: "¿Está de molde, y te burlas?" (roughly translated as 'It's in print, and you still mock the idea')' (Cruickshank 808). Though treated ironically in Lope's play, this incident suggests the power of print in the early seventeenth century (and presumably before) in Spain and, one must assume, in the Spanish colonies in the New World.

> strangers and fellow countrymen … Such was the confidence of this culture that it expected perfect strangers – the Arawaks of the Caribbean, for example – to abandon their own beliefs, preferably immediately, and embrace those of Europe as luminously and self-evidently true. A failure to do provoked impatience, contempt, and even murderous rage.

It is ironic that the first published text in Spanish focusing on the reality of the New World should have been written by an individual who was a non-Spaniard with a defective knowledge of Castilian and who was unaware of what he had witnessed, namely, Cristóval Colón (as his name is printed in his *Diario*). What we know about the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) is contained within the log-book journal he kept of his four voyages to the New World (1492–93; 1493–96; 1498–1500; 1502–4), as well as the famous letter dated 15 February 1493 which he sent to Luis de Santangel, the Catholic Monarchs' scribe, in which he announced the discovery of a New World. Columbus also wrote other letters to the sovereigns based on his subsequent voyages, namely, a memorial in April 1493 proposing that trading posts be established in Hispaniola, a letter to the same on 18 October 1498 and a letter to Doña Juana Torres, Isabella's confidante, in 1500 giving details of his third voyage, and the Lettera Rarissima to Philip II on 7 July 1503 (Murray 38–54). The *Carta a Luis de Santangel* (1493) is in effect, if not in intention, a proclamation of the discovery of a New World. While still labouring under the misapprehension that he was visiting islands off the coast of China, Columbus described the Caribbean islands he had visited in such terms that would lead to further investment by the Catholic Monarchs, enticing them with the hope of possession of foreign lands. The mountains are so enormous they reach the sky, the trees never lose their leaves, there is evidence of abundant spices and the rivers flow with gold ('traen oro'). The rest of the letter takes care in pointing out that the people encountered there are docile and would be easy to Christianise; they have neither iron or arms, and are 'temerosos a maravilla'. Columbus's concluding paragraph gives to understand that the islands he has visited are an abundant source of commodity, mineral and human capital: 'pueden ver sus Altezas que yo les daré oro cuanto hubieran menester con muy poquita ayuda que Sus Altezas me darán ahora' (Chang-Rodríguez and Malva E. Filer 13–14). It was a letter which would fire the imagination of the West for many years to come but it simultaneously spelt death for the inhabitants of the Caribbean whose lands and domestic environment would soon be savagely destroyed by the arrival of Spaniards hungry for gold.

The Brazilian counterpart to Columbus's discovery-letter is Pêro Vaz de Caminha's *A carta de Pêro Vaz de Caminha*, which was sent to Manuel I, the King of Portugal, on 1 May 1500, proclaiming the discovery of Brazil (at that time known as the Ilha de Vera Cruz; Caminha thought it was an island) by Pedro Álvares Cabral on 22 April 1500. Oddly enough, the letter lay undiscovered for 317 years in the Torre do Tombo archive in Lisbon; once discovered it was published (in 1817) (Menezes 2). Seen as the baptismal certificate of

Brazil, Vaz de Caminha's letter narrates the act of discovery and proposes future action. It begins with the customary laudatory introit, fitting for the time given its addressee, and also makes the crucial point that its content was based on events actually witnessed: 'aqui não há de pôr mais do que aquilo que vi e me pareceu' (9). Leaving Belem on 9 March 1500, according to the letter they passed by the Canary Islands, then the Cabo Verde Islands, until finally land was sighted on 22 April, and they set down anchor the following day at ten o'clock in the morning (11). The Indians they see are described thus: 'Pardos, nus, sem coisa alguma que lhes cobrisse suas vergonhas. Traziam arcos nas mãos' (12). Caminha describes the various hand movements used to communicate, the gifts exchanged, and how impressed the men were by the uncovered women, in a section called 'O encanto das vergonhas' (20–21), the nudity of the women being set off by their red paint. It describes a humorous event when the Indian chieftain attempts to put a green stone into the captain's mouth, and the captain was annoyed, though the crew laughed (28). Vaz de Caminha concludes, after a number of interactions, that 'é gente bestial e de pouco saber, e por isso tão esquiva' (30). The captain sends Afonso Ribeiro and two others to visit the Indian village consisting of nine or ten wood and straw houses (33). Vaz de Caminha also makes an important observation that, given the lack of culture or belief, the Indians would be easily Christianised: 'Parece-me gente de tal inocência que, se nós entendêssemos a sua fala e eles a nossa, seriam logo cristãoes, visto que não têm nem entendem crença alguma, segundo as aparências' (39). His letter concludes with the notion that the salvation of the indigenous inhabitants' souls is a more worthy prize than the silver and gold that these lands might possess, but it is important to recognise that even in the realm of the spiritual the notion of possession is central.

The connection between ownership and writing is also played out in the letters of the greatest of the conquistadors, Hernán Cortés (1485–1547), conqueror of Mexico, Governor and Captain-General of New Spain and later Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca. His letters, like Columbus's before him, were written to the Catholic Monarchs during the years of conquest (1519–26) to inform them of current developments but also to persuade them that this venture was worth further monetary investment. Their importance is based on two things: they provided Spanish and other Europeans 'with their first great paradigm for European encounters with an organised native state' and, 'through their swift publication in several European languages' reached a wide audience in the Old World (Clendinnen 87).[7] Cortés's letters, however, also had the purely pragmatic aim of ensuring that his own land privileges were retained; thus he is at great pains to record the various acts of treachery carried out by others (such as Diego Velázquez and Pánfilo de Narváez, fellow conquistadors whom

[7] The publication of these letters and their wide circulation was an indication of a paradigm-shift which occurred in the sixteenth century as a result of the creation of print. As Cruickshank has pointed out, while manuscript transmission involved a slow process, '[t]he press could make an author famous overnight' (Cruickshank 800), and this is essentially what happened in the case of Cortés's letters.

Cortés casts as villains of the piece in the first and second letters). The value of the letters nowadays is more to be found in what they show us about the process of transculturation. Cortés tells an unconsciously amusing anecdote: when the first conquistadors arrived on the Mexican mainland they understood the indigenous population to say that the land they had arrived in was called Yucatán, although the words pronounced actually meant 'we do not understand your words' (Cortés 3). The scene epitomises the drama of the conquest: on the one hand we have a native population which finds the words and actions of the European incomprehensible, while, on the other, we have the European coloniser mapping out a new world based on a misreading.

The Chroniclers

There were a great number of chronicles published in Spain, Portugal and Spanish America soon after the conquest (the Portuguese throne was able to keep a tighter grip on printing in its colonies than the Spanish monarchy; see below, p. 35), and still more have emerged into print in more recent years, such that it would be impossible to give an account of all or even some of them in an introductory study of this kind. What I propose to do therefore is to take a few chronicles as representative texts and discuss their information value and techniques of persuasion. It is important to recall that the works of this period were not necessarily written for the benefit of posterity. As the letters by Columbus and Vaz de Caminha already alert us, texts written during the early years of the aftermath of conquest were more concerned to persuade their audience of the justice of their claim to wealth, position or land. A good example is the manuscript, 'Nueva obra y breve en metro y prosa sobre la muerte del adelantado Don Diego de Almagro, hecha por un testigo de vista – por los años de 1550' held in the Biblioteca Nacional in Lima (Sala de Investigaciones A124, 5ff.). This work, which was notarised by Fray Félix Ponce de León (fol. 5v), seeks to restore the reputation of Diego de Almagro who, as this manuscript suggests, as a result of the foul deeds of 'Don Francisco y sus hermanos', was deprived of 'honra, vida y hazienda' (fol. 1v). This work crosses between the realms of literature (in the sense of a work written for aesthetic effect), history (understood as a chronicle), and legal document (in the sense of claiming the right to property, etc.). Typical of its era, 'Nueva obra y breve …' conflates various discourses for the purely pragmatic end of persuading the addressee of its truth-value.

Among the body of chronicles, two divergent trends can be identified. On the one hand were the official accounts of the conquest, such as *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (1526) authored by Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés (1478–1557), which were either commissioned by the Catholic Monarchs or received the royal seal at some stage during their composition. The official nature of Oviedo's text is underlined by his claim that members of the Council of the Indies saw and corrected the manuscript; it is dedicated

to Cardinal Fray García Jofre de Loaysa, President of the Royal Council of the Indies. Oviedo's work won fame in Europe, and justly so, for being the first ever description of the sub-continent's flora and fauna (Brading 43). In contrast to the official chronicles were those accounts which reported the first-hand experience of an individual's life (normally of a traumatic kind), such as Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios* (1542). Núñez accompanied Pánfilo de Narváez on his expedition to colonise the provinces of Florida, occupying the position of treasurer and *alguacil mayor*. The expedition set out from Spain on 27 June 1527. Núñez's *Naufragios* covers the voyage with Narváez, the fate of the expedition and specifically his adventures with a contingent of Spanish sailors shipwrecked on the coast of North America. They wandered through the mainland of the northern continent, gaining the friendship of the Indian tribes through their apparent ability to heal sick people, living on nuts, berries and tuna fish, until they met up with some Spaniards from the settlement of San Miguel, and were finally transported to Mexico City, where they arrived in July 1536. To this day, Núñez's route is disputed, and there are at least eight different hypotheses concerning which route he took (Hellenbeck 243–306). With a matter-of-factness which at times seems unsuited to the events described, Núñez recounts the various misadventures which befell him over a period of nine years. Particularly gripping is his description of the plight on the island which the Spaniards named Malhado, given their experience there. Again its identity is a matter of dispute, although Hellenbeck advances Galverston Island as the most likely (Hellenbeck 119–27). Having beached on this island on or around 6 November 1528, after being separated from the other barges and lost at sea with no knowledge of where they were for nine days, Núñez and his companions had a spell of good luck, since they were fed by the Indians they encountered there, although this was probably as much due to Cabeza de Vaca's 'skill as a cultural negotiator' (Ahern 225). When they had sufficiently recovered they put to sea once more on the barge which promptly capsized because of an enormous wave and three of the crew were drowned. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's account of the perils of sea voyages is the matrix text of a rich autobiographical tradition in Spanish America; Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora's *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez*, for example, provides an important stepping-stone between these narratives and the first fully-fledged novel in Spanish America, *Periquillo Sarniento*.

A Brazilian text which may usefully be compared to Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's expeditionary text is the diary of the journey of Martim Afonso de Souza which was written by his brother Pêro Lopes de Souza. The expedition, which consisted of three ships and two caravels, was commissioned by King João III to ward off French designs on the newly discovered territories of Brazil, and set off from Lisbon on 3 December 1530; the subsequent adventures, described in *Diário da navegação da armada, que foi à terra de Brasil em 1530 sob a capitania-mor de Martin Affonso de Souza, escripto por seu irmão Pêro Lopes de Souza*, lasted for a period of almost two years (the last entry is for 23 November 1532); the first edition was published in 1839, a symptom of the

zeal with which the intellectuals of the newly independent Brazil sought to recover their past. The diary consists of a series of short entries for each day. The explicit aim of the expedition was to demarcate territory; thus on 28 December 1530 a Spanish ship was seen off, a French ship found near the Brazilian coast on 31 January 1531 was fired upon, and subsequently requisitioned (Lopes de Souza 38). The Indians met in the Bay of Todos los Santos are described as comely, especially the women: 'A gente desta terra é toda alva, os homens mui bem dispostos e as mólheres mui fermosas, que nom ham nenhua enveja às da Rua Nova de Lisboa' (48). The narrator subsequently describes a war the Indians had with a neighbouring tribe, how they captured, roasted and ate their prisoners, while appearing to ignore the Portuguese, clearly not seeing them as a threat (48). With hindsight this was indeed an ironic moment: Indians waging war on each other in a land which had already been claimed by another nation in a series of agreements made on another continent, and about which they had not the slightest inkling. It is noticeable how, from October 1531 onwards, the log entries become longer, the nautical details less prominent, with the emphasis switching to a description of the flora and fauna of the land: 'A terra é mais fermosa e aprazível que eu jamais cuider de ver: nom havia homen que fartasse de oulhar os campos e a fermosura deles' (77). The narrator gets caught up in the enthusiasm of naming the islands and lands he discovers. He describes the bizarre Indian custom of cutting off a finger every time a family member dies (96–97) and, perhaps most significant of all, the act of founding São Vicente on 22 January 1532; the captain 'repartio a gente nestas duas vilas e fez nelas oficiaes a pôs tudo em bõa obra de justiça, de que a gente tomou muita consolação com verem povoar vilas e ter leis e sacrifícios e celebrar matrimónios e vivirem em comunicação das artes' (101), Brazil's prototype of the *Mayflower* experience (Lívio Ferreira 20).

Most of the accounts of military action in the New World, following in the vein of Cortés's letters, took the bias of the invading forces. Such was certainly the case with the *Historia general de las Indias* (1552) by Francisco López de Gómara (1511–64), and this is not surprising since he was for four years Cortés's chaplain (1541–45) and subsequently resided in the conquistador's house. Gómara's account of the Amerindian population is harsh to say the least: of the inhabitants of the Caribbean he charged that their god is the devil (XXVII, 45), the women are lascivious and the men are sodomisers, lazy, deceitful, ungrateful, capricious and uncultured (XXVIII, 47). Unlike Gómara's account, which was penned by someone who had never set foot in the New World, Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Verdadera historia de la conquista de la Nueva España* is concerned with the daily grind of the conquest. His is an eyewitness account; he was a 'testigo de vista' (Bernal Díaz, vol. 1, 65). It is for his emphasis on ocular evidence and his lack of interest in annotation that Bernal Díaz is favoured by the modern historian.

In the *Chronica del Peru* (1554) by Pedro Cieza de León (1518?–60), the author depicts himself as a soldier-writer, and in this he establishes a precedent which later writers such as Ercilla y Zúñiga would emulate; his two professions

are 'escreuir, y seguir a mi vandera y Capitan' (fol. 3r). Cieza de León's approach to the Incas is that of a Christian seigneurial colonist; like other chroniclers he has no hesitation in calling the Incas' god the 'devil' (the solemn feast of Hatum Raimi is described as 'witchcraft'; Book II, Chap. xxx), but unlike some hardliners such as José de Acosta, he is willing to cede that the Spanish have some blame to bear for their treatment of the Indians. At the end of Book II, Chap. xxv, for example, Cieza de León implores God to give the Spanish the grace necessary to repay the Incas the enormous human debt they owe them as a result of the conquest. Without a doubt the most skilled of all the chroniclers was El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539–1616), according to one critic, 'the first New World native and the first person of Amerindian descent to be published and read widely throughout Europe' (Zamora 3). He was the son of a leading conquistador and the descendant of a highly literate family which included among its ancestors the Marqués de Santillana, Jorge Manrique and Garcilaso de la Vega, and of the Inca princess, Isabel Chimpu Occlo, a grand-daughter of the Emperor Tupac Inca Yupanqui. Like earlier chronicles such as Cieza de León's *Chronica del Peru*, Garcilaso's *Comentarios Reales* (1609) shows a keen awareness of transculturation; as Garcilaso points out in the first chapter, it was as a result of the clash between the print-based culture of the Spaniards and the oral-based culture of the Incas that he decided to write down the history of the Incas. His knowledge had been culled from the conversations he had with his family while a young man and offers a remarkable insight into the Inca way of life which, in effect, makes the commentaries not only historiographical but also autobiographical.

Apart from the military chroniclers there was also a group of religious who wrote accounts of their experiences in the New World. An important early chronicler was Fray Toribio de Paredes o Benavente (1490?–1568), also known as Motolinía, a name based on the Yucatec word for poverty which he adopted for himself; his major work was *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España* (1541). Motilinía saw the New World as the work of the devil; thus he translated the Yucatec word for temple, *teocalli*, as 'templo del demonio' (Motolinía 24). A similar desire to depict Amerindian culture in satanic terms underlies *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590) by José de Acosta (1540–1600), who described the New World as a giant parody of the Christian world created by the devil (V, xxx; Acosta 181). His view of Aztec hieroglyphics was also uncompromising: 'la pintura es libro para los idiotas que no saben leer' (VI, iv; 185). Similar in tone and intention to Acosta's *Historia natural* is the *Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán* by Fray Diego de Landa. Diego de Landa's chronicle, though, throws light on the ambiguous space inhabitated by the religious in the middle of the sixteenth century in the New World. On the one hand they were enemies of the conquistadors and the *encomenderos* (see Diego de Landa, chap. XVII, 36–7); on the other hand, they were hostile to the Amerindian culture and especially its religious precepts as embodied by the Jaguar priests. Thus, he calls the Yucatecans' priests 'idolatrous' and describes their social function as 'dar al pueblo las respuestas de los demonios' (XXVII, 55).

Though written by a man of the cloth like Motilinía, José de Acosta and Diego de Landa, the version of the conquest found in the chronicles of Bartolomé de las Casas (1484–1566) could not be more different. His most celebrated pamphlet is the *Brevísima historia de la destrucción de las Indias* (1552), which, in one fell swoop, established the so-called Black Legend which would plague the Hispanic world for centuries to come. Las Casas's text was eagerly taken up by Spain's imperial rivals – the Dutch, French and English – in order to discredit the methods whereby the Spanish established their overseas empire. It describes the recently colonised empire region by region, beginning with Hispaniola and ending with Río de la Plata, and describes the initial peaceful overtures made by the Indians, followed by the treachery of the Spaniards (torture, forced slavery, rape, murder, etc.). Las Casas's main point in this essay is to underline the irony of the Spanish purporting to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ while acting like devils.

There were some chronicles which, like the *Codex Osuna*, highlighted the evils of conquest from the Indian perspective. Such is the case of *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* by Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (*c*. 1535–*c*. 1615), a sixteenth-century Quechua-speaking *ladino* Indian from the Ayacucho region. His text did not have a sympathetic hearing in the era in which it was written and languished in manuscript form for nearly three hundred years before it was finally discovered in the National Library in Copenhagen in 1908 by Richard Pietschmann and published in facsimile form in 1936. Guaman Poma de Ayala's basic point – the West imposed on the inhabitants of newly discovered lands a creed they did not live up to themselves – has had a sympathetic hearing in our anti-colonialist times.

The most sophisticated and searching religious discourse produced about Latin America was that created by the Jesuits in Brazil. Father José de Anchieta (1534–97) is the lynchpin of that extraordinary flowering of Jesuit culture which occurred in the Portuguese colony of the New World from its discovery in 1500 until the unceremonious expulsion of the Jesuit order in 1759 by Marquis Pombal. The main reason for the success of the Jesuits in Brazil – and, indeed, the cause of their eventual discomfiture – was that they literally accepted no jurisdiction other than that of God or of the Pope, and as a consequence often rebelled against temporal authority. That independence of mind was epitomised by Anchieta, co-founder of São Paolo, Christian proselytiser, first linguistician of the Indian languages and, in the words of one of Brazil's most important literary critics, Afrânio Peixoto, the 'initiator' of Brazilian literature (he wrote a number of essays, poems and plays discussed below; see pp. 32–4) (Peixoto 34). Anchieta's father was Spanish but, at the age of seventeen, Anchieta went to study as a novice at the Society of Jesus in Coimbra, and on 8 May 1553, he set off for Bahia on the third Jesuit mission, and stayed in the New World until his death. Anchieta's letters offer a fascinating insight into the early stages of colonisation in Brazil. His 1554 Piratininga letter (it covers the events from May to September of that year) describes the various small communities set up by the religious along the coast

of Brazil, how they attempted to gain the trust of the Indians living there, the problems they had with the Portuguese laity who were establishing families with the Indian women, and their attempts to force the Indians to desist from consuming human flesh: 'Indios que usiam todos comer em seus banquetes carne humana, no que mostram achar tanto prazer e doçura, de modo que comummente caminhan mais de 300 milhas para a guerra' (Anchieta, *Cartas*, 55). Anchieta at times found the Indians difficult: 'são indomitos e ferozes, e nem se contêm bastante pela razão' (46). His letters, written to the various members of the Jesuit community scattered in different parts of Brazil, have the hybrid feel of St Paul's letters in the Bible – they interweave news of what is going on in the various communities with information about his progress in the Tupi language (he later published the first grammar of the Tupi language, *Arte de Grammatica da lingoa mais usada na costa do Brasil* in 1595, an extraordinary feat), prayers and Christocentric thoughts. In one letter of June 1554 to the head of the order, Ignacio de Loyola, he recalls how two of the priests had run off with Indian women; the temptation was too much for them in Brazil 'onde as mulheres andam nuas e não sabem se negar a ninguém, mas até elas mesmas cometem e importunam os homens, jogando-se com eles nas redes porque têm por honra dormir com os Cristãos' (78). His May 1560 letter to the São Vicente community describes the various snakes, scorpions, panthers, and other animals, birds and trees found in the region – using their Indian names to do so, and thereby providing one of the first detailed descriptions of the flora and fauna of the New World; he even provides some description of the various malignant spirits which the Indians held to live in the forests and rivers (113–39). The letter are sprinkled with accounts of the various wars that the Indian tribes wage on each other, and on the Christians (letter of 16 April 1563 to General Diogo Lainez, 191–203, esp. 194–6), as well as valuable accounts of important historical events such as the founding of Rio de Janeiro (letter to Father Diogo Mirão of 9 June 1565, 255–64), the attack on São Vicente by English pirates (letter of 7 September 1594 to Father Claudio Aquaviva, 300–2). Anchieta's 'Informacões', as they came to be known, in which he gives succinct summaries of significant landmarks in Brazil's colonial history, including the discovery, the first settlements, the captaincies and governorships, bishops and priests elected to office, with – as might be expected – particular reference to the Society of Jesus, provide valuable historical vignettes of Brazil's early days as a fledgling nation (309–470; for the sermons see 503–41).

Called 'o Cavalheiro da Triste-Fala' (Lívio Ferreira 29, 40–1), Padre Manoel da Nóbrega, Brazil's first apostle (Lívio Ferreira 37) entered the Society of Jesus at the age of twenty-seven on 24 November 1544 (Lívio Ferreira 41). His letters offer a great deal of insight into the early days of colonisation. A letter to Padre Mestre Simão Rodrigues de Azevedo (1549), for example, tells of his efforts at proselytising. One of the chiefs 'diz que quer ser cristão e não comer carne humana, nem ter mais de uma mulher e outras cosas, sómente que ha de ir à guerra' (Nóbrega 72), which suggests that proselytisation at an early

stage involved advice about cultural behaviour. Another letter to Padre Mestre Simão, written in the same year, tells of the difficulties for the recent settlers produced by the lack of women:

> Todos se me escusam que não têm mulheres com que casem, e conheço eu que casariam si achassem con quem, em tanto que uma mulher, ama de um homem casado que veiu nesta armada, pelejavam sobre ella a quem a haveria por mulher. (Nóbrega 79–80)

He provides some first-hand experience of the cannibalism practised by the Indians on war prisoners:

> Si acontece aprisionarem um contrario na guerra, conservam-o por algum tempo, dão-lhe por mulheres suas filhas, para que o sirvam e guardam, depois de que o matam com grande festa e ajuntamento dos amigos e dos que moram por alli perto, e si delles ficam filhos, os comem, ainda que sejam seus sobrinhos e irmãos, declarando ás vezes as proprias mães que só os paes e não a mãe, têm parte nelles. (letter to Dr Navarro, Nóbrega 88–96 at p. 90)

Information on habits such as eating one's own niece quickly stirred up a view in Europe that the Indians of Brazil were no more than dreadful savages. In the same letter Nóbrega speaks of how the Indians appear to know something about what the Bible refers to as Noah's flood, although in their version, the individual who survived was an old woman who climbed up a tree and waited for the water to recede: 'Sabem do diluvio de Noé, bem que não conforme a verdadeira historia, pois dizem que todos morreram, excepto uma velha que escapou em uma arvore' (Nóbrega 91). This same letter has a memorable account of Nóbrega berating in raised voice and at great length, with the aid of a translator, a *feiticeiro*, which finally leads to the latter – no doubt completely browbeaten – expressing a wish to be baptised (95–6). On a number of occasions, in order to put a stop to the illegal couplings taking place, he asks for white women, particularly orphans, to be shipped to the New World (letter of 9 August 1599 to Padre Mestre Simão 79–87 at p. 80; letter to King João III of 14 September 1551, 123–7 at p. 126; letter to King João III, no precise date but 1552, 133–6 at p. 133). It is noticeable how Nóbrega's letters, as the decade of the 1550s progresses, become less anthropological (as, for example, his letter of 1549 to Padre Mestre Simão, 71–6), and more Pauline, that is, drawing on Paul of Tarsus's experiences and using a similar rhetoric to encourage Christian living in the various communities over which he now watches (see, for example, the letter 'Aos moradores de S. Vicente' of 1557, probably written between 23 April and 27 May of that year, 163–8; for discussion of Nóbrega's interest in St Paul, see Lívio Ferreira 35–7).

Padre Fernão Cardim, born at some point between 1540 and 1550 in Évora, Portugal, went to Brazil as a Jesuit missionary in 1583, working in Rio and Bahia. Apart from one notorious trip, he remained in Brazil until his death in 1625. In 1601 the ship on which he was travelling was attacked by English

pirates, and he was taken to England and imprisoned there. The manuscript Cardim was working on at the time, 'Do princípio e origem dos Indios do Brasil e de seus costumes, adoração e ceremonias', was taken from him and published in English in 1625 under the title, *A Treatise of Brazil written by a Portuguese which had long lived there*, under the false attribution of Irmão Manuel Tristão. It was only in the 1880s that Capistrano de Abreu proved that this work was actually written by Cardim, and the latter's works are now customarily studied in a group of essays brought together under the title of *Tratados da terra e gente do Brasil*. Cardim's essays range widely over the climate, geography, people, flora and fauna of Brazil. His essay, 'Do clima e terra do Brasil', is a detailed description of the flora and fauna of Brazil, among which there is a chapter on the sea monsters which by all accounts kill human beings by kissing them to death: 'O modo que têm en matar he: abração-se com a pessoa tão fortemente beijando-a, e apertando-a comsigo que a deixão feita toda en pedaços' (Cardim 57). The essay 'Do princípio e origem das Indias do Brasil' describes the customs of the Indians, their lack of knowledge of God, their manner of eating, drinking, sleeping, dressing, their abodes, their burial ceremonies, and also includes a rather long description of the cannibalistic feasts in which they appear to take an inordinate delight (113–20). Finally Cardim's *Narrativa epistolar de uma viagem e missão jesuística*, first published in 1847, is of the three texts mentioned the one with the most authentic Jesuit feel to it in that it describes his arrival in the Jesuit College at Bahia and his impressions of daily life in the New World, although focused more specifically on the Catholic rituals whereby the Indians were converted to Christianity. Though he sees the Indians as infidels Cardim is clearly struck by the gentle manner in which the parents treat their children, and the happiness which exudes from the children's games: 'Nenhum genero de castigo têm para os filhos; nem ha pai nem mãe que em toda a vida castigue nem toque em filho, tanto os trazem nos olhos' (187). He offers at one stage a valuable early (1584) description of a sugar mill ('O serviço é insoffrivel, sempre os serventes andam correndo, e por isso morrem muitos escravos', 193), as well as a portrait of the enormous wealth created by this emerging industry, such that there is more vanity in Pernambuco than in Lisbon (202). Cardim's entertaining account of his visit to the various settlements of Brazil from 1582 to 1585 (it offers a charming picture of Rio de Janeiro, for example, where 'parece estão os corpos bebendo vida', 29), before returning to Bahia, makes of this text a Jesuit version of Souza's *Diário de navegação*.

Brazil, like the Spanish viceroyalties, had its secular chroniclers and, of these, three deserve special mention: Pêro de Magalhães de Gândavo, Gabriel Soares de Sousa (*c*. 1540–91) and Ambrósio Fernandes Brandão. Seen as one of the great stylists of the Brazilian colonial period, Pêro de Magalhães de Gândavo in his *Tratado da Terra do Brasil*, offers the reader a panoramic overview (in a synchronic as well as a diachronic sense) of Brazilian culture in a style which is balanced and erudite, lively and informed. When first published in Lisbon this book had the title of *Historia da provincia de Santa*