Brandon, CSU, Chico Student: Good afternoon everybody. My name is Brandon [inaudible] and I'm the Vice President of Phi Sigma Iota, which is the Foreign Language Honor Society here on campus. This event is sponsored by Phi Sigma Iota. And if you would like or if you're interested in signing up for this Foreign Language Honor Society, there will be a sign-up sheet going around shortly. If you just sign your name and put your e-mail, we will contact you very shortly. I want to thank all the Phi Sigma Iota members for all their help with organizing and setting up this event. Also, I would like to introduce and extend this [inaudible] to Dr. Black who is the Chair of our department. And this department is the International Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. And I would like thank you for all of your support.

Dr. Patricia Black: So this is going to be very interesting this afternoon and I welcome you here. As Brandon said, I'm the Chair of International Languages, Literatures, and Cultures which is a long name for that, for all the foreign languages in the [inaudible]. And we're very pleased to welcome Dr. Angel Delgado-Gomez here to talk about the conquest of the Spanish discovering the New World, was. And it's interesting that Dr. Delgado-Gomez was a professor at the University of Notre Dame. But now, works at the university in Barcelona. His articles and books, in numerous quantity, concern the European Renaissance and Golden Age Spanish literature, as you're going to see in a moment. For the last twenty years, his focus has been especially on the historical literature concerning the New World. He published two critical editions, one of Hernan Cortes, “Letters of Relation to the Emperor Charles V” [inaudible]. And the other one, Bernal Diaz del Castillo's “True History of the Conquest of New Spain.” and the truth is often [inaudible] and I think he'll be
explaining that to us.
His last book came out from the John Carter Brown Library, an essay on [inaudible] in the early Americas. He gave that presentation here a couple of years ago and it was extremely interesting. So I give you Dr. Angel Delgado-Lopez, and I know you will be very pleased to find out what he is going to say.

**Dr. Delgado-Gomez:** Thank you, Patricia. Thank you very much. It’s an honor to be back here since this is a familiar place for me. I had the pleasure, as Dr. Black said, of being here two years ago. And so, I’m familiar now with the Chico community. And it’s marvelous to be back here. My special thanks to the department, to Dr. Black, to Dr. Char Prietto who had been the people who processed the invitation and [laughs] has--I’m so glad, like I said, that I have a chance here to present another different project, but that is related to, actually, what we discussed two years ago. So, the subject today is the New World, the Chronicles about the New World.

And I would like to start this with an analogy. Suppose the year is 2050. Suddenly, there's a revelation. A spaceship such and such reports that people had been found in a foreign galaxy, a galaxy we never hear of. Much to our surprise, the people there don't look like ET. They don't look like insects. They don't look like trees. They actually look like people. They seem to be people. And yet, what would our questions be? Well, obviously, we would be bewildered. Now, who are these people? How did they get there? How come they are the same as we are? Do we have the same origin? Imagine all the implications this would have. Scientific, even theological, you know. They are--Are they the same people or not? Do we have the same origin? Well, instead of 2050, let's go back to 1482.
And in 1482, this is what we have. This is the best map that pretty much represented with the knowledge of the world was in 1482. Ptolemy was the greatest geographer of the ancient world. He was Egyptian, but he was in the realm of Greek, of late Greek knowledge. And so, this is pretty much what we Europeans, I understand that this was a European knowledge of the world, had 500--a little bit over 500 years ago. As you can see, this is supposed to be Europe, okay. So this would be Spain. That would be France, England, the Scandinavian Countries. Notice how little and how bizarre the Scandinavian Countries look. They almost don't look like the way they are. But the fact is that knowledge was very limited and the Mediterranean is well represented. Okay, this is Europe. This is supposed to be the Black Sea and everything. So--But look at the way Africa is. And what--one--of course, the first thing we notice is where is the end of Africa? Well there is no end. There is no knowledge--There is no knowledge of Africa below the equator. In fact, the prevalent notion according to Aristotle is below the equatorial line, there is no life. You cannot survive, imagine.

So as we follow this, we have the Arabian Peninsula then we have India. India is supposed to be this. And look, what happens after India? Nothing. We don't know because nobody knew exactly. Marco Polo had been there in the 13th century. He had been in China. He had reported that supposedly there was an island in--beyond the Coast of China. This was supposed to be China. And beyond the Coast of China, there was Island called Cipango. He'd never been there. Remember, Marco Polo never made it to the coast. Of course, Australia does not exist or anything. But then, look at the way this Mare Indicum, Mare Indicum as it says there, was the Indian Ocean.
The Indian Ocean is pretty much like--like an immense lake because it's enclosed by land. So in 1492, what we knew [laughs] was, of course, a world that was represented by three major continents. The Continent of Europe, the Continent of Africa and the Continent of Asia. This had been the same knowledge, because Ptolemy, Ptolemy was from the 1st century.

So, what knowledge did we acquire between the 1st century and the 15th century in terms of geography? Zero. [Laughs] We didn't know more than the Greeks already knew. Now, this is the situation where the Portuguese are trying to go down the Coast of Africa. But as you can see, by the way, it's represented and this is--this was the great discovery of Ptolemy. Yes, they think the world is round. And therefore, in theory, one was supposed to go from one end of the world to another, by just circling the globe. But how or what we are going to find? That, nobody knew. All we knew is that just in the Coast of Spain there or the Coast of England, or the Coast of France, there was always a point where they called Finistere, the end of the world, the end of the earth. Because beyond that was unknown. So this is the situation in 1482 and this is very important to take into account as we're going to see what happened then.

The discovery of the New World, of course, was intended at the same time that it was accidental, because Columbus was a merchant sailor from Genoa. He was a strange merchant because he was intellectual merchant, something that at that time was sort of like an impossibility. But he had a penchant for learning books and he had conceived a plan to sail to the east by heading west. And this idea was based on Ptolemy.
Ptolemy had been forgotten for 1500 years and then recovered in the Renaissance. And as a result, Columbus has the plan of going east by heading west. The notion was already in the writings of a famous French author, Pierre Dulaine, and a very important Italian author, Pietro Paulo Toscanelli – because in the 15th century, Toscanelli tried to measure the circumference of the earth. Of course, he was far off the truth, but that didn't matter. The Portuguese, as I say, had made progress establishing a sea route. But the Portuguese by 1482 were not really that far. They were pretty much around there. But they were pushing south, much to their frustration because, of course, they didn't want to go south, they wanted to go east.

Why they wanted to go east? Everybody knows why. The East had the spices, the trade. And that trade was controlled by the Ottomans. And the Ottomans were in Turkey. So, the idea of the enterprise was a commercial one. Let's steal the business--let's steal--let's break the monopoly that the Turks have with the trades from the east. And remember that when we say the spices, as important as gold was, that was not the real--that was not where the real trade was because the quantity of gold was seriously limited. When we talk about spices, we talk about black pepper, of course. We talk about clover. We talk about many other elements, including not just spices that are for cooking, but also pigments to--for example, for painting, for textiles, as valuable as the spices. That's why pepper was called the black gold, for example, because it was extremely valuable. So, this is the situation when...Columbus had tried to get interest in this project in England and also in France. Both were not interested in the project.
And only Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon found the project interesting. The discovery of new lands on October 12 provided both the Catholic kings with an opportunity for territorial expansion overseas. This Spanish intervention across the ocean served a triple interest: God, the crown and private wealth. All three neatly conceived as mutually complementary. From the very beginning, the rapid process of discovery, conquest and colonization was to take place. And he was guided by three corresponding agents of those three goals. Namely, the church which took responsibility for the missionary aspect of the conquest. And this was very important because this provided the Spanish and then, of course, the Portuguese and the French Empire, as the excuse or the justification for doing the conquest. I mean, we have to do this because it's a--we are required to do so as Christians. Secondly, the king and his growing body of bureaucrats who exerted administrative control over the territories. And finally, of course, all the adventurers: sailors, soldiers, merchants, colonists, who risk their lives for the pursuit of glory and wealth, and maybe a new life across the ocean. Now, the big question was already posed in 1492 with these new lands. It's ironic that Columbus, the so-called discoverer of the New World, never accepted that there was a New World, because this would have been the defeat of his enterprise. His idea was that he was going to find the east by going to west. Of course, he didn't want to find a New World. And in fact, he never acknowledged finding a New World. He thought, Columbus thought, of course, when he landed in the--that he was somewhere in islands or maybe close to India, in the Indian Ocean, and that's why the inhabitants of the New World were named by Columbus, "Indians."
Columbus sailed three more times across the ocean and he even got to know the coastline of Central and South America. So by then, he probably accepted that he was in a continental land, and yet, he still believed, when he died in 1506, that he had discovered lands that belonged to Asia. And accordingly, he named the "Indies."

The earliest historiography of the New World is mostly descriptive, consists largely of reports of sea travel by witnesses. Landscapes are only vaguely described, although, with all and even illusions to paradise or mythical places. As for the islanders, authors can only reflect on their brief encounters with them marked by a frustrating language problem. It's very interesting that in the second—in the second trip, Columbus took with linguists. People who know Hebrew. Who knew Aramaic. Who knew every possible language, and he still was under the belief that he was going to find someone who would understand the Indians of the Caribbean. Imagine. He was frustrated by this lack of communication. So, let’s do then a small reflection about what this historical body of knowledge that we have here meant at the time.

What do we mean by "Chronicles of the New World?" From 1492 and starting with the first letter by—written Columbus himself, we have one major problem. And this is a situation that has never presented itself in history, and very likely, will never present itself again. Namely, the fact that not only we have to describe what we see, but the thing is we don't even know exactly what we see. We don't know how that relates to the body of knowledge that we already have. We don't know where we are. And, of course, the readers are totally unfamiliar with the new territory. So, that means that historians, before they actually tell history, have to provide full geographical descriptions of the new territories, both the territories and the people who inhabit those territories.
Secondly, the histories obviously have to deal with the enterprises of the Spaniards and their encounters with the natives, encounters that are of every possible kind from the peaceful to the most violent. And thirdly, we have to realize that the reader was always skeptical about any type of tale from far-away lands. Those readers had been accustomed to fantastic travels all throughout the 15th century, again, with this parallel, with this--that we started this lecture with. Imagine if somebody now starts telling us about new life in the blah-blah-blah. We have all the science fiction that we already have in our minds and all this ET literature that would affect our perception. We would be rather skeptical about anything that would tell us, "Oh no, I've seen a new life there -- but of course, I have no proof. It's only my word." So, this is the situation in 1493. There is a major problem. It's not only Ancient Greece and Rome who did not know the New World. There was something even more important, the Bible didn't make any reference to the New World. How this could be a New World if the Bible never said anything? Was the creation of the world different from what the Bible had said? Imagine that what the problem with the intellectual and philosophical and even theological problem that this meant. So, the historiographical tradition that started in 1492 had to feel an unparalleled void by a painful process of acquiring knowledge.

Eventually, the big question was, who were this newly found people and how are they related to the inhabitants of the Old World? So when we consider this whole body of knowledge, the historical knowledge, it's been pointed out repeatedly of course that the historian point of view was Eurocentric; that his view of both the physical and the human landscape was limited by his beliefs, traditions, culture, environment, and frequently tainted by social and religious prejudice.
Still, the late 18th century German naturalist, Alexander von Humboldt, arguably the first person to study the fauna, the flora and peoples of the Americas in a modern systematic way, expresses astonishment at the large amount of accurate observations valuable to later scholars and scientists that had already been accumulated by the 18th century when he made his famous trip to the New World that lasted several years. So their works brought about a reassessment of the values and ideas of the people who had conquered and settled the continent. Now, to understand fully the implications of the role of historiography in European thought, one must point out that in the 16th century, the division of knowledge into the modern disciplines and fields that we know today had not yet taken place. What did they meant by history in the 16th century? Well history included areas that are now part that we call the natural sciences such as botany, biology, zoology, all that was time--at that time, referred to as “natural history.” But it also referred to things that pertains human political, economic activities. And that was, at that time, called general or moral history. Because of the breath of history in this period, the contribution of Spanish historiography of the New World to the intellectual history of the west can hardly be overstated, European history was enriched by a vast new body of literature that contained the earliest descriptions of the physical and human landscape of the New World. This wealth of information provided fundamental data for the development of older established areas of language, of knowledge such as linguistics, political theory, biology, medicine, agriculture, and it also was important in stimulating the creation of two new ones.
The biggest, the largest descriptions of ethnographic character eventually led to the development of a new science called anthropology. And also, the disputes over the conflicting rights of natives and invaders provided from Fisco [phonetic], the Victoria and others with the materials to lay the foundations of one new science namely international law. This didn't exist before the 16th century. Now, I want to just make quick reference to—you may be familiar with a very interesting book that Jean-Paul Sartre wrote, a reflection about what is literature, “Que es la Literatura”. And he said when you make a small reflection. Let's make a reflection on three things that are literature: what, by whom, and for whom. So let's try to apply this interesting method to this body of history—historical writing written between 1492 and the next two--300 years. What?

First of all, when we consider the body of knowledge, we think of history as, of course, something written by professional historians. That is, people like professors in a university who are detached from the facts and study what happens in a particular place about the past—a gain, in a very detached way—and try to be objective about it. Well, this cannot apply to the situation of the New World.

Why? Well, first of all, because we're not describing things about the past. In many cases, we are describing things about the present. The second thing we have to know is that the, of course, what—by whom. Well, if we think that most of the people who go to the New World are not professional historians, then we have a different variety of people who write history or who consider things that are not exactly when they were written histories.
For example, some of these texts were originally letters, reports, but they were so important, so meaningful for the knowledge they provided, physical knowledge, human knowledge, political knowledge, that of course then they were considered histories. But when they were written, they were not meant to be histories. The case of Cortez’s letters about the conquest of Mexico is a very clear example, or Columbus. Both of them are writing just a report to the king. But that report happens to be so important that it gets published and it gets widespread knowledge all over Europe, immediately. And now, they're considered almost historical texts.

So, who writes these histories? By whom? All sorts of people. It can be church men. It can be political. It can be officers of the crown. It can be sailors. It can be friars or it can be also professional historians, eventually, yes. But all sorts of different people.

And then third question will be, and for whom. Well then again, this is also very special because when you write a history book today, you write the history book for prosperity, for everybody, for the whole world, for all the people who learn or who want to learn something. But many of these texts were not written for that—with that purpose, but with a purpose of telling the monarch, the crown, what had happened, and in many cases, asking for favors or all sorts of rewards. Because the people who wrote them were participants in the conquest, or in the spiritual conquest in the case of the friars. In other words, we have to be very flexible in a very special way when we talk about all these texts.
So the second part of this lecture, I will just try to go, and go a little bit to see the variety of texts that we can find. First, with two authors that represent the first stage of the conquest, of historical writing about the conquest. And then, we can see the particular case of Mexico because it has an enormous complexity about something that perhaps is unequal in human history. This is actually the "Insulis nuper in Mari Indico repertis." This is the first work published about the New World, written by Columbus himself; it's a letter. The letter that he wrote to the Kings, Ferdinand and Isabella, announcing the discovery of this new island. “Insulis” means the islands. Of course, he believes he's in the Mari Indico. So, this is the Latin translation published a year later, 1493, in Geneva. The 1492 edition—I mean, January 1493 edition, the first original one is in Barcelona, and that's in Spanish. So—and what is interesting is that here we have the first, the earliest representation, image of something about the New World.
And what do we have? We—This is supposed to be a Spanish ship, of course. And these are supposed to be Spanish people arriving at the coast. And we see the reaction of the—both reaction of the inhabitants. One, they bring presents and they want to have a pacific exchange. The other one, they're running away because they are scared. This is going to be—both are going to be constant, the two kinds of behavior that will happen not just to the Spanish but to the English or the French or everybody who was involved in the New World. So, this was published in 1493, again, and it's just a letter. Its very brief letter. But of course, this “epistola,” this letter, is the first one that described the Taino Indians as people of biblical innocence, naked in their bodies, incapable of any wrong doing. This is the beginning of the myth of the “noble sauvage,” the noble savage.
These inhabitants don’t know evil. They are one wonderful and peaceful. One the other hand, they are being attacked by these awful people called the cannibals. And so, we must protect them against the cannibals. 
So from the very beginning, we have the distinction between the good ones and the bad ones. It sounds like going to back to some sort of paradise threatened by the evil inhabitants of the--the inhabitants of evil that are represented by the cannibals. The letter, of course, announces an enthusiastic affirmation of future wealth and great spiritual benefits for Christianity because this will result in the unproblematic conversion of the natives. Columbus was absolutely convinced that they were going to become Christians naturally. Now, this Latin letter was of course published in 1493 and then was translated and published in many languages.
The second author that we're going to—that is most interesting is Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo because he was an officer in—for the crown— but he was also a humanist. He's also--He's really the first person with a significant knowledge that went to the New World and wrote about the New World. Fernandez de Oviedo had lived in Italy and was, for example, even a friend of Leonardo. And he knew just everyone in Italy. So, he had a very interesting life, and he went to the New World as an officer for the crown. And he wrote the first report about the New World from a historical perspective. What you see here, for example, is the first description of a canoe. You know, the Indians knew canoes. They didn't have ships. They were individual canoes out of just a single log. That's, for example, an ax.
This is a hammock. So the work, the "Historia Natural de Las Indias," is illustrated with some drawings that reflect to the life the Taino Indians.
And this is to say the way that the Taino Indians collected gold from the rivers. This was unknown in Europe, because in Europe gold was always extracted in mines. Remember that in the New World, the Indians didn't know mines. Mining was totally unnatural for them. It was unknown.
So then comes 14—uh, 1520 and suddenly there is a big change in everything. The truth is up until 1520, the discovery of this New World is to most Europeans a non-issue. There are many authors that in the 16th century remained totally uninterested in the New World. But certainly, before 1520, most people became uninterested. What changed in 1520? Cortes, of course. Up until then, the Indians that people related to inhabitants of the New World were these natural people, highlanders, naked, et cetera. Cortes suddenly reports, it's completely different. We have found an empire. We have found a political military structure that is a rival to us. That is as good as anything that you can see in Europe. This is a total shock. The real discoverer of the New World, in that respect, from the--from the mentality point of view is not Columbus, it's Cortes. It is the report that he sends to the--to Charles V, to the emperor, which is this "Cartas de Relacion Enviala Asumarestat" that it's a total shock in Europe. The published--This is a letter sent and published before he actually has finished the Conquest of Mexico. This is in the middle of the--of the campaign. But, he has already met Moctezuma. He has already been to Temixtitan. And he says--you know, he is a very clever--he has a very clear perception of the importance of what he has found and what he intends to conquer. The letter is published in Seville in 1523 and is immediately translated and published in other countries. By the year 1550, the two letters, most important letters of Cortes, the second letter and the third letter, had more than 50 editions in Europe. So, this became the conqueror's point of view of the conquest of, usually, Cortes is the main protagonist. And he sees himself as divinely protected and chosen to be able to do this enterprise which is going to be good for Christianity and good for the crown.
One very important part of this edition is that actually it includes the first map. This is a map of Temixtitan. Tainostic land; of course, it's a city as an island—as an island in the Lake Texcoco. And so, the city is very much like Venice. It's an island city. And of course, Cortes does a long marvelous description of everything that goes on in the island -- religious, you know, buildings, churches, temples, and [inaudible]. So he obviously--This is the first map of any city that is published in Europe, and it's accompanied by this other map that represents the Gulf of Mexico, the Gulf of Mexico that still has Yucatan as an island because Yucatan was not completely explored around and they still think it's an island. But otherwise, it's extremely exact. It's a very good map. So this is the Tainostic Land, of course, which Cortes calls the--he calls the Temixtitan. And it shows the lake and then the causeways that link this Iztapalapa and Koyokan [assumed spelling] and everything else. It--You can see all the causeways that link the island of Tainostic land with the lake around it.
And, of course, Cortes is astonished that this island has more than 200,000 people which, at that time, remember in the 16th century, Rome had something like 50,000 people. So, Cortes cannot explain what has happened here and how this has happened.
Okay, later on, Cortes states and [inaudible] discoveries, this--I thought this would be interesting because we are in Chico. You know what this is, don't you? Yeah, it's California. And you know California is called Sea of Cortes because he himself explored it when he was no longer Governor of the New Spain. So this is the first published map that shows exactly the Coast of California and with the Peninsula of California as a peninsula, because, for many years, it's represented as an island because nobody had gone all the way, before Cortes, all the way until the very end of the gulf. So that's why it's called the Sea of Cortes.
Anyway, again, the first – we have three layers of reports on Mexico. The first layer is the conquerors themselves. It’s the people who were there and participated in the conquest. This, for example, is an anonymous – it’s an anonymous report. It’s published in Italian, but it’s by a Spanish soldier. Obviously, he wrote a report. This report was translated in Italian and then it was published in Italy. And it’s very like that the author not only knew Cortes but also knew the letter of Cortes because some of the things are taken from Cortes, but other things seemed to be a personal report. Again, this would be the first layer.
Now, let's go back to the second layer. Soon, Cortes goes back to Spain when he has accomplished his conquest. And of course, he's friends with a humanist who knows Latin very well, who writes in Latin. You know, humanist at the time wrote in Latin. Everything was in Latin. All universities in Europe had Latin as their language. It didn't matter at all whether you were in Sorbonne or Salamanca or Oxford or Bologna. It made absolutely no difference because all classes were in Latin, nothing but.

So, of course Gomara is a good Latinist as [inaudible] and then his son, when he dies, Cortes' son, convinces Gomara to write an official history of the Conquest of Mexico. So Gomara, who has never been in the New World but has a lot of information from Cortes, from people who were there, but also written sources of every kind, he writes the first official history of the conquest of New Spain. His point of view, of course, is the same. I mean, this is a glorious conquest for country, for Christianity, and so forth. And Cortes is portrayed as the new Alexander the Great of Europe because he has expanded Christianity and so forth, right? So, this is, again, it's a second layer of--because it's written by an official historian, somebody who was not in the New World, but who had significant knowledge of the New World.
In fact, for example, what we find here in one of the chapters is the equivalent of the numbers, with the number in Nahuatl, in the Aztec language. In other words, he study a lot of the Nahuatl language. And many of the things that he writes about the--today, we call them the Aztecs. But remember, the Aztecs never called themselves the Aztecs, like the Mayan never called themselves the Mayan. We call them like that. The Aztecs called themselves the Mexica and that's the origin the word “Mexicans,” Mexicanos. But anyway, so the Mexicas...he knew the Nahuatl language enough to write about it.
And this is the first time Europeans know about the buffalo. This is a representation of an American buffalo, or more or less, right? Which is of course a new animal that they've never seen.

Anyway, Gomara’s work today, of course, again, you say Gomara today, unless you are a specialist in New World historiography, of course it doesn't mean anything. But let me tell you that Gomora’s work was translated to four languages and it was widely published. Everybody in Europe who knew how to read knew Gomara. In fact, the English translation, the history of the Indies and then the history of the conquest of New Spain, which is the second part of the history, was sort of like a bestseller of the time.
And in 1552, this is when the work appeared. Look how things have changed and, yes, this is very much like—remember how that Ptolemy—Ptolemy’s map included, there was nothing below the equatorial. Now that the Portuguese have gone all the way to India around the Cape of—in Africa, we have an exact description of Africa. But more than that, we have, look, all these about the New World. It’s very recognizable. So in 50 years, we’ve gone along way. Fifty years more has been studied and described than in 1500 years before. This is published in Zaragoza as you can see the date there is 1552.
Now, Cervantes de Salazar is another author and is interesting because Cervantes de Salazar is both a humanist, he's also a historian but he lives in the New World. He has moved to the New World. Therefore, he's not like Bernal–like Gomara, a person who writes from Spain but has never been to the New World. So now with Cervantes de Salazar we have the first official historian who is also, he has not been a witness to the conquest but he knows the area that he is talking about and he knows many people. He has interviewed many people who participated in the conquest. He is also very familiar with all the sites, pyramids, et cetera, that are part of the legacy of pre-Colombian history.
He didn’t publish his history of New Spain. Nobody knows exactly why because it stops after one point. I mean, very likely, this was also a commission. Gomara’s work by the way was commissioned by Martin Cortes which was Hernan Cortes’ son. In other words, he paid money to have this produced. Cervantes de Salazar was commissioned by the Governor of New Spain to also produce another history. But for some reason, now that we know about budget cuts, this happened to be—happens to be the case apparently that funding was cut immediately. And so, Cervantes stopped at one point in his history.
Now, Bernal Díaz del Castillo was a soldier in Cortes' army. He was not a man of letters. He says, "I am stupid. Yes, because I don't know Latin. I know I cannot write any history." But he is infuriated when he reads Gomara's history and says, "He was never there. What he says is nothing. It's not true. I was there. I saw it." What is the problem with Bernal Diaz? Not exactly. He is in fact a person who likes Cortes, who sees the value of Cortes. But Gomara speaks only about Cortes, Cortes, Cortes. Bernal Diaz is a soldier. He's a veteran. And he says, "Where am I in this story? How about us?" So he intends to rewrite Gomara's history. And of course, he knows, "For me, I don't know Latin. I don't know how to write this beautiful Spanish that Gomara does. But I have something that Gomara's does not have. I was a witness. So I will rewrite this history and tell exactly what happened." So basically, you have this inter-textual dialogue of the Conquest of Mexico whereas now Bernal Diaz, where Gomara's says Cortes decided, Bernal Diaz would say, "We decided. We all decided. We all were very brave in this battle. We all did. We all fought. We all planned." So, he admired Cortes, but he wants to put Cortes in perspective and say, "This was a collective enterprise. It was just—it wasn't just Cortes' feat."

Bernal Díaz del Castillo wrote this very long history. And he started writing this history when he was over 60 years old. Imagine, at that time, a person who was already 60 years old was rather rare. A conquistador who was 60 years old was almost impossible. Well, Bernal Diaz got to live to almost 90 years old. And in fact, he ended his life--I mean, he was a settler in Guatemala.
He married an Indian woman. So in a way, he's very representative of what happened because his children were mestizo children. And--So he wrote this history for 30 years, writing and rewriting and rewriting again.
And his manuscript is in Guatemala, and I have been fortunate enough to be there and see it day after day for--and it's very interesting because you can see the corrections. See, it's all full of corrections and things that he writes upon and all this. So this by the way is indicative of another thing. Most people wrongly assume that most of the conquistadors were illiterate. But in fact, Bernal Díaz was just a simple conquistador and he was able to write. And I have found evidence that significant number of the people who went with Cortes were able to write, read and write. So, it is not true that the majority of people were illiterate. This is really clearly not the case.
Bernal Díaz's work was not intended for publication because, of course, his style very, you know, unworthy of the readers of the time. But, it just so happened that this monk who is represented there, here, had participated in the conquest and his order thought that they had not gotten enough credit. So, because Bernal Díaz talks a lot about him, Bartolome de Olmedo, he thought it be interesting to publish it. So 100 years after the Conquest of Mexico, the book got published, but of course with many corrections and amendments. In any case, of course by then, Bernal Díaz, you know, had been dead for 60 years. But what is interesting is that Bernal Díaz del Castillo's work is rediscovered in the 19th century and is published in every single language now. Bernal Díaz del Castillo is published in more than 50 languages. You can find them in Penguin Classics Books. And it's the, probably, the most widely read chronicle of the New World that exists. Why? Because he has the perspective of the soldier. This book, you cannot put it down because it's so interesting in reflecting the personal view of a soldier.
And finally, in this row of people, we have Don Antonio de Solis. Now, Antonio de Solis, we already in the 17th century, and he represents the last of the great writers that wrote about the Conquest of Mexico. By then, the Conquest of Mexico is history. It's nothing but history because it's a distant thing. So, then Antonio de Solis writes a masterpiece of literature – beautiful style, beautiful chapters, great descriptions in the most elegant Spanish, so much so that this book became also a bestseller of the time. It was translated to English, to French, to Italian, and the Spanish book itself, the Spanish text, was considered a model for people who learned Spanish at the time. This was considered like the perfect most elegant prose of his time.
This is the--you can't see it very well. It's a little blurred. But anyway, the--you know, this is supposed to represent the king and there is two globe because of the New World and the Old World with one crown. And this is supposed to Europe and this is supposed to be America, which is naked and with a headdress.
Anyway, and now we go to third layer, the last one we studied today. This, we see--what did the Aztecs, what did the Mayan have? Did they have any type of history as we knew it? No, they didn't. Not in terms of books. Not in terms of narratives. Why? Because they didn't have an alphabet. They couldn't write texts the way we could. But what they had is--this codex is one of them. It's probably the most precious one. The Borgia Codex is something that was produced before the Spaniards got there. As you can see, by the way, this was produced in either deer skin or in amato which is a type of paper that they produced, vegetable paper. And it was pretty much like--you can see this accordion shape type of thing.
This is what a codex looks like. It's very difficult for us to understand exactly what is going on here. Why? Because it's not a narrative. But it's not painting. It's not an illustration. It's something that is both illustration, history, and so many other things because it includes concepts, symbols that have to be helped with a narrative. So the people who interpret this know what every single character, color, shape means. But it's not, unless, of course, you are a high priest, so to speak, you don't understand it. So, this would be what the type of things that, of course we call today codexes, but they didn't call them codexes. The name was not such.
See, as you can see, it's full of characters that represent all the gods, all the symbols, all the dynasties of kings, and so forth, all right? Now, most of these representations were destroyed during the conquest or right after conquest because they represented the religious beliefs and because people could not understand them. They thought that they could also be pretty much like the Bible was to us. In other words, an actual book of religion. And so, this is the reason why the Borgia Codex is one of the very few that survived.
But, see how they represent, for example, Tezcatlipoca. And Tezcatlipoca is one of the gods of the Mexicas. He is actually the rival of other gods, you know, the--gods in the Aztec world are very much like like the Greek gods. They're always fighting with each other.
Now, what happens when the Franciscans arrive is a completely new thing because this friar you see here, Friar Toribio de Motolinía, is the first one who learns Nahuatl and gets to really know the language extremely well. So Toribio de Motolinía is the one who writes the first history of the Indians by using his extensive language of the Nahuatl language. And so, he is the first one to produce a series of studies that are going to be very important because they—
Motolinia is represented here in one of the churches in Mexico. Unlike Cortes of the other conquerors that are supposed to be sort of like the military rulers, Motolinia and all the friars are popular in Mexico today. So you can even see things like sculptures of Motolinia and portraits of Motolinia.
So, the second and the most important one is Bernardino de Sahagun. With Bernardino de Sahagun, we have a true genius who spent more than 60 years in the New World. This is another extraordinary person who lived almost 90 years. And Bernardino de Sahagun becomes the first great scholar of the Nahuatl language, and not only in Nahuatl language but the Nahuatl culture. He is a man, probably we could say today, 200 years before his time. He's almost a modern anthropologist.

And what did he do? For 40 years, he's set to establish the--an encyclopedic knowledge of the Mexican culture. And in order to do that, he interviewed with scientific--in a very scientific way -- everything that had to do with the pre-Columbian world. And in order to be precise and not be prejudice by his own beliefs, he decided to write the history in Nahuatl. This is the most remarkable aspect of it. [Laughs]

So, he writes 12 books about the Nahuatl world in every possible -- the gods, the customs, the way you structure society, trade, et cetera, et cetera, and in the original language so that--because he thinks, if we translate the concepts into Spanish, we are somehow betraying the true meaning of this. See, if we use words like “king” or “queen” or “law” or something like that, we are already betraying the concepts that Mexicans have.
So together with the famous report that takes him, you know, particularly all his life to compile, he also includes many interesting depictions of life that can represent exactly what he's talking about.
Now, notice, let's go back here. This would be a totally Aztec-Mexican representation. It's brilliant colors, not exactly naturalistic depiction but in a way symbolic with everything that concerns the attributes of his power.
And notice the change here. What do we have? We have perspective. We have landscape. This is European. This is not. So, not only we have here the same colors and we have a very naturalistic representation of the different warriors, the Aztec warriors. But, we also have a new element here. This is being done by Mexica influence trained by Europeans. And as a result, we have here, for the first time, what we can call mestizo painting also. A mestizo painting style. This is the beginning of Mexican art after the conquest because it has both elements together.
This is a representation of human sacrifice when, you know, the heart is taken from the chest right after.
Notice the representation here. Again, according to--because so many artists intervene in the codex, we have all sorts of painting styles. But look at the--in this way, we don’t find...
...what we find here which is perspective, landscapes, something behind which is very European.
Here, we find more of the Aztec way of representing things. By the way, all these things you see here coming out of people's mouth are pretty much like modern cartoons. They are supposed to represent what they are saying, okay? The fact that they are talking. This is an interesting thing.
And this is our representation of the different gods. Notice the difference. This is Borgia style. The Borgia is [inaudible].
And this is the new style. It's completely different.
This has European influence. We have a detail, I think, yeah, one of them, okay.
These are a description of the different gods. This is the Chicomecoatl which is a goddess. It’s a female god. But as you can see, this is not totally Aztec representation. This has more like in European style.
But notice European style, this is even more so. This is pure Renaissance. This could have been produced in Spain or in Italy.
This is supposed to be how the Indians plant corn. You see, they make a hole and they put the seeds. They have a bag with the seeds and they make a hole with this sort of spear and they plant the corn and then the corn grows. Remember, the corn was from Mexico. Europeans didn’t know corn. So this is way to say how corn was planted. But notice, the beautiful expression, the beautiful pose. This could have been done in Italy. So, by then, at the same time that we have representation without any type of landscape in the most Aztec way, we also have these, who obviously have learned a lot already on the new way.
So, we have a whole spectrum of--another of the authors
--I mean--
Oh by the way, the most interesting part of Sahagun is that the 12th book of Sahagun is a book about the conquest. But for the first time, the conquest is not seen, it’s not perceived from the point of view of the conqueror, but from the Aztecs, from the Aztecs point of view. In other words, it’s what Leon Portilla has called La Vision De Los Vencidos. You know, it’s the version of the conquered ones, of the
vanquished. So you see, a completely different prospective. For them, it’s a tragedy. It’s a loss. It’s a defeat. It’s the end of a civilization. There’s no glory in it. There is pain and there's death and defeat. So that's very interesting how even though Sahagun is a Spanish friar, he actually has achieved the idea of expressing the point of view of “the other” and also in Nahuatl language so as to reflect it.
So, the other important person is Duran.
Duran is a Dominican instead of a Franciscan but he does exactly the same thing. He tries to study everything that has happened and he accompanies all that with paintings.
Notice, the European tradition here, it's very obvious...
...the landscape and everything.
This is supposed to be the founding of Mexico. You know, the eagle, the [inaudible] and cactus and so forth with a snake. And this is supposed to be the first Emperor of the Aztecs saying, "This is going to be where we are going to build Mexico City," which is in the middle of the island. This is of course mythical tale, but so is the Iniya [assumed spelling], the mythical tale of the founding of Rome and so forth.
Now, and this represents for example the moment where Pedro de Alvarado is defending himself with--and his troops because he has killed a number of people and the Aztecs, the Mexicans, have revolt against Pedro de Alvarado and they attacked them. Very interesting how on one hand, you have, of course, a very realistic representation of the Spanish with the armors and the guns and all that. And then on the other hand, you have here the Mexican warriors. But the representation of the pyramid is not in a very unrealistic way because the pyramid is now represented from the profile, but from the top down. See, this is like the--so it's a mixture of both styles.
Anyway, Duran – this is the manuscript. So you see that the manuscript, the text is accompanied with a number of drawings.
And this...
...is a very interesting drawing that represents Montezuma analyzing the strange appearance of a comet which appeared a few years before Cortes came, and then it was reinterpreted after the fact as an omen. They are coming from the east. And Moctezuma was somehow after this strange comet. Always, apparently, he thought that this is an omen for something that was going to happen to him and his people.
Anyway, this, yet another representation of the human sacrifice which of course was the obsession of the Spaniards and one of the reasons, one of the people to--that would justify the conquest because to say, "This was the religion of the devil and we had to put an end to something like that."
Well, Tovar is yet the last one of the great authors that have these representations. Also writes a history of the Indians and with—in the manuscript, you know, he has—
And this is, for example, interesting because, you know, in the lower part of the temples, of the pyramids, they have this area which was rather strange but it was full of skulls. And this is the representation of that. But you can—as you can see, it's a representation that has—it's not in the European style. It's more in the original Mexican style without any type of—without any type of perspective.
And this is supposed to be, this is our representation, of a dance, of a circle dance. And also, you can see that it’s not done in the European style. The--It doesn’t use the same perspective that we would use. So again, on the other hand, when you look at the--one by one of the figures, they are done in European style.
So again, we are in a mixture of both. This is the way it's done, for example, a representation--you know, you have the text and then all these drawings that tell us about what happened and how and all that.
Diego de Landa was the bishop.
And he did for the Maya what this other people did for the Aztecs. Remember the Maya, by this--when the Spaniards arrived, the Maya were in total decay. The Mayan Empire had disappeared for hundreds of years. So, they didn't even understand their own monuments. So for Landa, it was an uphill battle because he didn't have anybody who could interpret what you could see in the temples, in the pyramids. So, this is the first attempt, for example, to describe some of the elements that appear in the temples. And this is for example the vocabulary. The Mayan language, vocabulary as should--as he thinks it's represented in the temples.
This--We’ve already seen it, but it appears also in Alvarado Tezozomoc. So, we go to the very end of the presentation and what do we find? Now, we find the third layer and the last layer. We find the authors that are actually mestizos. By the late 16th century and early 17th century, what we have is people who are descendants of both Spanish and Mexica and who feel respect and pride of both ancestries. And this is a totally new thing of course. So they write histories from this perspective of double pride. And one of them is Alvarado Tezozomoc.
The other is Alva Ixtilxochitl. You can see the names, the combination of the Spanish name and the Indian name and the Mexica name. And look at the beautiful dress for example.
This is supposed to be Fernando de Alva Ixtlixochitl himself or, you know, him. He depicts more or less himself. He says he's a prince.
We're not exactly sure whether it's him or not. But anyway, it's a very beautiful representation. And again, Alva or Alvarado Tezozomoc were people who were descendants of the nobility, the Aztec nobility, and of course, the Spanish conquistadors. So they have equal pride.
And then the last one, Diego Munoz Camargo who represents the Tlaxcala, and Tlaxcala is also very special because the Tlaxcalans helped Cortes. Not all the Mexican peoples were against Cortes. Some of them helped Cortes because the Tlaxcalans felt they had been oppressed by the Aztecs. And so, they helped Cortes.
So Lienzo de Tlaxcala, for example, that appears here is interesting because--see, this is supposed to represent Cortes here for the first time he's taken to the pyramid when they're going to have a human sacrifice and he actually watches that when he's visiting the first time with Montezuma.
The Lienzo de Tlaxcala, we don't know who did it, you know, but it's a very good representation of the whole conquest. This is supposed to be Cortes with Marina, with Dona La Malinche, the Indian who helped Cortes because she was a translator and advisor. And this is supposed to be the emissaries of Montezuma that are bringing presents to Cortes.
This is the only portrait of Cortes that was actually done from the--it appeared in a literary text that--the last part of the literature would be literature itself. This is a poem, an epic poem written about Cortes. So we've seen in the case of Mexico, everything. We've seen from the letters of the conquistador himself to soldiers, to humanists, to humanists who were in the New World, to friars who went to the New World and learned everything about the culture, to eventually, people who are both ancestries and then, therefore, they refer to both perspectives of the conqueror and the conquered.

And I just want to finish this by saying, look, about 1572, look how things have changed. And now, we can recognize quite well, I mean, that both North America and South America, the Pacific Ocean -- now it's a real Pacific Ocean. Then we have of course the shape of Africa, India, Japan, all the ocean and so the world--with the exception of Antarctica. That is still not known. And of course, there's no Australia yet. Just a very small island here. But, by now, 1572, it's been 90 years since 1482 and look how things have changed. Now, we know the world as we know it now.