

3. Folding Screen Portraying the Conquest of Mexico and a View of Mexico City

Anonymous

Oil on canvas

New Spain

Late seventeenth century

213 x 550 cm

Inscriptions: "Conquest of Mexico: A. Arrival of Cortés and his welcome by Mochthesa. B. The Brigantines made by the Spaniards. C. House and balcony where Mochtheza was stoned. D. Cue (Aztec temple) that was in the Plaza of Mexico where the Palace is today. E. Cue that was in Santiago Tlatiluco where the Church is today. F. Palace of Mochtheza and houses that today belong to the Marquis. G. Treasury of Moctezuma to which the Indians set fire. H. When Cortés and his soldiers left on the Night of Sadness. I. Calzada de Guadalupe, the street by which the Spaniards entered along with their allies among the Indians of Tlaxcala.

"1. The Cathedral. 2. F. I. Dguadalupe. 3. Santiago. 4. Santa María 5. Santa Ana. 6. El Carmen. 7. Parroquia d Sa. Caterina Martir. 8. Santo Domingo. 9. Lamiçericordia. 10. S.lorenço d Relig. 11. La conçeusion de re.. 12. S. Juan de Dios. 13. San Hipolito. 14. S. Sebastian. 15. S. Pedro i Pablo. 16. Sta. Catarr. Dsenad.. 17. La encarnacion. 18. Colexio d. S. Andr. 19. Sa. Clara d relig. 20. Parroquia de la S. Beracruz. 22. San Diego. 23. Osspi. De los Convalecientes. 25. Sa. Ysanct d relisa. 26. Ospal. d S. Lasaro. 27. La Sma trenidad. 28. Ospal d las bubas. 29. Sa Ynes d relias. 30. Sa. Teresa d relias. 31. Jesús MR de relias. 32. Sa Cruz. 33. Lacompañia. 34. Elespiritu Santo. 35. S fransisco. 36. Colegio d niñas. 37. S Juan d letran. 38. Lamerçe. 39. Balbaneda d relias. 40. Portaceli. 41. S Jose d grades. 42. S. Bernardo. 43. Las capuchias. 44. Osp d Jesus nano. 45. S. Agustin. 46. Osp Real. 47. S. Pablo. 48. S. Geronimo. Reas. 49. Monsarate. 50. Regina d reas. 51. S. Ju d la penitencia re. 52. S. Anton. 53. Belen. 54. Lapieda. 55. Palaçio. 56. Lainquiçion. 57. Los caños. 58. Las calçadas. 59. Los bolcanes. 60. El peñol. 62. S felipe neri. 63. S. Cosme. 64. Elcalvario. 65. Lalameda. 66. Las escuelas. 67. Casa arsobispes. 68. El Campo Santo. 69. El Rastro. 70. Chapultepec."

This ten-panel folding screen is decorated on one side with a panoramic view of Mexico City and on the other with episodes from the Spanish Conquest led by Hernán Cortés. It is a product of the same aesthetic taste that spurred the creation of numerous works in New Spain in the late seventeenth century. These images were manifestations of criollo empowerment—an ersatz defense of their interests, requiring no direct challenge of viceregal authority.





7. Portrait of an Indian Lady, Daughter of a Cacique

Anonymous
Oil on canvas
New Spain
1757
67 x 56 cm

This is an extraordinary work in many ways. The painting is very skillfully rendered, and its subject matter is also of interest, as it depicts an indigenous noble woman. Moreover, the portrait was done before the young lady entered the convent. It allows us to glimpse unique aspects of mid-eighteenth-century taste and women's fashion in New Spain, and to observe the rich intricacy of a mestizo garment that combines the indigenous blouse or huipil with European and Asian accessories. Her attire's decoration incorporates two-headed eagles, Chinese silk galloons, and a profusion of pearls, borne on a double band that fastens the woman's hair and on the large flowers embroidered on the sleeve of her dress.¹

It was common practice in New Spain for parents to have their daughters' portraits painted before the latter took their vows. In the most impressive and well-known genre, the young women are depicted wearing their habits but also jewelry and crowns, and holding candles. Other paintings, however, including this one, portray them luxuriously dressed in the fashion of their times. The inscription tells us that the young lady, named Sebastiana Ynés Josepha de San Agustín, was sixteen at the time and the legitimate daughter of Mathías Alexo Martínez and Thomasa de Dios y Mendiola. From other records we know that her father was a governor and that the young lady in question was from Santiago Tlatelolco.² Because of her social and racial status, she entered the Corpus Christi Convent—founded in 1724 by the Viceroy Marquis de Valero—that only indigenous women could attend.

The brush strokes rendering the lace on the collar and full sleeves and the sparkles of light on the jewels and accessories point to the skillful artistry of the painting's creator. The work is unsigned, but dated 1757. At that time, José de Ibarra and Francisco Martínez had just died, but many other famous painters were still active and enjoying the benefits of a thriving art market, among them Miguel Cabrera, Andrés de Islas, Juan Patricio Morlete Ruiz, José de Páez Barreda, Francisco Antonio Vallejo, and José de Alcívar. (RRG)

1. Virginia Armella de Aspe, "El traje civil," *La historia de México a través de la indumentaria* (1988): 77-78.

2. Josefina Muriel, "El convento de Corpus Christi," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 7 (1941): 37.

Retrato de Sebastiana
Ynes Josepha de S.ⁿ Aug.
Hija legítima de D.ⁿ Mathi.
Alexo. Martinez y de D.
Thomasa de Dios. Y =
Mendiola. de Edad de
16 años. del Año
de 1757 años...



20. Bargueño (writing desk)

Walnut (?) with inlaid bone

Aragón (?), Spain

Late sixteenth or early seventeenth century

127 x 94 x 54 cm

Spanish drop-front desks, known today as *bargueños*, were perhaps the most common pieces of furniture in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish homes. Despite the elaborate embellishment, *bargueños* had a practical function: the small drawers, the hinged—and, for some, secret—compartments were well suited to the storage of small treasures, documents, and writing materials. With no central administrative capital in Spain during this period, the courts were constantly moving, making the design of this box form, which could be closed with

iron lockplates and carried by the drop-front handles, ideal for transporting desks laden with documents. When positioned, the *bargueño* rests either on a standard chest or a trestle stand of the same width and with pulls typically in the form of scallop shells. With the constant movement of the box itself, the original base is rarely known. Consequently, pieces such as the example here are often situated on bases of different styles and periods.

The origin of the Spanish *bargueño* is still widely debated among historians of this period. Some believe that it evolved out of a Muslim tradition. Others hold that it was a response to the Catalan chest and European cabinet. It has also been suggested that it originated in Aragón or Valencia, where Muslim traditions were met by Italian ones. The abundant number of extant seventeenth-century *bargueños* suggests that this widely popular form was made in various parts of Spain.

Sixteenth-century *bargueños* are characterized by both a drop front and a drop lid, decorated with inlaid bone and minute strips of light wood, usually boxwood, in a style known as *Mudéjar*, which combines European and Islamic motifs. The present example represents a transitional period from the more geometric and abstract patterns of the sixteenth century, to the more Italianate style of the seventeenth century. The Islamic penchant for intricate patterning and for decorating entire surfaces is manifested throughout this piece. Diamond, pear, and triangular shapes of ivory compose brilliant arrays of geometric patterns. On the face of the drop front, intricately detailed flower vases are set within plateresque-style arches; this richly ornamental style is related to a sixteenth-century Spanish architectural style. The combination of arched columns, floral arrangements, and curvilinear vines of pomegranates recalls those made in the province of Aragón. The lockplate lined with red velvet is more typical of an alternative mid- to late-seventeenth-century style, and must have been a later addition. (MCMQ)







22. Curved-Lid Chest/Trunk

Contrasting types of wood, tortoiseshell, bone, and ironwork with traces of gilding

New Spain

Seventeenth century

19 x 27 x 14 cm

Numerous pieces of household furniture such as trunks, chests, beds, etc., were copied in smaller formats. Such is the case of this small curved-lid trunk with decorative patterns of double eight-pointed stars inscribed within small square panels. The stars feature central diamond shapes. This type of decoration has a Moorish influence—specifically fine Mudéjar fretwork carpentry. The keyhole plate displays a beautiful two-headed eagle with an intricate profile. The metal fittings were not done in silver as was customary with high-quality furniture. Another idiosyncrasy of this trunk is that the motifs on the rear were simplified, even though the marquetry is complex. The lateral sides of the lid feature a geometric design somewhat reminiscent of the Virgin Mary's monogram. The trunk was designed to sit directly on a surface, as it bears no traces of ever having legs. The rib-shaped iron fittings of the lid continue to the rear and front, where they take the form of hinges and bolt, respectively. The craftsmanship is of noticeably high quality, especially in the multiple geometric cuts of the pieces used in the assembly of the stars and squares.

(GC)



23. Chest with Lid of Broken Lines

Contrasting types of wood, engraved, polychromed bone, silver,
iron, with silver key

New Spain

Seventeenth century

20 x 31 x 26 cm

Two sections of this small chest stand out: the first is the lid, and the way it was assembled. It is made of five elongated slats decorated with pieces of obliquely arranged bone bearing floral engravings. The second is the base that bears a large double molding that hides a secret compartment in the front of the chest. The decoration includes rhombuses, small squares, and oblique patterns, the white bone offset with light and dark wood.

The inlaid pieces of bone were profusely decorated with engraved scrolls or ribbons and floral motifs. The hollows in the graffito were later filled with black paint to highlight the Mannerist-style designs. This decorative touch lends great beauty to the piece. The use of graffito-adorned bone plates recalls the Italian furniture that immigrants brought to Mexico as part of their households during the viceregal period. Such pieces possibly influenced Mexican workshops that used graffito-decorated polychromed plates.

Inside the chest is a small compartment with a separate lid—a common feature of chests made in Spain and colonial Mexico. There are no signs that the piece ever had legs. The geometric decoration appears only on the front and sides of the piece. The double molding at the lower edge appears only on three sides, so that the chest could be placed against a wall. The lower elongated secret compartment that occupies the entire front of the piece is hidden by the double dark-wood molding, which serves as a base. In the rear the hinges are longer, so as to attach the lid, which features floral motifs on its sides. (G C)



24. Small Writing Case

Carved, engraved wood with sumac veneer; wrought, engraved,
and gilded ironwork

Oaxaca

Seventeenth century

35 x 51 x 33 cm

The Franz Mayer Museum has a fair number of pieces from the workshop that produced this one, all of excellent craftsmanship (refer to inventory numbers 6783 CAC-37, 7584 CAC-53, 8123 GBK-59, 5509-CAC-31, 4960 GCR-2, 6197 GBK-II, 6779 CAC-35, and 6780 CAC-36). These pieces of furniture have common features as far as their manufacturing technique is concerned, such as the use of engraved sumac veneer and of wooden nails to attach the inlaid, engraved pieces which depict figures. This small portable writing case bears greatest similarity to inventory number 6783 CAC-37; it features a pull-down lid and storage drawers for documents, letters, and writing implements. Such cases are commonly found in the written inventories of private

households—whether or not their owners knew how to write—as they denoted a certain level of social prestige. This case's pull-down lid bears a cavalry scene in an elaborate Renaissance-style panel: four horsemen preparing to joust, with two birds overhead and a castle in the background. From the battlements, soldiers appear to be announcing the start of the battle while another stands at the castle entrance. The inside of the lid is decorated with another scene of three birds, a rabbit, and a flowering plant. Both of these scenes are bordered with floral motifs, scrolls, and Mannerist anthropomorphic masks. Each side panel features a horseman representing an army division: one of them holds a lance, poised to attack, while the other fires a flintlock pistol into the air. Their clothes and hairstyles correspond to the fashions of the seventeenth century. Full-body male and female figures involved in courtship—some of them bareheaded and carrying flowers—are depicted in the upper front panel of the case within a sort of gallery. One might assume from these representations that the case was a wedding gift. The figures in the gallery are wearing seventeenth-century attire. The front of the case under the gallery is equipped with three drawers—two beside each other on an upper rung and another wider one beneath. The drawers' front panels are decorated with birds and animals including a lizard, or salamander, and a monkey. The back of the case and the top cover display the figures of a deer, a lion, and two birds. One of these would seem to be a hummingbird poised to peck at a flower that forms part of a bouquet placed in a vase.

This kind of furniture, whose surface is assembled like a jigsaw puzzle of small plates held together by wooden pins, is inspired by the design of boxes from Nuremberg called *cajas de Alemania*, which became very popular in the sixteenth century among the upper class of New Spain. These writing implements somehow found their way to Oaxaca, where they were copied and ultimately became a specialty of the region. It is still not known whether this type of work was done in the city of Oaxaca or in the town of Villalta in the Oaxacan Mixtec Highlands.



27 Chest with Curved Lid

Wood frame covered with dyed, woven plant fibers; wrought-iron and fretwork trimming; replacements of woven hemp rope on the upper part of the right side and on top of the lid; wooden nails; modern feet

Indo-Portuguese or Philippine (?)

Seventeenth/eighteenth century

70 x 90 x 49 cm

The technique used to manufacture this piece of furniture consisted of covering a wooden shell with plant fibers that form decorative designs associated with horseback riding or hunting scenes. Two bare-chested figures wearing European trousers, socks, and shoes attempt to spear a wild boar. Their long lances resemble primitive weapons.

Boar hunting is a typically European activity, but the facial features of the two men and the color of their skin tells us that they are either indigenous or African. Both the frame around the scene and the decoration on the lid feature floral motifs and what appears to be acanthus leaves in a rhythmic undulating pattern. The colorfully dyed fibers used in the basketry work suggest this piece comes from the Philippines, though it might have been made in India for the Portuguese market. Though the structure of the chest and the depicted subject matter are European, the technique is Oriental. (GC)



28. Chest

Wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl; wrought-iron trimmings
New Spain
Seventeenth/eighteenth century
56 x 104 x 50 cm

This large oblong chest is made of wooden boards assembled with visible dovetail tenons and reinforced with iron joint ornaments. The octagonal-shaped lid made of boards joined end to end is affixed to the rest of the structure by iron hinges and is closed by a huge lock with a plain circular keyhole plate. The front and sides of the chest are decorated with mother-of-pearl marquetry and light-colored wood.

The mother-of-pearl inlays are in the shape of flowers and petals encircled by vines and scrolls rendered in a double inlaid line, sometimes called *taracea de fideo*, literally “spaghetti marquetry.”¹ The use of mother-of-pearl is considered an Oriental influence in Mexican furniture, although in this case the floral motifs bear an indigenous influence. Another chest with the same decorative motifs has been classified as coming from northern Mexico.²

This piece conserves its original ironwork, except for the bolt on the lock. The keyhole plate is fitted into the surrounding decorative marquetry and forms part of its design, as opposed to the other trimmings that are placed on top of it. Hinges, keyhole plate, and reinforcements all have square iron nails—an unmistakable sign of the chest’s antiquity.

Chests are some of the oldest pieces of furniture and were most commonly used to stow objects that had to be carried from one place to another. As life became more sedentary, they were used as part of a room’s standard furnishings. This piece certainly was designed to be stationary because it has no handles, and may have been placed up against a wall, given that only the front is decorated. The absence of feet indicates that at one time it might have been set on a base, which no longer exists. (MCF)

1. Regarding this type of marquetry, see León R. Zahar, *Taracea islámica y mudéjar* (2000): 71; Marita Martínez del Río de Redo, *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries* (1990): 439, 446; Jorge Loyzaga, “Taracea en México,” *El mueble mexicano* (1985): 89.

2. Marita Martínez del Río de Redo, *ibid.*: 439.



31. Writing Case

Contrasting tones of wood, ebony, and ivory; engraved, painted bone; varnished to imitate Chinese lacquerwork; modern hinges, visible markings of where the former ones were placed; some missing marquetry replaced with wax

New Spain

Seventeenth/eighteenth century

63 x 71 x 36 cm

Furniture related to the art of writing —such as desks, writing cases, and wastepaper baskets— proliferated in bourgeois homes in New Spain, whether or not those people who owned them knew how to write. These pieces of furniture were status symbols, and it is for this reason that they are ubiquitous in inventories of private property from the colonial period.

This writing case is unique for several reasons. It has a folding top and drawers at the front. The original lock has been removed. The original hinges holding the cover have been

replaced by modern ones. However, what perhaps catches the eye most is the Mexican lacquered decoration, made in imitation of the Chinese style, which covers the inside of the lid and the inner back of the desk. This magnificent decoration includes the figures of a lion and a leopard, as well as flowers of Oriental inspiration. The decoration also features the figures of a monkey, a squirrel, a rooster, and a hen. The center of the lid bears an awkwardly depicted peony, its oddness most certainly due to the craftsman's unfamiliarity with this Asian motif. Certain decorative forms might be related to the patterns of textiles brought to New Spain aboard the Manila Galleon. Below the cover there are two rows of two drawers, all of whose inner structures have been totally and recently repaired—only their original front panels remain. Another large drawer appears to have been designed originally as a secret compartment. The sides of the desk and the outer face of the lid feature eight-pointed stars inscribed within circles and other geometrical motifs of Moorish influence. The case's inlaid decoration is similar to that of a wardrobe in the Franz Mayer Museum. (G C)





53. Pear-shaped Bottle

Porcelain with underglaze blue

China

1573-1620

27 x 17 cm

The graceful elegance of pear-shaped bottles is so endearing that these forms have remained a favorite of Chinese ceramics since Neolithic times. The onion-shaped mouth, a practical embellishment applied occasionally, provided better control when pouring and more secure capping. Beginning with Wanli (1573), until the mid-seventeenth century, the pear-shaped bottle with elongated neck was highly favored, a revival inspired by Persian flasks. Embellished with underglaze blue designs, they were the rage, especially abroad.

On the Franz Mayer bottle, the blue-and-white themes are arranged horizontally with *rui* scrolls encircling the mouth and pomegranate seeds within lappets around the neck. The globular body has an open field of motifs deployed laterally, beginning with beribboned auspicious symbols, followed by blossoms separated by highly elaborated rui scrolls. At the bottle's widest diameter, horses and *qilin* (fantastic beasts) are seen in flying gallop separated by trigrams and symbols of good omen. Along the base, tripeaked mountains surrounded by crashing waves alternate with a row of three semicircular waves. A line of interconnected brackets marks the bottom of the composition.

Stylistic parallels may be observed on pear-shaped bottles recovered from datable shipwrecks. These include the *San Diego* (1600),¹ *Witte Leeuw* (1613),² and the *Hatcher Junk* (c. 1643-46).³ The similarity in shape, motif, and compositional formulas on excavated pear-shaped bottles over a half-century attest to the continued popularity of this ceramic form. The compositional division of the design into panels is a common feature on late Ming blue-and-white bottles, but on the Franz Mayer example there is instead an open disposition of motifs that occurs more typically on the earlier (1600) *San Diego* pieces. The motif of the flying horse among waves on the Franz Mayer bottle is closer in style to those of Wanli than to the *Hatcher Junk* specimens dating to the early 1640s. (GK)

1. *Saga of the San Diego*. 1993, pls. 15-25.

2. C. L. van der Pilj-Ketel (ed.), *The Ceramic Load of the Witte Leeuw* (1613), 1982, pp. 134-37.

3. Sheaf and Kilburn, *The Hatcher Porcelain Cargoes: the Complete Record*, 1988, pl. 48.



54. Jar

Porcelain with underglaze blue

China

1660-80

33 x 24 cm

With the decline of court patronage, the literati tastes of the landed gentry and an emergent class of princely merchants found full expression in the decorative arts. During the transitional period (1660-80), artists explored new subjects, particularly narrative themes and landscapes.

The Franz Mayer jar reflects the changed patronage with the depiction of the literati gathering on a garden terrace and enjoying the gentlemanly pursuits of playing chess, viewing a painting of bamboo and rocks, reciting poetry from woodblock printed books, and strumming a Chinese harp (*qin*). Immediately below the dignified gentlemen, some children are engaged in a game of blindman's bluff while others frolic mischievously. Outside the garden fence a rock-filled stream burbles. Here and there patches of grass are rendered by dots and tiny lobes that are characteristic of the transitional period.

The juxtaposition of light and dark blue and the special color gradations of the rocks are typical of blue-and-white porcelain from the Chongzhen (1628-43) through the early Kangxi (1662-1722) periods. The style of rendering clouds as a horizontal series of overlapping elements that meander across the sky is also typical of the late transitional period. The glazed base has a double circle drawn in blue, a feature that frequently occurs on transitional period pieces.

The themes depicted on this blue-and-white jar were created to appeal specifically to Chinese patrons of the transitional period. However, the vagaries of trade brought this porcelain vase to an audience in the New World who found the subjects depicted intriguingly exotic and ultimately enchanting. (ГК)



58. Platter

Glazed porcelain from the East India Company, with polychrome overglaze decoration

China

Late eighteenth century

30 x 37 x 7 cm

This deep, oblong platter with an outline of both curvilinear and rectilinear segments displays the shield of Mexico City in its center, along with the inscription "ON. HIS. ACCESSION. TO. THE. THRONE. OF. MEXICO. CITY. ON. DECEMBER. 27. 1789." within a slightly worn gilt circle. The upper edge of the inner slope is adorned with a thin band of alternating green and red enamel. Its broad rim is edged with gilt and features a border of enamel dots in various colors between two solid bands. This platter belonged to the table service used by the Mexico City government to celebrate the crowning of Charles IV in Spain.

Series of table services with emblems of different civil associations within New Spain were made especially for the New World market to commemorate Charles IV's proclamation as king. These sets are known as proclamation services and, according to Manuel Romero de Terreros, their function was more memorial than utilitarian, as pieces from a single service were distributed among prominent figures in the viceroyalty.¹ (RDD)

1. Manuel Romero de Terreros, *Cosas que fueron* (1937): 133.



66. Apothecary Jar

Tin-glazed earthenware

Puebla

Early eighteenth century

25 x 12 (diam.) cm

Like so many ceramic shapes and decorations introduced to Puebla potters from Spain, the tall cylindrical jar is of Islamic origin. Known as *albarelos*, these jars were used to store medicinal herbs and ointments and were probably covered with such perishable materials as cloth or leather and secured around the neck by a string. This is one of ten nearly identical *albarelos* in the Franz Mayer Museum's extensive collection of Puebla ware. Additional examples of this style and shape can be found in other museum collections as well.¹ Together, these distinctive *albarelos* may once have lined the walls of one of Mexico's many private or monastic pharmacies during the colonial period.

Typical of Wanli period (1573-1620) Chinese porcelain, the central band contains individual compositions enframed by lobed panels. The panels are joined at two sides by a circle enclosing a dot, and spiraling tendrils with solid blossoms, or rain clouds, fill the remaining space of the band above and below. The decorative scheme of this *albarello* is similar to a Japanese *Kendi* (a specialized bottle form with a spout) that is decorated with lobed panels separated by spiraling tendrils, which is in the Museo Nacional del Virreinato in Mexico City.² The scenes within the two panels on the present example, however, differ from that of the *Kendi*.

This *albarello* is one of a variety of contemporary Puebla forms decorated with pictorial scenes modeled after a late Ming dynasty (c. 1560s-1640) blue-and-white porcelain type known to have been exported in quantity to the New World.³ On the side illustrated, a waterbird, possibly a crane, stands in a pond flanked by a sloping hill with flowering plants to the right and a cactus to the left. Above the cactus is an abstracted pavilion, which is more clearly articulated on other vessels with the same composition. The opposite panel depicts a pendant sprig of three chrysanthemum flowers composed of clusters of dots and leaves within a stylized landscape. The band at the base of the *albarello* is decorated with a pattern adapted from the calligraphic *alafia* motif found on Hispano-Muslim lusterware,⁴ although it may also be an alternating pattern of stylized Islamic structures.

(MCMQ)

1. For examples, see Edwin Atlee Barber, *Maiolica of Mexico* (1908), pl. 15.

2. See George Kuwayama, *Chinese Ceramics in Colonial Mexico* (1997), p. 43.

3. See Kuwayama, pp. 78-79; *La cerámica en la ciudad de México, 1325-1917* (1997), p. 84.

4. See Anthony Ray, *Spanish Pottery, 1248-1898* (2000), pp. 65-67.



67. Basin

Tin-glazed earthenware

Puebla

Early eighteenth century

18 x 66 (diam.) cm

The large, deep, and flat bottom basin with steep, slightly flared walls is an Islamic form introduced to Spain in the ninth century. Made in a variety of sizes, the basin was used as a baptismal font or wash receptacle and was one of the most common shapes made by Puebla potters during the golden age of the production of these wares, which dates from about 1650 to 1750. The Franz Mayer Museum holds a substantial collection of such impressive basins, including the largest known example extending some thirty-four inches in diameter (86 cm) and twelve inches in height (31 cm).¹ The present example is perhaps the most common size for Puebla ware. Typical of Puebla basins, the rim is textured like the edge of a piecrust, achieved by pinching the rim while the clay is still wet. The exterior walls are also decorated.

The overall appearance of this basin reflects the influence of Wanli porcelain (1573-1620). Beginning in the sixteenth century and continuing into the seventeenth century, Chinese potters began to move away from high-style design with imperial symbols and Taoist subjects, toward decorations of more popular appeal. The new style included more landscapes, narrative themes, and motifs that were more appealing to the scholarly gentry.² These types of porcelains were shipped to the New World by Manila galleons in increasing numbers toward the end of the seventeenth century.

The central roundel of this basin depicts a Y-shaped river flowing from one end of the basin to the other and back again. Various hunters cross two bridges over a river. To experience the scenes depicted here, the basin must be viewed from various angles. Arched structures supported by Solomonic columns radially divide the interior walls of this basin into eight panels of decoration. Within each panel are stylized trees, birds, and other animals, all disproportionately depicted in relation to the various architectural structures. Along the rim of the basin are unevenly spaced domed structures with animals and stylized bushes. Characteristic of Puebla pottery of this period, the entire surface is decorated, although contrasting light and dark shades of cobalt blue make it easier for the scene to be read. (MCMQ)

1. See Donna Pierce, cat. no. 219, *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries* (1990), pp. 464-66.

2. Margaret Medley, *The Chinese Potter: A Practical Guide of Chinese Ceramics* (1989), pp. 220; George Kuwayama, *Chinese Ceramics in Colonial Mexico* (1997), pp. 16, 34.



69. Jar

Tin-glazed earthenware

Puebla

Early eighteenth century

49 x 35 (diam.) cm

Both the shape of this jar and the bold decoration stand out as one of the most refined works of Puebla ware in the style of Chinese porcelain. The form and decoration were modeled after a blue-and-white porcelain jar from the Kangxi reign (1662-1722) of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).¹ As on the Chinese jar, chrysanthemum blossoms are rendered with strong outlines in white reserve. The floral design, which may have been inspired by Chinese silk damask popular in Mexico at the time,² fills the entire surface of the jar; the stems of the blossom become vines weaving down, up, and across. Monochrome blue-and-white decoration is more characteristic of Ming dynasty (1368-1644) porcelain, although the style continued to be made in China into the eighteenth century alongside polychrome vessels.

Framing the central panel above and below is a pattern of alternating stylized Islamic structures, which evolved from the calligraphic *alafia* motif of Hispano-Muslim lusterware. This border motif, commonly used by Puebla artists during the first half of the eighteenth century, replaces the vertical leaves decorating the base of the Chinese model. (MCMQ)

1. See Leonor Cortina, "Loza achinada: polvos azules de orientes," *La Talavera de Puebla. Artes de México*, no. 3 (1995), p. 51.

2. George Kuwayama, *Chinese Ceramics in Colonial Mexico* (1997), p. 81.



77. Chamber Pot and Bowl

Tin-glazed earthenware

Puebla

Early nineteenth century

27 x 32 (diam.) cm

Bowl

Tin-glazed earthenware

Puebla

Early nineteenth century

15 x 29 (diam.) cm

Like so many art forms produced at the turn of the nineteenth century in Mexico, the production of Puebla ware gave way to the fashion for Neoclassicism, fostered by the founding of the Academy of San Carlos in Mexico City in 1781. Chinese-style decoration had fallen out of favor, and an array of new colors and styles had been introduced to the limited Puebla palette. In Puebla, polychrome decoration on cream as well as pastel grounds replaced the ubiquitous blue-and-white. Even before the potter's guild was revoked in 1814, ceramists had begun to paint with more freedom. By this time, however, the number of ceramic workshops and potters working in the trade began to decrease and the quality of the vessel forms and decoration saw a decline.

Typical of this period are the garland, chevron, and woven patterns forming bands around the vessels. The floral sprigs evenly spaced on the bowl and randomly scattered on the chamber pot are perhaps the most distinctive element characterizing the style of these two vessels.

Very little archaeological work has been done to properly date the early-nineteenth-century Puebla types. The inscription, "Viva Fernando 7," emblazoned on a covered bowl with the same floral sprigs, however, dates this style to around the period of 1808 to 1821, when Mexican royalists supported the Spanish king who had been temporarily supplanted during the Napoleonic Wars (1808-21).¹ (MCMQ)

1. See Margaret Connors McQuade, *Talavera Poblana: Four Centuries of a Mexican Ceramic Tradition* (1999), p. 53.

