

CANNIBALISM AMONG AZTECS AND THEIR NEIGHBORS: ANALYSIS OF THE 1577–1586 *RELACIONES GEOGRÁFICAS* FOR NUEVA ESPAÑA AND NUEVA GALICIA PROVINCES

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This article presents the first systematic analysis of the statements on prehispanic cannibalism in the 1577–1586 Relaciones Geográficas (RGs) for Nueva Galicia and Nueva España provinces of New Spain, an area occupied by the Aztecs and their closest neighbors. Forty of the 105 RGs analyzed, from widely scattered locales in the two provinces, allege cannibalism. In both their content and their inherent limitations as a database, these mainly rural reports are very similar to the well-known, intensive, largely urban studies of Aztec culture made in the sixteenth century (e.g., by Durán and Sahagún). While the Spanish/mestizo RG authors who offered damning assessments of Indian culture or character were more likely to allege cannibalism, those whose greater interest in indigenous culture is reflected in their lengthier reports on it also mention the practice. At the same time, the statements on cannibalism were directly attributed to Indian informants in 18 (45 percent) of the 40 RGs alleging cannibalism.

THE STUDY OF CANNIBALISM in prehispanic Mexico was largely neglected during the 1980s and 1990s, following the heated debates about it during the 1970s (for a summary, see Petrinovich 2000) and the publication of William Arens's (1979) widely influential book denying the empirical proof of customary (i.e., culturally approved) cannibalism at any time or place (see Brady 1982). Recently, though, Arens's stance has been vigorously challenged, especially for Melanesia (Goldman 1999) and the U.S. Southwest (Turner and Turner 1999; cf. Kantner 1999). In this latter case, cannibalism is said to have diffused from central Mexico (Turner and Turner 1999:464ff.).

Recent research has also led to the conclusion that the "behavioral possibility or potentiality" of cannibalism is entertained in all cultures. "We have yet to encounter any case of a people bereft of a locally etched understanding of anthropophagy" (Goldman 1999:2). How odd it would be if none of the world's prehistoric or ethnographic cultures had ever institutionalized (i.e., incorporated into normal, accepted cultural practice) a potential behavior that "appears everywhere to have been a matter of some cultural preoccupation" (Goldman 1999:2). In short, I believe it is no longer a question of whether institutionalized

cannibalism has ever occurred, but of where and when—and of what kinds of evidence can be obtained to document those cases.

For central Mexico, reports on prehispanic cannibalism have relied almost exclusively upon a few sixteenth-century ethnographic resources (especially Durán 1994 and Sahagún 1981) derived mainly from research in urban centers. Then as now, the forte of the localized ethnographic approach is its potential for great depth of coverage. Its major shortcoming is lack of the spatial breadth that would permit an assessment of the regional currency of the reported practices. For the latter, we need systematic regional surveys, which provide information on broad areas but typically at the expense of depth of coverage (see Nutini 2001:37–44).

For sixteenth-century Mexico, we are fortunate to have available just such a systematic regional survey, the 1577–1586 *Relaciones Geográficas* (RGs), which provide coverage on a wide range of topics, including cannibalism. The surviving RGs for central and western Mexico—covering the Aztec Empire and its immediate neighbors—are of especially high quality. Yet, they have been largely ignored in the study of prehispanic cannibalism. This article presents the first systematic analysis of them for that purpose.¹

The 1577–1586 survey that produced the *Relaciones Geográficas* would be an impressive undertaking even if done today. In the Aztec and contiguous areas alone, hundreds of communities were surveyed using a standardized, fifty-item questionnaire prepared in 1577 (slightly amended in 1584) on orders of the Spanish king (see Cline 1972b). The resulting RGs are unrivaled in their systematic regional coverage for the sixteenth century. As with all other ethnohistorical documents, though, their scholarly value becomes evident only through an unsparing assessment of their biases and shortcomings of time, place, authorship, and completeness (see Barber and Berdan 1998; Calnek 1974; Heyden 1996; Klor de Alva, Nicholson, and Keber 1988). Most of this article is devoted to just such a critique of the RGs, which survive the examination well enough that they may be used to corroborate and extend much of the information in the roughly contemporaneous data-intensive sources. At the same time, analysis of the RGs helps point up the limitations of ethnohistorical resources in general for the study of cannibalism.

THE DATABASE

This article examines allegations of cannibalism in the 1577–1586 *Relaciones Geográficas* from the contiguous provinces (*gobiernos*) of Nueva España and Nueva Galicia in central and western Mexico. The RGs were organized by the dioceses shown in Figure 1 (Cline 1972a; Acuña 1984a–1988). The surviving RGs are widely distributed within the four dioceses of Nueva España province but are from only the Nueva Galicia province portion of the huge Guadalajara diocese, which also covered much of northern Mexico. For these two provinces, 110 (Acuña 1984a–1988) or 111 (Cline 1972b:193, 196, 205) of the original 133 RGs completed by 1586 survive today. I follow Acuña's (1984a–1988) count, as his edition of the RGs is my corpus. The present study includes only the 105 RGs in

which the questions designed specifically for Indian communities (see below) were answered: 33 in Antequera (Oaxaca) diocese, 14 in Tlaxcala, 31 in México, 16 in Michoacán, and 11 in Guadalajara (Nueva Galicia province only).²

The RGs are of three types in terms of internal structure: *Simple*, covering a single town or low-level political division; *Complex*, providing additional but limited coverage of the main center's subject towns; and *Composite*, providing extensive, separate coverage for each of the towns in the area or jurisdiction (Cline 1972b:191; Acuña 1982:11). Each Simple or Complex RG had a single response to each question, but Composite RGs typically had a separate set of responses for each component unit. Among the 105 RGs employed in this study, 40 are Simple, 23 are Complex, and 42 are Composite.³

Questions 11–15 of the fifty-item RG questionnaire were designed specifically for predominantly Indian communities. The present study draws mainly upon questions 14 and 15 (Cline 1972b:233–37):

14. To whom were they subject when they were heathens; what power did their rulers have over them; what did they pay in tribute; what forms of worship, rites [omitted in 1584 revision], and good or evil customs did they have?
15. Describe how they were governed; with whom they fought wars, and their manner of fighting; their former and present manner of dressing; their former and present means of subsistence; and whether they were more or less healthy than at present, giving any insight you may have as to the cause.

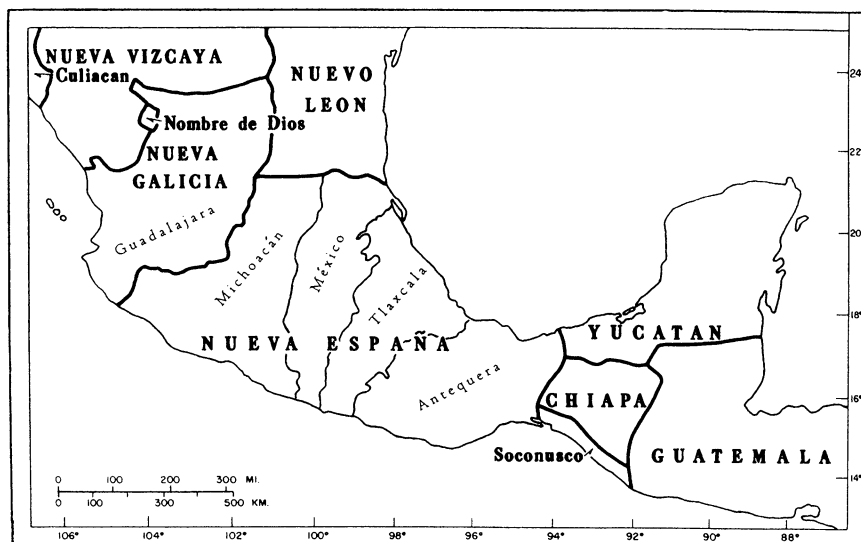


Figure 1. Nueva Galicia and Nueva España Provinces and Their Dioceses
(after Cline 1972a: Figures 5 and 7)

Also important is question 5, which includes queries about Indian population trends (“whether there have been more or fewer in former times”) and about “the degree and quality of their [Indians’] intelligence, inclinations, and way or life.”

ALLEGATIONS OF CANNIBALISM

Cannibalism is alleged in 40 (38.1 percent) of the 105 RGs (Table 1).⁴ In all but 8 of these 40, it is tied to ritual human sacrifice. If we set aside those 8 cases, the proportion of RGs alleging both human sacrifice and cannibalism (32 of 105, or 30.5 percent) is not much greater than the proportion asserting human sacrifice alone (29 of 105, or 27.6 percent). At the same time, 36 RGs (34.3 percent) make no mention of either practice. Only in México diocese, however, is the proportion of “Neither” (45.2 percent) greater than the proportion of “Cannibalism” (35.5 percent).

TABLE 1
Alleged Cannibalism and Human Sacrifice, by Diocese

Dioceses	No. RGs	Cannibalism ^a		Human Sacrifice Only		Neither	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Guadalajara	11	6	54.5	1	9.1	4	36.4
Michoacán	16	6	37.5	4	25.0	6	37.5
México	31	11	35.5	6	19.4	14	45.2
Tlaxcala	14	3	21.4	8	57.1	3	21.4
Antequerá	33	14	42.4	10	30.3	9	27.3
Totals	105	40	38.1	29	27.6	36	34.3

Note: In the Composite RGs, which cover multiple communities, the phenomenon is recorded as present if it occurs in any of the constituent units.

a. In 8 (20 percent) RGs (3 in Guadalajara, 3 in México, 2 in Antequerá), cannibalism was alleged in the absence of an assertion of human sacrifice (see text).

Guadalajara (Nueva Galicia province) stands out in Table 1 as having both the highest percentage (54.5 percent) of alleged cannibalism and the lowest percentage (9.1 percent) of ritual human sacrifice in the absence of cannibalism. Furthermore, fully half (3 of 6) of the allegations of cannibalism in Guadalajara are made in the absence of any ritual context whatsoever (see below). Compared to Nueva España province, prehispanic Nueva Galicia was less complex politically (see Carmack, Gasco, and Gossen 1996:Ch. 3), perhaps accounting for the greatly lower incidence of human sacrifice reported there. The very high percentage of cases in which cannibalism is asserted in Guadalajara (Nueva Galicia), on the other hand, may well reflect negative colonial attitudes towards Indians and a concomitantly lower Indian input to the RGs. Especially in the interior portions of Nueva Galicia, the Indians were relatively inaccessible to colonial officials, who often viewed them as barbarous marauders and brigands (see Acuña 1988:106–7, 112, 248–49).

Not surprisingly, nearly three-fourths (8 of 11, or 72.7 percent) of the Guadalajara (Nueva Galicia) RGs contain deprecatory characterizations of the native population. I shall return to this point later.

In most of the 40 RGs alleging cannibalism, the allegation consists of a single sentence or even just a phrase. In marked contrast are the lengthy statements by Juan Bautista de Pomar on Texcoco (Acuña 1986b:45–113; also, Pomar 1891) and Diego Muñoz Camargo on Tlaxcala City (Acuña 1984c:25–290; also, Muñoz Camargo 1892). Often referred to as “indigenous” authors, both these men were mestizos (Spanish fathers, Indian mothers) who self-identified as Spaniards. To both of them, “*a nuestro modo*” (“in our manner”) referred to Spanish culture (Acuña 1984c:13, 1986b:35–36). Pomar, however, typically treated his prehispanic heritage with admiration and sensitivity, whereas Muñoz Camargo was more often condemning.

In reference to the human sacrifices to the gods Tezcatlipoca and Huitzilopochtli in Texcoco, Pomar (in Acuña 1986b:62) wrote that

the body was then given to the owner, who was the one who had captured him. And, in this way, they sacrificed all that there were [available] for sacrifice on that day [festival of Tezcatlipoca]. Once finished, the other priests gathered up all the hearts, and after cooking them, they ate them; so that this very important member of the human entrails was assigned to these priests, servants of the Devil [*sic.*]. And in this way, they sacrificed to the idol Huitzilopochtli when his festival day arrived. And the bodies, after being taken away by their owners, were cut into pieces and cooked in great pots and were sent throughout the city and to all the neighboring towns, until nothing of it [the body] remained, in very small pieces, each less than a half-ounce, as gifts to the chiefs, lords and principal men, and majordomos and merchants, to all manner of rich men from whom they wished to elicit something, without there remaining anything of the body for them [the captors, or “owners”] to eat, because it was prohibited to them except for the bones, which they kept as trophies and a sign of their strength and courage, putting them in their house, in the part where everyone entering could see them. Those to whom a piece of this meat was presented gave them mantles, shirts, skirts, rich feathers, precious stones, slaves, maize, gold lip- and ear-plugs, shields, [and] war vestments and appurtenances, each as he wanted to or was able [to give], not so much because those pieces of meat had any value, since many [recipients] did not eat it, as by way of reward for bravery, so that they [the captors, or “owners”] became rich and prosperous.

Pomar (in Acuña 1986b:65) mentions cannibalism again in reference to sacrifices to the god Xipe but says that the body was treated “as I have said above.”

Muñoz Camargo’s major statement on Tlaxcalan cannibalism is the following (in Acuña 1984c:195; also, Muñoz Camargo 1892:141–42):

Universal idolatry and the eating of human flesh began only a short time ago in this land [Tlaxcala]; . . . they began to make memorial statues upon the death of very worthy persons: because they left things and memorable deeds on behalf of the republic, statues were made to them in remembrance of their good and famous deeds. And later, they ended up adoring them as gods; and thusly the Devil gained force . . . among people so simple and of such little talent. And later, owing to the emotions of one side towards the other, they began to eat their very meat to avenge themselves upon their enemies. And thus, rabidly, they began little by little until eating one another like demons became customary. And thus, there were public butchershops of human meat, as if they were of cow or goat as there are today. It is said that this error and cruel practice came from the province of Chalco [Valley of Mexico] to this one, and similarly the sacrifices of idolatry and the drawing of blood from their members and offering it to the Devil. The meats that were sacrificed and eaten were the meats of men captured in war, and of slaves or prisoners [criminals].

Three aspects of this statement deserve emphasis with regard to its merit. First, in short order, Muñoz Camargo offers two contradictory conjectures (the Devil and the people of Chalco) about the origin of human sacrifice and cannibalism in Tlaxcala. Second, his claim for human butcher shops runs counter to the corpus of serious sixteenth/seventeenth-century ethnography (e.g., Durán 1994; Motolinía 1971, 1981; Sahagún 1981; also see Davies 1984:215), and I agree with historian Alfredo Chavero's annotation to the 1892 edition (Muñoz Camargo 1892:141) that the assertion seems "empty of all veracity and should be considered as one of those vulgarities that are accepted without examination owing to an inclination towards the extraordinary and also because of the zeal with which the new Christians tried to forget and make detestable the pagan rites." We also have this insightful observation by Anaya Monroy (1966:215):

[N]either Bernal Díaz del Castillo nor Cortés in his Second Letter, in describing in great detail the Tlatelolco marketplace, which they so much admired for its order and size, says that human meat was sold or ingested [there]. . . . [L]ikewise Sahagún, who, in mentioning the goods that the Mexicans sold (Book 10), does not refer to human meat; and in mentioning the butchers, he details a multitude of meats, but not human; in addition, in referring to the foods of the lords (Book 8), neither does he mention said meat.

Third, Muñoz Camargo's claim that the meat of enemies was eaten to exact vengeance upon them also runs counter to the main corpus of scholarship from the sixteenth century until the present. "For when he took [a captive], he had said, 'He is my beloved son.' And the captive had said, 'He is my beloved father'" (Sahagún 1981:54; also see Carrasco 1999:Ch.5).

Muñoz Camargo offers another interesting statement on cannibalism in his account of the Tlaxcalan general, Tlahuicole, who was captured by the Aztecs and

briefly served in their army. Although at liberty to remain or return home, Tlahuicole was stricken with shame and asked to be sacrificed instead. At a presacrifice banquet, the Aztecs “fed him . . . his [favorite] wife’s genitals cooked in a soup” (Muñoz Camargo 1892:127; Acuña 1984c:188). In short, this is cannibalism by trickery for the purpose of humiliating a man who rejected the Aztec king’s munificence. Unstated is the root of the humiliation: eating human flesh *per se*? eating his own wife’s flesh? eating her genitals? Clearly, though, eating human flesh (or certain types of it) was shameful or despicable in some circumstances. The same can be said of the two other sixteenth/seventeenth-century accounts of prehispanic cannibalism by trickery in central Mexico (Chimalpahin 1965:207; Tezozomoc 1980:272; Durán 1994:105).

Eight of the other 38 RGs allege cannibalism in the absence of the context of ritual human sacrifice (3 in Nueva Galicia, 3 in México, 2 in Antequera).⁵ In 5 of them, human meat is casually listed among dietary items (Acuña 1984a:144, 1986a:267, 1986b:162, 1988:73–74, 170), e.g., “And, in those times, they ate human meat, and dogs and snakes and other vermin” (Acuña 1988:73–74). In 2 others (Acuña 1986a:192, 198, 205, 1988:321, also, 1984a:157), cannibalism is presented simply as the customary outcome of war, with the victor eating the vanquished, e.g., “they fought, killed and ate one another” (Acuña 1988:321). The remaining RG stands out as an oddity, because it claims that wars were fought “not for conquest or vassalage, but rather because they ate those who died in war, and they did the same with those they captured” (Acuña 1984a:119).

Following is a sampling of the statements on cannibalism in the remaining 30 cases:

They also sacrificed men and the priests killed them, and they took out the heart and made sacrifice [of it], and of the body they made pottages and all who found themselves at the festival ate them. (Acuña 1984a:50)

they sacrificed [war captives] in that house of their idols, by taking out their heart . . . and they ate the meat [body] with great rejoicing. (Acuña 1984a:89)

these natives had the custom of eating whichever of the [war] prisoners they wanted to. (Acuña 1985a:422)

they took out the heart and cut out the thighs, and these they sent to Montezuma, and the hearts [were put] in a jar by themselves, and all the rest they ate and divided it among the most important men. (Acuña 1985b:35)

And they ate meat and vegetables and their maize, and, sometimes, human meat of those captured in war. (Acuña 1986b:162)

and the Indians taken in war were sacrificed before these idols, which were offered the blood, and the bodies, they ate them and danced with them. (Acuña 1987:398)

And they say that the meat of the Indians who were sacrificed was eaten by those who made [went to] the war. (Acuña 1987:426)

they [priests] divided the bodies among the people, in all the barrios, and they ate them, cooked, with much contentment and *mitote*, which means “dance”, and this was the conclusion of their festival. (Acuña 1988:36)

they killed them [war captives] and removed the heart and offered it to the Devil, and they ate the meat [body] among themselves. (Acuña 1988:225)

ALLEGED SOURCES AND CONSUMERS OF HUMAN FLESH

War enemies are overwhelmingly the most frequently mentioned source of human flesh (Table 2), specified in 34 of the 40 RGs (85.0 percent) as either sacrificed war captives (27, or 67.5 percent) or enemies killed in battle (7, or 17.5 percent). Note, though, that these two categories of war victims are clearly separated in the RGs: e.g., “those who died in war were eaten, and the same was done to those who were captured” (Acuña 1984a:119); “They had the custom of eating the human meat of those who were killed and taken prisoner in war” (Acuña 1984a:157); “And, when they killed an opponent in war, they brought back the dead body and blood. . . . And these that they sacrificed after they were dead” (Acuña 1986a:157). Slaves purchased for sacrifice are mentioned in 8 RGs (20.0 percent). Executed criminals are said in 3 RGs (7.5 percent) to have been eaten; they are unspecified “prisoners” (but clearly criminals) in 1 (Acuña 1984c:195), murderers in another (Acuña 1986a:66), and adulteresses in the other (Acuña 1984a:215). The 2 RGs (5.0 percent) saying that “the ruler chose someone” probably are not independent cases, as one of the authors copied the statement from the other (Acuña 1984b:86). In exactly the same words, both RGs state that a slave, if available, was the victim in prewar sacrifices, “and, if not, the ruler chose someone” (Acuña 1984a:50, 1984b:93). Finally, in 1 community the human meat came from persons who volunteered to be sacrificed ritually “to go to the sky to serve the Sun” (Acuña 1987:386).

Whereas less than one-fourth (22.5 percent) of RGs alleging cannibalism fail to specify a source of the meat (see Table 2), over half (55.0 percent) leave unspecified the supposed consumers (Table 3). The most frequently specified consumers (12 RGs, or 30.0 percent) are elites, especially political—*principales* (important men) in 7 RGs, *caciques* (high officials) in 2, *los señores* (the lords) in 2, *el señor* (the ruler) in 1, and majordomos and rich men in 1 RG (Pomar, in Acuña 1986b:62). These statements accord well with the sixteenth/seventeenth-century intensive ethnographies (e.g., Motolinía 1971:33, 1981:24; Torquemada 1976:181, 226, 232, 377; Sahagún 1981:193; also see Davies 1984:215; González 1985:289). Priests are named in 7 RGs (17.5 percent), in 2 of which they are said to have eaten only the heart (cf. Pomar, in Acuña 1986b:62). Soldiers—“valiant men,” “war captains,” “men of war,” or simply “soldiers”—are specified in 5 RGs (12.5 percent), but we are not told whether any of these men were the actual captors

TABLE 2
Alleged Sources of Human Flesh, by Diocese

Persons Eaten	Dioceses ^a					RGs (<i>N</i> = 40) ^b	
	GU	MI	ME	TL	AN	<i>n</i>	%
Unspecified	3	1	2	0	3	9	22.5
War captives	2	5	7	3	10	27	67.5
War dead (enemies)	1	0	1	0	5	7	17.5
Slaves (purchased)	0	0	2	1	5	8	20.0
Criminals	0	0	1	1	1	3	7.5
Ruler's designee	0	0	0	0	2	2	5.0
Sacrificial volunteer	0	1	0	0	0	1	2.5

a. GU = Guadalajara, MI = Michoacán, ME = México, TL = Tlaxcala, AN = Antequera

b. Percentages are of the 40 RGs in which these sources of flesh were specified, not of column total. Because some RGs specified more than one source, column total exceeds 40.

TABLE 3
Alleged Consumers of Human Flesh, by Diocese

Consumers	Dioceses ^a					RGs (<i>N</i> = 40) ^b	
	GU	MI	ME	TL	AN	<i>n</i>	%
Unspecified	5	4	4	3	6	22	55.0
Elites (political)	1	0	7	0	2	12	30.0
Priests	1	1	1	0	3	7	17.5
Soldiers	1	2	2	0	0	5	12.5
All celebrants	0	0	0	0	3	3	7.5
Market buyers	0	1	0	1	0	2	5.0
Other	0	0	1	1	0	2	5.0

a. GU = Guadalajara, MI = Michoacán, ME = México, TL = Tlaxcala, AN = Antequera

b. Percentages are of the 40 RGs in which the consumer types were specified, not of column total. Because many RGs specified more than one type of consumer, column total exceeds 40.

of the persons sacrificed and eaten (see Pomar, in Acuña 1986b:62; Sahagún 1981:54). In 3 cases (7.5 percent), everyone who attended the festival involving human sacrifice purportedly ate the flesh (all probably nobles or priests; see Motolinía 1971:33, 51).

Two RGs (5.0 percent) claim that human flesh was sold in markets or butcher shops. One of them is the Tlaxcala City RG authored by Diego Muñoz Camargo, quoted earlier (Acuña 1984c:195). The other such claim is for Querétaro, in reference to war captives (Acuña 1987:237–38): “they killed him and cut him into small pieces, and cooked and sold [the meat] in their markets in exchange for chile, which is their pepper, and maize and other things: it was a very precious thing, and it sold very dear.” As I commented earlier, these claims go strongly against the grain of the in-depth ethnohistorical sources, which emphasize the ritual context of both human sacrifice and alleged cannibalism.

The 2 “Other” cases in Table 3 are as follows. The 1 in México diocese alleges the eating of murderers: “For homicide, the killer died and was sacrificed, and, quartered, was shared by those who had captured him and, cooked, they ate him” (Acuña 1986a:66). This RG, 1 of the 3 shown in the “Criminals” line of Table 2, is interesting for its specificity of who ate the meat, but it strikes me as only marginally more credible than the 2 cases of alleged marketplace sale of human flesh, discussed above. The remaining “Other” case is that of the Tlaxcala general, Tlahuicole, who was tricked by the Aztec king into eating his own wife’s genitals (Muñoz Camargo 1892:127; Acuña 1984c:188). It remains only to add that neither Table 2 nor Table 3 shows any particular patterning by diocese, unless it is the frequent specification of political elites in México diocese in Table 3.

ASSESSMENTS OF INDIAN CULTURE AND CHARACTER

Consultation with Indian informants is typically proclaimed in formulaic terms in the opening or closing paragraphs of most RGs: e.g., “the most senior and oldest [*viejos y ancianos*] Indians of these towns”; “old elders [*viejos antiguos*] of said towns”; “senior and elderly men”; “leading men [*principales*] and the most senior and elderly men of this said town” (Acuña 1984a:47, 93, 115, 141). While such informants’ input was crucial to responses to questions 14–15, the RGs “are a totally Spanish product” (Acuña 1984a:13) in the sense that Spanish officials designed them and colonial officials or agents compiled them.

Spanish control over the end product is plainly evident in the 95 evaluative statements on Indian culture and character in the RGs, mostly in response to question 5, which asked about “the degree and quality of their [Indians’] intelligence, inclinations, and way of life” (see Cline 1972b:234). Forty-eight (50.5 percent) of these 95 statements are derogatory (“Bad”), 19 (20.0 percent) are laudatory (“Good”), and 28 (29.5 percent) are somewhere between these poles; this “Middling” group is either bland (taking no solid position or containing only mild rebuke) or ambivalent (pointing to both good and mildly bad qualities). In terms of the assessments they contain (Table 4), 12 RGs (11.4 percent) are Good, containing such assessments as: “The natives of the city are smart people, clever, well inclined to matters of [Christian] doctrine and, in the trades they learn, they show much agility” (Acuña 1985a:126); or, “They are of sharp intelligence and of good dispositions” (Acuña 1987:390). Sixteen RGs (15.2 percent) are Middling: e.g., “The extent and nature of their intelligence is what is common to those of New Spain” (Acuña 1985a:76); “people of medium intelligence and, among them, there are good workers and others who are lazy” (Acuña 1984b:110); and, “They are people of good sense and, for Indians, of reasonable intelligence, and inclined to the vice of drunkenness” (Acuña 1987:60). There are 36 RGs (34.3 percent) with Bad assessments, discussed below. Finally, 41 RGs (39.0 percent) did not contain cultural assessments.⁶

A conspicuous example of the Bad assessments appears in the Tlaxcala City RG, authored by mestizo Diego Muñoz Camargo (Acuña 1984c:77), writing about his own mother’s people:

TABLE 4
Cultural Assessments and Cannibalism Allegations

Cultural Assessments	Cannibalism Alleged		Cannibalism Not Alleged		Combined	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Not answered	13	32.5	28	43.1	41	39.0
Bad	18	45.0	18	27.7	36	34.3
Middling	5	12.5	11	16.9	16	15.2
Good	4	10.0	8	12.3	12	11.4
Totals	40	100.0	65	100.0	105	100.0

these natives are of such low talent in their spirits and corporal forces, they are very weak and of low thinking, incapable of any serious thing whatsoever with which they are entrusted. . . . even today, in this province of Tlaxcala, there are Indians so simple and of such little intelligence, that they can be compared with irrational animals. And they . . . should be treated like children, according to their talent and capability, like a Spanish child of eight or ten years.

The comparison of Indians to Spanish boys of eight or ten years old also occurs in 2 other RGs (Acuña 1985a:344, 1986a:115). Further examples of the Bad category are:

They are people of little intelligence and inclined to the vice of drinking . . . , and not of virtuous inclinations. (Acuña 1984a:142–43)

They are dull [*torpe*] people and of low intelligence, of bad customs and inclinations, especially regarding the flesh and drunkenness. (Acuña 1984b:170)

Because the Indians of these towns are so ignorant that they are like beasts even today. . . . They are very stupid Indians, and inclined to only eat and sleep. (Acuña 1985a:170)

they are of low, very earthy intelligence: they have no honor . . . are not at all curious about anything . . . are very dirty . . . ; of vile and cowardly spirit Their natural inclination leads them to all manner of vice. . . . They are great liars. . . . They have neither fear nor respect. . . . They are cruel and without pity towards one another. . . . They are great thieves. (Acuña 1987:226–27)

They are accustomed, in general, to get drunk, and to steal and lie and commit all kinds of base acts. (Acuña 1988:183)

The customs they had were very bad and abominable. (Acuña 1984b:221)

How are these cultural assessments related to the allegations of cannibalism? Sorting by diocese yielded only one interesting pattern: 72.7 percent (8 of 11) of the Guadalajara RGs contain Bad assessments, compared with 30.8 percent (29 of 94) in the other four dioceses combined and 35.2 percent (37 of 105) of all RGs. Recall that Guadalajara had the highest incidence (54.5 percent) of RGs with cannibal allegations in Table 1 and that fully half (3 of 6) of those allegations were made apart from ritual contexts. We shall return to this matter later.

Table 4 shows that Bad assessments are more frequent in RGs alleging cannibalism (18 of 40, or 45.0 percent) than in those not alleging it (18 of 65, or 27.7 percent); that is, RG authors who held Indians in low esteem seem to have been more likely to allege a cannibalistic past. This difference is not very highly significant statistically, however ($\chi^2 = 3.315$, $p < .10$). The RG authors who held Good or Middling opinions were somewhat inclined in the opposite direction.

Before leaving this subject, we should emphasize that prejudicial attitudes (ethnocentrism or racism) were not the monopoly of any ethnic group involved in the production of the RGs. With one exception (Pomar), the 12 Good assessments were produced by Spaniards. At the same time, the damning assessment of Tlaxcalans by mestizo author Diego Muñoz Camargo makes clear that mestizo (Spanish father, Indian mother) authors were also capable of ethnocentrism and racism. Note, though, that Juan Bautista de Pomar, mestizo author of the Texcoco RG, praised key aspects of prehispanic culture (in Acuña 1986b:52, 67, 70, 88, 89)—despite his strong self-identification with his Spanish heritage (Acuña 1986b:35–36).

Did the Indian informants—all prominent citizens and all practicing a syncretic folk-Catholicism at the time of the survey—endorse or even engage in such disparagement? We do not know, but we should not rule it out, perhaps especially with regard to common people.

VARIATION IN LENGTH OF RESPONSE

In poring over the RGs, I was struck by the great length of responses to questions 14 and 15 (see above) in some of the RGs that alleged cannibalism. Accordingly, I sought a way of quantifying the responses to those two questions. The 40 Simple and 23 Complex RGs posed no problem, as each of them provided a single response to each question. The 42 Composite RGs, on the other hand, had to be broken into their constituent units, each of which was then measured separately, as if it were a Simple or Complex RG. The Composite RGs contained a total of 144 components (an average of 3.4 each) with responses to questions 14–15; treating each such component separately yielded a total of 207 cases, which appear on Table 5.

To quantify coverage, I counted the number of printed lines of the responses to questions 14–15. (Fortunately, the Acuña edition uses standardized fonts and format throughout its ten volumes.) The only case for which an estimate (rather than a hard count) had to be made was the monographic Tlaxcala City RG, which is not organized according to the questionnaire but which contains

TABLE 5
Presence/Absence of Cannibalism and Human Sacrifice, by Mean Number
of Printed Lines in Response to RG Questions 14 and 15

Dioceses	No. Cases	Cannibalism ^a (x lines)	Human Sacrifice Only (x lines)	Neither (x lines)
Guadalajara	32	75.17	29.80	19.28
Michoacán	24	58.22	93.25	28.36
México	58	174.00 ^a	81.35	32.43
Tlaxcala	35	690.00 ^b	52.35	21.17
Antequera	58	91.16	60.25	41.37
Total Cases	207	52	69	86
Total Lines		7,384 ^c	4,401	2,503
Mean Lines		142.00 ^d	63.78	29.10

a. Includes Texcoco, which has 1,315 lines—some 4.5 times the length of the next-longest case in the entire set of 207. The mean for the other 14 México diocese “Cannibalism” cases is 92.50.

b. Includes an estimate (rather than a hard count) of 2,000 lines for Tlaxcala City. The mean for the other 2 “Cannibalism” cases in Tlaxcala diocese is 33.50.

c. Eliminating Tlaxcala City (see note b. above) would reduce this total to 5,384.

d. Eliminating Tlaxcala City (see note b. above) would reduce this mean to 105.57.

at least 2,000 lines of material germane to questions 14–15 scattered throughout its rambling text.

Table 5 shows that there is indeed a salient pattern: except for Michoacán, the lengthiest average response is where cannibalism is alleged; the next-longest, where human sacrifice (but not cannibalism) is recorded; and the shortest, where neither cannibalism nor human sacrifice is reported. Even Michoacán is only a partial exception; although “Human Sacrifice Only” has the longest average there, the average for “Cannibalism” is over twice that for “Neither.” Further analysis (not shown in Table 5) revealed that responses of 100 or more lines to questions 14–15 have an exceptionally high rate of cannibalism allegations: 65.2 percent (15 of 23) versus 30.5 percent (25 of 82) for RGs with fewer than 100 lines ($\chi^2 = 9.07$, $p < .01$). The rate is 75.0 percent (6 of 8) in RGs with responses exceeding 200 lines. One possible explanation for these patterns is that the RG authors with the greatest interest in native culture, especially religion or war, not only made more extensive inquiries but also probed harder on cannibalism—or assumed it on the basis of their knowledge of sacrificial rites. Even if so, we have no indication of whether the Indian informants attested to cannibalism willingly (i.e., expressing a sincere belief about prehispanic culture); or “admitted” it after being badgered, as is documented elsewhere (Pickering 1999:58–59); or stated it strictly to please colonial masters. I return to these matters below.

VARIATION BY RG STRUCTURE (SIMPLE, COMPLEX, COMPOSITE)

The frequency of cannibalism allegations also varies by RG structure: 11 (27.5 percent) of 40 Simple, 10 (43.5 percent) of 23 Complex, and 19 (45.2 percent) of 42 Composite RGs contain this allegation.⁷ Note that Complex and Composite RGs—both of which cover multiple communities—are nearly identical by this measure. Combined, their percentage of cannibalism allegations is 44.6 (29 of 65), in contrast to 27.5 (11 of 40) for Simple. Although this difference has lower statistical significance than researchers usually accept ($\chi^2 = 3.022$, $p < .10$), I am reluctant to dismiss it summarily, because I believe it reflects a real difference in the RG authors' exposure to, or interpretation of, indigenous inputs. The Complex and Composite RGs covered multiple communities (or administrative areas) and would have required more or lengthier interviews with Indian informants—or wider peer-group consultation by these latter—than would have the Simple RGs, each of which covered a single community (or administrative area). The possibility that I am suggesting is this: the more Indians the RG authors consulted (directly or indirectly) or the more intensively they interviewed them, the more likely they were to elicit testimony of cannibalism—or, alternatively, to infer it from responses to questions about religious ceremonies involving human sacrifice.

Guadalajara diocese (Nueva Galicia province) serves as a check against carrying this argument too far. That diocese had the highest percentages of both cannibalism allegations (54.5 percent) and disparagement of the native population (72.7 percent). I have suggested that those figures reflect a lack of both Spanish familiarity with the indigenous population and meaningful indigenous input to the RGs. Let me now suggest that a propensity towards allegations of cannibalism could result from authors' having either very low or very high indigenous contact.

THE INDIAN INFORMANTS

Even though the written product of the survey was under Spanish control, the RG content was clearly influenced by Indian testimony, which is typically acknowledged in the opening or closing paragraphs of most RGs. Thus, it is important to assess both the extent of Indians' contributions and their limitations as informants.

We can never know exactly the extent of the Indians' contribution to RG content, but there is strong textual evidence that it was substantial with reference to questions 14 and 15, which are the main database analyzed here. In 15 (37.5 percent) of the 40 RGs in which cannibalism is alleged, the very paragraph containing that allegation also contains the words "they say [or, said] that" ("*dicen* [or, *dijeron*] *que*"), sometimes repeatedly and preceding the allegation in all but 1 case (Acuña 1984a:193, 257, 1984b:116, 271–73, 1985a:210, 422, 1985b:202–3, 1986a:85–86, 157, 191–92, 1987:291, 386, 1988:73, 225, 321). In 3 other cases, editor René Acuña inserted a bracketed "[*dicen*]"—to read, "Y [*dicen*] *que*" ("And [they say] that")—to indicate his confidence that Indian attribution was intended

by the RG author (Acuña 1984a:144, 1987:108, 413). In all, then, the material on prehispanic cannibalism was directly attributed to the Indian informants in 18 (45.0 percent) of the 40 RGs containing the allegation.

It is worth noting that these 18 RGs were not unusual in most other ways (i.e., other than clearly attributing to the Indian informants the statements on cannibalism). First, none of these 18 RGs had an exceptionally lengthy (over 200 lines) response to questions 14–15, and only 3 of them exceeded 99 lines each (110, 112, 153, respectively); in other words, only 16.7 percent of these 18 RGs were in the set most likely to contain cannibalism allegations based on length of responses to questions 14–15. Second, none of these 18 RGs contained exceptional allegations (e.g., that human flesh was sold in markets or that war was caused by a desire to eat captives) that would place them outside the mainstream of the RGs as a whole or of the major intensive studies. Third, only 3 (37.5 percent) of the 8 cases in which cannibalism is alleged in the absence of ritual context (see Table 2, note b) occur among these 18 RGs, which constitute 45.0 percent of the 40 RGs alleging cannibalism. Fourth, there is nothing unusual about them in terms of RG authors' assessments of indigenous people and/or their culture. While 10 (55.5 percent) of these 18 RGs contained "Bad" assessments, so did 18 (45.0 percent) of the total of 40 RGs that alleged prehispanic cannibalism (see Table 4).

We should also take note here of 2 other RGs that contain denials of past cannibalism. In 1 case, the denial clearly came from the Indian informants. In the other, it most probably originated there, too. The relevant passages are:

And that the captives that they gave to the said Montezuma were [given] so that the said Mexicans would eat them. And they were asked if they ate human flesh, to which they said that they did not eat it. (Acuña 1985b:115)

And they did not eat human flesh because, of those whom they captured in war they later cut off their heads, which they took to their land and there skinned and dried them. And each one of them carried a string of heads called quahuatzalli as a sign of those they had captured and conquered in war, and they left the bodies [on the battlefield]. (Acuña 1985b:87)

Let us now turn to the question of the Indian informants' limitations (in addition to the fact that they testified through interpreters). In the first place, by the midpoint of the 1577–1586 survey, no informant under age sixty had been born before the Spanish Conquest (1521), and none under age eighty-five–ninety would have been a fully adult participant in prehispanic society. In short, few of the Indian informants had anything but secondhand or childhood knowledge of pre-Conquest native culture (see Acuña 1984a:245, 1985b:107; Starr 1990).

Secondly, the demographic catastrophe of the sixteenth century contributed to a discontinuity of historical knowledge. The catastrophe is noted in most RGs, and 29 of them assert percentage reductions of 50 (2 cases), 70–79 (3), 80–89 (6), and 90–99 (18) since 1521. Two others estimate 55 and 75 percentage reductions, on top of earlier decimations, during the fifteen to twenty years prior to the survey

(Acuña 1985a:188, 1985b:247). In 4 other cases, the epidemic of 1576 alone is said to have resulted in losses of 40–90 percent (Acuña 1985a:126, 1986a:98, 1986b:99, 1987:224). These reductions removed many knowledgeable elders, compromising the retrieval of the prehispanic past: “all of the old Indians are dead and, those who remain, don’t know [the answers]” (Acuña 1986a:97); and, “They say . . . that they don’t know the idolatrous rites of their forebears of pagan times, because those who could explain them are dead, and those who are alive now are Catholic Christians” (Acuña 1985a:69).

Third, Indian informants of 1577–1586 were the bearers of a new, syncretic culture, not of purely indigenous culture. Indeed, Indian conversion to (syncretic) Catholicism was so complete by 1570 as to occasion astonished comments by scholars both then and now (see Nutini 1997). The situation in which all people “who are alive now are Catholic Christians” (Acuña 1985a:69) was not conducive to a free flow of information about religious matters of the pre-Christian past across the gulf of political stratification (Indian versus Spanish or mestizo). Jean Starr (1990:266) has weighed this situation in her assessment of the Valley of Oaxaca (Antequera diocese) RGs:

Were the Zapotecs really great anthropophagists? Fray Juan de Córdova has various entries under “sacrificar” in his “Vocabulario” [1578], but, despite all the knowledge gained from interrogating the Cacique of Tehuantepec, does not mention cannibalism. Neither does Burgoa [1674] in his very professional study of Mitla priests. However, one of Fray Juan’s entries is apposite. Under “Virtud . . .” he refers to incantations or spells using “the words of god” and says, “These are from their antiquity, so they think it is bad, but it is not, being just like prayers”. They had been taught to regard their past practices as evil. . . . I suggest that this [cannibalism] is a myth resulting from the Church’s model of prehispanic religion in New Spain, which was as effective as its model of witchcraft in Europe.

Whether or not we agree with Starr’s suggested conclusion, her observation that the Indians “had been taught to regard their past practices as evil” is important. Were these Indian RG informants overly eager to demonstrate their Christian loyalty by distancing themselves from the indigenous past through attributing to it horrendous customs (in willful distortion or uncritical eagerness to believe the worst about the past)? Alternatively, were these prominent men eager to curry official favor by fueling Spanish preconceived notions about the pagan past? We cannot truly know, of course, but the 18 RGs in which responses to questions 14–15 were clearly attributed to the Indian informants would seem to offer some comfort. That these 18 RGs neither contain extreme allegations nor disproportionately assert cannibalism stripped of ritual context should increase our faith in the informants’ steadfastness in reporting what they truly believed to have been the case.

CONCLUSION

Our aim up to this point has been to expose and analyze the limitations inherent in the RG database. Having done so, we can more fully assess their contribution to the study of cannibalism in central and western Mexico and weigh their utility relative to other data sources (both ethnohistorical and archaeological).

First, it is important to recognize that the famous sixteenth-century intensive ethnographic sources share with the RGs the limitations we have seen with regard to Indian informants' knowledge of prehispanic times. For instance, Diego Durán completed his *Historia* in 1581, and Bernardino de Sahagún finished his *Historia General* (Florentine Codex) in 1577. Although both men had begun their ethnographic and documentary studies much earlier, their completion dates fall within the RG time frame (1577–1586). Thus, the RGs are not alone among basic ethnohistorical resources in being post-demographic-reduction and post-religious-conversion products.

Second, judgments about the inconsistencies and gaps in the RGs should be tempered by the fact that they are the products of a regional survey conducted by many individuals of varying abilities working largely or entirely independently of one another. Though all were guided by the same interview schedule, they were neither trained nor experienced in either interviewing or ethnographic reporting. Thus, while we may be surprised that 9 (22.5 percent) of the 40 RGs alleging cannibalism are silent on the source of the human flesh reportedly consumed and that 22 (55.0 percent) do not specify the consumers, these omissions may well be explainable by the methodology employed. The lack of majority opinion on whose flesh was eaten (see Table 2) or who ate it (see Table 3) may have a similar explanation. The intensive ethnographies of the period indicate a considerable range of co-occurring types and categories in both regards, and it is not unreasonable to expect that the survey method would report this range piecemeal and inconsistently. In short, the RGs suffer in this regard when compared to the intensive studies of their day, but, viewed in terms of the field methodology that produced them, the RGs contain a surprising wealth of information. Most important, their geographically broader, more rural content tends to corroborate, not contradict, that of the roughly contemporaneous intensive, localized, largely urban studies of Aztec culture.

Third, comparison of the roughly contemporaneous intensive, mainly urban ethnographies and the extensive, mainly provincial RGs not only reveals a substantial corpus of shared content, as noted several times in this article, but also highlights extreme views in both. For instance, allegations of gustatory cannibalism or market sale of human flesh stand out as ideational outliers in both resources (e.g., Durán 1994:141, 233, 272, 474; Muñoz Camargo 1892:141–42; Acuña 1984a:119, 1987:237–38).⁸

Fourth, the survey methodology may also explain why a substantial majority (62.9 percent) of the RGs did not allege cannibalism, even where RGs for adjoining communities did so. That finding does not necessarily mean that the former lacked a tradition of prehispanic cannibalism or that the Indian informants covered it up.

Rather, it may mean that the Spanish/mestizo inquisitors simply did not probe sufficiently deeply on religious questions to uncover it. This suggestion gains credence from the fact that the longest responses to questions 14–15, and especially those exceeding 100 lines, are the most likely to allege cannibalism (see Table 5). The same is true of the multicomunity Complex and Composite RGs, which would have entailed more interviewing of Indian informants than would the Simple RGs. In other words, the more intensive or extensive the questioning of Indian informants, the more likely the inclusion of cannibalism among the reported prehispanic customs. Thus, it is very probable that the RGs reflect a much more widespread (although neither universal nor uniform) oral tradition of prehispanic customary cannibalism than is indicated by the 38.1 percent of them that explicitly recorded it.

Fifth, attribution of the cannibalism reports is problematical but not hopelessly intractable. In 55 percent (22 of 40) of the RGs that contain the allegation of prehispanic cannibalism, we are left to wonder whether the allegation originated with the Spanish/mestizo RG authors or the Indian informants. Of more than passing interest is the tendency of RG authors who recorded very negative assessments of Indian culture and character to also allege a cannibal past (see Table 4). This finding alone should make us cautious in drawing conclusions about the subject from the RGs. On the other hand, this concern has to be weighed against the clear attribution of the statements to the Indian informants in 45 percent (18 of 40) of these RGs. Unless we assume that most or all of these attributions were false—a ruse by which the Spanish/mestizo RG authors were able to insert racist propaganda by disguising it as local knowledge—or that the authors coerced all their Indian informants into making false statements about the past (cf. Pickering 1999:58–69), we are forced to conclude that many Indian informants were willing to state for the official, written record that their ancestors practiced customary cannibalism in specified contexts or circumstances. Indeed, we might reasonably postulate that such informants were also the source of the information in many other cases but did not receive stylistic recognition (“they say/said that”).

Thus, the RGs strongly suggest that the idea of past cannibalism was geographically very widespread in the indigenous population of the late sixteenth century. So long as we view this widespread sixteenth-century tradition of cannibalism as simply an idea about the past, we need not confront the question of whether it represented accurate knowledge of past empirical practices or was strictly an ideological element in an empirically ungrounded reinterpretation of tradition. That very question, though, is what makes cannibalism a fascinating subject both within and beyond anthropology.

For two reasons, the determined doubter is unlikely ever to accept ethnohistorical data in proof of cannibalism as an empirical phenomenon. First, biases and other limitations inherent in any corpus of ethnohistorical data provide easy ammunition for skeptics. Second, even widespread currency of an idea is no proof of its soundness, as both ancients and moderns are notoriously gullible. Witches, werewolves, vampires, succubi, incubi, sprites, leprechauns, yetis, giants, Amazons, dogheaded men, UFOs, satanic daycare providers, etc., all have

been or are widely believed to be empirical realities (see Askenasy 1994:149–63, 217–19; Carrasco 1999:164ff.). In 1990, many citizens of the United States believed in ghosts (25 percent) and the devil (over 50 percent), thought they had experienced a ghost (10 percent) or talked to the devil (10 percent) or personally seen a UFO (14 percent), believed in astrology (25 percent), and so forth (Askenasy 1994:218–19). In addition, fantastic “urban legends” are readily believed and circulated by millions in the same country today.

Nor is traditional archaeological methodology likely to “prove” the existence of prehistoric cannibalism in Mesoamerica beyond doubt. Butchering marks on human bones, for instance, can originate in a variety of ways, including certain burial preparations and the extraction of trophy bones (Kantner 1999:84ff.; also see Cid and Torres 1995; Durán 1994:162, 427; González 1985:276–82; Pomar, in Acuña 1986b:62; Román 1990:47–50). On the other hand, the sophisticated biochemical analyses recently used in the U.S. Southwest for the study of human coprolites appear promising for answering the question of whether prehistoric humans ingested the flesh of other humans; these techniques remain controversial, however (Billman, Lambert, and Leonard 2000; Dongoske, Martin, and Ferguson 2000; Lambert et al. 2000).

Certainly, we would like to know whether cannibalism was a behavior that actually occurred or was only a traditional belief in central and western Mexico, but the ethnohistorical study of cannibalism remains valuable in either case. Advanced technical methods may eventually settle the question of whether the practice existed empirically, but only ethnohistorical analysis could tell us the extent to which the practice was institutionalized and who ate whom and why, where, when, and how. In either case, the present article greatly increases the spatial breadth of our knowledge of prehistoric Mexican cannibalism along all those dimensions. By doing so, it also provides a larger framework within which to assess the handful of sixteenth-century, mainly urban-based, intensive ethnographic studies that report the practice.

NOTES

1. I gratefully acknowledge the sabbatical leave granted by the University of Cincinnati in Winter and Spring 2001, during which research for this article was completed. Revision of the manuscript profited from the comments of several *JAR* reviewers and *JAR* editor Lawrence Guy Straus.

2. The following RGs, which do not report the Indian sections of the questionnaire, are excluded here: San Martín in Guadalajara diocese (Acuña 1988:244ff.), Necotlan in Michoacán (Acuña 1987:183ff.), Cuzcatlan and Veracruz City in Tlaxcala (Acuña 1985a:89ff., 301ff.), and Antequera City (Acuña 1984a:31ff.). On the other hand, I have retained the two Indian dependencies of the Spanish town of Celaya in Michoacán (Acuña 1987:55ff.). For México, I follow Acuña (1985b:179–223) in lumping into a single RG the three surviving reports on the “Cuatro Villas” that belonged to Hernando Cortés, instead of counting them separately, as Cline (1972c) does.

3. I follow Cline’s (1972c) classification in the few cases in which Acuña departs in obvious error. Thus, in México diocese, I class Mexicaltzinco, Culhuacan, and Iztapalapan

(Acuña 1986a:31–47) as Simple rather than Composite; and, in Guadalajara diocese, Purificación (Acuña 1988:205ff.) as Composite, not Simple. I also class Tistla in Tlaxcala (Acuña 1985a:267ff.) as Complex rather than Composite.

4. Acuña lists the RGs by “*censo*”—Cline’s (1972c) census numbers—near the front of each volume. Following those lists, the 40 RGs with alleged cannibalism are: *Guadalajara* (Acuña 1988:14):4, 5, 75, 82, 84, 144; *Michoacán* (Acuña 1987:13):23, 68, 86, 95, 137, 60; *México* (Acuña 1985b:15, 1986a:13, 1986b:10): 8, 12, 1/47/112, 66, 76, 103, 114, 116, 117, 123, 136, Texcoco; *Tlaxcala* (Acuña 1984c:whole vol., 1985a:13): Tlaxcala City, 84, 118; *Antequer*a (Acuña 1984a:14, 1984b:12): 11, 21, 30, 34, 35, 45, 46, 57, 101, 102, 107, 124, 138.

5. In one case (Cuicatlan, in Antequera), the ritual context of the alleged cannibalism is unstated, but I infer it from the statement in the preceding paragraph that war captives were sacrificed (Acuña 1984a:168).

6. Simple or Complex RGs each contain a single (if any) assessment statement. The Composite RGs—which present separate coverage for two or more communities—often contain separate assessment statements for their constituent units, raising the potential problem of internal inconsistency. Eight of the 42 Composite RGs, though, had only one useable component (providing answers to questions 14–15), and another 30 were internally consistent in my ratings of their cultural assessment statements. Thus, only 4 Composite RGs were internally inconsistent. Their RG ratings and internal component ratings are: Middling (3 M, 2 B, 1 G), Bad (1 B, 1 M), Bad (4 B, 1 M), and Middling (3 M, 1 G). The RGs were rated according to majority internal rating in three instances (1st, 3rd, and 4th in the foregoing list), and by the polar response in the other. The last 2 RGs allege cannibalism, the first 2 do not.

7. There was no overall correlation between RG type and length of responses to questions 14–15.

8. In the main, the RGs probably were not influenced by the published works and manuscripts by Durán, Motolinía, Olmos, and Sahagún, but Pomar (author of the Texcoco RG) apparently had read Durán’s manuscript with appreciation (Acuña 1986b:38).

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