

LORENZO BOTURINI'S

*Historical Museum of the Indies*¹

José Luis Martínez*

The collection that Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci gathered during his stay in New Spain was, together with the library formed by Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, the richest of the colonial period. Boturini, born in Sondrio in the Milanese in the early eighteenth century, arrived in Mexico City in March 1736. The previous year in Zaragoza, Spain, he had met Canon Joaquín Codallos, who had informed him of the miraculous powers of Our Lady of Guadalupe. He also met the Countess of Santibáñez, who commissioned him to collect the rents from her encomienda in New Spain. These two events decided Boturini, a devout and cultured man, to make his voyage to the "Indies."



Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci.

FOUNDING THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF THE INDIES

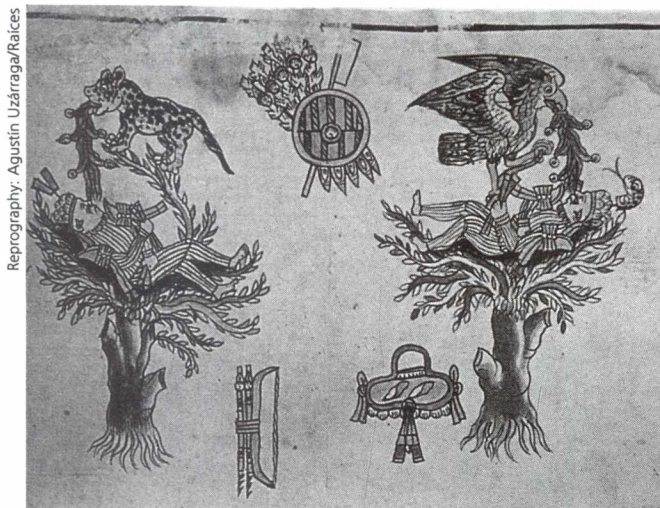
The collection's story, full of vicissitudes, started when, in 1737, one year after Boturini's arrival in New Spain, he began to gather codices and manuscripts in indigenous languages (both originals and copies), maps, chronicles and histories of pre-Hispanic Mexico, the Conquest, the colonial period and the tradition of Our Lady of Guadalupe. All these documents,

compiled during his inquiries into the archives and travels through the towns of the viceroyalty, eventually became the Historical Museum of the Indies. Boturini had access to what remained of the collections of Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, stored in the Library of the Saint Peter and Saint Paul Maximum College. He copied—or simply took—many of these documents.

Boturini's vehement desire to crown Our Lady of Guadalupe and his soliciting funds to finance the project, plus his not having acquired a permit to travel to the Indies (which he needed because he was considered a foreigner), were sufficient cause for the new viceroy, the Count of Fuenclara, to order him investigated. He was jailed in February

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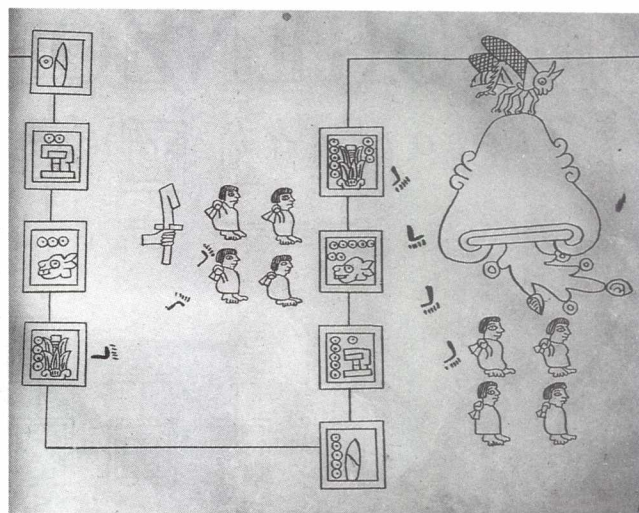
Toltec-Chichimec lords. *Toltec-Chichimec History*, detail, f. 20r., MS 54/58. Paris National Library.

1743 and later deported to Spain, and his Historical Museum of the Indies was confiscated.

Once in Spain, he spent a great deal of his time attempting to revindicate himself, recover his archives and writing. In 1746, he published his *Idea de una nueva historia general de la América Septentrional* (Idea for a New General History of North America) and included his *Catálogo del Museo Histórico Indiano* (Catalogue of the Historical Museum of the Indies) as an appendix, writing in part from memory.

THE VICISSITUDES OF THE COLLECTION

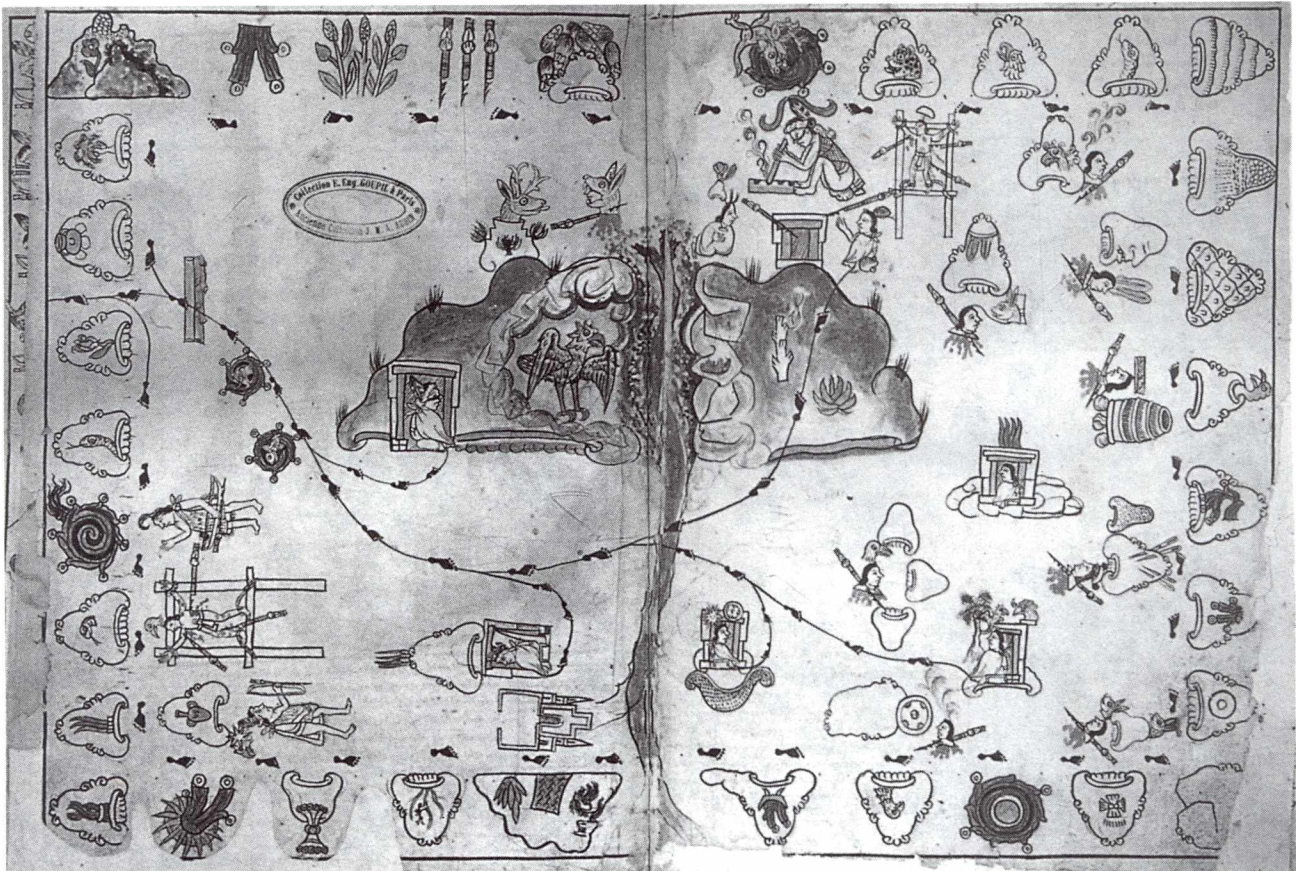
For different reasons, the Boturini Collection was inventoried seven different times between 1743 and 1918. The first time was when it was confiscated by royal fiscal order. At that time, the collection was deposited in the Royal Treasury, where it remained until 1745, when it was again inventoried and transferred to the government scribe's office. In 1771, thanks to efforts by the Royal Academy of History of Madrid and Mexico's archbishop, Francisco Antonio de Lorenzana, Viceroy Bucareli ordered the collection transferred to the library of the Royal Papal University of Mexico. The inventory carried out at that point showed that the collection was already beginning to be depleted, although, according to Glass, the most important losses occurred between 1771 and 1788.



Mexicas in Chapultepec. *Boturini Codex or Pilgrimage Strip*. National Museum of Anthropology.

Researchers of the period, some of them friends of Boturini, also contributed to the dispersal of the wealth of documents in the Historical Museum of the Indies. Among them were the Archbishop Lorenzana, who borrowed codices and papers to write his *Historia de Nueva España* (History of New Spain) (1770), which were later returned on the urging of Viceroy Bucareli, although, as León-Portilla points out, "without the assurance that all the documents that had been lent were returned." Boturini's friend and benefactor, Mariano Fernández de Echeverría y Veytia, consulted the archives and took those papers and codices he needed for his *Historia antigua de México* (History of Old Mexico), apparently without returning them. Don Antonio de León y Gama, the illustrious author of the *Descripción histórica y cronológica de las Dos Piedras* (Historical Description and Chronology of the Two Stones) and a friend of Veytia, managed to get the latter to loan him part of the documents he had taken out of the University Library. He never returned them.

In 1778, most of the collection was moved to the Viceroyalty Chamber Secretariat; some papers, however, remained at the university. In 1784, by royal decree, Mexico's viceroy took charge of the papers and sent copies to Spain. Six years later, Viceroy Revillagigedo asked Friar Francisco García Figueroa to comply with another royal decree ordering that copies again be sent and deposited in the archives of the Royal Academy of History of Madrid. Apparently, García Figueroa delegated the task to Friar Manuel de Vega,



The Quauhtinchan region. *Toltec-Chichimec History*, f. 33r., MS 46/50. Paris National Library.

who in less than three years turned over 32 volumes of documents under the name *Colección de memorias de Nueva España* (Collection of Memoirs of New Spain). León-Portilla points out that Vega, for unknown reasons and despite having reviewed the inventories and the collection as a whole, paid no attention to the most important material and only sent to Spain copies of chronicles and histories of the colonial period. The Boturini Collection, then, remained at the San Francisco Convent where it had been moved so Vega could make his selection. After Vicente de la Rosa Saldívar made a slovenly inventory in 1791-1792, the collection was returned around 1795 to the Viceroyalty Chamber Secretariat.

THE COLLECTION SCATTERS

Between 1803 and 1804, Baron Alexander von Humboldt had access to the Boturini archives in the viceroy's palace.

He acquired 16 pieces (codices or codex fragments) either by donation from the Franciscans or viceroyalty officials or through purchase from León y Gama's heirs. He donated these pieces to the Royal Library of Berlin in 1806. In the twentieth century, while Germany was divided into two countries, these manuscripts were kept in both the German Government Library of Berlin in the ex-GDR and the Government Library/Prussian Cultural Patrimony of West Berlin. Among the important pieces involved were the *Humboldt Codex* (MS Americana 2, fragment of the List of Tributes of Tlapa and Its Lordship to the Mexican Empire) and fragments of the *Huamantla Codex* (MS Americana 1).

In February 1821, immediately after Independence, Agustín de Iturbide ordered that the historical archives of the ex-Viceroyalty Chamber Secretariat, including both historical documents about the government and the Boturini Collection, be moved to the Ministry of Internal and Foreign Relations, under the care of Ignacio de Cubas. The following year, Iturbide established a Conservatory of

Taken from the Mexico in the obra de Jean Charlot catalogue, Museo Estudio Diego Rivera, INBA



Chalchiuh totolin. Figure 17, Tonalámatl-Aubin-Goupil Codex. National Museum of Anthropology.

Antiquities and a Bureau of Natural History at the university. León-Portilla says that some of the Boturini documents were then moved to the new conservatory.

In 1823, under the First Federal Republic, by order of Lucas Alamán, then head of the Ministry of Internal and Foreign Relations, the Boturini Collection was again inventoried by Ignacio de Cubas. Alamán mentions this decision in his *Memoria* (Memoir) in which he details his time in the ministry in 1823:

The aforementioned disarray created other damage difficult to repair: the archives of the [viceroalty's] Secretariat con-

tained precious examples of Mexican antiquities and relics from the first years of Spanish domination. Most of them can be traced to the illustrious traveler Boturini. Many have disappeared and others are incomplete and in tatters. What remains—which is considerable—has been gathered together and indexed precisely. Both these and the drawings and relics of the traveler Dupeé [*sic* It should say Dupaix], which [we will] attempt to have published, as well as any others which can be recovered, will be placed in a department in the library [specially] established to hold manuscripts and curious works [now] scattered in different archives and libraries of this capital. Their current dispersal makes it impossible to use them

Taken from the Mexico en la obra de Jean Charlot catalogue, Museo Estudio Diego Rivera, INBA



Eugène Goupil.

to the profit of scholars, who would then be able to read and examine them without obstacle or difficulty. This same procedure could be carried out in the other cities of the provinces to the great benefit of the nation.

“LOANS” NEVER RETURNED

After the English traveler William Bullock visited Mexico in 1823, he wrote *Six Months' Residence and Travels in Mexico...* (1824) and organized the first great exhibit of Mexican antiquities in London. He obtained the loan of important pre-Hispanic archeological objects, among them the *Boturini Codex* (or *Tira de la Peregrinación* [Pilgrimage Strip]) and the *Tlaxcala Codex*. He also had full-sized reproductions made of the Aztec calendar and the [carving of the goddess] Coatlicue. The exhibition was held in 1824 in the London's Egyptian Hall in Picadilly. The catalogue boasted 52 objects, among them 17 codices, several from the Boturini Collection.

Two years later, in 1825, the Bohemian-French artist Jean-Frédéric Waldeck (1766-1875) began his 12-year sojourn in Mexico. Waldeck made drawings of Mexican ruins, became involved in theater and wrote about everything he saw. He also began to compile documents from the Boturini Collection, ex-

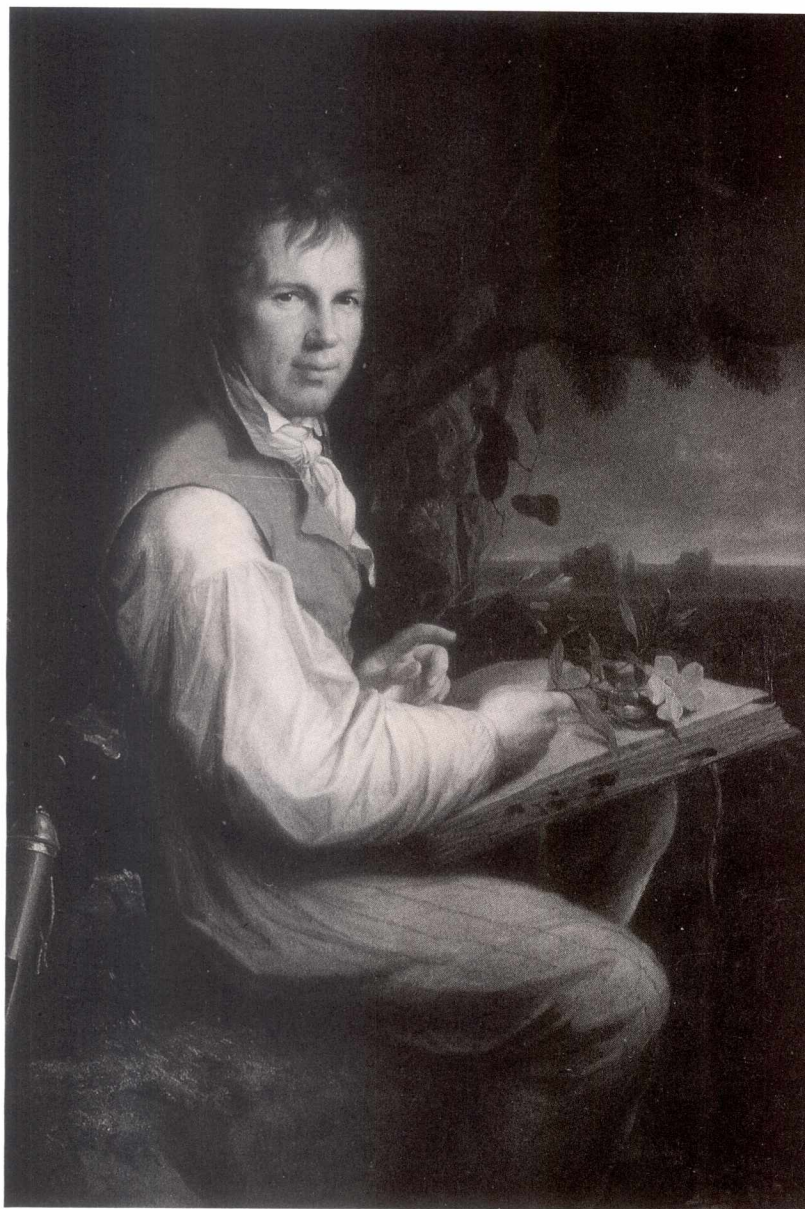
Taken from the Mexico en la obra de Jean Charlot catalogue, Museo Estudio Diego Rivera, INBA



Augustine Elie-Goupil.

porting some of them and selling others to the French physicist and antiquarian Joseph-Marius-Alexis Aubin, who had arrived in Mexico in 1830. Aubin himself acquired the León y Gama and the Father José Antonio Pichardo collections. He had also been able to extricate other treasures of the Boturini Collection from the archives of the Ministry of Internal and Foreign Relations. In 1840, *Monsieur* Aubin was able to secret them out of the country by tearing them apart and distributing them among his belongings to circumvent both the Veracruz customs officials and the Mexican legislation which protected the patrimony of the nation, passed November 16, 1827, prohibiting the export of antiquities.

In 1825, under the Guadalupe Victoria government, thanks to a proposal by Lucas Alamán, the National Mexican Museum was established to hold the antiquities housed previously in the university as well as some of the codices and documents in the Boturini Collection that were still at the Ministry of Internal and Foreign Relations, “despite the continual plundering [of the collection] to spirit pieces out of the country.” During the Porfiriato (the 30-year regime of Porfirio Díaz, which ended with the 1910 Revolution), another part of the Boturini Collection was sent to the National Library, then directed by José María Vigil. In 1917, the new director of the library, Ciro B. Ceballos,



Alexander von Humboldt.

instructed Ramón Mena to do another inventory of the collection prior to sending it to the National Museum (by that time called the Museum of Archeology, History and Ethnography). Mena published the catalogue of his inventory in 1918-1919. Today, the part of the Boturini Collection which remained in Mexico is housed in the Dr. Eusebio Dávalos Hurtado National Library of Anthropology and History, in the National Museum of Anthropology.

As Glass says, the Boturini Collection has been of major significance for Mexican anthropology and history. Suffice

Taken from the Mexico en la obra de Jean Charlot catalogue, Museo Estudio Diego Rivera, INBA

it to say that one of every five known codices belonged to it. Of the collection's nearly 160 codices and pictographic manuscripts, more than 100 survive and the location of 91 is known. Twenty-five are in the Paris National Library and 40 more are in Mexico City's National Museum of Anthropology.

León-Portilla considers Boturini's Historical Museum of the Indies one of the basic sources of knowledge about pre-Hispanic Mexico. It contained such important documents as the *Aubin Codex*, today housed by the British Museum; the *Huamantla Codex*, part of which is now in the National Museum of Anthropology Library and the rest in the Berlin Library; the *Cruz Codex*, the *Xólotl Codex*, the *Plotzin Codex*, the *Quinatzin Codex* and the *Tepechpan Codex*, all in the Paris National Library; the *Boturini Codex* or *Pilgrimage Strip* and the *Matrix of Tributes*, both in the National Museum of Anthropology Library. Other documents included in the collection were copies of chronicles by indigenous authors, among them Hernando de Alvarado Tezozómoc, Gabriel de Castañeda, Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin, Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl and Diego Muñoz Camargo; *Techialoyan Codices*; testerian codices; and documents about the history of the Conquest, the Catholic Church in New Spain and the tradition of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

THE BOTURINI-AUBIN COLLECTION

When J. M. A. Aubin lost part of his fortune with the plummeting price of Panama Canal stock and at the same time realized that some of the manuscripts he had secreted out of Mexico had begun to disappear, he decided to sell his collection. As Eugène Boban points out, most of Aubin's collection originated in Boturini's Historical Museum of the Indies. In 1889, the Mexican historian Antonio Peñafiel visited Aubin to see his collection and offered to buy it to return it to Mexico. His offer was refused, however, when Boban told his friend Eugène Goupil about it. Goupil thought "the documents should remain in France," and he also made Aubin an offer, which was accepted April 11, 1889.

Goupil commissioned Boban to do a study of his recently acquired collection, the result of which was published in 1891 as *Documents pour servir l'histoire du Mexique. Catalogue raisonné de la Collection de M.E. Eugène Goupil* (Documents Contributing to Mexican History. Annotated Catalogue of the Eugène Goupil Collection). In his introduction to the catalogue, Goupil explains that it was his love of Mexico that led him to buy the Boturini-Aubin Collection and that he intended—as “[his] little brick in the edifice of the history of that country [Mexico]”—to will it to the Paris National Library and the Trocadero Ethnographic Museum so scientists could study it. He also said that he had gathered the collection in order to “honor with great piety the memory of my mother, ...a descendent of the Aztecs.” He finalizes by confessing:

I originally intended to leave my collections to the National Museum of Mexico. Only one consideration stopped me: Mexico is very far away. Since my objective is to serve Mexico contributing to the reconstruction of its ancient history, anything that may aid Mexicanists in their research should be as close at hand as possible. For that reason, I decided that my collections should remain in Paris, the center of the intelligent world, an obligatory stop of all those who travel the road of science.

In this way, I believe I am doing Mexico a greater service than leaving it my collections, since few people in Mexico could consult them fruitfully, despite the estimable and numerous Mexican men of wisdom. As compensation, I offer them the texts and copies which I have had published at my own expense in devout concert with Monsieur Boban.

After the death of Eugène Goupil in 1895, his widow, Augustine Elie-Goupil, complied with his wishes. She donated to the Paris National Library on April 23, 1899 “the documents and works related to antiquities and the ancient history of Mexico originally possessed by M. Aubin (462 items enumerated in two appendices to this document). The objects donated are part of a collection which should always remain intact in the [Paris] National Library, where they will be catalogued under the name ‘Aubin-Goupil Collection.’”

A DIPLOMATIC INCIDENT

This collection remains in the Paris National Library, with the exception of the *Tonalámatl-Aubin Codex* which was taken June 19, 1982, by the Mexican journalist José Castañeda del Valle who attempted to evade prosecution by saying he had “recovered” it as national patrimony. The police took possession of the codex and gave it to the National Institute of Anthropology and History. Castañeda’s “feat” provoked a diplomatic incident between Mexico and France, cooling cultural relations and generating enormous problems for Mexican researchers who dared (and continue to dare) to attempt to work at the Paris National Library. Ten years later, a diplomatic solution was found whereby the codex is provisionally deposited in the National Anthropology Museum Library in Mexico City. ❧

FURTHER READING

- Boban, Eugène, *Documents pour servir a l'histoire de Mexique. Catalogue raisonné de la Collection de M. E. -Eugène Goupil (Ancienne Collection J.-M.-A. Aubin)*, Ernest Leroux (ed.), 2 vols. Paris, 1891.
- Boturini Benaduci, Lorenzo, *Idea de una nueva historia general de la América Septentrional*, preliminary study by Miguel León-Portilla, Porrúa (“Sepan cuántos...” Collection, No. 278), Mexico City, 1974 (First edition, Madrid, 1746).
- Boturini Benaduci, Lorenzo, *Historia general de la América Septentrional*, Manuel Ballesteros Gaibrois (editor, preliminary study, notes and documentary appendix), Institute for Historical Research (“Historiadores y Cronistas de Indias,” Collection, No. 8), UNAM, Mexico City, 1990.
- Glass, John B., “The Boturini Collection,” in Robert Wauchope (ed.), *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, Vol. 15, *Guide to Ethnohistorical Sources*, Part Four, Howard F. Cline (ed. of vol.), University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 1975, pp. 473-486.
- Matute, Alvaro, *Lorenzo Boturini y el pensamiento histórico de Vico*, Institute for Historical Research (“Historia Novohispana” Series, No. 26), UNAM, Mexico City, 1976.
- Torre Revello, José, “Documentos relativos a D. Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci,” *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación*, Vol. VII, No. 1, Mexico City, 1936, pp. 5-45.

CURRENT LOCATION OF THE BOTURINI COLLECTION CODICES AND PICTOGRAPHIC MANUSCRIPTS

TITLE	CURRENT LOCATION
<i>Americano</i> , MS (no. 10, part 8)	German Government Library of Berlin (ex-GDR) (lost)
<i>Aperreamiento</i> , MS of	Paris National Library
<i>Aubin Codex</i>	British Museum
<i>Aubin</i> , MS 20	Paris National Library
<i>Aubin</i> , Tonalámatl Codex	National Museum of Anthropology ¹
<i>Axotlán Codex</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Azcatitlán Codex</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Baranda Codex</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Boturini Codex</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Calpan, Confirmation of the Elections of</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Caltepaneca Fragment</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Cave Codex</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Chavero Codex</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Cholula Codex</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Cholula Codex</i> (copy no. 1)	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Cholula Codex</i> (copy no. 2)	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Conquest, Codex of the</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Cotitzin and Zozahuic, Genealogy of</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Cozcatzin Codex</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Cross, Codex on a</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Cuahtinchán, Map of</i> (no. 4)	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Cuahtli, Genealogy of</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Cuetlaxcohuapan Codex</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Etla, Genealogies of the Lords of</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Forest Region, Map of a</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>García, Annals of Diego</i>	Unknown
<i>Huamantla Codex</i> (nos. 1-6)	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Huamantla Codex</i> (nos. 7-8) (<i>Humboldt Codex</i> , nos. 3-4)	German Government Library of Berlin (ex-GDR)
<i>Huexotzingo, Matrix of</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Humboldt Codex</i> (no. 1)	Berlin Government Library (ex-FRG)/Prussian Cultural Patrimony
<i>Humboldt Codex</i> (no. 2)	German Government Library of Berlin (ex-GDR)
<i>Humboldt Codex</i> (nos. 5-15)	German Government Library of Berlin (ex-GDR)
<i>Ixtlilxóchitl Codex</i> (Part 1)	Paris National Library
<i>Ixtlilxóchitl Codex</i> (Part 2)	Paris National Library
<i>Ixtlilxóchitl, Genealogy of Felipe</i>	National Library of Mexico
<i>Maguey, Draft on Paper of a</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Metztépetl, Genealogy of</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Mexican Annals</i> (no. 4)	(A) Unknown
<i>Mexican Nation, Historical Annals of</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Mexican Nation</i> (copy)	Paris National Library
<i>Mexicans, History of the Ancient</i> (fragment)	Paris National Library
<i>Mexico, Fragment of a History of</i>	(B) Paris National Library
<i>Mexico and Tlatelolco, Annals of</i>	Unknown
<i>Mizquiahuala, Tributes of</i>	Unknown
<i>Nexmoyotla, Canvas of Saint John</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Nezahualcóyotl, Circular Genealogy of</i>	Latin American Collection, University of Texas Library

¹ Since 1982, the complete name of the library is the Dr. Eusebio Dávalos Hurtado National Library of Anthropology and History.

<i>Nine Lords, Wheel of the</i> (copy)	Unknown
<i>Nopalxóchitl, Genealogy of</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Otumba, Map of</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Pitzahua, Genealogy of</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Poinsett</i> (fragment no. 1)	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Poinsett</i> (fragment no. 2)	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Possessions, Codex of</i> (fragment 1)	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Possessions, Codex of</i> (fragment 2)	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Possessions, Codex of</i> (fragment 3)	Latin American Collection, University of Texas Library
<i>Process, Fragment of a</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Process, Piece of a</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Quinatzin, Map</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Rechnung</i> (Bill of Sale from Mizquiahuala)	German Government Library of Berlin (ex-GDR) (lost)
<i>San Juan Teotihuacan Codex</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>San Pablo Teocaltitlán, Book of Tributes of</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Santa Cruz Tlampa Codex</i> (no. 1)	Museum of the Army, Madrid
<i>Santa Cruz Tlampa Codex</i> (no. 2)	Unknown
<i>Santa Cruz Tlampa Codex</i> (no. 3)	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Serna: Calendar Wheel no. 2</i>	Royal Academy of History of Madrid
<i>Serna: Drawings</i> (copy)	Royal Academy of History of Madrid
<i>Sigüenza, Map of</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Tecpan de Santiago Tlatelolco Codex</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Tecpatepec, Painting of the Town of</i>	Latin American Collection, University of Texas Library
<i>Tepechpan, Strip of</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Tepechpan, Strip of</i> (copy)	Unknown
<i>Tepecuacuilco, Map of</i>	National Museum of Anthropology and German Government Library of Berlin (ex-DRG) (lost)
<i>Tepoztlán, Property Map of</i>	Austrian National Library, Vienna
<i>Tetlamaca, Genealogy of</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Tianquiztli, Map of</i>	Unknown
<i>Tlatelolco Codex</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Tlatengo, Tributes of</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Tlaxcala, Annals of</i> (no. 2)	Unknown
<i>Tlaxcala, Canvas of</i>	Unknown
<i>Tlaxcala Codex</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Tlotzin, Map</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Tlotzin, Map</i> (copy)	Paris National Library
<i>Toltec-Chichimec History</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Tributes, Fragment of</i>	Gilcrease Institute, Tulsa, Oklahoma
<i>Tributes, Matrix of</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Tributes, Matrix of</i> (copy)	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Tributes, Strip of</i>	Institute of Mesoamerican Research, Tulane University
<i>Tzintzuntzan, Tributes of</i>	Princeton University Library
<i>Vergara Codex</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Veytia, Calendar Wheels</i> (nos. 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 [copy])	Unknown
<i>Women, Fragment of the</i>	Brooklyn Museum
<i>Xalapa Codex</i>	National Museum of Anthropology
<i>Xolotl Codex</i>	Paris National Library
<i>Zapotitlán, Codex of the Tequitlato of</i>	National Museum of Anthropology

Source: John B. Glass, "The Boturini Collection," in Robert Wauchope (ed.), *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, Vol. 15, *Guide to Ethnohistorical Sources*, Part Four, Howard F. Cline (ed. of vol.), University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 1975, pp. 479-482.