

Writing lessons in the history of antiquarianism: the manuscripts of Guillermo Dupaix

This essay explores the manuscripts produced by Guillermo Dupaix in the context of the Royal Antiquarian Expeditions (1805-1809), sponsored by the Spanish crown with the aim of recording and studying pre-Conquest ruins in New Spain. While most histories of Mexican antiquarianism are based on published editions of Dupaix's work, his manuscripts tell a seldom-told story of American antiquarianism at a moment of "indiscipline," when antiquities did not have the commercial and symbolic values they would acquire over the nineteenth century, and neither the verbal and visual syntax, nor the methods and protocols associated with established disciplines were in place. I turn to Dupaix's drafts, drawings, lists, and diaries to explore the activity of knowledge in the process of being made and of the material, conceptual and political conditions that shaped Dupaix's thinking about objects. More broadly, I seek to address questions about the configuration of cultural and scientific objects and collections.

Key words: Guillermo Dupaix; antiquarianism; Royal Antiquarian Expeditions; expedition manuscripts and diaries; production of scientific knowledge