

The Virgin of Guadalupe



The Astrology of a National Symbol

by Luis Lesur

The Virgin of Guadalupe is the female face of the divine who has the most followers in the Western world. Her shrine in Mexico City receives 20 million visitors per year, many more than Fátima (Portugal) or Lourdes (France). Only St. Peter's Basilica in Rome receives more pilgrims in the Catholic tradition. The Virgin stands in the main altar of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York (on the right-hand side), and in Nôtre Dame in Paris, she is granted her own chapel. In Mexico, where the Virgin of Guadalupe originated, [\(1\)](#) and especially among the millions of Mexicans who live in the United States, she is — even more than the Mexican flag — the most beloved emblem of national identity. This applies even to non-Catholics.

Could astrology help us to understand what lies behind the huge popularity of the Virgin of Guadalupe? Is it possible to get a meaningful horoscope from a legend? In the following discussion, I will sketch out some ideas from my book, *The Secret Codes to the Virgin of Guadalupe*. [\(2\)](#)

The story tells us that, just a few years after the conquest of Mexico by Spain, the Virgin Mary appeared several times to the Indian, Juan Diego, on the hill of Tepeyac. The first time was before dawn on December 9, 1531, when she told him to go to Bishop Zumárraga and ask him to build a chapel for her there. The priest asked the Indian for proof of the apparition. On December 12, the third time the Virgin spoke with Juan Diego, she told him to cut some roses as a testimony to Zumárraga. When he returned to the bishop, everyone present saw that the cloth in which the flowers were bundled had been transformed miraculously into a portrait of the Virgin. This image, so the Church tells us, is the same one still on display in the Basilica of Guadalupe.



Historians have established that the painting is the work of the native artist Marcos Cipac, who inscribed the date: 1556. On the other hand, the narrative of the miracle was published for the first time nearly one hundred years later, in 1648, and there is no solid evidence that the legend was known before then. Some specialists maintain that the story is contemporary with the painting and that it came originally from the script of a religious drama. Others believe that the story is even more modern, arguing that the language in which it was written (Nahuatl, the language spoken by the Aztecs) does not have the syntax that was used in the mid-16th century.

If we accept that behind the Virgin there lie a myth and a historic reality, the search for her horoscope could follow either of these two paths. The first approach would be factual: Try to establish, through historical documents, when the image was painted and when the account was published; then select the more appropriate of the two and deduce, using rectification, the exact time. The second approach would be to take the literary dates and clues given by the narrative as points of departure for the rectification. It seems to me that this offers us a unique opportunity to explore the possibility of a mythological date as an "astrological moment," so I lean toward the second option.

Let's begin our search through the ritual process of rectification, which we astrologers use to determine the legitimacy of a speculative horoscope. The first step is to choose which of the four apparitions is the most appropriate. The two dates of greatest significance seem to be December 9, 1531, the first time (the "birth moment") that Juan Diego spoke with the Virgin; and December 12, 1531, when the image materialized on the cloth holding the roses, also a "first." The biggest difference between these two dates is the position of the Moon. [\(3\)](#) On the 9th, the Moon was in Capricorn; and on the 12th, in Aquarius. We would prefer the first placement, because Capricorn has traditionally been associated with Mexico. It is impossible to find a direct relationship between Aquarius and either the symbolism of the Virgin or that of this country.



On the other hand, at dawn on December 9, the Sun and Moon formed an antiscion. (4) This could be an important clue. Let's see why: The Virgin of Guadalupe belongs to the genre known as Virgins of the Apocalypse, because this iconographic depiction of the Catholic virgin is inspired by the following passage from the Apocalypse of Saint John:

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was

born. (5)

The perfect astrological match with this description would have been a New Moon or, even better, a solar eclipse. A nonastrological book about the Virgin of Guadalupe (Eclipse of the Divine Sun, written in Mexico in the 18th century) concurs with this point of view. Although none of the dates indicated in the text correspond to an eclipse or a New Moon, (6) at dawn on December 9, 1531, there is a configuration between the Sun and the Moon, an antiscion, which is interpreted in a similar way to a conjunction. On December 12, however, there is no link at all between the two luminaries.

Having established that the most appropriate day is December 9, 1531, we must now decide on the time. The tale itself shows us that the search shouldn't stretch beyond dawn. The text states specifically "much before dawn," not just "before dawn." This emphasis provides a new clue. A poor peasant in any part of the world — now, as centuries ago — normally begins the day at 3:00 a.m. and has completed several tasks before sunrise. From this point of view, any time after 5:00 a.m. is definitely not very early. If we base our analysis on the rhythms that have ruled life in the countryside for centuries, we can reduce our search to approximately the two hours between 3:00 and 5:00 a.m. Using these parameters, the Ascendant must be in either Scorpio or Sagittarius. How do we decide which one? Let's have a look.

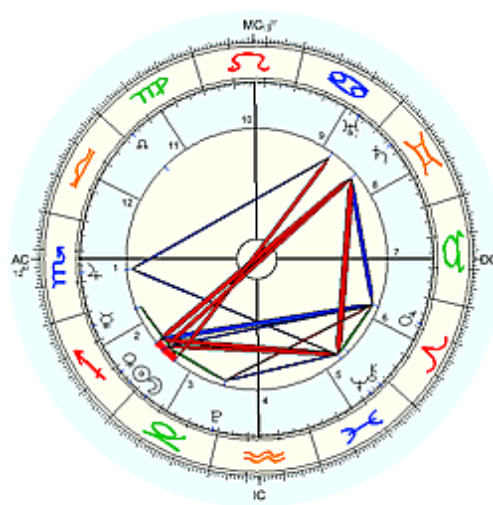
The hill of Tepeyac, where the Virgin appeared, was originally a sacred place for the Aztecs. Cihuacoatl, the Serpent Woman, was worshipped here in the form of Tonanzin, Mother Earth. Indeed, some think that the reason that the image was made and displayed in the chapel on the Tepeyac hill was to neutralize the cult of the Aztec Goddess that was still being worshipped there. However, to the dismay of the friars, there was no initial success, and the Indians continued to associate the Virgin of Guadalupe with the pre-Hispanic Goddess for a long time.

Now, among the 12 labors of Hercules, the one associated with the sign of Scorpio is the confrontation with the Hydra, a creature with the body of a dog and nine serpent heads, one of them immortal. Another myth associated with Scorpio is that of snake-haired Medusa. If there is any sign that recalls the goddess Cihuacoatl, the Serpent Woman, it's Scorpio. In this case, even the substitution of a female deity associated with the serpent by another purely protective deity reminds us of Perseus who, to rescue Danae, the "good mother," battles against Medusa, the "bad mother." I think, by now, we have a convincing argument for Scorpio as the sign of the Ascendant, but there's more to come. (7)

One characteristic that distinguishes the image of Guadalupe from nearly all the other representations of the Virgin Mary is its extraordinary similarity to the external parts of the female genitalia. Even the cloak that she wears resembles the labia of the vagina. We are talking about the threshold through which we all must pass to enter the world, as the artist Gustave Courbet reminds us with his polemical painting, "The Origins of the World." As we know, Scorpio rules the genitals. However, it's worth remembering that German astrologer Reinhold Ebertin associated specific parts of (human) anatomy not only with signs of the zodiac, but also with each of the 360 degrees in the zodiac. In accordance

with this correlation, the degree that rules the external female genitalia is 12° Scorpio. That degree crossed the Ascendant between 3:12:53 and 3:17:10 in the morning, within the range we have established as possible. If we base our analysis, as we have done so far, on the appearance of the painting, to refine the Ascendant, I believe that we have found the exact degree. But we can be even more precise.

During the four minutes when the 12th degree of Scorpio was on the Ascendant, the planetary hour changed. The hour of the Sun ended and the hour of Venus began, at 3:16 a.m. Erich Neumann, in his classic book, *The Great Mother*, tells us that the mandorla that represents the female genitals is an emblem of the goddess Aphrodite. It's obvious that the silhouette of the Virgin of Guadalupe forms a perfect mandorla. The planetary hours are attributes of the



Virgin of Guadalupe, December 9, 1531 OS;
3:16 a.m. LMT; Mexico City, Mexico



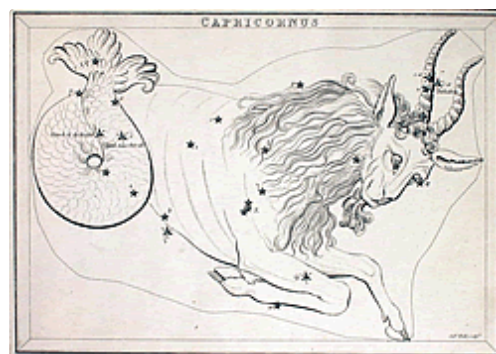
Ascendant (they change with the primary movement of the heavens, which also determines the Ascendant), so they color the appearance of whatever is made manifest in that moment. As a result, I have no doubt that the Virgin of Guadalupe would have appeared at the hour of Venus: a few seconds after 3:16 a.m. on December 9, 1531, on the outskirts of Mexico City. Moreover, with this rectification we find that the lunar nodes are close to the midpoint between the Ascendant and the Midheaven (MC). It seems appropriate that the nodes should be linked to the angles of this chart, because they are the head and tail of the fire-colored dragon that stands before the Virgin of the Apocalypse in the well-known image by William Blake. This creature also appears in a great many popular illustrations of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Finally, I would like to mention that at 3:16 a.m. on December 9, 1531, an observer on Tepeyac hill would have seen to the east the last stars of the constellation of Virgo, the virgin, standing perfectly over the horizon. (8)

I am aware that my rectification is somewhat unconventional — based solely on a legend and the appearance of a painting. To carry out a rectification based on events, as is the current fashion, we would need to know exactly what we are drawing a horoscope of. If we are talking about the miraculous appearance of the Virgin, it's difficult to know what we are dealing with, so there's no way of knowing beforehand which are the relevant events.

In this particular case, however, having now established the horoscope, I think that it can give us important clues for understanding, at least in part, the nature of what was born then. Let's begin with the Sun and the Moon. The former is in Sagittarius, which reminds us that this sign has been assigned to Spain (and Portugal), at least since Ptolemaic times. Following this line of thought, it is interesting that, when the original inhabitants of Mexico saw the troops of Hernán Cortés for the first time, they thought the riders and their horses were only one monstrous creature. There is even a famous painting by David Alfaro Siqueiros (with whom Jackson Pollock studied) representing this as a powerful, albeit wounded, half-human, half-horse beast. The painting is titled "The Centaur of the Conquest."

The German-born astrologer, engineer, and printer Henrico Martínez published the first astrological work of the New World in 1606. (9) In this book, he tried, among other things, to establish the astrological sign of Mexico. Since he was unable to follow the criteria that had been used in the past in the Mediterranean basin and Europe, he decided to take as a starting point the horoscope of the Creation of the World. He placed this in Damascus, with Cancer on the Ascendant. Martínez relocated this map to the coordinates of Mexico City and concluded that the sign of Mexico is Capricorn. (10)

A Novo Hispanic theologian without any astrological pretensions wrote at the end of the 17th century that "in the Virgin of Guadalupe the Spanish Sun and the Mexican Moon are united" — precisely what is true of this horoscope: the Sun in the sign of Spain in antiscion with the Moon in the sign of Mexico. The marriage, admittedly forced, between the two radically different cultures produced something new: mestizaje (mixture of races). Of all the signs of the zodiac, there are only two that are represented by the union of creatures of a different nature: the half-human, half-horse Sagittarius and the half-goat, half-fish Capricorn. One of the characteristics that distinguishes the conquest of Mexico from other conquests, even in the Americas, is precisely how generalized the mestizaje is. In Mexico, there are fewer inhabitants with purely European or purely Indian blood than anywhere else in the world. An observant visitor will realize that, even though Mexico has many Western facets, including the language, it is not really the West: It is a mixture, an intersection, a mandorla.



One immediately obvious characteristic of this horoscope is the t-square between the Venus-Sun-Moon conjunction in opposition to Saturn — and all of them square to Neptune, Chiron, and the Moon's South Node in Pisces. The closest contact to this configuration, a square within only 6 minutes of orb, occurs between Saturn and Neptune. The aspect was exact the following day. Because of the surprising appropriateness of the descriptions, I would like to quote what two astrologers have said about the contacts between these two planets (*italics added*): Liz Greene stated: "Form and formlessness collide, to create either the gift of incarnating vision or the refusal to be psychologically born." (11) Charles Harvey wrote: "Saturn-Neptune is the process of 'materializing the spiritual and spiritualizing the material' " and "It is the Our Father prayer which impels the aspiring soul to bring Earth into conformity with Heaven." (12) It seems to me that these descriptions capture, in a surprisingly literal way, what happened to Juan Diego, according to myth, at the foot of the Tepeyac hill in December 1531.

But the question remains: What really occurred in December 1531? Let's try to answer this by looking at what was happening at the seed moment, when Saturn and Neptune were together for the last time. The conjunction took place twice in 1523 and once at the beginning of 1524, and during the last pass, Jupiter also joined them. (13) Perhaps the most relevant event to take place in Mexico at that time was the arrival of the first evangelizing priests. Until that moment, the conquest of Mexico, which began a few years earlier, had involved mainly death, destruction, and pillage. The arrival of these monks was the first gesture of an attempt to reconcile Europe and the (by then) mortally wounded New World. Eight years later descends an image for collective inspiration, which attempts to bring the earthly into conformity with the heavens, spiritualizing the material and materializing the spiritual. Thus rose radiant the Guadalupan mandorla, the intersection between two worlds. The only possible reconciliation after the conquest was that victim and victimizer become identical, incarnated in a new lineage: the mestizos. Conforming to the perfect order of the heavens has always been the most powerful way to achieve social or political legitimacy.

Beneath the painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe, holding her up, we have "Cherub-like, a human soul whispers, seeking to manifest," which is the Sabian symbol of the 14th degree of Leo, (14) the Midheaven of this chart. What the soul whispers is gradually taking the form of what he is carrying over his head: the body of a new nation.

This article doesn't claim to provide an in-depth interpretation of this chart, but I can't resist mentioning the following: Any practitioner of psychological astrology who finds the Sun in a t-square with Saturn, Neptune, and Chiron would suspect a difficult and absent father figure. In this case, the astrologer would not be mistaken. In Mexico, a country packed with monuments and heroes, there is not one statue of Cortés. No street bears his name, nor is there anyplace where he is remembered. He's simply not here.

I'd like to end with some transits and progressions to this chart:

When the Mexican War of Independence began on September 15, 1810, Uranus was one degree from the Ascendant of this horoscope and Chiron's antiscion was at the same minute. When independence was finally gained, on September 28, 1821, there was a conjunction between Uranus and Neptune at

the natal Sun/Moon midpoint, and Pluto was in conjunction with natal Chiron in another of the corners of the "t-square." When the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed on February 2, 1848 — which made official Mexico's loss of half of its territory to the U.S. — the Descendant and IC by solar arc were a few minutes from natal Saturn and Neptune, respectively. When the 1910 Revolution began on November 20, Pluto activated this same configuration again by transit (a square within one minute of arc to Chiron). During the massacre of hundreds of students in Mexico City on October 2, 1968, Pluto was on the empty leg of the t-square. On September 19, 1985, when nearly 20,000 people died in an earthquake in Mexico City, the transiting Sun ($26^{\circ}34^{\circ}$ Virgo), the progressed Sun ($26^{\circ}05^{\circ}$ Pisces), and the natal Sun ($26^{\circ}39^{\circ}$ Sagittarius) formed an extremely narrow and rare t-square. Also at that time, the MC by solar arc was 10 minutes from the conjunction with the natal Ascendant. On that date, the progressed Ascendant (Naibod in longitude) was 9 minutes of arc from the conjunction with natal Pluto. The difficult situation in this year's presidential election in Mexico has never happened before, and it coincides with Pluto in Sagittarius touching the mutable t-square. From the beginning of 2005 and for several years to come, Pluto will be at the zone of mutable signs that forms the principal configuration of this proposed Guadalupe chart: its t-square. On previous occasions, this has coincided with great changes in the social and political structure of Mexico. It is reasonable to expect something similar on this occasion.

This article has been adapted for an international audience from the book, *Las Claves Ocultas de la Virgen de Guadalupe* (The Secret Codes to the Virgin of Guadalupe), by Luis Lesur, which was published in Spanish in Mexico in 2005, by Random House Mondadori. This article was translated from the Spanish by Barbara Kastelein; astrologer Lynn Bell also made some comments on the English manuscript.