PROLOGUE

If the "Good Neighbor Policy" were a fact rather than a political slogan or at best a pious wish, the life, work, and death of one of the great thinkers, writers, and teachers of the Western Hemisphere could hardly have passed almost without being noticed in the Anglo-Saxon part of the American continent. On March 6th of this year died in Mexico City Antonio Caso, mourned by Mexico and her Ibero-American sister republics as well as by three generations of students who in their minds and hearts bear indelibly the moral stamina which they received in the classes taught by their beloved maestro in the Escuela Preparatoria and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. José Vasconcelos, in his funeral oration, recognized in his departed compatriot "the most eloquent voice of Mexican philosophy, that voice which kindled in human minds the love for truth and beauty," and then recalled in his personal apostrophe the great scholarly and human qualities of Antonio Caso: "You were," he said, "a despiser of everything vile and wicked; you were disdainful of money, and you turned your back on power. . . . With your great gifts you might have gained materially comfortable positions of influence.

Many times Fortuna knocked at your door, but you refused to open because you had decided to remain loyal to your vocation as a thinker. . . . Meanwhile, your conscience stayed wide awake, sensitive to noble actions and sublime ideas. . . . Those who follow your leadership recognized in your balanced mind the marks of the classicist; in your sensitivity, those of the romanticist; in the integrity of your conduct, those of the gentleman. *Maestro completo*: wherever there is a school, there is your fatherland. *Mexicano universal*: through you our nation occupies a distinguished place in contemporary thought."

Kurt F. Reinhardt. "A Mexican Personalist: Antonio Caso (1883–1946)," The Americas, 3 (July 1946): 20.