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Unreadable Books:

Early Colonial Mexican Documents in Circulation

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Unreadable Books:
Early Colonial Mexican Documents in Circulation

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This dissertation is about the unreading of the Americas: about the ways that the documents that describe American history have been hidden, obscured, and rendered illegible even as they have circulated throughout the Americas and across the Atlantic. Its objects of study are the multilingual (and multimodal) documents that were produced during the first century of Spanish presence in Mesoamerica, a period that can be loosely defined as 1521-1621. It begins from the premise that, thanks to their linguistic and material conditions, the documents produced during this period were largely unreadable when they began to re-circulate among historians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It asks: in what ways were these unreadable books read, and by what mechanisms were they rendered readable?

To answer these questions, the dissertation focuses on the most innocuous of mechanisms: the processes by which texts have been replicated for circulation. Textual replication, from transcription to typesetting, photolithography, microfilm-

ing, and digitization, is a largely invisible mechanism that has long facilitated the relationship between historians and the primary sources of their scholarship. Today, in the face of large-scale digitization projects, we express concern about the limitations of these mediations: the errors introduced by transcription, or the detail lost through digitization. At the same time, we understand that in many cases it is only thanks to these mediations that these texts are accessible at all. Given these conditions, I find that differing values, and different technologies, shape the ways in which historical documents are made available to be read, and the kinds of information that is lost in transmission.

In this dissertation, I situate these contemporary anxieties, made urgent by the spread of digital technology, within a long history of textual reproduction. The first part of the dissertation focuses on transcription, which I define as the sequential replication of text across media. It moves chronologically through the contact zone of colonial Mexico, the libraries of nineteenth-century historians, and modern-day digitization projects. In doing so, it shows how the hands of copyists, collectors, librarians, and machines leave their mark on the page, and on the past.

The second part of the dissertation turns to the production of photographic facsimiles through the use of photolithography, the Photostat, and digital photography. Rather than focusing on technological innovation, however, the two chapters in this part consider the role of photographic facsimiles in both enabling and working against institutional control over Mexico's historical record. It illustrates how both transcription and photographic replication have been used to construct collections, libraries, and sites of cultural heritage across the U.S.-Mexico border. It argues that it is through these mechanisms that affiliated communities have asserted control over historical memory.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Mary Louise Pratt opens *Imperial Eyes* with the story of the manuscript of Guaman Poma de Ayala's history of the Spanish colonization of Peru. Forgotten in the Danish Royal Archive for centuries, the document was rendered, in Pratt's words, *unreadable* and *unread*. It was only in the twentieth century that the manuscript began to take on new meanings. "The readability of Guaman Poma's letter today," she wrote in 1992, "is another sign of the changing intellectual dynamics through which imperial meaning-making has become a subject of critical investigation" (Pratt 7).

I have found myself dwelling, years after my first reading of *Imperial Eyes*, on the centuries that the Guaman Poma manuscript sat in the archive. What did Pratt mean when she described the *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* as unreadable? She meant, first, that the document was written in a language — a mixture of Quechua and "ungrammatical Spanish" — that could not be comprehended by a Western audience. As she explains, "Quechua was not considered a written language in 1908, nor Andean culture a literate culture" (Pratt 5). By unreadable, Pratt also meant that the manuscript did not circulate; it was forgotten in the archive from its seventeenth-century acquisition until the public announcement of its reading, by the German researcher Richard A. Pietschmann, in 1908.[1] It was only after the 1936 publication of a facsimile edition that the manuscript could be read, and only after the rise of indigenous studies in Europe and the United States in the 1970s (and

[1]Pratt dates this to a London announcement of 1912; Adorno to an announcement in 1908, published in the 1936 facsimile.

the publication of a critical transcribed edition in 1980) that the manuscript was rendered readable to its Western audiences.

When Pratt writes about the readability of the indigenous manuscript, then, she is talking about what librarians today might call access, accessibility, and discoverability: a user's ability to encounter the document, to read its words, and to process their meaning. Pratt finds that these conditions of reading only existed in the twentieth century. What, then, did the manuscript mean for the previous three hundred years? According to Rolena Adorno, D. G. Moldenhawer, the director of the Danish Royal Library from 1788 to 1823, knew about the manuscript and hoped to publish extracts from it almost a hundred years before Pietschmann's encounter (Adorno n.p.). And documents written in ungrammatical Spanish, including those written in a mix of Spanish and indigenous American languages, had been circulating among European historians, antiquarians, and bibliophiles since the eighteenth century. Even if they could not be read according to the critical frameworks of postcolonial studies; even if knowledge of indigenous languages among researchers was imperfect at best; still these documents were known and valued enough to be preserved, to be circulated, and occasionally to be read. This isn't to say that these books were readable in the ways that Pratt is describing. It is, instead, to suggest that even unreadable books have meanings that are registered and values that are commonly understood.

Much like Pratt's *Imperial Eyes*, this dissertation is about the ways that the Americas have been read, and the ways that those readings have circulated across the Atlantic. Its objects of study are the multilingual (and multimodal) books that

were produced during the first century of Spanish presence in Mesoamerica, a period that can be loosely defined as 1521-1621. It begins from the premise, shared with Pratt, that the books produced during this period were largely unreadable when they began to re-circulate among historians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In what ways, then, were they consumed, and by what mechanisms were they rendered legible?

To answer these questions, the dissertation focuses on the most innocuous of mechanisms: the processes by which texts have been replicated for circulation. Textual replication, from transcription to typesetting, photolithography, microfilming, and digitization, is a fundamental but largely invisible factor that has long facilitated the relationship between historians and the primary sources of their scholarship. For as long as these mechanisms have existed, they have evoked concern about the limitations of these mediations: the errors introduced by transcription, or the detail lost through digitization. But in many cases, as in hand-written manuscripts like that of Guaman Poma, it is only thanks to these mediations that most viewers can read the text at all. Differing values, and different technologies, shape the ways in which historical documents are made available to be read, and the kinds of information that is lost in transmission.

The changes that textual reproduction introduces to a historical text often appear innocuous, as though they were the arbitrary consequences of human error and technological advancement. Such is the case of "dirty OCR," the gibberish that is produced when computers are used to automatically transcribe digital facsimiles of historical documents. While scholars of the digital humanities are aware

of the impact of dirty OCR on their own research, little attention has been paid to the specificities of this distortion, the way it renders particular kinds of language particularly illegible, the way those particularities are built into transcription algorithms, and the consequences of those particularities for ongoing research.[2] In my work developing tools for the automatic transcription of books from early colonial New Spain, it has become clear that the anglophone tools of automatic transcription are biased toward English, monolingual, and orthographically regular texts. When faced with Spanish, Latin, and indigenous-language texts from the early-modern period, the result was unreadable. In the case of British writers such as Shakespeare, whose work has driven much recent digital scholarship of the early modern period, we might have found these errors comical, or irritating, or even expensive. In colonial contexts, however, the naming of an indigenous language "dirty" and the distortion of indigenous discourse was viscerally unacceptable. When an apparently neutral technology of textual reproduction was applied to a colonial texts, the ongoing colonial assumptions that informed it were made immediately visible. So was the influence of these assumptions on the ways we access and read the historical record.

This dissertation was born out of a desire to historicize automatic transcription in order to better understand how transcription interacts with the social, cultural, and financial circumstances that motivate textual reproduction. The first part of the dissertation offers precisely that: an examination of transcription history that moves in parallel to the history of print, from the early colonial period to the modern

[2]Whitney Anne Trettien's "A Deep History of Electronic Textuality" and Laura Mandell's "Digitizing the Archive" are two excellent exceptions to this rule.

day. The second part of the dissertation incorporates this transcription history into a broader exploration of textual reproduction, from photolithography to Photostats and digital cameras. These photographic mechanisms achieve different kinds of accuracy towards (and introduce different kinds of distortions into) the reproduced text. By instantiating the moment of their reproduction, they also index textual reproduction in a different way into the archive of textual history, expanding the archive's ability to reference itself.

Though this dissertation does explore multiple historical mechanisms for textual reproduction, it is not primarily a work of media history. Instead, what the research for this dissertation has made clear is that a history of re-inscription is not possible without an understanding of the institutions that facilitate these reproductive processes and the people who carry them out. Libraries — from private gentlemen's libraries to those of universities, societies, and religious orders — have long managed the work of collecting and disseminating information. These spaces, and the people who shape them, are at the center of this dissertation. This includes the wealthy men who have historically had the power and ability to buy the historical record. But it also includes the individuals who did the work of copying the text, from the indigenous nobility working for the mendicant orders of New Spain, to the white women who served as assistant librarians at the turn of the twentieth century in the United States.

If the production and acquisition of historical texts has largely been in the hands of a white male elite, the labor of their reproduction has occurred across races and genders. It is no accident that this labor has been made invisible by the

categories of accuracy through which textual copies are evaluated. As I trace the reproduction of colonial books across borders and technologies, I seek to identify historical moments in which these multiple identities come together to shape the legibility of the historical record, and the readability of America's colonial past. As I look to the future of textual reproduction, I turn to academic libraries and community organizations to identify spaces where technologies for textual reproduction are being used to rework these hierarchies of textual power.

The Print-Digital Analogy

In a recent talk on digital memory, the librarian and historian Abby Smith Rumsey walked the audience through a history of recorded memory, from cuneiform tablets to the Gutenberg Press and the digital age. The story she told, and the three historical moments that she used to illustrate it, was so familiar that it elicited no comments from the packed room.

Yet there is something troubling about the facile relationships among these three moments, and the long historical silences in between them. We can trace this particular story to Marshall McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, which argued in 1962 that electronic communications technologies were transforming societies in a manner similar to that of the printing press and the development of alphabetic writing. In doing so, it established the analogy that Rumsey echoed between the spread of movable type in the early modern period and the spread of electronic (or digital) media today.

Rumsey is not alone in repeating this story, which I call for brevity the print-

digital analogy. Lisa Gitelman, writing in 2014, describes the analogy as "typological," remarking that it has "become a commonplace of late to compare the ascendance of digital networks and the World Wide Web with the rapid dissemination of letterpress printing in Renaissance Europe and the supposed emergence of print culture" (*Paper Knowledge* 20). Indeed, the introductions to such diverse studies as Elizabeth Eisenstein's *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1980), Adrian Johns' *The Nature of the Book* (1998), David McKitterick's *Old Books, New Technologies* (2013), and Gitelman's *Paper Knowledge* (2014) all locate the warrant for their work in the relationship between electronic culture and its precedents in print. Because it is so widespread among Anglophone authors, it is easy to see this print-digital analogy as naturalistic.

While scholars have worked to rethink the print-digital analogy by looking critically at the concept of "print culture" in early modern Europe (Gitelman, Johns) or expanding the history of textual reproduction (McKitterick), these studies have largely extended, rather than examining, the scope of the analogy. This is particularly apparent to anyone who reads this research with an eye to the histories of colonization and enslavement that are also, necessarily, part of the history of the printed book. The colonies dance at the margins of print history, much as they dance at the margins of the history of European modernity more generally. We know they exist, and we suspect that the history of the printed book in Mexico, or in the Philippines, or in New Zealand must be significantly different from the history of the printed book in Italy, France, or Spain. It is. But as Mary Louise Pratt has argued, the contaminating power of the colonies has a long reach. The history of

the printing press in Europe is a colonial history.

The contaminating presence of colonization in print history is brutally apparent in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, which is founded in colonial ideology. McLuhan's argument about the transformative power of both written language and the printing press is logically dependent on the concept of "primitive man" as a figure located both prior to and beyond the borders of modern life. Primitive man, he tells us, echoing the thought of early conquistadors and missionaries in the Americas, is primitive because his capacity for thought has not been informed by the organizing logic of written text. Modern man, he continues, is modern only insofar as he is able to conform his thought to the organizing principle of electronic media: fail and he will discover, in McLuhan's words, "the Africa within."

One of the motivations behind this dissertation was the desire to understand how a colonial ideology has insinuated itself, unchecked, into the dominant analogy through which we understand the history of the printing press and its relationship to the electronic age. It was with an eye to accomplishing this goal that I have located this dissertation in the colonies: in New Spain, a place that has become central to the counternarratives of European textual conquest thanks to the decolonial scholarship of Walter Mignolo and Elizabeth Hill Boone. In the historiography of New Spain, Nahua communication systems challenge colonial ideas about the relationship between writing and civilization, just as Nahua architecture, art, religion, and political structures challenge colonial ideas about European exceptionalism and Christian superiority. The early arrival of the printing press in Mesoamerica - the first press was established in Mexico City in 1539, less than twenty years after the

conquest of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan and some seventy years after the printing of the Gutenberg Bible - allows us to consider print history in New Spain as concurrent with, and integral to, the colonization of the Americas. This history also makes Mexico an appropriate counterpoint to Germany in the narratives of textual modernity.

When the print-digital analogy is shifted to Mexico, the colonial logic that enables it is made suddenly visible. Because the spread of movable type in Europe coincided with early encounters with the American continents, it is easy to link the printing press with the colonization, Europeanization, or modernization of the Americas. This is particularly tempting because of the illusion that the printing press was introduced into an uninscribed world. But as Philip Round remarks, even in places where indigenous communities didn't have easily recognizable forms of writing, they had many forms of inscribed signification that were even sometimes recognized as such (Round 12-13). As a result, what we see in the early colonial period is less the first writing of the New World than what Round calls the "interpenetration" of multiple forms of communication, including oral, manuscript, and printed texts (18). As with conquest more broadly, the writing of America does not begin with European advancement.

Nor does the spread of the printing press lead to the end of all other forms of communication, in the Americas or elsewhere. As the announcement for a recent conference on early modern book history in Europe explained, the "complex and vibrant manuscript culture" of the medieval period "did not simply cease to exist after the advent of print" ("Object Lessons"). Manually transcribed documents cir-

culated in the Americas (as in Europe) until the invention of the typewriter, as did other less familiar modes of inscriptive communication. And indigenous forms of inscription, including, in the case of Mesoamerica, pictographic modes of representation, insinuated themselves into printed texts. Furthermore, as Salomon and Niña-Murcio have shown, even when indigenous texts become functionally unreadable, they continue to be cared for, used, and read by communities with cultural ties to the documents and their past. The temporal acrobatics that McLuhan uses when he locates non-print inscription in a primitive past or at an exotic distance — so beautifully labeled 'the problem of the coeval' by Johannes Fabian — do not hold up to scrutiny. What does happen, however, is that the availability and legibility of these texts shifts, as do the ways in which they signify. It is these shifting ways of making meaning that this dissertation seeks to trace.

Tracing the history of textual reproduction through colonial inscription draws attention to the places where colonial ways of knowing become part of the Western archive. It allows us to see where epistemological difference ruptures the authority of textual collections in Europe and the United States, opening windows onto what José Rabasa calls *elsewheres* that are fundamentally unreadable to Western researchers (*Tell Me the Story*). At the same time, it shows how Western inscriptive mechanisms reshape the discourse of the contact zone to conform to changing standards of knowledge production and organization, imposing a framework of legibility onto unreadable texts. These histories are useful as we consider how large-scale digitization projects encode colonial ideology. Digitization projects have been contextualized in terms of both the history of the printing press and of the

enlightenment-era idea of universal knowledge. But by not being attentive to the colonial history of mechanisms for the collection and circulation of historical documents, these analyses misjudge both the pasts and futures of these digital projects. As this dissertation will show, renewed attention to the colonial history of digitization opens new paths forward for libraries and special collections.

The Archival Imaginary

In the short story "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote" by Jorge Luis Borges, the nineteenth-century Frenchman Pierre Menard sets out to become the kind of person who could compose the text of the seventeenth-century Spanish novel *Don Quijote*. *"Inútil agregar que no encaró nunca una transcripción mecánica del original; no se proponía copiarlo"* (Borges, "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote" 446).[3] Borges asserts. The result, however, is a copy; if it is different from the original, it is because of the changes in signification introduced by the new historical context of its inscription. *"La historia, madre de la verdad,"* writes Borges, paraphrasing Cervantes; *"la idea es asombrosa"* (449).[4]

This is a dissertation in comparative literature, and so readers will notice the absence of fiction, poetry, and drama from the analyses that follow. The questions that this dissertation ask are nevertheless born out of literary studies, and the analyses that I propose make available new ways of thinking about literary history. In the writings of Walter Benjamin and Jean Baudrillard, we can locate the origins of the

[3]" It is unnecessary to add that his aim was never to produce a mechanical transcription of the original; he did not propose to copy it" ("Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote" 48-49).

[4]"History, *mother* of truth. The idea is astounding" (53).

literary theorizing of text and replica; in Gayatri Spivak's theory of the subaltern and Homi Bhabha's discussion of mimicry, the logical outcome of their application to postcolonial studies. These arguments provide a framework through which I approach the analysis of textual replication.

The move that this dissertation makes in response to this work is to step from theory to practice; from the idea of copying, to the practice of textual reproduction. This implies a shift from the analysis of words and their connotations, to a close reading of the character of the text. Consider, for example, how Borges quotes Menard, quoting Cervantes:

> ... la verdad, cuya madre es la historia, émula del tiempo, depósito de las acciones, testigo de lo pasado, ejemplo y aviso de lo presente, advertencia de lo por venir. (Borges, "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote" 449)

The Cervantes text and Menard's reinscription should be identical; yet here is the passage as it appears in the first 1605 edition of Don Quijote:

> ...la verdad, cuya madre es la hiſtoria emula del tiẽpo, depoſito de las acciones, teſtigo de lo paſſado, exemplo, y auiſo de lo preſente, aduertencia de lo por venir. (Cervantes 33v)

What Menard, and Borges, inscribe is a normalized reinscription of a historical text. Though the words stay the same, the orthography betrays the transformations wrought by a transcription displaced in time. Were Menard working in the twenty-first century, influenced by the rising interest in diplomatic editions, he might have preserved the orthography of the historical text. Were Borges a graduate of the Department of English at the University of Pennsylvania, he might have

preserved the typeface of the historical impression, or the quality of the paper. But which impression, and which paper, would have been preserved? As we trace textual reproductions, their origins have a way of multiplying, bringing copies to the fore. Borges would not be surprised to find that there is no original underlying most of these replicated texts.

It is to Borges, too, that we can trace this dissertation's preoccupation with libraries. Borges was a great theorist of the paradoxes of information accumulation; in stories like "Funes el memorioso" and "La biblioteca de Babel," he describes in tragic detail the consequences of overloaded information and imperfect categorization systems. These same questions are parodied in the imaginary Chinese encyclopedia that Borges describes in "El idioma analítico de John Wilkins"; Michel Foucault uses this parody to introduce *The Order of Things*, which informs, in turn, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. It is from these two texts that we might trace the preoccupation with the archive in literary studies, including, formatively, Roberto González Echevarría's *Myth and Archive*, which brings us back to Borges.

González Echevarría was interested in the ways that Latin American fiction engages with the archival mechanisms of law and science, and in the ways that Latin American fiction archives itself. This dissertation shifts from the literary representation of the archive to the archive as a physical space and to archiving as a lived practice. In doing so, it follows the archival turn, and particularly the colonial archival studies of writers such as Ann Laura Stoler, Kathryn Burns, and Kirsten Weld. Through their work in the historiography of colonial archives, these scholars have articulated how archival organization can serve as a "flash-point" of

colonial epistemology; how the labor of colonial subjects can be made present in the archive; and how recovery and digital work in the archives can participate in movements for social justice.

While the work of this dissertation is inspired by these scholarly explorations of the archive, this is a dissertation about libraries, rather than archives. The distinctions among the library, the archive, and the special collection were not clear to me when I started this research, and were not helped by the synonymous use of these terms in digitization projects. Without engaging overmuch in debates about the etymological history of the archive, I follow the OED in describing archives as repositories for historical documents, including legal documents, manuscripts, and ephemera; I define libraries as places containing books for reading or display. Some of the documents in this dissertation, particularly the manuscripts, move among libraries and archives; many of the libraries double as archives. Special collections hold an imprecisely defined position between the two.

The distinction between libraries and archives is tenuous, and it will break down at several places in this dissertation. I draw attention to it here to highlight the focus on replicable objects at the center of this project. Unlike archives, which prioritize unique copies organized by their indexical status (their ability to record a legal act or moments in the life of an individual or an organization), libraries hold books that may exist elsewhere, even in many elsewheres; they are not primarily concerned with provenance. A book can exist in three or three hundred libraries, each with its own institutional mission and cultural value. Even as libraries, like archives, participate in the construction of national identity and the consolidation

and organization of cultural information, they have the flexibility to rework categories and collections according to multiple modes of signification.

Libraries, much more than archives, circulate across literary history. Archives are private institutions; while the rare scholar in a particularly erudite novel might take time to visit an archive, they more often appear, as in Roberto Bolaño's *Los detectives salvajes*, as places from which visitors are turned away. (At the end of that novel, the heroes find themselves denied access to an archive in northern Mexico.) Libraries, by contrast, are celebrated as the sites through which the public engages with literature. Libraries feature prominently in fairy tales and children's books, like *Beauty and the Beast* or *Harry Potter*; in thrillers like *The Handmaiden*; science fiction novels like *Snow Crash* and *Cielos de la Tierra*; and dramas like *Kafka on the Shore*. Libraries in these novels represent places to explore fantasies (both violent and liberating) or to access truth. They reflect cultural values of education and erudition, even as they reveal the way that those values may be based on hierarchies of class, gender, and race.

Writers love libraries, and the study of the library is literary work. Though I do not deal primarily with fiction in the library (or the fiction of the library), this dissertation does explore the ways that libraries signify, both as repositories for information, and as centers for the (selective) dissemination of knowledge. This allows the dissertation to move between the stories that we tell about libraries, and the structures and mechanisms that reinforce or belie those narratives. In doing so, I consider many of the questions that have been applied to archives: questions of ownership and acquisition, and their relationship to national, ethnic, and cultural

identity. In doing this work, I follow the lead of archivists and librarians such as Kim Christen Withey, Jeannette Bastian, Michelle Caswell, and Rodrigo Lazo. In shifting these questions from the archive to the library, I seek to expand the context for the ways we think about the collection of information, a project that is particularly vital as these categories take on new meaning in the digital age.

The particular meaning of the library as it appears in this dissertation is clarified by the focus on unreadable books. In Carmen Boullosa's *Cielos de la Tierra*, a manuscript from colonial Mexico is replicated across time and space; each replica becomes an entry in the libraries through which communities preserve historical memory. For Estela, writing in the 1990s, the manuscript is an object of cultural heritage preserved under national laws protecting historical memory; its copyist (and translator), a woman whose personal history of race and trauma inscribes itself on the transcribed page. For Learo, writing from the distant heavens of the post-apocalyptic future, the manuscript is entered into the disembodied banks of historical memory; its entry is an act of resistance against the dystopian pursuit of a world without text. The manuscript itself is unreadable; it is through the performance of reinscription that history is told and cultural amnesia is resisted.

Structure

This dissertation is divided into two parts, each defined by its mechanical and thematic focus. Part I offers a deep history of textual transcription that moves from the indigenous schools and libraries of early New Spain to the transatlantic transcription networks of nineteenth-century scholars and the development of automatic

transcription tools in the twenty-first century. Much like Gitelman's *Always Already New*, this part of the dissertation seeks to 'historicize' media without narrativizing history or giving media too much agency. At the same time, as in Gitelman's work, it seeks to understand media as technologies and the social behaviors that accompany them (*Always Already New* 7). Gitelman describes these social behaviors as the protocols with which we begin a phone conversation, for example. In the case of this dissertation, those behaviors must be read in the context of transnational politics and colonial ideologies.

Though new technologies do appear throughout this history of transcription, including movable type and lithography, the focus is less on mechanisms than on the people who commission transcriptions, the people who produce them, and the documents that result. Methodologically, this analysis begins with the practice of close reading that has long been fundamental to literary studies. Where close reading has traditionally focused on words and their meanings, however, this dissertation reads closely at the level of the character and the form of its inscription. Orthography and chirography become meaning-making operations in the transcription of historical texts; they assert culturally specific ideas of accuracy and authenticity that provide insight into the ways that historical texts were read. These meanings are interpreted, in turn, through the context of the people who made them (copyists) and those who commissioned them (librarians, historians, and collectors). It is through the interaction of scribe, text, and reader that reinscription signifies.

Part I is divided into three chapters, each oriented around a case study from a different historical moment. The first, Chapter 2, considers transcription in the con-

tact zone of early colonial New Spain, examining the imaginative scope of transcriptive practices and the ways they were applied to indigenous languages and modes of inscription. Chapter 3, set in the nineteenth century, focuses more closely on the transatlantic transcription network operated by historians of Spanish conquest, focusing on the interrelated cases of the Irish Lord Kingsborough, the Bostonian William Hickling Prescott, and the Mexican Joaquín García Icazbalceta. Chapter 4, set in the present day, examines the relationship between these historical reproductive practices and the application of automatic transcription tools to early colonial printed books. Collectively, these three chapters illustrate how national identities and racial ideologies are refracted through the orthography and chirography of the transcribed page, and how those ideologies in turn are incorporated into the reading and writing of colonial history.

The second part of the dissertation expands the project's scope to situate transcription alongside other reproductive mechanisms, including photolithography, Photostats, and digital photography. Much like the previous part, the use of these mechanisms is examined in terms of accuracy and authenticity, and in the context of libraries and copyists. Also like the first part, these mechanisms are examined through two case studies set in the nineteenth century and the modern day, respectively. Chapter 5 focuses on the institutional use of photographic reproduction in collections of colonial Mexicana, focusing on the case of the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island. Chapter 6 focuses on the use of digital reproduction in the transmission of cultural heritage items in Cholula, Mexico. Both cases share a methodological focus on the close reading of textual reproductions,

situated within an examination of the historical context of their use.

Part II of the dissertation departs from the previous section, however, by shifting away from the specificities of textual reproduction to focus more on the cultural context through which these mechanisms were used. This has required incorporating methodologies from history and cultural anthropology, including archival research, site visits, and community interviews. The fifth chapter, "Collection: Mexicana at the John Carter Brown Library," is concerned with the consolidation of materials from early colonial New Spain in the nineteenth-century libraries of Europe and the United States. By examining the application of replicative technologies to these collections, it becomes possible to see how the consolidation of these materials shaped the ways they were accessed and, at times, read. The sixth chapter, "Return: Cultural Heritage in Cholula, Mexico," focuses on modern-day processes of documentary repatriation, considering how textual reproduction has been used to facilitate the return of historical documents to affiliated communities across the U.S-Mexico border. It offers a historical context for the liberatory narratives surrounding digital repatriation, while introducing a critical framework for thinking about the future of cultural patrimony in an age of textual reproduction.

Part 1

Unreadable Transcriptions

> And now, if you please, stop wasting time and get back to transcribing, you know my final hours are numbered, I might go into the final coma tomorrow.
>
> Kenzaburō Ōe

Scholars transcribe. Every day, at every stage in our research, we engage with the practice of replicative inscription: of transferring a text from one page to another, from one medium to another. We produce transcriptions every time we conduct interviews, of course, by converting oral discourse into text; but this is only one stage in the accumulative practice of scholarly transcription. Each time we copy a long passage from a secondary source into a notebook or article draft or book chapter, we transcribe. Every time we sit in the archives, painstakingly replicating the text of a letter or a manuscript, we transcribe. For those who work as scholarly editors, this transcription practice is taken to the level of profession, or an art.

How can we understand this act of transcription? In copying and reproducing the phonetic inscriptions of my great great grandmother (shown in Figure 1.1), a native Yiddish speaker who came late to English and to literacy, something of the world she inhabited becomes clear even as the broader pattern of American assimilation is made present. Lena writes,

> *"ESTHER DEAR I JUST GOT A NODER COLL FROM ONE OF BOBY'S COSINS SHE TOULT ME THAT ONE PART OF THI BOYS ARE ON THI WAY BUT WE DUNT NOW HIF BOB IS ON THAT SHEP ARE NOT WE DUNT NOW I THING ITS NOW US TO GET AXCITIT. WE LL AFTA WAYT IN SE IN TH MANE TIME. AVERY BODY IS AXCITIT I SUPPOSE WE CANT, HALPIT I GAS THATS THI WAY IT IS WELL*

DOLENG KIPE WELL IN TAKE KARE OVE YOURSELF AND BE A GOUT GIRIL AND HEET A LOTE IN TRY TO GANE WEHET." [5]

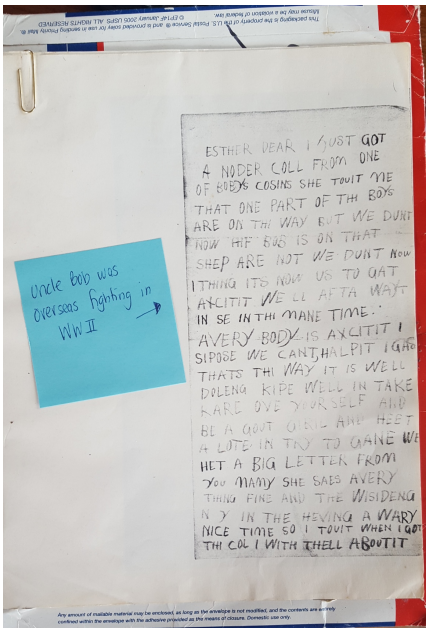


Figure 1.1: Photocopied personal letter.

In copying this letter, I am brought closer to the event of its inscription: the longing for a son at war, a granddaughter away at summer camp.[6] At the same time, in deciphering its sounds I come closer to the mechanism of the inscription: the social forces that multiply the inscription of immigration, and longing, and war (Derrida 74). With the recent death of my grandmother Esther, the letter's intended recipient, these mechanisms are in turn charged with the presence of nostalgia and melancholy. The act of copying takes on its own status as an inscriptive event.

Some of the affect and immediacy of this personal transcription is carried over into scholarly copying. In her slim handbook on archival research, Arlette Farge describes the act of archival transcription, writing,

The allure of the archives passes through this slow and unrewarding

[5] "Esther, dear, I just got another call from one of Bobby's cousins, she told me that one part of the boys are on the way, but we don't know if Bob is on that ship or not, we don't know a thing [alt: we don't know. I think], it's no use to get excited. We'll have to wait and see. In the meantime, everybody is excited, I suppose we can't help it. I guess that's the way it is. Well darling keep well and take care of yourself and eat a lot and try to gain weight."

[6] What Jacques Derrida, in *Typewriter Ribbon*, calls the *temps perdu*.

> artisanal task of recopying texts, section after section, without changing the format, the grammar, or even the punctuation. Without giving it too much thought. Thinking about it constantly. As if the hand, through this task, could make it possible for the mind to be simultaneously an accomplice and a stranger to this past time and to these men and women describing their experiences. As if the hand, by reproducing written syllables, archaic words, and syntax of a century long past, could insert itself into that time more boldly than thoughtful notes ever could. Note taking, after all, necessarily implies prior decisions about what is important, and what is archival surplus to be left aside. The task of recopying, by contrast, comes to feel so essential that it is indistinguishable from the rest of the work. An archival document recopied by hand onto a blank page is a fragment of a past time that you have succeeded in taming. Later, you will draw out themes and formulate interpretations. Recopying is time-consuming, it cramps your shoulder and stiffens your neck. But it is through this action that meaning is discovered. (16)

In Farge's description, the practice of copying archival records is described simultaneously as a banal act of repetition and an intimate exercise in historical memory. For Farge, the unique textual status of the transcription is elevated even above the act of historiography as an inscription that brings us close to historical truth. Paradoxically, it is precisely the lack of textual interpretation in transcription (we write what is written) that allows for this level of intimacy. It is among the syllables, the archaisms, the syntax — not necessarily the meaning — that intimacy is forged.

Farge writes, "In the digital age this act of copying can seem quite foolish. Maybe it is" (16). In contrast, a majority of the transcriptions that I have produced has been in the service of the digital age. To develop tools for Optical Character Recognition, which we often speak of as a form of automatic transcription, it is necessary to manually produce what is referred to as "ground truth": documents against which the automatically produced text can be evaluated. These documents,

in the case of the tool I helped to develop, were chosen at random from a large corpus of books printed in Mexico City in the sixteenth century.[7] At the level of the character, these transcriptions have been intimate: I have come to know the orthography, the typography, of printing in New Spain.

Yet manual transcription in a digital context does not always allow its workers to "know" their text in the same way that archival transcription permits. The pages I transcribed were decontextualized fragments of printed books, free from even the limited contextual information of a migrant or state archive: one page at a time. The corpus was written in eight languages, only one of which I could read comfortably. This isn't to say that meaning couldn't be made, but rather that meaning emerged from these texts in moments of revelation, as when I transcribed a page that seemed to be a metaphor for the very kind of transcription I was producing. The page, shown in Figure 1.2, was written by a Franciscan friar at the Colegio de la Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco, Mexico, and it describes a translational quandary: how to properly communicate the concept of the holy trinity in Nahuatl, an indigenous Mesoamerican language, without introducing heretical beliefs. The metaphor reflects the relationship between translation (the effort to perfectly reproduce meaning across two different and incompatible languages) and transcription (the effort to perfectly reproduce text across two different and incompatible media).

Of course the stakes for the missionary were higher than my own: he was seeking eternal salvation, whereas I was merely trying to improve the accessibility and discoverability of a historical corpus. As we will see, however, there is a risk

[7] Pages were chosen based on three criteria: 1. The quality of the scanned image 2. The absence of images 3. The presence of multiple languages.

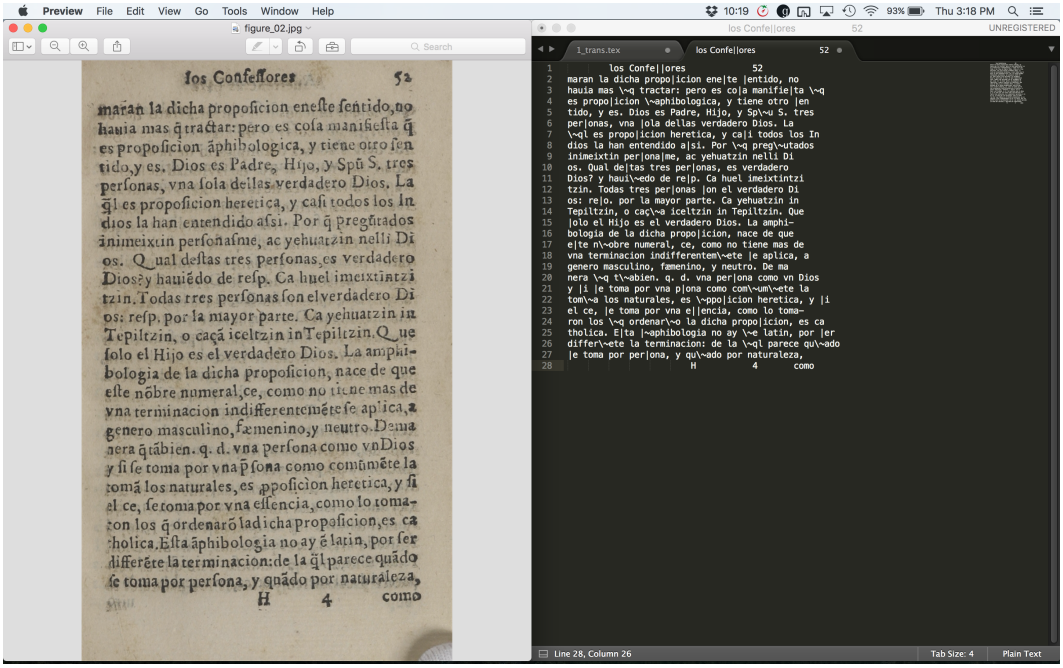


Figure 1.2: Transcribing the ground truth for a page in the Primeros Libros collection of books printed in the sixteenth century in the Americas.

of heresy — or of its secular variant — when working with documents that are also cultural heritage items. The reimagining of culturally valuable texts as data, be they works of literature or parts of the historical record, remains controversial in many circles. Further, many digital transcription tasks, as in the case of Amazon's Mechanical Turk, are fragmented in such a way as to vacate meaning entirely, making this kind of personal engagement impossible.

And what of automatic transcription? The ground-truth transcriptions that I have produced are in the service of the development of tools for automatic transcription. The goal is to be able to convert scanned pages of text into machine-readable text without writing it by hand. Unlike other acts of mechanical reproduction — photocopying, photographing, printing — automatic transcription is a task that du-

plicates indifferently, without affect or supervision, as a non-event. Does transcription cease to be a meaning-making operation when the labor of transcription is no longer human labor?

Defining Transcription

This dissertation begins with the act of transcribing, which is the manual, character-by-character duplication of a pre-existing text. When we transcribe, we pen, we put down in words what has already been said, we echo. We make no claim of ownership or authorship; indeed we could be said to inhabit, or be inhabited by, the initial text: like the possessed. The text that we produce is predetermined.

To transcribe is to move a text across surfaces. This is the *trans* in transcribe, the transitional, transparent transference of the script. The transcription of music is its conversion from one instrument to another: from voice to flute, from piano to bass. Biological transcription, similarly, is the production of single-stranded RNA from DNA's double helix. The transcription of an oral history produces a string of alphabetic script. The transcription of a hand-written letter might be a typed document; or a printed page might become machine-readable text; or a paleographic text might simply shift from one hand to another.

As a theoretical problem, transcription shares its condition with other forms of (mechanical) reproduction. Like photographs, transcriptions are indexical, pointing to some original text and to the moment of its capture. Like cinema, transcriptions are temporal, replicating in their production the timeline of textual consumption. Like so many forms of replicating media, one challenge that the transcription

poses is the simultaneity of duplication and difference: a transcribed text is both the same as the one that came before, and unique. One differentiating quality of transcription is that it is evaluated according to rigorous (but changing) standards of accuracy.

At the core, a transcription is an inscription, a communicative record made on a body. In attempting to parse the relationship between text and reproduction, it is worth returning to Derrida, whose theories of the inscription remain relevant. In "Typewriter Ribbon," he describes textual inscription as an event, a confession, and a justification (*Without Alibi*). Looking specifically at the writings of Augustine and Rousseau, he describes the inscription of the confession in archival terms as "a place and an instance of power" which "produces the event no less than it records or consigns it" (100).

At the same time, by integrating the textual event into a genealogy of inscriptions (in this case, a lineage of confessions that descends from Augustine to Rousseau), Derrida argues that the inscription can also be understood to be a mechanical and repetitive action. Each writing reproduces the actions of the past and foretells the actions of the future. The transcription might be understood to be similarly mechanical: it allows each node in the inscriptive timeline to unfold indefinitely across space, echoing not just the event of the original inscription, but also the mechanism that enabled that inscription. A study of transcription might then be in pursuit of genealogies of inscription and mechanisms of power.

Yet for the transcriber, transcription can also be a personal event unlike that of inscription. When the transcriber inscribes, she does not produce her own confes-

sion; instead, she engages in a particularly intimate kind of way with the confession of others. This may be specific to the conditions of the inscription. The medieval transcription of the student or the monk, one canonical mode of transcription, bears witness to the lexical truth of holy scriptures. But as we will see, other kinds of transcriptions abound. The notarial transcription, which is implicated in complex ways in the mechanisms of confession, is an act of law unlike that of testimony. The ethnographic transcription, which is also involved in testimony, holds a different social and indexical status. By looking closer at these different scenes of transcription, and the events and mechanisms that accompany them, this Part seeks to understand the shifting status of the transcribed text, and of the act of transcribing, itself.

The impetus for this Part comes from the "Primeros Libros" project, a digital repository for scanned copies of books printed in the Americas prior to 1601. The research that I conducted to develop tools for the automatic transcription of that collection will be described in Chapter 4. Through this research, I found that automatic transcription holds a different status from other kinds of electronic writing, like the word processing described by Matt Kirschenbaum. I found, also, that the application of transcription tools to colonial texts had different implications for textual transmission than that of European documents.

At the same time, I began to suspect that the transcription practices I was working with had histories that extended even earlier than the Victorian-era development of machine readers, perhaps as early as the sixteenth century. In fact, the alphabetic texts of early colonial Mexico have been transcribed since their induction, in the schools, convents, and institutions of New Spain, through their "re-

discovery" and circulation in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, all the way to their twenty-first century digitization. Part 1 of this dissertation seeks to trace this history, dwelling on three historical moments in the transcription of Mexican documents: transcription in the contact zone of sixteenth-century Mexico; historiographic transcription in the nineteenth-century archives of Spain, France, and Mexico; and automatic transcription and digitization in the twenty-first century.

Structurally, this Part seeks to accomplish for transcription what Bonnie Mak does for the page in *How the Page Matters.* In her introduction, Mak writes, "Tracing the development of the page will allow us to see the extent to which many recent explorations of writing technologies have been circumscribed variously by formal, national, or temporal divides" (*How the Page Matters* 5). The methodological approach used in this Part similarly treats transcription as an object of study that can engage critically with both historical periodization and national boundaries. Each historical moment described here is necessarily transnational, as texts and the people who produce them move across national and natural borders, from London to León to Boston and Tlatelolco. The long scope of the study, however, brings to the surface the instability of those borders and the urban spaces (and institutions) that mark them. Boston does not exist when this Part begins, and Tlatelolco will be consumed by the time it ends. The changing shape of these borders and their relationship to textual production is made manifest in and through the practice of transcription.

The structure of this Part is designed to critique the typological relationship between the spread of movable type in Europe and the rise of the electronic age,

as was described in more detail in the introduction. It accomplishes this by bringing into question two often unspoken assumptions that underlie the print-digital analogy: the geographical boundaries of book history, which rarely risks colonial contamination as it moves easily between Europe and the United States; and the technological narratives of media archeology, which often discards long-standing technologies with the arrival of each new tool.[8] By centering this history on Mexico, and by focusing on a practice that is not media-specific, this dissertation seeks to introduce an alternative model for thinking about the analogic relationship between the printing press and the electronic age.

In place of the print-digital analogy, the first part of this dissertation identifies a practice of continuous textual transcription that extends from the medieval period to the modern day. In c. 1541, in Mexico City, the Viceroy Mendoza commissions a transcription of pictorial documents by the Nahua tlacuilo Francisco Gualpuyogualcal. In 1839, in Boston, the historian William Hickling Prescott receives a shipment of transcribed manuscripts from Cadiz, Spain. In 1854, the bibliographer Joaquín García Icazbalceta writes to Prescott to report that the ship bearing a transcribed manuscript sank off the Mexican coast — but that the document was recovered, still miraculously legible. And in 2014, I begin what will become a multi-year project to transcribe digital facsimiles of printed books from early colonial Mexico.

Each of these cases of transcription shares the same defining characteristics:

[8] I do not, of course, mean to imply that this work has never been done. Many media archaeologists are critically aware that, for example, people haven't stopped reading books or writing in longhand, just as many book historians have turned their attentions to the colonial history of textual production (Philip Round and D. F. McKenzie are exemplary cases) #notAllBookHistorians.

the sequential reproduction of a text across media. Though they are not defined primarily by popular technologies, these cases do interact with the shifting textual mechanisms of modern history, including movable type, lithography, stereotyping, photographic facsimile, and digitization. Textual transcription serves here as a mode of inscription that decenters technological innovation. At the same time, it brings to the forefront the cultural practices that inform inscription across technologies. Language and literacy impact scribal practice at the level of orthography (spelling and punctuation) and chirography (handwriting), rendering certain kinds of transcription legible, and others unreadable. And changes in motivation shape the impact of these transcribed documents on the accessibility and discoverability — to use the language of library science — of the historical record. The case studies in this Part will show how, through the culturally and historically-specific assertion of accuracy and authenticity, transcription can serve as a vector of colonization. A transnational, translingual history of this practice will reveal the long colonial histories that underlie digital anxieties.

Chapter 2: Scribal Copying in Early New Spain

It could be argued that the writing of the New World begins with transcription. Christopher Columbus recorded his first journey across the Atlantic in a *Diario*: as generations of students of American history have learned, the journal includes the first European sighting of Caribbean birds, plants, lands, and people, along with the first stages of colonization and indigenous enslavement. It is for this reason that the Columbus *Diario* has been described as both original and foundational: Valeria Añón and Vanina Teglia, editors of a 2013 edition, describe:

> *El texto que inicia el corpus de la mirada occidental acerca del Nuevo Mundo es el* Diario del Primer Viaje a las Indias *de Cristobal Colón; diario de navegación y conquista, cuaderno de bitácora, relación (informe) a las autoridades, sumario atravesado por distintas voces y usos (por narradores diversos), fundante, en su heterogeneidad textual, de representaciones sobre las Indias / el Nuevo Mundo, configuradas en el imaginario medieval pero atravesadas por una renovada tensión hacia la redefinición de la* ecumene *que la experiencia de lo diverso impulso.* (Añón and Teglia 45)[1]

The Columbus journal, in the characterization of Añón and Teglia, has all the makings of an original text. It does not merely open the corpus of conquest writing, but rather gives birth to it. It does not merely initiate a literary tradition, but marks the beginning of a historical period. The language of the Columbus journal originates

[1] "The text that initiates the corpus of Western observations of the New World is the *Diary of the First Voyage to the Indies* of Christopher Columbus; a diary of navigation and conquest, a log book, an account (a report) for the authorities; a document pierced by distinct voices and uses (by diverse narrators), foundational, in its textual heterogeneity, of representations of the Indies/ the New World, configured in the medieval imaginary but driven, by the experience of diversity, towards a new tension leading to the redefinition of the *ecumene* (the known world)." Translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

modernity through its heterogeneous description of the new world. The very nature of the diary, penned over the course of time as events occurred, indexes the stages of discovery and embodies the experience of the great discoverer. It is original, and it originates.

We don't have it, of course. Columbus's log book, presented to Ferdinand and Isabella on his return to Spain, is long lost. Before he departed on his second journey, Columbus received a transcribed copy of his journal. This, too, was lost. What survives is "a partly quoted and partly summarized version" of Columbus's copy made by the Dominican Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, which is, in the words of Oliver Dunn and James E. Kelly, Jr., "obviously a working draft" (Columbus 4-5). In place of an originary text, then, what we have is, distressingly, a document that is fundamentally incomplete and in no way original. This textual paradox at the beginnings of European contact with the New World has been described by Roberto González Echevarria as the impulse behind the recurring themes of lost origins and archival accumulation in Latin American literature (Echevarría).

We need not follow González Echevarría, however, in confounding continuity with crisis. As scholars of scribal history have made abundantly clear, medieval European belief systems were shaped in fundamental ways by the scribal editing that enabled the circulation and consumption of historical texts. The same can be said of American inscription: the writing and rewriting of the New World began long before Columbus made contact, and it continued long after he returned to Europe. Scholars of Mesoamerican history have argued that the model of radical rupture with the past on which the myth of Spanish conquest is based may not apply

to the indigenous experience of conquest. It seems that the Spanish invasion was one of a long line of imperial conquests that had shaped Mesaomerican political structures, and that it was largely understood as such. I find a parallel story in the history of colonial transcription. The rewriting of texts was the norm both in the Old World and the New. The writing of New Spain was a transcriptive one.

If the writing of the New World was largely reproductive, the reading of the New World has been motivated by the desire, in the words of Kathryn Burns, to "look right past" the transcriber to focus on the document itself (4). For those studying canonical texts, scribes are often seen as an impediment to the authorial voice.[2] Recently, however, the medieval and early modern scribe in Europe and the Americas has begun to receive attention as a figure whose copying may also be a form of textual intervention. In the case of literary transcription, Daniel Wakelin has recently argued that scribal copying involved an act of "correction" that was fundamentally interpretive. In his careful volume *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft,* Wakelin offers a thorough analysis of scribal corrections in a small corpus of medieval British manuscripts held by the Huntington Library in California. In this analysis, he describes the medieval scribe as a "craftsman of words," a figure who inhabits an intermediate space between text and consumption (3).

Correction also played a role in shaping the transcriptions produced in the process of bureaucratic documentation, particularly in the case of legal documentation. Burns' *Into the Archive* traces the practices of notarial intervention from Europe to Peru. In Europe, notaries were responsible for producing the bulk of

[2]See for example the discussion in Rold (393).

Spanish archival material by inscribing legal documents and recording oral testimony. Burns describes this as passive labor, writing, "The notary (*escribano*) was a kind of ventriloquist - someone who could give other people an official voice" (3). Yet her close analysis of notarial labor shows that the transcription practices of *escribanos* were necessarily interpretive. In a survey of Spanish manuals for notaries, she finds that *escribanos* were not merely expected to record, word-for-word, the language of the witness. Instead, notaries were also responsible for taking testimony, meaning that, in interrogating (and even torturing) witnesses, they shaped the oral text that they would subsequently record (32).[3] Furthermore, in choosing what to inscribe, as a manual by Francisco González de Torneo argues, notaries were "interpreters" (qtd. in Burns 33). They were held to a high standard of inscriptive accuracy (though, as Burns notes, they did not often achieve it, occasionally recording testimony from memory). At the same time, as José Juan y Colom wrote, *escribanos* were expected to "purify" the words of witnesses, cleaning them up to conform to the decorum of legal discourse, especially in cases where the witness spoke in the crude language of the rural or the unlettered citizen (qtd. in Burns 34). At times, this purification could even include the use of torture to extract testimony. Spanish *escribanos* had a kind of agency in the shaping of the spoken text and in

[3]The confluence of violence, confession, and transcription in the case of the *escribano* points back to the mechanisms of inscription that Derrida describes in *Typewriter Ribbon*. When Derrida speaks of machines he refers, primarily, to the machine as metaphor for the mechanisms of social order that determine the shape of inscription. In this metaphor he makes a particular association between the mechanisms that *reproduce* text (the typewriter) and the mechanisms that reproduce (textual) experiences. Yet he allows the spector of violent machines to enter the argument as well, writing "we know quite well that there are machines for making people confess" (104). When the figure who operates those machines and the figure who inscribes the testimony are the same, as in the case of the *escribano*, the event of the individual inscription (with its potential for forgiveness) is fully absorbed into the mechanism of the state.

the production of editorial interventions in the written copy.

Scribal copying in Europe has received renewed attention as a form of interpretive labor that shaped religious, legal, and literary history. In this chapter, I turn to encounters with the territories that would become New Spain to identify the continuous transcription history that underlies the originary texts of American encounter and conquest. In the first case, I consider the double-transcription at play in the *Relaciones* of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca — the notarial transcriptions described in the narrative, and those that recorded Cabeza de Vaca's testimony — to consider how imagined acts of transcription were used to fill the gaps in the Spanish imperial archive. I then turn to two overlapping forms of transcription at work in the indigenous schools of early colonial New Spain: the transliteration of oral discourse and the transcription of pictographic writing. I use these examples to explore how transcriptions, and the scribes who produced them, mediated between Mesoamerican and Spanish communication systems to facilitate cross-cultural intelligibility and to navigate motivated mistranscriptions.

Performing Transcription in Cabeza de Vaca's *Relaciones*

Scenes of transcription dominate descriptions of early colonial America. As Burns remarks, "the first thing Europeans made on American shores in 1492 was a notarial record" (1). In a familiar episode, she describes the arrival of conquistadors on Caribbean shores: the oral pronouncement of conquest known as the *Requer-*

imiento; the ritual practices (such as planting a cross) that accompanied it; and the transcription of events by the notary who accompanied the crew. Like courtroom transcriptions, writing at the scene of conquest recorded not just the words spoken by the conquistador, but also the other forms of communication (the gesture, the cross) that signified ownership, converting the entire performance into the discursive authority of the state. As we will see, this transcription process was used by early Spanish colonizers to establish authority over lands and people which it could not fully contain. In this chapter I will suggest, however, that the ritual act of performing and then transcribing these colonial moments would take on a meaning that went beyond the signifying power of the inscribed words. The accuracy or even existence of a copy was less meaningful than the event of its production.

Notaries accompanied all Spanish expeditions to the New World, and the presence of the notary was fundamental to the execution of Spanish conquest. From an archival perspective, we can understand this as the effort to contain the expansion of Spanish territory within legal discourse and imperial archives. But these transcriptions rarely survived the processes of Spanish conquest; like the Columbus letter, they exist as gaps in the archive and glosses scattered across textual history. As the case of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca will illustrate, these glosses preserve the memory of the transcriptive event and secure the myth of the complete archive which was necessary to validate colonization.

Cabeza de Vaca travelled to the New World in 1527 as the treasurer for an ill-fated expedition led by Pánfilo de Narváez. Shipwrecked on the coast of what is now Florida, he spent eight years travelling with three companions across

the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, the first Europeans to traverse what is now the southern border of the United States. His account of this expedition is preserved in four documents; in this chapter, I follow Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz in focusing on the 1542 *Relación*, which includes three scenes of notarial transcription: the production of a *probanza*, the transcription of a *parecer,* and the pronouncement of the *Requerimiento*.[4] The documents that these events describe never made it to the Spanish archives; their description intervenes in the archival record by replicating the event of notarial transcription.

The first two notarial events, the *parecer* and the *probanza*, occur early in the expedition, before the death of the notary. The first occurs early in the journey, when the expedition encounters a storm. As they walk across the island in pursuit of safety, Cabeza de Vaca reports, they hear mysterious noises on the breeze:

> *"Andando en eso oímos toda la noche, especialmente desde el medio della, mucho estruendo y gran ruido de bozes, y gran sonido de cascaveles y de flautas y tamborinos y otros instrumentos que duraron hasta la mañana que la tormenta çessó. En estas partes nunca otra cosa tan medrosa se vio. Yo hize una provança dello, cuyo testimonio embié a Vuestra Magestad"* (1:28 (Z:f4v)).[5]

How do the Spaniards respond to these mystical events? According to Cabeza de Vaca, they produce a *probanza,* "A series of oral testimonies offered by several wit-

[4] All quotes and translations are taken from the bilingual Spanish-English edition of the 1542 *Relación* edited by Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz. Pagination and original foliation included when appropriate.

[5] "Walking along this way we heard all night long, especially after midnight, much noise and a great clamor of voices, and the loud sounds of bells and flutes and tambourines and other instruments, all of which continued until the morning when the storm ceased. In these parts such a fearful thing had never been seen. I prepared a *probanza* documenting it, the testimony of which I sent to Your Majesty" (1:29).

nesses, sworn before and written down by a notary public (*escribano*), responding to a questionnaire prepared to establish certain facts" (1:29). By describing not just the events but also their transcription, Cabeza de Vaca places impossible events within the authenticating framework of the *probanza*. But he also establishes a precedent of testimonial authenticity embodied in the performance of transcription. This will become important later, after the death of the *escribano*, when he is the only witness around.

Though the circumstances of the *parecer* is different, its effect is the same. Narváez, considering whether to go inland in search of a port, gathers the most significant figures of the expedition *"Y sobre esto nos rogó que le diéssemos nuestro paresçer"* (1:40 (Z:f7v)).[6] The subsequent debate is described from within the framework of this notarized (and transcribed) procedure. Cabeza de Vaca reports:

> *"Yo, vista su determinación, requerile de parte de Vuestra Magestad que no dexasse los navíos sin que quedassen en puerto y seguros, y ansí lo pedí por testimonio al escrivano que allí teníamos. Él [el gobernador] respondió que pues él se conformava con el paresçer de los más de los otros officiales y comissario, que yo no era parte para hazelle estos requerimientos. Y pidió al escrivano le diesse por testimonio como..."* (1:42 (Z:f8r)).[7]

Again, this narrative functions rhetorically as a proslepsis that allowed Cabeza de Vaca to covertly re-register his opposition to Narváez's fatal decision. And again,

[6] "And on this matter he requested that we give him our opinion." Adorno notes that in this case the Spanish word translated as opinion (*parecer*) refers to a formal opinion recorded and certified by a notary (1:41).

[7] "I, having seen his resolution, requested on behalf of Your Majesty that he not leave the ships without their being port and secure, and thus I asked that my request be certified by the notary we had there with us. He [Narváez] responded that since he agreed with the assessment (paresçer) of the majority of the other officials and the commissary, I had no right to make these demands of him. And he asked the notary to certify [his decision]..."

the transcription of the testimony ritualizes the event's movement from oral testimony to written text. Narváez's ambiguous rejection of Cabeza de Vaca's request (does he reject Cabeza de Vaca's right to record an opposition? Or to have one?) links the subsequent collapse of the expedition not to the absence of opposition, but to the improper transcription of oral assertions. The stakes of transcription here lie in the right to be accurately transcribed. This will have implications for the ongoing testimony of the *Relación,* which exists largely outside the context of ritualized transcription. The documentation of these early notarial records help Cabeza de Vaca to collapse the distance between testimony and transcription in subsequent events, helping this retroactive narrative to function as an authorized testimony.

The third notarial event of Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación* occurs near the end of the voyage, after the four survivors of the expedition had made their way back into Spanish territory. Their first encounter with the Spaniards goes poorly: this first group of men, under the command of Diego de Alcaraz, is searching for food and slaves, and Cabeza de Vaca describes in some detail their unchristian treatment of the native population, which has led to the depopulation of the region. After the four survivors meet with Melchior Díaz, the *alcalde mayor* (chief justice of the province), however, things turn around, and Díaz sets out to invite the fleeing Indians to return. Cabeza de Vaca describes the scene:

> *Y el Melchior Díaz dixo a la lengua que de nuestra parte les hablasse a aquellos indios y les dixese como veníamos de parte de Dios que está en el çielo, y que avíamos andado por el mundo nueve a nos, diziendo a toda la gente que avíamos hallado que creyessen en Dios y lo sirviessen porque era Señor de todas quantas cosas avía en el mundo, y que él dava galardón y pagava a los buenos, y pena perpetua de fuego a los*

> *malos, y que quando los buenos morían los levava al çielo donde nunca nadie moría ni tenían hambre ni frío ni sed ni otra necessidad ninguna, sino la mayor gloria que se podría pensar, e que los que no le querían creer ni obedeçer sus mandamientos, los echava debaxo la tierra en compañía de los demonios y en gran fuego, el qual nunca se avía de acabar sino atormentallos para siempre, y que allende desto, si ellos quisiessen ser cristianos y servir a Dios nuestro Señor de la manera que les mandássemos, que los christianos los ternían por hermanos y los tratarían muy bien, y nosotros les mandaríamos [a los cristianos] que no les hiziessen ningún enojo ni los sacassen de sus tierras sino que fuessen grandes amigos suyos, mas que si esto no quisiessen hazer, los christianos les tratarían muy mal y se los llevarían por esclavos a otras tierras. [...] Esto passó en presençia del escrivano que allí tenían y otros muchos testigos.* (1:256-58 (Z:f61v-62r)).[8]

I quote this passage at length because, as Adorno and Pautz remind us, it is the text of the *Requerimiento*, the formal declaration of conquest that all conquerers were mandated to recite after 1526. José Rabasa comments that the *Requerimiento* should have appeared much earlier in the *Relación*, prior to the conquests led by Narváez; its absence may be a subtle denunciation of the Narváez conquest and an endorsement of Melchior Díaz's more "peaceful" methods (*Writing Violence* 52).

[8]"And Melchior Díaz told the interpreter to speak on our behalf to those Indians [who had fled] and tell them how we came on behalf of God who is in heaven, and how we had walked through the world for nine years, telling all the people we had found to believe in God and serve him because he was Lord of all things in the world, and that he blessed and rewarded the good, and punished the bad with perpetual fire, and that when the good died, he carried them to heaven where no one would die or be hungry or cold or thirsty or have any other need whatsoever, but rather, would have the greatest glory that one could imagine, and that those who did not want to believe in him or obey his commandments would be cast by him under the ground in the company of demons and into a great fire that would never cease, but rather torment them forever, and that beyond this, if they desired to be Christians and serve God our Lord in the manner in which we commanded them, that the Christians would take them as brothers and treat them very well, and we would order them [the Christians] not to provoke them or take them out of their lands, but rather to be their great friends, but that if they did not want to do this, the Christians would treat them very badly and carry them off as slaves to other lands. [...] This occurred in the presence of the notary they had there and many other witnesses" (1: 257-59).

This is validated by the active involvement of both transcriber and translator, which, as Rabasa indicates, allows the ritual to signify to both the indigenous and Spanish participants. But both notary and translator are silenced here. Anna Brickhouse might call our attention to this event as one of motivated mistranslation: how might the translator have used this event to promote his own political agenda? The same question, of course, might be asked of the notary (*Transamerican Literary Relations* 51). The archive preserves the words of neither.

The *Requerimiento* episode is predicated upon embodied replication: the acts of recitation, translation, and transcription create at least the illusion of a scene whose meaning is replicated, too. Like the triplicate copies kept by accountants, the implication is that some kind of truth is fixed in place by the very process of multiplication. What we see in this episode, however, is that the truth of the scene is not held in any of the words that preserve it. As we have seen, translation, transcription, and recitation are all interpretive: even the words of the *Requerimiento* as transcribed, years later, by Cabeza de Vaca are a variation on the formal text. Instead, the ritual text passes through the body like the distorted voice of the dummy or the possessed. Its disembodied meaning, which we might refer to as a platonic ideal but which we will return to later in the context of the collated scholarly edition, is fixed in place precisely by this textual multiplication in much the same way that mapmakers used triangulation to measure space, or seafarers to determine location.

Transcription appears once more in the history of the Narváez expedition. After eight years, the four survivors (Cabeza de Vaca, Alonso del Castillo Maldonado, Andrés Dorantes de Carranza, and the enslaved Estevanico) finally make their

way to Mexico City. Here, at some point before February 11, 1537, the three Castillians give a sworn testimony of their expedition. This testimony was transcribed in a document known today as the Joint Report. Though the Joint Report was lost, a transcription of it (converted into the third person) appears in book thirty five of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo's *Historia general y natural de las Indias,* which was written between 1540 and 1548 (Adorno and Pautz 3:12). Rabasa argues that in this case, Oviedo chooses the Joint Report over other versions of the narrative because it contains the testimony of all three Castillian survivors (*Writing Violence* 50). Again, multiplication signifies historical authenticity for the sixteenth century writers of the New World.

While transcription within Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación* played a ritual role in the processes of conquest, the transcription of the Joint Report served to bring state actions into historical discourse. In this case, transcription mediated the movement of the travelers' testimony from oral speech into bureaucratic archives and then into historiographic writing. Oviedo's *Historia general* would remain in manuscript form until the nineteenth century, when it began to circulate among historians again, part of a new cycle of reproduction and transcription of the historical record that will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, "Transatlantic Transcription in the Nineteenth Century." Once again, absences in the Spanish imperial archive are adumbrated by the transcriptive gestures of external texts. These transcriptions, in turn, become unreadable books.

Transcription Across Cultures

In the case of Cabeza de Vaca, transcription practices took on new meanings in the unstable political environment of early American conquest. As relationships between the Spanish colonizers and the newly subjected indigenous inhabitants developed, however, new transcriptive challenges come to the fore. Scribes in early colonial America had to contend not just with the rude discourse of the illiterate and rural masses, but with languages for which no alphabetic writing system existed. They had to copy not just imperfect volumes, but documents written using non-alphabetic inscription systems. And they were often, themselves, products of the contact zone: the children of indigenous elite, educated at schools run by the religious orders and put to work mediating the salvation of the indigenous populace.

Transcription in the colonial context is often described as a passive and neutral act: the mere xeroxing, in the words of Kelly McDonough, of an early text. This understanding of transcription reinforces theories about the colonizing power of alphabetic text put forth by Walter Mignolo, Elizabeth Hill Boone, and others. In his seminal decolonial work "The Darker Side of the Renaissance," for example, Mignolo articulates a theory of orthographic conquest in which indigenous ways of knowing were subjected to Western epistemology by way of grammar and spelling. Elizabeth Hill Boone, Frank Salomon, and others have responded to this claim by turning their attention to the ways that indigenous ways of knowing are made present in non-alphabetic forms of communication, such as pictorial writing, khipu, or wampum.

Whether the focus has been on alphabetic writing or pictorial inscription, the

decolonial thrust of these scholarly analyses has been to locate and analyze sites of creative labor on the part of indigenous communicating subjects. In contrast, transcriptive labor places indigenous subjects in a position that has long been thought of as passive and even silent. This replicates the view of early Spanish colonizers, who valued indigenous intellectuals (if they valued them at all) primarily for their ability to copy. As Justyna Olko notes in passing, on arriving in Tenochtitlan the conquistador Hernán Cortes remarked on the ability of the Aztecs to faithfully reproduce the world around them, writing,

> *Y no le parezca a Vuestra Alteza fabuloso lo que digo, pues es verdad que todas las cosas criadas ansí en la tierra como en la mar de que el dicho Muteçuma pudiese tener conoscimiento tenía contrahechas muy al natural así de oro y de plata como de pedrería y de plumas, en tanta perfición que casi ellas mesmas parescían...* (Cortés, quoted and translated in Olko 1)[9]

Later, as Ellen Baird describes, the Franciscans working among Spanish-literate Nahua students identified a similar capacity for replication. As she writes, citing the Franciscan missionary Toribio de Benavente (known as Motolinía): "So adept were the Indians at copying, that if they were taught by a person whose handwriting differed from that of a previous teacher, they changed their handwriting to conform to that of their present teacher" (Baird 29).[10] Highlighting the copying abilities of

[9]"Let your Majesty not imagine that what I say is fabulous, for it is true that Moteucçoma had had copied very faithfully all the things created in both land and sea of which he had knowledge, in gold and silver as well as in precious stones and feathers, in such perfection that they almost appear to be the things themselves."

[10]Motolinía writes, "In the second year [1527] that we began to teach the Indians, a boy from Tetzcoco was told to copy a papal bull. He copied it so closely that his copy looked like the original. The first line was in large letters, and below he reproduced the signature exactly, together with the Name of Jesus and a picture of Our lady, everything so precisely that there seemed to be no difference between the copy and the original"(qtd. and translated in Baird, 29).

the students (which extends, in Motolinía's case, from transcription to other crafts of various kinds) served a political purpose for missionaries promoting the ability of a new class of literate indigenous subjects to learn and preach religious doctrine. These students surpassed even their teachers in their eager absorption of Western behaviors; passive reproduction marked the apex of that assimilation.

But the excess of accuracy developed by the indigenous students need not be read exclusively as overzealousness. Daniel Wakelin's research, described previously, showed how British scribes, by valuing different qualities of the text, could "improve upon" and therefore transform the original document. Spanish notaries, similarly, were expected to elevate the discourse of the unlettered masses. Reading indigenous scribal skill in this vein opens new ways of identifying how indigenous scribes may have asserted their interpretive work on the written page. Perhaps the indigenous copyists saw chirography as one of many ways in which an inscribed document could signify (an idea familiar to nineteenth century graphologists, who read personality in people's handwriting, and to today's forensic paleographers). Precisely in failing to mark the document with their own unique hand, the indigenous scribes may have left an interpretive trace on the pages they copied.

Indeed, what an examination of indigenous transcription in Mesoamerica can show us is how literate Nahuas navigated and shaped textual culture in the early colonial period. By producing transliterations of indigenous oral tradition, these scribes mediated the movement between oral and alphabetic traditions. By transcribing and glossing pictorial documents, they served as gatekeepers for non-European forms of inscription. Thus as Victoria Ríos Castaño writes, these scribes

served as cultural translators who, despite their marginal political status, played a central role in shaping the historical record (*Translation as Conquest*).

The discussion of indigenous scribal copying in this dissertation must by necessity be cursory. My training, which has allowed me to become fluent neither in indigenous Mesoamerican languages nor in pictorial writing, prevents me from offering a close-reading of the words at play in the copies under discussion here. This analysis is further impeded by what Rabasa describes as *Elsewheres*, the "forms of affect, knowledge, and perception underlying what a given individual in a given culture can *say* and *show* about the world" (Rabasa, *Tell Me the Story* 1). Elsewheres cannot be accessed by outsiders, in general; more specifically, the elsewheres inhabited by indigenous Mesoamericans of the conquest period cannot be accessed by modern readers with Western educations, such as myself. In place of a close reading, then, I offer a survey of some of the questions that scenes of indigenous transcription provoke, considering how they disrupt the facile definitions of transcription that we have seen in the previous cases. It is my hope that this approach offers new analytic contexts for those who work with these texts, and new ways of thinking for those who historically have not.

Transcription Across Inscription Systems

A careful article by the linguists Margarita Cossich Vielman and Sergio Romero describes a seventeenth century manuscript known as *El título de Santa María Ixhuatán* (Cossich Vielman and Romero). The *título* is a compilation of Nahuatl manuscripts that describe the history of the peoples who occupied the region of

Santa María Ixhuatán, in the department of Santa Rosa in eastern Guatemala. The purpose of the *título* was to establish land rights for the indigenous occupants of this region. Like many documents of this period, it seems to be a reading — what we might call a transcription — of a lienzo, a much older historical document written in pictographic script. As Cossich and Romero explain, however, it seems likely that this transcription was written by someone who, though fluent in alphabetic Nahuatl, did not know how to read the ancient text. Though the original lienzo has not been found, it would have been written using logograms (signs representing a word or phrase) and silabograms (signs representing syllables). The transcription, in contrast, describes these images as semasiographic — that is, as figurative representations of things and ideas (4). The authors explain,

> *[El TSMI] muestra algunas idiosincrasias e inconsistencias ortográficas y sintácticas que sugieren, en primer lugar, que el tlacuilo copiaba textos que no siempre entendía con exactitud y, segundo, que no estaba familiarizado con las convenciones ortográficas coloniales para escribir el náhuatl* (5-6).[11]

This document evokes several of the questions that this chapter hopes to address. The inconsistencies in the rendering of Nahuatl point to that language's irregular status as an alphabetic language. First inscribed alphabetically by the Spanish conquerers, the production of alphabetic Nahuatl reflected Spanish grammatical ideals (gleaned from Latin) more than indigenous linguistic realities. The establishment of orthographical standards for Nahuatl by Spanish friars in sixteenth century

[11] "The TSMI shows several orthographic and syntactic idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies that suggest, in the first place, that the tlacuilo (Nahua writer) copied texts that he didn't always understand with exactitude and, second, that he was not familiar with the colonial orthographic conventions for writing Nahuatl."

Mexico was a reinterpretation of the indigenous language that would not last. It was reimagined in the sixteenth century by the indigenous *escribanos* who developed their own idiosyncratic orthographies. Later, after the language ceased to be welcome in Spanish colonial discourse, it would be written only occasionally, as is the case in this TSMI. Finally, it would be reimagined both by twentieth-century linguists and by native speakers to produce new standards for scholarly editions and for popular texts.

The misreading of the pictorial writing further illustrates the complexities of transcription across incompatible forms of inscription. In early colonial texts, as we will see, pictographic documents were often accompanied by alphabetic glosses in Nahuatl or Spanish, and by alphabetic narratives as well (in the case of the TSMI transcription, the pictorial representation is almost entirely suppressed). These texts mix translation and transcription. Figurative writing is not language-specific, and so a transcription could appear in the form of a Spanish or Nahuatl gloss. Logograms and syllabograms, on the other hand, are language-specific, and must be transcribed into Nahuatl, or translated into Spanish. But as fluency over these documents waned, new kinds of transcription appeared, as in the case of the TSMI. Consider, for example, a case described by Cossich and Romero. The scribe transcribes the word *Teohuanhuaco*, a place name. Following this name, he remarks, *"tacuilol pochot tacuilol teuopixqui"* (13).[12] Cossich and Romero explain,

> *La ceiba pudo haber sido un jeroglífico con logogramas que se leerían TEOWA y K^{w}AW de kwawitl "árbol" de cuyo centro saldría una una*

[12]Cossich and Romero translate this as "dibujo de una ceiba, dibujo de un sacerdote" — drawing of a ceiba [tree], drawing of a priest.

> *voluta del habla representando al logograma NAWA de nahuatl 'cosa que suena bien'. El logograma NAWA sería aquí un rebus del locativo nahuac 'par de mi o conmigo' [...]. La toponimia sería entonces Teowakwawnawako "lugar al lado del árbol divino" or Teokwawko "lugar del árbol divino."* (13)[13]

Here we see how the hybrid signification of the pictorial text is reduced to a figurative rendering by the uncertain tlacuilo, a situation which, the authors remark, parallel modern readers' struggles to access these historical written documents. The result, the incorrect rendering of a place name, could have legal consequences for the authors of the *título*. The stakes of this transcription are high. Indeed, the stakes of transcription were often high for the cultural translators who worked as copyists in the sixteenth century. In what remains of this chapter, I use the transcription of the Nahua pictorial documents in the *Primeros memoriales* and *Historia general* of the Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún to explore how the interlaced processes of transcription, transliteration, and translation create new ways of reading — or obscuring — indigenous texts.

Indigenous Transliteration

Transliteration, a subset of transcription, is defined as "the rendering of the letters or characters of one alphabet in those of another." Today the transliteration of text into the roman alphabet is common practice, for example, among users of social media like Twitter or SMS from South Asia, the Middle East, and other regions. It is also

[13]The ceiba [tree] could have been a hieroglyph with logograms that would be read as TEOWA and K^{w}AW from *kwawitl* ("tree"), out of the center of which came a speech clound representing the logogram NAWA from *nahuatl* ("thing that sounds good"). The logogram NAWA would here act as a rebus of the locative *nahuac* ("alongside me or with me") [...]. The toponym would thus be Teowakwawnawako, "the place beside the divine tree" or Teokwawko, "the place of the divine tree."

commonly used to transcribe religious texts written in Hebrew, Aramaic, or other holy languages. Though it feels similar to translation (and, as we'll see, commonly overlaps with it), transliteration carries a greater claim to accuracy. In New Spain, it was a central part of the policies of religious indoctrination practiced by early missionaries groups seeking to teach indigenous populations Christian beliefs and practices.

Transliteration is not precisely the right word for the case of colonial Mesoamerica. The definition provided above requires that the original language be previously associated with an alphabetic script, which is not the case in Mesoamerica. Instead, in New Spain we see a bidirectional movement between oral and written communication systems that did not neatly correspond. The Testerian Codices, first developed by Jacobo de Testera, are a well-known example of the transliteration of Latin alphabetic writing into indigenous pictorial form. Much like the rebus puzzles popular among children today, in the Testerian Codices the Latin catechism was broken into its component sounds and reinscribed as pictographic Nahuatl images. As Mignolo writes, these codices translate Spanish ideas into indigenous modalities (Mignolo). More common, however, was the production of a Spanish or Nahuatl gloss to accompany (or replace) a pictorial document - transliteration into the Roman alphabet.

Such was the case with the huēhuehtlahtōlli, a discursive genre that Karttunen and Lockhart define as "ancient discourse, inherited wisdom" (Karttunen 8). This highly formalized set of dialogues likely served to instruct the young in correct behavior and polite language (8). Preserved through an oral tradition that is

ongoing, they were also transcribed in Nahuatl, and translated into Spanish, several times during the early colonial period. Among these, the primary Nahuatl documents include a manuscript collection appended to the *Arte de la lengua mexicana* attributed to fray Andrés de Olmos; Book Six of the *Florentine Codex* attributed to fray Bernardino de Sahagún; and the anonymous manuscript known as the Bancroft Dialogues.

Bernardino de Sahagún, a Spanish-born Franciscan missionary, arrived in Mexico in 1529 as part of a group of twenty friars. He remained in Mexico for the remainder of his (exceptionally long) life. During this time he served as director of the Colegio de la Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco and worked to collect information about the beliefs, practices, and history of the native peoples of Mesoamerica. His magnum opus, the *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* is a twelve-volume, bilingual Spanish-Nahuatl manuscript known popularly as the Florentine Codex. Earlier drafts and other related documents are held in a posthumously bound collection of documents known as the *Primeros memoriales*. Described today as the forefather to modern anthropology, it is important to recall that Sahagún's stated purpose in composing these documents was to advance the religious conversion of native peoples — and to eradicate heresy.

As we've seen previously, the transliteration of Nahuatl into alphabetic characters posed an inscription problem because the sounds of Nahuatl do not map fully onto the Roman set of characters. As Mignolo argues, this problem was informed by an ideological hierarchy of language which posed Latin as the linguistic ideal, and all other languages as derivative. Under this ideology, Mignolo explains, "the

letter had been promoted to an ontological position with clear priority over the voice" (Mignolo 46). This allowed many early writers to ignore the sounds unique to Nahuatl, including the use of a glottal stop and distinctive vowel length, while bemoaning Nahuatl's lack of certain Spanish sounds.[14] Every transcription of oral discourse, like the huēhuehtlahtōlli, can be seen in this vein as the imposition of European ideology.

In the huēhuehtlahtōlli that appear in chapter six of the *Florentine Codex*, we can also see evidence of motivated mistranscription. The chapter, titled "De la rhetorica y philosophia moral," frames these oral discourses within a respectable and comprehensible tradition of classical discourse, though they do not follow classical rhetorical structures of argumentation. In their discussion of these Nahuatl texts, Karttunen and Lockhart identify several places where the indigenous scribes seem to have intentionally omitted words in order to elide precolonial heresy: as they explain,

> In the several long speeches to Tēzcatlipōca in the *Florentine Codex*, the god's name is surely being systematically avoided, yet it does occur as part of a string of vocatives in the middle of an oration: "tezcatlipucae" 6:12. [...] One must wonder if the writer-informants of the *Florentine Codex* were not already doing what such Nahua writers as Alva Ixtlilxochitl were definitely to do a bit later in time, that is, approximate preconquest religion as closely as possible to Christianity to make it and themselves seem more acceptable. (Karttunen 36)

In these examples, we see how the Nahua scribes followed the Spanish *escribanos* in elevating oral discourse as they transcribe it to serve the rhetorical expectations

[14]The *Arte* by the indigenous Jesuit Antonio de Rincón is an exception to this rule, as will be discussed further in the chapter on digital transcription.

of archive and audience.

Though the Bancroft Dialogues were written later than most of the documents in this study, a brief consideration of this document can give further context to the transliteration in the *Florentine Codex*. As Karttunen and Lockhart write, following Angel María Garibay, this manuscript was likely written by an assistant to the Jesuit Horacio Carochi.[15] Carochi is best remembered for his 1645 Nahuatl grammar, the first to introduce diacritics to mark the unique sounds like glottal stops that differentiated Nahuatl from Spanish; the presence of these diacritics in the Bancroft Dialogues reveals his influence on the document.

It seems likely, however, that the Bancroft Dialogues were based on an earlier manuscript (now lost), probably produced in Texcoco around 1570-1580; at least parts of this document, in turn, were certainly informed by, if not copied directly from, the Florentine Codex. Karttunen and Lockhart find several explanations for the differences between these documents. For the sections that seem to replicate the Sahagún text, it is possible that they were based on a different draft from the ones that currently survive. The additions, subtractions, and reorganization of the dialogues can be attributed to the patterns characteristic of oral history, which tends to follow strict performative patterns but allows certain kinds of structural fluidity. They were likely constructed by indigenous aides at each stage in their inscription (13).

[15]Much of this discussion comes from Karttunen and Lockhart's 1987 transcription of the Bancroft Dialogues, itself a revision of Garibay's earlier copy. Among the motivations for the revision was the fact that Garibay's version was missing two folios which were omitted from the photocopy on which his transcription was based. Photocopies in circulation are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, "Collection: Mexicana at the John Carter Brown Library" (Karttunen 14).

At the level of orthography, however, other transcriptive interventions emerge. It is clear that the diacritics of the Bancroft manuscripts, which follow patterns developed in the 1640s, were introduced by the individual who transcribed the manuscript from the earlier document. The diacritic system in use in the manuscript was never adopted by native Nahuatl speakers, who had little trouble using context to differentiate among homonyms. It was useful, however, for language-learners, and it is likely that the Bancroft manuscript was transcribed for this purpose. Karttunen and Lockhart remark, however, that the inconsistencies of the diacritics seem to point to an indigenous scribe as the writer of the text: they reveal someone with a native familiarity with vowel length and glottal stops, but less certainty as to the information that a student of the language might require.

Diacritical errors here serve as a fingerprint that identifies the presence of indigenous labor. These errors are largely described as though they were passively produced, but we can also consider the active intellectual work of the indigenous scribe in carefully selecting information that would be useful to language-learners, despite his few mistakes. As Karttunen and Lockhart remark, the Carochi diacritical schema was too complex to be used in full; its selective application was necessary in mediating between practicality and accuracy.

In the transliteration of the huēhuehtlahtōlli, we see indigenous intervention at the level of language and orthography. The scribes working on the three documents described here changed the language of the histories to meet the rhetorical expectations of their audience, shifting religious discourse to obscure potential heresy. Orthographic variation further functioned as the fingerprint of indigenous labor as

well as an opportunity to differentiate Spanish and Nahuatl discursive forms. Even as indigenous transcription imposed the primacy of alphabetic text onto indigenous language and communication, it preserves the intervention of indigenous scribes in intentionally mistranscribing oral testimony. The interaction between the oral and inscribed huēhuehtlahtōlli, and the indigenous and Spanish contexts into which they are presented, is ongoing: Karttunen and Lockhart report that an ethnographer transcribed a modern version of the huēhuehtlahtōlli in the 1950s (9).

Hybrid Texts

Despite the motivated mistranscription described above, cases like the huēhuehtlahtōlli illustrate the thorough transferral of indigenous discourse into a European epistemological frame. But some transcribed documents of the early colonial period sustained a hybrid communicative system that brought together multiple modes of inscription by combining pictographic inscription with alphabetic Spanish and Nahuatl. Such is the case of both the *Codex Mendoza*, a document painted in Mexico around 1541, and the *Florentine Codex*. Both of these documents combine transcribed pictographic texts, likely based on pre-Hispanic manuscripts, with alphabetic transcriptions and translations. They illustrate how transcription mediated the transferral of information in the new rhetorical context of Spanish colonization.

The pictographic documents transcribed for Bernardino de Sahagún are collected in the *Primeros memoriales*; a smaller selection of images appear in the *Historia general*. These pictographic texts were copied either by the *principales* or by Sahagún's assistants. In her analysis of these pictographic texts, Ellen Baird has

found evidence of some lack of fluency even among these sixteenth century copyists. As she writes, "It is not uncommon for copying errors to occur when artists do not thoroughly understand the materials they are copying. Certain errors found in the veintena suggest the use of prototypes for the PM that may have been unfamiliar to the artists" (109). In one example, Baird suggests that an incongruous ear of corn may have been the misrendering of the double bag associated with the hunters of the god Quecholli. Elsewhere, images representing part of the Huytecuilhuitl ceremony are inappropriately drawn alongside those pertaining to the Tecuilhuitontli ceremony (111). Baird's analysis, like that of Cossich and Romero, illustrates what we might describe as the slow decay of indigenous pictographic literacy over the course of the sixteenth century.

Alongside these transcriptive errors, however, we might look for more active interventions in inscriptive meaning on the part of the tlacuilos who transcribed the text. We can find an example of this in the Codex Mendoza, which was painted around 1541, perhaps for the Viceroy Mendoza, by a "master of the painters" named Francisco Gualpuyogualcal (Nicholson 1.1). The *Codex Mendoza* combines copied pictographic text from what was likely a pre-Columbian manuscript with an original 'ethnographic' component. Gualpuyogualcal used European paper and ink to compose the Codex Mendoza, and he applied European stylistic methods like shading to his inscriptions. As rhetorical strategies, we might consider how these techniques authorize the pictographic text by speaking to the European education of the tlacuilo. Because the shading is particularly pronounced in the pages that are thought to be original compositions, we can further consider how these techniques

distinguish between the authority of the transcription and that of the composition. The former takes authority from authentic reproduction; the latter, from a display of skill.

The pictographic techniques displayed in these documents are complicated by their relationship with alphabetic inscription. Sahagún's *Historia general* is largely remembered as an alphabetic text, while the *Codex Mendoza* is remembered as a pictographic one, but in fact both texts combine inscription systems. In the case of the Sahagún documents, the pictographic texts are thought to have been fundamental to the production of the alphabetic inscription. As López explains, the Nahua *principales* at Tepepulco were interviewed by Sahagún's students according to a *minuta* (questionnaire). The answers to these questions were transcribed from oral testimony, but they were likely guided by the exposition of pre-Columbian pictorial documents. Some of these pictographic documents, in turn, were meticulously copied either by the *principales* or by the assistants.

In the *Primeros memoriales*, alphabetic glosses of figurative images or collections of images complement the pictorial text, while other Nahuatl transcriptions precisely represent the words inscribed by a name glyph or other logogram. The *Florentine Codex* (which uses only a small fragment of the documents in the *Primeros memoriales*, along with a plethora of later drawings), also includes a Spanish "translation," which is, itself, more of an imprecise gloss. Every stage in the interaction between transcription and translation here reshapes information, and is a site of indigenous labor. Indeed, because Sahagún suffered, at this point, from a tremor in his hands that prevented him from producing legible inscription

(leading to his famous tremulous signature), the production of every aspect of this text depended on the labor of indigenous copyists. This work also depended on the financial support of the church — something that Sahagún, whose work and position were controversial, did not always receive.

In the *Codex Mendoza*, the pictorial texts are also annotated with alphabetic glosses in Spanish or Nahuatl that explain, in brief, key information from the text: a place name, for example, or the presence of a *viejo* (elder). In addition, each pictographic text is accompanied by an expository text in Spanish prose. Rather than a transcription, this prose is written as a translation or exposition of the pictorial text. It seems that this text was inscribed by a Spanish cleric named Juan González. Of interest for our story is a note at the end of the manuscript, signed by the letter "G," "J," or "Q," "in which the scribe apologized for the crude style of the Spanish explanatory annotations because of the imperative haste of their preparation" (1.2). The presence of this Spanish text, transcribed by a Spaniard who may or may not have had Nahuatl fluency, is representative of the multiple influences that shaped scribal conduct in the contact zone. The hasty completion of the alphabetic text, especially given the care with which the pictorial images were produced, is also suggestive. We know that the document was to be sent to Spain, where no one was capable of reading the pictorial text. Why, then, would more attention be given to the drawings than to their alphabetic interpretation? Is it because they were more highly valued than the alphabetic transcription? Could this be because the purpose of this document was not, at least according to the Spaniards who commissioned it, to be read?

As it turns out, the rhetorical arguments of the *Codex Mendoza* never met their intended audience. The manuscript ended up, instead, in the hands of a French cosmographer; from there, it travelled to England, where it eventually was forgotten among the many documents in the Bodleian Library. For several centuries, it was remembered in Europe primarily because of an English translation and woodcut reproduction produced by Samuel Purchas, discussed in the next chapter.

The *Florentine Codex* had a similar fate. The Spanish text of the *Florentine Codex*, absent the Nahuatl and pictographic writing, was transcribed soon after it arrived in Europe in a document known as the Tolosa Manuscript. While the Florentine Codex disappeared into the archives of Italy, the Tolosa Manuscript, held in Madrid, became the standard text of the *Historia General* until the twentieth century. Thus through a series of transcriptions enacted by a sequence of Nahua and Spanish scribes, the Nahuatl pictorial histories were converted into a Spanish text. We can imagine why the scribe of the Tolosa Manuscript chose to copy (or was told to copy) only the Spanish text: if the men who commissioned the copy did not read Nahuatl, and could not understand the pictorials, they might have assumed that the Spanish copy was the most perfect and complete version of this complex document. For many years, among the historians of Europe, it was.

Conclusion: Transcription and the printing press

The history of transcription in colonial Mesoamerica described here has shown how both the imaginative power of the American unknown, and the epistemological difference of indigenous life, impacted European transcriptive practices in the contact

zone. Interactions with indigenous communications systems disrupted straightforward European hierarchies of textual production and reproduction, destabilizing the authority of a text's various and intervening hands. Through chirography, orthography, and translation, the Nahua scribes left their mark on the pages that they transcribed, even as they served as gatekeepers who exerted control over the presence of their past in Europe's historical record.

Furthermore, the textual histories of both the Joint Report of the Narváez expedition and the *Historia general* illustrate the role that transcription played in determining the circulation and preservation of the historical record. The early colonial period has been described as a period during which transcribed testimony was accumulated in the newly founded imperial archives, testimony whose authority would rest in part on these processes of accumulation and reproduction. Though these documents are primarily associated with higher authorities like authors, churches, or governments, many passed through the mediating hand of a scribe on their way to the archive. Many of the examples in this chapter, furthermore, never arrived in the imperial archives at all; they survive, instead, in the form of scribal reproductions that gloss over the gaps in the imperial record.

In addition to scribal transcription, the period that this chapter has been concerned with also marks the spread of another kind of textual reproduction. The first printing press in the Americas was established in Mexico in 1539, less than twenty years after the fall of Tenochtitlan, and some 100 years before the printing of the Bay Psalm Book in Cambridge. By the end of the sixteenth century, multiple presses operated in Mexico City, and presses had been established in Puebla

(Mexico) and in Peru. During this time, these presses, which printed documents for the secular government, university, and religious orders, produced a relatively large number of grammars, catechisms, and confessionals in Nahuatl, Zapotec, Aymara, Quechua, and other indigenous languages. The problems of manual transcription in the contact zone are thus made present, almost simultaneously, in type.

The relationship between manual transcription and print production is an uneasy one. History suggests that the arrival of the printing press would make manual transcription obsolete, though as we will see manual transcription never disappears from textual culture. Manual transcription remained an essential part of textual composition until the development of the typewriter, used in the production of correspondence, court records, and manuscripts prior to typesetting or stereotyping. Thus archives continue to be repositories of manual transcription until the twentieth century. Furthermore, for communities that didn't have access to printing presses — such as most colonial and rural communities — manual transcription remained a primary means of manuscript reproduction. This is what allowed Burns to find a manually transcribed copy of a printed edition of Francisco González de Torneo's guide for *escribanos* in an archive in Peru (17).[16]

Indeed, Marina Garone Gravier suggests that the uniquely disjointed paleography of indigenous scribes in New Spain may have been influenced by the transcription of printed materials. In "La indianización del alfabeto," she writes,

Otro factor a mi juicio que pudo haber influido para realizar una es-

[16]There are many examples of the manual transcription of printed books, including Round's discussion of missionary transcriptions in impoverished communities in the nineteenth century, as well as twentieth-century efforts to evade censorship under dictatorial regimes (64).

> *critura fragmentada es la pericia que los indios habían desarrollado en la copia de ejemplares impresos; hecho que como vimos mencionan varios cronistas. En este caso lo que copiaban los indios eran letras a imitación de tipos móviles más que caligrafías más o menos cursivas. Las copias de los indios llegaron a tal grado de excelencia que incluyeron, además, el dibujo de grabados y ornamentos tipográficos. Sin embargo, no se dejó de lado completamente el uso de algunos elementos visuales indígenas. Entre los rasgos de carácter local de los escritos podríamos mencionar la presencia de flora y fauna americanas, así como grecas y motivos geométricos que eran comunes en las estructuras arquitectónicas prehispánicas y que no corresponden a la tradición europea* (*La tipografía en México* 43).[17]

The presence of printed documents, Garone Gravier suggests, had an aesthetic impact on the development of a uniquely Mesoamerican scribal style.

As systems for textual reproduction, furthermore, printing presses are implicated in the history of transcription. The methods of typesetting and printing, though slightly more disjointed than manual inscription, nevertheless meet our definition of transcription: the linear reproduction of text across inscriptive mediums. While it's a rhetorical stretch to argue that we can call the transferral of a text from manuscript to print a transcription, it's worth considering why it is not. The difference does not seem to be mechanical: a typewritten copy of oral discourse is a transcription, and the automatic process of Optical Character Recognition is de-

[17] "Another factor that, in my opinion, could have influenced the production of a fragmented script is the expertise that the indigenous scribes had developed in copying printed exemplars, as we have seen mentioned by various chroniclers. In this case, what the indigenous scribes copied were characters that imitated movable type more than calligraphy, which was more-or-less cursive. The copies made by the indigenous scribes achieved such a degree of excellence that they included, furthermore, the copying of engravings and typographical ornaments. Nevertheless, the use of certain indigenous visual elements were not completely set aside. Among the traces of local character in these writings, we could mention the presence of American flora and fauna as well as borders and geometric motifs that were common in pre-Hispanic architectural structures and do not correspond to the European tradition."

scribed as transcription too. Instead, it seems to be the breakdown, into steps, of the inscriptive process that differentiates movable type. Decisions about type, layout, and orthography are made at different times and by different people, all prior to the act of inscription.

Yet many of the queries that we have asked of transcription can also be applied to printed documents: In what ways do the operators of printing presses leave their mark on the page? To what interests do those standards attach, and how do they change? Like alphabetic writing, the sixteenth-century printing press imposed specific boundaries on the practice of inscribing indigenous languages. An absence of what we might call 'special characters' in type limited how writers could represent unfamiliar sounds. The costliness of engraving (and the lack of engravers and their associated tools) would have made the printing of pictorial images difficult, even if it had been condoned. And unlike the indigenous scribes, printers and typesetters rarely had knowledge of the indigenous languages they were inscribing. (Indeed, some press operators were not literate.)[18] Furthermore, as the printing press became more widespread in Europe and the colonies, printed books increasingly acquired a kind of authority not available to the manuscript copy. For these reasons printing, even more than manual transcription, has been seen as the imposition of European inscriptive modernity onto indigenous life, as D. F. McKenzie argued compellingly in his seminal work on Maori printing, "The Sociology of a Text."

Considering printing alongside other manual forms of transcription allows

[18]Compare this to the (much later) Cherokee case, where the community was able to establish a press using the Cherokee syllabary (*Removable Type*). In Mesoamerica, there may be a case that some typesetters were indigenous, though this is not well documented.

us to locate new kinds of nuance in McKenzie's argument, showing, as Garone Gravier suggests, how a printed book might be reappropriated through manual transcription — and back again. Considering differences in the ways that these volumes are preserved, furthermore, can reveal the long consequences of these multiple transcriptive practices for the way the historical record has been accessed, even into the present day. As will be shown in the subsequent chapters, human ways of reading (or not reading) the text continue to be embedded into the orthography and chirography of manual transcription, lithographic reproductions, and transcription algorithms across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Chapter 3: Transatlantic Transcription in the Nineteenth Century

The third volume of William Hickling Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (1843) includes a facsimile copy of the signature of Hernán Cortés, the Spanish conquistador famous for leading the attack against the Aztec empire. The image is titled "FAC-SIMILE OF THE SIGNATURE OF CORTÉS"; below it, a caption reads:

> The above signature — Hernando Cortes — together with the rúbrica, in Spanish, which forms an indispensable appendage of a Spanish name, was the Conqueror's signature before he was made Marquess of the Valley of Oaxaca. It is not easy to meet with it as after that time he always subscribed himself by his TITLE.
>
> For Prescotts History of the Conquest of Mexico.

The signature comes from a lithograph made for Prescott to accompany the publication of the history. That lithograph was based on a facsimile which Prescott received from Lucas Alamán, the great Mexican historian and statesman, by way of Ángel Calderón de la Barca, Spanish envoy to Mexico and Prescott's correspondent. That facsimile, drawn on tracing paper and preserved among the Prescott Papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society, was in turn taken from a document in the archive at the Hospital de Jesus in Mexico City. Two manuscript notes inscribed below the traced image — one by Alamán, the other by an unsigned Anglophone writer — affirm the authenticity of the autograph. As the correspondence between Prescott, Calderón, and his wife Fanny reveals, the autograph was one of several interrelated records that Prescott was pursuing from Mexico, along with a description of Cortés' tomb and an Indian skull. In exchange, Prescott shipped the Calderóns a

Daguerreotype for their amusement.

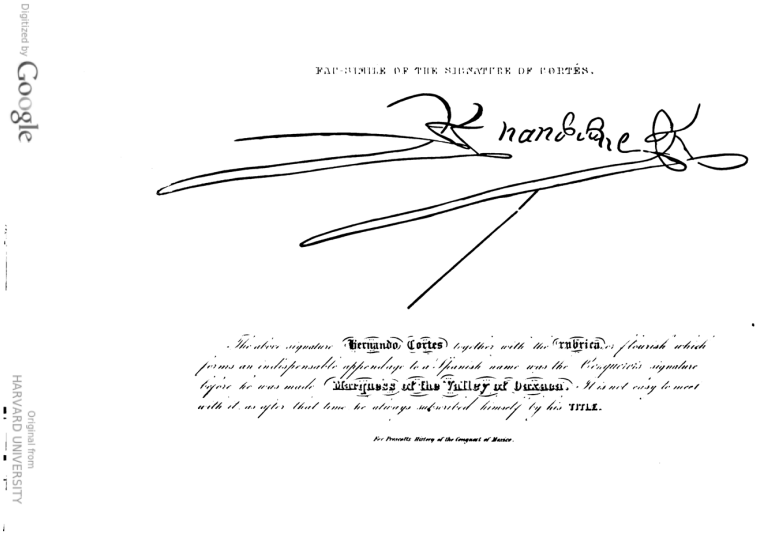


Figure 3.1: Signature of Cortes in the 1856 edition of Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*. Facsimile from Hathi Trust.

Transcription of documents pertaining to early colonial Mexican history takes on different meaning in the nineteenth century. In the sixteenth century, we saw how transcription was integral to textual production and to the accumulation of imperial archives. By the nineteenth century, increased access to the printing press had changed the way that long-form prose was circulated. Archives were undergoing changes as well, as political disruption, new ideas about national consciousness, and rising European bibliophilia led to a dramatic restructuring of the ways historical records were preserved and accessed. New mechanisms of reproduction, from

industrialized printing to stereotype plates and lithography, changed how written documents were produced and circulated. These processes did not, however, erase transcription from the process of textual reproduction, particularly in the case of historical documents. Bibliophiles collected copies of historical records in much the same way as they collected the "originals," and historians relied on transcribed copies of manuscript records when printed editions were not available (occasionally acquiring manually transcribed copies of printed volumes). While the nineteenth century displayed a significant increase in the print publication of historical documents, these publications were often based, themselves, on transcribed copies.

In the previous chapter, we learned that a close examination of transcription practices can real how performance, language, labor, and colonization are made present in the processes of textual circulation. In this chapter, we turn to the practice of historical research in the nineteenth century to see how the widespread practice of textual transcription is taken up and enfolded in historical methodology, asking how these writers working at the beginnings of modern historiography reproduce, transform, and participate in these replicative practices. In doing so, I seek to illustrate how these nineteenth-century practices engage with performance, language, labor, and colonization: the ongoing cultural forces underlying textual circulation.

To answer these questions, I turn to three closely connected figures. Edward King, Lord Kingsborough, was an Irish collector whose fascination with the historical documents of early colonial Mexico approached mythological proportions. Kingsborough died, notoriously, in debtor's prison; rumors suggested that he had squandered his considerable fortune on the production of his nine-volume *Antiq-*

uities of Mexico (1830) (Goodkind 83). Though as we'll see this history is not entirely accurate, the costly volumes did represent one of the most ambitious efforts to date to reproduce Mesoamerican records, bringing together alphabetic text, pictorial codices, and archaeological drawings from sources scattered across Europe. Production of the volumes, conducted primarily by the artist Augustine Aglio, combined manual transcriptive practices with new reproductive technologies for the production of the high-quality printed editions. Kingsborough's volumes allow us to see how pictorial writing — and its relationship to alphabetic sources — is transfigured in nineteenth century transcriptive practices, and how those processes, in turn, are reformed in print.

Lord Kingsborough's volumes were a valuable resource for Prescott in writing his *History of the Conquest of Mexico*. Prescott, already known for his popular *The History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic* (1837), never visited an archive during his many years of historical research; nor did he travel to Spain, Mexico, or Peru (the subject of a later history). Nevertheless, he saw reference to understudied historical documents as one of his key contributions to historical scholarship. He relied on a transnational network of diplomats, book dealers, and scholars to locate and acquire copies of historical records. Because of the state of his vision (Prescott was blind in one eye and had difficulty with the other) he further depended on personal assistants for both reading and writing. This chapter will consider how the mechanisms of reproduction inform Prescott's relationship with historical records, and how they intersect with questions of ability, access, nation, and race.

In the early 1840s, the young Mexican historian Joaquín García Icazbalceta began to develop a collection of historical sources pertaining to the history of Mesoamerica and Spanish colonization, a process that would continue throughout his life. Realizing that access to the Spanish archives would be out of reach for an unestablished Mexican scholar (and one without resources to travel to the archives himself), Icazbalceta settled on Prescott as the figure most able to help him acquire historical documents. Through Prescott, he acquired transcripts of transcripts of historical documents unavailable in Mexico, including the histories of Oviedo and Motolinía. These copies, in turn, were used by Icazbalceta in the production of a printed edition. Through Icazbalceta's relationship with Prescott, we can see how the politics (and market forces) of transnational scholarship mediated Mexican access to colonial records, and how the transnational transcription of these records left an orthographic trace on Mexican cultural patrimony.

Constructing Transcription Networks

Volumes 5 and 6 of the *Antiquities of Mexico* (1830 and 1848) include a printed edition of Bernardino de Sahagún's general history, titled *The General History of New Spain*. At its commencement, which begins with the sixth chapter as a standalone addition to Volume 5, a footnote explains:

> The General History of New Spain, by BERNARD DE SAHAGUN, from which this book has been extracted, has never been published; it is in the possession of the Right Honourable Lord Viscount KINGSBOROUGH.

Neither of the claims in this footnote are true. The text printed by Kingsborough came from what we today refer to as the Tolosa Codex: a transcribed copy of the Spanish text of the *Historia general* held in Madrid. A printed edition of this same text, edited by the Mexican statesman and historian Carlos María de Bustamante, had appeared in Mexico in 1830 under the imprint of Alejandro Valdés.[1] Not the first to produce an imprint of Sahagún's text, Kingsborough was also not in possession of the original — or even the original Tolosa Codex. Instead, his printed edition was based on a transcribed copy made in Spain and held in his library in Ireland.

Indeed, underlying Kingsborough's printed edition of early Mexican manuscripts was a vast transcription network that enabled historical documents, long hidden in imperial or religious archives, to circulate across Europe and the Americas. The circulation of original manuscripts in the early nineteenth century, mostly into the private collections of bibliophiles in Europe, has been written about in some de-

[1] In his introduction, Bustamante writes "Hoy sale á luz, despues de haber estado oculta por mas de dos siglos en el convento de S. Francisco de Tolosa de Navana, y se presenta como un ástro magestuoso en el orizonte literario para dar honor á la América mexicana: ¡dichoso yo, á quien ha cabido la suerte de contribuir á una empresa de que resultará tanto bien á esta pátria que adoro! El lector notará, que he hecho algunas *ligeras* variantes accidentales pero no *esenciales*, para dar á entender su testo, pues usa de voces anticuadas, y de modismos que entónces eran perceptibles al comun de las gentes: no he lacerado su testo y sentido, lo he tratado con la delicadez que merece un varon tan sábio y respetable" *(Today I bring [Sahagún's History] to the light, after having been hidden for more than two centuries in the convent of S. Francisco de Tolosa de Navana, and present it as a majestical star on the literary horizon to give honor to Mexican America: How fortunate am I, who has had the good fortune to contribute an imprint which will be so valuable to the nation that I adore! The reader will note, that I have made some slight accidental changes, but nothing essential, to make the account more clear, as it uses antiquated voices, and idioms that were at that time commonly understood by the people: I have not damaged his account or meaning, I have treated it with the delicacy that a man so wise and respectable deserves)* (de Sahagun II). Accents are sic. Bustamante's volume was subsequently translated into English by the U.S. anthropologist Fanny Bandelier in 1932. Of Bustamante, Keen remarks, "as an editor, Bustamante was guilty of crimes against scholarship" (Keen 320).

tail. This circulation was enabled in part by political disruption in Europe and the Americas, from the wars of independence across Spanish America to the French Revolution and the War of Spanish Independence, and is often referred to as the theft of Mexican cultural patrimony. Less fully described are the reproductive practices that accompanied this opening-up of historical archives, in part because these reproductions no longer carry the value that they held for nineteenth century collectors. As the new focus on archival documentation led historiographers of the period to attend to the newly-opened archives, a turn to preservation in the wake of archival disruption compelled historians to record and reproduce their national patrimony. These changes were often framed in terms of a new American nationalism.

William Hickling Prescott's research practices are exemplary of these transcription networks. Though Prescott's works were inspired by Washington Irving and written in the style of the historical romance, he believed that it was the acquisition of — and reference to — archival manuscripts that made his historiography a significant contribution to historical research. Yet, as C. Harvey Gardiner and Lindsay Van Tine have documented, this was no easy task for a researcher located in the newly established United States, particularly one like Prescott who was unable, or unwilling, to travel. Though Prescott was actively involved in the libraries of historical societies such as the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Boston Athenaeum, he found that these libraries remained lacking: as he wrote to the French historian Henri Ternaux-Compans, "A writer on this side of the Atlantic has to create his own library if he would write even on American themes" (Prescott, "20 Mar. 1839" 60). C. Harvey Gardiner concurs, writing that Prescott's "trail-

blazing contributions" to Spanish American historical studies in the United States "antedated the existence of public collections — hence the necessity that he build a significant personal library" (Gardiner 81). Working with the London-based book dealer Obadiah Rich, among others, Prescott developed a valuable private library of printed books. But to conduct research for his books, Prescott also depended on transcriptions of manuscripts held in private and state archives and libraries abroad.

To acquire these transcriptions, Prescott drew on a carefully cultivated network of researchers. As Gardiner has documented, this process was mediated primarily through Prescott's relationship with members of the U.S. Foreign Service. Arthur Middleton, for example, the secretary of the United States Legation in Madrid in the 1830s-40s, had been a schoolmate of Prescott's; with his help, Prescott was able to hire a German scholar based in Madrid to locate historical manuscripts and commission the production of transcribed copies. In other cases, the success of Prescott's first book attracted the interest of European historians who promptly offered their service in support of his Mexican project. Such was the case of Angel and Fanny Calderón, who corresponded with Prescott extensively while serving as Spanish diplomats to Mexico, and Pascual de Gayangos, a Spanish scholar based in England whose relationship with Prescott has been carefully documented by Gardiner ("Prescott's Aide"). It was through these connections that Prescott was able to gain access to the collections of historical societies, state archives, and personal libraries.

One of Prescott's contacts in Mexico was the politician and historian Lucas Alamán. In the late 1840s, Alamán's protégé, the young historian and bibliogra-

pher Joaquín García Icazbalceta, contacted Prescott with a request for manuscript copies. Icazbalceta is best known today for his definitive bibliography of printing in sixteenth-century New Spain; as part of his bibliographical project, he was active in recovering the forgotten manuscripts of the period from libraries in Mexico, particularly those written in indigenous languages. He is equally known for his collection of original manuscripts and pictorial documents, like the now-famous Relaciones Geográficas (census records from the sixteenth century, discussed further in Chapter 6, "Return: Cultural Heritage in Cholula, Mexico"), and for his printed editions of understudied sixteenth-century documents. Less well known, however, is the role that transcribed copies played in his manuscript collection.

Icazbalceta's *Coleccion de manuscritos, relativos a la historia de América*, held today in 20+ bound volumes by the Benson Latin American Collection in Austin, Texas, contains transcribed copies from across Mexico, Spain, and the United States. As the *Advertencia* accompanying the first text of the collection describes, for example, it is a copy taken from a manuscript held in National Archives of Mexico. This text, in turn, was a copy made by Dr. Beye Ciseneros from a work held in an archive in the convent of the Provincia del Santo Evangelio. Of this text, Icazbalceta remarks, *"Del original [...], no he podido lograr noticia y persuadome á que habrá sido extraido de aquel Archivo, como lo han sido otros muchos documentos"* (García Icazbalceta, *Colección de manuscritos* Tomo 1).[2]

Other manuscripts in Icazbalceta's collection have similar histories. Of the

[2] "Regarding the original [...], I have not been able to receive news, and I am convinced that it has been extracted from that Archive, as has been the case with many other documents." Don Matias de la Mota Padilla, *Conquista del reino de la Nueva Galicia en la América Septentrional*: 1742.

Crónica Mexicana of Don Hernando de Alvarado Tezozomoc, for example, Icazbalceta explains,

> *Poseeyó el Manuscrito original D. Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci, en cuyo catálogo se encuentra asentado con el n.o 11 del §VIII. De este original de Boturini sacó una copia el historiador Dn Mariano Veytia, y de esta se tomó, segun la advertencia del colector, la que existe en el Archivo General de la Nacion. Segun todas las apariencias la presente copia se sacó de la del archivo, en el mismo año de 1792 en que se hizo aquella, ó acaso directamente de la que perteneció á Veytia.* (Tomo IV)[3]

Again, the Icazbalceta case unveils a chain of transcription practices as historical documents move across institutional and national boundaries. Even as what we might call the original documents disappear from the history, a traceable string of copies (indicative, in part, of Icazbalceta's training in bibliography and attention to provenance) allows the documents to enter the possession of the national archives as well as those of personal collectors like Icazbalceta himself.

What are we to make of the transcription-mediated textual networks established by Kingsborough, Prescott, and Icazbalceta? On the one hand, these three cases are indicative of much larger trends in historical research: all major historians operating in Europe and the Americas shared resources using these same transnational, transcriptive exchanges. Differences in local resources and conditions gave the collecting practices of these three men different implications, however. In the case of Lord Kingsborough, the size and sophistication of his collection was evi-

[3] "The original manuscript was possessed by D. Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci, in whose catalogue it can be found assigned the number 11 of § VIII. From Boturini's original, the historian Don Mariano Veytia made a copy; from this copy, according to the *advertencia* of the collector, was made the copy that exists in the General Archive of the Nation. According to all appearances, the present copy was taken from the one in the archive, in the same year of 1792 in which the other was made, or perhaps it was take directly from the copy made by Veytia."

dence of his success as a bibliophile, a member of an elite class of Europeans able to invest a sizeable fortune in extending the intellectual record of nation, empire, and continent. Famously, Kingsborough is said to have died for this collection (and for its publication in the *Antiquities of Mexico*) when he contracted typhus in debtor's prison at the age of 41. This myth does not stand up to more careful scrutiny, however. As Sylvia Whitmore explains, the larger part of his debt came from his father, who had been declared insane in 1833; furthermore, Kingsborough may have gone to prison in an effort to gain access to his father's fortune, rather than because he was truly impoverished (Whitmore 12-13). The story surrounding Kingsborough's death nevertheless suggests the symbolic importance of Kingsborough's reproductions: they represent both the vital importance of collecting for the intellectual strength of the nation, but also the risk of crossing a line into decadence and intellectual decay. Sir Thomas Phillipps, the man who acquired much of Kingsborough's library after his death, is described on Wikipedia as having suffered from a "severe condition of bibliomania."

Collecting conditions were different in the New World. Though Prescott, the grandson of a hero of the American Revolution, wrote proudly of America's break with empire and aristocracy, he envied what he perceived as the greater sophistication of Europe's intelligentsia. Hardly afraid of bibliomania, Prescott wrote of Phillipps, "This is the very cream of civilization, when fox hunters find a relaxation in pleasures so intellectual. Our rich men go on heaping up the gold dust, to be scattered into infinite atoms at their deaths again" (Prescott, *Papers* 171). For Prescott, America's focus on material gain rather than on intellectual pursuits was

a symptom of the youth of the American nation. Prescott's own collection practices, of which he was quite proud, presaged the shift into a more reflective and mature civilization. The focus on Mexican documents, which Prescott refers to as "American," marks an effort to lay claim to the American continent and conquest as part of U.S. national identity. As Anna Brickhouse and Iván Jaksić have argued, we see this same effort at work in the prose of Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*.

In Mexico, meanwhile, national identity had been disrupted first by the wars of independence (and subsequent political turmoil), and then by the French invasion. Historians like Icazbalceta saw the movement of historical documents and archives out of Mexico during this time as a loss of national patrimony, a concern that underlies Icazbalceta's description of manuscript provenance. As Bustamante wrote in his introduction to Sahagún's *Historia general*, the reproduction of these early colonial documents within Mexico had distinctly national undertones. The same motivation inspired Icazbalceta's collection practices. By valuing and even reproducing transcribed copies, Icazbalceta engaged in a kind of archival reconstruction reminiscent of the "digital returns" popular today.

One consequence of the transcriptive networks described here is that the movement of these documents literally left its mark on their pages, in the chirography and orthography of the transcribed texts. The subsequent sections of this chapter will consider these transformations in more detail. These transcriptions, in turn, would shape the private libraries, public libraries, and printed editions of historical texts. Transcriptions took their place alongside "original" documents and

printed volumes in the private libraries of collectors. In a note in one of his journals, after complaining about the delay wrought by attempting to work his way through Kingsborough's "olla podrida," Prescott remarked, "My Mexican & Peruvian MSS, beautifully bound make a cheering appearance on my shelves - the flower of my seraglio" (*Literary Memoranda* 48). The collecting of these manuscript copies into bound volumes, by Icazbalceta as well as Prescott, illustrates how these volumes were physically incorporated into the construction of a personal library. This value is also reflected in the posthumous life of the manuscripts. Prescott's collected manuscripts were included alongside printed volumes in his will, to be given to his family members or sold at auction.[4] Icazbalceta's documents, similarly, were sold by his heirs alongside his printed volumes to the Benson Latin American Collection.

Kingsborough's manuscripts and printed volumes were also sold at auction, despite efforts by Sir Thomas Phillipps to acquire the entire collection intact. Phillipps was ultimately able to acquire subsets of these collections, including many copies of Mexican manuscripts, all recorded in A. N. L. Munby's extensive documentation of Phillipps' collection. Phillips acquired one set of thirty Kingsborough manuscripts through the bookseller Obadiah Rich (who also worked closely with Prescott). However, as Munby explains,

> Phillipps accepted the thirty volumes at £10 apiece; but before they

[4]The legacy of this library is not fully known. Anne Anninger and Michael Winship were able to locate a collection of printed volumes and manuscripts pertaining to Spain at the Harvard University Library, as bequeathed in Prescott's will (Anninger and Winship). The remaining library was primarily to be divided, according to Prescott's will, among his wife and children, though he recommended that collections pertaining to Mexico and Peru be kept whole (Prescott, *Papers* 403). The current location of these books — if they do survive — has not been identified, though Lindsay Van Tine has made some progress in this pursuit.

> had been perfected and bound, the Baronet accused the bookseller of having transcripts made of them to sell in America, a charge which Rich indignantly repudiated. Certainly his conduct in the matter seems to have been quite frank, for when he made his original offer of the volumes he stated that he had duplicate copies of several of them, which he expected to sell to an American library. Phillipps, however, seized upon this pretext to refuse payment, and persisted in this attitude until judgment was given against him in a suit brought by Rich in 1848. Even then a wrangle continued over the completion of certain of the manuscripts, and it was not until January 1849 that Rich received the final installment of his money. (Munby 14)

This story is suggestive of the value that these manuscript copies would come to hold as original documents, and of the role that collectors (both private and, later, public) would ultimately play in controlling the circulation of manuscript copies. Even as transcription networks grew, and manuscript copies became increasingly accessible, manuscript owners maintained tight control over documentary history.

Kingsborough's Pictorial Lithographs

In the dedication printed in the fifth volume of Lord Kingsborough's *Antiquities of Mexico*, the Italian artist and engraver Augustine Aglio wrote,

> Your LORDSHIP's Liberality has supported my exertions and anticipated my wishes; - Your LORDSHIP'S Name has been my sure and ready passport to those valuable resources of information scattered through Europe, of which Royalty or Science were the guardians. [...]
>
> *The only merit to which I venture to lay claim is that of having diligently transcribed those various Manuscripts and Drawings of which the present Volumes contain correct Fac-similes.* These labours, which have occupied my undivided attention during the last five years, are the

> best, as they are the most appropriate, offering of which I can venture to request Your LORDSHIP'S acceptance. (Kingsborough)[5]

Aglio's dedication describes a process in which he was the central author and compiler of the *Antiquities* — a position that he speaks of, in no uncertain terms, as that of diligent transcription. Why does Aglio choose the term transcription, and what might he mean by it? An Italian artist classically trained in the studio of the landscape painter Luigi Campovecchio, Aglio went on to serve as draughtsman on antiquarian expeditions in Greece, Sicily, and Egypt before moving to England (Newton). According to his letter, he was responsible for transcribing the many historical and contemporary manuscripts in the *Antiquities*, but he is better known for producing the more than 1,000 lithograph plates in Lord Kingsborough's impressive text, representing most of the Mesoamerican codices known in Europe, as well as artifacts, monuments, and even an illustration of an (Andean) khipu. By "transcription," then, Aglio must refer (at least in part) to the manual copying of texts written using non-alphabetic inscriptive systems; texts that he could not read.

Printed in seven enormous volumes (with an additional two produced posthumously), and originally sold for the very large sum of £175 (for colored plates) or £120 (without), the *Antiquities of Mexico* represent, in the words of Prescott, a "magnificent" contribution to Mesoamerican studies (Prescott, *Conquest* 128). The first three volumes contain the largest collection of reproduced Mesoamerican codices to date. Volume 4 is dedicated to the manuscript of the French antiquarian Guillaume Joseph Dupaix and reproductions of his illustrations of Mesoamerican monuments (along with illustrations, by Aglio, of artifacts). The remaining vol-

[5]Emphasis mine.

umes contain printed version of alphabetic texts by early colonial authors such as Sahagún, as well as more modern commentaries, some by Kingsborough himself.[6] Some of these alphabetic texts will be discussed later in this chapter; my focus in this section is on the three volumes dedicated to Mesoamerican codices. By considering the way these texts are organized and reproduced, I seek to understand what role transcription played in mediating the reproduction of these unreadable texts. I will argue that Aglio's approach to transcribing the codices had the effect of rendering the documents unreadable, playing into nineteenth century ideas about the prehistoric and semi-civilized character of pre-Columbian Mesoamerica. To make this argument, I will focus on the first and (arguably) most famous codex in the collection, known as the Codex Mendoza.

One major problem in trying to identify the role of transcription in facilitating the production of the Kingsborough reproduction arises when we try to parse the relationship between transcription and facsimile reproduction. The term *facsimile* differs from transcription by degrees of exactitude. Today, a facsimile reproduction is usually a photograph or scanned copy that preserves with precision the text as it appears on the page. In the nineteenth century, we see the term facsimile used to refer to tracings that mimic the chirography of historical texts; the term is also used, by Aglio, to describe his lithographic reproductions. In these cases, specific mechanisms of reproduction designed to guarantee precision are implicit in the production

[6]One of Kingsborough's goals in collecting and publishing these materials was to support the argument that the Aztecs were, in fact, the Lost Tribe of Israel. At the time of publication, this argument was met with skepticism by readers like Prescott, who described it, quoting Butler, as "Cobwebs-fit for skull, That's empty when the moon is full" (Prescott, *Literary Memoranda* 44). Though this chapter does not explore this argument in depth, we can imagine how it provides a specific mythological framework for these historical documents.

of facsimiles, from tracing paper to stone. Also implicit in the concept of the nineteenth century facsimile is a higher degree of authority. As Prescott remarked of the Cortés facsimile signature that opened this chapter, "I have other signatures of his [Cortés], but being copied instead of traced on transparent paper, they will not answer my purpose" ("5 May 1840" 186).

Yet prior to the widespread use of photography, facsimile reproductions overlapped uneasily with transcription. Lithographic production involved the manual transcription of codices in archives around Europe, followed by engraving, printing, and (in some cases) coloring.[7] Unlike in alphabetic writing, color played a signifying role in Mesoamerican pictorial writing. In the page displayed in Figure 3.2, taken from the Codex Mendoza, for example, the red behind the ear of the figure seated at the top right is a dab of blood that marks that figure as a priest. Were the original transcriptions of these documents produced in color, or did they perhaps have annotations for future colorists? We can only speculate.

Figure 3.2 shows three copies of a page from the Codex Mendoza. The first figure is a modern photograph of the page produced by the Bodlein Library, where the document is held. The second is a woodcut reproduction produced for Samuel Purchas' 1625 *Haklvytvs posthumus*; prior to the Kingsborough edition, the Purchas reproduction (and copies thereof) was the primary way that Europeans were able to access the manuscript (indeed, for some time it seems that the location of the original had been forgotten). The loss of signifying information - including color - in

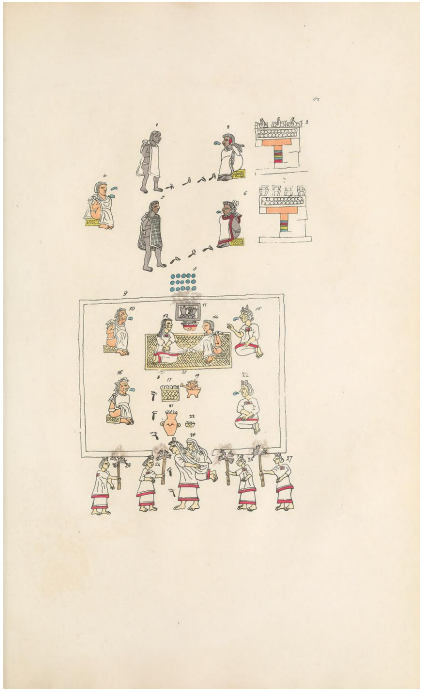
[7] It would be interesting to learn more about Aglio's specific methods of transcribing, engraving, and coloring these texts, and about the other individuals involved in this process of textual reproduction, including, perhaps, library assistants or print-shop colorists.

the Purchas edition shows how the limitations of technology shaped the reproductive possibilities for copying these texts: the absence of wrinkles on the faces of the elders on lines 40 and 50 can similarly be conceived of as an orthographic transformation of the original text. Much of this information has been restored to the Aglio facsimiles, a product of the detail enabled by lithographic printing, and also perhaps a new focus on the ideal of facsimile reproduction. Indeed, the clean lines of the lithographic reproduction, printed on an extremely large page with extensive white space, helps to highlight this ideal of accurate representation.

The most explicit difference between the Codex Mendoza and the lithographic facsimile is the elision of almost all alphabetic text from the Kingsborough copy. The original manuscript, likely produced in the early 1540s, was a product of the contact zone. According to the modern authoritative edition of the codex edited by Frances Berdan and Patricia Rieff Anawalt (1992), the codex contains seventy-two annotated pictorial leaves and sixty-three pages of commentary in Spanish, divided into three parts. The first two parts, which pertain to the history of the Mexica conquests and imperial tributes, respectively, are inscribed on European paper and are likely reproductions of pre-conquest documents (now lost). The third part, which is an ethnographic account of Mexica life, uses a different kind of European paper and was likely composed specifically for this document (Berdan and Anawalt 1.xiii). As summarized previously, the codex is thought to have been produced by a Nahua named Francisco Gualpuyogualcal, described as "master of the painters" in a 1547 *parecer* (1.1). The Spanish annotations are thought to have been written by a Spanish cleric named Juan González. Evidence suggests — though not con-

(a) Photograph of Folio 61r of the Codex Mendoza (c. 1541). From the Bodleian Library. 30cm x 21cm.

(b) Woodcut of Folio 61r of the Codex Mendoza. From Samuel Purchas' *Haklvytvs posthumus* (1625). From the Library of Congress.



(c) Lithograph of Folio 61r of the Codex Mendoza. From Kingsborough's *Antiquities of Mexico* (1831). From Internet Archive. 55cm x 39cm.

Figure 3.2: Three representations of a single folio from the Codex Mendoza show how changes in technology and ideas about pictorial writing inform the presentation of pictorial sources. The page describes life events for youths of fifteen years: the top illustrates the educational options available to young men, while the bottom shows the marriage of young women.

clusively — that the document was prepared for the Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, whose name it carries.[8] What is certain is that the edition held by the Bodleian was made to be read by a Spanish audience, and the mixed forms of inscription reflect that reading public.

The Aglio lithographs erase evidence of this multicultural scene of inscription, and the politics that were at work in the text's production. In the photographed

[8]Nicholson offers a thorough history of the provenance of the codex. By 1553, the manuscript was in the hands of the French cleric André Thevet, later cosmographer for the king, who inscribed a dated signature on folios 1r and 71v (and elsewhere) (1.5); it seems that Thevet acquired the document when a Spanish ship carrying it was captured by the French. Around the 1580s, the manuscript was acquired by the English travel writer Richard Hakluyt, who commissioned a translation into English of the Spanish text by Michael Lok. After Hakluyt's death, the manuscript was purchased by Samuel Purchas, who printed Michael Lok's English translation of the Spanish text, along with woodcuts of the pictorial material, in volume 3 of his renowned *Hakluytus Posthumus: Or, Purchas His Pilgrimages*. Nicholson remarks, "However quaint, these illustrations constituted a much larger portion of the Mesoamerican native tradition pictorial than had ever been published before" (1.7). After Purchas's death, the manuscript went to his son, then to the English antiquary John Selden, before arriving at the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, in 1659, where they were promptly forgotten.

Purchas's woodcuts increased awareness of the Codex Mendoza across Europe. Some of the woodcuts were reproduced in several later editions of Joannes de Laet's *Nieuwe Wereldt ofte Beschrifjvinghe van West-Indien* (1630 (Dutch second edition), 1633 (Latin), 1640 (French), 1644 (Dutch third edition)). Athanasius Kircher, a German Jesuit known for his work on Egyptian hieroglyphics, copied several of the Purchas woodcuts in his *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (1652-54), along with a Latin translation of Lok's English translation of the Spanish text. Another copy of the woodcuts was printed in 1672 in a (relatively) heavily circulated text by Melchisedec Thevenot, with a French translation of the English translation of the Spanish text.

Eighteenth-century historians were ignorant of the Codex Mendoza's whereabouts. Clavigero seems to have known the document only through Thevenot's 1696 publication — he was the one who first applied the name "Mendoza" to the codex. It was not until Kingsborough's *Antiquities of Mexico*, however, that "the curtain was really lifted on the Bodleian corpus" (10). This was followed by a black-and-white photograph facsimile edition in 1925 by Francisco del Paso y Troncoso, along with a color photograph fascimile edition in 1938 by James Cooper Clark which was subsequently destroyed in the London bombings of 1940. More modern editions include the 1964 Mexican re-edition of Kingsborough's *Antiquities* with color photographs, Spanish text, and commentary; a 1978 Swiss edition with color photographs and English commentary; a 1979 Mexican color photograph reproduction of the Codex Mendoza derived from the 1938 Clark edition; and a 1979 reproduction of the Paso y Troncoso black-and-white photographic edition. The current standard edition is the massive four-volume Berdan and Anawalt critical edition, in which the history summarized here has been printed.

image provided by the Bodleian Library (Figure 3.2a), we can see how the Spanish colonial context of the historical document makes its presence felt on the page — a sign, perhaps, of Gualpuyogualcal's awareness of his audience's aesthetic values. The figures have been labeled with Spanish and Nahuatl glosses, and pages are marked in Spanish to aid the reader in navigating the text. Shading on the bodies and clothes of the figures is used in the Spanish style, though the presence of footprints and speech scrolls indicates an indigenous mode of reading. In contrast, both the Purchas and Aglio representations forego the shading and alphabetic glosses.[9]

Despite the delicacy of lithographic technology, the text and shading have been elided from the Kingsborough volume altogether. One effect of this elision is to impose a pre-Columbian façade onto the document. A second effect is to exaggerate the "illegibility" of these documents, erasing the signifiers that would highlight, for Europeans, their textual qualities. In the Aglio version, it is no longer obvious that the geometric images in the upper right corner are a school, or that the figures knotted together in the center of the page are a man and a woman (muger and varon) surrounded by elders (viejos). Instead, European readers are offered numbers which point to a textual gloss provided elsewhere, a reference system that does not allow these viewers to read the codex as text. These numbers are rather more like the annotation system for historical artifacts used in a museum or record of antiquities.

By treating the codices as antiquities rather than texts, Aglio moved them

[9]In the Purchas case, this is likely a product of the relatively crude inscriptive possibilities of the woodcut, but it is interesting to observe that the textual footnotes that Purchas provides are not translations of the Spanish glosses. Rather they seem to draw from the accompanying Spanish prose, offering a new way of reading the text.

away from the transcriptive tradition. Transcription was nevertheless central to the processes of reproduction that he employed. Though more research would be needed to confirm this, the operations underlying the production of the Aglio lithographs also likely involved transcription, but the transcriptive labor would have been shared by multiple copyists, none of whom were literate in Nahuatl. Though Aglio may have travelled to many of the archives himself to observe and copy codices, he also likely drew on a transcriptive network much like the alphabetic networks that Prescott and Icazbalceta used, described above. In this case, the copyists might have been classically trained artists like Aglio himself, who produced colored illustrations or illustrations marked with notations regarding coloring.[10] After collecting these manuscripts, Aglio would have reproduced them on stone lithograph plates, itself a transcriptive process. After printing, a set of colored volumes was produced, most likely by colorists employed by the printer.

The example of the Mendoza Codex shows how the combination of technologies and literacy impacted the reproduction of this hybrid text. For nineteenth-century readers, this in turn affected their access to and consumption of the Mesoamerican codices. As Prescott and Kingsborough both remarked, the use of Spanish inscriptive technologies to produce the Mendoza Codex called into question its authority as a historical source, and influenced its aesthetic value as an artifact. In contrast, Prescott shows little critical awareness of the possible inaccuracies or the interpretive lens used by Aglio in producing the lithographic reproductions. Though he wrote tersely on receiving the volumes, "am disappointed as to the execution of

[10]Prescott also used artists to produce copies of portraits of the major figures in his histories, from which he commissioned lithographs to be included with the printed volumes.

the plates - very common," his general approach to the lithographs was one that presumes accuracy (Prescott, *Literary Memoranda* 43). Indeed, in an attitude that parallels his approach to alphabetic transcriptions (as the subsequent section will argue), Prescott may have seen the lithographic plates, with their façade of facsimile reproduction, as an improvement over the originals. Freed from the stain of colonial contact, the lithographs provided direct access to a prehistoric moment that transcended reading.

Prescott's Hieroglyphics

"In casting the eye over a Mexican manuscript, or map, as it is called," wrote Prescott, "one is struck with the grotesque caricatures it exhibits of the human figure; monstrous, overgrown heads, on puny, misshapen bodies, which are themselves hard and angular in their outlines, and without the least skill in composition" (*Conquest* 93). Prescott is speaking, of course, of the clean, unreadable copies of the Kingsborough volumes. This description shows, as we might expect, some basic misunderstandings of the codices. From his discussion in the *Conquest of Mexico*, it is clear that Prescott did not understand that the Kingsborough documents are not all Aztec in origin. Though this collection includes Mayan, Mixtec, and Nahua documents, and though these documents represent not just cartographic histories but also annals, genealogies, and dynastic lists, Prescott refers to them all indiscriminately as Aztec maps.

Like many historians of the nineteenth century, Prescott did not read the pictorials: how could he? Though he had access to the alphabetic reinscriptions of

some of these texts through the writings of Sahagún and others, he considered the manuscripts themselves to be largely unreadable, writing, "the hieroglyphics on the monuments of Central America will probably never be deciphered, because there is no known standard with which to compare them" (*Literary Memoranda* 39). Aztec pictorial writing, which Prescott called hieroglyphics, nevertheless played an important role in his imaginative understanding of pre-Columbian Mesoamerica. For Prescott, the use of hieroglyphics was a diagnostic through which he could evaluate the quality of Aztec civilization more broadly. As he wrote in comparison to Egyptian inscription, "The Aztecs, also, were acquainted with the several varieties of hieroglyphics. But they relied on the figurative infinitely more than on the others. The Egyptians were at the top of the scale, the Aztecs at the bottom" (*Conquest* 93).[11]

As Lindsay Van Tine argues, Prescott's theory of hieroglyphics fits neatly with larger trends in European historiography described by Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, who writes of "changing perceptions of the value of indigenous systems of writing" in the eighteenth century (Cañizares-Esguerra Van Tine 62). Rather than being evaluated based on the reliability of their author or even the integrity of their content, scripts were now "tightly linked with the worth and credibility of the information they stored"; if a manuscript wasn't written using alphabetic writing, then the infor-

[11]Because Prescott associated writing so closely with civilization, he remained anxious about the limitations of European understanding of pictorial writing. As the uncovering of the Rosetta Stone suggested, just because Europeans could not decode a writing system did not mean it wasn't an advanced inscription system. In a letter written as late as 1855, he wrote, "[Ramírez] considers that he has ascertained the existence of phonetic characters among the ancient Mexicans. Have you any knowledge yourself how far he had succeeded in establishing this interesting point, which would raise the ancient races an important step in the scale of civilization?" (Prescott, *Correspondencia* 67).

mation it contained was suspect (Cañizares-Esguerra 2). Conversely, the greatest value of a pictorial document was not the information inscribed on its pages, but rather what the writing revealed about the culture that produced it.

Prescott's evaluation of the Aztec pictorials, discussed over twenty-five pages or so in the fourth chapter of his *History*, is indicative of this larger trend. He argues for a three-staged hierarchy of inscription, among which picture-writing, the *representative* or *figurative* version, is the lowest stage, followed by *symbolical* (the most difficult to interpret), and then *phonetic* (Prescott, *Conquest* 92).[12] In addition to this hierarchy, Prescott applied an aesthetic evaluation to the paintings of the tlacuilos, arguing that the Egyptions "handled the pencil more gracefully than the Aztecs, were more true to the natural forms of objects, and, above all, showed great superiority in abridging the original figure by giving only the outline, or some character or essential feature" (94). We know that the pencil Prescott is describing was actually an imprint of an etching made by running acid over a drawing made with a wax crayon by Augustine Aglio. We also know that Aztec pictorials could vary in degrees of abstraction. At issue for Prescott, however, is this: that "Egyptian text has almost the appearance of alphabetical writing in its regular lines of minute figures. A Mexican text looks usually like a collection of pictures" (95). The visual dissimilarity between pictorial and alphabetic writing, determined primarily by the composition of the images on the page, led Prescott to evaluate them according to a system designed for European paintings. Within this evaluative system, the

[12]It's worth observing here that the communication systems of indigenous North Americans are also mentioned in passing in this discussion, but they are found to be so primitive that they do not even qualify for the hierarchy of civilization.

hieroglyphics fall far short of other kinds of representation.

Rather than trying to read the hieroglyphics, then, Prescott analyzes the Aglio lithographs against Western ideas of visual art — a not-inappropriate approach, given that Aglio, too, was trained in landscape painting. He uses this analysis to support his evaluation of the Aztec civilization, which he finds similarly wanting. This becomes important, even central, to Prescott's writing process when we consider the role that hieroglyphics play in his own work. We know that Prescott prioritized his sixteenth century sources; we also know that he was concerned about their contaminating effect on his work. The only true hieroglyphics, in the Aztec sense, that Prescott includes in his work is a chart illustrating the Aztec calendar, with European-style images of rabbits and ears of corn (see Figure 3.3). As Anna Brickhouse argues, this absence can be explained by Prescott's anxieties over the contaminating effect of indigenous language:

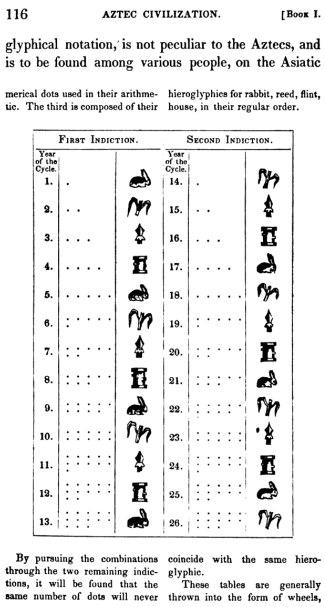
> "As with the Spanish chronicles, [Prescott] finds himself repulsed by the "barbarous nomenclature of [indigenous] vernacular," the "profusion of uncouth names in the Mexican orthography which bristle over every page." Prescott thus envisions words themselves not only as markers of civilization or its lack, but as potentially miscegenating repositories of racial and ethnic impurity, somehow imbued with a contagious power to degenerate the larger anglophone text into which, in this case, they have pointedly not been imported." (Brickhouse, *Transamerican Literary Relations* 76)

As Eric Wertheimer explains, for Prescott hieroglyphics come to symbolize the presence of indigenous contamination. In his article on race in Prescott's *History*, Wertheimer describes Prescott's approach as a "hieroglyphic conception of representation," in which Otherness "reproduces itself for us in the historiographic

processes" of both the Aztecs, authors of pictographic histories, and of Prescott himself (305). This argument turns on the metaphoric relationship that Prescott established between what he referred to as the Aztec hieroglyphics and the illegible chirography of alphabetic inscriptions both from the conquest period and from Prescott's own hand. Prescott's belief that the illegibility of Aztec hieroglyphics was a symptom and sign of their cultural inferiority carried over into the difficult chirography of both Spanish and Nahua writers, who bore the weight of indigenous barbarism and the *leyenda negra*. It also applied to the bad handwriting of his scribes, and to the bad handwriting of Prescott himself. Because he had difficulty seeing, Prescott used a noctograph, a writing machine for the blind, to produce letters and book manuscripts. He referred to the script produced through this mechanism, which uses carbon paper and a stylus to produce text which the writer never sees, as hieroglyphic.

Legibility and hieroglyphics become permanently entangled in Prescott's engagement with historical sources. Writing of the Spanish friar Bartolomé de Las Casas, Prescott's German aide Friedrich Wilhelm Lembke remarked that his manuscripts were "of a very wretched and unorthographical handwriting" (Lembke 45). The slippage, in Lembke's remark, between bad handwriting and bad orthography — that is, bad spelling — highlights the association between legibility and communicative sophistication which was also associated with the reliability and authenticity of the historical record. In contrast, of the manuscript copies that Lembke shipped from Spain, Prescott remarked, "The manuscripts are beautifully executed, and many of them in a hand as legible nearly as print, which is of great importance

to me" (Prescott, "4 Apr. 1839" 65). Rather than producing facsimiles, Prescott's expectation was that the copyists who worked for him would produce a cleaner and more legible text.



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glyphical notation, is not peculiar to the Aztecs, and is to be found among various people, on the Asiatic

merical dots used in their arithmetic. The third is composed of their hieroglyphics for rabbit, reed, flint, house, in their regular order.

First Indiction.			Second Indiction.		
Year of the Cycle.			Year of the Cycle.		
1.	.		14.	.	
2.	. .		15.	. .	
3.	. . .		16.	. . .	
4.	. . . .		17.	. . . .	
5.	. . . . .		18.	. . . . .	
6.	:		19.	:	
7.	: : . . .		20.	: : . . .	
8.	: : : . .		21.	: : : . .	
9.	: : : : .		22.	: : : : .	
10.	: : : : :		23.	: : : : :	
11.	: : : : :		24.	: : : : :	
12.	: : : : :		25.	: : : : :	
13.	: : : : :		26.	: : : : :	

By pursuing the combinations through the two remaining indictions, it will be found that the same number of dots will never coincide with the same hieroglyphic.

These tables are generally thrown into the form of wheels,

Figure 3.3: Hieroglyphics in William H. Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (116). From Hathi Trust.

At stake in the improved legibility that Prescott required of his transcribed manuscripts was the racial and ethnic purity — to use Brickhouse's language — of the historical record.[13] But equally important for Prescott was the issue of accessibility: given the condition of his eyes, he literally could not read unevenly inscribed texts. As he explained to Obadiah Rich, who had sent him a copy of Alonso de Palacio's chronicles, "The chirography of this however is so crabbed and enigmatical that I shall have it again copied here. From the infirmity of my eyes, the greater part of my Spanish is now read to me - and a difficult manuscript would add new delays to my necessarily very snail-like progress" ("Jan. 1828" 54). Later, writing again to Rich, he remarked, "I am obliged to you, for the little manuscript biography of Ximenez which I shall doubtless make useful to me in spite of the hieroglyphics in which it is written" ("25 Jun. 1828" 60). Unlike the Lembke case, in these examples cultural

[13]For example, Prescott repeatedly insisted that he was not interested in acquiring the writings of indigenous authors, particularly those who worked in Nahuatl.

corruption was acting at the cite of transcription; the metaphor of the hieroglyphs suggests that these bad transcriptions marked the failure, on the part of European copyists, to correct for colonial wretchedness.

Prescott's hieroglyphic metaphor further carried into his personal writing practices, which were also heavily transcriptive. Prescott's inconsistent vision made him largely dependent on a series of personal amanuenses for his research, men who he employed annually at a rate of $250-$400 per year, plus travel expenses and access to his personal library. (Prescott additionally depended on his family members, especially his wife, to transcribe some personal correspondence). These assistants worked eight hours a day, six days a week and were responsible for reading texts aloud, transcribing oral and written correspondence, and copying Prescott's manuscripts from the noctographic originals.[14] As Prescott remarked in the introduction to his *The Conquest of Peru*, with the use of the noctograph "The characters thus formed made a near approach to hieroglyphics" (quoted in Wertheimer 303).

"Is Prescott merely being glib, evaluating his writing from the standpoint of penmanship?" asks Wertheimer. "Or is he implying the iconographic broach of something more ambitious... [or] is he reflecting the insecurities of his national identity?" (306). For Wertheimer, the answer lies in the symbolic power of hieroglyphs in Prescott's writing, the role they play in both containing and distorting history. For our purposes, we are more concerned with the mediating role that the amanuenses and copyists played in transmitting these hieroglyphic texts. As Mara Mills has argued, technologies that mediated reading among blind individuals in the

[14]The fact that these assistants read the texts aloud permits us to wonder whose poor vision, precisely, determined his ability to consume transcribed copies.

nineteenth century were part of a national project that associated citizenship with literacy. Prescott's amanuenses played a similar role; by translating the hieroglyphics produced by the noctograph, they made them fit for the more civilized American nation.[15]

The conversion of Prescott's hieroglyphics to legible text had consequences for the nature of these texts. Both Prescott's personal copyists and his copyists abroad were highly educated, able to work in multiple languages and decipher complex orthographies. Indeed several went on to become writers in their own right. John Foster Kirk, Prescott's longest-lasting amanuensis, would edit Prescott's completed works after his death; later, he would become a lecturer in history at the University of Pennsylvania (Ramsey). In Europe, similarly, the Spanish historian Pascual de Gayangos copied many texts for Prescott himself (Gardiner).

Language and orthography nevertheless posed a problem for Prescott's assistants. At least some of them learned Spanish on the job, reading aloud to him in a language that they themselves may never have heard. Similarly, though Prescott sought copyists familiar with historical orthographies and multiple languages (including the barbarous language of the Mexicans) to transcribe his documents, that is not always what he got. Transcription corrected for the barbaric qualities imposed by both historical writing and physical disability; it also introduced new kinds of

[15]Prescott's approach to his own hieroglyphic writing links physical disability (in his case, physical degeneration) with cultural primitivism, suggesting that the disabled body cannot be fully integrated into civilized society. Yet Prescott was proud to have overcome these obstacles by using his financial privileges to erase the evidence of his disability from public view. It would be interesting to see how these contradictions applied to Prescott's work with the Perkins School for the Blind. Did he see the students as primitive, and education as a means of civilization? How might that compare to the ways he wrote about the civilizing effects of language on indigenous speakers?

errors imposed by copyists who could not read the texts that they were trying to transcribe. Textual legibility in a European context came at the expense of Mexican languages and orthographies.

Prescott's transcriptions ultimately had consequences both for the shape of his collection, and for his telling of history. Famously, Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico* is loaded down with footnotes that cite extensively from Prescott's historical manuscripts, arguably at the expense of the more reliable edited editions, especially when dealing with indigenous sources (Van Tine 101). The work additionally includes printed fragments of these original sources, such as excerpts from Sahagún and Oviedo, copied directly from Prescott's manuscript copies. As Van Tine argues with regard to Prescott's footnotes, "Prescott accumulated his rare and unpublished sources only to subsume them within an interpretive framework provided by the best-known and widely available history of the conquest" (109). Though these fragments and footnotes were stripped from many subsequent (posthumous) editions, the early volumes are suggestive of Prescott's effort to rein in his manuscript collection.

Icazbalceta's Editions

In a letter to the Mexican historian José Ramírez, Joaquín García Icazbalceta explained,

> *"Vi que convenía ante todas cosas procurarme copias de los manuscritos que no se hallasen en ésta y con tal fin era precioso pedirlas, o a las librerías de Madrid, o a los particulares que las poseyeran. El primer ar-*

> *bitrio ofrecía graves dificultades, como sucede siempre que se trata de cuerpos colegiados y establecimientos públicos, por lo que me pareció preferible el 2o fijándome desde luego en la preciosa colección del Sr. Prescott."* (Icazbalceta, "22 Jan. 1850" 5)[16]

Thus began a relationship that would span almost a decade. Though the two men never met, Prescott was generous in opening his library to the protégé of the great historian Lucas Alamán, who had of course provided Prescott with a number of Mexican documents himself. According to the published correspondence of the two men, Prescott sent Icazbalceta copies of manuscripts and printed books including the following (prices are listed when available):

- Toribio de Benavente (Motolinia), *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España* (16th c.) (400 pages at 40 cents a sheet).
- Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (chapters on Peru and Mexico) (16th c.) (1400 pages at 40 cents a sheet).
- Diego Muñoz Camargo, *Historia de Tlaxcala* (16th c.) (200 pages at 40 cents a sheet).
- Juan de Grijalva, *Itinerario de la armada* (1520).
- Juan Calvete de Estrella, *de Rebus Gestii* (1555) (with above, $10.62).
- Antonio de Alcedo, Biblioteca Americana (6 cents per 100 words).

In addition, Icazbalceta (sought to) acquire via Prescott a number of printed books, including:

[16] "I saw that it would be wise, in the first place, to procure copies of the manuscripts that cannot be found in this [country], and to this end it would be valuable to request them either of the libraries in Madrid, or of the individuals who owned them. The first possibility offered grave difficulties, as is always the case when dealing with professional bodies and public establishments. For this reason the second option seemed preferable; I focused, of course, on the precious collection of Mr. Prescott."

- George Bancroft, *History of the United States* (1834-1874).
- J. H. McCulloch, *Researches, Philosophical and Antiquarian, Concerning the Aboriginal History of America* (1829).
- Samuel George Morton, *Crania Americana* (1839).
- Peter Stephen Duponceau on American languages (unspecified).
- George Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature* (1849).

The process of transcribing these manuscripts was arduous and, occasionally, melodramatic. The first three documents Prescott had made — the Motolinía, Oviedo, and Camargo — were quoted to Icazbalceta at two reals (two cents) per page, or 40 cents a sheet: double what it would cost to make the documents in Mexico. The total, Prescott predicted, would be $200. Prescott offered the labor of his own amanuensis, working in his free time, but said that it would take about a year to transcribe the documents at a rate of about two hours per workday (Prescott, *Correspondencia*). In the end, the three documents come to 2,740 manuscript pages, or $274 dollars (plus an additional $10 for materials). Prescott sent this bill on March 10, 1851, suggesting that the process took some fifteen months to complete (Prescott, "10 Mar. 1851"). Prescott did apologize for the length of the process, but explained that it was difficult to find copyists who could accurately transcribe foreign manuscripts — plus his amanuensis was half the price.

Despite the long production period, these three documents were transcribed and shipped with relative ease. This was not the case with the transcription of Alcedo's *Biblioteca Americana*, held in the library of the historian (and Prescott's friend) Jared Sparks. Prescott offered to have a copy made in a letter dated May 21,

1853, and Icazbalceta accepted in a letter dated June 27 of that same year. In the original letter, Prescott wrote that the copy would be made by a Mr. Ciani, an Italian who had become "acquainted" with Spanish while working as an editor in Havana. As Prescott described, Ciani was a language teacher who need to supplement his income over the summer, but who was not established enough with the community to charge high prices. He offered the transcription at a rate of six cents per 100 words, which Prescott said corresponded to the rates for the earlier documents ("21 May 1853").

The process did not, however, go as planned. Prescott related the story in a letter sent the following year:

> I must, in a few lines explain the cause of the delay. The work was first placed in the hands of a Italian copyist, recommended to me by my friend Mr. Ticknor. This person after performing nearly half this task for which I settle with him every week absconded but fortunately left his papers behind him. I then, have the work of a scholar who abandoned it in disgust in less than a week. I was more fortunate with the third, who completed it and who as well as the Italian has done his task faithfully. ("23 Jul. 1854" 58)

For this convoluted final product, Prescott required $200, in addition to 18 dollars for materials and certification. But the story does not end there. In a letter to Prescott dated September 30, Icazbalceta wrote that almost immediately after receiving Prescott's letter, he heard that the Brazileiro, the ship on which the manuscript had been sent, had sunk. However, *"Por un especie de milagro, han llegado, pues, en mi mano los papeles y aunque bastante mojados, están por fortuna legibles"* (Icazbalceta, "30 Sept. 1854").[17]

[17]By some kind of miracle, the papers have arrived in my hands, and though they are a bit damp,

This story brings into stark relief the problems inherent in acquiring manuscripts from abroad. Because Icazbalceta was forced to have the documents copied in an Anglophone city, copyists were hard to find and the copying was costly. Even then, the language skills of the copyists may have been questionable. While I have not been able to locate the manuscript copy of the *Biblioteca Americana*, which may have been too damaged to preserve, the other manuscripts made by Prescott were bound in Icazbalceta's many-volume *Colección de manuscritos, relativos á la historia de América*. Because Icazbalceta would go on to print these documents in his *Nueva colección de documentos para la historia de México*, he included careful annotations and corrections which give insight into the process of producing and consuming these transcribed copies.

A cursory examination of the manuscript pages reveals an unfamiliarity with the Mexican names derived from Nahuatl on the part of the original transcriber. On the third page of Motolinía's *Proemia*, for example, Icazbalceta has written the word *Anahuac* (the Nahua name for the basin of Mexico) over a crossed-out term that appears to read "Aanhac." Other mispellings include "Motezuma" for the Aztec emperor "Moteuezoma"[18]; "Culiba" for "Culhua" (people from the Altepetl of Culhuacan); "Tescuco" for "Texcoco"; "Teuticlan" for the capital city "Tenochtitlan"; etc. (*Colección de manuscritos*). Though I cannot at this point attribute these mistakes to a particular scribe, it seems unlikely that they would have been passed down uncritically across copies without some effort at correction. This allows me to suspect that it was Prescott's scribe whose transcription shows an unfamiliarity

they are, fortunately, legible.

[18] Anglicized as Montezuma by Prescott

with the basic vocabulary of Mexican history.

The errors in the transcription, however, are not exclusive to Mexican naming conventions. Instead, the many corrections that Icazbalceta makes to the Spanish of the document more generally suggest a lack of language proficiency on the part of the original copyist. On the first page of the Proemia, for example, Icazbalceta corrects the incorrect pluralization of *sus* in the phrase "sea siempre con su ánima." Later the word *del* in the phrase "en la corte el emperador se precia de..." was corrected to *el* and *enterado* corrected to *entendido*. The corrections suggest someone familiar enough with the Spanish language to transcribe words for words (no gibberish here). But they also suggest someone who, at least a few times per page, fails to use context in order to determine the correct word, a sign that could signify lack of careful reading in the process of transcription. This, in turn, could be because the copyist did not fully comprehend the language it is written in.

In addition to his careful orthographic corrections, Icazbalceta collated the Prescott manuscript with the only existing printed edition of Motolinía's *Historia*, an extract included in Lord Kingsborough's *Antiquities of Mexico*. He then used these two documents to produce the first complete printed edition of the *Historia*, contained in volume two of his *Nueva colección de documentos para la historia de México* (1866). Though Icazbalceta preserves inconsistencies between the Kingsborough and the Prescott versions through footnotes, he corrects many of the orthographic errors described above without comment, replacing the misspellings with the proper Mexican names. Yet the orthography of one name is deemed worthy of an extended footnote. At the first reference to the term *Colhua*, Icazbalceta writes,

"El autor llama indistintamente en esta Epistola, Colhuas ó Acolhuas á los Tetzcocanos, siendo así los Colhuas eran los Mexicanos, llamándose Acolhoas solo los Tetzcocanos; y su reino Acolhuacan. Será tal vez error de los copistas; pero tambien es muy fácil, como lo han hecho muchos, confundir nombres tan semejantes" (*Bibliografía mexicana* 5).[19] Here Icazbalceta, having deemed an orthographic variation authentic, preserves it.

These comments and corrections illustrate that, despite the obvious editorial inconsistencies of the documents, Icazbalceta decided to take the Prescott manuscript as his primary source, and to use the printed Kingsborough version only as a secondary witness. This decision demonstrates, above all, Icazbalceta's commitment to careful documentary editing and documented provenance. Icazbalceta's reasons for producing a new edition of Motolinía's text are not difficult to unpack: the Kingsborough edition was costly, rare, and incomplete. Because he decided to unilaterally follow the Prescott transcriptions in his printed edition of Motolinía, Icazbalceta's edition carries in its very characters the legacy of the document's movement through two Anglophone nations on its way to Mexico. Remembered as the first printed edition of Motolinía's *Historia*, these variants in turn became the authoritative edition of the text for over fifty years, until the publication in 1914 of Fray Daniel Sanchez Garcia's Barcelona edition (Benavente).

[19] "In this Epistle, the author uses equally the name *Colhuas* or *Acolhuas* to refer to the Tetzcocans, though in fact the Colhuas were the Mexicans, while only the Tetzcocans referred to themselves as Acolhoas, and to their kingdom as Acolhuacan. This could be a mistake [introduced by] the copyists, but it is also very easy to confuse such similar names, and it has occurred many times...."

Conclusion: Stereotyping the historical record

In exchange for the manuscripts that Prescott sent him, Icazbalceta shipped to the United States a number of books printed in Mexico, both for Prescott's personal use and for the use of organizations such as the Academy of National Sciences in Philadelphia. The first exchange he proposed, however, was for a document that he was particularly excited about: a manuscript, copied by Icazbalceta himself, of Juan B. Pomar's *Relación de Texcoco* (1582) with additional "romances en mexicano" (poems in Nahuatl). Icazbalceta had recently uncovered the only known copy of this document, and offered it to Prescott on the chance that it might be useful in any revisions Prescott intended to make to his *History*. But Prescott rejected the offer outright, explaining that he had no intention of making revisions — and no interest in the document — because his book was already in stereotype.

Icazbalceta replied,

> *Desde que ofrecí a usted la relación de Pomar creía que no podría serle útil, por la misma razón que usted me expone, de que estando ya estereotipada la Conquista de Méjico no es posible revisarla y corregirla. Por eso me ha parecido siempre que la estereotipía no debía aplicarse a las obras hasta después del fallecimiento de sus autores, porque siendo estos en general poco inclinados a limar y corregir sus obras, tienen además en contra para hacerlos el interés de sus editores. Por mi parte pienso con el italiano Morelli que las obras son como los hijos, que no basta darles el ser sino que es preciso cuidar de ellos toda la vida.* (Icazbalceta, "14 Oct. 1851" 36-37)[20]

[20]"As soon as I offered you the Relación by Pomar, I realized that it could not be useful to you, for the same reason that you explained, which is that since the Conquest of Mexico was already in stereotype it would not be possible to revise and correct it. For this reason it has always seemed to me that works should not be put in stereotype until after the death of their authors, because not only are authors little inclined to refine and correct their works, but it is also against the interest of their

We already know that Prescott had little interest in indigenous historiography, so it's no surprise that he rejected Pomar's manuscript. But there's something complicated at play in the role of printing technology here. When Prescott says he cannot revise the text, he is not being entirely truthful. Stereotype plates can be modified, though the changes may be costly; and the book went through so many editions during Prescott's lifetime that there would have been ample funds and opportunity to make a revision. Is Icazbalceta mocking Prescott by attributing his intellectual limitations to technological rigidity? From the twenty-first century, the metaphor of the Indian stereotype, set in immovable type, is all too clear.

We can benefit here from a more attentive consideration of the ways that stereotype consolidate text. The greatest challenge, in the case of stereotyping, is the addition of new content, such as the new information provided by the Pomar manuscript. This might be accomplished as an addendum, or plates might have to be re-cast. Erasure, however, is relatively easy to accomplish, and individual letters can be transformed. If stereotypes set the content and structure of an idea in place, they remain flexible at the level of orthography — the space in which this chapter plays. Much can be done to revise the ideological force of a stereotyped text. What is interesting, then, is how this technology came to stand, very specifically, for early-nineteenth-century ideas of indigeneity that, once set in immovable type, would cast a long shadow over historiography in the United States.

Even given the small-scale revisions that were possible with stereotype plates, the illusion of fixity, assigned to both stereotype and lithographic plates, became

editors. For my part I think, with the Italian Morelli, that works are like sons, and it is not enough to give them being, but it is also necessary to care for them throughout their lives."

increasingly compelling over the course of the nineteenth century.[21] As a result, historical scholarship would shift away from the manuscript copy and towards the printed edition as an authoritative source. This allowed for new attention to the art of editing during this period. It also led to the relative disappearance of the manuscript copy from the public eye. Though many important colonial Mexican documents, such as the histories of Sahagún and Motolinía, were available only through a chain of transcriptions, that chain was often forgotten under the spell of the printed document. Though Icazbalceta, the bibliographer, often preserved a record of the provenance of his printed documents, both Prescott and Kingsborough elided or misrepresented these histories, as would become the norm.

In the introduction to this chapter, I described how Prescott sent his friends a Daguerrotype camera in exchange for the signature of Cortés (and associated documents and artifacts). Ultimately, printed editions based on transcribed copies would in turn be replaced by photographic facsimiles. These facsimiles, once printed, are now often made available in repositories online, as is the case with almost every document described in this chapter. The process of transcription — both manual and mechanized — has become central to the labor of producing digital facsimiles. These processes will be the subject of the next chapter, "Automatic Transcription in the Twenty-First Century."

[21]The myth of fixity has long been associated with movable type, as Elizabeth Eisenstein and Adrian Johns have argued (Johns Eisenstein). Perhaps the page-size consistency of the stereotype plate superseded that of movable type; or perhaps the myth of printing-press fixity was fading by the nineteenth century.

Chapter 4: Automatic Transcription in the Twenty-First Century

From one perspective, the landscape of twenty-first century transcription looks completely different from that of the 1830s.[1] With the advent of the typewriter in the 1870s, the manual labor of transcription was no longer primarily a task of manuscript production: a radical change for our study, which has focused so closely on questions of chirography. Originally designed as writing mechanisms for the blind, typewriters would ultimately become a familiar presence in both corporate and private life. They brought with them more efficient and visually homogeneous writing than that produced by individual hands. As Friedrich Kittler argues in his history of the typewriter, "The typewriter cannot conjure up anything imaginary, as can cinema; it cannot simulate the real, as can sound recording" (Kittler 184). In place of these greater transformations, the typewriter offers speed and consistency. Indeed, by resolving the question of bad handwriting that plagued Prescott and others, the typewriter promises a more perfect copy than could have been imagined before: the ideal of the clear copy taken to a mechanical extreme.

One anxiety that the typewriter provokes has to do with the distance it imposes between hand and word. Martin Heidegger articulates the idea clearly (for once): "The typewriter tears writing from the essential realm of the hand, i.e., the realm of the word. The word itself turns into something "typed."" Against this danger, Heidegger offers a modest corrective, writing, "Where typewriting, on the contrary, is only a transcription and serves to preserve the writing, or turns into print

[1] A version of this chapter appeared in *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 10.4 (2016) under the title "Machine Reading the *Primeros Libros*." This article was published under an open-access license that gives authors permanent ownership of their work.

something already written, there it has a proper, though limited significance" (qtd in Kittler, 198). This articulation of the divergence between transcription and composition is telling. In the case of composition, as Heidegger argues, the mechanization of inscription is a site of danger and anxiety, a troubling of the very status of the word itself. In the case of transcription, on the other hand, these same machines seem useful and unproblematic.[2]

Though the terms, and the machines, will change, Heidegger's central argument will remain in place over the course of the twentieth century. With the mid-century popularization of computers came a new interest in machine reading (and, by association, machine transcription). Mechanisms originally conceived to aid in literacy for the blind were now mobilized for machine reading, leading to the predecessors of the technologies we now speak of as scanning and optical character recognition. The transformation of text into data, to be processed in invisible and therefore dangerous ways, has evoked consternation from within literary studies and beyond. The automatic transcriptions produced by these processes, on the other hand, have received little attention as transformative textual events; when they are examined critically, it is mostly to bemoan their inability to produce a perfect copy.

This story is repeated again in the 1980s with the spread of personal computers, as Matthew Kirschenbaum documents. Word processing was perceived as deeply troubling by writers and those who think about writing, even as some raced

[2]Heidegger's analysis also marks the first time in this dissertation that we see the word "preservation" appear in the context of mechanical (or machine-mediated) transcription. Preservation, of course, is a key term used in the description of twenty-first century digitization projects.

to adopt the new technology. As Kirschenbaum shows, these anxieties were often conceived in terms of the perceived distance that word processors imposed between writing and text, a distance made even more extreme by the "suspended inscription" of word processing that separates screen from page (46). At the same time, the relative malleability of text on a computer screen seemed to transform the very nature of composition. As originally conceived, however, word processing sought to do none of these things: instead, it was originally designed to be used by secretaries, and its original promise was the ideal of perfect copy (35). Even among literary writers, this would be the primary use of early word processing systems for many individuals, who continued (and continue) to write their novels longhand, employing assistants to transcribe their manuscripts by entering them into the machine.[3]

These assistants were primarily women, sign of a demographic shift in copying practices that begins, as Kittler documents, with the typewriter. This shift is astonishing enough to replicate here: while in 1871 women made up a mere 4.5% of the stenographers in the United States, by 1880 they made up 40% of the workforce, and by 1930, 95.6% (184). "The typewriter cannot conjure up anything imaginary, as can cinema; it cannot simulate the real, as can sound recording; it only inverts the gender of writing," Kittler argues. "In doing so, however, it inverts the material basis of literature" (183). For Kittler, the textual transformations wrought by the typewriter are less significant than the demographic shift that it heralded. Kirschenbaum, while less inclined to technological determinism, nonetheless finds women residing in the shadows of the word processor as well: "the word processor

[3]Indeed, in some ways the need to transfer texts of all kinds to the computer has increased the relevance of transcription today.

was imagined from the outset as an instrument of... "women's work,"" he writes, designed explicitly for the use of women who had long-since been ensconced in a secretarial role (141). Women appear, too, in the background of the history of automated transcription. The early scanners used for machine reading, like other machines of the computer industry, were associated early on with female operators, though today they interact with gender in less obvious ways.[4]

So we see that transcription in the twenty-first century is unlike anything that could have been conceived of before the advent of writing machines. Yet in other ways, these mechanisms obscure underlying continuities with the transcriptive past. The ideal of a perfect copy, defined by clearly formed letters and orthographic precision (whatever that may mean), remains the goal even as typewriters, machine readers, and word processors change the surface on which that copy is inscribed. The underlying interpretive labor that enables these copies goes largely unremarked, and the people who enact this labor are largely forgotten despite efforts at recovery by Kirschenbaum and others.

Indeed, it is the contention of this chapter that while much has been said about the radical mechanical transformations that have been wrought on writing production in the past century, there is a lot to be gleaned from the continuities between early writing practices and those enacted today. The methodological ap-

[4]Women, who have been largely absent from the transcription history told here, are dragged into the scene by Kirschenbaum, Kittler, and others with the development of tools for mechanical inscription. Yet the only woman who will appear in this chapter is me. This chapter, I suspect, will reveal more than enough about my position as a transcriptive agent. Make of that what you will. Make what you will, too, of the absence of people of color from the story I am about to tell, though I suspect the words of Marisa Parham are not irrelevant here: "There's a way in which the notion that the technological has nothing to do with people of color is embedded in society. It runs deeply" (Dinsman).

proach of this chapter, which has focused on a body of written texts from the sixteenth century, enables us to follow these continuities through multiple political, social, economic, and mechanical changes.

Though the mechanisms described in this final section may seem radically different from those that came before — and will be less comfortably familiar than the scribal copying of previous chapters — the questions that this section asks will in many ways remain unchanged. By focusing on machine reading, and the processes of automatic transcription, the section seeks to understand how the long history of manual transcription makes itself present in automatically transcribed texts, and how these texts reflect, or are influenced by, the historical moment and social context in which they are produced. As has been the case throughout this chapter, its primary focus will be on the automatic transcription of historical documents from early colonial New Spain.

Introducing Automatic Transcription

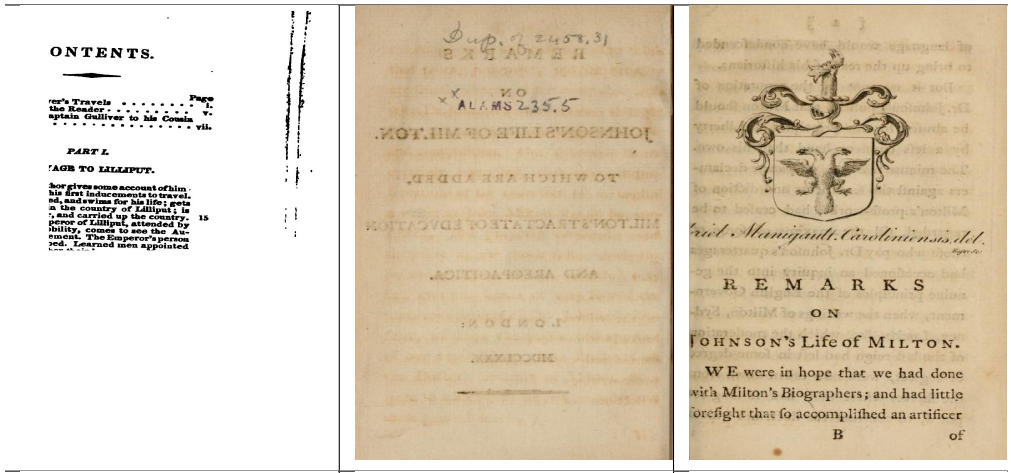
The focus of this section is automatic transcription, the mechanical production of transcribed texts based on scanned facsimiles of text.[5] As mentioned previously, automatic transcription is produced by way of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software, which, as its name implies, refers to the visual recognition of character sequences taken from an image. The process involves the production of the digital facsimile, its segmentation into discrete characters, and the association of those

[5]Though we generally think of automatic transcription as applying to printed or manuscript text, it can also be used, for example, to read written signs in landscape photographs.

characters with a statistical model held by the machine. The system pairs each image with its most probable character match to produce a sequence of characters letters as a string, or, colloquially, a word.

Though only a small number of people use Optical Character Recognition, most modern computer users are familiar with its output. Major repositories for online facsimiles, like Internet Archive and Google Books, use OCR to transcribe scanned texts. If you have used PDFs that have a highlighting, underlining, or search function, you have likely used texts have have been automatically transcribed. In that case, you have also likely encountered "Dirty OCR": the name given to OCR output that features non-linguistic characters or gibberish transcriptions. Figure 4.1 shows examples of dirty OCR that reflect various material conditions (the 'noisiness') of the original image. In one example, a poorly aligned scan has distorted the characters beyond recognition. In another case, shadows on a blank page are re-interpreted as characters by the over-optimistic machine reader. In a third example, a decorative image is misinterpreted as language and encoded as nonsense. Each of these examples reflects the machine's inadequate understanding of the relationship between text and object. Other examples, some of which will be addressed later, reflect the machine's inadequate understanding of language.

My interest in OCR arose - as is the case among many people - out of an interest in conducting computational operations on scanned documents. I was working with the *Primeros Libros* collection, a respository of digital facsimiles of books printed prior to 1601 in the Americas. I wanted to be able to search this collection



ONTENTS. rer'sTraTelt Z^ the Reader ** aptain GnlliTer to his CotMia vii. PARTI, TAOB TO LtLLIFUT. JprclTtt lome aecoant ofhim * nu first indncemeDts to travel. Bd, aadtwiflu fisr his life ; seta in the conntry of Lillipat ; it % and carried up the country. 15 perpr of Lillipat, attended by >bUity, comet to tee the Au- emeni. The Emperor's person u* '^J^'ffr*®^ men appointed	::»«.^ ^■^ tt'-^T.- ^ ur%,i\ v< 0^- >•— ALAi«b^.3i.^ . r ^ *^ i ^ XJ,-.- ■.'::<-'i3rtr.	'^u/ .. '//^M/yr/^^//. /^a yo/r?7/r/f.j/^, ^// S'^iffiCc: REMARKS O N I" H N s o n's Life of M i l t o n. W E were in hope that we had done -vitk Milton's Biographers; and had little ■orefight that fo accomplilhed an artificer B of
Title page to an 1823 edition of Gulliver's Travels, with accompanying "full text" as found on archive.org.	Blank page opposite the title page to a 1780 edition of John Milton's Areopagitica, with accompanying "full text" as found on archive.org.	Title page from the Remarks on Johnson's life of Milton (1780) with accompanying "full text" as found on archive.org.

Figure 4.1: Dirty OCR of facsimile pages of historical documents taken from archive.org.

for what I thought was basic information. Because the texts existed exclusively as JPEG or PDF images (because they had not been transcribed), I found these operations impossible. I rather naively set out to find a mechanism for easily and quickly transcribing the books myself. That task ultimately led to the development of the "Reading the First Books" project, a two-year, multi-institutional effort to develop and implement tools for the automatic transcription of early modern printed books, funded by a Digital Humanities Implementation Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The "Reading the First Books" project uses Ocular, a tool for the automatic transcription of historical books which had recently been developed by computer scientists at U.C. Berkeley. We chose Ocular as our preferred tool for transcribing the *Primeros Libros* because it was (and may still be!) the state-of-the-art in historical document transcription, designed specifically for documents printed using a hand press.[6] By taking into account the unique material factors affecting transcription of these printed books, Ocular improves significantly on tools that assume the stylistic consistency of modern printed books. Ocular works by combining two generative statistical models that represent how text should be. The first model, which is called the "font model," focuses on the material qualities of the text: the shape of the font, the alignment of the type, the over- or under-inking that make text difficult to read visually. The second model, which is called the "language model," focuses on the text itself. After analyzing a language sample, it builds a statistical model of

[6]This chapter does not consider other prominent OCR systems, such as Google's Tesseract or ABBYY Fine Reader, though a comparative study could yield interesting results. Both systems do offer the option of a language model, suggesting that some of the implications of this study would be broadly applicable.

six-character strings (known as six-grams): given any sequence of five characters, it is able to guess at what the sixth character should be. The result of this combination is a model that can identify clearly defined characters and use context to recognize an unclear image (Berg-Kirkpatrick, Durrett, and Klein).

Ocular is uniquely effective because it pays particular attention to the material conditions of the text. When working with the tool, however, we found that equal attention to the language model is necessary for a fully functioning OCR system. Ocular was originally designed for a nineteenth-century British corpus which was relatively monolingual and orthographically regular. In our sixteenth-century corpus, monolingual documents were not guaranteed: texts switch between languages at the level of the chapter, paragraph, sentence, and even word. This is illustrated, for example, in a passage from Rincón's Arte mexicana in which he describes the Nahuatl use of the gerund, writing: *"El gerundio, en do, ſe ſuple tambiẽ en dos maneras. Lo primero por la compoſicion de todos los verbos que ſignifican quietud o mouimiẽto v.g. ni tetlaçotlatica, eſtoy amando, nitetlaçotlatiuitz. vengo amando..."* (Rincón 24r. Nahuatl words have been italicized)).[7] Elsewhere, quotations from Latin are incorporated smoothly into the Spanish prose, much like in this chapter. Like language usage, sixteenth-century orthography was not consistent even within a single document, where printers might use three or four spellings for a single word, including common letter substitutions (a "u" in place of a "v") or shorthand (the elision of the letters n and m). Neither of these challenges is unique

[7] "The gerund, endo, is also used in two ways. The first is in the composition of all the verbs that signify stillness or movement, for example, ni tetlaçotlatica, I am loving, nitetlaçotlatiuitz. I come loving...." I have retained the orthographic idiosyncrasies of the original. Thanks to Adam Coon for his help with this translation.

to the *Primeros Libros* corpus: in his survey Natural Language Processing for Historical Texts, Michael Piotrowski describes these as two of the key challenges for transcribing and analyzing historical documents created throughout the early modern world (11).

To handle these challenges, we modified Ocular on a multilingual model that allows it to identify the language of each character before attempting to transcribe it. We also added an interface for orthographic variability, which allows us to alter the system manually according to period-specific orthographic patterns. A technical description of the system can be found in the *Proceedings of NAACL 2015* ("Unsupervised Code-Switching"). Later extensions to the system included the development a system for automatically recognizing orthographic variability, and for jointly producing both diplomatic and modernized version of the text ("Orthographic Variation"). In developing these extensions, I became aware of the variability of historical orthography and of the ways that ideas about language, history, and accuracy can become embedded in OCR algorithms. This ultimately inspired this chapter of the dissertation.

This chapter has two goals. First, by incorporating the history of automatic transcription tools into the larger history of transcription described here, I hope to better understand the roles these tools play in mediating our engagement with historical texts. Second, by closely analyzing the transcriptions produced by Ocular on the *Primeros Libros*, I will illustrate how Ocular replicates the colonial forces that have been embedded in the transcription of these documents from their inception in the missions of New Spain. At the same time, however, I hope to show how we can

work against those currents of colonial textuality by thinking critically about how and what we transcribe.

Automatic Transcription in History

Most histories of OCR begin in the nineteenth century, when innovators in the United States registered the first patents for machine readers for the blind (Mills Schantz). These machines were intended to provide blind readers access to text by producing sounds corresponding to each letter on the page. Mary Jameson, working with the "reading optophone" developed in the early nineteenth century, was able to achieve a rate of sixty words per minute in this manner. Here "text" is defined narrowly as that which can be read aloud according to a simple one-to-one correspondence of character and sound. This is, interestingly, the closest to a transcription tool —- in the traditional sense — that OCR has ever come. Absent, in these early machines, was the etymological sense of transcription as a written process. But if we understand the sounds to be texts in their own right, as Mara Mills suggests we should, then this one-to-one process fits Arlette Farge's description of transcription perfectly: the "slow and unrewarding artisanal task of recopying texts, section after section, without changing the format, the grammar, or even the punctuation" (29).

We may find the legacy of this history in the fact that "accessibility" is often cited as a benefit of transcription. Mara Mills calls this the assistive pretext of OCR. Unlike digital facsimiles, transcribed texts can be interpreted by the screen readers which blind readers use to browse the internet. (In a case like the *Primeros Libros*

however, where output is in the form of early modern orthography in low-resource languages like Nahuatl or Latin, this pretext is dubious at best.) It is tempting to link the automatic transcription of OCR to the history of assistive technologies because it is tempting to think of transcription as a public service specifically designed to target the underprivileged members of our community. This fits with other claims about the democratic potential of online collections. It is not random that both Mills and Howard Schantz, the two most prominent historians of OCR, both link its development to the growth of usonian democracy in the nineteenth century.

In the twentieth century, these histories turn to the twin processes of globalization and neoliberalism to explain how OCR shifted from being a tool for aiding individual readers to become a tool for the facilitation of institutional data processing. Interestingly, this institutional present of automatic transcription is often described as one that is independent of identity, culture, nation, and language. Even when scholars are critical of what they see as the neoliberal implications of big data, they often describe it as a total rupture with historical forms of engaging (as humans and machines) with text. In contrast, when OCR is written into a longer history of transcription practices that extends into the medieval era, it becomes possible to understand how it engages with the practice of scribal correction, translation, and composition.

We have seen in previous chapters how transcription moved from the hands of indigenous students at the Colegio de Santa Cruz into the hands of educated scribes working in the archives of Europe (and occasionally the Americas). How can we situate OCR against or within this history? Today, the manual transcrip-

tion of historical documents is carried out by faculty members, students, librarians, community volunteers, and occasionally the workers on crowd-sourcing systems like Amazon's so-called "Mechanical Turk."[8] Most transcriptions of printed documents, however, are produced through computer-aided processing. This might suggest that the labor of transcription has become, at least in part, computer labor, and that the artificially intelligent computer may be in some ways analogous to the Franciscan friar or his indigenous students.

Yet in other ways automatic transcription belongs to a profoundly separate history. Scholars in the humanities —- and PDF users more generally — are familiar with OCR primarily as a transcription tool. Yet transcription has not been the primary purpose of OCR since the 1950s, when large institutions and corporations first became interested in making their data — addresses on envelopes, accounts payable and receivable —- available for computer processing. This required the conversion of paper records to machine-readable files. At this point, the task of "transcribing" a text disappears entirely from the narrative. In its place we find the deconstruction of an image into its constituent parts in a way that makes it available, as text, for computational analysis.

Today, OCR requires neither the presence of a written document (a page, an envelope, the address printed on the mailbox of a house) nor the presence of a human consumer. At the post office, OCR is used to sort envelopes without any human intervention: though the material text (the envelope) remains central to the process, human readers disappear entirely (Schantz 23). At Google, OCR is used to rec-

[8]It is not mere coincidence that both racialization and colonization are embedded in this title. See (Aytes).

ognize house addresses in Street View footage in order to improve the accuracy of Google Maps: although currently human readers are used to train the models, ultimately neither humans nor objects will be relevant to the complex models, of which OCR is just a small part (Google). As Ayhan Aytes and Shawn Wen have pointed out, even when humans participate in the transcription process through programs like reCAPTCHA or Mechanical Turk, the work is often fragmented and decontextualized to the point where the transcriber has no interpretive grasp on the text being transcribed.

The temptation here might be to suggest that this total fragmentation of the text into parts or pixels eradicates the "composite agency" behind transcribed texts. In contrast, I argue that this shift in the relationship between transcriber and text requires us to shift the focus of our attention as we seek evidence of the transcriber's hand (metaphorically speaking) in the final transcription. First, it means that, like the machine reader, we must work at the level of the character string, rather than the word or the sentence, to identify sites of interaction between a transcription and the historical moment of its production. Second, it means that alongside the transcription, we can turn to the processing apparatus itself to identify further interventions in the text produced by the machine. As Ocular processes facsimiles, it gathers extensive information about every pixel in the image — and every character —- on the page. This supplementary information, not unexpectedly, becomes central to the processing potential of the tool, and to the interpretive interventions made to the printed page.

Biased Transcriptions

How does OCR shape transcriptions? I have argued that Ocular intervenes in the printed text in two ways. Ocular's 'recognition' of printed characters directly impacts the final output. At the same time, the processes through which Ocular recognizes characters create supplementary information that alters the meaning of the text.

This section is concerned with the first intervention: the ways that the Ocular system "recognizes" printed characters and how that recognition can have an interpretive effect on the final transcription. I show first how the dangers of transcription that are present in the colonial context (the composite author-figure of the contact zone) insinuate themselves into Ocular by way of the language data. Second, I consider how the Ocular system and our evaluation methods are biased towards certain kinds of machine reading. Here, I seek to show that the system itself has a deterministic effect not just on the success of the machine reading, but also on its form. This impact, again, is shaped by the context of the system's use.

Importantly, the goal in this section is not to prove that machine-learning systems like Ocular aren't neutral. As recent reports in popular media about "biased algorithms" have shown, this is already a well-established truth (Angwin et al. Cain Miller Baldridge). Instead, I attempt to identify where the historical contingencies of text and context interact with the Ocular system, how they affect our transcription of the *Primeros Libros*, and how this situates our Ocular transcription within the longer history of colonial textual reproduction embedded in the *Primeros Libros* collection.

Biased Data: The Language Model

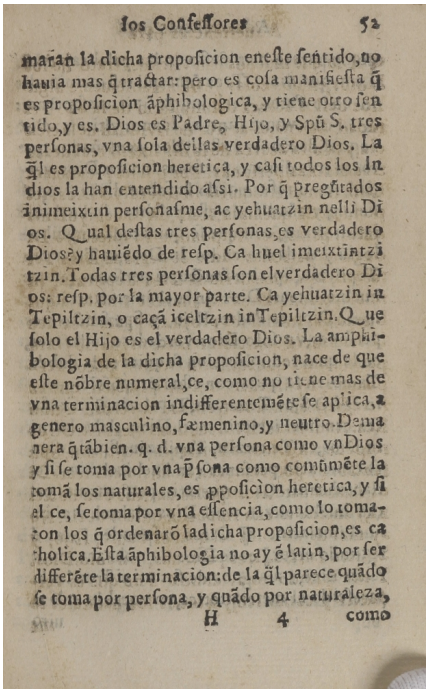
As the brief history of the *Primeros Libros* described, the colonial effort to reframe Nahuatl as a Latin language has been understood as a process that both enacted and recorded broader processes of cultural exchange and (forced) assimilation in early colonial Mexico. We see this embedded in the very texts themselves, as shown by the example of Rincón's creative reworking of Latin grammatical law, or in Bautista's efforts to translate theologically precise concepts and texts into Nahuatl. The differences can be expressed, importantly, at the level of orthography: for example, the presence or absence of the letter 'h', used by some philologists to mark the glottal stop, may reflect different understandings of the language that are shaped by efforts to adhere to — or sway from —- the Latin model (Lockhart 104).

Consider, for example, the facsimile shown in Figure 4.2. This page from Bautista's *Advertencias* discusses efforts to communicate the concept of the holy trinity to new indigenous converts. The danger is that the converts will understand the trinity – meant to be three facets of a single god – as polytheistic. The solution, Bautista informs us, is to use the Nahuatl phrase Ca huel imeixtintzitzin, which signifies *"todas tres personas son el verdadero"* (52r).[9] As Bautista describes, however, embedded in this Nahuatl phrase is an *amphibologia* (amphibology: a grammatically ambiguous phrase) which might lead the uninformed to the heretical belief that God is a person. Bautista explains: *"Ēsta ãphibologia no ay ẽ latin, por ēser diferẽte la terminacion"* (52r).[10] This is Bautista's paradox: without properly explaining the concept of the holy trinity, new converts will believe Christianity

[9] "All three people are the true [god]."

[10] "This amphibology does not exist in Latin because the ending [of the word] is different."

is polytheistic. Yet due to a grammatical difference between Latin and Nahuatl, efforts to explain the concept lead, themselves, to the risk of heresy.


los Confessores 52

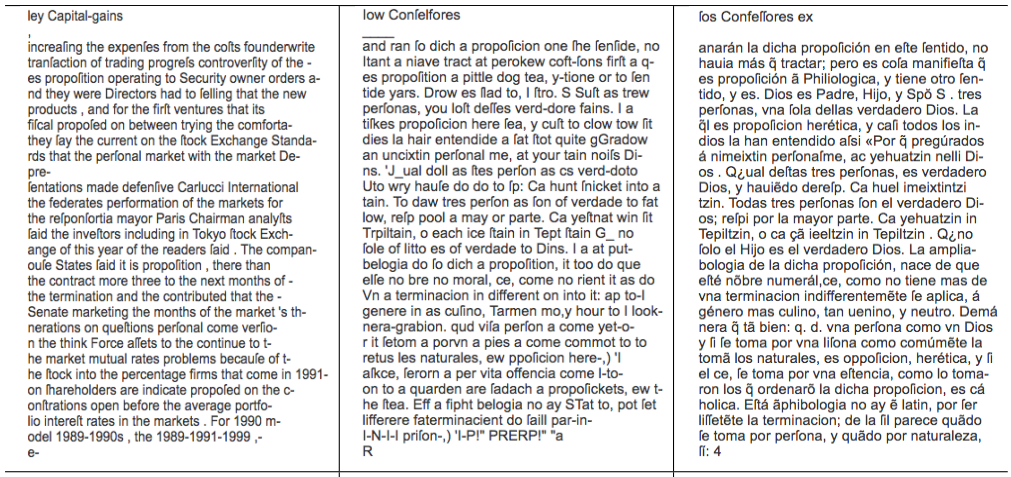
maran la dicha proposicion en este sentido, no
hauia mas q̃ tractar: pero es cosa manifiesta q̃
es proposicion ãphibologica, y tiene otro sen
tido, y es. Dios es Padre, Hijo, y Spũ S. tres
personas, vna sola dellas verdadero Dios. La
q̃l es proposicion heretica, y casi todos los In
dios la han entendido assi. Por q̃ pregũtados
inimeixtin personaſme, ac yehuatzin nelli Di
os. Qual destas tres personas es verdadero
Dios? y hauiẽdo de resp. Ca huel imeixtintzi
tzin. Todas tres personas son el verdadero Di
os: resp. por la mayor parte. Ca yehuatzin in
Tepiltzin, o caçã iceltzin in Tepiltzin. Que
solo el Hijo es el verdadero Dios. La amphi-
bologia de la dicha proposicion, nace de que
este nõbre numeral, ce, como no tiene mas de
vna terminacion indifferentemẽte se aplica, a
genero masculino, fœmenino, y neutro. Dema
nera q̃ tãbien. q. d. vna persona como vn Dios
y si se toma por vna p̃ sona como comũmẽte la
tomã los naturales, es ꝓposicion heretica, y si
el ce, se toma por vna essencia, como lo toma-
con los q̃ ordenarõ la dicha proposicion, es ca
tholica. Esta ãphibologia no ay ẽ latin, por ser
differẽte la terminacion: de la q̃l parece quãdo
se toma por persona, y quãdo por naturaleza,

H 4 como

Figure 4.2: Facsimile image of a page from the *Advertencias* (52r).

The process of automatic transcription can pose a translation problem that is analogous to that faced by Bautista. This translation problem is introduced to the system by way of the language model. Recall that the language model is a simple n-gram model based on 'language data' provided by the user. To observe how this language data shapes the transcription, consider Figure 4.3, which shows three variations of an Ocular transcription of the page from the *Advertencias* shown in Figure 4.2.

The three variations here show three ways of "reading" the facsimile page, each based on a different language model. The first variation uses a model based on the New York Times, similar to the Wall Street Journal model used by the original Ocular system. The second variation uses a language model based on the full text of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* from Project Gutenberg. The third shows a language model that draws on three historical corpora of Latin, Spanish, and Nahuatl.



New York Times	Alice in Wonderland	Trilingual language model

Figure 4.3: Transcriptions of the *Advertencias* (Bautista, 1601) produced using three different language models.

Each variation is a kind of "dirty OCR": a deformation of the original text that looks like gibberish. A closer examination, however, shows that there are patterns. Each variation is a reworking of Spanish and of Nahuatl that reflects the linguistic biases of the original. Ocular works by pairing a "font model" based on the visual appearance of the characters with a "language model" based on its knowledge of what language is supposed to look like. In these examples, the "font model" pulls the transcription towards the visual appearance of the text, while the language model pulls it towards the linguistic context of modern English, Victorian English, and multilingual New Spain. The result is a jabberwocky-esque transcription that looks like the *Advertencias* – like Spanish and Nahuatl – but appears in sequences characteristic of other times and places.

We would never use *Alice in Wonderland* as language data for the automatic

transcription of the *Primeros Libros*. What these examples make explicit, however, is that the language data has a direct effect on the transcription. This is true even in the multilingual, early modern corpus that we used for our transcriptions. Given the wide variations in orthographic norms among regions and writers and the sparsity of language data relative to the requirements of the language model, it was impossible to build a language corpus that perfectly represented the context of our documents. Instead, our language data is more generalized, which has a homogenizing effect on regional variations. This homogenization is complicated by the fact that many of the transcriptions we used for our data are modernized versions of historical documents. Modifications of spelling, extension of shorthand, and standardization of character use are respected practices among documentary editors working to produce readable documents for a (relatively) general public. When they are embedded into the language data, however, they become unrecognized influences over the shape of the final text.

A closer consideration of the Nahuatl case shows how this homogenization or modernization can have a meaningful impact on the final transcription. Because alphabetic Nahuatl was still under development during the sixteenth century, orthographic difference can be an important marker of regional, religious, authorial, or class distinctions. Our language data for Nahuatl came primarily from scholars schooled in the orthographic tradition promoted by James Lockhart. This tradition, based on that developed by the seventeenth century philologist Horacio Carochi, was primarily documentary: it sought to reflect the styles of the original documents (Lockhart 109). Modernization nevertheless occurred, as in the transcription of an

unrenderable shorthand as "qz," or the general adherence to standards that didn't "jelly" (to use Lockhart's term) until the 1560s or 70s, some thirty years into the *Primeros Libros* corpus. In this case, the decision to draw on Lockhart's documentation in our transcriptions was a conscious decision to bias the model towards these orthographic standards. Perhaps more significantly, however, the Lockhart examples often came from the legal archives, which had spelling conventions that often differed significantly from their ecclesiastical counterparts. As Lockhart writes, "when left to themselves [. . .] Nahua writers had a very different outlook on what they were doing than their Spanish counterparts. Spaniards were spelling words; in general, they wrote a given word the same way every time they used it, employing the same standard spelling, in relative independence of how they might pronounce it. To the Nahuas, the word, insofar as they were even aware of it, was a constantly changing entity with fluid borders" (111). This could be represented by a difference in spacing, but could also appear in the form of phonetic spelling variations. It was also reflected at the level of the letter, through the presence and absence of the glottal stop as 'h' and the 'n' or 'm' to signify nasal sounds. To impose this orthographic pattern onto the *Primeros Libros* documents, which were primarily ecclesiastical, is to erase important cultural differences between two forms of Nahuatl writing. Yet given the paucity of the Nahuatl corpus, distinguishing between the various forms of Nahuatl was not a real option.

I find in this intractable challenge an echo of the problem that Bautista encountered with translating the holy trinity. Bautista found himself trapped linguistically between two heresies: the heresy of polytheism or the heresy of deistic per-

sonhood. Though the orthographic variations in Ocular's language data may not appear to carry the same theological weight, they do mark epistemological differences, the erasure of which may, among certain circles, come dangerously close to heresy. If we return to the scene of textual production, we recall that these texts are the products of relationships between the friars — Spanish and criollo —- and the indigenous scribes. Orthographic homogenization can also present itself as the erasure of already-obscured indigenous voices, or of the growing influence of Spanish epistemologies. Both of these factors are consequential for our reading of the text.

Biased Systems

Recognizing bias in the language data is intuitive: it makes sense that what you put into the system will affect what comes out of it. Less intuitive are the ways that the system itself can have a deterministic effect on the transcription. This deterministic effect is built into the relationship between the font model and the language model, which work in tandem to recognize characters. It is also present in the evaluation system that we use to measure Ocular's accuracy. The previous section described how Ocular's transcription output responds to different orthographic patterns in the language data. This does not mean, however, that we can simply impose a transcription philosophy on our system by choosing the right texts for the language model. When human transcribers decide to replace an "x" with the more modern "j" in words like *dixe* (modern Spanish *dije*, "I said"), they do so based on an understanding of the historical relationship between the two characters. In contrast, when the system encounters dixe, the visual data from the font model makes the letter 'j'

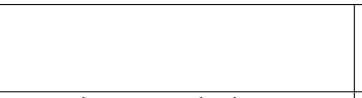
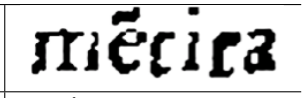
		
Automatic transcription	mentira	merita
Automatic Transcription + orthographic extensions	mentira	mẽtira

Figure 4.4: Automatic transcription of two instances of the word “mentira” using the original Ocular tool and Ocular with our orthographic interface extension. Without the extension, the system misreads the shorthand version as a different word.

highly improbable as a substitute. Instead, if the historical usage of the ‘x’ in place of the ‘j’ is not embedded in the language data, the system is likely to substitute a visually similar, but incorrect, letter.

Consider a similar example that we encountered in the *Advertencias*. Figure 4.4 shows two variations of the Spanish word *mentira* (lie) that appear on a single page. The first variation follows modern spelling conventions. In the second variation, the ‘n’ has been elided, as indicated by a tilde over the e (*mẽtira*). When we give the language model a standard corpus of early modern Spanish, the system misreads the second variant as merita, a statistically probable interpretation of the character string, but not a correct one. When we use the interface for orthographic variation that we built into the system to teach the program about character elisions, it’s able to read both words correctly. This points, again, to the relationship between language data and transcription output. But it also reveals one way that the system imposes a single transcription method onto the text. Ocular prefers —- and in some ways, depends on — an ultra-diplomatic transcription.

	Character Error Rate	Word Error Rate	Word Error Rate with punctuation
Ocular	12.3	43.6	56.6
+ code switch	11.3	41.5	53.5
+ orth. var.	10.5	38.2	51.0

Table 4.1: Macro results show Ocular transcription error rates, and improvements based on our multilingual extension and our orthographic variation interface. Full results are reported in (Garrette).

This preference for the ultra-diplomatic model was not always duplicated by the evaluation system that we used to test Ocular. When presenting our modifications of Ocular to a scientific audience, we provided data in the form of a table of results, summarized in Table 4.1 (Garrette 1039).

Our results show an improvement over Ocular, which in turn showed an improvement over Tesseract, Google's popular and freely available OCR tool (Berg-Kirkpatrick, Durrett, and Klein). This improvement can be understood as evidence of what Julia Flanders elegantly describes as the "progressive momentum" of the digital humanities. In a now-classic article in *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, however, Flanders argues that "the digital humanities domain reflects the non-progressiveness of the humanities disciplines" (Flanders). While the improvements that our system provides for automatic transcription are real, they are not the whole story.

The Ocular system is evaluated by measuring the correspondence between the characters output by the system and the characters typed by a human transcriber. This poses a scientific problem: how can we be sure that the human is correct?

If one system is closer to the human system, does that mean the system is more accurate? Better? Are those always the same thing? In this case, we found that human transcribers struggled to determine where to put spaces between words, and how to encode unusual diacritics or orthographies. A smudged letter might be a "u" in modern Spanish, but in sixteenth century text it might just as likely be a "v." If one tool output "u" and the other output "v", the one that guessed closest to the human would earn a better evaluation, but might not be more "correct."

The epistemological concerns embedded in this evaluation system are made most clear in the Nahuatl example. In our case, none of our transcribers were fluent in Nahuatl, though all read Spanish and Latin. As a result, while a transcriber could make a decision about an unclear Spanish word based on his knowledge of the language and the historical context, he could only make Nahuatl decisions based on his knowledge of Spanish and Latin. As a result, the evaluative system encouraged an output in which the Nahuatl looked more like a Romance language. This effect is compounded when we consider the history of the Nahuatl documents themselves. As described previously, for the early Spanish linguists, Nahuatl's value as a language was measured against a Latin standard, such that one Franciscan was able to remark "the Mexican language lacks seven letters" (Mignolo 46). For these early linguists, this lack articulated not just the paucity of the language, but by association, the weakness of the culture which produced it. At the same time, the imposition of Latin grammar, orthography, and textual ideology onto Nahuatl culture was itself a reframing of the relationship among speaker, language, and text which would have epistemological consequences. When these linguistic relations are du-

plicated by the Ocular evaluation system, the colonial legacy of the documents is again embedded in the system's output.

Conclusion: Beyond transcription

In the prior section, I showed how the automatic transcriptions produced by the Ocular system are shaped by biases in the system and the language data. In my description of the history of OCR, however, I suggested that the automatic transcription output by an OCR system is merely a byproduct of the textual processing at the heart of the work that Optical Character Recognition does. To conclude this section, I want to point to some ways that recentering our understanding of OCR away from the transcription can open new doors for textual analysis that go beyond the re-inscription of cultural hierarchies into digital copies of colonial texts.

Ocular produces a statistical analysis of each character in the digital facsimile of a historical document, analyzing color saturation, character alignment, textual context, and language. We have Ocular conduct this analysis in order to 'recognize' each character by predicting its most likely textual correspondent. If we reorient away from character recognition, however, we find a wealth of data about the original facsimile. This data can open new doors for textual analysis. For example, Ocular's font model has a statistical understanding of the font used by a given document that could provide insight into the circulation of fonts, or provide key evidence for printer attribution in the case of an ambiguous document. The font model also identifies patterns in inking and character variation that might enable us to identify the order in which copies were printed.

The language model gathers important analytic data as well. Consider for example the language tagging that is implicit in our multilingual enhancement of the original Ocular system. We modified Ocular by asking it to identify the language of each word in a document before drawing on the appropriate language model for character recognition. Given the three language options in our corpus (Spanish, Latin, and Nahuatl), the system makes a best guess for every word as it transcribes it, and then uses that guess to improve the transcription. By preserving that language choice, we end up with a representation of language distribution across the document.

There are several ways that language tagging can open new interpretive possibilities for future analysis. This data makes it easy to filter the thousands of pages in our corpus to focus on a particular language. It also makes it possible to track patterns of multilingual expression throughout the corpus. Furthermore, language tagging can have important downstream consequences for scholars interested in natural language processing. Piotrowski describes how multilingual documents pose problems for future analysis, like part-of-speech tagging, lemmatization, morphological analysis, and syntactic parsing, because each of these forms of analysis expects a monolingual corpus (Piotrowski). Multilingual tagging may enable separation of the corpus for these monolingual forms of analysis.

At the same time, errors in language tagging reveal how these analytic approaches carry their own colonial dangers. Errors in language tagging frequently occur in the Rincón transcription, which often intersperses Nahuatl prefixes, suffixes, and other elements of word use into Spanish descriptions of grammatical pat-

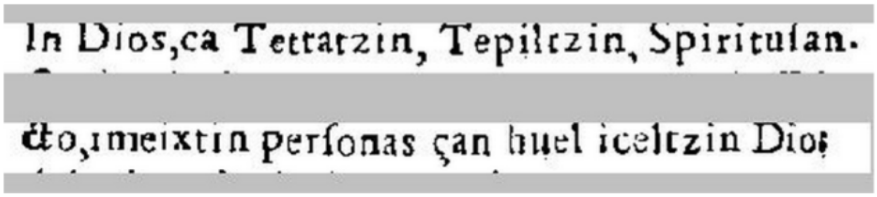


Figure 4.5: Lines from the Advertencias with an automatically produced Ocular transcription. Red marks Spanish, while blue is Latin and black is Nahuatl. Note the difference between the two instances of the Spanish word "Dios."

terns. Here the brevity of the word fragments (two or three letters) doesn't provide enough information to trigger a language shift in the system. More interesting for our purposes, however, are errors like those in Figure 4.5, which shows a fragment from the *Advertencias* that continues the discussion of the holy trinity described above. Here we see that the Spanish word *Dios*, which appears twice in the fragment, has been identified first as Spanish, then as Nahuatl. Elsewhere on the same page, the Latin words *Sancto* and *Sanctisima* were incorrectly tagged as Nahuatl. In both cases, the incorrect tagging is likely triggered by the frequent presence of loanwords in the Nahuatl, Spanish, and Latin training corpus. Though the *Primeros Libros* may be an exaggerated case, early modern writers were almost all multilingual, and early modern writing frequently switches between Latin and the vernacular, using Latin words to emphasize or highlight key terms in much the same way that Spaniards writing in Nahuatl (or their Nahua assistants) drop in terms like

Sancto (holy) or *Dios* (god).

The accurate tagging of loan words poses a particular problem when there is a mismatch between our language data and the text being transcribed, because, as James Lockhart has shown, the use of Spanish loanwords in Nahuatl is period-specific. As with the other examples in this chapter, however, the concept of a language tagging error obscures a deeper ambiguity in the language itself. If a text written in Nahuatl uses the word Dios, is it accurate to describe that as a Spanish word, or would it be more accurate to describe it as a Nahuatl word adopted after conquest? Should we perhaps understand it as the codeswitching of a bilingual writer for whom the boundaries between the two languages were not fixed? The system forces a single linguistic choice where we may in fact be observing the breakdown of standard linguistic categories.

Postscript to Part 1

Scholars transcribe, and scholars depend on transcription for their access to the documentary record. Once this practice of transcription is made visible, it can come to seem as though all texts are copied, all words are remediated, and all language has been shaped by the hand of the transcriber. Yet the task of the transcriber, often explicitly stated, is to disappear from the page. So the Nahua scribes in Tlatelolco replicated the handwriting of their instructors (or the local printing press), eliding their presence from the text. So the inconsistencies of OCR transcription are treated as "dirty" and erased from the page.

The argument of this part has been that transcription nevertheless leaves its mark. The ideal of a perfect copy is a fluid thing, and efforts to achieve that ideal can produce significantly different texts. Trilingual Nahuas served as cultural translators even as they made copies. Prescott's copyists corrected the barbarous orthography of the Mexican language, the unreadable chirography of colonial texts. Optical Character Recognition documents the orthographic vagaries of colonial printing. Mechanisms of inscription, from lithography and noctography to printing and scanning, can shape these ideals, but they are also, as we might expect, subject to the specificities of the historical moment: who is using them, and when, and how.

At stake in the changing ideal of the perfect copy is the readability of a historical text. Readability, which refers to an individual's ability to understand what an inscription signifies, can be understood from many angles: circulation, accessibility, legibility, intelligibility. We might have expected that the process of

transcription was a process designed to increase a text's readability. Textual reproduction can increase the circulation of a text by making it available to more people or by preserving it for a greater length of time. It can increase the accessibility and legiblity of the text by changing the chirography or inscriptive system. It can increase the intelligibility of the text by changing its orthography or even, at times, through translation.

As this chapter has shown, however, transcription is not always or even primarily oriented towards increasing these aspects of historical texts. Reproduction may preserve a text, but collection practices often remove these preserved copies from circulation entirely, allowing them to disappear into archives or private libraries, as was the case with Sahagún's *Historia general*. Transcription may result in a clearer chirography, but it may also obscure certain kinds of legibility, as was the case with Prescott's barbaric transcriptions. As in the case of the Aglio lithographs, copying can even render a text illegible that had once been a readable document. Because we so often access the documentary record through transcribed copies, our reading (or not) of the past is mediated by the historical context that shaped reproduction.

These transcriptive contexts are not arbitrary, but rather specific and predictable. The archival turn of the nineteenth century, which was associated with a flurry of reproductive attention towards historical Mexican texts, is still present in many of the historical texts we read today. Facsimile reproductions, which were not discussed in depth in this chapter, became popular first the 1920s and again in the 1970s; these were accompanied by new documentary editions of historical texts.

And of course manual, crowd-sourced, and automatic transcriptions have become essential to the development of digital repositories. These are the texts that we turn to first when we conduct research on colonial history. They mediate the histories we read, and inform the stories we tell.

Part 2

Unreadable Facsimiles

Today, transcription takes its place alongside many other mechanisms for textual reproduction. In the archive, we pair our transcriptions with digital photographs, which pose their own kinds of replicative problems. Photographs displace the challenge of reading the text from the archive to our offices and homes; the very ease and speed of their production can create an illusion of consumption that does not necessarily correspond to a growth in understanding. The work of managing, organizing, preserving, and using those images turns each of us into the curator of our own digital archive. This work may come reflect a new kind of unreading, as we gather collections of digital surrogates that we do not have the time to read.

Many researchers today experience the digital age through a deluge of photographic facsimiles of textual objects. The overwhelming sensation of being surrounded by photographic surrogates is a subset of the broader sensation of overwhelming photographic immersion, made possible by the spread of smartphones with cameras, and facilitated by social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Digital facsimiles circulate alongside selfies and memes through social media accounts, private emails, and institutional repositories. At times, as in the work of the brilliant Mallory Ortberg for The Toast, they *become* those memes.

The importance of photographic facsimiles to the methods of modern scholarship cannot be overstated. Every aspect of this dissertation was enabled by digital photography. Many secondary sources were accessed in the form of illegally-circulated PDFs; many primary sources were visited once in a library, and revisited many times through the Internet Archive, Hathi Trust, Google Books, or my private collection of digital photographs. Some of this methodology is made explicit

in my writing, or preserved in the citations, but most of it is rendered invisible. Does it matter that I read Benjamin's *Illuminations* as a Kindle eBook; that I read Barthes' *Camera Lucida* as a PDF; that I chose not to read large sections of secondary sources because they were unavailable in my library and partially censored by Google Books?

It might matter. In a recent conversation with Neil Safier, the director of the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island, he expressed anxiety over the methodological implications of both material books and automatic transcription. Do we give digital replicas of scholarly works the same attentive reading that we would give to a printed edition? Safier wondered. Can we develop an intimate understanding of a text without manually transcribing it? The implication was that scholarly methodologies depend on the attention and intimacy afforded by inscribed texts.

Safier, who has supported digital initiatives at the JCB Library since his arrival as director, is not alone in his anxieties. In his discussion of Early English Books Online (EEBO), a repository for digital facsimiles of early modern printed books, Ian Gadd remarked that:

> Despite the beguiling nature of what *EEBO* presents — a hundred thousand pre-1700 titles immediately accessible from *your* desktop — it cannot, of course, provide an actual copy: a real book to hold in your hands. Nor can it represent the weight, texture, or smell of an early printed book. In an *EEBO* book, the ink can be any colour so long as it's black: there is no red, no gold. An *EEBO* book usually has no outside; only very rarely are bindings included. *EEBO* books appear at first to be a uniform size, regardless of the book's original size. But does any of that matter, *really* matter, to anyone other than bibliographers and book historians? (682)

Gadd's concerns should be familiar to anyone who has dipped even briefly into the world of early modern digitization. Even for those who feel more optimistic about digitization, there are concerns: what to do as platforms and image formats and databases and interfaces go out of fashion? How can we make these massive collections of digitized pages usable for researchers?

One response to the concerns of Safier and Gadd is a renewed attention to methodology in the digital age. Because the chapters that follow focus on photographic facsimiles, they are particularly attentive to the relationship between the research methods of the historical players who produced and consulted these facsimiles, and my own methods as I consulted and replicated them for my own use. One thing that has become clear through this process is that I spent as much time reading and transcribing documents as I spent photographing them; even in the digital age, there is no escaping the necessity of intimate engagement with historical texts.

Another response to anxieties around photographic facsimiles is the historicization of these processes. It turns out that much of the discourse surrounding digital surrogates predates the digital age; many of the same hopes and fears were attached to other technologies for photographic reproduction, such as microfilm, Photostats, and photolithography. Identifying the historical precedents for digital collections, as Gadd, Diana Kichuk, and Bonnie Mak have done in the case of EEBO, can help us to understand how these collections came to be, and what factors beyond the mechanical might shape their form and utility.

In historicizing photographic facsimiles, the second part of this dissertation

will illustrate how photographic reproduction has long been implicated in the acquisition and circulation of knowledge among historians, anthropologists, and other researchers. It thus historicizes not only digitization projects, but also the methodologies that are being used in the work itself. As in Part I, the chapters to come focus on documents produced during the first century of Spanish presence in Mesoamerica. They offer an insistently postcolonial approach to the history of photographic facsimiles, one that has largely been excluded from the history of EEBO. In doing so, they create space for a serious consideration of the role that digitization can play in facilitating access to historical knowledge across economic, linguistic, and political divides. Ultimately, they will suggest that access may not be the only or even the primary consideration when dealing with the circulation of photographed texts.

Defining Photographic Remediation

Unlike transcription, photography has been heavily theorized as a technology for historical preservation and communicative replication. Nearly from its inception, it has incited anxieties about the relationship between the referent and the surrogate, the representation and the real. The problem, writes Roland Barthes in his meditation on family photographs, is that while most means of communication use referents that are *optionally* real, the photographic referent is *necessarily* real, because every photographic image corresponds to some object in the real world (76). The photographic guarantee of reality is a mechanical one, a product of the relationship between lens and object. It is also, of course, a lie, because photographs can tell as many untruths as any other form of representation. The difference rests

in where we assign agency. It is the uniquely indexical nature of the photograph that allows us to displace much of the work of accurate representation – and much of the responsibility for dissembling — onto the machine.

Every time we take a photograph, we produce a historical record and preserve (or index) a historical moment. In the case of a photograph taken of a loved one, say, or by a journalist in a time of war, the image indexes an event that could not otherwise be preserved. This creates the illusion that the photograph is a window into a past time, an illusion that echoes the argument, which we've seen previously, that transcription allows us to embody a past (inscriptive) action. While words can describe the past, these inscriptive mechanisms speak to a more immediate kind of historical access. To do so, they hide — or we allow them to hide — the materials and mechanisms that mediate our access to history.

Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin use the term "transparent immediacy" to describe the illusion of immediate access to history that renders intervening media invisible. As consumers of media, they argue, we weave this illusion by assigning authority to mechanical features of reproductive technologies. In the case of photography, for example, we are conditioned to trust the photograph's adherence to linear perspective; its reproducibility; and the removal of the artist as an intervening agent (26). In the case of digital graphics, we place our trust in the mathematical perfection of representation, and the algorithmic operations that enable visual display. In both cases, we know that the image has been shaped by human operators, and that it is subject to manipulation. Trusting these mechanisms nevertheless allows us to see through these media to the objects, people, and events

that they preserve.

We are familiar with the consequences of transparent immediacy: mass reproduction and consumption; the aestheticization of violence; and the deterioration of the real. Writers from Walter Benjamin to Susan Sontag and Judith Butler have written critically about the consequences of photographic reproduction and circulation for the social condition. In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Benjamin powerfully articulates the contradiction between the democratization of art which came with mass reproduction, and the ways that mass reproduction changes how art is consumed. In popular discussion, this argument is frequently reduced to Benjamin's treatment of the aura, an ineffable quality of visual arts that decays as those works are moved across media — or remediated, to anachronistically apply the language of Bolter and Grusin.

One place where Benjamin's arguments have been taken up is through the study of remediation, which can be defined as the re-production of one medium in another, but is most frequently viewed as the re-presentation of an older medium in the new. In their discussion of remediation, Bolter and Grusin describe a digital age in which digital media are constantly self-referential, endlessly reworking pre-existing media. They trace this trend back at least as far as the Renaissance, describing modern European art as always already remediative. While the concept of remediation has been applied broadly, from BBC remakes of Jane Austin novels to cinematic representation of virtual reality machines, it has also been applied valuably to the practice of facsimile reproduction (Kichuk). This is where the attentions of this Part lie.

Photographic facsimiles are remediated replicas of documents or artifacts, created using photographic mechanisms, that reproduce the object 'exactly' as it appears. They combine the indexical properties of photography with the categories of precision that, as we have previously seen, are culturally and mechanically specific. They differ from transcription in that they are not sequential in their reproduction — they reproduce an entire page at once, without distinguishing between character, word, line, and page. As a result, they never distort the orthography or chirography of a text the way transcription does. Instead, the photographic facsimile is interpretive along other parameters: the representation of three dimensions as two; the manipulation of light and color; and even, sometimes, the editorial manipulation of the image itself. This does not mean that photographic facsimiles are more legible, or more complete, than their transcribed counterparts.

Photographic facsimiles can take many forms, each of which has different modes of accuracy and authenticity. A photolithographic facsimile of a historical book replicates not just the original image but also the mechanism of its impression; as we'll see, it can also be easily manipulated. A photostatic facsimile, in contrast, sometimes leaves the text blurry or distorted; because the image was exposed within the machine, however, it was considered far more reliable than ordinary photography. Digital facsimiles can seem the most easily manipulatable, ethereal, and subject to change; yet they can preserve details that are invisible even to the naked eye.

Photographic facsimiles generally seek to clone the object: to produce " a 'faithful' facsimile, as if the old medium could migrate to the new medium without

alteration" (292). Yet they are often accompanied by other modes of remediation, described by Bolter and Grusin as those which emphasize the differences between old and new media; refashion older media; or absorb the older medium entirely. The binding together of photographic copies, the enlargement of copies, and the production of accompanying transcriptions or metadata are just a few examples of these more transformative mediations.

In part because photographic reproductions co-exist with other forms of remdiation, the chapters in Part II do not center photography in the same way that the previous chapters have centered transcription. Instead, these chapters situate various forms of facsimile reproduction within the context of the consolidation and circulation of historical documents. In the first chapter, "Collection: Mexicana at the John Carter Brown Library," the setting is the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island; the object is a collection of early Mexican printed books and manuscripts acquired from Nicolas León in 1896. In the second chapter, "Return: Cultural Heritage in Cholula, Mexico," the setting is the city of Cholula, Mexico; the objects are two projects to recover documentary patrimony enacted between 1990 and 2017. The geographical and historical setting of each chapter functions as a nexus around which objects are consolidated and from which they circulate. From that starting point, the chapters consider how documents are replicated and how these replicas function as social, political, and economic actors. The specificities of replicative technologies play a role in the stories that these chapters tell, but they are only one set of parameters according to which facsimile reproductions are created, evaluated, and used.

Just as these chapters are thematically different from their predecessors, they also draw on distinct research methods and take on a different structure and tone. The chapters combine methods of bibliography and media archeology with community interviews and archival research. Each is organized around a thematic question. The first chapter asks: how did cultural institutions in the U.S. and Mexico use facsimile reproductions to perfect their collections of Mexicana? The second chapter asks: how do cultural institutions use facsimile reproductions to perform post-colonial restitution and repatriation? To answer these questions, I consider what these facsimiles look like, how they were made, and how they move across the U.S.-Mexican border.

One result of this analysis is a long history of colonial remediation that parallels the long history of transcription put forth in the first part of this dissertation. The discourse that surrounded the introduction of a Photostat machine to the John Carter Brown Library in 1913 is startlingly similar to the discourse that surrounds digitization projects today. By examining this process alongside newer projects of document surrogacy, we can see how cultural ideals about complete and total access to history move across mechanisms of facsimile reproduction, and how they are subject to the limitations of national relations and economic imbalances.

At the same time, by focusing on colonial documents and their transnational circulation, these chapters consider the specifically colonial implications of large-scale textual reproduction projects. Just as colonial thought has been at the center of book history at least since Marshall McLuhan, anti-colonial desires have informed the study of facsimile production since Benjamin's essay on mechanical

reproduction. Benjamin's essay concludes with an often-ignored epilogue that focuses on the relationship between reproducible images and imperialistic war. Fascism, writes Benjamin, "expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense of perception that has been changed by technology" (242). This argument has been thoroughly developed in the study of war photography by Susan Sontag, Judith Butler, and others, who worry about the ways that consumption of photographed violence aestheticizes war and induces complacency. But it has largely been left out of our discussion of the more neutral-seeming photographic instances of facsimile reproduction. Part II reintroduces Benjamin's concern with political oppression and colonial violence to the question of mechanical reproduction. It follows Sontag and Butler in considering how facsimile reproductions can numb consumers to colonial violence, and how they can serve as objects of social justice and cultural restitution.

Chapter 5: Collection: Mexicana at the John Carter Brown Library

The John Carter Brown Library of Providence, Rhode Island, is a specialized collection of printed documents pertaining to the conquest and settlement of the Americas. Established as a private gentleman's library by several generations of the Brown family, it was bequeathed to Brown University by John Nicholas Brown (1861-1900) in 1900. Today it is housed in a neocolonial stone building on the Brown campus. Heavy doors embellished with wooden books open into the massive reading room, with green Tiffany lamps over the long tables, and rare books in glass shelves lining the walls. The tables are largely occupied by a rotating group of fellows whose research is funded by the library's not-insignificant endowment. In March and April of 2017, I was one of these fellows.

I arrived at the JCB, as it is affectionately known, in order to study an event that had a significant impact on the circulation of early Mexican books. In 1896, the Mexican scholar and book dealer Nicolas León Calderón published a catalogue of books for sale. The catalogue listed over 200 books, many of them rare or unique copies of early Mexican imprints. The sale drew the interest of private collectors in Paris and Moscow, as well as the government of Mexico. But León was only interested in selling his collection in a single lot, for the large sum of $5000 in Mexican silver, and it seems that those buyers couldn't pay (Borton, "26 Aug. 1896").

In the summer of 1896, John Nicholas Brown and his new librarian George Parker Winship decided to acquire the entire catalogue.[1] They conducted the sale

[1]John Nicholas was the son of John Carter Brown, after whom the library was named. John

anonymously, thanks to the help of a U.S. book dealer living in Puebla named Frank Borton. On September 12, 1896, the deal was struck. Winship, who had travelled to Mexico to conduct the deal in person, wrote to Brown: "I fear that I am not wholly sober this evening despite the most complete abstinence. I have already telegraphed you that the purchase of Dr. Leon's library is concluded" (Winship, "12 Sept. 1896").

The deal was kept secret until the books had arrived safely in New York; even then, Brown rejected Winship's proposal to publish an announcement of the new acquisition. Brown's reasoning was that self-promotion was not in the spirit of the library, and insisted that the acquisition was no secret (Brown). But the complicated politics of the acquisition could not be ignored. There had already been distinct grumbling among Mexican historians about the rapid disappearance of Mexican books from Mexico throughout the nineteenth century. The León sale seemed to mark the end of an era in Mexican book dealing. As Borton, whose personal finances depended on this market, would write sadly, "in securing the Leon library you have gotten most of the rare Mexicana that are getable" (Borton, "30 Sept. 1896").

I arrived at the JCB hoping to explore how the acquisition of the Nicolas León collection shifted the geography of Mexico's historical record towards the United States, and how the physical movement of the books in the León collection would impact ongoing historiography both in the U.S. and Mexico. What I found,

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Carter built up the longstanding Brown library with the help of his brother Nicholas, who later decamped to Europe; the two men were, in the words of George Parker Winship, "predisposed to infection with the epidemic Bibliomania which raged in England at the beginning of the nineteenth century" (Winship, *The John Carter Brown library* 9).

unsurprisingly, is that in many ways this is a story about textual reproduction. As the JCB collection grew over the course of the nineteenth century, the library had become part of a network of researchers and book collectors who were interested in perfecting their bibliographical practice, a project which largely depended on access to and accurate records about perfect copies of historical books. Prior to the León acquisition, the JCB had collaborated with other libraries to perfect its own copies of incomplete or damaged historical books, even as it used photography and photolithography to circulate information about its large collection of Americana, as the first section of this chapter, "The Perfect Copy: Photolithographs in circulation," will describe. With the León acquisition the JCB shifted to the center of the circulation network for Mexican imprints, making the library a gatekeeper in the production of perfect copies of Mexican books.

In the wake of the León acquisition, two changes would impact the production of perfect copies at the JCB. The first was the donation of the library to Brown University following John Nicholas Brown's death in 1900. By 1904, the library had been moved from the Brown family home to the new building on campus where it is housed today. Run by a Committee of Management, with Winship as head librarian (until 1915), this process of institutionalization marked a change in the library's perceived mission. As Winship wrote in the library's Annual Report of 1909, it would have been easy for the library to go on competing for "the choice nuggets that make up the aristocracy of bookdom" as they had in the past. Instead, he wrote, they chose to "put the Library in a better position to meet the more usual wants of those who apply for information regarding colonial American

books" (*Annual Reports* 1909:7).

With the institutionalization of the JCB, in other words, the library's mission shifted from the collection of perfect copies to the production of a perfect library. This was made possible in part by the popularization of a new technology for photographic reproduction. The Photostat machine, also known as the Rotograph or Rectigraph (all brand names), was a mechanism for textual reproduction that could reproduce books relatively cheaply and rapidly. Unlike ordinary photography, which was completed in a photographer's studio, Photostats could be run by an operator working inside the library, and the image was developed inside the machine. As a result, the process of reproduction was more speedy, less costly, and less risky than photographic ventures. With the Photostat, it became possible to shift from the reproduction of single pages or images to the reproduction of entire volumes.

The optimism over the Photostat and its potential to transform bibliographical practice during this time cannot be overstated. "A purchase which has had an unexpected influence upon the development of the Library is that of a mechanical photographing machine," wrote Winship in the Annual Report of 1913 (1913:8-9). This acquisition quickly became part of the library's mission to produce a complete research collection. As Winship would explain,

> The accumulation of Americana in this Library has reached the stage where it becomes possible for us to form definite ideas about the future development of the collection, to estimate what we may still hope to secure and what we must frankly forego. If we are to become the place to which students of American subjects will most naturally apply for any book printed before 1801, we must gather, in addition to the

> original publications, all the available information about such things as we do not possess. The photographic copy is the next best thing to the original.

For Winship and other librarians, the Photostat promised to enable the completion of research collections that could never hope to acquire originals of all the historical books relevant to their subject. The photostating of colonial Mexican books, one of the first projects that the library undertook, is the subject of the second part of this chapter, "The Perfect Library: Building photostat collections"

Methods

The material for this chapter was primarily collected from the library correspondance held in the archives at the John Carter Brown Library. These archives are largely undescribed and lack complete finding aids. Their organizational structure resists systematic scholarship. Before I begin my analysis, I want to take some time to describe these collections and the practices that surround them. In doing so, I hope to shed some light on how the archival silences and epistemological flashpoints that have been the subject of so much archival theory had direct and practical implications for the history being told here.

The organizational structure of the archives which form the basis for this research is inconsistent and largely undescribed, a condition that I report without intending a critique. My research focused on the years that George Parker Winship served as the librarian of the JCB, 1895-1915. I began in 1890 in order to contextualize my work, and I occasionally reached backwards for information about specific acquisitions, or forward to find the end of a longer story. Even within these

narrow temporal constraints, the correspondence for this period is spread across several boxed collections: Records of the Library 1904-1924 (which actually covers the years 1846-1924, with the exception of 1898-1899); Brown Family Papers (which fills in the gap of 1898-99 but also covers other years to an extent that is not entirely clear); Brown Family Records, which may be categorically the same as or distinct from the Family Papers; and the John Russell Bartlett Letters. While the early Records of the Library are organized chronologically, the records subsequent to 1904 are organized alphabetically by correspondent. There is a printed item-level list of items in the John Russell Bartlett Letters, and a digital item-level list of the Records of the Library prior to 1904, but there is no finding aid for the later period.

It is only as I write this description that I fully understand the scope of these research materials; during the length of my time in Providence, my approach was necessarily haphazard. My work was framed by three published records: a history of the John Parker Brown Library published by George Parker Winship in 1914; the Annual Reports of the library from 1904-1915; and the memoirs of Margaret Bingham Stillwell, who served as an assistant librarian from 1909-1914. These records narrated historical events and provided the names of individuals around whom I could organize my research.

I began my work in the archive by reading chronologically through the Records of the Library, 1890-1897, followed by the Brown Family Papers of 1898-1904. My goal was to achieve the illusion of a comprehensive epistolary record, something that promised narrative coherence. But the overwhelming reality of the library archive for this period is that it is made up largely of silences and gaps. The

archival record preserves many letters received by the library, but only a few sent in response. It contains only a subset of letters received by the library, others of which have been preserved separately both at the JCB and at other institutions. And it preserves very little non-epistolary communication, such as meetings or telephone calls.

In a self-consciousness that seems to have been intended for archival purposes, this collection is one that endlessly draws attention to its own silences. Following a protocol that has long since disappeared, nineteenth-century correspondence opens with reference to a letter received (or, worse, not received): "Your favor of the 9th duly received," or in Spanish, *"En mi poder tu grata En 1o"* [2] Each letter opens, then, with a gesture towards absence. Unrecorded conversations, too, make their presence known in print. The earliest reference to the telephone that I came across appeared in a letter dated 1902, in which Charles Dexter Allen wrote to George Parker Winship,

> I was in providence this morning and telephoned to you eight times and to five places at three different periods! All to no purpose! You are quite the most active person I have ever met! You have always "just been gone three minutes." or were supposed to be there but had mysteriously disappeared! And the kind voiced person who replied to me three times at your own library, deserves my thanks for her kindness in going to look for you in the library twice!

The use of the telephone marks one way in which new technology moves communication away from the archive. At the same time, Allen's letter reminds us that the telephone was used to facilitate other kinds of in-person communication that

[2] "In my possession, your favor of Jan. first."

are equally uninscribed. Again, these letters remind us, this record is always and fundamentally incomplete.

More frustrating, and maybe more troubling for my research, is the fact that the Records of the Library after 1904 are organized alphabetically according to correspondent. There is no list of correspondents, nor is there any clear way to associate writers with their institutional affiliations, and it was not possible to review the files in their entirety during the two months of my fellowship. As a result, much of the information from this period that I encountered during my research was a product of chance. The central case study for the second half of this chapter, which revolves around the correspondence of William E. Gates, was stumbled upon accidentally while researching an entirely different subject. I am grateful for this good fortune, and it is tempting to think of it as evidence of the strength of my argument. But the reality is that without a systematic way to read this material, it stands on the force of anecdote alone.

The JCB archive is also largely silent when it comes to the less prominent individuals who worked for or with the library. Charles Dexter Allen's letter refers to a "kind voiced person" who answered the phone at the JCB, perhaps one of the three female employees who Margaret Stillwell describes meeting on her first day of work (Stillwell 10). Of the various women who worked at the JCB during the period of this study, Stillwell, Maude Covell, and Rebecca Steere appear on occasion by name in the correspondence, but that correspondence is nearly always addressed to George Parker Winship. It is only after Stillwell departs for work at the New York Public Library in 1914 that she becomes a correspondent in her

own right. Others remain anonymous throughout the archive, including the typists who must have produced much of the twentieth-century correspondence, and the man (or men) who operated the Photostat. These silences are more particular than those caused by oral communication or missing letters; they point to the ways that already-marginalized figures are hidden by inscriptive practices and the archival methods that preserve them.

All archives reveal their own silences, biases, and forgotten histories. In doing so, they draw attention to uncomfortable and problematic histories. In many cases, institutions prefer that these histories remain in the past, at least until the far-off date in which their organization and description can be completed to modern archival standards. The leadership of Neil Safier, director of the JCB, in making the library's institutional history available for study is a model for historical institutions interested in interrogating their own past. This was facilitated, where the record was incomplete, by the deep institutional knowledge of Kimberley Nusco, Assistant Librarian, and Ken Ward, Curator of Latin American Books. Kim was particularly helpful as I sought to navigate incomplete finding aids and undescribed archives. So were Meghan Sullivan-Silva, Reading Room Coordinator, and Scott Ellwood, Public Services Assistant, who patiently located unnamed and poorly identified materials for me over my two months of research. I name them here partially in response to the disappearance of library staff from the archives of the past.

I have described some of the ways that the institutional archives at the JCB offer an imperfect, partial, and disorderly record of the past. In doing so, they make explicit archival qualities that exist even in the most perfectly described and

organized collection. Perhaps because I am not trained as a historian, I find that I feel most comfortable within these silences and gaps — the unreadable corners of the institutional archive. This has meant that my primary goal has not been to fill these gaps with documentary evidence, perhaps by visiting other archives in pursuit of missing records. Instead, I have treated this archive as a historical narrative bound within the constraints of the library. The story I tell in this chapter is of the JCB as it recalls itself.

The Perfect Copy: Photolithographs in circulation

Among the many Mexican incunables (books printed in Mexico prior to 1601) that the John Carter Brown library acquired from Nicolas León in 1896 was a copy of Alonso de Molina's *Aquí comiença un vocabulario...*, a Spanish-Nahuatl dictionary printed in Mexico in 1555. The book appears as entry 105 in León's catalogue, where it is described as a "perfect copy":

> The books is of such extraordinary rarity, that only some five copies altogether are believed to be extant; an so litle was known about the existence of the volume, that even the last edition of Brunet records it only under the false name of OLMOS [sic]. (León 18)

León's 'perfect copy' of Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario* appears in the John Carter Brown Library catalogue as 'copy one' of two exemplars of the valuable book. 'Copy two' was acquired by the JCB some years earlier. The bibliographical description in the online catalogue explains,

> John Carter Brown Library copy 2 imperfect: leaves [1-7] (first count)

> and all after leaf 244 in facsimile; leaf [8] (first count) of woodcuts lacking; excessively trimmed, especially the bottom margin (text affected); leaves 130-151 apparently worm eated [sic] and mended (text affected).

It is clear from this description why this copy has been relegated to second place: though both copies are labeled 'imperfect' in the JCB catalogue, the second one has sustained more damage, and has been repaired according to historical standards that do not match modern bibliographical practice. The mending, trimming, and introduction of facsimile leaves all mark nineteenth-century efforts to "perfect" an imperfect copy by bringing it closer to its original state. These volumes would then be bound in beautifully worked nineteenth-century leather to create a perfect library of completed books. Though today these interventions are not always judged positively, according to nineteenth century standards, a book that had been modified in this way could have been described as perfect.

When the title page of 'copy two' of Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario* is compared to that of 'copy one,' however, differences become evident that belie the perfection of these completed copies. While both title pages are decorated with the same wood-block image, 'copy two' has a white margin between the vertical edges of the woodcut and the black border that surrounds it, while the woodcut in the title page of 'copy one' is flush with the border. In both cases the entire image is surrounded by a second border, but there are variations there, too: four breaks in the horizontal line on the bottom edge are present in 'copy two,' while none are to be found in 'copy one.'

Something is amiss in the facsimile reproduction of the title page for 'copy

(a) Original Title page of 'copy one' of Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario* from the John Carter Brown Library. Image from archive.org.

(b) Facsimile reproduction of Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario*, as used in 'copy two' at the John Carter Brown Library.

Figure 5.1: Title pages of Alonso de Molina's *Aqui comiença un arte...* (1555). The title page on the left is an original; the alignment of the woodcut in the image on the right shows that it is a facsimile. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

two' of Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario*, shown in Figure 5.1. The facsimile was produced using photolithography, a nineteenth-century technique that etched photographic images onto lithographic plates, which could then be used in a printing press to impress photographic reproductions of images and events. Prior to the introduction of photolithography (and even later, in cases where it was not accessible), imperfect books were often completed through the production of pen facsimiles; as Sarah Werner writes, "Adding pen facsimiles of missing or damaged leaves was not unusual in the nineteenth century for collectors who preferred their works to be pristine and perfect, a common preference" (Werner). These facsimiles, when produced by skilled artists, can be difficult to differentiate from the printed page. But they can't approximate the perceived accuracy of the photographic image, which promises, to use Barthes' language, the authenticity of the necessarily real referent.

The differences between the two title pages cannot be explained by the mechanisms of photolithography, however. Instead, a clue can be found in a note written by John Russell Bartlett in March of 1883 and archived, as a photocopy, in the bibliographical file for Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario*. Bartlett explains:

> The present copy was purchased of Asher [and Co.,] Berlin, upon whose catalogue it appeared as perfect. Upon its receipt, however, I discovered that a considerable portion of the end was wanting. The title page and some preliminary matter was also deficient. Upon enquiring of Mr. Lenox, I found he possessed a copy, which he kindly loaned me that we might have a copy made of the [leaves] which were deficient. Photographic copies were therefore made accordingly.
>
> But unfortunately the title of Mr. Lenox's copy was mutilated, the central portion, a woodcut, having been cut out.
>
> I now wrote to London to see if there was a copy in the British Museum from which we might complete the title, but found that, although that

> library possessed a copy of the book, its title was mutilated in the same manner as Mr. Lenox's.
>
> Failing here I next wrote to Mr. Icazbalceta, my correspondent in Mexico enquiring whether he owned a copy, or, if one could be found in that city.
>
> In reply, Mr. I... wrote that he possessed one, but that its title was mutilated the same as the others, the central figure having been removed.
>
> From the [leaves] of the title that remained in the copies examined, it appeared that the central figure which had been abstracted from them all was precisely like the woodcut in Molina's "Arte de la Lengua Mexicana" of 1571 in [12o].
>
> I now combined the portions that remained, with the woodcut of the Molina of 1571 and had them photographed, thereby completing the title as it now appears. (Bartlett, "Mar. 1883")

The photolithographic facsimile bound into 'copy two' of Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario*, in other words, is a manipulated image, a mash-up of a damaged title page and an image printed in a different book. The facsimile was made possible by the replicative qualities of the printing press, which allowed multiple nearly-identical copies of Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario* to exist, and by the common early-modern practice of re-using woodblock prints across volumes. It was also enabled by the new mechanism of photolithography, which could combine two disparate images in one printed page. But the photolithographic manipulation of the image was not seamless. It left gaps in the image, and those gaps are what give the illusion away.

Photographs in Circulation

The manipulated title page of Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario* was just one of many photographic facsimiles that circulated among Americana collections in the late

nineteenth century. In addition to original printed books, John Nicholas Brown purchased numerous photolithographic reproductions of historical documents, especially maps. He also allowed various kinds of copies to be made of the volumes in his father's library. In some cases, these copies were used to help other collectors complete their imperfect copies. In other cases, the reproductions were used to resolve bibliographical questions or to illustrate new printed volumes of bibliography or historiography. Because of the costliness of photolithographic reproduction, it was usually used exclusively for the production of a single page or small collection of pages; entire books were never reproduced photolithographically by or for the JCB.

Two examples of textual reproduction were significant enough to appear in Winship's first Annual Report, written in 1901 for the newly institutionalized library (*Annual Reports* 5). The first case involved the Consolato Generale D'Italia (the General Consulate of Italy); the second involved the Legación de Chile (the Chilean Legation). The Italian Consulate approached John Nicholas Brown in 1891 on behalf of the Italian national committee charged with planning the quadricentennial celebrations of Christopher Columbus's first voyage. Over the course of several letters sent in 1891, the consulate requested, first, a transcribed copy; then, in place of a transcription, a photographic reproduction; and then finally negatives made on pellicles, rather than on stereotyped glass, so that they would be less likely to break (D'Italia). The negatives would be used in a massive volume celebrating the documentary history of Christopher Columbus. A receipt in the archive shows that the Italian consulate was charged $48 for six photographs (Baker). As with anything as-

sociated with the 1892 quadricentennial, this example allows us to consider how the relatively young North American nation was able to assert cultural and economic control over the national identities of other nations. In sending the photographs, the JCB made the Italian project beholden to a U.S. cultural institution even as other quadricentennial events would turn the Columbus anniversary into an assertion of American control over its own history (Trouillot 130).

Communications with Chile also began in 1891, when the bibliographer Jose Toribio Medina wrote to ask John Nicholas Brown how much it would cost to have a copy made of Melchor Jufré del Aguila's *Compendio historial*, printed in 1630 in Lima, Peru. The archive does not record any other communications from Chile until 1895, when a correspondence begins with the Legación de Chile. Medina's name is never mentioned in the letters sent by the Legation, which simply explain that a professor at the University in Santiago was looking for a copy of a poem by Melchor Jufré de Águila. After several letters among the anonymous professor, the Legation, and John Nicholas Brown, it is decided that Brown will send the *Compendio historial* to the Legation's offices in Washington D.C. so they can have a copy made. In the Annual Report, Winship writes that the Chileans used the book to acquire a transcribed copy (*Annual Reports* 5). The procedure was completed, and the book returned, on July 22, 1895 (de Chile). A new edition of the *Compendio* was published by the Universidad de Chile in 1897.[3]

In the introduction to the published edition of the *Compendio*, the editors are explicit about their discomfort with the circulation of the historical volume,

[3]There is no record of the Chilean Legation sharing this printed edition with the JCB; it does not appear in the library catalogue today.

which they clearly see in nationalistic terms. *"Parecía imposible procurarse un libro que no se hallaba en el comercio, ni tampoco en alguna biblioteca pública,"* they complained (del Águila III).[4] Eventually, they found it in the John Carter Brown Library, which they describe as *"una de las más ricas del mundo en materia de curiosidades sobre las cosas de América, particularmente en ediciones originales de las primeras relaciones de viajes, descubrimientos y conquistas, y en las primitivas producciones de la imprenta en el nuevo mundo"* (II)[5] It's clear from this description that the editors respected and valued the Brown library, which was an American gem on American soil. But they were also frustrated by their own lack of access to the document. After acquiring the transcribed copy from the JCB, they wrote, *"La Universidad, en posesión de la copia solicitada, resolvió publicarla para salvar del olvido una obra que, si bien de escaso mérito literario, fue escrita en nuestro propio suelo, y tiene algún valor para nuestra historia"* (III).[6] By attributing the project to the University as an institution, and tying the book to the very soil of the Peruvian nation, the editors made a compelling claim for this volume as a work of national heritage that had, unfortunately, been displaced.

The JCB's participation in these two national projects illustrates how different kinds of textual reproduction, including photography and transcription, were used in the circulation of documents that were clearly understood by affiliated

[4] "It seemed impossible to procure a book that was not be found on the market, nor in any public libraries."

[5] "One of the richest libraries in the world for curiosities related to American things, and more particularly, original editions of the first reports of voyages, discoveries, and conquests, and in the earliest imprints in the New World."

[6] "The University, in the possession of the solicited copy, resolved to publish it, in order to save from oblivion a work that, though it may be of minimal literary merit, was written on our own soil, and has some value for our history."

groups as cultural heritage. It also shows how, by the 1890s, the JCB was coming to be seen as a center for the transnational circulation of Americana. As a private gentleman's library, however, the library only fielded a small number of inquiries. This would change with the institutionalization of the JCB in 1900.

While the JCB did help to circulate photographs and transcribed copies of rare volumes from its collection, a more significant use of title page facsimiles at the JCB was for the library's *Bibliotheca Americana*, a bibliographical catalogue that was first published for private distribution in 1865. The first edition of the catalogue includes a bibliographical description of all items in the collection related to the Americas, and was organized primarily by year, and then by author. No photographs were included in the first edition, which was printed in three volumes, and covered the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries.

Ten years later, in 1875, a revised edition of the first part was released. This work contained a description of all volumes printed prior to 1600 held at the JCB, and it was much more thorough. It offered more complete bibliographical descriptions, as well as photolithographic facsimiles of select images and title pages. It also promised more accurate transcription: as Bartlett explained in the introduction, "The titles have been transcribed from the originals with great care, and each one is reproduced in its exact orthography, however incorrect that orthography may be" (Bartlett, *Bibliotheca Americana* vi).

Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario* doesn't appear in the 1865 edition of the *Bibliotheca Americana*, likely because it had not been acquired yet; but it appears as entry 206 in the revised catalogue of 1875. In addition to the transcribed title page and

colophon, the entry includes a facsimile of the title page, the colophon, and a woodcut found on the reverse of the title page. A comparison of the facsimile title page in the Catalogue with the title pages shown in Figure 5.1 shows that the catalogue image was re-set using modern type, meant to mimic but not perfectly replicate the type used in the original. I suspect that this decision gave the compositors more flexibility in framing the facsimile of the woodcut, allowing them to correct the gap between the woodcut and the frame that we saw in the facsimile title page of 'copy two.' The imperfect typography of the catalogue facsimile allows for a more perfect representation of the woodcut.

Bartlett used photography and typography to produce two facsimile reproductions of the title page to Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario*, both creative reconstructions of a title page that he had never seen. The photographic facsimile was bound into the library's copy of the 1555 book, transforming the imperfect volume into a complete and perfect item in the library's collection.

The typographical variant, in contrast, served a more public role. As part of the catalogue, the typographical variant served the purpose of educating a select public (mostly other collectors and librarians) about the contents of the JCB, and providing bibliographical information about its more rare and treasured objects. This was considered part of the social role of the library in progressing knowledge about America's past.

As it turns out, the photographic variant also circulated widely outside of the JCB. Ten years after the publication of the JCB catalogue, the Mexican bibliographer Joaquín García Icazbalceta published his own bibliography of Ameri-

can books. Rather than a library catalogue, Icazbalceta's 1886 *Bibliografía mexicana del siglo XVI* offered a comprehensive description of every book known to have been printed in Mexico in the sixteenth century; it remains an essential reference work to this day. Much like the earlier JCB catalogue, the *Bibliografía mexicana* combined bibliographical descriptions with photolithographic reproductions of woodcuts and title pages, although the Icazbalceta volume reproduced title pages in full, rather than reproducing them in modern type.

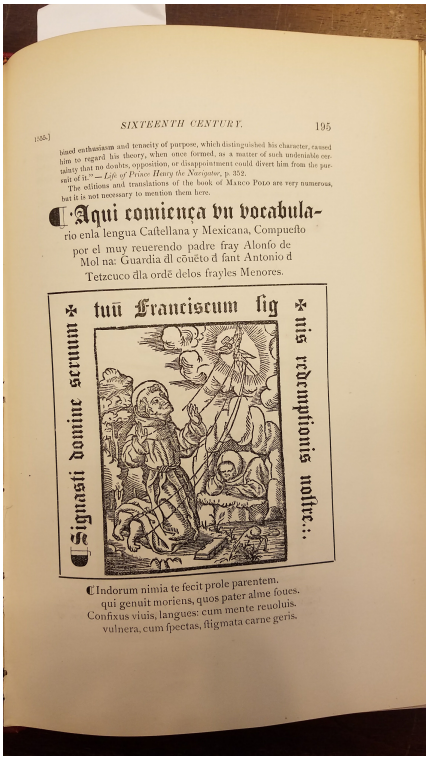
Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario* is described in entry 23 of Icazbalceta's bibliography, in which he writes: *"El ejemplar decrito, completo, con portado de fotolitografía, está en mi poder"* (*Bibliografía mexicana* 62).[7] Like John Nicholas Brown, Icazbalceta had used photolithographic facsimiles to complete the imperfect copy in his collection. In fact, it seems likely that Icazbalceta completed his copy with the mashed-up facsimile produced in Providence. I didn't encounter a record of this exchange in the JCB archives. In a letter sent in September of 1877, however, Bartlett wrote to Icazbalceta about the facsimiles in a way that suggests he might have previously sent his colleague a copy:

> Regarding the title to the Molina of 1555, I must explain how it was made. The copy in the Brown Library was wanting the title. Mr. Lenox's copy was deficient in the same way. Either I, or Mr. Berendt wrote you a letter on the subject and learned that the title page of your copy was also imperfect. I then caused an examination to be made of the copy in the British Museum, and to my astonishment their copy was equally wanting in a perfect title. In most of the copies the central picture had been taken out, but we ascertained that it was precisely the same as that in the title pages of other [...].[8] D Behrendt, who was then

[7] "The described exemplar, complete, with a photolithographic title page, is in my possession."

[8] I found this fragment of text difficult to decipher, but the general meaning is clear. We know

in New York, took Mr. Lenox's copy for the printed portion of the title, and then added to it the central figures from the [title]. This is the reason why the picture does not reach the line surrounding it. I have never been able to find a copy of this book with a perfect title page. I have just heard, heaven, of another copy in the country, which may be perfect, but it is not now accessible. ("29 Sept. 1877")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1555.] tioned enthusiasm and tenacity of purpose, which distinguished his character, caused him to regard his theory, when once formed, as a matter of such undeniable certainty that no doubts, opposition, or disappointment could divert him from the pursuit of it." — *Life of Prince Henry the Navigator*, p. 352.

The editions and translations of the book of MARCO POLO are very numerous, but it is not necessary to mention them here.

¶ Aqui comiença vn vocabula-
rio enla lengua Caſtellana y Mexicana, Compueſto
por el muy reuerendo padre fray Alonſo de
Molina: Guardia dl cōuēto d ſant Antonio d
Tetzcuco dla ordē delos frayles Menores.

Signasti domine seruum tuū Franciscum sig nis redemptionis nostre.:.

¶ Indorum nimia te fecit prole parentem.
qui genuit moriens, quos pater alme foues.
Confixus viuis, langues' cum mente reuoluis.
vulnera, cum fpectas, ſtigmata carne geris.

Figure 5.2: Facsimile of the title page to Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario* as it appears in the *Bibliotheca Americana* catalogue. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

The story that Bartlett gave Icazbalceta is similar to the version preserved in the Bibliographical File for Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario*. I transcribe it here because I find the repetition of the story telling. It seems that Bartlett took pride in his clever reconstruction of the Molina title page, and he wanted to share his bibliographic genius with his colleague. Icazbalceta, it seems, approved of Bartlett's methods. An examination of the digital facsimile of Icazbalceta's copy of Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario*, held at the Benson Latin American Collection and made available through the Primeros Libros Project, shows a title page that shares the telltale gap between woodcut and border, evidence of a JCB-made facsimile. Icazbalceta chose not to in-

that the image was taken from Molina's later *Arte de la Lengua Mexicana.*

clude the facsimile title page in his own bibliography, however; perhaps this was because he didn't design it himself, or perhaps it was because he did not want to replicate its imperfections.

The JCB archives suggest that in 1892 the Molina facsimiles, perhaps including the title page, were sent to the Lenox library. Recall that the Lenox library had produced the original facsimiles, minus the woodcut in the title page. Now, many years later, the Lenox library had acquired another incomplete copy. So Wilberforce Eames, a longtime correspondent of the JCB, wrote to ask whether the JCB had any extra facsimiles that could be returned, to help perfect the new volume. Winship cheerfully obliged; perhaps that facsimile is bound in the copy of Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario* at the New York Public Library, which contains the Lenox collection.

Another JCB facsimile may be bound into the copy held in the Biblioteca Histórica of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and made available in digital facsimile through the Primeros Libros project. The title page of this copy has the same telltale features, with one difference: it appears that the red has been inked in by hand, rather than having been printed in two colors. Perhaps a black-and-white copy was sent by the JCB to Madrid, though I did not encounter a record of that shipment. Or perhaps the Madrid copy was made from the lithograph in the possession of Icazbalceta or the Lenox library.

Ten years later, in 1896, the JCB would acquire a 'heavenly' copy of Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario*, one with an original title page, as part of the León purchase. And the cleverly constructed facsimile would be relegated to 'copy two,' its im-

perfections preserved in the metadata and the bibliographical file. Not all libraries preserved this bibliographical record, however. In the metadata for both the Icazbalceta copy and the Madrid copy, there is no record that the title pages are lithographic reproductions. They appear in digital facsimile as what they are: a perfect copy.

The Perfect Library: Building photostat collections

The sale of the León catalogue marked a change in the market of rare Mexican books. As early as 1894, Frank Borton, the book dealer who facilitated the León acquisition, had written to John Nicholas Brown, "As you are doubtless aware all such examples of Mexicana are growing excessively scarce with each year" (Borton, "12 Nov. 1894"). Borton reiterated this sentiment in 1896, remarking, "In 20 years there will not be a single volume of 16 cent. books in this Republic. They will be in Europe and the United States" ("10 Jan. 1896"). As someone who made at least part of his living from the sale of rare books, Borton had personal reasons to be attentive to changes in the market for Mexican books. For him, the León sale seemed to mark the end of an era.

As the market for rare Americana grew smaller and prices grew higher at the turn of the century, collectors began to turn their attention to other aspects of their collections. At the JCB, John Nicholas Brown began to think about modernizing his father's collection by hiring Winship, reorganizing materials, and constructing a new library to house his father's books (and perhaps the books of other collectors). He also made the decision, recorded in his will, that the library would be institutionalized after his death. Brown's will made provisions for the library to be

incorporated into Brown University, including funds for the construction of a new building, and a large endowment for managing and growing the collection. His early death in 1900 (at the age of 39) accelerated this plan.

The library's mission changed significantly over its first ten years as part of Brown University. While the library might previously have focused on competing for "the choice nuggets that make up the aristocracy of bookdom," as Winship wrote in 1909, the goal now was to "put the Library in a better position to meet the more usual wants of those who apply for information regarding colonial American books" (*Annual Reports* 1909:7). In practical terms, this meant the acquisition of fundamental primary and secondary texts that had little value as collectibles, but significant utility for researchers. Though the library continued to occasionally acquire rare documents, the bulk of its funds were spent on acquiring cheaper volumes for research.

In the Annual Report of 1912, Winship declared this project accomplished, writing: "We started in 1904 to put the Library in a position where we might state without qualification or explanation that it is a collection of Americana printed before 1801, and that, within its field, it recognizes no superior" (1912:4). Winship seems to see no contradiction between the library's rejection of a bibliophilic aristocracy, and its embrace of an elite institution for higher learning. He also does not seem at all concerned with articulating the differences between French, Spanish, and English sources, or their European counterparts. The category of 'Americana,' which was still under debate when William Hickling Prescott developed his library (see Chapter 3), appears natural here.

The turn of the century, then, marked a shift from completing or perfecting books to completing and perfecting the entire library as a coherent unit. The first stage of this project had to do with the acquisition of printed volumes. The second stage would turn out to focus on textual reproduction. Facsimile production, as we've seen, had long been part of the library's public work, and the Annual Reports for the first decade of the twentieth century describe the production and circulation of facsimiles of some of the library's most valuable holdings, particularly maps.[9] But it was with the acquisition of the Photostat machine that facsimile production would really take off. This was announced in the 1913 Annual Report, when Winship wrote:

> A purchase which has had an unexpected influence upon the development of the Library is that of a mechanical photographing machine. This was added to our equipment in order that we may supply investigators with more satisfactory copies of extracts from books about which they inquire. The machine does accurately and more quickly what the human copyist transcribes with constant likelihood of error. The use of the Photostat for this purpose has amply justified its purchase. (1913:8)

As we will see, Winship first conceived of the Photostat as a more efficient way to accomplish tasks that had long been fundamental to the library's public work. The first book that was photostated at the JCB served precisely that purpose. But as Winship explains in the Annual Report, it quickly became apparent that the Photostat could also be used by the JCB to acquire rare volumes that had long been unavailable for purchase. "If we are to become the place to which students of American subjects will most naturally apply for any book printed before 1801,"

[9]Recall, of course, that these were largely constrained to facsimiles of single-page documents or documents or short pamphlets.

Winship wrote, "we must gather, in addition to the original publications, all the available information about such things as we do not possess. The photographic copy is the next best thing to the original" (1913:9).

Through photolithography, Winship and Brown had worked to fill in the missing pages of incomplete books. Winship hoped that the Photostat would allow him to accomplish the same goal, but at a larger scale. As we will see, Photostat machines could be used to copy entire books, and they could do it more quickly, cheaply, and at a lower risk than ordinary photography. While the Annual Reports focus on the Photostat reproduction of documents related to the early history of the United States, one of the first major projects that the library undertook was a Photostat exchange of early Mexican manuscripts and printed books. This is largely because of the 1896 León acquisition, which drew the attention of researchers specifically interested in Mexicana. Through these exchanges, Winship and the JCB used the Photostat to fill in the gaps in their Americana collection, shifting the focus from perfect books to perfect libraries.

An Unexpected Influence

On April 3, 1912, Jacob P. Dunn received several photostated pages of a manuscript from the JCB. Dunn was the Recording Secretary of the Public Library Commission of Indiana, and a student of the "Indian languages" of the midwest. He had been working with Winship and with Margaret Bingham Stillwell, an assistant librarian at the JCB, to transcribe a Miami-French dictionary.[10] The goal was to produce a

[10] 'Miami' refers to the language known today as Myaamia, a language spoken in what are now Ohio and Oklahoma.

printed edition of the dictionary, along with a translation of its introductory materials, with the help of two native Myaamia speakers.

Speed and affordability were both of the essence in this transcription project, which was conducted by Stillwell. Rapid transcription was essential because, as Dunn explained, "I know only two Indians who are competent to translate the mss, and the best of these, the one with whom I worked in January, is an old woman, liable to die at any time" (Dunn, "11 Feb. 1912").[11] Finances were tight because the financial support for the project came from the Bureau of American Ethnology, which was dependent on Congress, a slow and unreliable source of funds. Letters from both Dunn and Hodge during this period show that they were hard at work lobbying for resources to support this project (Dunn, "27 Jul. 1911" "11 Feb. 1912").

Manual transcription of the Miami dictionary was difficult, slow, and expensive. In the meantime, as Stillwell recalls in her memoir, the brother of another JCB librarian named Rebecca Steere had become the eastern agent for the new Photostat machine. Stillwell had transcribed as far as the letter M when the library acquired a Photostat, and Winship proposed to both Dunn and Frederick W. Hodge that the project be completed with the help of the machine.

Hodge's response was enthusiastic. "I have become interested recently in the work of the photostat through Mr. Bishop of the Library of Congress, who has told me of the wonders it has been performing," he wrote on receiving the sample Photostats (Hodge, "1 Apr. 1912"). Dunn was more skeptical, writing, "I do not

[11] Readers will recognize in this narrative the anthropological impulse towards preservation, which hinged on the idea that indigenous peoples were disappearing forever from the American landscape (Sterne 311).

think that photographic reproductions could be used to advantage in my work, as much of the French, as well as the Indian, has to be "studied out"" (Dunn, "3 Apr. 1912"). Both men were concerned about how the photostated document would facilitate the ultimate goal of producing a printed volume. It seemed unlikely that a compositor would have the skill to interpret the cramped, orthographically irregular manuscript, and convert it into movable type.

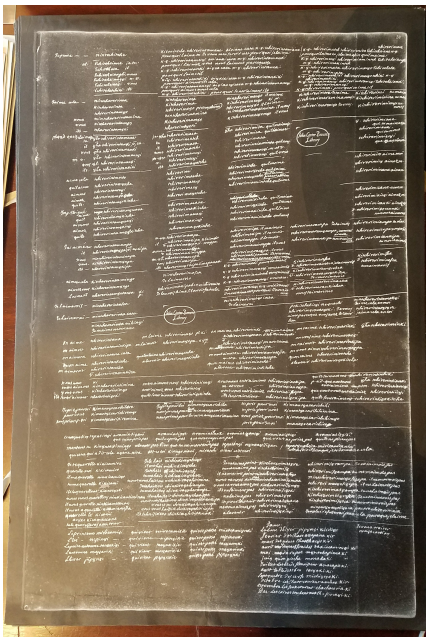


Figure 5.3: Photostat negative of the Miami-French dictionary at the John Carter Brown Library. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

But not all the text was going directly to the compositor — much of it had to be reviewed by Dunn and his informants first. Eventually, it was decided that it would be sensible to photostat the introductory materials, which Dunn was planning to translate prior to typesetting, while having Stillwell transcribe the dictionary itself. Dunn would be able to translate directly from the Photostat, while the dictionary could be set from Stillwell's copy (or from a typeset copy based on Stillwell's).

As it turned out, the Photostat was both faster and cheaper than a manual transcription; the saved funds allowed the JCB to produce one typed transcription of the dictionary (minus the extensive introductory text) and two complete Photostat reproductions, one for Dunn and one for

Hodge (Winship, "27 Sep. 1912").[12]

In this way, the Miami-French dictionary came to mark the transition of the John Carter Brown Library from manual transcription to photographic reproduction. As the library's first major project, it was exemplary in two ways. First, though it does symbolize a transition of sorts, the French-Miami dictionary was hardly a clean break with the transcriptive past. This is partially because Dunn and Hodge felt that the hand-written manuscript needed to be transcribed in order to make it readable, especially for future compositors. It is also because even as the Photostat, by increasing the size of the image, could make a document easier to read, it could also deteriorate a text's legibility by distorting the images on the page. Stillwell explains:

> A photostat will produce only whatever is actually black. Some of the strokes of the quill pen with which the text was written did not reproduce. So the services of Madam Chinard, the wife of a French professor at Brown, were procured to help me make all speed. By dint of numbering the pages and lines of the photostats, it was possible to check the original and supply the weak spots in a typewritten transcript. In this dot-and-dash fashion the task was completed. (22)

According to Stillwell's memoir, written some fifty years after the original transcription was completed, it took 1.5 years to transcribe the letters A-M, and one year to Photostat the remaining sections. The Photostat, which was run by a trained operator, introduced cheap, speedy reproductions — but producing a readable copy was still a slow and arduous text.

[12]For the reproduction of the introductory materials, Winship charged Hodge $118 for 130 exposures at $0.90 per each. $282 had been allotted originally for the typed transcription (Hodge, "17 Apr. 1912" Winship, "27 Sep. 1912").

The second, and not unrelated, reason that the Miami-French dictionary is an exemplary case is that it was an indigenous-language text. Standardizing indigenous orthography was an important project for ethnographic researchers in the pre-Boaz era, who often saw themselves as racing to save America's history before the indigenous populations disappeared. Mrs. Wadsworth, the Miami informant who was misremembered in Stillwell's memoir as an Indian chief, became a symbol of the need to rapidly produce transcriptions in the conversations among Stillwell, Winship, Hodge, and Dunn. Yet the need for speed was paired with a need for readable text. This standard was much harder to achieve.

Practically the Unsurmountable

In January of 1911, the John Carter Brown Library received a letter from William E. Gates, a prolific student of Mayan languages based in California. Gates explained that after a great deal of work, he had finally succeeded in building a complete collection of printed books relating to Mayan history and language. "This has brought me to the close line of what is practically the unsurmountable - so far as acquisition is concerned," he wrote (Gates, "12 Jan. 1911"). By "the unsurmountable," Gates was referring to manuscripts and printed books so rare that they could not be acquired on the market. Would it be possible, Gates wondered, to see a catalogue of Mayan materials at the JCB? And if any of those materials were of interest, could copies be made?

As subsequent letters revealed, Gates had already made it his business to travel to libraries and archives and acquire transcribed copies or photographs of

Mayan documents. Once it became clear that the JCB had a Photostat, Gates enthusiastically began to develop an ambitious scheme to copy all Maya-related books held there. In exchange, he proposed to pay whatever fees the JCB would require; he also offered to make copies of materials from his own library using his Rectigraph, a competing brand of copying device. Over the next four years, Gates received Photostat copies of three Kaqchikel dictionaries, the Motul Maya dictionary, and the Gilberti Dictionary, among others.

The correspondence between Gates and Winship reveals some of the challenges faced by these early Photostat projects. Winship offered to produce all of the Photostats at cost, but at this early stage he wasn't sure what the cost of materials and labor would be. So he decided to follow the rates that had been standardized by the Library of Congress in a recent circular: fifty cents per negative, ten cents for each additional print; sixty cents for each positive, and twenty cents for each additional print (Winship, "27 May 1912"). As a point of comparison, recall that in 1891 the Italian consulate paid $48 for six photographs of the (apocryphal) Columbus manuscript. The Photostat prices were extremely low; and Winship made it his business, in the following years, to try to reduce his own costs even further.[13]

Photostat operations during the early years were plagued with errors. Though Winship never refers to the operator of his Photostat by name, it was likely Joseph McCoid, who operated the Photostat at the JCB until 1938. On McCoid's retirement, John Nicholas Brown II wrote:

[13]It should be noted here that the Photostat was not useful for producing many copies at once: photostatic copies couldn't be used in a printing press, and libraries generally seemed to produce 10 or fewer photostatic copies of any given document (Cole 3).

> "He learned at once to become a skillful operator of the photostat camera and in 1912 began under Mr. Winship the reproduction of books and newspapers for the use of scholars, thus taking an important part in that revolution of research procedure through the photostat in which this Library, with the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library, was the pioneer." (Library)

In the early years, however, not everything went smoothly. The first document that the JCB sent to Gates was a copy of the celebrated Motul Maya dictionary, itself likely a (poorly) transcribed copy of a seventeenth-century manuscript (Tozzer). Among the problems that they encountered were badly focused images and missing pages, which could sometimes have long-term consequences for future research.[14]

In the case of the Motul Maya Dictionary, Gates had to request duplicates of eighteen prints that showed "a double image, caused by perhaps even a walking across the floor during the exposure" (Gates, "6 Mar. 1913"). Aside from these pages, he described the document as "satisfactory" in an early letter to Winship. But in 1914, he reported that he was in the process of typing a transcription of the Motul Maya and was finding it difficult. He explained: "I was so glad to get any sort of copies of the ms. when it came, taht [sic] except for a dozen badly out of focus pages you remember I had you make me over, I tried to believe it was all right. But after my own experience of the past years, it is beyond question that about the first half of the Maya Spanish part is wiggly in the focus" ("13 Nov. 1914").[15] Winship has his operator recopy — and resend — the first 255 leaves of the Motul Dictionary for Gates.

[14] Recall that the huēhuehtlahtōlli discussed in Chapter 2 was published with two folios missing because they were somehow excluded from the photographed copy.

[15]

Gates was very particular about the form of his photostats. Photostat machines produce a negative (black with white text) that could then be re-photostated to create a positive print. Gates preferred to create the positive with his own machine, so that he and his operator (an unnamed woman) could maintain control over the quality of the image. He also preferred images that preserved the edges of the book, so that he could bind them together so that the edges showed. The goal, he wrote, was to create the illusion of reading the original.

From 1911-1914, Gates and Winship maintained a productive (if largely unidirectional) exchange of photostatic copies of manuscripts and, less often, printed books. This project is best understood as part of a larger effort, across libraries, to improve their collections with the aid of photostatic reproduction. In his 1914 Annual Report, Winship listed the Gates project alongside other photostatic projects, the most significant of which was the multi-institutional effort to photostat more than 700 issues of the pre-Revolutionary newspaper the *Newport Mercury* (*Annual Reports* 12).[16] Collaborations like these allowed U.S. institutions (and individuals) to join together in creating research libraries that could promise complete access to the historical record, from Gates' complete collection of Mayan documents to the JCB's complete collection of the *Newport Mercury*.

Large-scale photostatic projects would only increase in importance in subsequent years. In 1922, George Watson Cole published a survey of photostatic practices in libraries across the country. His particular interest was bibliography;

[16]In reference to Gates, Winship wrote in the Annual Report: "Most of our Mexican manuscripts and several printed volumes have been copied for a student living on the Pacific coast" (*Annual Reports* 1914:12).

he wrote: “The photostat has worked a complete revolution in bibliographical and research work by furnishing a comparatively inexpensive means of comparison between different copies of the same book” (Cole 1). From the thirty-odd questionnaires that he received, he found that most libraries were both using Photostats in-house and acquiring Photostatic copies from elsewhere. Photostats were used to complete imperfect books, much as photolithographs had been used previously, though they in no way created the illusion of an original. They were used as reference texts in place of originals in order to preserve the more delicate documents. And they were used to fill out collections through the reproductions of rare books that could not be acquired by any other means.

As the Photostat grew in importance, the question of accuracy also became more pronounced. In the case of both the Motul Maya dictionary and the French-Miami dictionary, we saw how color binarization, focus, and carelessness could impact the accuracy of the copy. Because the Photostat printed in black-and-white, and because it could only print on certain kinds of paper, Photostats were unlikely to mistaken for any other kind of document, never mind an original. This may have been part of the reason that the Photostat was considered more accurate than the easily-manipulated photolithograph. The other part had to do with the technology itself. As John S. Greene of the Photostat Corporation explained to Cole, “The photostat print is usually accepted as evidence whereas the photograph is not, for the simple reason that the photostat print cannot be changed while it is an easy matter to rearrange a photograph” (14). The photostatic copy may have looked quite different from the original document. But it was nevertheless so accurate that

it could be used as evidence in a court of law. Technological accuracy surpassed similitude in the photostatic replica.

In addition to the effort to perfect his own library, Gates had a secondary project that he proposed early in his correspondence with Winship. He began by reminding Winship of the financial circumstances that forced León to sell his catalogue of rare books. As a consequence of that sale, he wrote, León had given up all motivation to continue with his valuable work as a researcher in American linguistics. Gates went on,

> In sending me a copy of his printed list of 1896, he wrote at the bottom - Comprado por el biblioteca Browniana. Now Dr. León has always been ready to help every other student with his stores; and [...] I right then formed the intention of asking you, as soon as the copying became practical, to let me copy a number of the pieces you got from him, and then surprise him by presenting him back with working copies of his own mss. (Gates, "7 Jun. 1912")

Gates continued to talk about the plan to send León Photostat copies of his own manuscripts for the length of his correspondence with Winship, though I have no evidence that he ever followed through. Gates' dream of photostatic philanthropy is telling, however. It allows financially powerful institutions in the United States to maintain control over historical documents and their distribution, while reaching for the ideal of a somewhat more democratic (or at least meritocratic) distribution of information. Cheap photostatic reproduction made this dream appear closer than ever. But as we've seen, there remained many logistical differences — from production to legibility — between the original text and the readable replica.

Conclusion: Documentary control

In this chapter, I have described the coincidence of three changes that occurred within a short period of time at the JCB: the acquisition of the León catalogue; the institutionalization of the library at Brown University; and the acquisition of the Photostat machine. I have tried to suggest that, although the timing of these three events was to some extent random, they were also part of larger historical shifts that were interrelated in meaningful ways. The accumulation of wealth in the United States, and the political and economic instability in Mexico, shifted the balance of power to the north. The shift of cultural property from Mexican institutions to private libraries from California to Chicago was part of that larger trend, which was hardly politically neutral. As León wrote bitterly (and trilingually) in one postcard, *"Le bon dieu proteja a el child de Mr. Brown; él con un hijo y 20,000,000 de $$; yo con 7 childs y $0000000!!"* (León, "18 Mar. 1900").[17] Gates' plan to send León a photostatic version of his own library can be understood as an early twentieth-century attempt to resist the impact of that inequality on scholarly work.

The incorporation of the JCB collection into Brown University was also part of a larger trend as rare books disappeared from the market and were consolidated in more permanent and public-facing institutions. This process led the JCB to develop a more complete and utilitarian collection of Americana. In doing so, it partnered with other American collectors and libraries to create a collaborative network of institutions with the shared goal of producing and replicating American collections.

[17] "The good lord protect the child of Mr. Brown: him with one son and 20,000,000 of $$; me with 7 children and $0000000!!"

The subscription model allowed multiple libraries to share their collections of materials like the *Newport Mercury* across institutions. Though this project had space for Spanish and French American documents, we don't see many of those volumes circulating through the Americana networks at this time. Instead, they were reserved for smaller projects like the private Gates library. Even as the Mexican documents moved into the United States, they were largely kept out of the largest and most public projects of textual circulation, projects linked to U.S. national heritage.

We can see the consequences of these changes in the ongoing relationship between the JCB and Nicolas León. After the initial acquisition, León and Winship remained in close correspondence. León sold books to Winship, and Winship sent bibliographical information and other resources to León. Stillwell recalled León, who was clearly deeply respected at the JCB, as "the most important" of all the foreign visitors to arrive at the library during her time there (Stillwell 35). Yet in two cases, when León attempted to accomplish serious scholarly work with the help of the JCB, his plans were blocked by American researchers who didn't trust his ability to do the work.

In the first case, León partnered with some Mexican researchers who intended to publish an edited edition of the Motul Maya manuscript held at the JCB. León was not the first to show interest in the document: it had been transcribed and carefully annotated (though with many errors, as it turned out) by Berendt.[18] León aspired to produce a new transcription, either from the original or from the Berendt copy, which was held by the anthropologist Daniel Brinton.

[18]Prior to acquiring the Photostat from the JCB, Gates had acquired a photostat copy of the Berendt transcript.

Winship first heard of the project in December of 1897 from Albert Gatschel at the Bureau of American Ethnology (Gatschel, "30 Dec. 1897"). (Because they shared interests, Gatschel and Winship regularly passed information about León between them.) The next month, Winship received a letter from León directly, in which he asked for help in getting access to the manuscript copy (León, "11 Jan. 1898"). But Gatschel quickly moved to bring the León enterprise into question. At first, he expressed concerns about the cost of the transcription; then about the difficulty of finding a copyist familiar with the languages. "If the transcript was mine I would not allow it to be published unless the cost for copying, composition, press-work and proof-reading was fully secured in advance and placed in the hands of trustworthy people" he wrote (Gatschel, "12 Jan. 1898"). León, in the meantime, had found a scribe: Reverend William Lawrence Pope, who was unfortunately stuck in Cuba awaiting the end of the Spanish-American war (Pope). But Gatschel remained dubious, writing to Winship more firmly in June, " I greatly doubt if the Mexican people can print the Maya ms. in a manner that will please either you or Mr. Brown" (Gatschel, "15 Jun. 1898").

Ultimately, Gatschel proposed that the Bureau of American Ethnology take on the project of publishing the Motul Maya Dictionary instead of León, and León conceded the issue. But the Bureau never did complete — or even start, as far as I could discern — the task, and the Motul Maya manuscript remained untranscribed when Gates approached Winship to make a Photostat copy more than ten years later.

The following decade, the same story repeated itself. We've already seen Gates' commitment to supporting León, particularly when it comes to linguistic

work. In 1913, in a letter that I did not encounter in the archive, León seems to have written to Winship about his plan to publish the Motul Maya Dictionary in a facsimile edition on behalf of the Museo Nacional de México, where León was employed. Gates responded by writing a lengthy letter to Winship describing his doubts about León's plans. "I know you will understand me when I say it is a delicate matter," he began, before going on to describe broadly the trouble with government publications "on this side of the ocean — not on the other," and more specifically, the problems with León's earlier attempt to produce an indigenous-language manuscript. "The mss. needed a scholar acquainted with the language to decipher it, and there was no such. The result was just chaos, in spite of all his efforts," Gates wrote, though he insisted that León was not to blame (Gates, "14 Apr. 1913"). Still, it's clear that financial and bureaucratic instability, as well as prejudice, had combined to make Mexico appear to be an unreliable site for scholarly publication.

Once again, as a solution, Gates proposed to take over the project himself. Instead of producing a facsimile edition, however, he offered simply to treat the photostat copy as a facsimile. León acquiesced, according to Gates, with gratitude, happy not to have to go to the expense and trouble himself ("14 Apr. 1913"). But of course, Gates never intended to produce more than 5-10 photostat copies of the Motul Maya. Two of those appear in WorldCat today, one at the Tozzer Library at Harvard University, and the other at the Newberry Library in Chicago. Perhaps that number was big enough to satisfy the needs of the very small community of researchers working in Maya at the time. Perhaps not.

Many details are missing from these histories, and much is left to speculation. But there is certainly a story behind León's repeated efforts to gain access to historical documents from Mexico with the purpose of creating new editions for broad distribution. Probably León, like the Chilean editors, was feeling the costs of attempting to do research without access to his own nation's primary sources. In response, Gatschel, Gates, and Winship prevented León from pursuing his own projects, insisting that they would be better accomplished by U.S. institutions. Because they weren't priorities for those institutions, however, they were never completed. A 1921 description of the Motul Maya dictionary remarked that William Gates was at work on an edition, but it does not seem to have been published.

What these examples tell us is that the acquisition and consolidation of Mexican documents in the United States had a real consequence for scholarly practices on both sides of the border, at least in part because of nationalistic disagreements over who had the right to control and circulate early American documents. They also show how technologies for textual reproduction were used both to to justify these decisions, and to resist them. Bartlett sent Icazbalceta the photolithographic copy of Molina's 1555 *Vocabulario*, and Gates, at the very least, had good intentions of sharing his photostatic copies with León. We will see the legacy of both of these practices in the following chapter, which follows the circulation and replication of colonial documents into the digital age.

Chapter 6: Return: Cultural Heritage in Cholula, Mexico

In one corner of the historical center of San Pedro Cholula is a Franciscan convent that dates to the 1550s. Cholula, located some 134 km east of Mexico City, is known in the tourist literature as the longest continuously inhabited area in the Americas, with ruins that date to the third century CE. The convent, which has been in continuous use since its construction, was restored as part of a collaboration between the Universidad de Las Americas Puebla (UDLA) and the Franciscans in anticipation of the 1992 quincentennial of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas. Today, in addition to an active church, the convent is home to the Biblioteca Franciscana, a historical books collection (*fondo antiguo*) and archive.

"Es patrimonio," says Fray Francisco Morales, the Franciscan friar who is the force behind the library. It was Padre Morales who first developed the idea, together with the architect Miguel Celorio Blasco, to restore the convent and build a museum. Later, Morales would spearhead the construction of the library, and after that, an archive. The collections of historical books in the Biblioteca Franciscana do not belong to the state: "Es propiedad particular," Morales insists several times. But the books are patrimony, nevertheless. The books were collected — rescued is the word Morales uses — from Franciscan convents across Mexico. They represent the intellectual history of the Franciscans, one of the most influential religious orders in New Spain. As Elvia Morales and Rocío Cazares write,

> *Caminar por espacios sacros dentro de una arquitectura colonial, inmersas en un acervo antiguo que integra a hermanos franciscanos con investigadores que aportarán más conocimiento sobre la colección, nos hace apreciar lo especial de nuestro trabajo, así como pensar en la*

> *valiosa contribución hecha al rescate del patrimonio documental nacional* (Morales and Cázares 75).[1]

National documentary patrimony is a term that carries legal weight: the weight of international conventions, transnational treaties, and national and state legislation. To refer to these documents as national documentary patrimony is to make a declaration about the obligations of the state and the library to preserve and provide access to these historical objects. It is also a declaration about the value of these documents in the ongoing reworking of Mexican national identity and its relationship to the colonial past.

"No es *nuestro* patrimonio," says Dr. Lidia Gómez García. Gómez is a professor of history at the Benemerita Universidad de las Americas Puebla (BUAP) whose research focuses on the history and ongoing legacy of colonization among Cholula's indigenous population. A Cholulteca by birth and by sensibility, and member of the barrio of San Cristobal Tepontla, she has been active in efforts to protect local practices and patrimony. Among her many projects was a collaboration with the University of Texas at Austin focused on a colonial map of Cholula, one of the sixteenth-century Relaciones Geográficas held by LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections. The purpose of the project was a ceremonial return of this map, in the form of high-quality printed facsimiles, to the local community. For Gómez the project to return the maps is a clear-cut case of cultural

[1]To walk through the sacred spaces of colonial architecture, immersed in a historical library that brings together Franciscan brothers with researchers who will contribute knowledge about the collection, makes us realize what is special about this work, and think about the valuable contribution that has been made towards the rescue of our national documentary patrimony.

repatriation, though one with complex social implications. Some of those complications will be explored in this chapter.

The Biblioteca Franciscana, however, is another story. Though the convent dominates the Zócalo, few people in Cholula know that the library exists, and even fewer have entered the reading room or consulted the documents. Gómez refers to the UDLA, the university that manages the project, as a neocolonial institution, and she sees the history contained in the library in a similar vein. As a professor Gómez works with undergraduates who study the very books held by the Biblioteca Franciscana, and as a historian she values the preservation of historical books and archives. But she is uncomfortable with the idea that there are parallels between the library and the maps. She tells me, in no uncertain terms, *"No puedes colocar la biblioteca junto con los mapas."* [2]

Bringing together the library and the maps is, nevertheless, the purpose of this chapter. Broadly speaking, the subject of the chapter is documentary patrimony: the textual objects that serve not only as sources of information but also as sites of cultural memory. Textual objects have been formally incorporated into the category of cultural property ("bienes culturales") on an international scale at least since the Hague Convention of 1954; they are defined as cultural property in UNESCO's 1970 *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*, and they are defined as historical monuments in Mexico's 1972 *Ley Federal sobre Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicos, Artísticos e Históricos*. In all cases, documentary patrimony

[2] "You cannot locate the library together with the maps."

is a protected class. Yet as Idalia García Aguilar writes, *"la preocupación patrimonial en nuestro país, por lo que se refiere a los libros antiguos y los documentos históricos es increíblemente deplorable"* (3).[3] The movable status of documentary patrimony, its presence in private collections, and the very wealth of surviving materials all impact the value that has been placed on these objects. So do competing ideas about what history matters, and to whom.

This chapter is concerned with the effect of replication on the patrimonial status of historical texts — that is, on their value as objects of cultural heritage. How does the existence of multiple copies change the way we value these historical objects? And how can replication be used to establish cultural affiliation and ownership over cultural heritage? To answer these questions, the chapter focuses on two case studies. The first case, that of the Biblioteca Franciscana, considers the role that rare books and historical libraries play in constructing cultural memory, and how that memory can work across or against categories of national identity construction. The second case, that of the Relaciones Geográficas, considers how the return of document facsimiles can play a social and political role in the representation of local and indigenous memory.

As the conflicting positions of Morales and Gómez illustrate, for those involved in the preservation of cultural patrimony, the stakes are quite high. The return of the maps coincided with a political conflict between the government of Cholula and the local community over the effort to modernize the city and increase its appeal as a center for tourism, a conflict which is ongoing. Cultural patrimony,

[3] "The concern with patrimony in our country, with regard to historical books and historical documents, is incredibly deplorable."

particularly that which speaks to both pre-Columbian life and the beginnings of European colonization, takes on added weight when the legacy of that history feels threatened. Less urgently — but not less importantly — the protection of Franciscan patrimony is a response to nineteenth-century attacks on the religious orders associated with Spanish colonial rule, the legacy of which are ongoing.

In both cases, access to cultural patrimony is directly associated with the protection of a historical legacy that has long been erased or negatively represented by the state. It also has a transnational dimension, as many of the objects discussed in this chapter are or have been held in repositories in the United States. Though the transnational movement of cultural property abroad has often been discussed in terms of theft and pillaging, preservation has also been a motivating factor, as this chapter will describe. In doing so, the chapter seeks to offer a more nuanced understanding of the role that the U.S. has played in preserving Mexico's cultural patrimony, even as it explores the future of these institutions in the changing landscape of cultural heritage.

Though this chapter is not oriented primarily around digital repatriation, current debates surrounding projects of digital return motivate many of its underlying questions. Digital repatriation, or the return of cultural patrimony to affiliated communities in the form of digital surrogates, has changed the landscape of cultural patrimony. For some, digital repatriation is the solution to the colonial legacy of artifact collecting: historical repositories can maintain ownership over physical artifacts, while simultaneously undoing the colonial structures that brought those artifacts into the institutions in the first place. At the same time, the possibility of

digital repatriation has invited new questions about the role of the surrogate and the original within the framework of cultural heritage. As this chapter illustrates, however, these questions are not unique to the digital realm; they also apply to the circulation of patrimony in the form of material surrogates and of documents, like printed books, that already exist in replica. This chapter invites us to think beyond the digital as we examine the foundational questions and challenges of surrogate repatriation.

What is Cultural Patrimony?

Though patrimony is not a new or unfamiliar concept, its definition, particularly in terms of culture, is elusive. Historians, anthropologists, and lawyers use distinct but overlapping definitions of the term, which can be traced to its roots in antiquity. These definitions, in turn, overlap to varying degrees with popular usage.

Popular usage generally stems from the anthropological definition, which is, in the words of Bolfy Cottom, *"aquellos productos culturales tangibles o intangibles (materiales o inmateriales) que tienen un valor excepcional para una colectividad social determinada y que forma parte fundamental de su identidad cultural"* (82).[4] This definition outlines key elements of cultural patrimony: its dependent relationship to a culture (or cultures); its status as tangible (material) or intangible (immaterial); and its exceptional value. Under this definition, chiles en nogada, a stuffed pepper eaten seasonally in Puebla, Mexico, could be considered intangible

[4] "Those cultural products, tangible or intangible (material or immaterial) that have exceptional value for a determined social collective and that form a fundamental part of their cultural identity." The distinction between tangible and intangible patrimony is standard and stems from the UNESCO definitions, as we will see.

patrimony for Poblanos, the people of the state of Puebla. The colonial map of Cholula might be considered tangible patrimony for the Cholultecas. At the same time, both chiles and maps could be considered the national patrimony of Mexico. Given that the maps were made during an imperial census, they might be considered Spanish patrimony as well. In contrast, popular mythology dates the invention of the chile en nogada to 1821 and imagines it as a symbol of Mexican independence from Spain. Cottom's definition does not highlight an additional important feature of patrimony, which distinguishes between "immovable" patrimony (like pyramids) and "movable" patrimony (like books).

The popular definition of cultural patrimony is broad and flexible: almost anything can be patrimony, and almost anyone can claim an affiliation to an aspect of cultural heritage. There is no contradiction in the fact that a single object, like a historical map, can simultaneously be affiliated with three distinct social groups. This loose definition is insufficient, however, for laws and regulations intended to govern the preservation and ownership of cultural patrimony. The legal history of cultural patrimony can be traced to nineteenth-century efforts to protect books and artifacts from the damages of war and from colonial pillaging. As a consequence of this history, these laws encode a nationalistic understanding of cultural affiliation, as well as a capitalistic understanding of patrimony as property.

National or multinational conventions like the Brussels Declaration of 1874 and the Liber Code of 1863 (in Europe and the U.S., respectively), which sought to protect artifacts in cases of war, are the modern predecessors of today's cultural patrimony laws. In Mexico, similar codes were established in reaction to

the post-colonial commodification of Mexican history by collectors abroad. The first legal protections for cultural patrimony in Mexico appeared in the 1896 *Ley sobre Exploraciones Arqueológicas* and the subsequent *Ley relativa a los Monumentos Arqueológicos* of 1897, which were a direct reaction to the decimation of pre-Columbian monuments by researchers and adventurers from the United States. These laws established for the first time that archaeological monuments (a term that refers both to edifices and artifacts) were the property of the state (88).

The Hague Convention of 1954, established in the wake of the Second World War, affirmed and strengthened these treaties, setting the groundwork for legal definitions of patrimony today. Under the Hague Convention, cultural patrimony was first defined in legal terms as "cultural property," a concept which emphasizes state ownership as key to establishing patrimony rights (Francine).[5] As a result, in the global arena, subsequent conventions, laws, and treaties surrounding the protection of cultural patrimony have focused primarily on protecting the rights of nations to control the fate of their own heritage.

Legislation today stems from the 1970 UNESCO *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* ("Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing"). The 1970 convention was established in response to concerns about the looting of

[5]In Spanish, the term is 'bienes culturales', a term that does not make ownership explicit. Indeed, the language of the Spanish translation is less focused on ownership overall, speaking of "bienes culturales pertenecientes a cualquier pueblo" in comparison to the English "cultural property belonging to any people whatsoever" (UNESCO, "Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property" "Convención para la Protección de los Bienes Culturales"). Mexico signed the convention in December 1954. The subsequent 1970 convention, however, does refer more explicitly to *propiedad* ("Convención sobre las Medidas que Deben Adoptarse").

archaeological sites, particularly in Mesoamerica. The UNESCO convention defined cultural property broadly as "property which, on religious or secular grounds, is specifically designated by each State as being of importance for archaeology, prehistory, history, literature, art or science" ("Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing"). Again, the focus of this legislation is on a state's right to ownership, a fact that has led to sustained criticism from those who argue that world heritage should transcend nationalistic concerns (Cuno). One high-profile consequence of the UNESCO convention (and subsequent conventions and legislation) has been the return of objects deemed to have been stolen illegally, such as artworks taken from German Jews during the Second World War. Another has been to limit the trade in cultural property across national lines, both for private collectors and public museums, libraries, and archives.

Mexican laws follow a similar pattern to the European conventions, though with some differences. State ownership and protection under the newly established Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) for monuments from the pre-Columbian period through the nineteenth century was established by the *Ley sobre Protección y Conservación de Monumentos y Bellezas Naturales* of 1930 (and the 1934 revision), but it had limited jurisdiction. In 1966, a revision to the Constitution gave Congress the right to establish legislation for the protection of archaeological, artistic, and historical monuments. This was followed by legislation in 1972 with the *Ley federal sobre monumentos y zonas arqueológicos, artísticos e históricos*, which remains in effect (Cottom).

The 1972 law establishes state ownership over archaeological, artistic, and

historic monuments, and places responsibility for the protection of these monuments in the hands of the Institución Nacional de Antropología e História (INAH) and the Institución Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBA). The influence of the 1970 convention can also be seen in the 1971 *Treaty of Cooperation between the United States of America and the United Mexican States Providing for the Recovery and Return of Stolen Archaeological, Historical and Cultural Properties,* which established a bilateral legal obligation to support the research and exhibition of cultural property, to prevent these behaviors when deemed illegal, and to facilitate the return of cultural property moved illegally across national borders.

Documents and other textual artifacts occupy a special place within the broader history of cultural patrimony. Documentary patrimony is different from other kinds of monuments and artifacts because, as García Aguilar describes, it is both cultural property and historical testimony (García Aguilar 3). Though documentary patrimony, which refers to the books, manuscripts, and archival documents that can also be classified as cultural property, is protected under Mexico's 1972 law, it was not given sustained attention until the 1990s. The 1993 UNESCO Memory of the World program drew attention to the particular importance of documentary heritage, which it broadly defined, in a 1995 revision, to include oral traditions, audiovisual documents, and digital facsimiles, as well as manuscripts and printed books. This program situates the category of documentary patrimony within a broader project to locate, preserve, and disseminate objects of global value. One of its top priorities is to expand access to these documents through curation, circulation, and digitization.

The online registry of documents associated with the Memory of the World program is telling here. The program lists twelve projects from Mexico, which range from "Los Olvidados," the original cellulose nitrate negative of the film by the Spanish surrealist Luis Buñuel, to the "Collection of the Center of Documentation and Investigation of the Ashkenazi Community in Mexico (16th to 20th Century)," a collection of manuscripts and printed volumes. While the size, place of origin, and principles of organization of these collections vary, half of the projects are related to indigenous languages and ways of writing. The association between cultural heritage and indigeneity in Mexico remains dominant. It is also remarkable that only one library, the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, is included in the registry. Printed books and the libraries that preserve them are not at the center of this program.

As was the case with other UNESCO conventions, the Memory of the World program did not carry with it any legal weight; it is the responsibility of individual communities to produce associated legislation. Just as rare books were not centered in the Memory of the World program, they have been largely overlooked by Mexican patrimony law: as Idalia García Aguilar writes, *"A la fecha en Mexico, ni las leyes que protegen el patrimonio cultural ni aquellas específicas para las bibliotecas, toman en cuenta la salvaguarda de libros antiguos ni de fondos antiguos"* (35).[6] As a result, the Biblioteca Franciscana, one of the subjects of this chapter, operates largely outside the context of cultural patrimony law even as it participates in digital projects, like the *Primeros Libros* project, with a global heritage mission.

Indigenous pictographic documents, in contrast, have largely been protected

[6]As of today in Mexico, neither the laws that protect cultural patrimony nor those which are specific to libraries take into account the safeguarding of historical books or archives.

under cultural heritage law in Mexico (unlike, of course, the long history of their destruction and dispersal during the colonial era). While in the United States, however, where the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1992 has long prioritized the return of certain kinds of cultural heritage objects to indigenous communities, in Mexico there is no legal obligation to ensure that indigenous peoples have access to, or ownership over, indigenous artifacts. Instead, the legal protections put in place to safeguard indigenous heritage stem out of *indigenismo*, the incorporation of indigenous culture into the Mexican state. So the Relaciones Geográficas repatriation project, like the Biblioteca Franciscana, operates outside the auspices of the national government.

Repatriation, Restitution, Digital Return

At the center of debates about cultural patrimony lies the question of repatriation, which is the process of returning cultural patrimony to its rightful owners. Repatriation is the most high-profile aspect of cultural patrimony law, and the one which has provoked the most criticism from collectors, dealers, and curators. The concept of a rightful owner is, of course, rightfully fraught. In some cases, objects have changed hands several times since the time of theft, such that the current owners cannot be held accountable for the crimes of the past. In other cases, the movement of a given object was not held to be criminal at the moment of removal, such that, once again, current owners are not precisely accountable for what is now deemed to be a criminal act. In yet other examples, the social group to which the object once belonged no longer exists in a clearly recognizable form. Finally, there are

cases where the people affiliated with cultural property do not have the resources to take ownership over valuable objects. Despite these concerns, for those seeking restitution for a past where oppression was embedded in the structures of commerce and law, repatriation can be considered part of healing.

The discursive complexity surrounding repatriation — like that surrounding cultural property — points to the competing interests and concerns associated with these processes. Like the word patrimony, the etymological root of repatriation is the nation as a (masculine) political entity; it implies a return on a national scale (Frick 118). The word originally referred to the return of people such as refugees or prisoners to their nation of origin (Glass 118). Such is the case of the Mexican Repatriation of 1929-36 in the United States, during which hundreds of thousands of people of Mexican descent, including many U.S. citizens, were forced to return to Mexico.[7] This etymological history suggests the complex politics of desire that underlie both the circulation of cultural patrimony and its return, as nations weigh the costs and benefits of maintaining valuable objects (or, in fact, people), and of returning them.

Though the repatriation processes described in this chapter do not directly touch on restitution or reparation, the ethics of return often conflates these three categories. Restitution refers specifically to the return of an object as property in the case of theft. It is not applicable in the cases described here because the objects were not legally protected at the time of removal; nevertheless, from the perspective of the twenty-first century, their removal can feel like a criminal act. Reparations

[7]Today, the repatriation of Mexicans is again a politically contentious subject in the United States, though the word repatriation is not being used.

are legal payments to victims of a crime, usually made by the state to redress injury or damage (118). Again, while the returns described here do not carry the legal weight (or financial benefit) of reparations, their value or success may be evaluated within a similar framework.

The concept of repatriation is made more complicated in cases of reproduction, including digital surrogates. As Caroline Frick writes, "repatriation is, and always has been, about copies" (125). In her study of the repatriation of historical films, Frick explains that historical films exist in a limited number of copies that were distributed for display and kept because the costs of return were greater than the benefits. The entities that once possessed these films may no longer exist, or may lack the interest in or resources for preservation. Yet the hoarding of duplicates in a national repository is not always useful, particularly when, as Frick describes, those repositories lack the resources to do more than preserve: that is, they lack the resources to catalogue, describe, or display the artifacts.

Duplication is also a mark of the historical book, which shares a history with film and other replicable media. Chapter Two illustrated how historical manuscripts have circulated in the form of transcribed copies, and how those copies have taken their place in historical libraries and archives — repositories for cultural patrimony. In the case of Joaquín García Icazbalceta, for example, we saw how transcribed copies were bound and incorporated into a collection of historical sources that itself, in turn, became a collection oriented around the biography of the historian himself. Historical printed books, which exist by definition in replica, have similar histories.[8]

[8]The Spanish term for historical book collections, "fondos antiguos," refers in the Mexican case to books printed between the 15th century and 1821 (de Zamora 2).

As this chapter will discuss, their survival in duplicate can shape the discourse around ownership and preservation. Some of this discourse is informed by local ideas about textual authenticity and the significance of reproduction. As Gwyneira Isaac has argued for the Zuni case, the idea of a copy as a degeneration of the original is a Euro-American concept that may not be applicable across all cultural borders (212). Indeed, it may the case that the concept is less applicable even within the Anglo-American context than it at first appears.

Digitization has drawn particular attention in repatriation discourse because of the rise in what has been termed "digital repatriation" or "digital return."[9] the promise of digital return is that it can enable multiple stakeholders to simultaneously access, control, and interpret heritage objects: by putting a work of art, a document, or an artifact online, museums can both maintain ownership over an object and share it with other communities. This has been useful in cases where, for example, an affiliated indigenous community does not have the resources to preserve a material collection, but nevertheless wants access to their historical record.

Digital return has also provoked both theoretical and practical concerns. From a theoretical position, as Fiona Cameron has argued, digitization forces a rethinking of the relationship between the original and the duplicate. In Cameron's argument, museums have long valued the original because of the role it plays in authenticating state narratives; as she explains, ""real" objects are deemed to have a

[9]Following Jim Enote, Director of the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center at Zuni, I will use the term "digital return" to describe this process; as Enote explains "We are not talking about ownership really if we are just getting a copy. That is not the same thing. If it is truly repatriation we get the ownership of it. Do we have to say this was a gift from this museum or now that we have this image or recording do we have to say courtesy of? No, unless we own it then it is not truly repatriation." (Quoted in Bell et al, 8).

historical actuality while acting as a visible sign of the past. They act as fragments of information, having a special place in time and space as survivors of the past ensconced in the museum" (Cameron and Kenderdine 54-55). Yet the digital surrogate has its own history of labor, its own provenance, and its own unique material qualities, all of which, in Cameron's argument, should enable us to value better and understand the significance of digitization. At the same time, as discussed previously, the narratives of state authenticity and historical witnessing associated with the material original may be culturally specific. Not all people devalue the duplicate.

Digital return can also challenge popular notions about accessibility and interpretation. Nearly from its inception, digitization has been viewed as an act of radical freedom, increasing the accessibility of information and releasing it from the stranglehold of corporate interests. The theoretical framework of freeing information, however, does not always apply in the context of cultural heritage. As Christen explains, "The celebration of openness, something that began as a reaction to corporate greed and the legal straightjacketing of creative works, has resulted in a limited vocabulary with which to discuss the ethical and cultural parameters of information circulation and access in the digital realm" (Christen, "Information" 2874). Instead, as Bell, Christen, and Turin write, it becomes essential to turn from a focus on accessibility to one that takes into account both access and control (Bell, Christen, and Turin 7).

In indigenous cases, this reworking of the framework of accessibility stems from the desire to take indigenous epistemologies seriously. In her work on both

the Mukurtu Wumparrarni-kari Archive and the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal, two indigenous digital archive projects, Christen describes how descriptive metadata, content, and accessibility were shaped by the needs of affiliated communities. Access to specific kinds of facsimiles, including photographs of the dead, were restricted by community-determined categories such as the tribal affiliation, sacred status, and gender of the user. In the case of the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal, parallel metadata schema enabled frameworks for organizing and accessing information that could meet the needs of both the library and the tribal nations (Christen, "Opening Archives" 199).[10]

The ideal of universal accessibility is not globally shared, and can often carry cultural and personal risks. The reproducible objects that appear in this chapter — the printed books and the map — already exist in replica, however, and their broad dissemination is largely uncontested. Indeed, though access remains central to library discourse around projects of documentary return, it plays only a minimal role in the two cases featured in this chapter. Instead, as we'll see, the receiving communities value ownership, preservation, and distribution. Repatriation, return, and restitution here are largely divorced from the information that these texts contain.

[10]The argument for a more nuanced approach to accessibility does not only apply in cases of indigenous epistemological differences, however. Human rights archives, and indeed all archives containing sensitive materials associated with living individuals, must address similar concerns. The personal archives of political figures, artists, and writers often come with time-based restrictions, and are gradually opened to the public over time. Yet there are conditions in which these delays are not practical. In the case of the Guatemala Police Archive, for example, digitization was an urgent task as physical and political conditions put these records at risk. Because the records could provide information about the fate of individuals killed during the civil war, and because they contained information that could support legal action against those involved in the war, preservation and distribution was a top priority. At the same time, however, the records contained sensitive information about living individuals and their families. Those digitizing the Guatemala Police Archive were thus faced with competing priorities around access and restriction (Weld).

Structure

This chapter is concerned with the effect of replication on the patrimonial status of historical texts — that is, on their value as objects of cultural heritage. How does the existence of multiple copies change the way we value historical objects? How can replication be used to establish affiliation with and ownership over cultural heritage? To answer these questions, the chapter turns to two interrelated case studies in the city of Cholula, Mexico: the Biblioteca Franciscana and the *Relación Geográfica* map. The first case considers how replicated and replicable books can become unique artifacts in a historical collection. The second considers how the replication of a widely disseminated document can be used to perform ownership and negotiate political authority.

Each case study follows the same structure. The 'document' sections begin with a close-reading of the objects of documentary patrimony. In the case of the Biblioteca Franciscana, this means a close examination of the books held at the library, as well as an examination of the collection as a whole, which in this case functions in many ways as a readable object. Replication of pages and collections work together to produce a 'bibliographic turn' in documentary patrimony. In the case of the *Relación Geográfica* map, this means reading the map against its reproduced copies to situate the RG map against a broader history of reproduction and dissemination. In both cases, the cultural value of replicable (and replicated) texts is invoked by prioritizing the extratextual meanings of a document, such as its format, its iconicity, its legal status, and its display, over its textual content. These features reveal how a document's material conditions can create and reinforce cultural affili-

ation while manifesting the long colonial histories that have been inscribed into the margins (literally and figuratively) of these historical documents.

The second section of each case study, 'Repatriation and Restoration,' contextualizes these documents within the specific physical, social, and political contexts of repatriation. In the case of the Biblioteca Franciscana, this involves locating the historical printed books within the larger project surrounding the Convent of San Gabriel, in which the documents are housed. At the Biblioteca Franciscana, the narrative of historical continuity that is fundamental to the convent restoration is performed through the cataloguing of the historical books. In the case of the Relación Geográfica, the performance of repatriation was part of a larger political conflict in the cities of Cholula surrounding the protection of archaeological sites. Within this context, the repatriation of the map affirmed indigenous authority over land use by performing historical continuity. In both cases, barriers to the access of historical artifacts are used to reinforce their social and political value.

At stake in these case studies is the contested legacy of colonial history as it is made manifest in the preservation, organization, and accessibility of documentary patrimony. In *Along the Archival Grain*, Ann Laura Stoler makes explicit the status of the colonial archive as a site of epistemological and political anxiety. The collecting and organizing of documents, she explains, is a "flash point" of epistemology; it makes cultural values and prejudices visible even as it renders certain kinds of information elusive (7). In applying this theory to Mexican colonial archives, Jane Anderson describes the role that the category of authorship, specifically, plays in "reducing Indigenous and non-European subjectivity and legitimat-

ing the (ongoing) appropriation of Indigenous cultural material by non-indigenous authors" (230). As access to indigenous archival documents has shifted in the past several decades, she writes, there has been "a monumental failure" to acknowledge the conditions that have shaped our understanding of these documents, particularly in the domains of authorship attribution and copyright (241). The impact of this failure is found in the irresponsible replication of colonial structures of information as documents circulate and appear online.

These archival concerns apply to the collections considered here, including the *fondos antiguos* that preserve printed books from New Spain and the academic institutions that house the RG maps. In the archival context, repatriation is framed as an opportunity to restructure information and reassign categories of authorship and ownership. But through repatriation and replication, the documents explored in this chapter are relocated into libraries and private collections that operate differently from a colonial archive. The logics they embody are in complex and sometimes contradictory relationship to that of the state. Through cultural patrimony projects, these contradictions take center stage.

Printed Books as Cultural Heritage: the Biblioteca Franciscana

Document

In her discussion of documentary patrimony, Idalia García Aguilar defines the *libro antiguo* as *"aquellos [libros] publicados desde al final del periodo incunable (1501) hasta la introducción de las máquinas en la producción librería (1801). Durante este periodo la producción de libros se realiza de forma manual y es esto lo que determina sus características"* (32).[11] The focus on mechanisms of production are indicative of the emphasis, in book history, on technological progress; it is also telling that this definition follows the contours of European print production rather than the specifics of the Mexican case. However, García writes, when considering documentary patrimony it is not sufficient to focus on the document as an isolated object, despite the fact that this is largely how documentary patrimony has been understood. Instead, she writes, we must recall that historical books *"no existen en lo social de forma aislada sino integrados a una colección documental, que es el resultado de procesos históricos específicos"* (32).[12] The preservation of documentary patrimony requires attention both to the historical book and to historical collections.

In considering the Biblioteca Franciscana as a site of documentary patri-

[11] "Those books published between the end of the incunable period (1501) and the introduction of machines for book production (1801)."

[12] "[Historical books] do not exist in society in an isolated form, but rather are integrated into a documentary collection which is the product of specific historical processes."

mony, then, we can begin by examining both the *libros antiguos* held by the library, and also the ways that the library preserves the historical processes that have shaped their long history of use.[13] As we will see, an examination of the library catalogue shows how bibliographical impulses have whitewashed the collections by erasing evidence of Mexican imprints and indigenous labor. These same bibliographical impulses, and their effect, can be seen in the manuscript notations and preservation efforts that mark the few early Mexican imprints in the collection.

Unlike many libraries, the Franciscana does not purchase books. Instead, the collection is made entirely of donations from parishes across the Franciscan province, including libraries in Cholula, Puebla, Veracruz, and Mexico City. As one of the cataloguers told me, these convents do not have the clean, climate-controlled archives of modern special collections; the books arrive at the Franciscana covered in dust and mold, uncatalogued and in many cases unsorted. The people who operate the Franciscana describe their work as a rescue mission, promising to *"reunir los volúmenes que estaban dispersos en diferentes conventos en un solo punto"* (Garone Gravier, *Miradas* 49).[14] The library catalogue makes this model of collecting visible by drawing the historical contours of Franciscan intellectual thought in the region without seeking to correct or alter the ruptures wrought on the collections over centuries of use.

[13]Though the Biblioteca Franciscana contains both a rare books collection and a Franciscan archive, I focus exclusively on the rare books collection here. This is possible both because the archive and the books are physically and institutionally separate, and also because the archive was founded several years after the library. At this stage, it is as separate from the library as the many other preservation projects at the convent, which will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

[14]"Reunite the volumes, which had been dispersed across various convents, at a single site."

One aspect of this history that the catalogues make abundantly clear is the disappearance of indigenous and Mexican texts from Franciscan collections. The Franciscans have long been known for their bookishness, and indeed it was a Franciscan mandate during the colonial period to establish a library at every convent. These libraries held books imported from across Europe and printed at the newly established presses of New Spain; they also included manuscripts and even, in rare cases, pictographic documents. The 1664 inventory of the convent of San Gabriel de Cholula, for example, lists 767 volumes, including classical texts from Séneca, Ovid, Virgil, and Cicero which were likely imported; and volumes like "Fray Juan de Zumárraga, un tomo" that were almost certainly printed or inscribed in Mexico. The same kinds of books are seen in Michael Mathes' catalogue of the sixteenth-century Colegio de la Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, another early Franciscan library. Many of these books were produced in Mexico with the help of indigenous workers who served as translators, scribes, composers, and (likely) compositors or even printers. They would have been read (and written) alongside the imported texts.

The absence of these texts from the Franciscana points to the libraries' long history of textual purging. While we might expect that indigenous texts disappeared from the library because they were not valued, as was largely true of indigenous-language archives, in this case colonialism is much more pernicious and subtle. The nineteenth-century wars of independence and the nationalization of religious property wreaked havoc on convent libraries. Divorced from the indigenous people and the Franciscan missionaries who produced them, early Mexican imprints became valued collectors' items for bibliophiles in Mexico and abroad. As a result, while

some of these books were brought to the more powerful Franciscan library in Mexico City, many others were incorporated into national or private collections both in Mexico and abroad, a history described in more detail in the previous chapter.

What this means for the Biblioteca Franciscana is that out of the almost 1000 volumes in the library's online catalogue that were printed during the first century of Spanish presence in Mesoamerica (1492-1621), only three were printed in Mexico. The rest were printed in places like Salamanca, Venice, and Madrid, shipped from Spain to build the Franciscan libraries. These books, the same volumes consulted across Europe, point to a common intellectual discourse among Franciscans across the European colonies, including among their trilingual indigenous students. They also suggest that Franciscans in the regional convents may have shifted towards reading the European texts as Mexican books grew in value and as indigenous content fell out of favor. This is reinforced by a close examination of the three early Mexican volumes at the Franciscana, which reveals their changing value as they shifted from readable works to family artifacts and then to bibliographical ones.

All three of the early Mexican imprints in the collection are concerned with indigenous evangelization. Fray Juan de Torquemada's *Los veynte y un libros rituales y Monarchia Indiana* (1614) is a historical account of indigenous life, while the two works by Fray Juan Bautista, the *Advertencias para los confessores de los naturales* (1600) and *A Iesu Christo S.N. ofrece este sermonario en lengua mexicana* (1616) are both written at least partially in Nahuatl, and written to address the specifics of New World evangelization. The *Advertencias*, which we saw in Chapter 4, is concerned with changes to the act of confession in the American context,

while the *Sermonario* is a collection of sermons written in Nahuatl. This volume, composed by the final director of the Colegio de la Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, is famous today for its Spanish introduction, in which Bautista gives the biography of the numerous Nahua students who helped to translate and otherwise produce his texts.

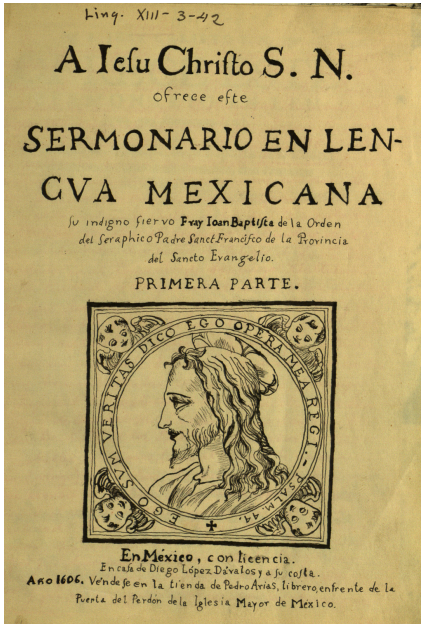
I'll focus in this section on the *Sermonario*, in which the narrative of textual use is most explicitly manifested. The volume is bound in embossed leather that shows significant wear, and it is missing the original title pages. The pages of the sermons are marked with interlinear translations into Spanish, evidence that Franciscan readers were studying the text, and a symbol for the imperial shift from Nahuatl to Spanish in the eighteenth century. It is clear that the content of this volume was meaningful for the Franciscans who owned and used it; indeed, it's possible that this use, and the subsequent damage, is the reason why the volume was not removed from the regional convent library.

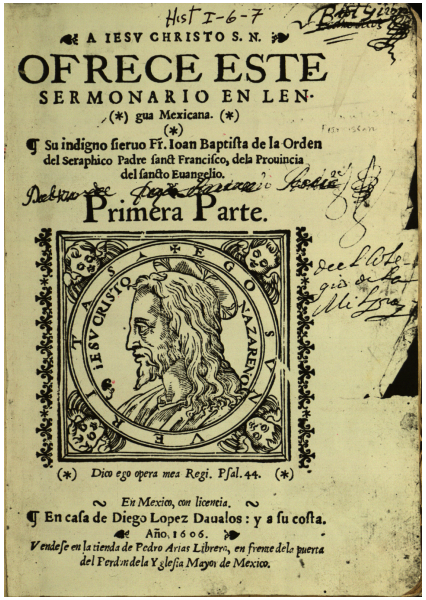
What is also clear, however, is that the meaning that the volume held for Franciscan readers extended beyond the words on the page. The volume contains four manuscript inscriptions — two on the back of the title page, and two on the colophon — that memorialize the death and interment of two individuals: "mi tio Padre Francisco" on July 14, 1729; and "mi ermano don Ju[an/lio] Gregorio Juarez" on July 7, 1762. We don't know much about these two men, who are not identifiable from among the Franciscan catalogues of the deceased; perhaps the latter was a secular don. We also don't know the relationship between these men and the book into which their deaths were inscribed: were they the owners of the book? Did they love

it, read it, teach from it? Or did it perhaps belong to whoever made the inscriptions, possibly as many as four different men? While the history of these inscriptions is uncertain, what they reveal is a network of family relations that includes both bloodlines (mi tio) and religious networks (Padre Francisco). This intimate family narrative tells a story of use that has little or no relationship to the words printed on the pages of the *Sermonario*.

Yet another narrative is embedded in the volume, which has obviously gone through several stages of preservation, through the history of its conservation. At some point, pages that were worn or damaged were lined with an opaque protective tape. At some stage the title page fell out or was removed from the volume, and several generations of users created replacements that were bound into the book, along with a two-page bibliographic description written in ballpoint pen. Unsurprisingly for these who have been following along, the different approaches to textual reproduction in the three title pages show three different approaches to textual history. Photographs of the title pages are shown in Figure 6.1.

The first is a facsimile reproduction made with a blue ballpoint pen, made to mimic the typography of the original, with a careful reproduction of the woodblock illustration that graced the 1606 page. The use of ballpoint pen dates the illustration to the second half of the twentieth century, but there is no other hint as to the provenance of the facsimile. This title page is followed by a two-page bibliographical introduction to the text, written in red ballpoint and footnoted, in black marker, by Fr. Domingo Guadalup Díaz, a Franciscan contemporary of Fray Francisco Morales, the current director of the Franciscana.





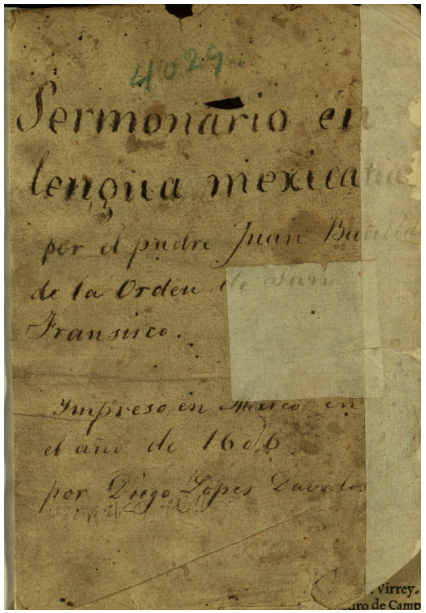


Figure 6.1: Three title pages bound into the copy of the *Sermonario* held at the Biblioteca Franciscana. From left to right: a manuscript facsimile in ballpoint pen; a photographic facsimile; and a manuscript transcription in fountain pen. Images courtesy of the Biblioteca Franciscana, Dirección de Bibliotecas. Universidad de las Américas Puebla y Provincia Franciscana del Santo Evangelio de México.

The second title page is a photographic facsimile, identical in design to the ballpoint-pen illustration, but likely a photograph of the original title page of another surviving copy of the book. The origin of this facsimile remains unclear, though a number of manuscript notations in the photograph would make the original easily identifiable. A comparison of this photograph with the ballpoint version shows that the illustrator either took liberties or was working from a different image. The typography of the two versions is strikingly different, and the orthography of the manual page has been modified to extend shorthand (but not to correct historical variations in character usage). Absent in the hand-illustrated title page are decorative type ((*)) and a border on the edge of the woodblock illustration; the Latin caption beneath the woodblock in the photographic facsimile has been incorporated into the image in the ballpoint illustration.

The photographic facsimile is followed immediately by a third title page. This one contains a shortened version of the text of the original, with no illustration; written in ink, it is significantly older than the other two pages. (A note on the verso side of the page, dated 1762, suggests it is at least from the eighteenth century.) This title page has been repaired with tape by a later conservator, and a piece of the page has been cut out, perhaps to remove an illustration.

Embedded in the three title pages is a tripartite history of textual reproduction as conservation. The oldest transcription, perhaps a colonial-era title page, is concerned exclusively with preserving the bibliographical content of the original: title, author, date, and publisher. It does not seek to preserve the style of the original title page, nor does it preserve illustrations or extraneous details (even the title

has been condensed to contain only key information). The other two title pages, which may have been produced in any sequence, are more concerned with a precise reproduction of the historical text, but here too there are differences. The manual facsimile carries the spirit of the original while deviating from its content and style. The photographic facsimile preserves the original in perfect detail, while importing into the Franciscana copy the manuscript notations from a different exemplar.

Like the death notices inscribed in the *Sermonario*, the multiple title pages record a history of use; in this case, the use is bibliographic in nature. The title pages are arguably more concerned with the actual text of the book than the manuscript notations. The oldest one, certainly, is a utilitarian introduction to the contents of the volume. The other two title pages, however, suggest a move away from textual content. The photographic facsimile represents an indexical and archival record of the title page's original appearance, pointing directly to the ideal copy that this volume must once have been, and providing access to the aesthetic details of the typography. The ballpoint transcription of the title pages seeks to accomplish a similar goal by replicating certain qualities of typesetting, typeface, and woodblock printing. But the indexicality of both pages is more impressionistic than it is realistic. The replication of manuscript notations on the photographic facsimile imports an external history of use, while the inaccuracy of the ballpoint facsimile reveals the copy as a work of artistic interpretation. Ultimately, both facsimiles draw attention to their production. Rather than returning the book to its original state, they function as new entries in the long history of its use, a history that shifts from textual consumption to personal value and finally to bibliographic interest.

The bibliographic turn in the *Sermonario* can help us to understand how the books in the Biblioteca Franciscana function as objects of cultural patrimony. The Franciscana collections paint a portrait of Franciscan discursive history, but it is one that has been altered by external factors, including national interests and market forces. The few early Mexican imprints that survive hint at an early period of cultural intermingling, but the history of their use shows a move away from the multilingual discourse of evangelization and towards a more internal Franciscan concern for personal relations and, finally, textual history. This textual history is the principle that guides the Franciscana collections today.

Repatriation and Restoration

Though scholars might visit the Convent of San Gabriel to access the Biblioteca Franciscana or its associated archive, it is the restoration of the building and its murals that attracts tourists and other visitors. The convent is a brilliant yellow building at the end of a large courtyard, just off the zócalo (the central square) of San Pedro Cholula. On entering the building, visitors pass through a room full of rotating exhibits from the Biblioteca Franciscana, and then into the bright courtyard at the heart of the convent. Here the plaster has been removed and the walls have been cleaned to reveal depictions of Saint Francis or other biblical scenes. Many of the murals are from the late-colonial period, but some have been dated to the sixteenth century.

As Anamaría Ashwell describes, *"En el recinto conventual cholulteca la imaginería franciscana histórica y cristológica es la que predomina y domina toda*

la decoración. Sin embargo, elementos estilísticos e iconograficos mesoamericanos son evidentes" (34).[15] Among the fantastic and Christian images in the portería of the convent, for example, Ashwell identifies two Mesoamerican jaguars, as well as flowers, mushrooms, and an eagle that seem to come from the Mesoamerican iconographic tradition (37-39). For Ashwell these images point back to that historical moment of first contact and early collaboration, before the strict separation of indigenous and Spanish life and labor.

As we will see elsewhere in this chapter, in Cholula there is a particular interest in artifacts that point towards the cities' pre-Hispanic history, especially when those artifacts can illustrate continuity between the past and the present. Lic. Juan de Jesús Quiroz is one of several Cholultecas who uses the term syncretism to describe the mixture of pre-Hispanic and European practices that are central to religious life Cholula. By syncretism, Quiroz and others mean the ongoing practice of traditions that are rooted in pre-Hispanic culture, from the seasonal consumption of pulque to events like the *procesión de los faroles* or the *truque*. In Cholula, as in much of Latin America, these pre-Hispanic traditions are inseparable from the Christian beliefs and rituals that surround them; these beliefs, in turn, are inseparable from Cholula's sodalities (mayordomías and cofradias). The sodalities, which can be defined as "a hierarchy of ranked offices" introduced by the Spaniards and organized around the neighborhood saints, map onto Cholula's pre-Columbian community structures (Chance and Taylor 1).

[15] In the courtyard of the Cholulan convent, historical and Christological Franciscan imagery predominates and overwhelms the decor. Nevertheless, elements that are stylistically and iconographically Mesoamerican are evident.

The restoration project at the Convent of San Gabriel highlights this tradition. The project began in the early 1990s as a collaboration between the Provincia Franciscana del Santo Evangelio de Mexico and the Universidad de las Americas Puebla. As Fray Francisco explained to me, it originated as one of the many regional, national, and global events surrounding the Columbus quincentennial of 1992; though the restoration didn't actually begin until 1997, the first contract was signed in 1991.

This date is not a coincidence: the Columbus quincentennial was a perfect opportunity for communities to reframe their relationship to the European conquest of the Americas. In the case of Cholula, the arrival of the Spaniards was both pivotal and of a piece with the city's long history of occupation and conquest. The origins of Spanish presence in Cholula are marked by a massacre of local nobility, which occurred on the site of the future Convent of San Gabriel. By celebrating the quincentennial with the Franciscan arrival of 1524, rather than the first Spanish arrival of 1519, the project was able to focus on the narrative of evangelization and cross-cultural faith, a narrative that celebrates the continuity between pre- and post-Hispanic Cholula.

To establish this continuity, the project included an archaeological excavation in the courtyard under the convent, one of the few excavations of the site. As Patricia Plunket and Gabriela Uruñuela describe, the hope was to find evidence of the Great Temple of Quetzalcóatl, which had long been a pilgrimage site and was reported to have been on or near the location where the convent was constructed. While the researchers were unable to locate the temple conclusively, they did find

sculptures and bone fragments pointing to, in their words, *"la continuidad a través de la historia de un mismo espacio sagrado"* (Plunket and Uruñuela 27).[16] This history of the sacred is highlighted in the spaces where tourists are directed, including the courtyard and the curated displays. But they are also made present through the recovered murals on the walls of the reading room, in the stacks, and in the offices where the librarians do their work.

Descriptions of the restoration project emphasize this same continuity between pre-Columbian past, Franciscan arrival, and the present. José Luis Castillo y Ignacio Cabral describe the restoration process in some detail, writing:

> *Previa autorización del Centro INAH Puebla, primero se llevó a cabo un minucioso levantamiento de toda la construcción, con los espacios anexos a ella. Se procedió a identificar los diversos daños que tenía el inmueble y se hizo la liberación de los agregados de muros, canceles, muebles sanitarios, lamines, aplanados y demás, para rescatar los espacios originales.* (33)[17]

Two aspects of the project jump out in this description. The first is the emphasis on the removal of modern features with the goal of recovering the original monument. Just as the project seeks to create a sense of continuity between the present and the colonial (and pre-Hispanic) past, it also seeks to bring visitors into contact with that time by scraping away evidence of modern intervention — including the presence of the Franciscan friars who still live in the space. As Elvia Morales and Rocío Cázares write, *"Entrar a la biblioteca era situarse en otra época, traspasar un velo*

[16] "The continuity, across history, of a single sacred space."

[17] "With the authorization of the INAH Center of Puebla, first the meticulous process of the construction was accomplished, with the spaces annexed to it. Then we proceeded to identify the diverse damages that the immovable monument had suffered, and then removed the added walls, doors, toilets, laminate, leveling, and all the rest, in order to retrieve the original spaces."

y llegar a un lugar donde el tiempo se había detenido" (Morales and Cázares 73).[18]

The second aspect of Castillo and Cabral's description that draws attention is the requisite authorization from the INAH. Under article seven of the 1972 *Ley Federal Sobre Monumentos...*, the authorities of states, federal districts, and municipalities have the right to restore and conserve immovable monuments of cultural patrimony, as long as they do it under the auspices of the Insituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. The Convent of San Gabriel, which was first consigned and registered as a "Monumento Colonial" (colonial monument) in 1931, falls neatly under this jurisdiction. Though the project was managed by the UDLA and the Franciscan province, it must also be understood as part of the larger patrimonial mission of both the state of Puebla and the nation. This is no surprise: early colonial and pre-Hispanic monuments have long been a preservation priority in Mexico.

The Biblioteca Franciscana is literally embedded in this restoration project, and it shares the dual purposes of historical continuity and temporal return. Idalia García Aguilar argues for an approach to documentary patrimony that creates *"un solo universo de bienes culturales,"* [19] bringing together the immovable property of a library edifice with the movable property of the books that it contains (García Aguilar 12). The Biblioteca Franciscana, which revives a library tradition as old as the building that contains it, accomplishes this goal. As Marina Garone Gravier writes, *"la creación de la Biblioteca Franciscana responde al deseo de preser-*

[18] "To enter the library was to find oneself in another epoch, to pass through a veil and arrive in a place where time had stopped."

[19] A single universe of cultural property.

var parte de las colecciones de la provincia Franciscana del Santo Evangelio de México, la primera en establecerse en territorio americano hacia la primera mitad del siglo XVI, en un sitio histórico restaurado de la misma temporalidad" (Garone Gravier, *Miradas* 43).[20]

Despite the focus on historical continuity, however, the single universe of the Biblioteca Franciscana is not one that was transported intact from an earlier epoch. Instead, it is a curated collection that traces the contours of Franciscan architectural, visual, and textual thought. This chapter has largely described that process as the effort to reconstitute history from the passive reconstruction of fragments of the past. If we have learned anything from archival theory, however, we know that this reconstitutional labor is never passive. Nor is it, in this case, a process motivated by the national narratives that often shape cultural patrimony collections. This is because, as Fray Morales emphasized in our discussions, the books in the collection are the "propiedad particular" of the Franciscans: private property embedded in a convent monitored by national organizations. As a result, the library was not required to follow state protocols for determining value, preserving documents, or organizing information.

We can see the consequence of this in the classification system at the Franciscana, which reflects cultural values that do not directly meet those of the state at large. In classifying the books, the unusual choice was made to prioritize the books' provenance, rather than their content. The homegrown classification system

[20] "The creation of the Biblioteca Franciscana is a response to the desire to preserve part of the collections of the Franciscan Province of the Santo Evangelio de México, the first to be established in American land during the first half of the sixteenth century, in a restored historic site of the same time period."

records, first, the library of origin, and second, the sequence in which the books were received by the Franciscana. The effect of this system is that a visitor walking through the stacks in the portal of the convent can pass from one convent to another, browsing the shelves one collection at a time.[21]

The classification system at the Franciscana is fundamentally different from the Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress systems used in the United States and Mexico. These systems organize information according to what has been referred to, in information science, as 'aboutness'; that is, the primary subject of the document, or the subject that is most likely to compel a user to consult the text. The challenges of determining aboutness are multifold: documents often have many meanings, and determining the meaning of a large collection is resource-intensive. Subject-based classification is nevertheless valued for the benefits to accessibility, and is considered an essential element of preserving documentary patrimony. The system used by the Franciscana, in contrast, is cheaper, but more narrow in scope. If we examine it in terms of 'aboutness,' we might think that the primary subject of each book was, in fact, its site of origin. The library's focus on Franciscan intellectual practice is embedded in the classification of the documents themselves. Content becomes a secondary value, recorded in the digital catalogue but not in physical space.

Just as the restoration project stripped the convent of modern features, the classification system of the library requires visitors to engage with historical struc-

[21] It is important to observe that very few people actually pass through this collection: it is open to library staff only, except on special occasions. In my case, the cataloguer, Mtro. Israel Lopez Luna, was kind enough to give me a tour.

tures of information. This replicates the sentiment of moving back in time that is created by the architectural space. In this way, library consultations become rituals of engagement with an imagined past that bring history to life in the present. This accomplishes the effort, in Morales' words, to *"darle dignidad al conjunto conventual y restablecer el sentido de servicio a su diseño original"* (Morales and Cázares 17).[22] Indeed, Morales' focus on dignity and service suggests that a cultural restoration underlies the restoration of the historical books. Together, the library and convent establish new ways of engaging with sacred and intellectual history that bring new life into cultural practice within the convent.

Surrogate Repatriation: the Relación Geográfica de Cholula

Document

On the surface, the repatriation of the *Relación Geográfica* (RG) map of Cholula seems like a standard repatriation project. The map was made between 1579 and 1581 by the Spanish corregidor of Cholula, Gabriel de Rojas; it was likely based on earlier indigenous maps, and illustrates the intersection of Spanish and indigenous ideas about the representation of geographical and political boundaries. While the provenance of the map is not fully known, we do know that it was acquired by the nineteenth-century Mexican historian Joaquín García Icazbalceta, who has appeared in several chapters of this dissertation. These maps were sold by his heirs,

[22] "Bring dignity to the convent, and reestablish the sense of service to the original design."

along with the rest of his rare books collection, to the Benson Latin American Collection in Austin, Texas, where it remains to this day as a highlight of the colonial collection.

The Benson's stated priorities include cultural agency, social inequality, and sustainable democracy; these values are reflected in the institution's attention to the role of U.S. archives and libraries in reinforcing colonial and neocolonial approaches to history. In the past few years, the institution has been involved in a number of projects with an explicitly decolonial or anti-colonial mission, including the Latin American Digitization Initiative (LADI) post-custodial digital archive.[23] The repatriation of the RG map to Cholula, through the hands of indigenous community leaders, can be understood in this vein. The decision to repatriate a reproduction (rather than returning an original) follows a logic similar to that of digital repatriation: the Benson can apply its extensive resources to the ongoing preservation of the original, while explicitly acknowledging indigenous cultural affiliation and improving community access to indigenous heritage. The focus on Cholula was the product of chance: Kelly McDonough, a faculty member, works closely with community members in Cholula who expressed an interest in repatriation. The hope is to extend the project to other RG maps.

Yet in certain key ways, the repatriation of the Cholula RG map breaks with the standard logic of surrogate repatriation. Along with the Iglesia de la Virgen de los Remedios at the top of the pyramid of Cholula and the Convento de San Gabriel de Cholula, the 1581 *Relación Geográfica* map depicting the colonial city

[23]For full disclosure: I am a former and future employee and ongoing affiliate of LLILAS Benson.

of Cholula has become an iconic image of the 'ciudad milenaria.' It has been reprinted in scholarly books, like Barbara Mundy's *The Mapping of New Spain* and the edited collection *Mapping Latin America*, as well as tourist-friendly texts like *Cholula en sombras y luces* (*Cholula in Shadow and Light*). It appears in artistic representations like those that decorate the Hotel Real de los Naturales. And it can be found online from multiple sources, including LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, where the original is held. Given this plethora of replicas, what was it that compelled LLILAS Benson to work with Cholulteca community leaders to repatriate high-quality reproductions of the map to the community? And what value could that reproduction have in a context where access to the map is already easily available?

The Relaciones Geográficas and their maps

A closer consideration of the map, its cultural affiliations, and its other replicas can help us begin to answer these questions. The *Relaciones Geográficas* (RGs) were questionnaires commissioned by King Phillip II and distributed across New Spain in the 1570s. An early example of an imperial census, the questionnaires aimed to gather information about the geographical and cultural features of the empire; among the fifty questions in the census were details about the local language, people, agriculture, geography, and urban plans. Howard Cline cites 167 extant RG questionnaires and 76 extant maps, plus fifteen that are known to have been lost,[24] significantly less than the Spanish crown had expected (Cline). Considered a fail-

[24]Daniel Robertson describes 92 maps.

ure as a census, the collection nevertheless continues to have historical relevance for scholars of the early colonial period.

The Relación Geográfica for Cholula was produced between 1579 and 1581 by the Spanish corregidor of Cholula, Gabriel de Rojas, along with at least one anonymous indigenous participant. Though information about Rojas is scant, he first appears in the archives in 1578, and lived at least until 1627 (Grunberg 282-83)). Fluent in Nahuatl, he collected testimony from indigenous informants and conducted his own inspections during the completion of the RG. As Bernard Grunberg remarks, this resulted in a careful evaluation of the pre-Columbian population estimates, lengthy discussion of the etymology of Cholula and other linguistic questions, and a brief discourse on the *matanza de Cholula*, the massacre directed by Cortés prior to the conquest of the capital city of Tenochtitlan. In Grunberg's analysis, Rojas' approach to indigenous subjects was ideologically Spanish, but it does show evidence of what Grunberg calls transculturation, the insinuation of indigenous ideas about the past into a Spanish writing of history. Grunberg sees the absence of religious denunciations, for example, as evidence of a degree of sympathy from the corregidor.

Three items in the questionnaire ask for the production of maps. Question Ten asks that respondents "Make a map of the layout of the town, its streets, plazas and other features, noting the monasteries, as well as can be sketched easily on paper. On it show which part of the town faces south or north" (Mundy, *Mapping* 29). Questions 42 and 47 ask for similar maps of the ports, landings, and islands along the coast. The approximately 92 maps that survive today were produced in

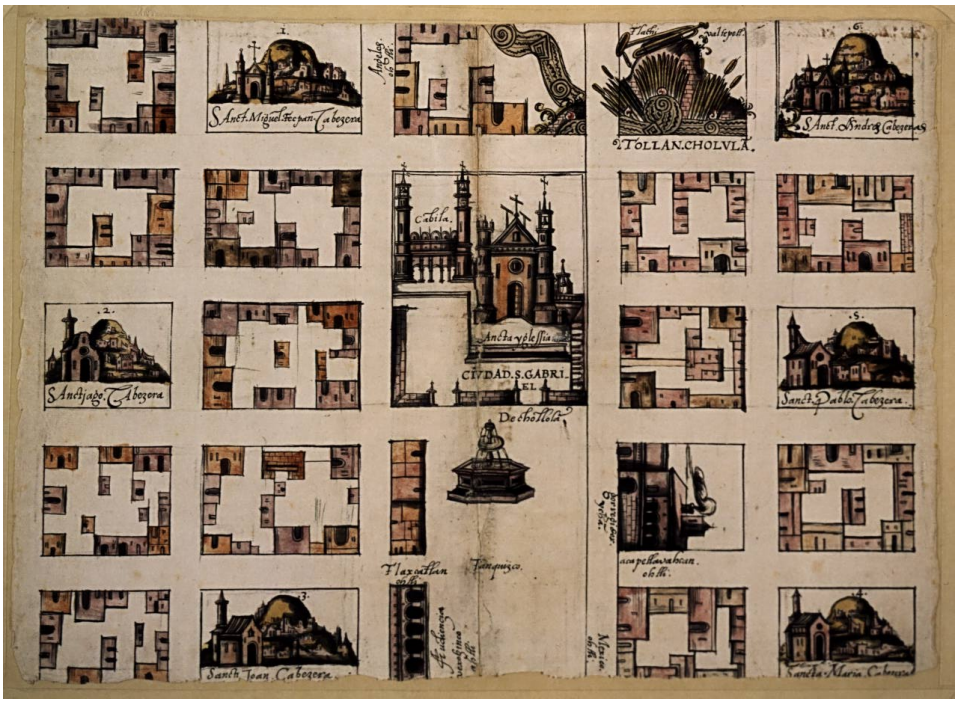


Figure 6.2: The Relación Geográfica map of Cholula. 31x44 cm. Image from the digital collections of LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, UT Austin.

response to these questions. They have been studied in detail by Barbara Mundy in her authoritative *The Mapping of New Spain*. Though the maps were generally unsigned, Mundy finds that forty-five of these maps were likely drawn by indigenous artists. The map of Cholula is one of these cases.

The map of Cholula, shown in Figure 6.2, is a 31 x 44 cm painting. Mundy describes the map as an "extraordinary indigenous map," explaining that it is painted in a grid, with the convent of San Gabriel at the center and the pyramid of Cholula in the upper right (72). Like other church-centered maps, Mundy argues, the Cholula map suggests that the painter saw the convent as the *axis mundi* of the town. The use

of gridlines and perspective in the map also suggest that the cartographer had Spanish training, perhaps from the fresco school at the convent of San Gabriel, Cholula (now home to the Biblioteca Franciscana). Along with the convent, the map highlights six *cabeceras*, head towns that served as centers for religious administration and proselytization. While the toponym of Cholula in the upper right and the map's not-quite-northward orientation hint at the presence of an indigenous artist, the grid creates the overwhelming impression of European cartography.

Mundy nevertheless argues that the RG map was likely based on an indigenous social settlement map, probably the one found in the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca* (126). As Mundy describes, social settlement maps were a solution to the challenge of cartographically representing social groups with a widely distributed geographic presence. In pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica, the basic communal unit was the *altepetl*, a term that has been loosely translated as city-state. Though the *altepetl* were socially and politically coherent, they were often geographically fragmented and could overlap. The same was true of the *calpolli*, subdivisions of the altepetl. Eight of Cholula's twelve *calpolli* are represented in the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca*.

Mundy finds that each of the six *cabeceras* in the RG map of Cholula corresponds to one or more of the pre-Hispanic *calpolli*, while three maintain their Nahuatl name. Indeed, it seems that the term *cabecera*, which usually applies to larger political entities, has been imperfectly applied to these Mesoamerican social groupings. The numbering of the *cabeceras* on the map corresponds to the rotational cycle through which the *calpolli* distributed power and community obli-

gations. Though the map of Cholula is almost entirely European in its mode of representing space, it shows the persistence of indigenous community structures.

The persistence of pre-Columbian traditions is central to the ongoing life of the Cholula map. The *calpolli* of the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca*, reimagined as *cabeceras* in the Relación Geográfica, survive today as barrios or mayordomías in the cities of Cholula.[25] For those Cholultecas who participate in the religious life of the barrios, they continue to be an important social and political organizing structure; the individuals who participate in the rotating religious leadership of each barrio (the mayordomías) have high status in the community, and people identify closely with their barrio.

I spoke with several members of the barrio of Santa Maria Xixitla about the importance of the map for the community today. Through these conversations, it became clear that the map is meaningful, at least in part, because it marks the continuity of these identities from colonial and pre-Hispanic times.[26] But I was also told that the map is everywhere, and has been for years. It was reproduced in books that can be seen at the UDLA or the cultural center in Cholula. Digital copies are held on the personal hard drives of community members. There was discussion of making postcards with the map as a fundraiser for the church. Community access to this documentary record, then, is not at stake for the people of Cholula, and could not have been a motivating factor in the repatriation project.

[25]I use the plural "cities" because Cholula is divided into two municipalities: San Pedro Cholula and San Andrés Cholula.

[26]We can draw parallels between the map's significance in Cholula, and the meaning of patrimonial khipus for the Andean communities described in Frank Salomon's *The Cord Keepers*. The patrimonial khipus, which Salomon distinguishes from 'ethnographic' khipus, are valued as part of a community's historic legacy, although no one in the community can read them as texts.

The Cholula map in reproduction

Figure 6.3: Map engraving based on the *Relación Geográfica* map, *in situ* at the Hotel Real de los Naturales, Cholula. Map by Juan de Jesús Quiroz.

The most prominent replica of the map in Cholula is located at the Hotel Real de los Naturales, located just off of the zócalo of San Pedro Cholula. The hotel commissioned Lic. Juan de Jesús Quiroz, a local historian and artist, to produce art that would speak to Cholula's pre-Hispanic heritage. Quiroz, who first encountered a copy of the map while a student at the UDLA, produced three painted stone engravings depicting portions of the map: one representing the pyramid and toponym; one depicting the cabecera of San Miguel Tecpan; and the third portraying the convent of San Gabriel. These engraved reproductions were copied from printed

replicas of photographs of the original map, and hung in the Hotel Real.[27]

Quiroz chose to replicate entire squares of the map, preserving the grid plan set out in the original. This grid plan, Mundy argues, "was linked to civilized life itself and promulgated by royal order" (Mundy, "Hybrid Space" 52); it imposes itself forcefully on the map, and on Quiroz's engravings. As in the original map, the square representing the monastery of San Gabriel acts as the *axis mundi* of the Hotel Real, hung behind the bar, while other images are dispersed in nooks in the restaurant. This allows us to imagine the mapped boundaries of the community as those lands that fall under the jurisdiction of the Franciscan church. This is reinforced by the presence of the Capilla Real (royal chapel) in the same square, which mimics the architecture of the Great Mosque at Córdoba and may have symbolically reinforced the relationship between the conquest of Mexico and the Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula. It is also reinforced by the transcribed text, which reads "CIVDAD S. GABRIEL De chollola," the Spanish name for the city of Cholula. The anachronism of the name and the orthography, however, may point to a historical moment of Spanish evangelization, rather than trying to extend its legacy.

In contrast to the image of the Franciscan complex, the other two reproductions highlight the influence of the indigenous tlacuilo on the map's design. The representation of the barrio of San Miguel (Tianguisnahuetl), which Mundy associates with the calpulli of Xiuhcalca, Uitziluaque, Chimalzolca, and Tianquinauaca, uses Spanish mapping techniques to mark the persistence of communal structures

[27] In an email, Quiroz explained that the engravings were made on a stone known as Tepeojuma, after the region in the state of Puebla where it is mined. Tepeojuma is a kind of limestone with a smoothness, texture, resistance, and color that make it good for detailed engraving.

that predate the Spanish conquest (Mundy, *Mapping* 126). The representation of the hill and the buildings that surround it also shows a use of perspective and of schematic, one-dimensional images that is more akin to pictographic representation than European mapping (Mundy, "Hybrid Space" 54).

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Quiroz's engravings is his reproduction of the indigenous toponym for Cholula, which combines an alphabetic place name with its logographic inscription showing the combination of a hill (tepetl) with water (atl) to signify altepetl. The alphabetic transcription, which reads "TOLLAN CHOLVLA," replicates the chirography and orthography of the original, pointing to the historical moment of its inscription, much like the reproduction of the pictographic toponym. Slight differences between the original and the reproduction, however, show how Quiroz's historical literacy influenced his reproduction. By dropping a tilde that appeared over the 'A' in CHOLVLA, he loses the historical rendering of the 'n' that once appeared at the end of the word Cholula. Similarly, by restricting himself to a single square, he loses the running water which flowed into an adjacent square. This river, which was essential to the legibility of the compound 'altepetl', also represented the rupturing the Spanish grid plan by the indigenous word.

The distribution of pieces of the RG map across the Hotel Real encourages viewers to reimagine the map in a new kind of space: not the flat space of the document, but the lived space of the hotel restaurant and bar. This lived space functions as a meeting place for tourists and sometimes locals; a workplace for hotel staff; and a site of market exchange. It gives new contours to the colonial

map.

Though the content is fundamentally the same, the replicas of the RG map that were repatriated to Cholula by LLILAS Benson were produced using different mechanisms and according to different values than Quiroz's engravings. Mechanical reproductions and their relationship to artifacts have perhaps been overtheorized. By comparing Quiroz's reproduction to those produced by LLILAS Benson, however, I want to insist that we think critically about the role that archival surrogates play in establishing relationships to historical artifacts. In the case of Quiroz's reproductions, there is no effort to reproduce many qualities of the original, including its material form, and no one would consult the stone engravings to learn about the historical map. The faithful reproduction of archaeological perspective, logographic inscription, and historical orthography, however, gestures towards that original document and the conditions of its production even as the copy's form is an imaginative reworking of historical memory.

The LLILAS Benson reproduction, in contrast, promises archival accuracy. This idea of accuracy turns on the pixel-level indexicality of the printed surrogate. The surrogate was produced by digitally photographing and reprinting a historical object. In the act of photographing the object, an indexical relationship was established at the level of the pixel: each pixel is a representation of a minute fragment of the object as it existed at the moment of its reproduction. From the field of media studies, we know that the ability to produce pixel-level indexicality has an impact on the way we think about our ability to preserve and refer back to historical moments in time. As Mary Ann Doane writes about film, "Archival desire

is intimately linked to the technological assurance of indexicality" (Doane 22). In the LLILAS Benson reproduction, we can see that archival desire at work, but it is a self-referential desire. The photograph indexes not the authority of the colonial census, but rather the authority of the academic library. That authority is embedded in the pixel-level transfer of information, which fulfills the mandate of libraries and academic institutions to facilitate access to information.

As in the examples of transcription in the previous chapter, the perfection of the mechanically reproduced map is the product of a constrained idea of accuracy. In the case of a photograph, both the position of the camera and the lens can distort the representation, as can the calibration of colors in the printer. The very concept of a pixel has a distorting effect on multidimensional objects. The decision to crop the framing edge of the paper out of the reproduced map has the effect of erasing the object in favor of the information, allowing the new page to stand in for the old. Collectively, though I have used the word "distortion" to describe these features of digital reproduction, these decisions signify information accuracy to the informed eye, which should recognize the mark of a technology that guarantees authentic reproduction. Or at least, this is how I imagine the maps to be. During a month of field research in Cholula, I did not see either of the two repatriated maps, for reasons that will be considered in the subsequent section.

The printed reproduction of the Cholula map is valuable because of the high-quality technology used in its production. This technology, which promises to increase the accuracy of the representation, is costly and labor-intensive. The result is a mechanical reproduction that is nonetheless rare and rich in information; though

not as rare or informative as the original itself, it remains a valuable gift. This costliness is essential for a repatriation project that also hopes to serve as restitution or reparations for the removal of an indigenous document from the community, and the nation, that produced it. As we will see, however, it was the object's reproducibility, rather than its costliness, that gave it value for this community.

Repatriation and Restoration

Why do you think reproductions of the map were brought to Cholula? I ask Mago.

"Eso no entiendo," she replies. This I do not understand.

We are sitting in the brightly-painted courtyard of the Casa del Puente, where I would later meet Jesús Quiroz, the artist who produced stone reproductions of the 1581 map. Margarita Tlapa is a deeply involved and active community member, with a doctorate in chemistry and a career focused on the protection of what she calls environmental patrimony in southern Mexico. She is also a long-standing community leader in the barrio of Santiago Mixquitla. For Mago, these are two separate aspects of her life that must not be combined.

Part of Tlapa's work as a *principal* has involved researching the history of Cholula and tracing the pre-Columbian roots of modern practices and rituals, particularly around the use of natural resources and lands. This work, Mago tells me, has been limited by a lack of access to the archives and documents of early-colonial Cholula. Even the documents that are held in Cholula and Puebla are often restricted, withheld from community members. On the other hand, she continues, the map has long been easy to access, and she has consulted it many times. This affirms

what we already suspected: the return of the map was not about facilitating access to information.

Instead, Mago says, the return is about the context of *conflicto social* into which the maps were introduced. The delivery of the map coincided with a period of intense conflict between Cholulan activists and the municipal government, including the governor and mayors of San Pedro and San Andrés, Cholula. Patrimony is at the heart of this conflict, which centers on disagreements over the preservation of archaeological patrimony, natural resources, and the religious traditions of local communities. These disagreements, which have led to community organizing, protests, and the imprisonment of several community leaders, have led some Cholulteca scholars to rethink the relationship between their academic affiliations (and the institutional power they entail) and their community engagement. While Tlapa has been careful to maintain distance between the two parts of her life, others, including Lidia Gómez García and the anthropologist Anamaría Ashwell, have developed identities as activist-scholars. It was through these channels that the repatriation project was conceived.

The conflict flared up in 2009 when the municipal government proposed a series of projects to modernize Cholula, increasing access and parking to the pyramid and developing the surrounding tourist region. That year, the decision was made to build a bridge rather than constructing a new freeway to improve vehicular access to Cholula. As Anamaría Ashwell describes, in preparation for this construction a number of trees were cut down, leading to flooding in the historical neighborhood of Santiago Mixquitla and surrounding swamps; to manage the flooding,

it became necessary to build new waterways. This construction, in turn, led to the uncovering of historical artifacts and monuments that could be several thousands of years old. Ashwell describes the response to these discoveries in terms of the intentional mismanagement of historical patrimony, writing that archaeological findings were hidden or destroyed with the purpose of accelerating the construction of the bridge (Ashwell 111-113). In a later essay, she is more explicit, writing *"El puente violaba la ley de protección de la zona arqueológica de 1993 porque obstruía la visual de la Gran Pirámide, además de comprometer el subsuelo arqueológico y afectar la recarga de mantos acuíferos"* (154).[28]

The construction of the bridge was followed, in March of 2014, by the proposal for the "Parque de las Siete Culturas," a project that would include the construction of buildings, gardens, an artificial lake and fountain, walls, and parking lots. The project was first announced by the governor of Cholula, Rafael Moreno Valle, and was supported by various officials of local government; it was not supported by some members of the local community, who considered it a threat to the protected archaeological zone. These community members were particularly concerned with the ways that the new construction would disturb archaeological sites, disrupt the aesthetic of the city, and restrict access to zones that had long been incorporated into religious practices. These concerns became particularly acute when it became clear that the government would be reclaiming private land to be developed for the project, including land owned by Adán Xicale Huitle. Protests grew

[28] "The bridge violated the 1993 law for the protection of the archaeological zone, because it obstructed the view of the Great Pyramid, in addition to compromising the archaeological subsoil and affecting the refilling of the aquifers."

over the next several months, culminating in the October 7 occupation of the city hall and the subsequent imprisonment of four protestors: Adán Xicale, Paul Xicale Coyopal, Albino Tlachi, and Primo Tlachi (153-169). Adán and his son Paul were imprisoned for more than a year before being released in November of 2015 (Manzano).

The repatriation of the RG map occurred in the midst of this controversy. On October 5, 2015, as part of a tribute to Mexican Indigenous Studies scholar Dorothy Tanck de Estrada, a reproduction of the RG map was delivered to the mayordomos and fiscales of San Pedro and San Andrés, Cholula on behalf of LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections at the University of Texas at Austin (where the original manuscript is housed). It is no coincidence, according to Tlapa, that the event occurred almost exactly one year after the imprisonment of the Xicales. Governance of Cholula has long been managed by two separate but parallel forces: the municipal government, led by governors and mayors; and the mayordomías, organized around the ten barrios and their patron saints. The conflict around the bridge and the park can be understood as a conflict between the priorities and values of these governing entities.

This is how Tlapa explains the context of *conflicto social* that surrounds the repatriation project: it manifests support from U.S. academics for the local activist-scholars in their conflict against the secular government. The RG map, which represents early colonial Cholula but also shows traces of pre-Columbian history, represents the ongoing valuation of indigenous cultural production, including by extension the archaeological zone threatened by the government's modern-

ization projects. The decision to deliver them to the mayordomos and fiscales explicitly prioritizes the indigenous government and its claim over the management of Cholula's cultural patrimony. The RG map, which marks many of these barrios by name, affirms the long-standing authority of these communities over the land and its use. Unlike the *pinturas* (both legitimate and forged) that have been used in court to affirm land ownership, however, these maps do not help to adjudicate land-claims, but merely gesture towards historical continuity. In this sense, the maps themselves are less significant than the performance of their return.

As Diana Taylor reminds us, protest performance *"crea un espacio privilegiado para el entendimiento de trauma y memoria"* (Taylor 33).[29] In this case, the repatriation was part of a sequence of performances including protests and sit-ins that leveraged public spaces and symbols of national identity, much like the examples Taylor describes. In these cases, the trauma of the modernization projects, enacted on the bodies of the historical monuments and of the Xicales, is linked to a longer history of colonial trauma and recalled through the reiteration of performances drawn from Christian and pre-Hispanic traditions.

The performance of repatriation was quite different from these other events. It was an invitation-only event wrapped in the spaces and rituals of academic performance: introductory remarks, scholarly reflections, the public transmission of the document, and a photograph to be displayed on the University of Texas website. This performance confused historical lines of power by situating the university, historically a site of colonial power and symbol of state violence, as a *"reto para la*

[29] "Creates a privileged space for the understanding of trauma and memory."

performance del Estado" (40).[30] This challenge was made possible by the transnational alliance of institutions working outside of governmental mandates.

The Eighteen Barrios of Cholula

Performed repatriation ceremonies, like the celebration described above, can articulate the tensions and contradictions underlying the cross-institutional exchange of goods. In a case like this one, where the funding came from academic institutions and the key players were university affiliates, the event was overwhelmed by the presence of academic systems of power and prestige. But we can also understand that transfer as the last hurrah of the academic institution: having publicly rescinded their right to the RG map replica, the universities involved were no longer able to control the performative role of the heritage object in the public eye. In this case, the map (and a second copy, made later) were immediately removed from public view. In a context where access is easy, the community leaders asserted power by rendering the documents unreadable.

The first map, which was delivered formally on October 5 2015, landed in the hands of the mayordomos of one of the barrios in San Pedro Cholula. At first, the map was shared with a select audience: it was displayed in the sanctuary of the church dedicated to the Virgén de los Remedios, the church at the top of the Cholula pyramid, where it could be observed by certain elite members of the community. The choice to display the map in a church is telling: it suggests the reimagining of what was essentially an imperial archival document as a sacred object. Thanks to

[30] "Challenge to the *performance* of the State."

the complicated relationship between church and state in Mexico, this act relocates the map outside the framework of state patrimony. Given the close association between the church and the local governance of the barrios, however, the sanctuary also represents the indigenous political structure. Soon after its display, however, the map was removed from the sanctuary. Though it is supposed to be located in a new building attached to the church, my understanding is that, as of August 2016, it was in the home of Don Tomás, a *tiaxca* (elevated leader) of Santa Maria Xixitla.

I visited Santa Maria Xixitla to learn more about the repatriation of the map. It was August 28, the saint's day for the patron saint of the barrio, and the surrounding neighborhoods had gathered to celebrate the annual changing of the mayordomo. (City-wide celebrations would be held the next week, on the saint's day for the Virgen de los Remedios.) In between masses, we stepped outside to join the crowds drinking beer, soda, or the more traditional foamy chocolate, or eating neon green ices out of paper cups, and to debate the repatriation. In addition to Don Tomás, I speak with his wife, doña Leonor; his daughter Idalia, an art curator at the UDLA; her boyfriend Mauricio, who works for cultural affairs in the city of Cholula; and their ex-pat Texan friend, the photographer John O'Leary, also a faculty member at the UDLA.

Though everyone expressed great personal affection for the people involved in the repatriation, the response to the act itself was largely scornful. Foremost was the question of accessibility, which has plagued this chapter: why repatriate a copy of an object when so many other copies exist? But a second concern had to do with who has the right to own, display, and view the map. The problem is

that everyone involved has multiple affiliations. Don Tomás, former mayordomo of the Virgen de Guadalupe (a city-wide position), is also a former mayordomo of the barrio of Santa Maria Xixitla. Santa Maria Xixitla is part of San Pedro Cholula, the older, less wealthy, and (arguably) more traditional of the two municipalities of Cholula. Don Tomás' possession of the map elevates the status of his barrio and his municipality.

As it turns out, the conflicts between San Pedro Cholula and San Andrés Cholula run deeper than possession of the map. Though in many ways the two cities are similar, San Andrés has distinct and more modern traditions: where the people of San Pedro have mayordomos, in San Andrés there are fiscales, a more secular name for what is essentially the same social position. Some people I spoke with in San Pedro argued that the difference between the two municipalities came from different ethnic backgrounds that date to pre-Columbian migrations, when the Olmec people were pushed out of San Pedro, forming what is now San Andrés. Others say that the people of San Andrés, who benefit financially from their proximity to Puebla and to the UDLA, have lost their connection to indigenous traditions, and that they no longer share the idea of collective property. This matters because cultural patrimony is also, in many ways, cultural property.

I consider questions of belief to be beyond the scope of my position as a librarian and book historian, more the purview of anthropologists with years of research funding and extensive methodological training. What I find telling in the discourse around the map is the anxiety over cultural ownership that surrounds the distribution of the maps, an anxiety that extends to local community members and

(relative) outsiders like John. Back at Santa Maria Xixitla, Idalia clarified that in fact a second copy of the map was given to the people of San Andrés, where it disappeared from the sight of those involved in the repatriation. Still, this leaves eight barrios without maps. Some argue that a proper repatriation would involve the distribution of copies of the map to the mayordomos of each remaining barrio.

Here the question returns, again, to the conflict between the barrios and the municipal government. As Tania Romero Castillo, an activist with the group Cholula Viva y Digna from San Pedro Mexicalcingo explained to me, social resistance in the face of governmental change required a breakdown of neighborhood distinctions, the unification of San Pedro and San Andrés. For others, however, these unification efforts mark the erasure of differences that are fundamental to indigenous Cholulan culture, differences that are inscribed in the very maps and documents that record the city's origins. This erasure is, of course, the same thing that the activists are fighting to prevent.

Underlying the return of the map are two layers of conflict: the conflict between the mayordomos and the municipal government, and the conflict between the ten barrios of Cholula. A third conflict is related to the role of academic institutions in mediating the movement of cultural patrimony. Not everyone is comfortable with the role that academic institutions, like BUAP, UDLA, or UT Austin, have taken in supporting activism in Cholula; for them, the map repatriation is one more element of this inappropriate academic involvement in community life. For at least one community member, the solution would be to remove the academy entirely from the very process of repatriation, recentering the mayordomos, the fiscales, and

their long history of managing community life. This would strip the maps of the context of transnational repatriation and cultural conflict, simplifying their status as documentary patrimony.

Conclusion: Academic institutions and documentary patrimony

The repatriated RG map and the books in the Biblioteca Franciscana share the characteristics that I have been referring to as 'replicability' and 'unreadability.' As we saw in the case of the *Sermonario*, the historical preservation of rare books has involved various kinds of transcriptive replication, rendering the book a hybrid of original impressions, original notations, and copied texts. These layers of replication, which encode a history of relationships with documentary heritage, are encoded in a printed book that itself exists as a replica. While bibliographers like to focus on what makes a copy unique (and therefore marketable), the reality is that the content of these texts is readily available through critical editions, better-preserved copies, and digital surrogates. A similar argument can be made for the RG map, which exists in widespread print, digital, and engraved replication. Access, which has long been described as a motivating factor for libraries, special collections, and repatriation projects, cannot be claimed as a primary factor here.

For these replicable texts, new meaning has been made through the moments that they index, and through the performance of their repatriation. When I say the moments that they index, I mean the event of reproduction as it is preserved in the

form of the copy: the pixels, the ballpoint inscriptions, the photographed image. In this way, these replicated documents become archives of reproductive episodes that encode moments in the life of the document. It is as archives that these documents have been 'returned' through the performance of repatriation. In the case of the Biblioteca Franciscana, the performance of return is encoded in the catalogue of the library and its architectural space. In the case of the RG map, the performance of return was enfolded in academic rituals that asserted the archival accuracy of the pixelated map.

In both cases, the documents were rendered unreadable by the structures that contain them. The cataloguing of the books at the Biblioteca Franciscana renders the contents of individual books undiscoverable: we can see them through the glass, but they are hard to access, and harder to read. The RG replicas are similarly inaccessible, in this case because they have been hidden behind closed doors and out of sight. In the context of widespread dissemination, these replicable documents acquire cultural authority by asserting presence even as they deny access.

Both of the patrimony projects described here assert their presence in a context that is highly fraught. As I write this chapter, the status of the repatriated Relación Geográfica maps is indicative of larger conflicts still active in the community in Cholula. As we have seen, two copies of the map have been repatriated, under the auspices of scholars at U. T. Austin and in Puebla. These maps are in the hands of the mayordomos of San Pedro Cholula and one of the fiscales of San Andrés, respectively. But there remain nine barrios in San Pedro, and seven in San Andrés, that do not have possession of the map. One Cholulteca suggested that a

copy of the map should be given to each of the remaining barrios. Another suggested that the maps should only be given to the six barrios named on the map, which would require the impression of an additional four maps. Both resolutions depend on the fact that the map, which remains in a digital copy, is easy to duplicate four or eight times. They also both point to the conflicted relationship between the barrios and their status in the community. Possession of the map affirms the historical authenticity of the barrio system, an authenticity that is only loosely aligned with the history documented by the map itself.

Another conflict revolves around the role of scholars in mediating the repatriation. One community member told me that the U.S. librarians involved in the project had been manipulated into participating in the repatriation and, by proxy, in the conflict around the urbanization project. The resolution she proposed was that future repatriation projects be enacted without the participation of the librarians, leaving the academy in general, and U.S. institutions specifically, out of the picture. Though academic institutions would remain involved, since the map remains in the possession of the University of Texas and the copies would presumably be made by U.T., the absence of U.S. scholars from the distribution ceremonies would allow the repatriation project to appear to be an internal affair. This would reduce the impact of U.S. institutional backing on the barrios and their relationship with the city government. For other community members, of course, the involvement of scholars from the U.S. was welcome support in the fight for social justice. And for the U.S. librarians and scholars, it was an opportunity to assert their position as scholar-activists abroad.

The conflict over the role of U.S. institutions here illustrates the challenge that libraries and museums face in conducting cross-cultural repatriation projects, particularly those that do not happen at a national level. As James Cuno argues, global repatriation policy has been designed to emphasize the role of national interests to the detriment of both cross-cutting identities and global values. Even when repatriation projects act outside the framework of legal restitution, however, as in the case of the RG maps, national concerns nevertheless cling to the project. In the RG case, for example, the University of Texas came to represent the interests of the nation at large, despite the fact that it was not officially backed by the state. Though the map was not returned to the *patria*, in the sense of the nation of Mexico, it came from the hands of a nation that has long had an imperial relationship with the people, economy, and culture of Mexico. As a U.S. institution, the University came to stand for that relationship, implying a U.S. intervention in Mexican politics.

This relationship was further confused by the decision to repatriate the maps to the mayordomías of Cholula, indigenous political structures that have no parallel in the United States. In the U.S., the repatriation of Native American heritage under NAGPRA has served as the model for indigenous repatriation. These projects are enacted in a context where indigenous communities have a clearly defined legal status and political structure that is independent and parallel to the nation. (Indeed, one of the greatest challenges to repatriation under NAGPRA has come from the messy reality beneath this political framework.) In Cholula, in contrast, the mayordomías have no legal status within the municipal or state government, but rather operate on entirely separate terms. The return of the RG maps thus strained the

nation-to-nation narrative that is often present in discussions of repatriation.

The political structures and social conflicts in Cholula are so distinctive that it is hard to imagine replicating the RG repatriation with other affiliated communities. If LLILAS Benson does continue to perform surrogate repatriations for some of the other RG maps in its collection, as it has already begun to do, it will be interesting to observe the roles modernization, historical memory, preservation, and indigenous political power play in shaping the repatriation. What kinds of authority will future repatriation projects invoke? How will the library navigate other kinds of political ruptures? What futures will various communities decide on for the repatriated maps? Will other communities even be interested in receiving a replica of a colonial map? These questions invite us to step back from reproducible objects to think about the replicability of performative repatriation. I suspect that in these cases, replication will reaffirm the patrimony narratives described here and highlight the institutional authority of the holding library. Less clear are the implications of that repetition for receiving communities.

The role of university libraries and U.S. institutions is also at stake in the case of the Biblioteca Franciscana and its relationship with the UDLA. A founding partner of the convent restoration project, the UDLA employs the library and archive staff, and it hosts the website and catalogue for the library. Its financial and intellectual resources have been fundamental to the completion of the project. Yet the role of the UDLA is also controversial. Within the Biblioteca Franciscana, some people I spoke to expressed resentment towards the university, which was described as having an overly proscriptive approach to determining the job descrip-

tions of employees. The library's affiliation with the UDLA can also give outsiders the impression that the library is inaccessible to ordinary citizens, designed primarily to serve the interests of foreign scholars like me.

The UDLA is not the only controversial figure involved in the Biblioteca Franciscana; the Franciscans, who own the land on which the Biblioteca Franciscana is located, are commonly said to have stolen many of the valuable objects from the churches over the centuries, also have a conflicted position within the community.[31] Yet among those who were familiar with the library, the university more frequently appeared as a point of contention (perhaps, at least in part, due to the popularity of Fray Morales). Like the Relación Geográfica, its ties with the United States made it particularly controversial. For those concerned with U.S. interventions across the border, the UDLA can be seen as an outsider imposing usonian ideologies on the community at large. This does not leave room for the syncretism that the Franciscans allowed, or even promoted, for hundreds of years.

Underlying the controversies surrounding the projects, then, are questions about the role of academic institutions at large, and of U.S. institutions in particular. As the RG return illustrates, projects that might seem relatively neutral within an academic institution can have exponentially greater meaning outside, thanks to the overinflated status of these institutions for outside communities.[32] When cultural heritage is at stake, and especially when groups with long and intertwining histories are competing for narrative control over historical objects, these projects become

[31] An earlier version of this chapter incorrectly stated that the UDLA owned this land. Corrected July 16, 2017.

[32] Conversely, as all librarians know, internally meaningful projects often have little impact outside the institution.

messy, at best.

With institutional power, then, comes institutional responsibility. To conduct an ethical patrimony project, be it restoration or repatriation, from within the academy may require the institution to be narrow in its influence and minimal in its presence. This allows local communities to use institutional resources in the ways that they deem best, while taking advantage of institutional experience and expertise. Unfortunately, however, this approach does not serve the purposes of the institution, which depends on publicity for ongoing funding. Without that publicity, the institution might not be able to participate in projects of this nature at all.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

> We immediately set about the
> painstaking work of transcription.
>
> Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*

This dissertation has been about the process of textual replication, the mechanisms through which the readability of textual objects is managed. By examining the use of these mechanisms across various historical moments, it illustrates how the categories of access, accessibility, and discoverability have been shaped by both mechanical and cultural factors that shift over time. By examining the transnational replication of colonial texts, it centers questions of national, ethnic, and racial bias that often fall to the margins of book history, emphasizing the ways that these biases have consequences for the practice of textual replication and for historiographical work. It shows how a close examination of the detritus of textual circulation can deepen our understanding of the relationship between the documentary record and historical memory.

The first part of the dissertation was a chronology of transcription that moved from the early colonial period to the nineteenth century and the modern age, an approach taken from media archeology's emphasis on "reading digital media into history" (Gitelman, *Always Already New* 11). The three chapters that made up this part offered a comparative analysis of transcription as a single mechanism that highlighted the continuities and differences of this practice across historical moments. In the colonial period, we saw the importance of performed transcription and the

ways that it was used to encode cultural interaction in the contact zone. In the nineteenth century, we saw the value of transcribed texts as collectible objects, and the ways that transcription was subject to various standards of legibility. And in the twenty-first century, we saw how mechanisms for automatic transcription can encode linguistic biases and create opportunities to rework long-standing hierarchies of textual value.

The second part was also chronological, and also focused on a single mechanism for textual reproduction, photography. Yet these chapters differed methodologically from the previous section in that they combined the methods of media archeology with the emerging field of critical provenance studies, which takes the movement of texts as property as a site of critical analysis. These chapters focused on the movement of texts across borders and into library collections as a way of decentering photographic technology, which coexisted with other reproductive mechanisms like transcription and engraving. The first chapter considered how photolithography and the Photostat were used to build libraries of historical volumes, and the second chapter considered how print reproduction and digital photography were used to navigate various affiliations among social groups and objects of documentary heritage. These chapters illustrated the new kinds of accuracy promised by photographic reproduction, even as they demonstrated the limits to photography as a more perfect representation of historical truth. They also highlighted the role that collecting institutions have played in facilitating the production of meaning across replicable documents, and especially among documents that are not intended to be read.

I conceive of this dissertation as an intervention in the digital humanities, which I define as the interdisciplinary application of digital methods, platforms, and objects of study towards the elucidation of humanistic research questions. The analyses of automatic transcription, digital facsimiles, and metadata are all cases that draw directly from the theoretical and methodological practices described by DH practitioners. Yet the digital takes up only a small part of this project. At times, in writing this dissertation, it seemed as if the more deeply I delved into questions of digital practice, the more thoroughly I was drawn out of the digital and into practices that occurred away from the screen, whether they be the secreting-away of a printed reproduction of a digital photograph, or the manual transcription of a photostated book. I suspect that this dissertation's most significant engagement with the digital humanities may be its movement away from the digital. It proposes an approach to DH that puts the digital in its place, alongside, surrounded by, and responding to a broad array of textual engagements occurring on multiple planes.

When digital practice is removed from isolation, then questions that have long been fundamental to the humanities come to the fore. In this context we cannot disregard the ways that digital scholarship, like much academic work, participates in and responds to ideologies with long and often troubling histories. In the case of this dissertation, the ways that digital practice is complicit in colonial thought were clarified through the deep historicization of digitization. It seems obvious, now, that books inscribed during the first century of Spanish presence in the New World were complicit with the violent process of colonization: as Robert Bringhurst put it in a recent talk, even for the most peaceful and sympathetic missionaries, these books

were weapons wielded against the indigenous population. Less obvious are the ways that our own circulation of these texts, often framed as an effort to read against the grain of colonial thought, might engage with the ongoing violence of the post-colonial era. Exploring how historians of the past copied and circulated these texts has illustrated how colonial ideology can be resisted through textual reproduction, and how it can be reinforced. At the same time, it has highlighted the limitations of academic practice as a center of resistance to oppression. It is an unfortunate lesson of this dissertation that academics and librarians rarely understand fully the implications of our work. Yet there is hope in the counterpart to this lesson, which is the understanding that our efforts to control the meaning of texts are always partial and incomplete. When we work in collaboration and across borders, we open ourselves to unforeseen engagements with historical documents that are often more significant than our own historiographical research.

The practices of textual reproduction described in this dissertation largely occur in the context of relative financial and political security. It is true that Sahagún's work was resisted by the Franciscan elite, that colonial printed books were censored by the Inquisition, and that Icazbalceta and León struggled with financial instability and fluctuations in political favor. The broader picture painted here, however, is one in which textual reproduction is an everyday practice, and hierarchies of power are negotiated at the level of the character and the word. The personal and social stakes of these practices can feel high, as individual writers work for religious salvation, or national recognition, or personal celebrity, and as historical texts undergo transformations that have long-term consequences for historical memory.

For the writers involved, however, transcription rarely leads to direct confrontation with the violence of church or state. Even in the example of the Relación Geográfica map, the ceremony of return was celebrated away from the more politically charged sites of violence and imprisonment.

There are times, however, when the stakes of textual reproduction can be much higher. In a recent blog post about the Iranian Revolution, for example, the historian Naghmeh Sohrabi remarked, "Many interviewees defined their early political activity as copying illegal books manually in order to distribute them" (Sohrabi). In this case, textual reproduction functioned as a weapon against political oppression. A similar argument can be made for the production of Samizdat texts in the Soviet Union, or the transcription of religious texts by native missionaries working with impoverished congregations,[1] or even the digitization of paywall-protected scholarly articles by digital activists like Aaron Swartz. Although these cases were outside the scope of this dissertation, they illustrate moments in which textual reproduction becomes a political act that can have immediate repercussions for practitioners and consumers alike.

Examples like these remind us that there are times and places for which access to texts, and their accessibility and discoverability, are things worth giving up freedom for. Whether we are historians in the archive, librarians building collections, families recording genealogies, or activists restructuring historical memory, understanding how these moments fit into the broader fabric of textual reproduction can help to clarify our role as copyists in a textual world.

[1] See Philip Round's *Removable Type* (64).

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