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## Review/Reseña

Arnold J. Bauer, *The Search for the Codex Cardona: On the Trail of a Sixteenth-Century Mexican Treasure*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.

## The Search for Answers about the Cardona

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As Arnold J. Bauer recognizes, the fate of the mysterious “Codex Cardona” is a story with an unknown beginning and an unknown end. His book takes on a labyrinthine quest in search of the manuscript’s provenance, a heroic effort that took him across the United States, to Mexico, and to Europe, all without quite leading us out of the maze. But Bauer’s account of the quest is seductive and the reader is left with a yearning to know more.

The manuscript in question consists of 400+ pages, organized in multiple bundles with extra boxes and maps. Its content relates to sixteenth-century adjustments in various indigenous communities engulfed today by Mexico City. Two predominant who-dun-its begging further

clarification relate to: 1) the manuscript's composition (who made it, when, where, why—more in line with an ethnohistorian's interest, due to such questions' bearing on the reliability of the contents); and, 2) the manuscript's journey (who took it out of Mexico, when, how, who tried to auction it off for millions of dollars, and who has it now—the questions that have most captivated Bauer). Both inquiries have serious import.

Taking the manuscript out of Mexico was a reprehensible act, a crime against Mexican cultural heritage preservation. Even more, the manuscript's loss (or really, concealment) strikes a violent blow to world heritage.<sup>1</sup> This makes Bauer's primary mission of considerable value, but also a dangerous one, with high intrigue and potentially serious consequences for the major players involved. This explains his caution to change some of the players' names, hedging against objections to his continued sleuthing. Not aiming to protect the culpable, it seems Bauer wishes to keep a window open so that he may continue to follow the thread, for the story still awaits a proper conclusion—the location of the manuscript and its full study. Will Bauer's book stir the possessor to come forward, possibly relinquish the Cardona, return it to Mexico, and make it available to scholars? Or will the questions and potential ramifications drive it further underground?<sup>2</sup>

Bauer originally toyed with making the story of his pursuit into a novel, along the lines of the hunt for the Da Vinci code. Fictionalizing the story, making it a mystery-thriller, would not only add drama and fascination but also provide a mechanism for inserting detours when he arrived at dead ends in the research into the ownership history. Remnants of the novel concept can be found in the fictional inserts that appear in the



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<sup>1</sup> Bauer cites the relevant international agreements on page 70. The United Nations counts early Mexican manuscripts to be of momentous value to the world given their accounting of large indigenous populations devastated or changed dramatically due to European expansionism.

<sup>2</sup> I myself was horrified to learn that the Cardona may have been smuggled out of Mexico, given that I went to look at the manuscript in New York and wrote a report about it for Christie's auction house in 1998–99. On page 89 Bauer suggests I was being cagey about who owned the manuscript, but I had no information of that sort. What I had heard at the time was that the "owner" was possibly in the U.K. or Ireland, which jibed with accounts from colleagues who reported having seen it in Manchester at a meeting of the International Congress of Americanists.

book in a separate font. Scholars should be gratified by the way the author and editors decided to set off the fiction from the non-fiction in this account of the Cardona and its ultimate whereabouts. The inserts do add to the entertainment value of the book, but they are not wholly satisfying for those of us who are pressing for the many truths that are so elusive in this now vanished manuscript.

The magnitude of the manuscript’s disappearance is concordant with its magnificent contents, the drama of the sixteenth century colonization of Mexico by Europeans, and the economic, political, and social consequences of Atlantic world expansionism. The cultural losses and devastation from epidemic diseases wreaked by Renaissance-era globalization in the Americas are possibly unparalleled in human history. This manuscript, which sheds light on what was destroyed, lives that were lost, but also what was built, created, adapted, and how indigenous survivors responded to the European incursion, absolutely must be found again. It is literally voluminous and very detailed, with information about sixteenth-century Mexico that may be (at least partially) one of a kind. Even if copied and/or contrived to some degree, it is vital to interrogate the document in order to determine what is legitimate and what information in it might rock the world of Spanish colonial history.

	
<p>María Achichina (Left), Executed for Leading Rebellion (Codex Cardona)</p>	<p>María Bartola, In the Act of Writing (Codex Cardona)</p>

Bauer aptly points to some of the riches hiding in the Cardona, such as the rebellion led by María Achichina (also spelled Axixina and Chichina), a woman who normally sold fruits and vegetables in the open-air market of

Mexicaltzingo.<sup>3</sup> Examples of organized, anti-colonial resistance movements are rare and yet much celebrated in recent decades; this one, led by a woman, could easily become a regular feature of lectures on sixteenth-century Mexican history or global women's history, especially if we had the chance to round out the story. Brief texts and no less than four drawings of her appear in the manuscript, first armed with bow and arrow herself, then directing the collection and transport of arrows and shields by a carrier, followed by her dramatic capture at the hands of Spanish authorities who set her house on fire, and, finally, her execution by hanging.<sup>4</sup>

Laden with a similar potential are a drawing and references to the female scribe, María Barthola (Bartola), whom Bauer also points out. In the Cardona, she is described as “la mussa ydya” (the Indian muse) and a relative of a king named “Cuitlabac” (Cuitlahuac), the lord of Iztapalapa at the time of Cortés' arrival. The Cardona text says María Bartola had a great fame for her special abilities with the Castilian language and for her account of the Spaniards' seizure of Tenochtitlan, along with “esotras ystorias en lengua Rromāce” (other histories written in the Romance language).<sup>5</sup> Historians, especially feminist historians, would relish knowing more about a woman who could write history not only from the indigenous perspective, but also from a woman's point of view –whether in Spanish or Nahuatl. What might she have to tell us about the enigmatic Malintzin, for instance? This María Bartola would appear to be the same woman who received a brief mention (and may have served as a key source) in the histories of Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl of Tetzaco. He also mentions her connection to Cuitlahuac and her sixteenth-century account of the

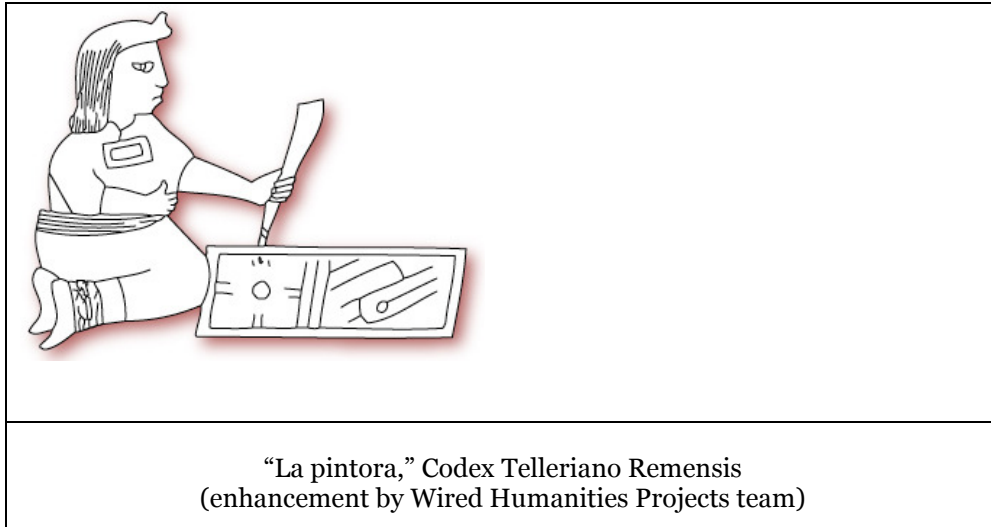
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<sup>3</sup> Libro C, 40r.-43v. A cacique named Melchor is also implicated.

<sup>4</sup> The story is located in Libro C, 40–43. My citations refer to the manuscript's grouping in *libros* (books, but it really consisted more of *legajos*, or bundles) and boxes as of 1998. The person in Mexico City who asserts that the manuscript was taken from him illegally, kindly lent Bauer, Andrés Reséndez, and the Wired Humanities Project slides and permission to study and publish about the manuscript. Preliminary studies have begun. Some slides have disappeared, but we have plenty to keep us busy. The Cardona map of Mexico City, for example, is under study for publication in the Mapas Project, <http://mapas.uoregon.edu>, with a team of graduate and undergraduate students, including Jonathan Truitt (Tulane), scrutinizing its details for several months now.

<sup>5</sup> Libro C, 39v-40r.

Spanish conquest of Mexico (now lost).<sup>6</sup> Even without the additional detail and portrait that the Cardona provides of her, María Bartola has already found her way into the *Women’s Power DVD*<sup>7</sup> and *Uppity Women of the New World!*<sup>8</sup> And, how many times have we seen the image of the rare, female scribe from the Codex Telleriano Remensis reproduced, ravenous as we are for female authors?<sup>9</sup>



“La pintora,” Codex Telleriano Remensis  
(enhancement by Wired Humanities Projects team)

Beyond such exceptional women, the bulk of the substance occupying this huge manuscript highlights indigenous communities especially—their prominent cacique families, their economic and religious activities. The lives of people of African, mixed, and Spanish heritage also receive attention. Cartography is a major feature, taking in many towns. The fact that these settlements are in what is now the Federal District, the

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<sup>6</sup> See remarks by Miriam Salazar Hernández, Archivo Histórico de Iztapalapa, 2008:

[http://www.iztapalapa.df.gob.mx/htm/0101090400\\_2005.html](http://www.iztapalapa.df.gob.mx/htm/0101090400_2005.html). She is also cited as a “princess of Iztapalapa” in Elisée Reclus, *The Universal Geography: Earth and its Inhabitants*, eds. and tr., Ernest George Ravenstein and A. H. Keane, vol. 17, Mexico, Central America, West Indies (London: J., S. Virtue & Col, Ltd., 1876–94; see: <http://www.archive.org/details/universalgeograp17recl>.

<sup>7</sup> See: <http://www.suppressedhistories.net/womenspowerscript4.html>.

<sup>8</sup> By Vicki León (Berkeley: Conari Press, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> This image, enhanced by the Wired Humanities Projects team for use on the cover of our Nahuatl Dictionary, comes from the *Códice Telleriano-Remensis: Ritual, Divination, and History in a Pictorial Aztec Manuscript*, ed. Eloise Quiñones Keber (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), pl. 3. The original is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in France. The Nahuatl dictionary is at: (<http://whp.uoregon.edu/dictionaries/nahuatl/>),

site of powerful altepetl and the locus of concentrated Spanish habitation early on, will ensure a rapt audience once the details can be brought to light. Included in the roster of native communities under the microscope are Tenochtitlan, Tlatelolco, Mixcoac, Churubusco, Tacubaya, Xochimilco, Culhuacan, Coyoacan, Iztapalapa, and Tlalmanalco. Fortunately, we have many fine studies of society and economy in such cities and towns, not to mention primary source materials, against which we will compare the details from the Codex Cardona.<sup>10</sup>

While the name “Codex Cardona” will now surely stick, by rights, the manuscript should not be called a codex.<sup>11</sup> The use of the term lends the flavor of a pre-Columbian pictorial or an early-colonial, pictographic or alphabetic indigenous-language manuscript. Rather, from my brief experience viewing the manuscript, I conclude that it fits best within the genre of Relaciones Geográficas (RGs), which relay geographical, social, political, and economic information about colonial jurisdictions to the Crown in response to pointed questions—some 50 in the questionnaire of the 1570s, and eventually up to 300 questions as time wore on. Bauer suggests that the Cardona was “in some sense a predecessor” of the RGs, but I suspect it was a later compilation that drew from RGs or RG-type (*visita*) information.

The manuscript does contain material from the 1550s or early 1560s. It cites, for instance, monastery construction as taking place in

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<sup>10</sup> Rebecca Horn’s study of Coyoacan, for example, or Sarah Cline’s work on Culhuacan and Xochimilco, will be crucial for verifying the details of the Cardona. Also essential for corroborations of the social and demographic material would be the *Colección de documentos sobre Coyoacan, Vol. 1: Visita del oidor Gómez de Santillán al pueblo de Coyoacán y su sujeto Tacubaya en el año de 1553*, Colección Científica Fuentes, Historia Social, 39, eds. Pedro P. Carrasco and Jesus Monjarás-Ruiz (Mexico, D.F.: Centro de Investigaciones Superiores, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1976). The Cardona refers to the Santillán report, although I do not recall precisely where it is mentioned. Graduate students John López and Rosario Granados Salinas report (personal communication, December 2009) that the position of the Real Universidad as it appears on the Cardona’s map of Mexico City was the institution’s location from 1589 until 1596, at the latest. Thus, we know that this particular component of the corpus could not have been created (or copied from something dated) earlier than 1589.

<sup>11</sup> We will also want to settle the question of the name “Cardona.” An Alonso de Cardona y Villaviciosa is supposedly named on the title page of Libro C, but I have not yet corroborated that. I have spotted “A. Cardona” at the start of Libro D, and a signature for what may be an A. Cordona (sic?) at the bottom of the map of Tacubaya in Libro B (first bifolio, interior).

1551–53 (Extra Box, 3). It includes a portrait of don Juan Guzmán Itztollinqui, who was governor of Coyoacan from 1526 to 1554 (Libro A, 73). It refers to the “current” Provincial of Cuernavaca, Fray Juan de Rivas, who died in 1562 (Libro B, 117). And, it mentions the founding of (Spanish) Mexico City “forty years ago,” possibly putting the reference at about 1561 (Libro D, 145). But a couple of red flags suggest these particulars were compiled and repeated after the fact.

One of the greatest causes of concern when contemplating a mid-sixteenth-century date of composition of the Cardona is the inclusion of an indigenous noble named don Diego de Mendoza Austria Moctezuma (Libro B, 80bis and 108, and Libro D, 46–48). He is a central figure in controversial colonial Mexican manuscripts spanning the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. A number of scholars have been suspicious of his grant for special privileges, mentioned in the Cardona as being dated 14 April (15) 23, allegedly given to him by the Crown.<sup>12</sup> The Mendoza Austria Moctezuma family genealogy also appears on the reverse of the late-colonial Techialoyan García Granados Codex, painted on *amatl* (indigenous fig-bark paper, called *amate* in Spanish).<sup>13</sup> The use of the name Austria and the claim of descent from Cuauhtemoc stand out as elements lacking corroboration in legitimate seventeenth-century sources, such as the writings of Chimalpahin, who nevertheless do recognize a don Diego de Mendoza as having been municipal governor of Tlatelolco in the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Eighteenth-century petitions for cacique privileges launched by men and women boasting the name Mendoza Austria y Moctezuma could hint at a motive for copying and circulating sources that might mention the supposed son of Cuauhtemoc and founder of the *cacicazgo*.<sup>15</sup> One purported descendant of the Tlatelolco governor, don

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<sup>12</sup> See, for starters, the *Handbook of Middle American Indians* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964–1976) v. 14, 161–162.

<sup>13</sup> Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia, MNA 35–49.

<sup>14</sup> *Relaciones originales de Chalco Amaquemecan*, ed. Silvia Rendón (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1965), 262, 267.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, documents from Tetepango, 1717–1723, cited in Juan Manuel Mene Llaguno, *Fuentes para la historia de la tenencia de la tierra en el Estado de Hidalgo: Índice de documentos del ramo de Tierras del A.G.N.* (Pachuca, Hidalgo: Centro Hidalguense de Investigaciones Históricas, 1976), 149;



	
<p>Figure from one of the Mendoza Moctezuma Genealogies (Archivo General de la Nación, México; Tierras 1593)<sup>16</sup></p>	<p>Figure from one of the Mendoza Moctezuma Genealogies (Cover, Techialoyan Ms. from Tolcayuca, Hidalgo)<sup>17</sup></p>

Diego García de Mendoza Moctezuma, was arrested in 1705 for his involvement in suspect manuscripts.<sup>18</sup>

An additional cause for concern in the Cardona is its divergence from the standard *Relación Geográfica* in language, orthography, and paper. Spaniards writing in Spanish usually authored the RGs, although these reports to the monarchs were derived from questionnaires often put to the local indigenous elite, and probably typically employed interpreters of native languages. Accompanying the Spanish-language texts were pictorials and maps frequently made by indigenous collaborators. In these

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and Archivo General de la Nación, México, Tierras 1586, exp. 1, ff. 2–3, in the year 1707.

<sup>16</sup> A version of the genealogy is located today in the Archivo Histórico of the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia and has been published in *Los códices de México* (Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1979), 132–133.

<sup>17</sup> See <http://mapas.uoregon.edu>.

<sup>18</sup> See, Stephanie Wood, “Don Diego García de Mendoza Moctezuma: A Techialoyan Mastermind?” *Estudios de cultura náhuatl* 19 (1989): 245–268. The more recent work of María Castañeda de la Paz promises to shed considerable light on the historical and the mythical, the truth and the lies in the life of don Diego de Mendoza Austria Moctezuma, a man whose identity she sees as having been “reinvented.” Her article on coats of arms notes that a don Diego de Mendoza of Axacuba (Hidalgo) may have been granted royal heraldry that was taken and twisted by the supposed descendants of don Diego of Tlatelolco. See María Castañeda de la Paz, “Central Mexican Indigenous Coats of Arms and the Conquest of Mesoamerica,” *Ethnohistory* 56: 1 (2009): 125–161, and especially 149.



two large features (texts and images) the Cardona loosely conforms to the RG genre, a fascinating hybrid of European and American traditions. Where it diverges is in its being written and painted on amatl and in a very strange orthography, more Romance than specifically Spanish.

Interestingly, the use of amatl is self-consciously discussed in the text of the manuscript (Libro D, 108; and see Libro A, 52), as Bauer notes. The author of the Cardona felt compelled to explain his (presumably) extraordinary use in a record of this type, saying that European paper was temporarily unavailable and that “papel nativo” was locally made and abundant. Clearly, the use of amatl is an issue that today’s scholars have raised several times as a suspect feature of the manuscript, something Bauer recognizes. Amatl was the paper of choice of Techialoyan author-artists working in the second-half of the seventeenth century and the first decade of the eighteenth. It seems unlikely that a twentieth-century forger –sufficiently learned to know where and how to compile a fake RG– would take the risk of using amatl, so inappropriate for the genre. On the other hand, a colonial indigenous compiler/copier might know that amatl would be suspect, but perhaps he hoped to satisfy his doubters, especially if official “papel sellado” was unavailable to him. These are considerations for future explorations on the theme, as we search for the remaining answers that will help explain the enigmatic Cardona.<sup>19</sup>

The “Spanish” of the Cardona, too, has such a uniqueness that its idiosyncrasies deserve some careful attention and comparison with the writings of other authors from colonial Mexico. Might the texts be copied from an early Romance source? We see, for example, “mullieres” (*mujeres*, women), “etate” (*edad*, age), “omes” (*hombres*, men), and “insula” (*isla*, island), suggesting the original writer, perhaps a member of the clergy, had

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<sup>19</sup> The amatl of the Techialoyan corpus is less refined than that used for the Cardona, arguing against the Cardona being a product of the Techialoyan school (even if its compiler may have shared similar motivations). There are some graphics in the Cardona that have a vague similarity to the Techialoyan style, such as the portrait of a founding cacique in Libro B, 51, with his very stylized crown. But the portrait of Achichina is more reminiscent of the graphic style used for the likeness of doña Marina in the Manuscrito del Aperreamiento (Bibliothèque Nationale, Manuscrit Mexicain, 374). Face profiles, especially the way mouths are drawn, are also reminiscent of the Codex Telleriano Remensis.

an Italian or Latin education that influenced his writing of Spanish.<sup>20</sup> We also see the prolific substitution of “x” for “j,” such as in the term “mōxa” (*monja*, nun—Extra Box, 26); “f” for “h,” as in “fixas” (*hijas*, daughters—Extra Box, 82) and “façedado” and “façienda” (for *hacendado* and *hacienda*—Libro B, 66 and 73); “ch” for hard “c,” as in *chomerçio* (*comercio*, commerce—Libro B, 73), “eschrivano” (*escribano*—Libro C, 57), and “champesinos” (*campesinos*—Libro B, 117); and, other interesting terms such as “espanos” (*hispanos*—Libro B, 68), “agvnd” and “agbnd” (*aún*—Extra Box, 82), “puebla” (*pueblo*—Libro C, 1), and “Matrit” (Madrid—Libro B, 73).

An indigenous compiler possibly pulling material from some now lost RGs, and if not well versed in Spanish himself, might not have noticed that the vocabulary and spelling stood out from the norm—which suggests the Cardona texts may have been copied. A later forger, perhaps trying to replicate older Spanish without really studying the texts of the sixteenth century, might have sprinkled the Cardona language with imagined vocabulary and archaisms, but the Romance influence is so consistent and the texts are so ample, that it seems doubtful the orthography was invented. A very cautious modern copyist, if well versed in RG texts, would probably have worried about the radical orthography the sources for the Cardona employed, and might have tried to replicate a more normal spelling system.<sup>21</sup>

Although it was not Bauer’s first intention to research and write much about the authenticity of the Cardona, he does address some of the uncertainties that were raised in the course of its journey through the

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<sup>20</sup> In Libro B, 53, one finds references to Naples and Corsica, suggesting the author had some familiarity with Italian city-states. Another suggestive passage is the expression, “Nō tienen ecclesia nin capella,” very Italianate and concerned about the need for a greater presence of the church in one small town (Libro C, 49r.).

<sup>21</sup> Bauer cites an unpublished report on the manuscript by Stephen Colston for recognizing that multiple hands can be detected. But more time will be required to see if all the hands at work were writing with the same orthography. I have seen some variation, such as Xorobosco and Vuicilopuzco as two different spellings for Huitzilopochco (Churubusco today). See Libro C, 10v. and 30r. The rendering of Nahuatl is very poor, suggesting that a native speaker did not make the compilation nor even a Spaniard familiar with the language of the capital. “Hey tecotel,” for example should be “Huey tecuhtli” (see Libro D, 46).

international rare book and manuscript markets. Bauer makes a reasonable point when he suggests that a manuscript with multiple volumes, such as this one, would be overkill if a modern forger just wanted to craft a convincing sixteenth-century manuscript and sell it for a handy sum. If sufficiently persuasive, the map of Mexico City itself could bring millions. But the fact that Princeton has in its special collections one or more pages from the Cardona underlines the possibility that a forger/compiler may have broken it into sections (or envisioned breaking it into sections) for multiple sales.<sup>22</sup> A late-colonial compiler whose aim was to provide indigenous communities with local histories might also have imagined selling the relevant portions to the various towns that might benefit. That was the *modus operandi* of late-colonial manuscript dealers such as don Diego García de Mendoza Moctezuma and Pedro de Villafranca.<sup>23</sup> If the Cardona reflects any of the patterns of such fabricators, legitimate local detail would have been sought and incorporated whenever possible, and large sections could be copied intact or with some tweaking that would benefit the cacique families potentially affected.

Bauer is cognizant that the issue of potential contrivance does have a bearing on the significance of the manuscript's current concealment and could add weight to the story of various efforts to have it auctioned. How

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<sup>22</sup> For comparisons, follow these links to the two pages made available on line:

[http://libweb5.princeton.edu/mssimages/Princeton%20Mesoamerican/princeton\\_meso20-2.jpg](http://libweb5.princeton.edu/mssimages/Princeton%20Mesoamerican/princeton_meso20-2.jpg) and [http://libweb5.princeton.edu/mssimages/Princeton%20Mesoamerican/princeton\\_meso20-1.jpg](http://libweb5.princeton.edu/mssimages/Princeton%20Mesoamerican/princeton_meso20-1.jpg). The digital photographs, in magnification, are very legible, making the hand and the orthography of the Cardona easily identifiable. The text on 20-2, for instance, uses the "x" in lieu of "j" in the word "trabaxā" (*trabajan*, they work) and "f" for "h" in the word "feridos" (*heridos*, injured people). The graphic style of the massacre scene on 20-2 also echoes the Cardona.

<sup>23</sup> See Stephanie Wood, "Pedro Villafranca y Juana Gertrudis Navarrete: falsificador de títulos y su viuda (Nueva España, siglo xviii)," in *Lucha por la supervivencia en América colonial*, eds. David G. Sweet and Gary B. Nash, eds. (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1987), 472–485. Manuel Ramírez Arellano was another fabricator who supplied manuscripts and maps to indigenous communities in the early twentieth century but tried to pretend they were from the first half of the seventeenth. See the recent study by Florencio and Claudio Barrera, "La falsificación de títulos de tierras a principios del siglo XX," *Historias* 72 (2009): 41–64 and 97–102. The production of Ramírez Arellano was so voluminous it exceeds the size of the Techialoyan corpus, which boasts fifty or more examples.

many of the recent players might have been involved with its manufacture—or might have simply known it was contrived—and still tried to profit from its sale? How many of the modern actors were innocent, possibly duped by some late-colonial or nineteenth-century forger, just as other owners might have been before them? There is a difference between a manuscript being compiled circa 1700 to bolster claims to status in the century of contact and shore up an elite indigenous family's slide into obscurity, versus a document specifically created to fool some wealthy foreign purchaser and secure the modern forger's own luxurious retirement. Some considerable research went into the creation of the Cardona, and it matters how close to the events at hand the creator really was.

A story about a rare, sixteenth-century manuscript going astray is more newsworthy than a story about a possible fake disappearing. Although not a codex and not a typical RG, the Cardona could nevertheless be a valuable report from the heart of the new Spanish empire, one that gives detailed information about indigenous communities and drew indigenous painters into collaboration in the first generations after the Spanish seizure of power in Mexico. Bauer's subtitle, "a sixteenth-century Mexican treasure," tells us that he is betting on the manuscript's authenticity, even as he acknowledges the doubts some of us have raised. He may be right, and I hope he is, but in my opinion the manuscript is not verifiable currently as a product of the sixteenth century, even if it describes sixteenth-century activities in a meticulous way.<sup>24</sup>

This minx of a manuscript will get under many people's skin. Bauer's insatiable quest to trace the history of its ownership and recover the original manuscript is a totally sympathetic one. Ethnohistorians will wish

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<sup>24</sup> Also, an indigenous role in its production remains to be proven. Bauer is a little hazy on the Cardona's hybridity. No one who made it needed to know Nahuatl, since RG texts are typically in Spanish and the text of the Cardona is in a type of Spanish. So, Bauer's wonderings about the possible involvement of James Lockhart and his school, who could read and possibly write convincingly in Nahuatl, while entertaining, are off the mark. Bauer believed that I had read the entire manuscript, which is not the case, unfortunately. I had only a couple of days with it in New York, and I have yet to tackle most of the slides received more recently. What details Bauer reproduces from my report, on pages 91–93, are all legitimately recalled from my cursory notes from 1998.

him success in carrying the pursuit to a conclusion, if at all possible, and maybe the publication of this story will bring a crack in the case as more eyes are turned in its direction. More completely unraveling the years of secrecy and deceit could help solve the mystery of possible fabrication and facilitate the manuscript's return to Mexico. That might allow for new scientific studies of the paper, ink, and watercolors, too. But for Mesoamericanists, the vital questions about the value of the manuscript will find answers in a careful examination of its contents, made possible through the slides shot by early owners if not through a study of the original. Bauer states humbly that, even if the manuscript is now lost, "there were a few things to be said about it." For those of us who hunger to know mid-sixteenth-century Mexico more intimately, a lot remains to be said. We must thank Arnold Bauer for bringing this manuscript to the forefront of our imaginations.