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LOS CÓDICICES: An Exhibit of Illustrated Books from Indigenous Mesoamerica

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Presenting:

An exhibition in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month 2018

“LOS CÓDICES: An Exhibit of Illustrated Books from Indigenous Mesoamerica”

By Jacob S. Neely, M.A.

-in consultation with-

Drs. Ruth Brown and Mónica Díaz

Presented by:

The UK College of Arts and Sciences,
Margaret I. King Library Special Collections,
and the Departments of
Anthropology,
Hispanic Studies,
and Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies (LACLS)

Table of Contents*

Acknowledgments	3
Welcome	4
(Four)grounding Continuity	4
Timespan	4
Multilingualism	5
Legacy	5
Today	6
The Codex Tro-Cortesianus (ca. 1200-1400)	8
The Codex Dresden (ca. 1200-1400)	10
The Codex Paris (ca. 1450)	12
The Codex Borgia (ca. 1250) and The Borgia Group	14
The Codex Laud (ca. 1450)	16
The Codex Fejérváry-Mayer (ca. 1450)	18
The Codex Vindobonensis Mexicanus 1 (ca. 1500) and The Mixtec Group	20
The Codex Cospi (ca. 1500-1530)	22
The Codex Egerton (ca. 1550)	24
The Codex Borbonicus (ca. 1520)	26
The Codex Magliabechiano (ca. 1566)	28
The Codex Ixtlilxochitl (ca. 1585)	30
<i>Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana y mexicana y castellana (1571)</i>	31
<i>Tlahtolxiuhitlacayotl: Chicontepec, Veracruz (2016)</i>	32
Contemporary Nahuatl-Language Educational Items (2015)	33
Exhibit Advertisement:	35

*Scans of items on pages 8-30 are found on the preceding pages.

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Dr. Christopher Pool and Mr. Barry Kidder in Anthropology, whose 2014 exhibition on the codices entitled “A Glimpse into Ancient Mexico: Writings of the Aztecs, Mixtec, and Maya,” provided an excellent jumping-off point and thus inspired this year’s thematic shift towards “Continuity.” My sincere hope was to expand upon the excellent work they made available on UKnowledge.

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Finally, the front desk staff of the Special Collections Research Room (SCRC), who consistently answered my questions effectively and taught me how to scan documents professionally.

My sincerest thanks,

-Jacob S. Neely, M.A.

Welcome

...to this exhibition regarding the form, content, and import of these pre-Hispanic and Early-Colonial documents.

The theme of this year's exhibit is **Continuity**¹.

As you move through the exhibit, you will be moving chronologically through time. Despite spanning hundreds of years, dozens of languages and dialects, and at least three culturally distinct empires, you will notice how enduring the form and content is in general.

Throughout this exhibit, there are also a few modern texts on display. These educational texts from contemporary Mexico² are meant to call your attention to the cultural continuity of these cultures all the way up to the present.

(Four)grounding Continuity

At first glance, Western notions of alphabetic literacy incline the untrained viewer to consider these texts as a single corpus that represents a form of barbarous or primitive pre-history of indigenous Mesoamerica. However, four (4) underlying factors actively subvert this notion. These factors are summarized here as Timespan, Multilingualism, Legacy, and Today.

Timespan

The content of codices (the plural of "codex") shown in this exhibit is estimated to span a period of about 2000 years.

- For comparison, less time has passed between the founding of the Roman Empire and today than between the oldest and newest almanacs contained in these pieces.
- The **Maya Civilization** existed from approximately 1500 BCE - 900 CE³. However, Maya culture was still widespread throughout Mesoamerica during the Aztec and Colonial Periods.
- The **Aztec Empire** was consolidated when the three Central-Mexican city-states of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan formed the ruling Triple Alliance and in 1428 AD⁴.

¹ The idea of "continuity" as a central theme of the codices comes from Gordon Brotherston's discussion of Indigenous Latin American literary genres. This exhibit both emphasizes and expands on Brotherston's assertions by highlighting common traits in the texts and identifying contemporary iterations of indigenous literary and cultural continuity.

Brotherston, Gordon. "Mexican Codices: The Question of Genre." *LAIL speaks!: Selected papers from the VII International Symposium on Latin American Indian Literature*. Ed. Mary H. Preuss. Culver City, CA: Labyrinthos, 1990, pp. 109.

² Contemporary Nahuatl-language texts were temporarily donated for the purposes of this exhibit by Jacob S. Neely, MA, University of Kentucky Department of Hispanic Studies.

³ The earliest Maya settlements began to appear in about 1500 BCE. However, the Classical Period of the Maya Civilization that we associate with cultural sophistication and large architectural achievements lasted from about 250 CE to 900 CE.

"Maya." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc, 2016. *Encyclopædia Britannica.com*. 22 Aug. 2018.

⁴ "Aztec." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc, 2018. *Encyclopædia Britannica.com*. 22 Aug. 2018.

Multilingualism

It is widely accepted among scholars that the pictographic “writing” seen in the codices shrewdly selected specific forms of their subjects in order to be communicative in multiple languages⁵. By contrast, alphabetic literacy (using letters to represent the sounds of a language on paper) tend to limit communication to a small pool of “lettered” individuals in one particular language.

- Such multimodal communication was important because of the high linguistic diversity of indigenous Mesoamerica⁶; many of the local languages do not even belong to the same language family.
- A similar iteration of this phenomenon is the Chinese-Japanese connection wherein Japanese, a predominately-alphabetic language, employs *Kanji* characters from Chinese, which are not phonetic.⁷ Although many definitions have changed over time, some characters retain their meaning, despite Japanese and Chinese belonging to entirely different language families (the Japanese-Ryukyuan and Sinitic families, respectively).
- In both contexts, having a shared cultural “landscape,” economy, and/or cosmography helps facilitate communication, as the texts describe phenomena with which readers of various languages would be familiar.

Legacy

An overarching theme of the codices is legacy. That is, they locate their subjects within the context of the past while also keeping an eye on the future. According to Brotherston, all of the known codices fall into one of two genres: *annals* and *ritual texts*⁸:

- “[*Annals* go] from one date to the next, from year to year, mov[ing] forward through time” in a linear fashion. They recount major historical events and detail royal lineages.
- “By contrast, the *ritual* books are always divided into self-contained chapters each of which has its own internal reading sequence, usually cyclical, and its own theme.” They recount mythological narratives and are often metaphors for the movement of celestial bodies.⁹

⁵ Boone, Elizabeth H., and Walter Mignolo. *Writing without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1994. 13-15.

⁶ According to Yolanda Lastra, as of 2008 there were approximately 5.1 million speakers of indigenous languages living in Mexico alone. They belong to at least three separate language families.

Lastra, Yolanda. "The Present-Day Indigenous Languages of Mexico: An Overview" *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, vol. 96, no. 1, 2009: 35-44.

⁷ “Kanji.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc, 2017. *Encyclopædia Britannica.com*. 22 Aug. 2018.

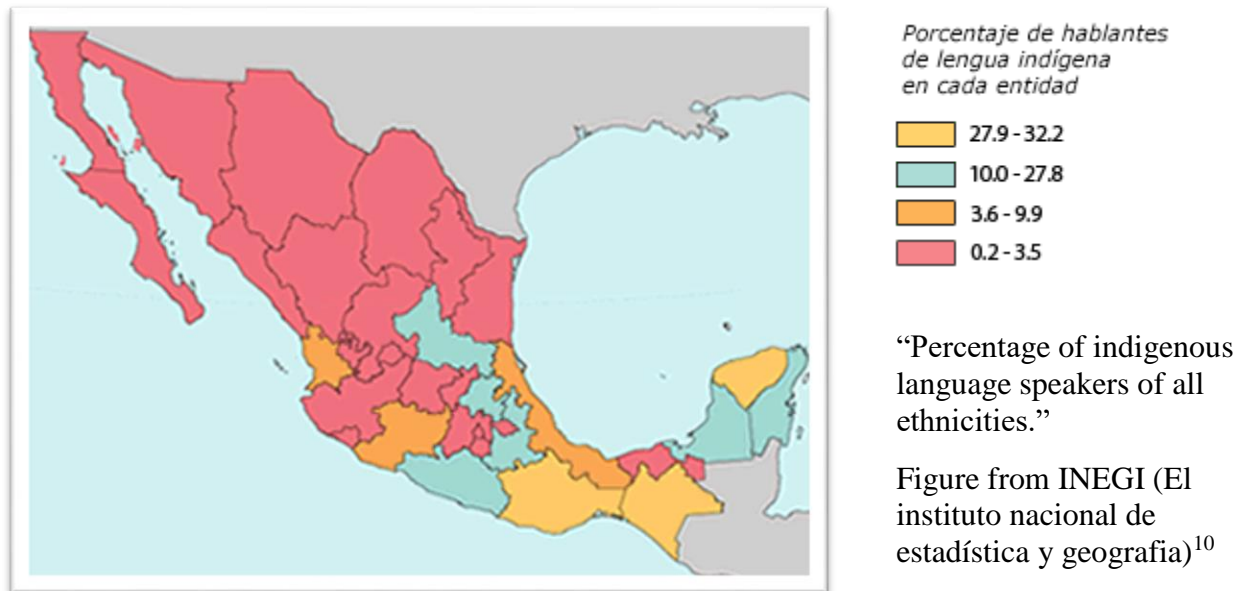
⁸ Brotherston, Gordon. “Mexican Codices: The Question of Genre.” *LAIL speaks!: Selected papers from the VII International Symposium on Latin American Indian Literature*. Ed. Mary H. Preuss. Culver City, CA: Labyrinthos, 1990, pp. 110.

⁹ Milbrath, Susan. *Heaven and Earth in Ancient Mexico: Astronomy and Seasonal Cycles in the Codex Borgia*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013, pp. 81.

Today

These cultures still have numerous living descendants and significant cultural impacts.

- *Millions* of people still speak indigenous Mesoamerican languages and retain many of the cultural practices referenced in the codices.
- In fact, many indigenous agricultural, astronomical, and architectural insights, as well as local myths have been –and still are– key to the maintenance of the contemporary Mexican and Central American economies and cultures.



¹⁰ “Habla de lengua indígena en México.” México: El instituto nacional de estadística y geografía. *Cuéntame*. INEGI.org. 10 Sep. 2018.



Figure 1: The Codex Tro-Cortesianus, folios 10-11.

All scans courtesy of University of Kentucky Margaret I. King Library Special Collections and carried out by Jacob S. Neely.

The Codex Tro-Cortesianus (ca. 1200-1400)

The Codex Tro-Cortesianus, or Madrid, is possibly the oldest codex in this exhibit. There is some debate surrounding its production date but it contains almanacs that refer to years as far back as the tenth century. Scholars believe it is either from the northwestern Yucatán region of Mexico or northern Guatemala.

Along with the Codices Paris, Dresden, and Grolier (not featured in this exhibit), this is one of the only four legible pre-Hispanic Maya Codices. Others are unearthed from time to time, but are often too deteriorated to handle.

Telling Maya and other codices apart is actually simple, because the Maya languages use hieroglyphic syllabaries. That is, the series of linear glyphs that you can observe on the pages most often represent consonant-vowel clusters (displayed: folios 10-11).

However, despite employing different stylistic conventions, the Tro-Cortesianus performs many of the same generic functions the Mesoamerican codices as a whole. For example, it contains its own 260-day almanac, but refers to it in Maya as the *tzolkin* instead of the Nahuatl *tonalpohualli*. Similarly, it contains a solar *haab* calendar of 365 days, or a *xiuhpohualli*.

Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to the Codex Tro-Cortesianus?

Bibliography:

- Leibsohn, Dana. "Writing Systems: Maya Systems." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. *Oxfordreference.com*. 13 Sep. 2018.
- Pool, Christopher and Barry Kidder. "Codex Madrid, p.50-51." *A Glimpse into Ancient Mexico: Writings of the Aztecs, Mixtec, and Maya*. Sep. 2013-Present. University of Kentucky Special Collections, Lexington, KY. *UKnowledge.uky.edu*. 13 Sep. 2018.
- Vail, Gabrielle. "Madrid, Codex." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. *Oxfordreference.com*. 13 Sep. 2018.
- Valero de García Lascuráin, Ana Rita. *Entre Códices*. México: Universidad Anáhuac México Norte, 2012, pp. 36-40.



Figure 2: The Codex Dresden, folios 49-50.

All scans courtesy of University of Kentucky Margaret I. King Library Special Collections and carried out by Jacob S. Neely.

The Codex Dresden (ca. 1200-1400)

The Codex Dresden is ritual-calendrical in nature, like most of the codices. However, it stands out as being one of the most sophisticated and interculturally legible codices that survives.

Between 1865 and 1887, Ernst W. Förstmann recognized astronomical data in the Dresden and used this observation to correlate the Mayan and Gregorian calendars. In essence, mutual observation of the night sky on different continents led to a basis for intercultural understanding. This innovation allowed scholars to date (in the European fashion) some pre-Hispanic documents for the first time.

What's more, further analyses of the Dresden revealed the stunning accuracy and forethought that went into the elaboration of the document. For example, it contains detailed information regarding the 584-day cycle of Venus as well as solar eclipse cycles. Regarding the later, Harvey and Victoria Bricker postulate that the Maya prediction cycle could accurately predict solar eclipses through the end of 2140.

Seen here are folios 49-50, regarding the cycle of Venus. Compare this to the page displayed for the Codex Borgia, which also regards the position of Venus, there represented as the deity Quetzalcoatl.

Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to the Codex Dresden?

Bibliography:

Bricker, Harvey and Victoria R. Bricker. "Classic Maya Prediction of Solar Eclipses." *Current Anthropology*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1983, pp. 1-23.

Pool, Christopher and Barry Kidder. "Codex Dresden, p.49-50" and "Codex Dresden, p. 53-54." *A Glimpse into Ancient Mexico: Writings of the Aztecs, Mixtec, and Maya*. Sep. 2013-Present. University of Kentucky Special Collections, Lexington, KY. *UKnowledge.uky.edu*. 13 Sep. 2018.

Grube, Nikolai K. "Dresden, Codex." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. *Oxfordreference.com*. 13 Sep. 2018.

Valero de García Lascuráin, Ana Rita. *Entre Códices*. México: Universidad Anáhuac México Norte, 2012, pp. 32-35.

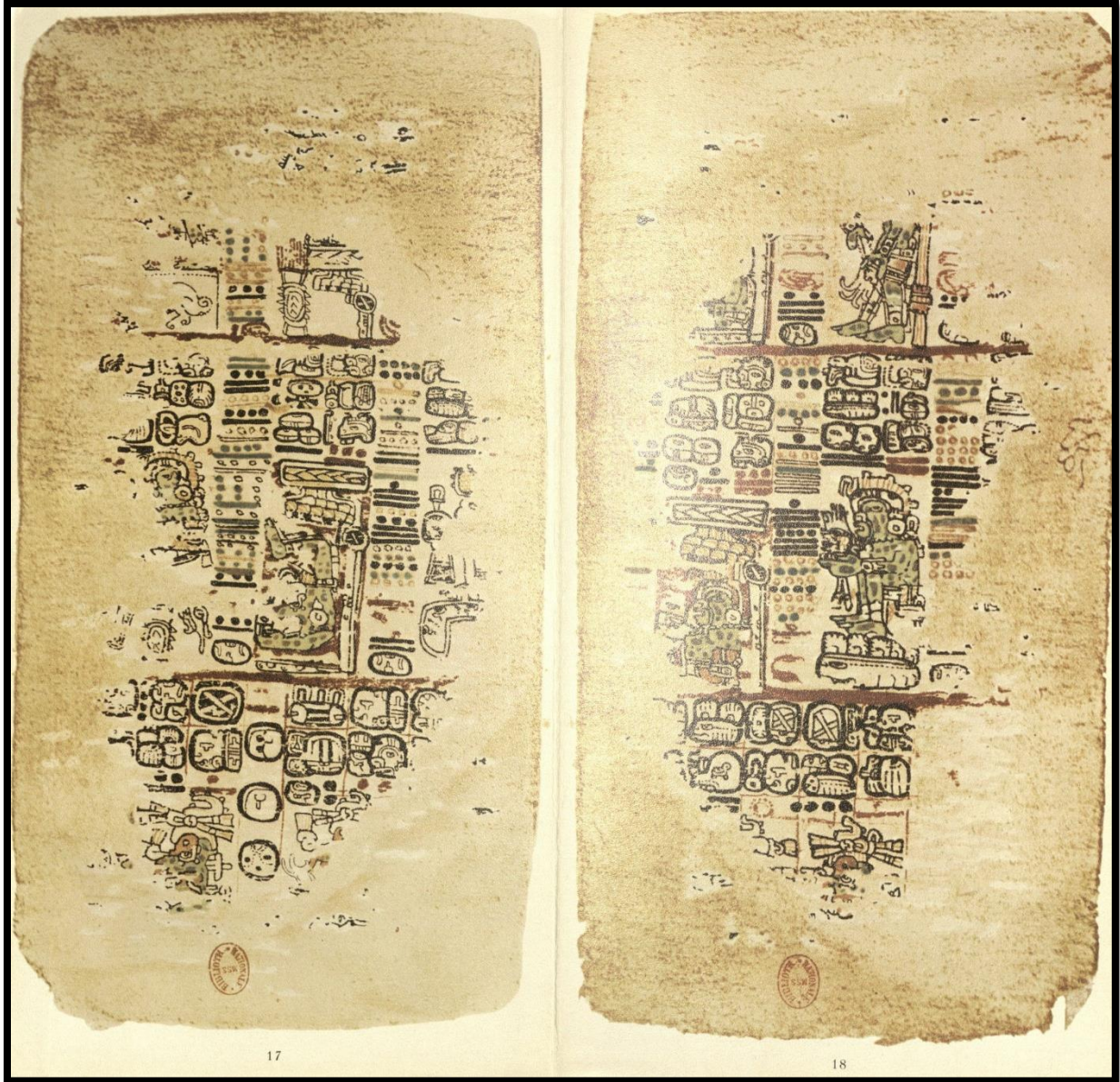


Figure 3: The Codex Paris, folios 17-18.

All scans courtesy of University of Kentucky Margaret I. King Library Special Collections and carried out by Jacob S. Neely.

The Codex Paris (ca. 1450)

The Codex Paris originated in the Yucatec city and historical site of Mayapán. However, like the Tro-Cortesianus, it contains information dating back hundreds of years. This is because scribes would copy older materials over the centuries to preserve their contents when their materials deteriorated. The Paris and Grolier have deteriorated significantly since elaboration and discovery, lending credence to this supposition. Folios 17-18, shown here, demonstrate the diminished condition of the Paris.

The 16th century Friar Diego de Landa provided an explanation for the context of Maya codices. In his memoir *Yucatan Before and After the Conquest*, he noted:

The sciences which [were] taught [to the sons of priests and the second sons of chiefs] were the reckoning of the years, months and days, the festivals and ceremonies, the administration of their sacraments, the omens of the days, their methods of divination and prophecies, events, remedies for sicknesses, antiquities, and the art of reading and writing by their letters and the characters wherewith they wrote, and by pictures that illustrated the writings.

Later, Landa would order the burning of “a great number” of these documents for being “idolatrous” in nature, resulting in an immeasurable loss.

Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to the Codex Paris?

Bibliography:

Landa, Diego de. *Yucatan Before and After the Conquest*. Trans. William Gates. London: Global Grey, 2015, pp. 30, 129.

Love, Bruce. "Paris, Codex." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. *Oxfordreference.com*. 13 Sep. 2018.

Valero de García Lascuráin, Ana Rita. *Entre Códices*. México: Universidad Anáhuac México Norte, 2012, pp. 40-43.

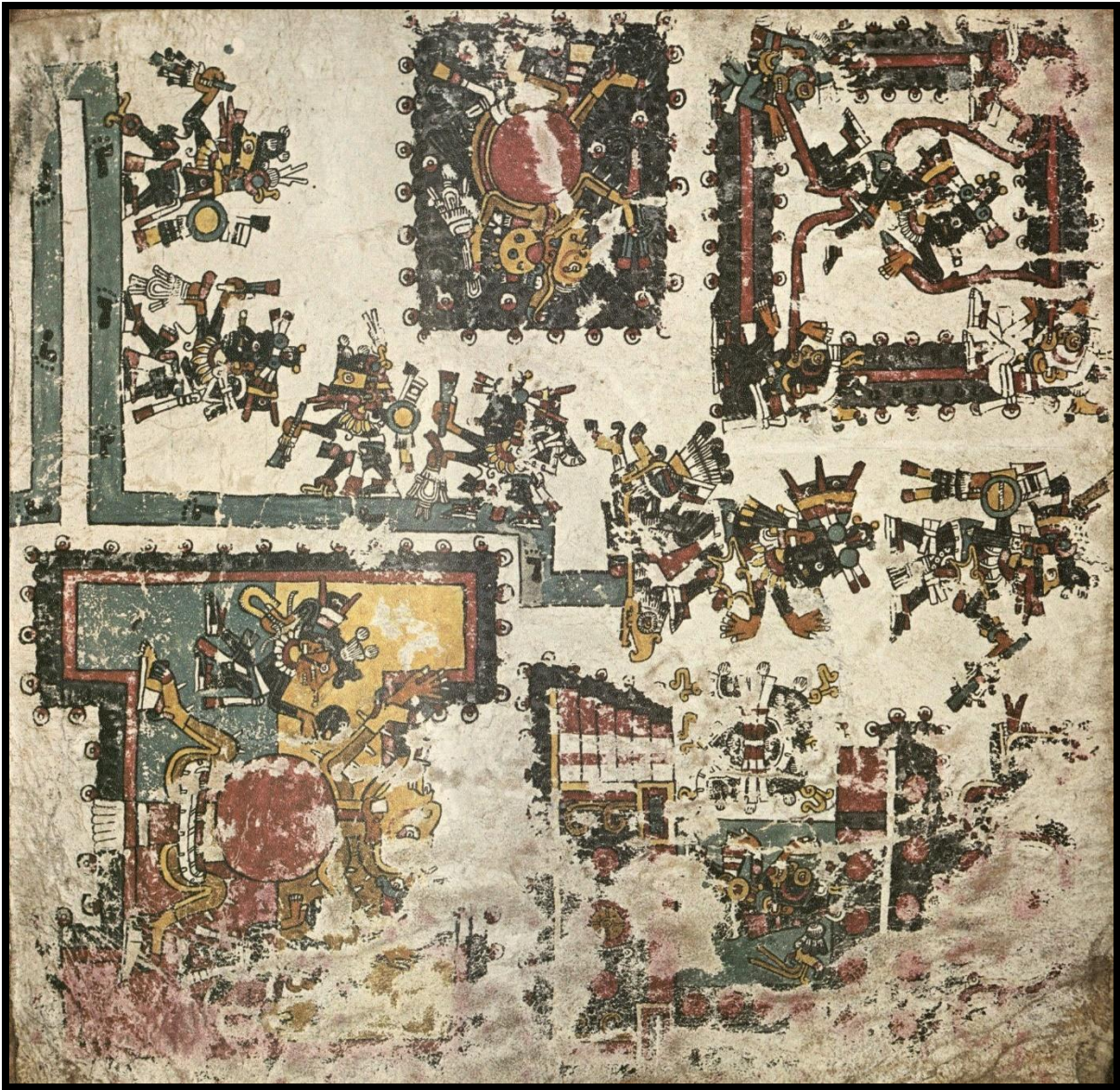


Figure 4: The Codex Borgia, folio 35.

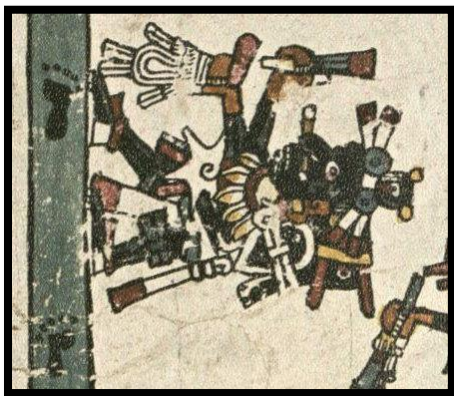


Figure 4.1: Quetzacoatl as Venus, the “Evening Star,” with a “smoky eye,” possibly representing a comet that would have been visible in the eastern sky near Venus.

All scans courtesy of University of Kentucky Margaret I. King Library Special Collections and carried out by Jacob S. Neely.

The Codex Borgia (ca. 1250) and The Borgia Group

The Codex Borgia is among the best-preserved pre-Hispanic codices. It contains a series of mythical narratives that detail the sequential yearly religious festivals.

The Borgia is the namesake for the **Borgia Group**, a corpus of codices similar in their origin, style, and content. They come from the Mixteca region of Mexico, which encompasses the states of Puebla, Guerrero, and Oaxaca. Principally, they serve as “divinatory manuals,” containing information about astronomy, astrology, and mythology. These overlap, with deities often representing celestial bodies. These texts are comparable, at least superficially, to astrological traditions in the West.

Recent scholarship suggests the Borgia itself has various scientific imports. For example, ethno-astronomer Susan Milbrath observes that the Borgia contains a unique depiction of Quetzalcoatl in his role as the “Evening Star” (Venus) seen nowhere else. On the page above in the upper-left quadrant (and again in the center-right position) (folio 35), you will notice that he has a “smoky eye,” theoretically representing a comet that would (a) be visible in Mexico that year and (b) *indeed* appear in the eastern sky adjacent to Venus.

Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to the Codex Borgia?

Bibliography:

Jansen, Maarten E.G.R.N. “La división mántica de las trecenas.” *Mexicon*, vol. 8, no. 5, 1986, pp. 102–107.

Milbrath, Susan. *Heaven and Earth in Ancient Mexico: Astronomy and Seasonal Cycles in the Codex Borgia*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013, pp. 81.

Nicholson, H. B. “Borgia Group of Pictorial Manuscripts.” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. *Oxfordreference.com*. 13 Sep. 2018.

Valero de García Lascuráin, Ana Rita. *Entre Códices*. México: Universidad Anáhuac México Norte, 2012, pp. 45-47.

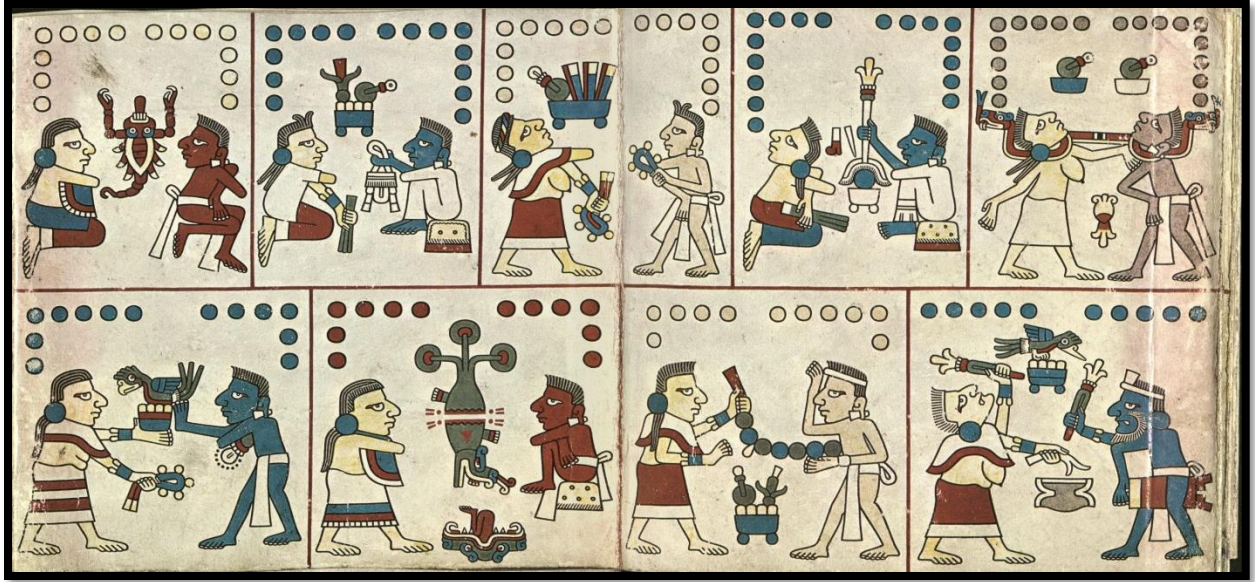


Figure 5: The Codex Laud, folios 33-34. These the upper-center quadrant is divided between the two folios, as screen-fold documents did not rely on page turning like Western-style books.

All scans courtesy of University of Kentucky Margaret I. King Library Special Collections and carried out by Jacob S. Neely.

The Codex Laud (ca. 1450)

The Codex Laud is a member of the **Borgia Group**.

Borgia texts like the Fejérváry-Mayer, Borgia, and Cospi subdivide their *Tonalamatl*, or 260-day ritual calendar, into twenty *trecenas* (thirteen-day “months”) of seven- and six-day. On the other hand, the Laud uniquely subdivides its ritual festivals into increments of eight and five days. It also names different patron deities for its divergent (half) *media-trecenas*. Further, the Laud is the only codex in the Borgia Group likely read in reverse (right to left). Maarten Jansen says this is possibly the result of local variation in divinatory preferences and stylistic traditions, though we are unable to say for sure.

Another aspect that the Laud shares with the Borgia is a brief chapter regarding the prognostication of marriages (folios 33-38). Many of the codices –including many outside this group– concern themselves with the theme of marriage. However, when compared to the Codex Egerton, which is primarily an *historical* record of actual marriages, the Laud’s divinatory nature seems to *suggest* favorable, future matches.

Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to the Codex Laud?

Bibliography:

Boone, Elizabeth H. “Marriage Almanacs in the Mexican Divinatory Codices.” *Anales del instituto de investigaciones estéticas*, vol. 89, no. 1, 2006, pp. 71-92.

Jansen, Maarten E.G.R.N. “La división mántica de las trecenas.” *Mexicon*, vol. 8, no. 5, 1986, pp. 102–107.

--. "Laud, Codex." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. *Oxfordreference.com*. 13 Sep. 2018.

Valero de García Lascuráin, Ana Rita. *Entre Códices*. México: Universidad Anáhuac México Norte, 2012, pp. 55-56.



Figure 6: The Codex Fejérváry-Mayer, also known as *Tonalamatl de los pochtecas*, folios 9-10.

All scans courtesy of University of Kentucky Margaret I. King Library Special Collections and carried out by Jacob S. Neely.

The Codex Fejérváry-Mayer (ca. 1450)

The Codex Laud is a member of the **Borgia Group**.

The Fejérváry-Mayer also bears the name *Tonalamatl de los pochtecas*. The *pochtecas* were “professional, long-distance traders [who] brought to highland markets the most expensive goods from distant lands.” Miguel León-Portilla identifies this codex as being of interest to the *pochtecas* because many the almanacs featured within bear depictions of travelers. This suggests the merchants would use this document to coordinate and stay abreast of their journeys between distant markets (see the displayed folios 9-10).

The re-naming of the *Tonalamatl de los pochtecas* is part of a larger trend to describe the codices by their form, function, and origins. In the past, were named for their collectors or current locations, facts that have no bearing on their interpretation. In fact, it is apparent that the very distance (both cultural and physical) that their former names communicate has been a hindrance to their study and decipherment, as they reside thousands of miles from their cultures of origin. For more on the utility of contemporary local interpretations of codices, see the **Codex Egerton** in this exhibit.

Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to the Codex Fejérváry-Mayer?

Bibliography:

- Boone, Elizabeth H. "Fejérváry, Codex." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. *Oxfordreference.com*. 13 Sep. 2018.
- Jansen, Maarten E.G.R.N., and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez. “Renaming the Mexican Codices.” *Ancient Mesoamerica*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2004, pp. 267–271.
- Valero de García Lascuráin, Ana Rita. *Entre Códices*. México: Universidad Anáhuac México Norte, 2012, pp. 51-53.



Figure 7: The Codex Vindobonensis Mexicanus 1, folios I-II.

All scans courtesy of University of Kentucky Margaret I. King Library Special Collections and carried out by Jacob S. Neely.

The Codex Vindobonensis Mexicanus 1 (ca. 1500) and The Mixtec Group

The Codex Vindobonensis Mexicanus 1, also known as the Vienna or the Leopoldino, is a member of the **Mixtec Group**. This group is similar in style and origin to the Borgia Group, but contains *historical* and *genealogical* narratives instead of divinatory manuals.

The Vindobonensis Mexicanus 1 is a record of the rulers of Tilantongo, a Mixtec city-state in Oaxaca. Scholars generally agree that it was likely owned by Lord 4 Deer (named for his birthdate according to the *Tonalpohualli*), the last pre-Hispanic ruler of Tilantongo.

The Codex begins with the mythological origins of the ruling dynasties. This rhetorical strategy lends credibility to the genealogy that follows by suggesting that the ruling families have a divine right to rule. On the displayed folios I-II, you can see a list of rulers, tracing the family lines back centuries.

Unusually, the chain of custody of this Codex is clear. We know that it was in Spain by 1521 – the year Cortés’ coalition took control of Tenochtitlan/Mexico City– because there is an archival trail.

Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to the Codex Vindobonensis Mexicanus 1?

Bibliography:

- Jansen, Maarten E.G.R.N. "Vienna, Codex." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. *Oxfordreference.com*. 13 Sep. 2018.
- Pool, Christopher and Barry Kidder. "Codex Vindobonensis Mexicanus 1, p.3." *A Glimpse into Ancient Mexico: Writings of the Aztecs, Mixtec, and Maya*. Sep. 2013-Present. University of Kentucky Special Collections, Lexington, KY. *UKnowledge.uky.edu*. 13 Sep. 2018.
- Valero de García Lascuráin, Ana Rita. *Entre Códices*. México: Universidad Anáhuac México Norte, 2012, pp. 78-81.



Figure 8: The Codex Cospi, folios 19-20.

All scans courtesy of University of Kentucky Margaret I. King Library Special Collections and carried out by Jacob S. Neely.

The Codex Cospi (ca. 1500-1530)

The Codex Cospi, sometimes referred to as the Codex Bologna, is also a member of the Borgia Group. However, there is disagreement between scholars about whether it is in fact one-hundred percent pre-Hispanic.

Like its sister codices, it contains a *Tonalpohualli* (260-day calendar) and primarily serves as a ritual calendar marking the passage of the twenty trecena festivals. However, its elaboration seems to have been the work of different generations. The main section is the product of highly skilled *tlacuilos* (painter-scribes) but later sections employ a “careless” and “clumsy” style. The stylistic difference between the two sides even includes the types of paint used. Taken together, scholars date the later passages the end of the pre-Hispanic period, or even perhaps the early Colonial period.

On display are folios 19-20, which comes from the later section. Take a moment to compare this page with the rest of the Borgia Group. You will notice that it employs fewer, less vibrant colors. In addition, it has a divergent layout, such as some unpainted figures and asymmetrical placement.

Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to the Codex Cospi?

Bibliography:

- Buti, D., et al. “Colouring Materials of Pre-Columbian Codices: Non-invasive *in situ* Spectroscopic Analysis of the Codex Cospi.” *Journal of Archeological Science*, vol. 39, no. 3, 2012, pp. 672–679.
- Valero de García Lascuráin, Ana Rita. *Entre Códices*. México: Universidad Anáhuac México Norte, 2012, pp. 46-49.
- van der Loo, Peter Lodewijk. "Cospi, Codex." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. *Oxfordreference.com*. 13 Sep. 2018.

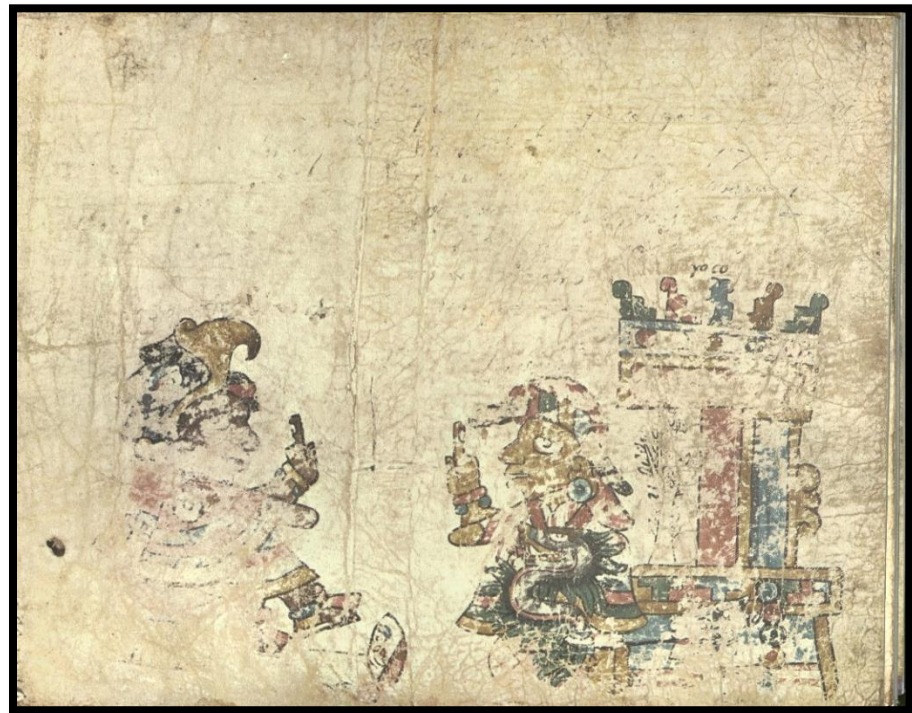
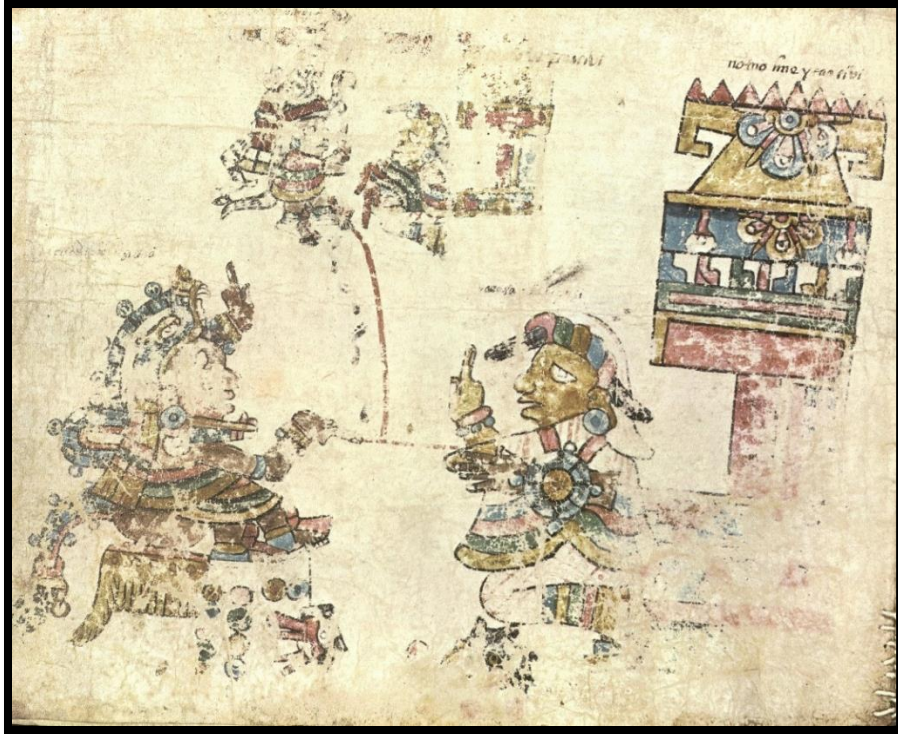


Figure 9: The Codex Egerton, folios 6-7.

All scans courtesy of University of Kentucky Margaret I. King Library Special Collections and carried out by Jacob S. Neely.

The Codex Egerton (ca. 1550)

The Codex Egerton, also known as the Codex Sánchez-Solís or the Codex Waeker-Gotter, is a member of the Mixtec Group along with the Codex Vindobonensis Mexicanus 1.

The Egerton is special in that it details, along with the Codex Bodley (not shown in this exhibit), the intermarriages of noble families from both the Mixteca highlands and the Mixteca lowlands. In fact, because the right to rule was matrilineal in this context, one noblewoman in particular named “Bloody Feathers” (*Plumas sangrientas*) appears in both Codices. In folio 6, on display here, she is located on the right.

While conducting research on this Codex in the late 2000’s, Ethelia Medrano Ruíz took scans of it to the town where she and fellow specialist Sara König believe it was elaborated, Santa María Cuquila, Oaxaca. There, she and local elders successfully translated and matched-up several previously unidentified places enumerated in the Egerton with their still-existing counterparts.

Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to the Codex Egerton?

Bibliography:

Jansen, Maarten E.G.R.N. *La gran familia de los reyes mixtecos: Libro explicativo de los llamados Códices Egerton y Becker II*. México: Fondo de cultura económica, 1994.

--. "Mixtec Group of Pictorial Manuscripts." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. *Oxfordreference.com*. 13 Sep. 2018.

Medrano, Ethelia Ruíz. “Mixteca Alta, un lugar llamado Santa María y el Códice Egerton.” *Mexicon*, vol. 31, no. 5, 2009, pp. 113-118.



Figure 10: The Codex Borbonicus, folio 13. Notice the Spanish- and Nahuatl-language “glosses” throughout the document.

All scans courtesy of University of Kentucky Margaret I. King Library Special Collections and carried out by Jacob S. Neely.

The Codex Borbonicus (ca. 1520)

The Codex Borbonicus, also known as the Hamy or the Paris Calendar, is one of only a few extant pictorial manuscripts directly attributed to the Aztec Empire.

What sets the Borbonicus apart from the other codices in this exhibit is the inclusion of the *xiuhpohualli*, a 365-day solar calendar, alongside the more-common *tonalpohualli*. The *xiuhpohualli* consists of eighteen twenty-day “months” and one five-day period at the end. The *xihuitl*, or year, takes its name from the first day of that last period.

The inclusion of both calendars is key to understanding the content of the Codex because the *xiuhpohualli* and the *tonalpohualli* only coincide once every 52 solar years. When this happens, it is the dawn of a new era or “New Fire.” The Borbonicus is a preparation for this milestone meant to usher-in the new era. If the ritual were to fail, it would foreshadow an era of chaos.

However, neither calendar is unique to the time nor location of the Aztecs. Rather, they are endemic of a larger Mesoamerican tradition that balances agricultural imperatives (the *xiuhpohualli*) and ritual ones (the *tonalpohualli*).

Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to the Codex Borbonicus?

Bibliography:

Keber, Eloise Quiñones. "Borbonicus, Codex." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. *Oxfordreference.com*. 13 Sep. 2018.

Pool, Christopher and Barry Kidder. “Codex Borbonicus, p.12.” *A Glimpse into Ancient Mexico: Writings of the Aztecs, Mixtec, and Maya*. Sep. 2013-Present. University of Kentucky Special Collections, Lexington, KY. *UKnowledge.uky.edu*. 13 Sep. 2018.

Valero de García Lascuráin, Ana Rita. *Entre Códices*. México: Universidad Anáhuac México Norte, 2012, pp. 88-91.

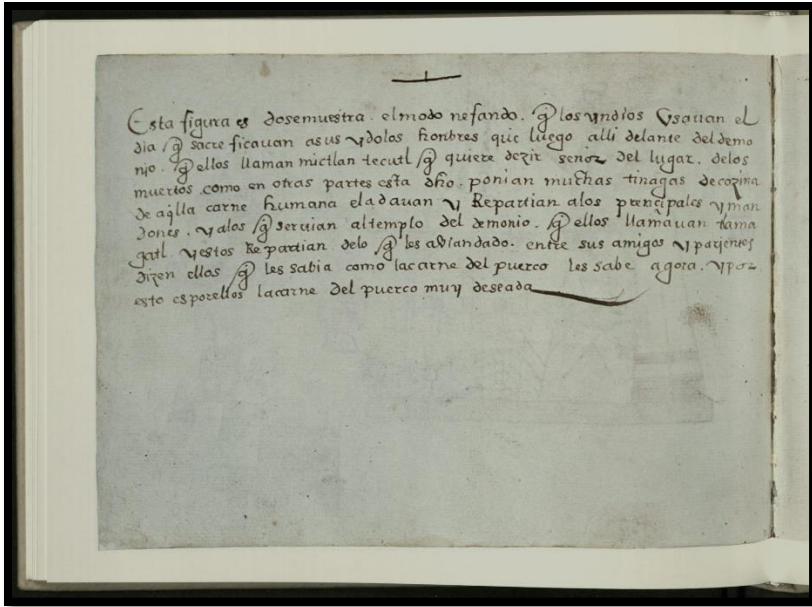


Figure 11: The Codex Magliabechiano, folios 72-73. Notice how this codex is bound as a book, rather than in the traditional screen-fold format.

All scans courtesy of University of Kentucky Margaret I. King Library Special Collections and carried out by Jacob S. Neely.

The Codex Magliabechiano (ca. 1566)

In the Early Colonial years, the Spanish, in conjunction with indigenous noblemen and noblewomen, collected data with an eye towards gaining a better understanding of Mesoamerican culture in order to facilitate more efficacious evangelization and tribute collection. Elizabeth Boone posits that the Codex Magliabechiano, Codex Tudela (not featured in this exhibit), and Codex Ixtlilxochitl are all at least partially composed of copies of this early project.

The Magliabechiano serves as a “cultural encyclopedia” of indigenous central Mexico. Though it contains much of the same ritual, calendrical, and scientific data as its pre-Hispanic predecessors, it stands out as being ethnographic in nature. This tone shift reflects the change in intended readership in the mid sixteenth century: the colonial authorities and the indigenous nobility.

The duality of the Magliabechiano’s nature stands out in its materiality as much as in its content. For example, it is one of the earliest bound in the European style (like a book). What’s more, you will note that the alphabetic writings no longer appear as post-composition *glosses*, but instead as part of the *intended* formatting at the time of composition.

Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to the Codex Magliabechiano?

Bibliography:

Boone, Elizabeth H. *The Codex Magliabechiano and the Lost Prototype of the Magliabechiano Group*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

--. "Magliabechiano, Codex." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. *Oxfordreference.com*. 13 Sep. 2018.

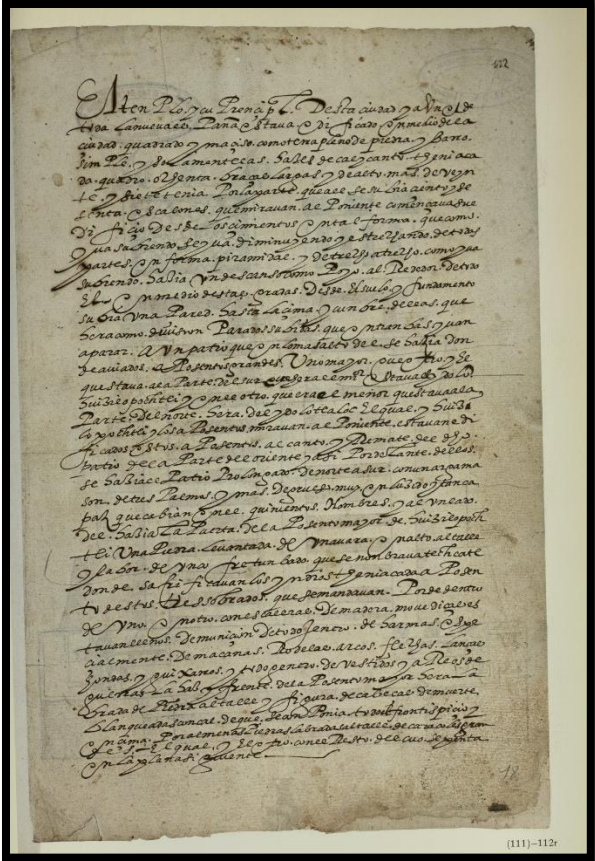


Figure 12: The Codex Ixtlilxochitl, folios 110v-(111)112r. The image you see is of the Mesoamerican deity Tlaloc. However, here he is rendered in a European fashion and accompanied by a full page of alphabetic script.

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The Codex Ixtlilxochitl (ca. 1585)

The Codex Ixtlilxochitl is a composite piece comprised of three documents by at least three distinct authors. It pertains to the complex *altepetl* -or composite city-state- of Texcoco that, along with Tenochtitlan and Tlacopan, formed the Triple Alliance of dominant city-states we refer to today as the Aztec Empire.

It contains a ritual-calendrical portion painted in the traditional style, a detailed response to a Spanish geographical survey regarding Texcoco's history, and an alphabetic explanation of the Aztec calendar. The first portion is possibly a copy of the same source from which the Magliabechiano emerged. Juan Bautista Pomar and Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, both *mestizo* (mixed-race) descendants of Texcocan nobility, produced the second and third portions, respectively. The Codex takes the name of the latter because he likely bound the three documents together.

This document (as a whole) may have been composed for self-interested purposes. In the Early Colonial period, being legally *indio* ("Indian") was a privileged status in the Colonies that would have made Alva Ixtlilxochitl a direct subject of the Crown rather than of local authorities, offering a significant modicum of privilege.

Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to the Codex Ixtlilxochitl?

Bibliography:

- Boone, Elizabeth H. "Ixtlilxochitl, Codex." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. *Oxfordreference.com*. 13 Sep. 2018.
- Brokaw, Galen and Jongsoo Lee. "Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl and Colonial Indigenous Historiography from the Conquest to the Present." *Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl and His Legacy*. Ed. Galen Brokaw and Jongsoo Lee. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2016, pp. 2-28.
- Lockhart, James. *The Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1993, pp. 24-25.
- Valero de García Lascuráin, Ana Rita. *Entre Códices*. México: Universidad Anáhuac México Norte, 2012, pp. 94-95.
- Whittaker, Gordon. "The Identities of Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl." *Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl and His Legacy*. Ed. Galen Brokaw and Jongsoo Lee. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2016, pp. 29-75.

Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana y mexicana y castellana (1571)

In 1571, Franciscan Friar Alonso de Molina worked with group of first- and second-generation (relative to the Conquest) indigenous scribes to compose this bilingual dictionary. It was the first dictionary of its kind in the Americas.

Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to Molina's dictionary?

Bibliography:

Molina, and Miguel Portilla. *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana y mexicana y castellana*. México: Porrúa, 2004, pp. 0, 2.

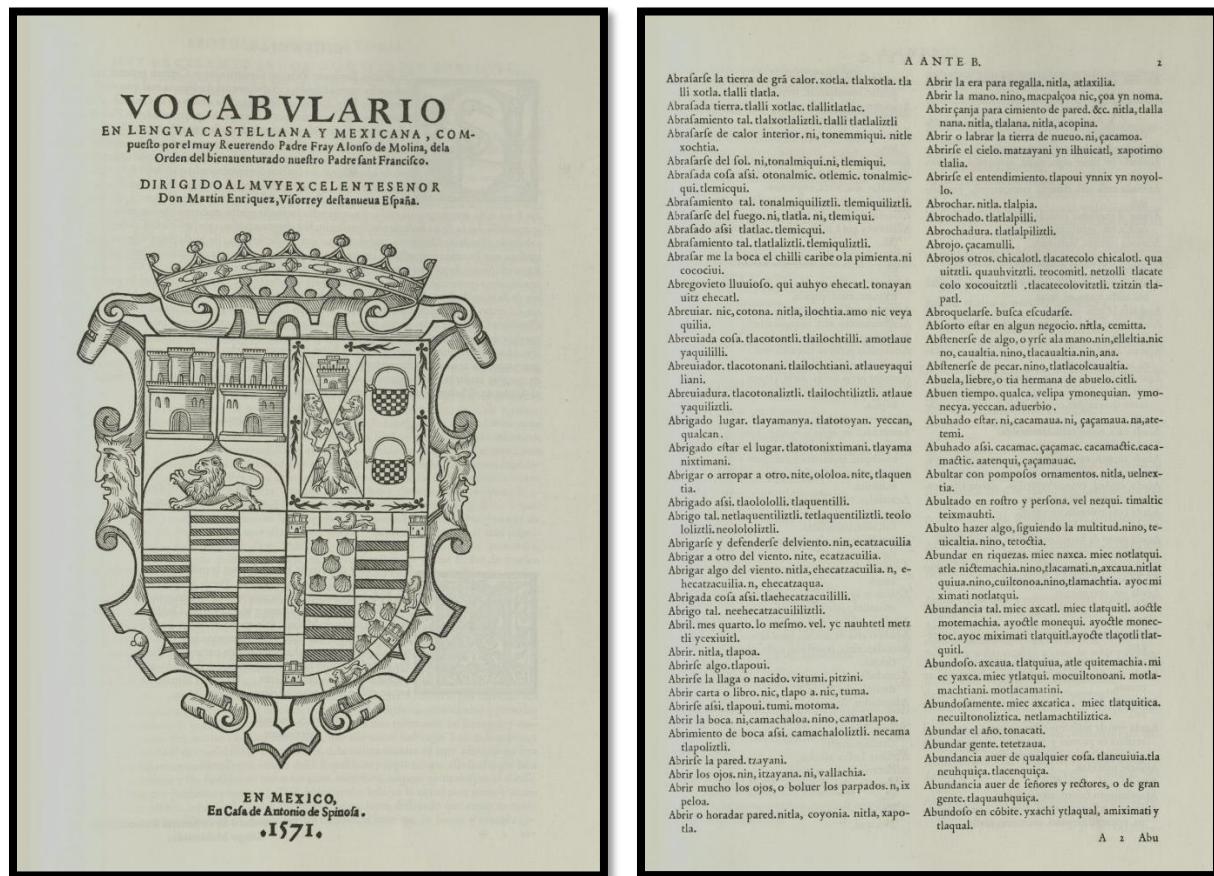


Figure 13: The Molina dictionary. On the left is the cover of the original. The image on the right is a typical page from the text.

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Tlahtolxiuhcayotl: Chicontepepec, Veracruz (2016)

Nearly 500 years after first contact between the Spanish and the indigenous peoples of Mexico, this is the first monolingual dictionary in a local Mexican language. That makes this the first dictionary made by and for speakers of Nahuatl, a major step in the process of language preservation and revitalization. It contains the Nahuatl dialect of northern Veracruz, specifically in and around the titular city of Chicontepepec.

Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to this groundbreaking dictionary?

Bibliography:

Sullivan, John, et al. *Tlahtolxitlahcayotl: Chicontepepec, Veracruz*. Warsaw: University of Warsaw Press, 2016.

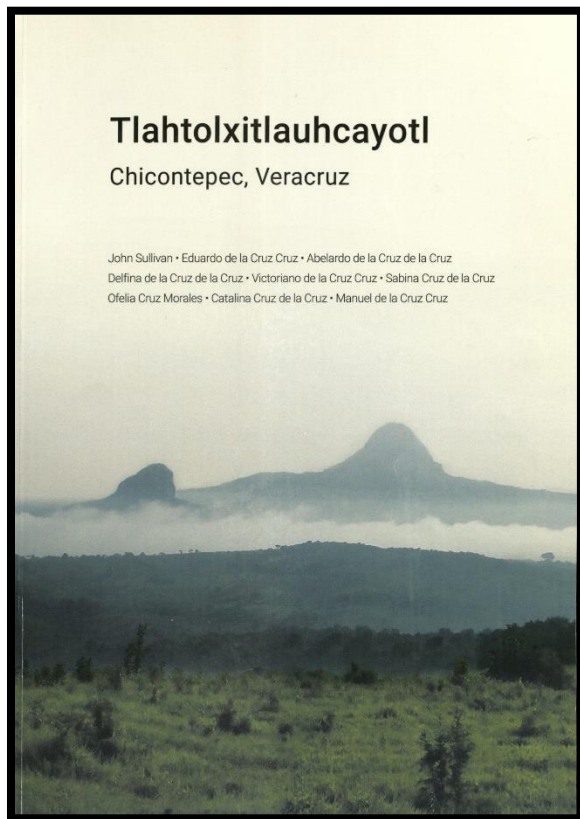


Figure 14: The Nahuatl-Language dictionary original cover.

If in-person: please feel free to touch and to interact with this piece.

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Contemporary Nahuatl-Language Educational Items (2015)

Included here is a small sample of contemporary educational texts. These texts serve two purposes. First, they help educate indigenous children in their languages and codify local traditions and mythology. Second, they educate outsiders about the culture and language of their respective regions. All three are from the University of Warsaw in Poland, where a robust linguistics department patronizes Nahuatl-language texts on a regular basis.

If in-person: please feel free to touch and to interact with these pieces.

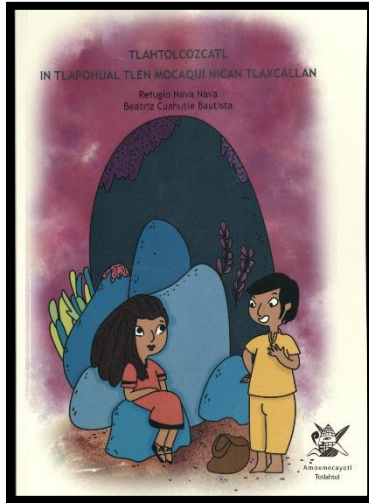


Figure 15 (left):

Tlahtolcozcatl in tlapohual tlen mocaqui tlaxcallan by Refugio Nava Nava. It is children's book written in the Nahuatl dialect of Tlaxcala, a state to the East of Mexico City.

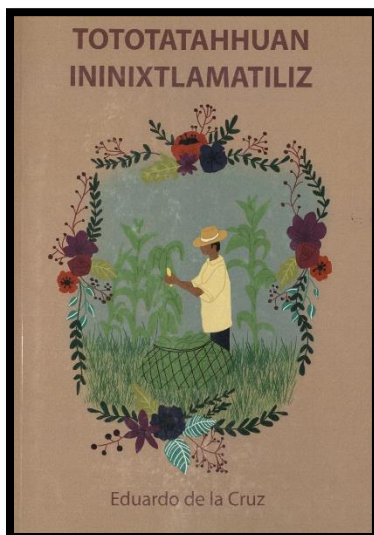
Figure 16 (right):

Nahui tonatiuh by Isabel Bravo. It is a children's book written in the Nahuatl dialect of the *Huasteca* of Northern Veracruz, a central-eastern state that borders the Gulf of Mexico.



Figure 17 (left):

Tototatahuan ininixtlamatiliz by Eduardo de la Cruz. It is another children's book written in the Nahuatl dialect of the *Huasteca* of Northern Veracruz.



Which of the four categories of CONTINUITY apply to these books?

Bibliography:

Bravo, Isabel, and Cruz. *Nahui tonatiuh*. Warsaw: University of Warsaw Press, 2015.

de la Cruz, Eduardo and Alejandra Bueno. *Tototatahhunan inixtlamatiliz*. Warsaw: University of Warsaw Press, 2015.

Nava Nava, Refugio, et al. *Tlahtolcozcatl in tlapohual tlen mocaqui nican tlaxcallan*. Warsaw: University of Warsaw Press, 2015.

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