

immediate resonance for archival and library communities. Kirschenbaum conceives of digital text as “genetic text,” a source that holds a “history of its own making” (p. 229). A genetic text affords the possibility of recovering aspects of object evolution that its creator deliberately deleted. This particular affordance raises a number of ethical questions for archivists contending with the demands that posterity exerts on the intent of the creator. The possibilities for scholarship and professional praxis proceeding from the genetic text framing should directly inform discussions of what structural meaning must be maintained and accounted for in each of the objects constituting rapidly growing, computationally produced literary collections in institutions throughout the country. And, of course, these considerations need not be bound to the literary; they extend to considerations for working with faculty papers and similar archival collections.

As the cultural heritage community continues to build upon its ability to collect, process, preserve, and provide access to born-digital literary collections through the use of ePADD, ArchExtract, and a suite of other computational methods, it would do well to engage with the considerations that Kirschenbaum advances in this work. Among the growing body of literature that focuses on questions in this space, *Track Changes* is undoubtedly a foundational work that bears immediate value and will likely continue to do so for the foreseeable future. While the work will have immediate resonance with archivists and librarians directly engaged in the work of preserving and providing access to digital literary materials, the text is crafted in such a way that it can readily serve as a meeting ground for productive discussion between colleagues working in disparate (inter)professional and (inter)disciplinary roles.

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NOTES

- ¹ Patricia Cohen, “Fending Off Digital Decay, Bit by Bit,” *New York Times*, March 15, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/16/books/16archive.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1.

Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s Native Archive and the Circulation of Knowledge in Colonial Mexico

By Amber Brian. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2016. 208 pp. Hardcover. \$55.00. ISBN 978-0-8265-2097-5.

Such recent works as Kathryn Burns’s *Into the Archive: Writing and Power in Colonial Peru* (Duke, 2010), Anna More’s *Baroque Sovereignty: Carlos de Sigüenza*

y Góngora and the Creole Archive of Colonial Mexico (University of Pennsylvania, 2013), and Sylvia Sellers-García's *Distance and Documents at the Spanish Empire's Periphery* (Stanford, 2013) have contributed to the study of archives in colonial Mexico and Latin America. Amber Brian, an assistant professor of Spanish at the University of Iowa, adds to this historiography by introducing don Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl (c. 1578–1650) and Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora (1645–1700) as two exemplary *letrados*, or members of the “lettered city,” who preserved manuscripts in central Mexico.

With good organization and accessible prose, *Alva Ixtlilxochitl's Native Archive and the Circulation of Knowledge in Colonial Mexico* approaches a very famous set of manuscripts, the five historical works of Alva Ixtlilxochitl: “Summary account of all the things that have happened in New Spain”; “Succinct account of the history of New Spain in the form of a petition”; “Historical compendium of the kingdom of Tetzcoco”; “Summary account of the general history of this New Spain”; and “History of the Chichimeca nation.” As a speaker of Nahuatl and Spanish, and as someone familiar with the humanist works available at the former Franciscan school at Tlatelolco, Alva Ixtlilxochitl was able to translate oral histories and transcribe pictorial and alphabetic texts. Brian defines Alva Ixtlilxochitl's alphabetical-cum-pictorial works as an “archive.” In the Spanish-speaking Americas of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, volumes of handwritten texts (sometimes by multiple authors) were often bound together as books or recombined as vellum-bound codices. These collections of manuscripts were unique for having been brought together in a particular arrangement, not necessarily because they were the only copies known to exist.

Brian's awareness of the archival characteristics of Alva Ixtlilxochitl's works is particularly strong in the introduction and first chapter. She mentions the royal archives of Tetzcoco, a powerful city-state which had been home to Alva Ixtlilxochitl's maternal ancestors. Founded in 1115 C.E., Tetzcoco had been one of the three member states in the Triple Alliance that ruled an empire centered at Tenochtitlan. Nearly all of the cultural items within the Tetzcoco archives were apparently burned or otherwise lost through deliberate actions of the Spanish, particularly the friars. Some authors, including Alva Ixtlilxochitl, also attributed the burning of this archives to Hernán Cortés. The destruction of this pre-Hispanic archives was still remembered two generations later when Alva Ixtlilxochitl attempted to recover and preserve knowledge of the kingdom of Tetzcoco. As Brian emphasizes, Alva Ixtlilxochitl utilized the remnants of the Tetzcoco archives and oral histories he collected from elderly Tetzcocans to write his own histories. In some cases, he copied other manuscript histories entirely; for example, his copy of Juan Bautista Pomar's *Relación de Tetzcoco* (1582) is the only known copy in existence today. During an age when hand transcription served as a method of preservation—perhaps on par with printing multiple

copies—Alva Ixtlilxochitl understood the value of the materials he was copying, writing, and saving.

Of perhaps greatest importance for Brian is the fact that Alva Ixtlilxochitl helped to create histories that incorporated precolonial and colonial modes of preserving cultural memory. Alva Ixtlilxochitl's archive was "the knowledge native communities collected in an effort to preserve their connection to the pre-Hispanic past in the context of European domination" (p. 14). Rather than a representation of all pre-Hispanic cultures before the Spanish conquest, his archive documents a very particular historical moment and is a highly contextual version of precolonial and colonial history. As matrilineal descendants of the former nobles in the Tetzcoacan elite, his family had retained some power and land after the Spanish arrived. Cortés himself employed several Tetzcoacans in the siege of Tenochtitlan.

Thus, Alva Ixtlilxochitl's archive provided a source of personal power as he and his descendants sought to retain control over land holdings and bureaucratic responsibilities derived through lineal relationships. Brian details the genealogy of the *cacicazgo*, or "family estate," in San Juan Teotihuacan that Alva Ixtlilxochitl inherited from his mother and how he and his son struggled to retain it against land claimants and legal threats between 1611 and 1682. Mining legal records, Brian argues that *castizos* (individuals with 75 percent Spanish ancestry) were privileged enough to utilize the Spanish court system to validate their hold over titles and tributes. Alva Ixtlilxochitl also relied upon family documents to obtain official positions as governor of Tetzcoaco in 1612, of Tlalmanalco in 1616, and of Chalco in 1618. He even served as translator for the General Indian Court in New Spain.

In chapter 3, Brian shows how Alva Ixtlilxochitl idealized the famous ruler of Tetzcoaco, Nezahualcoyotl and compared him directly to the Persian king Cyrus, thereby linking Tetzcoacan history with narratives of civilization popular in Europe in the seventeenth century. The fourth and final chapter analyzes the works of Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, whom Brian calls a "creole intellectual." Sigüenza inherited Ixtlilxochitl's archive in the 1680s from the latter's son. Brian suggests, contrary to other historians, that the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe originated with "native texts" preserved by Alva Ixtlilxochitl and others (p. 101).

Of greatest interest to archival historians, perhaps, is the fact that Brian labels Alva Ixtlilxochitl as an "archivist" (if only in two specific instances), informs us that the word *archivo* may have entered Castilian Spanish vocabulary as early as 1490, and alludes to the establishment in 1540 of the first Spanish state archives in Simancas (pp. 14, 27, 37). However, her usage of the terms "archivist" and "archive" is quite unconnected to these developments. She deploys "archive" to mean not the physical structure in which important documents are housed, but the personal authenticity attained through written documentation. Indeed, Brian leans more heavily on postmodern theory than on etymological purity.

She cites Michel Foucault and González Echevarría in an attempt “to pull the embedded discussion of power and authority away from a strictly creole or European social and discursive context” (p. 15). Thus, Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s archive comes across as equally an ideological statement as an interpretation of historical events: “For him, custody of the native archive meant credibility, such that material authority over the documentation of the past was a crucial aspect to his self-construction as a reliable author who was also engaged with the historical memory of his contemporaries” (p. 27).

Instead of labeling him an archivist, a more appropriate description of Alva Ixtlilxochitl may be as a local historian for Tetzco, or as the genealogist of his mother’s Tetzcoan lineage. This may somewhat diminish the stature of Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s works, though he would occupy a place alongside other local historians and cultural preservers in the colonial Americas. One thinks, for example, of the pastor Jeremy Belknap, author of the *History of New Hampshire* (1784–1792) and a founder of the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1791.

Yet, the local can be made national, if placed in the right hands. When Sigüenza died in 1700, his collection of 460 books and 28 manuscript volumes was deposited at the Jesuit College of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Mexico City. Over time, Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s original works were scattered, while manuscript copies of them circulated during the eighteenth century. In 1827, two of Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s volumes came into the hands of the Bible Society of London. Two years later, portions of his writings finally appeared in print for the first time. In the 1970s, historian Edmundo O’Gorman issued a transcription of Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s works that was complete up to that point in time. Then, in 2014, the Bible Society sold its two volumes to Mexico’s National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) for a million dollars. Deemed an act of “repatriation” by Mexican writer Heriberto Yépez, the purchase by the Mexican government indicates the symbolic value of this native (and colonial) archive to the modern nation of Mexico.

All in all, Brian’s well-written (if a bit too condensed) book addresses issues important to practicing archivists, including the changing values attributed to and contested meanings embedded within texts of complex origins, as well as the constructed nature of collections and archives. At the start, Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s family records and oral histories were deployed for utilitarian purposes, especially to defend the privileges and rights invested in his family estate; after his death, Sigüenza continued to defend the family’s honor and incorporate new interpretive findings. When Sigüenza died, the collection could not be kept together in private hands. If archivists and historians wish to engage with the global roots of their allied professions, they will need to grapple with the overlapping histories of manuscript creation and cross-cultural exchange.

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