

Saqueo en el archivo: El paradero de los tesoros documentales guatemaltecos.

By WENDY KRAMER, W. GEORGE LOVELL, and CHRISTOPHER H. LUTZ.

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Plates. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. xxxiv, 65 pp. Paper, \$20.00.

The authors of this brief report have all distinguished themselves by their scholarship on Guatemala, most recently with their collaboration on “*Strange Lands and Different Peoples*”: *Spaniards and Indians in Colonial Guatemala* (2013). It is from their research for that brilliant volume that the present work emerged, which focuses on the whereabouts of many of Guatemala’s historic manuscripts and archaeological treasures. They observe that much of Latin America’s archaeological and documentary records no longer reside in the region itself, having found their way into museums, libraries, and other public and private repositories in Europe and the United States, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They refer in particular to the second and third books of the Cabildo de Santiago de Guatemala, covering the critical period from 1530 to 1553. Their research into this question revealed the extent of the threat to national patrimony and suggested that Guatemala’s experience may well be relevant for other Latin American states. The authors discovered that these two record books of the Guatemalan cabildo, long believed lost, eventually ended up with the Hispanic Society of America (HSA) in New York City. They pursued the probable trajectory of these historic works as well as other archaeological and historical treasures. While in many cases it is true that the documents in foreign collections have been better preserved than those that remained in Guatemala, there has been rising resentment among nationals of that country over the loss of national patrimony.

Four brief chapters discuss recurrent problems in the Guatemalan archives, with periods of mismanagement when many documents were lost or sold to private collectors. An English version of these chapters appeared earlier in the authors’ 2013 article “Pillage in the Archives: The Whereabouts of Guatemalan Documentary Treasures,” published in the *Latin American Research Review*. Acquisition of such materials by private collectors (both native and foreign) had occurred since the sixteenth century but became frequent by the late nineteenth century. Wendy Kramer, W. George Lovell, and Christopher H. Lutz pay particular attention to the activities of a Leipzig bookdealer and publisher, Karl W. Hiersemann (1854–1928), and his principal customer, Archer Milton Huntington (1870–1955), who was a founder and patron of the HSA in 1904.

Two appendixes, not included in the *LARR* article mentioned above, add much value to the book. The first, a Spanish translation of an essay by Dr. C. (Karl) Berendt (1817–1878) entitled “Colecciones de documentos históricos en Guatemala,” originally published in English by the Smithsonian Institution in 1877 and based on a month’s stay in Guatemala City in 1876, describes the archives available at that time. These included the Archivo Nacional, the Archivo de la Audiencia, the Archivo Municipal, and the libraries of the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala and of the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País. Berendt noted the richness of the manuscript and archaeological resources there but wrote that the documentary collections were not well cared for. He recommended that the

documents be transcribed before they disappeared. The second appendix lists the 83 entries related to Central America from Hiersemann's catalog of items sold to Huntington and now in the HSA. Other sections of the 563 items in the catalog, not reproduced in this volume, were devoted to Latin America in general or to other regions of South America, the Caribbean, and the Philippines. Kramer, Lovell, and Lutz raised the question of why the second and third books of the Cabildo de Santiago de Guatemala and many other invaluable documents are found not in Guatemala or Mexico but rather in repositories of the United States or Europe. Their work should be considered as a preliminary answer to that complex question as well as a valuable research tool.

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Colonial Period

Veracruz 1519: Los hombres de Cortés. By MARÍA DEL CARMEN MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ. León, Spain: Universidad de León, 2013. Plates. Figures. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. 303 pp. Paper.

In the spring of 1519, Hernán Cortés and his expedition landed on the coast of what would become Mexico. Shortly thereafter, they began to distance themselves from Diego Velázquez, governor of Cuba, and set the expedition inexorably toward Tenochtitlan and the conquest of the Mexica. The critical document explaining those events, the petition of the town of Veracruz, was lost from the historical record. Now, after nearly 500 years, two books have published and analyzed this petition, appearing within months of one another. The present volume is one of those; I wrote the other with the assistance of Helen Nader, published by the University of Texas Press. One of the more remarkable features of the petition is that it was signed by the members of the Cortés expedition. Although most sources indicate that around 500 men accompanied Cortés, only some 340 signatures (318 full signatures and over 20 fragments) appear on the document, due to a large tear on the bottom of many of the pages.

María del Carmen Martínez Martínez has done a solid job in her study of the document. For her analysis, she draws heavily on the literature in Spanish relevant to the Age of Discovery and to the conquest in particular. Most importantly, she looks at all the various references in roughly contemporary documents to the petition of the town, such as ones by Bernal Díaz del Castillo and many others. Other documents of the expedition, such as the power of attorney for the agents in court, also refer to the petition. Thus she uses these references to provide a deep context for the document. Nonetheless, she does not discuss the historiography of the document at any great length and how later historians looked on the events that surrounded it in their treatments of the conquest narrative. The analysis of the document itself focuses to a certain degree on its physical reality: the torn edges, the placement of the signatures on the pages, the structure of the petition. The book does include a transcription of the document in Spanish and a