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ERNST FÖRSTEMANN'S INTRODUCTION TO THE DRESDEN CODEX

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In 1880, Ernst Förstemann (1822–1906, Head Librarian in Dresden from 1865–1887) published the first complete photographic representation of the Dresden Codex. The Dresden Codex is a Maya hieroglyphic book kept in the Royal Public Library in Dresden. This publication was titled *Die Mayahandschrift der Königlichen Öffentlichen Bibliothek zu Dresden [The Maya Book in the Royal Public Library in Dresden]* (Förstemann 1880). This book showed the complete codex (in chromolithography) and included an 18-page introduction to the codex. Förstemann, regarded as the leading expert on the codex, published many articles on the codex later in his life (Tozzer 1907:153). Cyrus Thomas (1825–1910) translated the first seven pages of the introduction into English in *Aids to the Study of the Maya Codices* (Thomas 1888:261–269). Many of Förstemann's other writings were translated into English in 1904 in *Mexican and Central American Antiquities, Calendar Systems, and History* (Bowditch et al. 1904); however, the introduction has never been completely rendered in English. This is unfortunate, as substantial information about the Dresden Codex and the state of Mesoamerican studies is in this introduction. The narrative given here is from Förstemann's article, supplemented by the books and articles cited by Förstemann, as well as complementary information from more recent sources.

Among the 18 pages of the introduction, many interesting subjects are covered. These include:

1. A history of what is known about the acquisition of the Dresden Codex by Johann Christian Götze in 1739.
2. The list of publications that include depictions and descriptions of the codex.
3. A description of how the Dresden Codex pages were numbered, including the separation of the codex into pieces.
4. The enclosing of the pages of the codex in glass in 1834, and the rearrangement of the pages when that occurred.
5. Some discussion of the discovery of Maya sites and the publications about them, such as the books by Stephens and Catherwood, and how that leads to the understanding that the Dresden Codex is a Maya book.
6. The finding of Diego de Landa's *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*, including his "Maya alphabet," and how that should have led to the translation of the Maya glyphs, but did not.
7. The mention of the first photograph of the codex, taken of page 23 in 1865 and sent to William Bollaert in London.
8. The discovery of the Troano Codex (first half of the Madrid Codex) in Madrid in 1864, and the publication of photographs of it.
9. A discussion of the reading order of the glyphs and an attempt at translating them by Bollaert.
10. A short concordance of the iconography across the Dresden, Madrid, and Paris codices.

The introduction begins with Johann Christian Götze (1692–1749, Head Librarian 1734–1749), an earlier head librarian of the Royal Library, and what is known about his acquisition in 1739 of the Dresden Codex. Förstemann writes:

The one to whom we owe the discovery and thus perhaps the preservation of the Codex was Johann Christian Götze, son of an evangelical pastor, born in 1692 in Hohburg near Wurzen in the Electorate, Saxony. He joined the Catholic Church and was educated in Vienna, then in Rome, he became the first chaplain of the King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, later also became a papal protonotary. In 1734 he was assigned to the Royal Library of Dresden and died in this position, highly respected for his scholarship and honorable character, on 5 June 1749. (Förstemann 1880:1 translated from German)

That information comes from his obituary in *Neuen Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen* [*New Newspapers of Scholars Things*] (Obituary Johan Christian Götzens 1749).

Götze had been to Italy four times where he had acquired many books and manuscripts for the library. One of those trips was in 1739. Götze acquired 300 works, and listed them in a hand-written document entitled “Books delivered by me to the Royal Library January 1740” (Götze 1740:1 translated from German). Most importantly, he lists as Entry 300 (shown in Figure 1) “An invaluable Mexican book with hieroglyphic figures” (Götze 1740:12). This is the Dresden Codex.

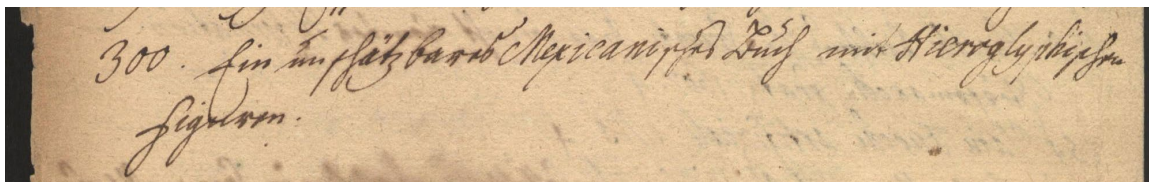


Figure 1. Götze's recording of the acquisition of the Dresden Codex: “300. Ein unschätzbares Mexikanisches Buch mit hieroglyphischen Figuren” (Götze 1740:12).

In 1744, Götze published a book of more than 500 pages describing the interesting items in the Dresden library titled *Die Merkwürdigkeiten der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Dresden* [*The Curiosities of the Royal Library in Dresden*]. The Dresden Codex was the first item, and thus the most important, to be described in the book.

A Mexican book with unknown characters and hieroglyphic figures inscribed on both sides, and painted with all kinds of colors in elongated octavo, neatly laid in folds of 39 leaves, spread out lengthwise over six cubits.” (Götze 1744:1 translated from German)

Götze then continues discussing the Dresden Codex and New World codices. On page four, he gives three sentences that include everything known about how the codex was acquired:

Our Royal Library has this advantage over many others in that it possesses such a rare treasure. It was found a few years ago by a private person in Vienna, and easily obtained as an otherwise unknown thing for free. Without a doubt, it came from a Spaniard, who was either himself or his ancestor in America. (Götze 1744:4)

Götze received the codex from someone in Vienna while he was passing through on his way to Italy. The codex had been donated to the Dresden library. Förstemann searched the Royal State Archives in Dresden and the Royal Collection but found no further information about Götze's acquiring the codex.

Götze continues with some discussion of Mexican codices in general. On page 5, Götze says that Joseph Simon Assemani (1687–1768), who was the head librarian of the Vatican, saw the Dresden Codex while Götze was in Rome. He assured Götze that it was similar to a Mexican codex in the Vatican Library. Assemani was most likely referring to the Borgia Group codex, known now as Vaticanus B (Figure 2). While both documents came from the New World, they do not originate from the same region or cultures.

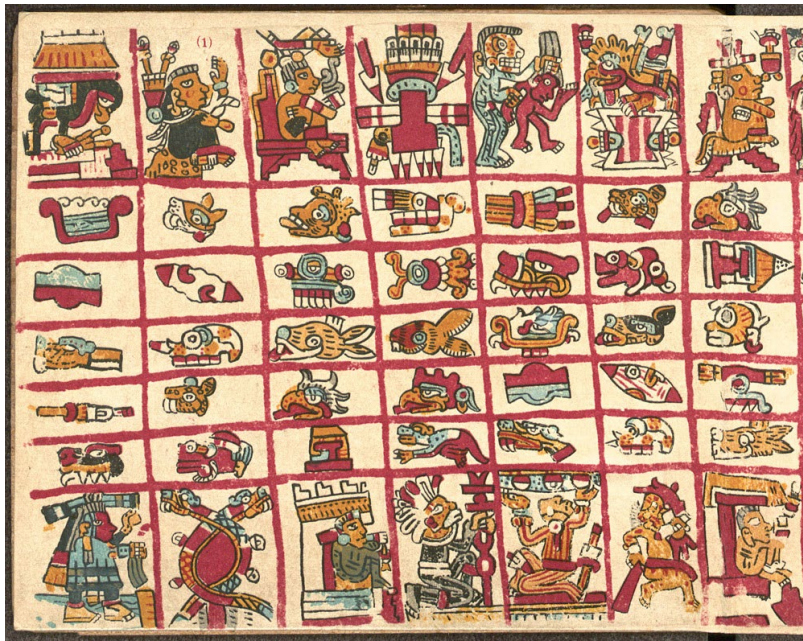


Figure 2. Page 1 of Borgia Group Codex Vaticanus B (Loubat 1896:1).

The codex was left neglected and unmentioned for many years. The next head librarian in Dresden, Johann Christoph Adelung (1732–1806, Head Librarian in Dresden 1787–1806), published *Mithridates oder allgemeine Sprachenkunde mit dem Vater Unser als Sprachprobe in bey nahe fünfhundert Sprachen und Mundarten* [*Mithridates or general language studies with the Lord's Prayer as a sample in almost five hundred languages and dialects*] (Adelung 1806) beginning in 1806. The third volume was published posthumously in 1816, in which he discusses Mayan and Aztec languages; however he fails to mention the Dresden Codex in his care.

Although Förstemann tries to be comprehensive on all the mentions of the Dresden Codex in print, the next appearance of the Dresden Codex in print was not mentioned. It was found by Michael Coe (1929–2019) (1963) in a publication on architecture and interior design. This five volume set, including four of text plus an atlas of drawings, was titled *Darstellung und Geschichte des Geschmacks der vorzüglichsten Völker in Beziehung auf die innere Auszierung der Zimmer und auf die Baukunst* [Representation and history of the taste of the most excellent peoples in relation to the interior decoration of rooms and architecture] (Racknitz et al. 1796). Plate 35 of the atlas is shown in Figure 3a, and Figure 3b shows the elements in the Dresden Codex they were based on (note that some are mirror-imaged). This drawing has elements extracted from pages 8, 9, and 52 from the Dresden Codex, as well as elements similar to those on pages 61 and 62, and these are the first images from the Dresden Codex to appear in print.



Figure 3. a) Plate 35 of *Mexikanischer Geschmack* (Racknitz et al. 1796).
b) Images from the Dresden Codex Pages 8, 9, and 52 (Förstemann 1892).

Carl August Böttiger (1760–1835) is the next to mention the Dresden Codex in his 1811 publication *Ideen zur Archäologie* [Ideas on Archaeology] (Böttiger 1811:21–22). He describes the codex having 40 leaves (not 39 as will be noted below), and notes that the pages are rectangular, not roughly square like the Mexican codices. Böttiger then quotes the earlier information supplied by Götze.

Böttiger introduced Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) to the Dresden Codex. Sometime later Humboldt published drawings in his book *Vues des Cordillères et monumens des peuples indigènes de l'Amérique* [Views of the Mountains and Monuments of Indigenous

Peoples of America] (Humboldt 1810:267).¹ Within this book appears the first full page drawings of the Dresden Codex from pages 47, 48, 50, 51, and 52. These pages are now known to describe the motions of Venus (pages 47, 48, and 50) and probably calculations of lunar eclipses (pages 51 and 52) (Thompson 1972:62–78). Humboldt apparently had not viewed the codex himself, giving inaccurate details as he was likely relying on Böttiger’s description. For instance, he described that there were 40 leaves, when there are only 39, and that the entire length of the codex was almost 6 meters, when it is only 3.5 meters long.



Figure 4. Drawings from Alexander von Humboldt’s Dresden Codex pages 47, 48, 50, 51, 52 (Humboldt 1810:267).

In 1822, Friedrich Adolf Ebert (1791–1834, Head Librarian in Dresden 1827–1834) published *Geschichte und Beschreibung der königlichen öffentlichen Bibliothek zu Dresden* [History and Description of the Royal Public Library of Dresden] (Ebert 1822). On pages 66 and 161, he describes the codex as a “treasure of the highest value,” although he introduces no other information apart from that found in the previously mentioned articles and books. In 1831, Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer (1801–1888) published *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium Bibliothecae Regiae Dresdensis* [Catalog of Codex Manuscripts in the Royal Dresden Library] (Fleischer 1831). On page 75 he mentions the codex and repeats information supplied by Böttiger. He gives the catalog number of the codex, E451 which was still being used in 1880, although the current catalog number in 2021 is R310.

Beginning in 1931, Edward King, Viscount Kingsborough (1795–1837), published what eventually became a nine-volume set of drawings of the New World codices and monuments, titled *The Antiquities of Mexico*. These were large volumes and hand colored costing him £32,000 to produce the entire series. In 1837, he contracted typhus in debtor’s prison when he could not pay a small debt owed to a printer. He died three weeks later on February 27, 1837, and the last two volumes were published posthumously (Webb 1878:275). The drawings

¹ Humboldt’s book has the date 1810 on the title page, but it was published no earlier than 1813 explaining how Böttiger’s 1811 work preceded it.

of the Dresden Codex appear in Volume 3, dated 1831 (Kingsborough, Aglio, and Dupaix 1831:vol. 3). The drawings of the Dresden Codex included were executed by an expert artist named Agostino Aglio (1777–1857). Aglio traveled to the various libraries around Europe which held New World codices. Förstemann estimates that Aglio arrived in Dresden in 1826.

Aglio assigned each page a number when constructing his drawings and, except for the page numbers on the first two leaves, these page numbers are still used today. Förstemann goes into some detail on how the pages were numbered by Aglio. Aglio must have found the codex in at least three pieces. He assumed that the first two pieces belonged to one codex (Part A), and that the third part was a separate codex (Part B), and arranged them so that the pages on Part A were numbered first, then the pages in Part B.

Dr. Carl Schultz-Sellack (1844–1879) pointed out that there were issues with the flow of the document between the first two leaves and third leaf, and that Aglio had likely drawn the first two leaves reversed from the original order drawn by the Maya. When Förstemann reprinted the codex in 1892, he used the same plates as the 1880 publication; however, he corrected the order to reverse the first two leaves (Thompson 1972:17). The Kingsborough page 1 becomes Förstemann’s page 44 (K1=F44), K2=F45, K44=F1, K45=F2. Förstemann’s 1892 page numbering is shown in Figure 5.

	Part A																									Part B																								
Reverse	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	0	0	28	27	26	25	74	73	72	71	70	69	68	67	66	65	64	63	62	61	0												
	K2	K1																																																
Obverse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60											

Figure 5. The canonical page numbering from the Förstemann 1892 printing, with the correct reading order of the pages of the pages shown by the arrows. Pages with a 0 are mostly blank and not numbered (after Thompson 1972:18).

In 1892, Förstemann, like Aglio, still assumed that there were two separate codices. He explains how in Part A that three horizontal divisions appear on each page, while part B has more undivided pages. However, as we now know, he was wrong and there is only one codex. On the obverse, page 46 comes after page 24, and page 25 comes after page 74 on the reverse. By the time Förstemann published his *Commentar zur Mayahandschrift der Königlichen öffentlichen Bibliothek zu Dresden* [Commentary on the Maya book in the Royal Library in Dresden] (Förstemann 1901), he had realized the mistake. On page 182 of the English translation (Förstemann 1906), he writes “And yet, the two parts are so closely connected with one another that the idea of two independent Manuscripts must be dismissed.” However, Förstemann’s 1892 page numbering has become the canonical page numbering used by all subsequent authors. Changing to the actual reading order now would cause undue confusion.

There are three pages on the Part A and one on Part B that are mostly blank. Aglio did not draw or number those pages. In Förstemann’s writing, he numbers those pages with a zero, and he did not print the pages of them in his book. Because the blank pages are not numbered,

they must be numbered as the reverse of the page number on the obverse side, for example “the reverse side of page 18.” The blank pages can be seen on the recent images presented by the Dresden Library (SLUB Dresden 2009) and some show traces of red and black paint and what looks like palimpsest drawings on them, where the previously painted drawing was removed to make way for new text that was never completed, although the details are impossible to make out in the photographs. At some point, the “blank” pages should be examined with enhanced imaging techniques to see if any information can be retrieved.



Figure 6. The “blank” page on the reverse side of Dresden Codex page 20 (SLUB Dresden 2009:29).

Förstemann mentions that for those that could not afford the cost or had the strength to lift the volumes, a detailed review of Lord Kingsborough’s work was published in *The Foreign Quarterly Review* (Grimes 1832). This 34-page article not only reviews the work, but also describes much of what was known of Mexican antiquities studies in 1832. Förstemann also states that all of Lord Kingsborough’s text should be discarded, as it was written to justify the thought that Jews had settled the New World. Although this has been clearly proved wrong by later research, it was a frequent idea at the time.

On January 27, 1832, Lord Kingsborough wrote to Friedrich Adolf Ebert that he was sending a copy of *Antiquities of Mexico* in gratitude for allowing the library to make copies the Dresden Codex.² A public feud ensued in the local newspapers when the copy did not arrive. On April 27, 1832, an anonymous note about Kingsborough’s donation appeared in the *Leipziger Zeitung* newspaper.³ It appears there was some confusion between Humboldt’s

² Förstemann says that the original letter is in Ebert’s correspondence in the Dresden Library, but does not appear to be online.

³ These newspapers are not archived online at present, so this author has not been able to review the feud.

drawings and Lord Kingsborough's. On May 5th, Ebert responded in the *Dresdener Anzeiger* newspaper saying that such comments were "premature and intrusive." On May 12th, Böttiger (possibly the anonymous author himself) then replied in *Dresdener Anzeiger* defended the anonymous author, to which Ebert hotly retorted on May 20. Finally on May 25th Böttiger broke off the feud. Förstemann (1880:6) says "Thus, the great bibliograph and the great archaeologist became enemies for a long time by our Codex." Academic feuds are as old as academics, and unfortunately both Ebert and Böttiger died within three years without resolving their dispute.

The images from Lord Kingsborough's work appear in other books and articles. Joseph-Bathazar Silvestre (1791–1869) included an image in his *Paléographie Universelle. Collection de fac-simile d'écritures de tous les peuples et de tous les temps* [Universal Paleography. Facsimile collection of Scriptures from All Peoples and All Times] (Silvestre 1839), and Léon de Rosny (1837–1914) includes a black and white drawing of page 60 of the codex in his *Les écritures figuratives et hiéroglyphiques des peuples anciens et modernes* [The Figurative and Hieroglyphic Writings of Ancient and Modern Peoples] (de Rosny 1860:21). De Rosny published the first photograph, shown in Figure 7, of page 49 of the Dresden Codex in his 1876 work *Essai sur le déchiffrement de l'écriture hiératique Maya* [Essay on deciphering Mayan hieratic writing] (de Rosny 1876a:108 plate on unnumbered subsequent page).⁴ Later, de Rosny published an extended version, with more plates and citations, in *Essai sur le déchiffrement de l'écriture hiératique de l'Amérique Centrale* [Essay on the deciphering of the hieratic writing of Central America] (de Rosny 1876b Plate XV).⁵ This second work also includes photographs from the Madrid and Paris codices, and drawings from all three Maya codices⁶, as well as drawings from Mexican codices such as the Aubin Tonalmatl.

⁴ Förstemann says that de Rosny's 1876a work is in tome I; it is actually in tome II.

⁵ Although *Essai sur le déchiffrement de l'écriture hiératique de l'Amérique Centrale* has the date 1876 on the title page, the introduction (de Rosny 1876b:vi) makes it clear that was published in 1879 (Förstemann says 1878). Förstemann draws heavily on this book for the second half of his introduction.

⁶ At the time, the Madrid Codex was thought to be two separate codices, called the Troano and the Cortesianus. It was not until later that they were found to be two parts of the same codex. These names appear in the labels of the various figures in de Rosny's work.



Figure 7. The first published photograph of the Dresden Codex (Page 49) from 1876 (de Rosny 1876a:follows 108).

On November 13, 1834, Ebert died, and was replaced as head librarian by Konstantin Carl Falkenstein (1801–1855, Head Librarian in Dresden 1835–1852). Falkenstein had a different approach than that of his predecessor and put the codex on public display. To protect the codex from visitors, around 1836 they were enclosed between glass plates and “hung freely in a frame, so that both sides were visible” (Förstemann 1880:7). Förstemann says that the glass plates protected it from handling; however it did not protect it from light. In 1880, green curtains had only recently been hung over the windows helping to protect the codex. Förstemann says that the codex did not seem to have suffered any damage. However, by comparing the Kingsborough drawings to the photographs from 1880, some of the red numerals have vanished, particularly in the early pages. (For example, compare the Kingsborough drawing with the Förstemann photograph in Figure 8.) Some of the red numerals at the top of the page in Kingsborough are missing by the time the Förstemann photographs were taken 54 years later. This was an ongoing problem with the red paint as there are other pages that are missing red numbers (even in 1826). Also noting that some of the browns have faded as well, Thompson writes:

Exposure to light and perhaps some normal wear caused some deterioration between the Kingsborough and Förstemann editions, a period of fifty years when one may assume the codex was on view in the old Saxon Royal Library.

In several places Förstemann's edition which was made with extreme care, omits red numerical bars which Kingsborough gives and which we know, but Aglio did not, are called for. We can be confident that their absence from the Förstemann edition means they had faded so much in the half-century as to have become invisible. These are: pages 2a, five red numbers; 2b, red 6 and 11; 2c, red 10 and 1 (page 2 was detached from the rest of codex); 22b, red 3; 22c, red 7 (Förstemann omits one dot); 23a, red 4; 33a, red 11. Also 8c left, Aglio gave all day signs, but Förstemann has the last badly damaged. Occasionally, too, Aglio shows glyph detail missing in Förstemann, but Aglio's glyph drawings fall far below his drawings of figures. There is no evidence of water(?) damage between the two editions. In the color copies of the Kingsborough edition colors are far brighter than in Förstemann. I think that was partly due to Aglio having restored colors to what he thought they once were, but, in part, because colors had probably faded less then. Moreover, Förstemann's blues are far too green and dull. (Thompson 1972:18)



Figure 8. Images from Kingsborough (left) (Kingsborough, Aglio, and Dupaix 1831:45) and Förstemann (right) (Förstemann 1892:2). The Förstemann images are missing red numbers at the top of the page.

Förstemann describes how the glass plates were arranged for display, with little regard for the original page ordering. The order Förstemann describes is as shown in Figure 9.⁷

Reverse	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	24	23	22	21	20	19	18																						
																				K45	K44																				
Obverse	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	25	26	27	28	0	0	0	K1	K2	44	45	3	4	5	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60

Figure 9. Page ordering as displayed in 1880 (after Förstemann 1880).

Falkenstein published *Beschreibung der königlichen öffentlichen Bibliothek zu Dresden [Description of the Royal Public Library in Dresden]* (Falkenstein 1839:281–285) describing the codex as a “treasure of first greatness.” However, he mentions three blank pages, instead of four (possibly because of the palimpsest drawings previously mentioned). He also talks about hieroglyphic writing in general and equates the codex with those of the Aztecs and other Mexican codices. Förstemann reasons that by 1839, it should have been possible to identify the Dresden Codex as a Maya book. The city of Palenque had been discovered by the middle of the 18th century and had been visited by Antonio del Rio (c. 1745–c. 1789) in 1787. His report was finally published in English in 1822 as *Description of the Ruins of an Ancient City Discovered near Palenque, in the Kingdom of Guatemala, in Spanish America* (del Rio 1822), and in German as *Huehuetlapallan, Amerika’s grosse Urstadt in dem Konigreiche Guatemala [Huehuetlapallan, America’s great original city in the kingdoms of Guatemala]* (del Rio 1823), and as *Beschreibung Einer Alten Stadt, die in Guatemala (Neuspanien), Unfern Palenque Entdeckt Worden Ist Huehuetlapallan, Amerika’s grosse Urstadt in dem Konigreiche Guatemala [Description of an ancient city that was discovered in Guatemala (New Spain), not far from Palenque, is Huehuetlapallan, America’s great ancient city in the kingdom of Guatemala]* (del Rio 1832). Figure 10a shows an image of glyphs from his report with glyphs similar to those in the Dresden Codex.

⁷ The ordering changed again after the codex was put back on display after World War II, after performing restoration from the water damage it received in the fire-bombing of Dresden on February 13–15, 1945. The author saw the codex in Dresden in 2018, and it is currently in a glass display case with pages on two levels. The obverse of the pages are face up, with the mirrors placed below to allow observation of the reverse. The current display order is shown below. The pages 8/38, 7/39, and 6/40 are displayed inverted.

Reverse	24	23	22	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	38	39	40	5	4	3	2	1																				
													-	-	-					K45	K44																			
Obverse	25	26	27	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	8	7	6	41	42	43	44	45	K1	K2																		
													-	-	-																									
	18	19	20	21	60	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	7																					

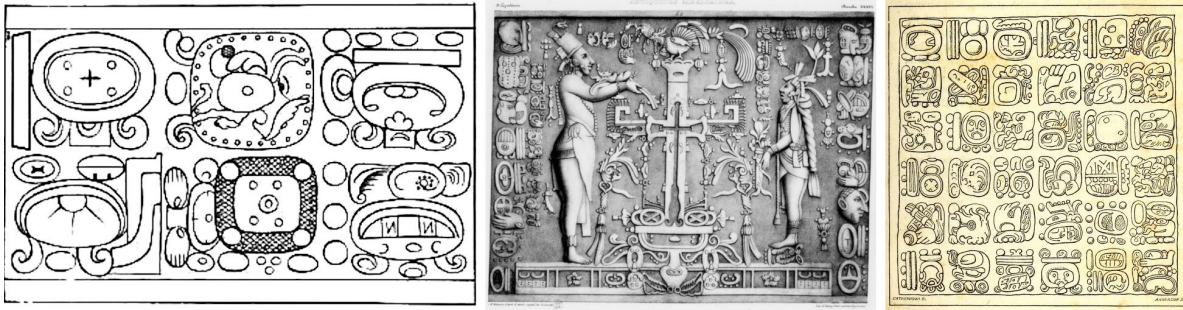


Figure 10. a) Image of glyphs from the del Rio Report (del Rio 1822).
 b) Dupaix's drawing of images from the Temple of the Cross from Palenque (Dupaix 1834: Plate XXXVI). c) Catherwood's drawing of Altar Q from Copan (Stephens 1841:volume I, 141).

Guillaume Joseph Dupaix (1746–1818) also visited Palenque three times between 1805 and 1807 and his report was finally published in 1834 as *Antiquités mexicaines, relation des trois expéditions du capitaine Dupaix* [Mexican Antiquities, relation of the three expeditions of Captain Dupaix] (Dupaix 1834). Although his drawings are of very low accuracy, they still have the same feel as the images in the Dresden Codex. An example of Dupaix's drawings is shown in Figure 10b.

The conclusive evidence, though, that the Dresden Codex was a Maya book came with the publications of John Lloyd Stephens (1805–1852) and the drawings of Frederick Catherwood (1799–1854). In 1841, Stephens published *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* (Stephens 1841), and in 1843, *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan* (Stephens 1843). The quality of Catherwood's drawings clearly shows the similarities to the glyphs and figures in the Dresden Codex, as seen in Figure 10c.

The next head librarian in Dresden was Gustav Friedrich Klemm (1802–1867, Head Librarian in Dresden 1852–1865). He published his *Allgemeine cultur-geschichte der Menschheit* [General Cultural History of Mankind] (Klemm 1852:volume 5, 142) in which he compares images in the Dresden Codex with the Mexican codices and asserts that they are similar to Dupaix's work. Klemm, however, had not consulted the works of Stephens.

In 1853, Abbé Charles-Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg (1814–1874), after returning from his second trip to Central America, published an article titled *Antiquités Mexicaines* [Mexican Antiquities] (de Bourbourg 1853:417) in which he identifies the Dresden Codex as being similar to the inscriptions from Palenque and other cities of Chiapas and Yucatan. He also notes the similarity with the Paris Codex.

In 1857–1859, de Bourbourg published his four-volume work, *Histoire des nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique centrale durant les siècles antérieurs à Christoph Colomb* [History of the Civilized Nations of Mexico and Central America during the Centuries before Christopher Columbus]. In the introduction to the first volume, he makes the same point that he had in the earlier work about the similarity of the Dresden Codex to Maya inscriptions (de

Bourbourg 1857:71,73). In Theodore Waitz's *Anthropologie der Naturvölker* [*Anthropology of Primitive People*] (Waitz 1864:172,298), he mentions that the Dresden Codex is different than the Mexican codices and more similar those of the Maya region.

In December 1863, de Bourbourg made a most important discovery: he found Diego de Landa's *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* [*Relation of Things in Yucatan*] in the archives in Madrid. The *relación* was a remarkable work of anthropology, including calendar glyphs, as well as a complete "alphabet" in Maya hieroglyphics. Unfortunately, what was discovered was an abridged version from about 30 years after de Landa's death—the original has never been found. De Bourbourg, realizing how important this work was, quickly published it in Spanish and French the following year in *Relation des Choses de Yucatan de Diego de Landa* [*Relation of Things in Yucatan by Diego de Landa*] (de Bourbourg and de Landa 1864). Since 1864, this work has been translated and printed many times, sometimes inaccurately (Stuart 1988). In 1887, Daniel Garrison Brinton (1837–1899) published a scathing review of de Bourbourg's translation. Among his comments:

He omits, without a word, fully one-sixth of the whole text. In his edition, p. 346, he concludes with the words, *aquí acaba la obra de Landa*, "here closes the work of Landa." No such words are in the original. On the contrary, the MS. he copied from continued with a number of chapters, on the reason why the Indians offered human sacrifices, others on the serpents, animals, trees, etc., of Yucatan. Of these Brasseur says not a syllable. In copying he occasionally, but rarely, omitted sentences, doubtless through haste." (Brinton 1887:2)

Furthermore, Förstemann warns that de Bourbourg's thoughts should be ignored because he refers to the "sources of the primitive history of Mexico and Central America etc., in the Egyptian inscriptions, and of the primitive history of Egypt in the American inscriptions" (Förstemann 1880:10). Regardless of the quality of the translation, however, the publication inspired hope that the Maya hieroglyphs might quickly be translated. Landa's provided the "alphabet" that gave hieroglyphs and their corresponding sounds, shown in Figure 11. Förstemann wrote an insightful comment:

One should think, if a language is grammatical and lexical, and the previously unknown alphabet of that language is finally found, then the old manuscripts of the language written in that alphabet must be readable and translatable. However, this is by no means the case with our Mayan manuscripts, but we are still here in the first attempts at explanation. The reasons are as follows: the alphabet of Landa is incomplete and incorrectly recorded; the order in which the characters in the manuscripts are to be read is uncertain; between the phonetic signs, as the numbers and the calendar already prove, ideographic signs are also mixed; the individual monuments may be written in different dialects; the manuscripts can be much older than the time from which we know grammar and lexicon of the language; at last, the manuscripts are difficult or impossible to read in some places due to the destruction of the writing. (Förstemann 1880:10 translated from German)

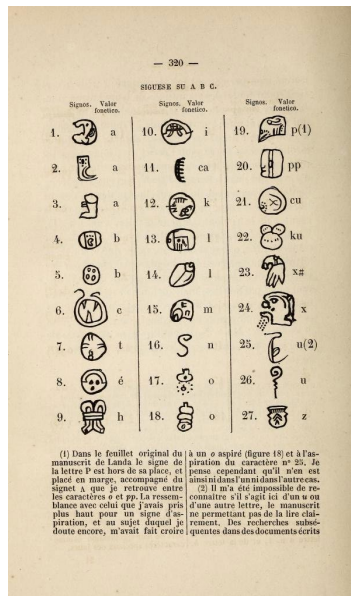


Figure 11. The “alphabet” page from Brasseur de Bourbourg’s translation of *de Landa* (de Bourbourg and de Landa 1864:320).

As we know now, the glyphs shown on this page do not stand for letters, but syllables. Brinton understood how this page functioned as early as 1879 (Stuart 2013), but it was well into the 20th century before its usefulness in translating Maya hieroglyphs could be properly applied. Brinton wrote in 1882:

Moreover, rightly understood, Landa does not intimate anything of the kind. He distinctly states that what he gives are the sounds of the Spanish letters as they would be transcribed in Maya characters; not at all that they analyzed the sounds of their words and expressed the phonetic elements in these characters. On the contrary, he takes care to affirm that they could not do this, and gives an example in point. (Brinton 1882:62)

William Bollaert (1807–1876) author of at least 80 articles and three books, was an interesting character of the 19th century. His name shows up often in Förstemann’s text. Bollaert worked as a chemist and assayer in the silver mines in Peru in the 1820s, searched for meteoric iron in Chile, joined the military in Portugal, and served as a spy in Spain. In the 1840s he surveyed parts of Texas for the new republic, and his journals covering the early history of Texas were later published, for which he is best known. He was a member of the Royal Geographical Society (Hollon 1989:XVIII–XXV).

Förstemann was appointed head librarian on October 1, 1865. Just a few days later, on October 8th, Bollaert wrote to him from London. In the letter he talked about the find of de Landa’s alphabet. Bollaert must have just submitted an essay titled *Maya Hieroglyphic Alphabet of Yucatan* in the Memoirs of the Anthropological Society of London that was published the following year (Bollaert 1866a), and included a copy with his letter. Bollaert wanted a photograph of a page from the Dresden Codex so that he could compare it to the

Kingsborough drawings and check their fidelity. Förstemann immediately complied and took a photograph of page 23, made three copies, and sent one to Bollaert. Over the next 10 years Förstemann must have given out the other two copies, as he says that he had none left when de Rosny asked for one in 1875. It is possible that photograph of page 23 is out there to be found in the papers of Mr. Bollaert or the other recipients.⁸ Bollaert compared the photograph to the drawings and wrote back to Förstemann on November 4th thanking him for the photograph and telling him that the Kingsborough drawings had “passed the test.”

In 1864, the Paris Codex, also called the Codex Peresianus or MS. No. 2, was published for the first time (Duruy 1864). However, only 10 copies were printed. In Trübner’s *American and Oriental Literary Record* No. 17, dated August 1, 1866, it says:

Yucatecan Ideography.—We have several times had the pleasure to notice in the Record the extensive labours and publications of that distinguished traveller, the Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg, and for whose forthcoming work on Mexico and Central America we are anxiously awaiting. We have now to notify to our readers that the Abbé has been able to procure from the French Government the Photographs of the 22 pages of the Maya MS., known as the “MS. No. 2 de la Bib. Impl.” for presentation to the British Museum. Thus the students of American Archæology will now have the opportunity of examining this MS., as well as the excellent fac-simile of the Maya “Dresden Codex,” by the Maya Hieroglyphic Alphabet discovered by the Abbé in Spain. We may mention that Mr. Bollaert has a paper on the Maya Alphabet (with drawings of same) in vol. ii. of *Memoirs of the Anthropological Society*; also that he sends two papers to the British Association this year, one, “Examination of Central American Hieroglyphs,”—those of Yucatan, including the Dresden Codex in the “Guatemalien” (No. 2 of the Bib. Impl.), the hieroglyphs of Palenqué, Copan, Nicaragua, Veraguas, and New Grenada, by the Maya Alphabet; the other, “On Ancient Peruvian Records, including the recently-discovered Peruvian figurative writing. (Trübner 1866:299)

Between 1861 and 1867, Napoleon III of France invaded Mexico and established Maximilian as Emperor of Mexico in the short-lived Second Mexican Empire. Maximilian accepted the crown on April 10, 1864 and reached Mexico City on June 12th. Brasseur de Bourbourg was added to a French expedition later that year, presumably to investigate the new French possessions. In September 1864, de Bourbourg met with Bollaert in London and gave him a copy of his de Landa translation, then headed off to Yucatan on his fourth trip to America. However, he had barely landed when his illustrator became sick, and the trip was aborted. On his way back to France, he stopped in Madrid, and there met Don Juan de Tro y Ortolano del la Reina (1814–1875), a professor of paleography and an alleged descendant of Cortez. Through Professor Tro, he discovered what became the first part of the Madrid Codex, which de Bourbourg named the Codex Troano. Förstemann writes:

⁸ Some of Bollaert’s papers are at Newberry Library in Chicago, others at the University of Texas at Austin, and others still at Oxford, but none of the indexes of the papers mention the photograph.

It consists of 35 leaves or 70 pages, which are slightly larger than those of the Dresden manuscript, but not as large as those of the Parisians. The material is the same as offered by the other two, in terms of the frequent three-division of the pages, it resembles our Codex A, the coloring is more vivid and the preservation better than in the other two manuscripts; in general, it is closer to the Parisian than to the Dresden. Mr. Brasseur de Bourbourg was given permission to take the new find to Paris for chromolithography; there, Mr. Bollaert, who had come over from London, saw him in October 1866. The reproduction took place under the supervision of Léonce Angrand, former General Consul in America. (Förstemann 1880:11)

Bollaert published a note on this in *Trübner's American and Oriental Literary Record* dated November 2, 1866. It reads:

Discovery of a Third Maya Codex.—On reference to No. 17 of the American and Oriental record, there is a mem. on “Yucatan Ideography,” and where I notice the discovery in Madrid of the Maya Alphabet, by the indefatigable Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg, by which we are enabled to read, at once, much of the Dresden and Paris Codices, now proved to be of Maya origin. I have now the pleasure to inform you that the Abbé met with, not long since, in private hands, in Madrid, another Maya Codex of 70 pages, which he calls Codex Troanus. The owner allowed him to bring it to Paris, when the French government ordered a fac-simile to be taken, under the superintendence of M. Léonce Angrand (ancien Consul-Général en Amérique) and the Abbé. These gentlemen most obligingly allowed me to examine this Codex, which is in a good state of preservation, and about the same size and form as the other two...In conclusion I may tell you that I have examined the Maya Codex No. 2, at the Bib. Imperl.; it is more like the C. Troanus than the Dresden. Thus with these three precious records, we may hope in a short time to unveil some of the enigmatic history of the ancient and interesting Mayas.—WM. Bollaert (Bollaert 1866b)

A translation into German of the above notice was printed in the newspaper *Das Ausland* on December 11, 1866 (*Das Ausland* 1866)⁹. De Bourbourg published the Codex Troano in 1869 as *Manuscrit Troano: études sur le système graphique et la langue des Mayas* [*Troano Manuscript: Studies on the Graphic System and the Mayan Language*] (de Bourbourg 1869). This was a two-volume set, and while the publication of the codex was exemplary, Förstemann gripes that it is longer and more expensive than necessary because de Bourbourg added a decipherment and translation of the codex, which everyone then condemned. Förstemann himself wrote a critical review in the newspaper *Centralblatt* on December 3, 1870 (Förstemann 1870). Förstemann paraphrases Hubert Howe Bancroft (1832–1918) as saying “that’s a failure!” (Bancroft 1875:780) and de Rosny, “for what Brasseur has figured out, there is nothing” (de Rosny 1876b:9).

Förstemann mentions that de Bourbourg writes in the introduction on page IV that a fourth codex had been found in Madrid and photographs of it had been sent to Paris, but he had not heard anything further. This must have been what was later named the Codex Cortesianus. It was not until later that this and Codex Troano were realized to be two parts of the same

⁹ Förstemann says that the *Das Ausland* article was printed on page 1198, but it was printed on page 1199.

codex, which is now called the Madrid Codex, or sometimes the Codex Tro-Cortesianus. It is curious that Förstemann says that he had heard nothing more about it since he cites de Rosny's work of 1876 (published in 1879) that discusses it and include a photograph from it (de Rosny 1876b: Plate XI), but maybe Förstemann did not realize de Bourbourg had been talking about the Cortesianus. De Rosny published the complete Cortesianus in 1883 (de Rosny 1883).

On May 12, 1870, Bollaert sent Förstemann a letter including an essay later published in the Memoirs of the Anthropological Society of London, titled *Examination of Central American Hieroglyphs: Of Yucatan-including the Dresden Codex, the Guatémalien of Paris, and the Troano of Madrid; the Hieroglyphs of Palenqué, Copan, Nicaragua, Veraguas, and New Granada; by the recently discovered Maya Alphabet* (Bollaert 1870). In this essay, Bollaert says "I have read from the bottom upwards, and from right to left. (Bollaert 1870:306)" and notes that he is following the scheme of de Bourbourg. We now know that while it is true that some of the numeric tables in the codices increase in value right-to-left, bottom-to-top, that is not how the glyphs are read. Förstemann gives an extensive quote from Bollaert's essay (which is a cringeworthy interpretation of both the iconography and the glyphs). This is an example of the interpretation of page 23:

The first group is apparently a mother holding a young girl before her, and a younger one is carried at her back. The mother's name or rank is designated by a symbol on the head. The reading of the hieroglyphs the group seems to be as follows: We come thy presence to implore. The second group,—a female with a deity or magician: The young female implores before the Deity, she weeps but has courage. The third group probably represents a king and young female: She has made a vow about the king to the magician...the king is happy. (Bollaert 1870:306–307)

Förstemann notes that he is dubious of the interpretation. Bollaert later probably regretted this article, as in a letter to de Rosny dated July 6, 1875, he says "I did not find Landa's alphabet of the use I hoped for." Förstemann then notes that he reads the glyphs left-to-right, top-to-bottom. It was not until after Förstemann's article was published that the true order of reading in pairs of columns was understood.

On June 15, 1875, De Rosny wrote to Förstemann to request a photograph of the Dresden Codex (as mentioned above). Förstemann had to decline as he had given them all away. However, Förstemann promised de Rosny that he would produce a complete photographic record of the entire codex, which de Rosny recorded in *Essai sur le déchiffrement de l'écriture hiératique Maya [Essay on Deciphering Mayan Hieratic Writing]* "M. Dr. Förstemann writes to me that it is a question of publishing a photographic facsimile of this precious manuscript. Such a publication would be very useful for the studies of Yucatan Archaeology" (de Rosny 1876b:14). It took another four years, but Förstemann did just that. Somehow, de Rosny got a photograph to publish in his article (Figure 7). It is probable that Förstemann produced it but de Rosny does not give the source and Förstemann does not mention producing another photograph.

At the fourth International Congress of the Americanists in Nancy, France on July 21, 1875, de Rosny spoke about the deciphering of the Mayan Manuscripts. Only a short excerpt of the talk was included in the Proceedings (de Rosny 1875a). In the same volume of the Proceedings, in an appendix, however, was published a longer article titled *Mémoire sur la numération dans la langue et dans l'Écriture sacrée des anciens Mayas* [*Memoir on numeration in the Language and in the Sacred Scripture of the Ancient Mayans*] (de Rosny 1875b). This article lays out that the Maya used a base 20 numbering system with a horizontal line indicating five and dots indicating ones, “so that, for example, 18 is indicated by three strokes and three points.” De Rosny believed that there was no meaning to the color of the numbers being red or black, but Förstemann had his doubts. It was not until after Förstemann’s publication that it was discovered that in most cases the black number indicated Distance Numbers (time between dates), whereas the red numbers were the coefficients of the Tzolk’in dates being landed on.

When de Rosny was authoring his articles on the codices in *Essai sur le déchiffrement de l'écriture hiératique de l'Amérique centrale*, he relied on the Troano and Paris codices, and less so on Dresden because he did not have a good reproduction. He was suspicious of the quality of the Kingsborough drawings of Dresden because Wuttke had expressed his doubts in his *Die Entstehung der Schrift, die verschiedenen Schriftsysteme und das Schrifttum der nicht alfabetarisch Schreibenden Völker* [*The Origin of the Writing, the Different Writing systems, and the Writing of the Non-Alphabetically Writing People*] (Wuttke 1877:230–231).¹⁰ De Rosny supplied a critique of de Bourbourg’s, Bollaert’s, and de Charencey. The latter had not been previously mentioned and is referring to Charles-Félix-Hyacinthe Gouhier, Comte de Charencey (1832–1916). Förstemann says that Charencey published two essays in 1875 but does not supply citations. By examining Charencey’s publications, these must have been *Essai de déchiffrement d'un fragment du manuscrit troano* [*Attempt to decipher a fragment of the Troano manuscript*] (de Charencey 1875a) and *Fragment de chrestomathie de la langue maya antique* [*Fragment of chrestomathy of the ancient Mayan language*] (de Charencey 1875b). De Rosny references various writings of de Charencey.

Förstemann (1880:16–17) makes some comments on the iconography across the codex, then gives a concordance of the iconography across the three codices, the Dresden (Dr), Troano (Tr), and Paris (P), giving the pages that they can be found on:

Two people facing each other: Dr. 8, 19, 21, 23, 45, 68; Tr. 5, 6, 30, 19*, 20*. 21*, 22*.

Women with children on their backs: Dr. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20; Tr. 19*.

Outstretched tongue: Dr. 11, 12, 25, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 61, 65, 66, 67, 68. 69; Tr. 5*; P. 13.

Pierced animals: Dr. 46, 47, 48; Tr. 18.

¹⁰ Förstemann, in an aside earlier in the document, writes that the painter Clara Biller (1831–1900) copied parts of the codex in 1855, which were then included in two plates in Heinrich Wuttke’s (1818–1876) *Abbildungen zur Geschichte der Schrift* [*Illustrations on the History of Writing*] (Wuttke 1873).

Birds: 3, 7, 17, 18, 25, 26, 27, 28, 35, 36, 69, 74; Tr. 15, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 29, 31, 33, 35, 4*, 13*, 20*, 22*, 26*, 27*, 28*; P. 5, 13, 16, 21.

Snake? Dr. 34, 35, 36, 42, 69; Tr. 5, 8–15? 22, 25, 26, 27, 28*? P. 15.

River? Dr. 61, 62; Tr. 28.

Pouring water. Rain: Dr. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 65, 66, 67, 68, 71, 72, 73; Tr. 24, 25, 26, 27, 20*.

Fire preparation: Dr. 5, 6; Tr. 6, 19, 12*, 14*, 15*.

Torch: Dr. 34, 37, 39, 40; Tr. 23, 24, 32, 33, 27*, 28*, 29*.

Altar with fire: Dr. 25, 26, 27, 28, 34; Tr. 18, 21, 32, 33, 2*, 3*, 5*, 6*, 7*, 8*, 25*; P. 6.

Sacrificed fruits: Dr. 10, 11, 12, 13; Tr. 5, 32, 33, 5*, 6*, 8*, 9*.

Staff by hand: Dr. 25, 26, 27, 28, 31; Tr. 24*.

Necklace with plate, on which several tassels hang: Dr. 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 37, 42, 43, 65, 66, 67, 74; Tr. 2? 20, 32*, 33*; P. 13, 17, 19, 20.

Square coat of arms (?) on which something hangs: Dr. 1, 2, 37, 38, 39, 40, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 66, 68; Tr. 10, 17, 5*, 7*, 8*, 9*, 10*; P. 6, 7, 10, 14, 18.

Slide-like frame: Dr. 27, 28, 33, 36, 43; Tr. 21*, 22*; P. 3.

Axe (machete of today's Indians of Yucatan): Dr. 29, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 65, 66, 67, 69; Tr. 17, 15*, 16*, 17*, 18*, 24*.

Skewers. Arrows. Swords: Dr. 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 60, 67, 69, 74; Tr. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 25, 20*, 21*, 22*, 23*, 26*, 30*.

Förstemann gives a few words of thanks to a General Director of the Royal Collection of Art and Science which allowed the manuscript to be printed, as well as funding some of the cost, and also thanked the printer for their hard work. The work is dated "Dresden. May 1880. E. Förstemann." This is followed by a note by the printer on the process used to produce the book.

Förstemann's document is a fascinating view of the state of Maya Studies as of 1880. The wealth of topics covered as well as the persons involved provides a context helpful in assessing how we have come to understand the words and works of the ancient Maya. The Förstemann introduction covers the history of what is known about the acquisition of the Dresden Codex and early depictions and descriptions of it. It describes how the pages were numbered and why the scheme was used. There is a discussion of how the pages were enclosed in glass, and the arrangement of the pages on display. There is information on how it was discovered that the codex was of Maya origin. There is information of the discovery of Diego de Landa's *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*, including his "Maya alphabet". The first photograph taken and the first published photograph of Dresden are discussed. The history

of the discovery of the Troano Codex is covered. The recording of the first attempts at reading the glyphs was made. He supplies a concordance of iconography across the codices. All this information was elegantly covered in 18 pages.

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Supplemental Materials

Supplemental to this article are two appendices: Appendix A is a full English translation of Förstemann's introduction, including hyperlinks to the source documents that Förstemann cites. Appendix B is a transcription of Götze's (1744:1–5) description of the Dresden Codex, in German. The source is in a Fraktur font that is almost as difficult to read as Maya hieroglyphs, so this transcription may be of use to future translators.

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THE
MAYA BOOK
IN THE
ROYAL PUBLIC LIBRARY
IN
DRESDEN
PUBLISHED
BY
PROF. DR. E. FÖRSTEMANN,
CHANCELLOR AND HEAD LIBRARIAN
WITH 74 CHROMO-LITHOGRAPHY PRINTED PANELS.
LEIPZIG,
PUBLISHED BY A. NAUMANN'S LIGHT PRESS.
1880

[Page 1]

INTRODUCTION.

The Mayan language still spoken on the Yucatan peninsula has had the fate that its ancient Maya documents, according to not insignificant literature, have largely disappeared due to the fanaticism of the European conquerors. It is all the more important that the few remaining remnants of that literature of science are preserved. Since among these remnants the Dresden Codex is one of the most outstanding and since its reproduction in Lord Kingsborough's *Mexican Antiquities* excludes a more general use because of the cost and inconvenience of this work, a re-image of the manuscript is a determined demand of science. This demand has been made to me several times and ever more strongly, especially since the chromo-lithography in its present-day perfection ensures the fidelity of the image to a far greater degree than was possible in the time of Lord Kingsborough. Only by comparing all manuscripts and inscriptions of the Mayan language will it be possible to interpret the contents of the Mayan language sufficiently, which interpretation is still in its early beginnings. It cannot be the task of the present work to promote this interpretation directly, since this includes a special purpose of life devoted to this subject, but the nearest purpose is only to make the precious treasure more accessible for general use.

We therefore have to talk above all about the history of the manuscript published here and the related studies.

The history of the manuscript unfortunately only begins with the year 1739. The one to whom we owe the discovery and thus perhaps the preservation of the Codex was Johann Christian Götze, son of an evangelical pastor, born in 1692 in Hohburg near Wurzen in the Electorate, Saxony. Transferred to the Catholic Church and formed in Vienna, then in Rome, he became the first chaplain of the King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, later also papal protonotar, in 1734 he was assigned to the Royal Library of Dresden and died in this position, highly respected for his scholarship and honorable character, on 5 June 1749; we take these notes from his obituary, which is in the *Neuen Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen*, [New Newspapers of Scholars Things] Leipzig 1749, No. 62".¹ In his ministry as librarian, he had

¹ (Obituary Johan Christian Götzens 1749) https://zs.thulb.uni-jena.de/rsc/viewer/jportal_derivate_00228691/dt_zs_1071_jg1749_582.tif.

been to Italy four different times and had acquired rich collections of books and manuscripts for the Dresden Library. One of those trips fell in 1739; we are well informed about their scientific yield through a document in Götze's hand, which is located in the archives of the Royal Public Library under A, Vol. II, No. 10² and bears the inscription: "Books delivered by me to the Royal Library January 1740". It says in item No. 300: "An invaluable Mexican book with hieroglyphic figures". This is the Codex, the replica of which we will show below.

[Page 2]

Götze also brought the presence of the manuscript first to public knowledge. In 1744 he published in Dresden: *die Merkwürdigkeiten der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Dresden, erste Sammlung* [The Curiosities of the Royal Library of Dresden, First Collection].³ This first volume of the meritorious and still highly usable work begins discussing the codex right on the first page, so that we realize how great the importance Götze attached to this find, in the following way:

1) "A Mexican book with unknown characters and hieroglyphic figures described on both sides, and painted with all kinds of colors in elongated octavo, neatly folded in folds or 39 leaves, spread out lengthwise over six cubits to carry out the..."

Götze continues to talk about this from the first to the fifth page but can only teach us a few things that are relevant to the matter, but rather deals with Mexican painting in general terms and about hieroglyphic writing in general. On page 4 it says: "Our Royal Library has this advantage over many others that it possesses such a rare treasure. It was found a few years ago by a private person in Vienna, and easily obtained for free as an otherwise unknown thing. Without a doubt, he came from the legacy of a Spaniard, who was either himself or his ancestor in America". On page 5, Götze says: "There are many sheets of the same Mexican scripture in the Vatican Library, as assured by Joseph Simonius Asseman, who saw our copy in Rome four years ago".

Götze received the manuscript as a gift on his way to Italy by way of Vienna and took it with him to Rome. Unfortunately, we know nothing about the person of the previous owner; a more detailed report about the trip does not seem to exist, at least the Royal State Archives in Dresden have nothing about it, and just as little is in the Royal Collections. Götze had not learned that the Vatican codex is quite different from the Dresden codex from the Dresden era, as is clear from the above communication.

Despite the high value that Götze had attached to our manuscript, it remained unnoticed and unmentioned well into our century. Even Johann Christoph Adelung, who died in 1806, who had it in his care as a head librarian, does not mention it in his *Mithridates*⁴, of which there is a part dealing with the American languages (III, 3), which was not published until 1816 after his death, edited by J. S. Vater; it was close to mentioning the Dresden Codex here, since on page 13ff the Mayan language is dealt with in detail and continues on to the other languages of the Aztec; that our manuscript belongs to the former, of course, one could not know at that time.

According to Götze, it is first C. A. Böttiger who mentions our Codex in his *Ideen zur Archäologie* [Ideas on Archaeology], Dresden 1811. 8. Pages 20–21⁵, without, however,

² (Götze 1740:12) <https://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/2514/12/>.

³ (Götze 1744:1–5) https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_ddcPAAAAQAAJ/page/n12.

⁴ (Adelung 1816) https://archive.org/details/mithridatesodera_33adel/page/n6.

⁵ (Böttiger 1811:21–22) https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_WHtbAAAAQAAJ/page/n53.

saying anything else about it than what we already know from Götze. But Böttiger gets a double credit for the cause. Firstly, as we will see, Alexander v. Humboldt first learned about it from him, and secondly, the note of Böttiger, as he himself explains in the *Dresdner Anzeiger* [Dresden Scoreboard] of 1832, No. 133, p. 3⁶, which led Lord Kingsborough to arrange to copy the manuscript in Dresden.

We come to Alexander v. Humboldt. On the front page, his *Vues des Cordillères et monumens des peuples indigènes de l'Amérique* [Views of the Mountains and Monuments of Indigenous Peoples of America]⁷ bears the year 1810, which in any case only denotes the beginning of printing, the preface is dated to 1813. This work, which gave a powerful boost to the study of Central American languages and literature, includes the Atlas Picturesque, and on page 45 there are five pages of our manuscript; They are Nos. 47, 48, 50, 51, 52 in the Lord Kingsborough drawings. In the textual band belonging to this atlas, Humboldt discusses on page 266-267 our manuscript, the existence of which he had not yet known about at the beginning of his work; it was only by Böttiger, whose above-mentioned writing he also quotes, that he was informed of this. Here we first find out,

[Page 3]

that the substance of the manuscript consisted of the plant Metl (Agave mexicana, like other manuscripts that Humboldt had brought with him from New Spain). It also correctly indicates the height of each sheet at 0.295 and the width of 0.085 meters. On the other hand, there are two errors when he says that there are forty leaves and the whole document formed by the codex has a length of almost six meters; on the contrary, there are only 39 leaves and the length, as the calculation approximates, is only 3.5 meters, since the leaves are described on both sides. Humboldt's other comments do not directly address our task.

In 1822, Fr. Ad. Ebert, then secretary, later head librarian, published his *Geschichte und Beschreibung der königlichen öffentlichen Bibliothek zu Dresden* [History and Description of the Royal Public Library in Dresden].⁸ Here we find, both in the history on p. 66 and in the description (p. 161) some information about this "treasure of the highest value". Information which, although nothing new, has certainly helped to spread knowledge of the subject to other circles. It may also be noted here that H. L. Fleischer in his *catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium bibliothecae regiae Dresdensis* [Eastern Royal Library Catalog Codex Dresden] (Lipsiae 1831. 4.) P. 75⁹ our codex is only briefly mentioned as "liber mexicanus ligneus, picturis instructus, qui Oedipum suum exspectat", to which the text of Böttiger's is quoted. The signature of the manuscript E 451 recorded here is the one still valid.

Between the notes mentioned above at Ebert and Fleischer falls the first, and so far only, complete reproduction of the manuscript.¹⁰ Probably in 1826, there appeared in Dresden the Italian, Agostino Aglio, a master in facsimile drawing. Aglio traveled to the European libraries, most probably even then on behalf of Lord Kingsborough, to copy the scattered manuscripts and illustrations that originated or seemed to come from Mexico.

The question that is most important for all interpretation now arises: in what form did

⁶ The *Dresdener Anzeiger* and *Leipziger Zeitung* newspapers for this period are not currently online.

⁷ (Humboldt 1810:266-267) https://archive.org/details/gri_33125012643553/page/n383.

⁸ (Ebert 1822:66,161) <https://archive.org/details/geschichteundbe02eberggoog/page/n89>.

⁹ (Fleischer 1831:75) <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044036304269&seq=93>.

¹⁰ (Kingsborough, Aglio, and Dupaix 1831) <https://archive.org/details/AntiquitiesMexiv3Kings/page/n163>
<http://www.famsi.org/mayawriting/codices/pdf/kings.pdf>.

the manuscript appear to Aglio? Was it only a 3.5 meter long strip or did it consist of several pieces?

In order to clarify the following answer to this question, it is necessary to note first that of the 39 sheets of the Codex only 35 are written on both sides, four on only one, so that not 78, but only 74 pages of the manuscript can be read. These 74 pages will always be referred to in the following with the page numbers they have at Lord Kingsborough, and it is advisable to stick with these page numbers to avoid all errors until the manuscript can be read with complete certainty; I will call the four blank pages 0, when they should be explicitly mentioned.

It is also necessary to indicate which of these numbers belong two each of pages in such a way that they are the front and back of the same sheet. This is now the following way: one and the same sheet are the pages 1 45, 2 44, 3 43, 4 42, 5 41, 6 40, 7 39, 8 38, 9 37, 10 36. 11 35, 12 34, 13 33, 14 32, 15 31, 16 30, 17 29. 18 0, 19 0, 20 0, 21 28, 22 27, 23 26. 24 25, 46 74, 47 73, 48 72, 49 71, 50 70. 51 69. 52 68, 53 67. 54 66, 55 65, 56 64. 57 63, 58 62, 59 61, 60 0.

Now, however, one is certainly entitled to the at least highly probable assumption that Aglio will not have arbitrarily changed the order of his submission nor Lord Kingsborough the order of Aglio's. Consequently, Aglio must have already had the manuscript in front of him in two pieces, be it that the thin skins by which the individual sheets are joined had detached themselves in one place, or only then the whole was separated in order to allow manipulation of the images to not have to operate with the whole inconvenient strip being handled. But a third possibility, to which we immediately return, is that we accept two pieces separated from the beginning; Götze would have

[Page 4]

then seen this, but does not mention this circumstance, that the original unity is disturbed by tearing.

Of the two pieces, one must have 24 leaves, the other 15 leaves. Each of the two pieces, however, Aglio copied in such a way that, always advancing from the left to the right in a European way, he drew first the whole one, then the other side of the whole piece. So it was Aglio's template:

First piece. Front (left to right):

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24.

Back (right to left):

45. 44. 43. 42. 41. 40. 39. 38. 37. 36. 35. 34. 33. 32. 31. 30. 29. 0. 0. 0. 28. 27. 26. 25.

Second piece. Front (left to right):

46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60.

Back (right to left):

74. 73. 72. 71. 70. 69. 68. 67. 66. 65. 64. 63. 62. 61. 0.

Here, the position of the four empty pages, three of which are adjoined, the fourth is isolated, attracts our attention. One should expect that the isolated blank page would have begun or finished the second piece and had deliberately been left empty, otherwise it would have been outward when the whole thing was folded and would have been easily subject

to damage; but the remaining three should be expected at the end of the first piece. The former, as you can see, is quite possible, but not the latter, if one does not assume that in Aglio's template the original order was completely destroyed by cutting and sticking it together again. That the four blank pages were ever inscribed, they show no trace of; the reddish-brown spots they have are also found on the inscribed pages. So perhaps those three contiguous pages indicate a section in the presentation; perhaps they should have been filled in later, much like page three has remained unfinished, since the scribe has only started the lower half.

I do not want to hold back here with my view that the two pieces that Aglio found were separated from the beginning, and even that they even belong to two very different manuscripts, although written in the same format; just because mistakes are human, I will also talk about a codex in the following, according to the previous usage.

My conviction is based above all on the fact that the scribe of handwriting A (i.e. pages 1-45) strives to break each page into three parts by two horizontal strokes, which is what the scribe of handwriting B (i.e. pages 46-74); rarely thus. More precisely, in A, pages 1, 23 and 29-43 always show such two lines in red color: pages 25-28 have no lines, but clearly have the three-part divide; Page 24 is the only one of this manuscript which has only writing, no illustrations and where the larger context of speech forbids the tripartite (here one side of the manuscript ends); Page 45 finally seems to be the real end of the whole, because three very weak lines appear here, i.e. a four-part division takes place; in general, everything here is more crowded and the figures are smaller than on the previous sheets, just as in some newer books the last page is compressed or printed with smaller letters to reach with the room. I also suspect in page 1 the real beginning of the manuscript. For this is indicated to me by the awkward nature of sheet 2/44, which lost a corner and whose page 44 has completely lost its writing. If, when the codex is folded, the sheet 1/45 is slightly countered by the

[Page 5]

rule inwards rather than outwards, sheet 2/44 was the outermost and page 44 the too top or too lower and thus most exposed to the damage, However, I do not want to hide the fact that Dr. Carl Schultz-Sellack drew my attention in Berlin to the fact that originally sheets 1/45 and 2/44 were initially attached inverse to the rest, so that 43, 1, 2 and on the other side 44, 45, 3 would have come together, then the gods would come together here, which also followed on pages 29 and 30. There is no denying that with this assumption the awkward nature of sheet 2/44 is even better explained, which must have been the outermost of the manuscript; 44 is the real one, that is to say title page, and on page 45 the scribe began his representation with that narrow scripture, not finished, and only later moved on to a more expansive writing; otherwise, some things are very well combined in this assumption. But this can only be put to rest after further progress in deciphering.

In two places, by the way, this first manuscript shows a crossing of the drawings from one side to the neighboring one, namely from 4 to 5 and from 30 to 31; the second manuscript does not do this. By the context of the content, if one can infer from the similarity of the drawings and the department, for the time being chapters are arranged as 1-2 (then follows the unfinished very isolated page 3), 4-17, 18-23 (here follows page 24 without illustrations), 25-28, 29-33, 34-35, 36-41.

On the other hand, the manuscript B rarely shows a three-division, but on pages 65-68

and 51-57 there is a division by a line. Another difference is that A has only one page (24) on 45 pages without illustrations, B on 29 pages whose 9 (51, 52, 59, 63, 64, 70, 71, 72, 73) are bare writing. Page 74, deviating from all the others, forms the final tableau of the whole; Similarly, page 60, the last of the front, shows a very special character. A closer connection of the content can be assumed here between pages 46-50, 53-58, 61-62, 65-68.

Both manuscripts are also very different in the use of the sign, or rather of the few different characters that resemble a representation of the human eye, and consist of two arcs, one open upwards, the other open downwards, colliding right and left. Of the 45 pages of Codex A, only five (1, 2, 24, 31, 43) know such characters, but 16 of the 29 pages of Codex B (48, 51, 52, 53, 55, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 70, 71, 72, 73).

I believe that the differences mentioned, to which others are likely to find more, are sufficient to justify my view of the original independence of both codices. If you look through the whole series of leaves unbiased, if you come from leaf 45 to 46, you will not be able to resist the feeling that something else is beginning here.

Thus, the drawings of Aglio has opened the possibility of daring a presumption of certainty about the original form of this monument. Five years after Aglio made the drawings, the first volumes of Lord Kingsborough's Mexican antiquities were published in 1831, costing 175 pounds in bookstores; the production had cost more than 30,000 pounds; it was not until 1848 that the eighth and ninth volumes followed. The enormous work has been undeniable in its great value through the many replicas of ancient monuments of Central American art and literature, which had never been published to a large extent. As far as the added partly Spanish partly English texts are concerned, it is of far less importance in this respect. We can walk away from the notes added by Lord Kingsborough himself, in which he seeks to support his favorite hypothesis that Jews were the first settlers in America. Those who want to learn more about the character and content of the whole work and who are afraid of the effort to lift the volumes themselves,

[Page 6]

we refer to the in-depth article in *Foreign Quarterly Review* No. 17 (January 1832, London. 8.), pages 90-124¹¹, where a clearly written literary history of Mexican antiquity studies can be found.

In the middle of the third volume of the Mexican Antiquities (page numbers are missing here), there is the title: Facsimile of an original Mexican preserved painting in the royal library

¹¹ (Grimes 1832:90-124) <https://archive.org/details/foreignquarterl32unkngoog/page/n100>.

at Dresden, 74 pages. These 74 pages are arranged here on 27 sheets in the following way:

| Codex A. | Codex B. |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. 2. 3. | 46. 47. 48. |
| 4. 5. 6. | 49. 50. 51. |
| 7. 8. 9 | 52. 53. 54. |
| 10 11. | 55. 56. 57. |
| 12. 13. 14. | 58. 59. 60. |
| 15. 16. 17. | 61. 62. 63. |
| 18. 19. | 64. 65. 66. |
| 20. | 67. 68. 69. |
| 21. 22. 23. | 70. 71. 72. |
| 24. 25. | 73. 74. |
| 26. 27. 28. | |
| 29. 30. 31. | |
| 32. 33. 34. | |
| 35. 36. 37. | |
| 38. 39. 40. | |
| 41. 42. 43. | |
| 44. 45. | |

So, overall, each sheet at Kingsborough contains three pages of our manuscript. I cannot say why the editor on pages 10 and 11, at 18 and 19, at 24 and 25, has only shown two pages, and left page 20 alone. But the fact that he does not add 46 to 44 and 45 also depends on the fact that this is a completely different handwriting.

On 27 January 1832, Lord Kingsborough wrote to the then head librarian in Dresden Fr. Ad. Ebert, from Mitchelstown Castle near Cork, Ireland, a letter expressing his gratitude for the permission given to copy and indicating that he had commissioned his publisher in London to send one of the ten large paper copies of the work to the Royal Public Library in Dresden. The original of the letter can be read in Ebert's handwritten correspondence at the Dresden Library.

On April 27, 1832, when the copy had not yet arrived in Dresden, an Anonymous writer wrote in No. 101 of the *Leipziger Zeitung* about this donation, whereby misfortune happened to him because he had not seen the work himself, and had confused Humboldt's drawing with that of Lord Kingsborough. Ebert spoke out strongly against this "premature and intrusive note" in the *Dresdener Anzeiger* of 5 May. In the latter sheet of 12 May, the above-mentioned Böttiger, until then close friends with Ebert, defended the Anonymous writer (who had perhaps been himself) in an extremely irritated tone. Ebert became more and more aggressive on 20 May, until Böttiger broke off the feud in an article of 25 May (No. 150 of the same sheet). Thus, the great bibliograph and the great archaeologist became enemies for a long time by our Codex.

From Kingsborough's work, individual samples of the manuscript have since been transferred to other books; such as, for example, Silvestre's *paléographie* provides universal access

(Paris 1839–41, fol.)¹², as does Rosny's *les écritures figuratives et hiéroglyphiques des peuples anciens et modernes* [The Figurative and Hieroglyphic Writings of Ancient and Modern Peoples] (Paris 1860, 4.)¹³, and with Madier de Montjau in the *Archives de la société Américaine de France*, 2nd series, volume I, page 5.¹⁴

Ebert died in 1834, and he was succeeded as head librarian by K. C. Falkenstein. Dissimilar to his predecessor, he was particularly eager to make the library accessible to the broadest audience. The visits to the library increased to a great extent, and our codex, already slightly vulnerable as a result of its material, had to be accessible to the eyes of the visitors while their hands were kept away. Therefore, the manuscript was placed between glass plates and hung freely in a frame, so that both sides were visible. So it still hangs in the library, withdrawn from handling, but exposed to another enemy, the light against which it is only recently protected by green curtains. But it does not seem to have suffered significantly from the light in these four decades; at least two former library officials, one of which was employed in 1828 and the other in 1834, say that the colors were not noticeably fresher then than they are now. This remark is important because the clean drawings of both Humboldt and Lord Kingsborough's gives a false impression because the manuscript is in fact only weakly colored; it may have looked similar to these pictures three hundred years ago.

Spatial and aesthetic reasons prevailed, when around 1836, the manuscript was enclosed in the indicated manner, that both unequally sized manuscripts, which were thought to be a whole and whose future decipherment one hardly seems to have thought of, were divided into two roughly equal parts.

Therefore, the first five sheets, i.e. pages 1-5 (with the backs 41-45), were cut off from Codex A and placed in front of Codex B so that page 46 joined on page 5. By examining the codex in more detail, I found that between 5 and 46 (and 41 and 74) there is no such skin as it is used to connect the other leaves. This change brought one part to 20 leaves, the other to 19.

At the same time, a second change has been made. The three blank pages between pages 28 and 29 seemed disturbing and they were brought to the end by cutting between the sheets 18/0 and 17/29, but turning the cut sheets over, so that now page 24 joins 29 and 17 joins 25. The skin that had been cut at this place was rejoined again.

I expressly point out here that I have neither a written report nor an oral report on these two manipulations, but that they have only come to me with necessity from the comparison of the present arrangement with the order which Aglio must have found.

So the arrangement I found, which may remain until my views are recognized, is the following:

I. The reduced Codex A (19 sheets).

Front:

6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 25. 26. 27. 28, 0. 0. 0.

Back:

18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40.

¹² (Silvestre 1839) https://archive.org/details/b29328226_0002/page/802.

¹³ (de Rosny 1860) <https://archive.org/details/lescrituresfigu00rosngoog/page/n13>.

¹⁴ (de Rosny 1876a:5-108) <https://archive.org/details/archivesdelasoc05frangoog/page/n10>. Although Förstemann says it is in tome I, it is in Tome II.

Or, if you record the back from right to left, so that the back of each sheet is under its front:

6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. | 25. 26. 27. 28. 0. 0. 0.
40. 39. 38. 37. 36. 35. 34. 33. 32. 31. 30. 29. | 24. 23. 22. 21. 20. 19. 18.

[Page 8]

II. The enlarged Codex B (20 sheets).

Front:

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60.

Back:

0. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45.

Or with the reverse back:

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. | 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60.
45. 44. 43. 42. 41. | 74. 73. 72. 71. 70. 69. 68. 67. 66. 65. 64. 63. 62. 61. 0.

Falkenstein published his description of the Royal Public Library in Dresden in 1839, which contains a review of our “treasure of first greatness” in page 281–285.¹⁵ He mistakenly speaks of three blank pages instead of four. The comments otherwise found here partly contain what is already known from the above communications, partly they refer to hieroglyphic writing in general and therefore do not belong here. From Falkenstein, the Dresden Codex is completely equated with the Aztec and other Central American monuments, as they are in the Collection of Mendoza, in the Escorial, Vatican, at the Borgia Museum in Rome, in Bologna, Oxford, Vienna, Berlin and Budapest.

And yet, by that time, the first conditions had already been fulfilled, through which it was subsequently possible to determine more precisely the geographical district from which the Dresden Codex emerged. By the middle of the last century, the magnificent ruins near the city of Palenque had already been discovered not far from the south-western corner of the Yucatan Peninsula, and by 1787 these ruins had already been examined by Antonio del Rio on behalf of the Spanish government. Their monuments have been partially drawn. However, the del Rio’s report was not printed until 1822 in English¹⁶, and soon after in a German translation under the title: *Huehuetlapallan, Amerika’s grosse Urstadt* (Meiningen 1823)¹⁷, for the second time in German with some additions edited by J. H. v. Minutoli (Berlin 1832)¹⁸. The same fate, long unknown, had the investigations of Dupaix, which had already taken place in the beginning of our century, until they finally appeared in Paris in 1834 in three books (*Antiquités Mexicaines, relation des trois expéditions du capitaine Dupaix, ordonnées en 1805, 1806 et 1807, pour la recherche des antiquités du pays, notamment de Mitl et de Palenque*) [Mexican Antiquities, Relation of the Three Expeditions of Captain Dupaix, ordered in 1805, 1806, and 1807, for

¹⁵ (Falkenstein 1839:281-285) <https://archive.org/details/beschreibungder01falkgoog/page/n296>.

¹⁶ (del Rio 1822) <https://archive.org/details/descriptionruin00cabrgoog/page/n5>.

¹⁷ (del Rio 1823) <https://archive.org/details/huehuetlapallana00roan/page/n3>.

¹⁸ (del Rio 1832).

the research of the country's antiquities, notably from Mitl and Palenque].¹⁹ Both works, that of Del Rio and that of Dupaix, do not go into more detail in their numerous copper plates on the inscriptions, which present the stone monuments of Palenque in large numbers, but in them, as it were by chance, there are some of these characters, and these could have been sufficient to realize that they correspond to the writing of the Dresden Codex. But this knowledge could have been gained far more surely. after the two travel works of J. L. Stephens had been published, in 1841 the *Incidents of Travels in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*²⁰, in 1843 the *Incidents of Travels in Yucatan*²¹; German translations came out of the first work in Leipzig in 1854, from the second as early as 1853. In both works there are numerous illustrations, drawn by the master hand of Mr. Catherwood, who accompanied Mr. Stephens for this purpose, and among these illustrations one notices quite a few inscriptions on which Stephens is right to be attentive. The first work contains such inscriptions from Palenque itself and from Copan to the southeast of it, east of Guatemala, the second from the northern part of Yucatan, from the places of Ticul, Kabah, Kewick and Chichenitza, all south and east of Merida. If these numerous documents had been compared with our handwriting, at the very first time, it would surely have resulted in the knowledge that we in Dresden are not dealing with an Aztec document, but with a Mayan document.

[Page 9]

Even in Falkenstein's time, his later successor, my immediate predecessor G. Klemm, wrote his general cultural history of mankind in its fifth volume (Leipzig 1847. 8.).²² On page 142 our manuscript is discussed, with the right feelings that it is "completely isolated" among the Aztec documents and that the pictorial representations vividly recall the reliefs of Palenque by Dupaix. Otherwise, nothing can be said from that meeting that would not arise from looking at the pictures, namely Klemm has not yet consulted the works of Stephens.

The one that is still treated as completely equal as Falkenstein, more precisely separately and thus to have instructed our handwriting to be in the correct position, is, in my view, the excellence of the Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg, whose tireless zeal American studies, he may have deviated greatly from the right path in his later interpretations. Mr. Brasseur de Bourbourg, having returned from his second American trip, published in the *Revue Archéologique* (IX année, 2me partie, Paris 1853, 8.)²³ on the occasion of a paper on the subject submitted by M. A. Aubin of the French Academy a copy of the Mexican Antiquities with an essay entitled "Des antiquités mexicaines", and in this one it reads on page 417: "About one hundred of all these documents, the Codex of Dresden and another of the National Library of Paris, although offering some relations with rituals, are beyond interpretation. They belong, as well as the inscriptions of the ruins of Palenqué. those of the other cities of Chiapas and Yucatan, as well as the monoliths of Central America, to a more elaborate writing, such as inlaid and calculiform (two very significant means of expression), of which traces are believed

¹⁹ (Dupaix 1834) Text: <https://archive.org/details/antiquitesmexicainesrelationdestrois...dupaixguillaumebpt6k5823768d/page/n5> Atlas: <https://archive.org/details/antiquitesmexicainesrelationdestrois...dupaixguillaumebpt6k5725493t/page/n217>.

²⁰ (Stephens 1841) Volume 1: <https://archive.org/details/incidentsoftrove11841step/page/n9> Volume 2: <https://archive.org/details/incidentstravel02cathgoog/page/n11>.

²¹ (Stephens 1843) Volume 1: <https://archive.org/details/travelinyucatan01step/page/n7> Volume 2: https://archive.org/details/gri_incidentsoft02step/page/n5.

²² (Klemm 1852:142) <https://archive.org/details/allgemeinecultu01klemgoog/page/n167>.

²³ (de Bourbourg 1853:417) <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.104665/page/n427>.

to be found in all parts, very formerly civilized, from the two Americas.”

If we look away from the last mentioned probably still rather uncertain traces, here the Dresden manuscript is first put together with its next relative, the Paris, but the study of these documents is separated from that of the Aztec etc. and to a special branches of this science.

Following the chronological arrangement, I insert here the remark that in 1855 some parts of our manuscript were copied by the painter Clara Biller; two pieces of these copies were later transferred to Wuttke’s history of writing, where they are located in the first part (Leipzig 1872, 8.) on plates 22 and 23.²⁴

In the years 1857-1859, after returning from his third American trip, Brasseur de Bourbourg published his four-volume *Histoire des nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique centrale durant les siècles antérieurs à Christoph Colomb* [History of the Civilized Nations of Mexico and Central America during the Centuries before Christopher Columbus]²⁵, a work that offers the richest teachings that would be hard to criticize. The second volume deals with the areas of the Mayan region that are particularly important to us here. In the introduction to the first volume pages 71 and 73 the same views are expressed about the position of our Dresden manuscript, which we have already mentioned from the *Revue archéologique*, otherwise the work has little reason to elaborate on our subject matter.

Theodor Waitz in the fourth volume of his highly deserved anthropology of natural peoples²⁶, published in 1864, mentions on page 172 only briefly that the Dresden Codex (which, incidentally, he had examined more closely in our library) is different from the actually Mexican Manuscripts distinguish between and establishes on page 298 that it is in closer kinship of our codex than with the other antiquities of the Mayan region.

I owe it to speak of various new tools for closer knowledge of the Mayan language, which appeared around this time. But it is of immediate importance to our subject that in December 1863 in Madrid, in the archives of the Royal Academy, Mr. Brasseur de Bourbourg published a manuscript of Diego de Landa, whose *Relacion*

[Page 10]

de las cosas de Yucatan [Relation of thing in Yucatan]. Beginning in 1553, Diego de Landa was guardian of the monastery of Izamal, east of Merida in Yucatan, and was bishop of Merida from 1573 to 1579. At first glance, Brasseur de Bourbourg had realized that in this manuscript that Diego de Landa (who, incidentally, tells how he worked diligently in the destruction of American manuscripts) cites and interprets a lot of those characters, which until then had been completely enigmatic in the Dresden and Paris Codex; it was suddenly found not only a large number of ideographic signs for the months and days of the Mayan calendar, but also a complete alphabet. Brasseur de Bourbourg, in knowledge of the significance of the find, succeeded in publishing the manuscript in 1864 in the Spanish original and French translation under the title: *Relation des choses de Yucatan de Diego de Landa*.²⁷ Unfortunately, as it must be noted here, the manuscript of Landa is not the original manuscript of the author,

²⁴ (Wuttke 1873) <https://archive.org/details/abbildungenzurg00wuttgoog/page/n76>.

²⁵ (de Bourbourg 1857) Volume 1: <https://archive.org/details/histoiredesnatio01bras/page/n4>

Volume 2: <https://archive.org/details/histoiredesnatio02bras/page/n4>

Volume 3: <https://archive.org/details/histoiredesnatio03bras/page/n4>

Volume 4: <https://archive.org/details/histoiredesnatio04bras/page/n4>.

²⁶ (Waitz 1864:172,298) <https://archive.org/details/anthropologieder04waituoft/page/172>.

²⁷ (de Bourbourg and de Landa 1864) <https://archive.org/details/relationdeschoseland/page/n8>.

but reproduced about thirty years after his death, and quite incorrectly rendered. Also, the signs are rather imperfectly reproduced, as Brasseur in page V of the introduction notes: "in the American Codex of Dresden they are written in a more cursive way and we recognize the quick work of a hand accustomed to this kind of writing". We want to ignore with silence the treatise that Brasseur de Bourbourg in sending out of his edition of Landa: "sources of the primitive history of Mexico and Central America etc., in the Egyptian inscriptions, and of the primitive history of Egypt in the American inscriptions". From Landa's writing, as passages that are particularly close to our subject, I highlight the following (after the French translation). Page 45: Their books were written on a large sheet, lined in folds, which were then contained between two planks that were carefully adorned [missing in Dresden]; they wrote on either side in columns, following the arrangement of the folds: as for the paper, they made it from the roots of a tree and gave it a white varnish, on which one wrote very well. [The Dresden manuscript] Page 133 deals with the counting method used in Yucatan, page 205-211 informs the signs and names for the days, from page 241 the whole calendar is shown on the side of the Roman with all the corresponding Mayan signs, page 317-323 we find comments about the lettering and the alphabet, the use of which, by the way, was already displaced by the Roman alphabet in Landa's time, according to page 323. Page 347 ends the scripture of Landa; the editor adds a few attachments, including a grammar and a lexicon of the Mayan language.

One should think, if a language is grammatical and lexical, and the previously unknown alphabet of that language is finally found, then the old manuscripts of the language written in that alphabet must be readable and translatable. However, this is by no means the case with our Mayan manuscripts, but we are still here in the first attempts at explanation. The reasons are as follows: the alphabet of Landa is incomplete and incorrectly recorded; the order in which the characters in the manuscripts are to be read is uncertain; between the phonetic signs, as the numbers and the calendar already prove, ideographic signs are also mixed; the individual monuments may be written in different dialects; the manuscripts can be much older than the time from which we know grammar and lexicon of the language; at last, the manuscripts are difficult or impossible to read in some places due to the destruction of the writing.

Nevertheless, the discovery of Landa's writing was an epoch-making event for these studies, and one only needs to look up Trübner's American and Oriental record from 1865 in order to see from various places the great interest to be seen, which these studies began to arouse.

This interest was also the basis of a letter which Mr. A. Nuñez, The Secretary of the

[Page 11]

Mexican embassy in Vienna, on December 4, 1864 addressed to the director of the Dresden Library on behalf of the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs, a letter which received more detailed information about our manuscript, but nothing of importance.

So on October 1, 1865, I had taken up my office as head librarian and thus also took care of our Maya codex, as already on October 8th Mr. William Bollaert from London wrote to me, who has been versatile with America and its antiquities since 1828 had been busy; he informed me of the find of the Mayan alphabet, sent me an essay on it, which he had just written about it in the second volume of the memoirs of the anthropological society of

London²⁸, and asked me to give me any page of our manuscript for him to check the facsimile's fidelity to Lord Kingsborough. I immediately complied with Mr. Bollaert's wishes by selecting page 23 of the manuscript for photography and already on 4 November, Mr. B. was able to thank me for the sending: the drawing at Lord Kingsborough had passed the test completely. By the way, Mr. Bollaert's essay is essentially a reproduction of what Landa has handed down and of some notes that Mr. Brasseur de Bourbourg had added to his edition.

In the meantime, however, a discovery of the highest importance had already been made. On the occasion of the French expedition to Mexico, the French government had decided to add to this expedition a commission on scientific studies and Mr. Brasseur de Bourbourg was also selected for this commission. In 1864 (unfortunately only in ten copies) the manuscript in the Paris Library, which had already been mentioned above, was photographed in order to promote his Mayan research²⁹; this codex Peresianus, named after a former unknown owner, contains 22 pages, two of which are almost completely destroyed, the rest are poorly preserved. In September 1864, Mr. Brasseur de Bourbourg met Mr. Bollaert in London with Mr. Bollaert, to whom he gave his edition of Landa, and then embarked on his fourth trip to America. But barely arrived in Yucatan, he had to give up his studies because of the illness of his illustrator. On the way back he arrived in Madrid and had a success here, which he had failed in Yucatan. He found, through the professor of paleography Don Juan de Tro y Ortolano, an alleged descendant of Cortez, a third manuscript in accordance with the Dresden and Paris Codex, which he named Codex Troano after its owner. It consists of 35 leaves or 70 pages, which are slightly larger than those of the Dresden manuscript, but not as large as those of the Parisians. The material is the same as offered by the other two, in terms of the frequent three-division of the pages, it resembles our Codex A, the coloring is more vivid and the preservation better than in the other two manuscripts; in general, it is closer to the Parisian than to the Dresden. Mr. Brasseur de Bourbourg was given permission to take the new find to Paris for chromolithography; there, Mr. Bollaert, who had come over from London, saw him in October 1866. The reproduction took place under the supervision of Léonce Angrand, former General Consul in America.

The anonymous report on this codex, which is printed in "*Das Ausland*" 1866 page 1198³⁰, is nothing more than a translation of Mr. Bollaert's note in *Trübner's American and Oriental literary record* No. 20.³¹

Already at the exhibition of 1867 some samples of this manuscript Troano were seen in the Palais des Champ de Mars. Two years later, Paris was published in two volumes in Fol. the entire work of Mr. Brasseur de Bourbourg under the title: *Manuscrit Troano, Études sur le système graphique et la langue des Mayas* [Manuscript Troano, Studies on the graphic system and the Mayan language].³² The publication is to the highest level of the excellence with both the French Government and the publisher

²⁸ (Bollaert 1866a:46–54) <https://archive.org/details/memoirsreadbefo00londgoog/page/n60>.

²⁹ (Duruy 1864).

³⁰ (Das Ausland 1866:1199) Forstemann says this is on page 1198, but it is on page 1199.

<https://opacplus.bsb-muenchen.de/Vta2/bsb10530708/bsb:6201557?page=581&lang=en>.

³¹ (Bollaert 1866b:346) <https://books.google.com/books?id=BZ1TAAAcAAJ&pg=RA1-PA346>.

³² (de Bourbourg 1869) Volume 1: <https://archive.org/details/manuscrittroano01bras/page/n5>
Volume 2: <https://books.google.com/books?id=Miffu0RFzk4C&printsec=frontcover>.

earning credit. Unfortunately, the work is much longer and more expensive because (apart from the re-adding of a grammar and a lexicon) the editor has let himself be drawn to the communication of a deciphering and partial translation of the codex. That you still have all the reason to be afraid of this is already apparent from the author's vacillation over the content; he had originally suspected a kind of agricultural calendar in the manuscript, but in the edition itself it appears as an ancient record of the flood of sin and other Earth revolutions. All the assessors are united in condemning this interpretation; for Germany I lead the voice of the literary in *CentralBlatt* of 1870 (page 1337).³³ For England, Hubert H. Bancroft's exclamation: "that's a failure!"³⁴ For France, the statement of Leon de Rosny: "for what Brasseur has figured out, there is nothing".³⁵

It is worth mentioning that Mr. Br. de B., in the introduction to his book on page IV addressed to the Minister of Education Duruy, says something mysterious, a fourth manuscript of this kind had already been found in Madrid and photographs of it had been sent to Paris. I have not heard anything further about this. Once again, it was Mr. Bollaert in London who followed this new enrichment of our knowledge with particular interest. On 12 May 1870 I received from him his essay, which was again printed in the *Memoirs of the anthropological society of London: Examination of Central American Hieroglyphs: of Yucatan – including the Dresden Codex, the Guatémalien of Paris, and the Troano of Madrid; the Hieroglyphs of Palenqué, Copan, Nicaragua, Veraguas, and New Granada, by the recently discovered Maya Alphabet*.³⁶ Here he also gives his opinion on the content of our codex, noting that he does not allow himself to be drawn to the thoughts of Mr. Brasseur de Bourbourg, against whom he is rather considerate but clear. He starts from page 23, whose photograph I sent him, and then briefly gives his opinion on the rest. It will be interesting to read the whole passage here:

The Dresden Codex contains records of the mythic, historic, and ritualistic character: and, like the other two, made up of profiles and writings, or that by the side of the profiles, which express symbolically the facts, are found the explanations in phonetic characters.

The photograph of page 23, I have read from the bottom upwards, and from right to left (which Brasseur de Bourbourg thought). The first group is apparently a mother holding a young girl before her, and a younger one is carried at her back. The mother's name or rank is designated by a symbol on the head. The reading of the hieroglyphs about the group seems to be as follows: *We come to thy presence to implore*. The second group, – a female with a deity or magician: *The young female implores before the Deity, she weeps but has courage*. The third group probably represents a king and young female: *She has made a vow about the king to the magician . . . the king is happy*.

The second compartment contains a sitting female figure who makes offering of a tortoise, Here are symbols of chief, magician, queen to unite: may mean, – *that after her marriage to the king she presents an offering of a tortoise*.

There are now four lines of hieroglyphs, of which the following may be the meaning: *The sacred bird chel is sacrificed, there is weeping; the bride weeps for the bird, she makes a vow or prays for the king, she offers a tortoise, a great feast is given*.

³³ (Förstemann 1870:1337–1339) <https://books.google.com/books?id=Q6RFAAAACAAJ&pg=PA1337%23>.

³⁴ (Bancroft 1875:780) <https://archive.org/details/nativefacespaci00nemogoog/page/n801>.

³⁵ (de Rosny 1876b:9) https://archive.org/details/gri_33125015553734/page/n21.

³⁶ (Bollaert 1870:288–314) <https://archive.org/details/memoirsreadbefor03anth/page/288>.

The third compartment. Here is a portion of a female figure, holding a symbol like part of *ik*, courage; *Thou, O king, hast given us the fish feast; we have cried for joy.*

I can only here offer a very brief summary of the principal subjects in the Dresden Codex. 1st section, pages 74 to 70. Mythic personages, man and woman, who have

[Page 13]

come to Yucatan; they have procured water for the aborigines. The symbols generally seem to have reference to periods of time; the hieroglyphs to the historical portions.

2nd section, pages 69 to 60. The mythic personages are deified; something like union of the sexes; warriors appear; canoes seen; fishing; priests; diviners, or magicians; sacrifices; a chief taken prisoner and brought before a king.

3rd section, pages 59 to 51. Symbols and hieroglyphs, probably detailing the circumstances of section 2. At page 53. a woman is seen hanging, and as if dead.

4th section, pages 50 to 46. Well drawn and finely colored. 50 is a man with a book trembling before a priest, or king; representation of combats, in which warriors, priests, magicians, deities, and animals are depicted.

5th section, pages 45 to 29. Domestic scenes, people weeping; the sun; warriors with tomahawks; men in canoes; warriors killing a chief or king; animal with lighted torch; *un rapto*. Drunken man on the head of tapir; woman with water; young woman in canoe with an old man; an apartment, with emblems before a king; another apartment, man playing a pipe, another beating a drum; a ladder; men with tomahawks; men in canoes; authority, with staff of office; magician, holding an animal by the tail which is vomiting water; man paddling canoe.

6th section, pages 28 to 25. Figures well drawn and colored, bold and expressive; deities, with heads of animals; authorities, with staff of office; kings, magicians, priests or sacrificers. This section comprises religious doings.

7th section, pages 23 to 16. Page 23 already alluded to. Priests, women, and children; women and children imploring deities; women weeping, and apparently dead children; old man weeping; many women.

8th section, pages 15 to 1. Deities, men and women; men and women making offerings of fruit and flowers to deities connected with the dead; old and young men, some weeping; men in the act of carving symbols on stones, and by twirling an instrument in the hands. 3. This is a curious compartment. The principal figure is a nude dead man. and the symbol of *ahau*, or king. is observed. From the center of the body rises a figure. with a hawk's head and has four wings, having in its beak what may be meant for one end of the entrails. Four groups of figures surround the corpse. This may be emblematical of the soul or life going to another world. 2. Magician and another person performing an incantation over fire; male figures; a man with another on his back.

The pages are mostly in three horizontal compartments [darüber oben das Genauere], and these divided in three perpendicular ones. All the pages have symbols and hieroglyphs. the reading of which is now occupying my attention. This Codex may have come from Mayapan [Mayapan was the capital of Mayaland].

At the conclusion of his essay, Bollaert says: At no distant date, I hope to lay before the Anthropological Society a detailed examination, by the Maya alphabet, of the Dresden, Paris, and Madrid Yucatan Codices.

Until now, one can see, the interpretation of the illustrations is still on rather weak feet, but also, as the example of page 23 shows, the reading of the scriptures; yes, Mr. Bollaert himself says in a letter to Mr. Leon de Rosny dated 6 July 1875: I did not find Landa's alphabet of the use I hoped for.

By the way, I was not trying to read this font from the bottom up, but from top to bottom, for which I was determined by the page 3 started above and unfinished at the bottom. Mr. Bollaert follows the individual pages from the right to the left (in the Parisian handwriting he describes each sheet first on its front, then on its back), I would assume the order from the left to the right, already because of the character page 45, which appears to be the end of Codex A. The lines also seem to me to be read in our European way; this is also supported by the fact that the faces

[Page 14]

are almost always turned to the left, except where groups of more than one person occur; where lines are unfinished, I find only the left, not the right side described; for example, on pages 27 and 28 for the (stone-like calculiformes) characters, page 64 for the numerals. Often, the order in which to read will also depend on the compulsion imposed by the room on the scribe; for example, the numersigns are sometimes moved out of their usual position because of the lack of space, so that the line for the 5 is vertical instead of horizontal, and the dots for the units are also not next to each other, but above each other. Here it is obvious to read the remaining characters vertically instead of horizontally.

Already during the failed attempts at interpretation by Brasseur de Bourbourg and during the very uncertain interpretation of Bollaert, another excellent scholar had made it to take a much slower, but therefore safe, path for an interpretation. It was Professor Léon de Rosny who had already inherited the inclination for American archaeology from his father and who is to be sought as the actual founder of the société Américaine de France. The same wrote to me from Paris on June 15, 1875, and wished me, in order to be able to impress the first Americanist Congress in Nancy, a photograph of our Codex, or at least a part of it. I very much regretted not being able to fulfill this wish; of the three copies of the photograph of page 23, which I had made in 1865, none was in my hands anymore; but I promised Mr. de Rosny that in the future I would be able to make a picture of the whole Codex appear. As a result, he says in his *Essai sur le déchiffrement* [Essay on the Deciphering of the Hieratic Writing of Central America], on which he mentions on page 14: "Dr. Förstemann writes to me that it is a question of publishing a photographic facsimile of this precious manuscript.³⁷ Such a publication would be very useful for Yucatan archaeology studies".

At the fourth session of the Congress on Nancy, 21 July 1875, Mr. Léon de Rosny spoke about the deciphering of the Mayan manuscripts. The lecture is not self-reported in the proceedings of the Congress Volume II, pages 80-85, but only in a short excerpt, which we can address here all the more so since we immediately have to discuss the outstanding work of the speaker.³⁸ On the other hand, among the appendixes of the same volume, page 439-458 of Mr. de Rosny *mémoire sur la numération dans la langue et dans l'écriture sainte des anciens Mayas* [Mémor on Numeracy in the Language and in the Holy Writing of the Ancient Mayans].³⁹ It is raised here beyond any doubt that the actual basic number of the counting

³⁷ (de Rosny 1876b:14) https://archive.org/details/gri_33125015553734/page/n27.

³⁸ (de Rosny 1875a:80–85) <https://archive.org/details/proceedings1218inte/page/80>.

³⁹ (de Rosny 1875b:430–458) <https://archive.org/details/proceedings1218inte/page/439>.

system was the 20, just as the month in Diego de Landa resolved into 20 different named days. The 20, however, was divided into four smaller parts of five each, corresponding to the fingers of the hand or the toes of the foot. Each 5 is denoted by an usual horizontal line, two lines mean 10. three 15. four 20; the excess units are added below or above the lines. so that, for example, 18 is indicated by three strokes and three points. These number signs, some of which are very numerous on all pages of our Dresden manuscript with the exception of the final table from 74, do not go beyond the number 20; if higher numbers are expressed in the Mayan manuscripts, they are by signs of a different kind, which we mostly do not yet know. In that I find in our manuscript very often (e.g. pages 7, 16, 24, 25, 28 etc.) the Mexican sign for 200 depicted in the proceedings page 445, which suspects a comb or the one-sided flag of a goose feather. Mr. de Rosny, by the way, expresses his particular view that the red or black color of these number signs makes no difference and that will have to be supported. In the Dresden manuscript, I add, red and black numbers occur next to each other on almost all sides; only the four pages 25-28, which show no coloring at all, have only black numbers; I have already summarized these four pages as a special “capitel” of the codex. In our

[Page 15]

Handwriting, I add, is also surrounded by black numersigns from a red line, for example on pages 2: 31, 58; also, close to each other, on pages 62: 16 and 1, on 63: 15, 17, 19, on 70: 6, 8, and 6, 6, on 71 to 73: 11, 13. 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 1, 3, 5, 7; a series of groups which are just as to think, such as the order given by Mr. de Rosny on sheet 22 of the Codex Troano (11, 2, 6, 10. 1, 5, 9, 13. 4, 8, 12, 3. 7 11). By the way, our codex shows similar progressions several times. e.g. page 1: 10. 12. 14. 16. 18, page 59: 2, 4. 6, 8. 10, 12, 14, 16, 18. Strange is also the occurrence of the extraordinarily many 13s on page 59.

Sometimes the numersigns show a closer connection to several adjacent pages. For example, on pages 30–33, a black 13 appears next to a red 11 nine times in a row. Through pages 53–38, both in the upper and the lower half of the sheets, each a row that always has the sign 8 in red color and under it always the black sign for 17. This tremendously frequent return of numbers without words in between, and often the same numbers behind each other, is excellent, which must be considered in relation to any attempt at interpretation about the content of our manuscript.

The first delivery of the *Essai sur le déchiffrement de l'écriture hiératique de l'Amérique centrale* [Essay on Deciphering Central American Hieratic Writing] by Léon de Rosny appeared in 1876⁴⁰, the second in 1878⁴¹: both together comprise nine sheets of text and eleven plates. According to a general introduction, the author justifies the term “hieratic”, which is, of course, borrowed from the corresponding Egyptian script, since this typeface relates to the signs on the monuments of Central America, such as the hieratic sign of the Egyptian to the hieroglyphics. As a result, Mr. de Rosny confines his consideration to the three Mayan manuscripts mentioned above, and he deals most with the Codex Troano, less to the codex Peresianus, and least so to the Dresden. For although the latter is “unquestionably the most beautiful of the three known manuscripts”, he does not have a reproduction produced with the latest aids in front of him, as with the other two, and moreover, through a statement at Wuttke (*Entstehung der Schrift* [Origin of the Writing] page 230–231)⁴² has become a little

⁴⁰ (de Rosny 1876a) <https://archive.org/details/archivesdelasoc05frangoog/page/n8>.

⁴¹ (de Rosny 1876b) https://archive.org/details/gri_33125015553734/page/n7.

⁴² (Wuttke 1877:230-231) <https://archive.org/details/dieentstehungde00wuttgoog/page/n260>.

too suspicious of the accuracy of the illustrations at Lord Kingsborough, which, incidentally, is a nod to his critical sense. The author, after briefly discussing the three manuscripts, then critically elaborates on the attempts at interpretation by Brasseur de Bourbourg, Bollaert and Mr. Hyacinthe de Charancey, who, as I have not mentioned above, who also dealt with the subject in two essays in 1875⁴³: the result is that we are still completely at the beginnings of our knowledge. Furthermore, page 14 states that the 71 characters handed down by Diego de Landa (20 for the days, 18 for the months 33 for the alphabet) are not sufficient to interpret the approximately 700 characters found in the manuscripts. L. de Rosny now passes to the 20 signs for the days that are found in our manuscripts very often; it detects with greater or lesser security on page 17 a large number of variants of these characters, which thereby increase from 20 to 77; to the extent, these new discoveries will be seen as a sure gain for science. Then the author passes to the signs for the months, which are rarely encountered in our manuscripts (they are, by the way, incidentally, quite expendable from the expression of a date; for in order to denote, for example, the day *lamat* of the seventeenth month *kayab* needed to be called *lamat* 17). So much is then made sure that page 22 contains phonetic elements in the very complicated monthly signs, but their more precise knowledge still encounters considerable difficulties. Furthermore, the study turns to the small cycles or *Katun* (from 52, i.e. 13 by 4 years) and the large cycles or *Ahau-*

[Page 16]

Katun (from 312, i.e. 13 by 24 years). For as the week of the Mayans has 13 days, and with them the 13 is the holy number, so the people also formed their great and small weeks of the year. On page 25 it is shown with complete certainty, as I also noted above independently of Mr. de Rosny, that the Mayan script is usually to be read from left to right, both in the individual lines and in relation to the sequence of pages, from top to bottom, in other words, in a European way. The author then refers to the images, which refer to certain terms in both the Mexican and Mayan manuscripts; here he says on page 28: These illustrations are very varied, especially in the Dresden Codex, where they are traced with an indisputable knowledge of the art of drawing, and with a talent of illumination décor that had been pushed to a high degree of perfection in Mexico. The names for sky, sun, moon, stars, fire, water, earth, then different animals are discussed here. This ends the second delivery of the meritorious work. One must be particularly curious about the third, because after the suggestion in the proceedings of the Congress at Nancy we have to discover there the discovery of the form of the plural and various other grammatical forms as well as the deciphering of at least 21 smaller formulas. Unfortunately, this third section does not appear to have been published yet.

A few more comments, which I am prompted to take a closer look at the illustrations of our manuscript. Pages 6–23, i.e. 18 pages (as much as the Mayan year has months) show a great similarity and would seem most easily understandable if they were considered as a kind of festive calendar, in which first the name of the festival, then the date would be given and now always follows a symbolic representation, which indicates the activity of men towards the Godhead; note the frequently recurring images on which man is present in his hands. After page 24, which does not contain any paintings, the strange pages 25–28 follow, where the main image, however, always, to speak with polish, is reminiscent of an “authority,

⁴³ (de Charencey 1875a, 1876b).

with staff of office". On pages 29-41, the frequent recurrence of the water light blue ground with dark blue snaked lines is to be observed, pages 36 and 40 also show messengers. On page 46-50 hunting and war is the main thing, on page 65-73 the water reigns again, with a messenger on page 65. For all attempts at interpretation, it will be a particular difficulty that, as a rule, the top edge of the page, where one expects a kind of heading, has suffered the most and a large number of signs have been destroyed here.

With further comments, I hold back and leave the further research, in particular, to those who wish to compare our Codex in more detail with the other written monuments of the same literature, which is now an opportunity.

However, since all three manuscripts are now as comfortably next to each other as no one has ever had, I would at least like to draw attention to some pictorial representations, at least by overlooking the peculiarity of each manuscript. both in our Dresden Codex (Dr.) as well as in the Codex Troano (Tr.) and the Paris (P.) in a very similar way, i.e. form parallel passages, the observance of which may be conservatized for further interpretation:

Two people facing each other: Dr. 8, 19, 21, 23, 45, 68; Tr. 5, 6, 30, 19*, 20*, 21*, 22*.

Women with children on their backs: Dr. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20; Tr. 19*.

Outstretched tongue: Dr. 11, 12, 25, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 61, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69; Tr. 5*; P. 13.

Pierced animals: Dr. 46, 47, 48; Tr. 18.

Birds: 3, 7, 17, 18, 25, 26, 27, 28, 35, 36, 69, 74; Tr. 15, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 29, 31, 33, 35, 4*, 13*, 20*, 22*, 26*, 27*, 28*; P. 5, 13, 16, 21.

[Page 17]

Snake? Dr. 34, 35, 36, 42, 69; Tr. 5, 8-15? 22, 25, 26, 27, 28*? P. 15.

River? Dr. 61, 62; Tr. 28.

Pouring water. Rain: Dr. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 65, 66, 67, 68, 71, 72, 73; Tr. 24, 25, 26, 27, 20*.

Fire preparation: Dr. 5, 6; Tr. 6, 19, 12*, 14*, 15*.

Torch: Dr. 34, 37, 39, 40; Tr. 23, 24, 32, 33, 27*, 28*, 29*.

Altar with fire: Dr. 25, 26, 27, 28, 34; Tr. 18, 21, 32, 33, 2*, 3*, 5*, 6*, 7*, 8*, 25*; P. 6.

Sacrificed fruits: Dr. 10, 11, 12, 13; Tr. 5, 32, 33, 5*, 6*, 8*, 9*.

Staff by hand: Dr. 25, 26, 27, 28, 31; Tr. 24*.

Necklace with plate, on which several tassels hang: Dr. 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 37, 42, 43, 65, 66, 67, 74; Tr. 2? 20, 32*, 33*; P. 13, 17, 19, 20.

Square coat of arms (?) on which something hangs: Dr. 1, 2, 37, 38, 39, 40, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 66, 68; Tr. 10, 17, 5*, 7*, 8*, 9*, 10*; P. 6, 7, 10, 14, 18.

Slide-like frame: Dr. 27, 28, 33, 36, 43; Tr. 21*, 22*; P. 3.

Axe (machete of today's Indians of Yucatan): Dr. 29, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 65, 66, 67, 69; Tr. 17, 15*, 16*, 17*, 18*, 24*.

Skewers. Arrows. Swords: Dr. 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 60, 67, 69, 74; Tr. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 25, 20*, 21*, 22*, 23*, 26*, 30*.

Other items, such as fish, shackles, trees, musical instruments, are still too unsafe for me.

Finally, I have to express the most vivid feeling of gratitude to the General Direction of the Royal Collections of Art and Science, which not only approves my application for the publication of this manuscript, but also a significant contribution to the costs. willingly

approved the replica.

A special thanks also goes to the A. Naumann'schen Lithography company in Leipzig, which has subjected itself to the extraordinarily laborious production of this work with such an interest in the matter and with such an understanding of the subject-object that we here have a completely strange and as yet unattainable masterpiece in front of us, to which a full recognition in the vicinity and distance is to be wished.

Dresden. May 1880.

E. Förstemann.

[Page 18]

NOTE OF THE PUBLISHER.

For the sake of the complete novelty of chromo-lithographic printing, we believe that the following observations on the assessment of the present work should not be without interest.

When Prof. Förstemann made the honorable request to us to reproduce the precious Mayan manuscript, the realization immediately arose that the simple reproduction by photography or lithography was not sufficient to solve this problem and multi-colored imaging is absolutely necessary.

But in order not to lose the guarantee of absolute fidelity to nature, one could not leave the path of photomechanical printing processes and so we used multi-colored lithography. Attempts that have been in this for years have been excellent for us and we therefore believe that we have proved the practical applicability of chromo-lithography through this work, since it shows the possibility of reproducing multi-colored originals without the hand of an artist participating in it. In this way, a faithful depiction of the partly blurred and crumbled red and black writing characters and the contours as well as some colors of the figurative illustrations was obtained in this way through a purely photomechanical process.

In the case of minor matters, however, as the background of several such representations and some smooth tones in the color of the same, we believed in not to be able to dismiss the aid of significantly simpler and cheaper photolithography in order not to make the price of the work unnecessarily expensive. The retouching required was carried out by a skilled lithographer with the greatest possible accuracy.

For the reasons given above, we believe that, apart from the high scientific interest of the works, this works must also be given importance with regard to its technical manufacture; at least we have not yet been aware of a similar work and should therefore rightly claim priority for our own.

Leipzig, 21 June 1880.

A. Naumann'sche Lithography.

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I.

Die Merckwürdigkeiten der Königlichen *Bibliothec* zu Dreßden.

- I.) Ein *Mexicanisches* Buch mit unbekannten *Charactern* und *Hieroglyphischen Figuren* auf beyden Seiten beschrieben, und mit allerhand Farben bemahlet, in länglicht *Octav*, ordentlich in Falten oder 39. Blätter zusammen gelegt, die ausgebreitet der Länge nach über sechs Ellen austragen.

Die Materie, worauff diese Figuren, die weder Buchstaben noch Wörter andeuten, gemahlet sind, bestehet aus einer Art von Werck aus Baum-Wolle, die man zusammen gepresset, und mit einer weissen Farbe, vielleicht von Mahiz-Meel überstrichen hat, so daß die Blätter unsern Pergamenten mit Bimsenstein überstrichenen Schreibe-Tafeln gleichen, ob wohl die weiße Farbe nicht so feste daran klebet, sondern gar leichte davon kan abgerieben werden. Die ersten Spanier, welche in die Gegend von Mexico gekommen, haben diese Figuren vor Zauber-Zeichen angesehen, und daher aus einem wohlmeinenden Eiffer die darmit beschriebenen Bücher, und andere Denckmähle verbrennet, und verwüestet. Worzu ohne Zweiffel die teufflischen Gestalten, wormit auch in unserm Buche ihre Abgötter vorgestellt werden, dieselben betrogen haben.

Gemelli Careri in seiner Reise-Beschreibung um die Welt, T. VI. C. V. schreibt: „Die scharfsinnigen Mexicaner, weil sie keine Buchstaben hatten, bedienten sich der Sinnbilder und Hieroglyphischen Figuren, um die Dinge, die eine körperliche Gestalt hatten, anzudeuten; Zu andern Dingen aber, die nicht in die Augen fallen, erdichteten sie gewisse Ziffern, und auf diese Weise verließen sie ihren Nachkommen das Andencken ihrer Geschichte. Allein man findet dergleichen Bücher nicht mehr in Neu-Spanien, dieweil die Spanier sie bey ihrer Ankunfft verbrennet hatten, insonderheit der erste Bischoff von Mexico Sumarica, indem man die Characteres, die man nicht kennete, vor Aberglaubisch und Zauberey gehalten.“ Gleichwie sich Gemelli Careri in dem Rahmen dieses Bischoffs, welcher Johannes de Zumarraga geheissen, und ein sehr frommer und ge-

lehrter, auch verständiger Mann aus dem Orden des H. Francisci gewesen, betrogen, also glaube ich auch, daß er ihm Unrecht gethan, indem er seinem Eiffer vornehmlich die Vertilgung der Mexicanischen Bücher zuschreibt. Joseph Acosta in Historia Novi Orbis nat. & mor. L. VI. C. VII. redet hiervon gantz anders: „Die Einwohner von Neu-Spanien, sagt er, sind in den Alterthümern wohl erfahren. Ihre Geschichte und Thaten behalten sie durch sonderbare Kunst auf. In der Provintz Jucatan, wo das Bisthum Honduras ist, hat man Bücher gefunden, deren Blätter ordentlich zusammen gelegt und gefalten geschienen. In denselben hatten die Americaner die Eintheilung der Zeit und den Lauff der Planeten, wie auch die Natur und Eigenschafften der Thiere, Pflantzen und anderer Dinge, nebst ihren Geschichten gar sorgfältig beschrieben. Allein einer von den Predigern hat dem Volcke öftters zugeredet, daß dieses lauter Zauber-Bücher wären, die man verbrennen müste; Wodurch er auch erhalten, daß man sie zusammen gesucht, und ins Feuer geworffen. Welche That nicht allein den Indianern, sondern auch den Spaniern, die gerne die Geheimnisse des Landes gewust hätten, höchst mißfallen.“

Die Art und Weise, wie die Me-

xicaner ihre Schrifften verfertigt haben, finden wir bey dem Spanischen Geschichtschreiber Antonio de Solis in seiner Historia de la nueva Espana. Madrid 1684. f. Daselbst L. II. C. I. p.76. erzehlet er, daß der König von Mexico Motezuma zwey Statthalter seines Reichs, worunter sein Oberster Feldherr Teutile gewesen, an Ferdinandum Cortez abgefertiget: „in deren Gesellschaft einige Mexicanische Mahler gekommen, die mit großem Fleiß auf baumwollenen Lappen, die sie zuvor bereitet, und zu diesem Ende überstrichen hatten, die Schiffe, Soldaten, Waffen, Geschütze, Pferde, und alles, was ihren Augen merckwürdiges vorkam, abgemahlet, und aus so verschiedenen Dingen verschiedene Landschaften von nicht unebenen Riß und Farben entworfen haben. Diese Mahlereyen wurden auf Befehl des Mexicanischen Generals Teutile verfertigt, um dem Könige Motezuma etwas neues zu berichten; und um es ihm besser begreifen zu machen, schrieben sie hin und wieder einige Ziffern und Figuren, mit welchen sie dem Scheine nach die Mahlerey deutlicher erklärten. Sie bedienten sich dieses Kunstgriffes um zuschreiben; denn sie wusten von keiner andern Schrift, hatten auch keine Buchstaben, wie andere Völcker, um daraus Sylben

und gantze Wörter zu machen, sondern gaben ihre Gedancken, vermittelst des Pinsels zu verstehen, und bedeuteten die in die Augen fallenden Dinge mit ihren eignen Bildern, daß übrige aber mit Ziffern und Figuren, die so zusammen gesetzt waren, daß die Zahl, das Sinnbild und die Figur eine Bedeutung machten, und völlig ausdrückten, was sie wolten zu verstehen geben. Welches gewißlich eine schöne Kunst gewesen, woraus man ihre Fähigkeit hat abnehmen können, und welche der Kunst, deren sich die Egyptier bedienet, mit Hieroglyphischen Figuren zu schreiben, gegleicht hat. Allein diese thaten es aus Prahlerey, um ihre Scharffsinnigkeit an den Tag zu legen, da es hingegen bey den Indianern eine gemeine und gewöhnliche Schreib-Art war, die sie geschickt und glücklich anzubringen wusten, daß sie gantze Bücher von dergleichen Figuren und leserlichen Characteren gehabt, worinnen sie das Andencken ihrer Alterthümer erhalten, und denen Nachkömmlingen die Jahr-Geschichte ihrer Könige hinterlassen haben.“

Eben dieser Geschichtschreiber deutet auch L. II. C. VIII. p. 104. die Zeit, welches Anno 1519. gewesen, und den Ort an, wenn und wo zum ersten Mexicanische Bücher gesunden

worden: „In der Gegend Zempoala, ohnweit dem Orte, wo hernach Vera Cruz ist erbauet worden, haben die Spanier zum erstenmahl, nicht ohne Verwunderung, Mexicanische Bücher gesehen. Es waren ihrer dreye oder viere in ihren Tempeln, welche die Gebräuche ihres Götzendienstes enthalten sollten. Sie bestanden aus einem breiten Blat, oder einer überstrichenen Leinwand, die sie in gleiche Falten zusammen legten, so daß eine iede zusammen gelegte Falte ein Blat, und alle zusammen ein Buch ausmachten. Der Text schiene eben so geschrieben, oder mit solchen Ziffern und Sinnbildern gemahlet zu seyn, deren sich die Mahler des Teutile bedienet hatten.“

Vielleicht haben die Ordens-Geistlichen und ersten Missionarii, welche die Mexicaner zum Christlichen Glauben bekehret haben, verspühret, daß die Bücher, worinnen ihre abergläubische Ceremonien enthalten waren, diesem Volcke zu einem Steine des Anstoßens gereicheten, sie in ihrer Abgötterey erhielten, und von Annahme des Christenthums verhinderten; daher sie sich gemüßiget befunden, alle dergleichen mit Figuren beschriebene Bücher zu verbrennen und zu vertilgen; weil sie sich nicht selbst im Stande sahen, die nützlichen Bücher von den schädlichen zu unterschei-

den und abzusondern. Allem Ansehen nach rühret die Seltenheit dieser Bücher von einer dergleichen Ursache her. Unsere Königliche Bibliothec hat diesen Vorzug vor vielen andern, daß sie einen solchen raren Schatz besitzt. Man hat ihn vor wenig Jahren bey einer Privat-Person in Wien gefunden, und als eine unbekannte Sache gar leicht umsonst erhalten. Ohne Zweifel ist er aus einer Verlassenschafft eines Spaniers, welcher entweder selbst oder doch dessen Vorfahren in America gewesen.

Der berühmte Lambecius beschreibt in dem XIV ten Anhang des VIII. Tomi Commentt. de Biblioth. Vindob. p. 660. ingleichen Nessel P. VI. Catalogi MSS. Biblioth. Cæsar. p. 163. ein solches Mexicanische Buch, welches zu seiner Zeit in die damalige Kayserliche Bibliothec von Johanne Georgio, Hertzoge zu Sachsen-Eisenach, verehret worden. Beyde diese Bibliothecarii nennen es unvergleichlich und unschätzbar, haben auch eine Seite davon in Kupffer stechen lassen; woraus erhellet, daß es zwar dem Inhalte nach von dem unserigen unterschieden, im übrigen aber demselben vollkommen ähnlich sey. Vermöge einer schriftlichen sich darbey befindlichen Nachricht soll es der König Emanuel von Portugall dem Pabst Clementi VII. verehret haben,

nach dessen Tode es der Cardinal Hippolytus Medices in die Hände bekommen, und nachdem auch dieser das Zeitliche gesegnet hatte, der Cardinal von Capua, welcher dem nur gedachten Hippolyto zwey tausend Ducaten Einkünfte abgetreten, und sich dieses Buch von dem Cardinal Salviati, als Executore Testamenti, zu einer besondern Gnade ausgebeten hatte. Allein in dieser Erzählung sind einige Dinge, die sich nicht wohl zusammen reimen: Zum Crempel, daß der König Emanuel dieses Buch dem Pabst Clementi VII. geschencket, da er doch eher gestorben, als dieser erwählt worden. Es kan auch, wie Lambecius will, nicht der Pabst Leo X. und die seyerliche Gesandtschafft, die dieser König an denselben Anno 1513. geschicket, verstanden werden; weil die Mexicanischen Bücher vor Anno 1519. nicht bekannt worden.

In der raren Englischen Sammlung der Reisen, die Samuel Purchas in vier Bänden in Folio zusammen getragen, finden wir T. III. a p. 1066. ein solches Mexicanisches Buch mit Figuren in Holtz geschnitten, und einer Erklärung derselben, die Melchisedech Thevenot in die Frantzösische Sprache übersetzt, und sammt den Figuren seiner Sammlung der Reisen T. II. der neuesten Edition von Paris 1696. f. unter dem Titul: Histoire

de l'Empire Mexicain représentée par figures, einverleibet hat. Es ist aber dieses Buch folgender gestalt denen Engelländern in die Hände gerathen. Ein Statthalter von Mexico hat nicht ohne große Mühe diese Historie von den Händen der Indianer, nebst einer Erklärung in Mexicanischer Sprache der Figuren, woraus sie bestehet, bekommen können. Er hat sie darauß in die Spanische Sprache übersetzen lassen, und dem Kayser Carl dem Vten übersenden wollen. Allein das Schiff, worinnen dieses Buch gewesen, ist von einem Frantzosen weggenommen worden, und das Buch in die Hände des Andreas Thevet gerathen. Hakluyt, welcher damahls Capellan bey dem Englischen Gesandten in Franckreich gewesen, hat es von des Thevet Erben gekauffet, und auf Walter Raleighs Befehl durch einen gewissen Locke aus dem Spanischen ins Englische übersetzen lassen. Der berühmte Heinrich Speelman hat einige Zeit hernach den Purchas veranlas-

set, die Figuren in Holtz schneiden zu lassen, die solcher gestalt dem gemeinem Wesen zum Besten erhalten worden. Dieses Buch, oder Sammlung der Figuren, wird in drey Theile getheilet. Die Figuren des ersten enthalten die Jahr-Bücher des Mexicanischen Reichs: Der andere Theil desselben Einkünfte; nemlich was ein ieder Ort vor Tribut und Steuern bezahlet, nebst den natürlichen Reichthümern, die sie zu genießen hatten. Die Hauf-Wirthschafft der Mexicaner, ihre Verfassung und Zucht in Kriegs- und Friedens-Zeiten, ihre Gebräuche in Kirchen: und politischen Begebenheiten machen den dritten Theil dieser Historie aus.

In der Vaticanischen Bibliothec sind nur etliche Blätter von dergleichen Mexicanischen Schrift vorhanden, wie Herr Joseph Simonius Asseman, welcher unser Exemplar vor vier Jahren zu Rom gesehen, versichert hat.

This font is Old English MT, which is similar to the Fraktur font in the original text. The ligatures and medial "s" characters are replaced and quote marks moved to surround the quoted text. This rendering was meticulously compared to the original text.

Götze, Johann Christian

1744 Die Merkwürdigkeiten der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Dresden Ausführlich beschreiben, und mit Anmerkungen erläutert. Die erste Sammlung., vol.1. Dresden: Ben dem Königl. Hof Buchhandler, George Contrad Walther. Pp 1-5.