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of
Hispanic American
Manuscripts

A Guide by J. Benedict Warren

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It is endorsed on the verso with the rubrics of six councilors of the Indies. It is numbered 51 on the recto, 104 on the verso. It is written on stamped paper, dated for the year 1660.

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[Fernando Alvarado Tezozomoc]. . . . La coronica Mexicana. [Mexico, ca. 1600 (i.e. between 1598 and 1609)]. 158 leaves.

Tezozomoc's chronicle has come to be recognized as one of the principal sources for our knowledge of the narrative history of the Aztecs. It begins with their legendary origins but enters into a more truly historical narrative with the reign of Acamapichtli I in the late 14th century. The author then traces the development of the Aztec Empire down to the reign of Montezuma II and the arrival of the Spaniards under Cortés in 1519.

The text originally consisted of 112 chapters but it is lacking two leaves (4-5), which contained the end of chapter 3, all of chapter 4, and the beginning of chapter 5. D. W. McPheeters, who described this manuscript (see McPheeters), discounted the idea that any of the text was missing, but it is obvious that where there are two leaf numbers missing with a corresponding skip of two chapter numbers, some text must be missing. The printed editions of the work disguised the break in the text by renumbering the chapters, beginning with chapter 6 (chapter 4 in the printed versions). In this they probably relied upon the manuscript copies made in the late 18th century. The break in the text occurs as follows: (leaf 3v at the bottom) "y así concertado para dividirse les hablo el propio ydolo huitzilopochtli a todas," (leaf 6r) "y así amanescido otro día todo lo tenía puesto por orden el teomama . . ."

The author, who lived from ca. 1520 to 1609, was a descendant on both sides from the Aztec emperors. On his father's side he was a great grandson of Axayácatl, the sixth emperor, and his maternal grandfather was Montezuma II, emperor at the time of the Spanish invasion. We know that he was writing his chronicle about the year 1598 because when he writes of a great flood in Tenochtitlan which he dates as 1470, he says it occurred "about 128 years ago" (chapter 83 in this manuscript, chapter 81 in the printed texts). In his writing he was able to draw upon the oral traditions of his people to give a fuller interpretation of the hieroglyphic histories which had been preserved.

This is the earliest known manuscript of the chronicle, dating from the late 16th or early 17th century. An undated note at the foot of the recto of leaf 1 records that Francisco Peres de Peñalosa bought

it from Padre Francisco Besera for 1 peso and 4 tomines. The manuscript is known to have been in the collection of the 18th-century Italian Mexicanist Lorenzo Boturini Benaducci (see Boturini, p. 17). Mariano Veytia used the manuscript after he returned to Mexico in 1750, and some of the marginal notations in the manuscript are attributed to him. Veytia had a copy made, which he used in preparing his *Historia antigua de México*. In 1792 two other copies were made from Veytia's copy for the Viceroy Revilla Gigedo. It is from these copies that the various printed editions are derived. The present manuscript found its way into the library of the Counts of Revilla Gigedo, where it remained until the 20th century.

The chronicle was published in 1848 by Lord Kingsborough in his famous collection, from one of the copies derived from Veytia; Manuel Orozco y Berra republished it in 1878. Two abridged editions have appeared during the present century. Tezozomoc prepared, or intended to prepare, another volume on the conquest, but it has not come to light.

The present manuscript varies in many small particulars from the printed versions, pointing to efforts on the part of the various editors to improve the style. Any new edition of the work must take these variations into account.

The end papers of the volume were written on before they were used in this binding. The front end paper contains a prayer to the Virgin Mary, repeated over and over, written by Pedro Díaz de Aguilera in Mexico on the 13th and 14th of October, year unknown (but in an 18th-century hand). The back end paper contains large alphabets. In both front and back, the pages which are glued to the binding were written upon before being glued in the book. The leaves were originally numbered 1-160. Leaves 4-5 are missing. The numbers were trimmed off some of the other leaves in binding.

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Amerigo Vespucci et al. *Anthology of miscellaneous materials in the Italian language*. [Florence, third quarter of the 16th century] 29 leaves [leaves 12-13 blank].

Provenance: Found in 1937 in the family archive of Prince Ginori Conti, member of an old Florentine family. Manuscript ex libris of Giovanni Strozzi on front end leaf.

This small volume (23 cm. x about 17 cm.) was first used to copy a letter of Amerigo Vespucci to Lorenzo de' Medici of July 18, 1500, and a fragment of another letter from Vespucci, written after 1502, known in the literature as the "fragmentary letter." Other unrelated