THE AMERICAS
75:1/January 2018/155–180

doi:10.1017/tam.2017.101

PATRIMONY LOST: *Hispanic-American Treasures in Foreign Collections*

We came to this country to study its antiquities, which is to say, make collections of them.

Eduard Seler (ca.1897)

The greatest thrill that any researcher can experience is coming across, quite unforeseen, priceless documents long given up as lost. In the case of myself and two close colleagues, Wendy Kramer and Christopher H. Lutz, the documents that have come to light and that have so delighted us include *Libros de Cabildo* numbers two and three of the city of Santiago de Guatemala, the capital of Spanish Central America. *Libro Segundo* is a register of events that took place between 1530 and 1541; *Libro Tercero* is a log spanning the years 1541 to 1553. Our incredulity at learning the whereabouts of these two volumes was matched, if not surpassed, by the anticipation of verifying their existence and thereafter consulting them, something that has not occurred (as best we can determine) in over a century. Far more than

First expression of thanks goes to our Dutch colleague Sebastián van Doesburg for alerting Christopher H. Lutz to the bounty of Guatemalan colonial documents housed at the Hispanic Society of America in New York, the *Libros Segundo y Tercero del Cabildo de Santiago* in particular. Chris generously shared the revelation with Wendy Kramer and me. Wendy and Chris have forged ahead, in collaboration with Jorge Luján Muñoz, Edgar Chután, Guisela Asensio Lueg, and Mayda Gutiérrez Rodríguez, in transcribing and preparing for publication an edition of the *Libro Segundo del Cabildo*. Work on the *Libro Tercero del Cabildo* continues apace. So unique are these two sources that their appearance in transcribed book form is sure to attract the attention not only of those who study Guatemala but also other scholars of colonial Spanish America, far and wide. My concern in this article is not with the contents of the find but with the events whose trajectory led us to the two tomes—and to countless other documentary and archaeological treasures that were removed from Guatemala to form part of foreign collections. At the Hispanic Society, Mitchell A. Codding and John O'Neill have been most accommodating. Much of the material O'Neill oversees and deals with as archivist and librarian has yet to be properly identified and inventoried. One may request to consult certain items, for instance, by the number and description given them in printed sales catalogues. For those items acquired by purchase from Karl W. Hiersemann more than a century ago, one consults the catalogues prepared by the Leipzig book dealer himself. Making a functional inventory of Hispanic Society holdings is a work in progress, an undertaking that external funding may be the best means of advancing. Another Dutch colleague, Ron van Meer, has proven pivotal in assisting me move the locus of inquiry from the upper reaches of Manhattan to Germany, Berlin and Leipzig specifically. In Berlin, Viola König and María Gaida of the Ethnologisches Museum were very helpful, as were (in Leipzig) Thomas Döring, Steffen Hoffmann, and Marcel Schneider of the Bibliotheca Albertina, and Bruno Schelhaas of the Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde. All visual images were photographed by me in the course of my forays. As always, Maureen McCallum Garvie was editor and muse beyond compare. I am also indebted to Juan Marchena Fernández for the opportunity to present *Saqueo en el archivo: el paradero de los tesoros documentales guatemaltecos* (2014) at the forum Mundos Indígenas na América (Séculos XVI–XVIII), held at the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, in February 2015. My remarks at the book presentation resulted in Pablo Ibáñez Bonillo encouraging me to delve further and say a bit more. Research funding from the Killam Program of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and Queen's University's Office of Research Services is gratefully acknowledged.

the minutes of mundane municipal affairs, these two *Libros de Cabildo* contain valuable information about Spanish conquest and colonization, and indigenous resistance to it, that will enhance considerably our understanding of the early colonial period, not only in Guatemala but throughout Central America.[1] Furthermore, the *Libros de Cabildo* have proven to be the proverbial tip of the iceberg, for the cache of which they form part contains other treasures perhaps not quite so unique but nonetheless of significant historical worth.[2]

Here I reprise some of the circumstances surrounding the chance discovery, cause for quiet optimism, and explore further how Hispanic American patrimony, that of Guatemala in particular, was acquired by an array of non-Guatemalan individuals and institutions. Consequently, not all national treasures are to be found in the country itself but must be sought in foreign collections.

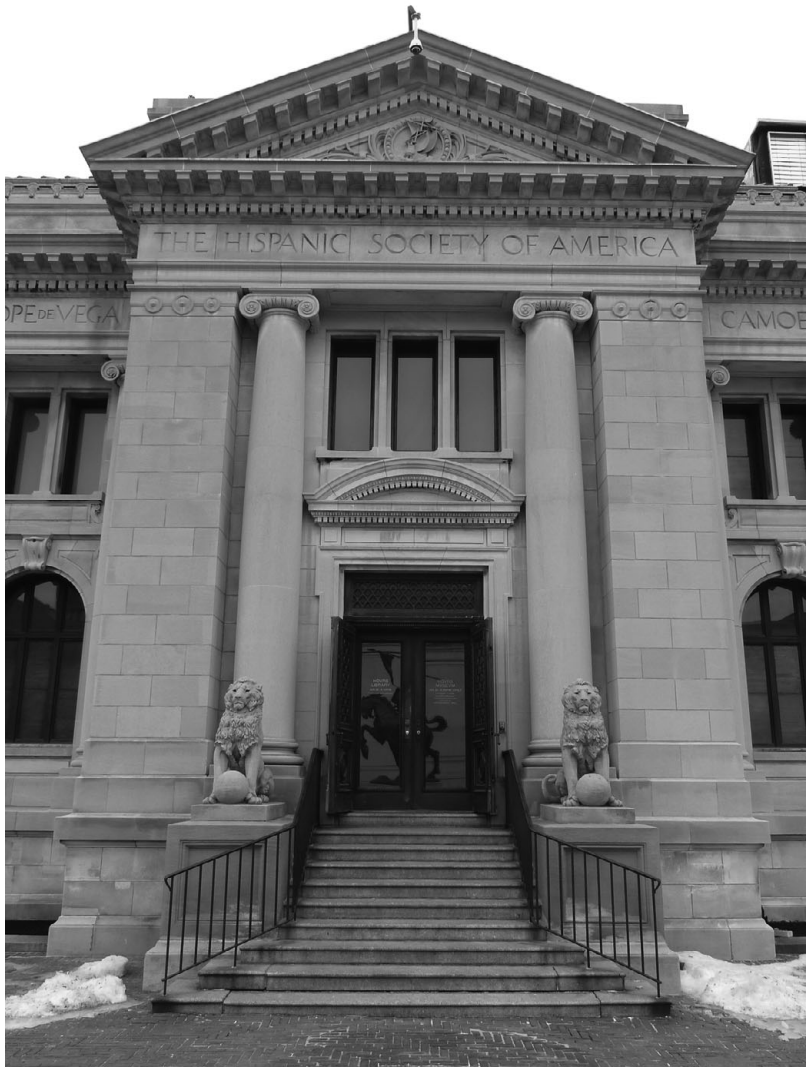
The Hispanic Society of America

The Hispanic Society of America (Figure 1) is one of New York's most venerable art institutions, renowned for its majestic paintings by Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida (1863–1923) of *The Provinces of Spain*, though masterpieces by El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulous, 1541–1614), Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664), Diego Velázquez (1599–1660), Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617–1682), and Francisco de Goya (1746–1828) are also among its prized

1. The *Libros de Cabildo* shed new light on a variety of topics. Throughout the *Libro Segundo*, for instance, in which the text of one folio is penned in code to obscure content from prying eyes, minutes of city council meetings record palpable tension, and marked dissention, among Spanish ranks, with fears openly expressed that native resistance was so fierce and widespread as to threaten the very presence of Spaniards in Guatemala. In an eerie indication of what was to occur on the night and in the early hours of September 10 and 11, 1541, when a thunderous mudslide destroyed the capital city of Santiago, then located on the lower slopes of Volcán Agua in the Valley of Almolonga, mention is made of earlier such incidents when heavy rain caused huge boulders and massive trees to be washed down from the upper reaches of the volcano into the heart of the city. For a dramatic account of tragedy that was forewarned but nonetheless occurred, see Juan Rodríguez, *Relación del espantable terremoto que agora nuevamente acontecido en las yndias en una ciudad llamada Guatimala* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispanica, [1541, 1543] 1944). *Libro Tercero* begins three days after the devastation, in which many eminent Spaniards and an estimated 600 (or more) native inhabitants lost their lives. It records the decision to relocate the capital to the nearby valley of Panchoy, and spells out regulations concerning the layout in the new city of streets, plazas, churches, houses, and adjacent agricultural land. Pedro de Alvarado, the *conquistador* and later *adelantado* (supreme governor) who ruled Guatemala with an iron hand, had died waging war in Mexico in July 1541. Consequently, the pages of the *Libro Tercero* deal with the imposition of a new, post-Alvarado order, in which the crown sought to create a more stable, better organized, and less tyrannical regime.

2. For more extended discussion, see Wendy Kramer, W. George Lovell, and Christopher H. Lutz, "Pillage in the Archives: The Whereabouts of Guatemalan Documentary Treasures," *Latin American Research Review* 48:3 (2013): 153–167; and Wendy Kramer, W. George Lovell, and Christopher H. Lutz, *Saqueo en el archivo: el paradero de los tesoros documentales guatemaltecos* (Antigua, Guatemala: Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica; Ciudad de Guatemala: Centro de Estudios Urbanos y Rurales, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala; and Wellfleet, MA: Plumsock Mesoamerican Studies, 2014).

FIGURE 1
Main Entrance to the Hispanic Society of America, New York



Source: Photo by the author.

possessions. Far less known is that the Hispanic Society is home to a magnificent library and archive, the contents of which have only lately been reappraised and are awakening the interest of the academic world [3]

3. For elaboration, see Mitchell A. Codding, "A Brief History of the Library of the Hispanic Society of America," in *The Hispanic Society of America: Illuminated Manuscripts,* Mitchell A. Codding and John O'Neill, eds. (Madrid:

It was in this context that, in November 2010, my colleague Chris Lutz was contacted by Sebastián van Doesburg, after the Dutch ethnohistorian (at the time a Guggenheim Fellow affiliated with the American Museum of Natural History) became aware of the nature of some of the Hispanic Society's exceptional holdings. It was finding out about the two *Libros de Cabildo*, which have been housed at the Hispanic Society for over a century, that prompted Van Doesburg to contact Lutz, which he did at the bidding of fellow ethnohistorian Florine Asselbergs, a scholar whose interests (like ours) lie in the complex interactions between Spaniards and Indians in colonial Guatemala.[4]

When we arrived in New York to inspect the *Libros de Cabildo* firsthand, we could scarcely believe our good fortune at being able to peruse unique sources long thought lost.[5] The *Libros de Cabildo*, it turns out, are but two items among hundreds acquired by the founder of the Hispanic Society, Archer Milton Huntington (1870–1955), in a purchase he made of a catalogue (number 418

Brizzolis, SA, 2006), 9–23; John O'Neill, "Archer M. Huntington, La Hispanic Society of America y sus fondos americanistas," in *Aproximaciones al americanismo entre 1892 y 2004,* Pilar Cagiao Vila and Eduardo Rey Tristán, eds. (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 2006), 143–155; and John O'Neill, "La biblioteca y el archivo documental de la Hispanic Society," in *El tesoro arqueológico de la Hispanic Society of America* (Seville: Fundación Cajasol, 2009), 195–208. Mitchell A. Codding, ed., *Tesoros de la Hispanic Society of America: visiones del mundo hispánico* (Madrid and New York: Museo Nacional del Prado; and the Hispanic Society of America, 2017) showcases the institution's treasures in a sumptuous manner, the dividend of an extraordinary exhibition mounted in Madrid's Museo del Prado that drew widespread attention and considerable acclaim. The exhibition, curated as the Tesoros de la Hispanic Society of America, which is also the name of the exhibition catalogue, featured some 250 works of art or scholarly artistry. Among them are the *Mapamundi* of Giovanni Vespucci, the nephew of Florentine explorer, navigator, and cartographer Amerigo Vespucci, drafted in Seville in 1526; the Zapotec codex known as the *Árbol genealógico de Macuilxochitl* (1580), a genealogical tree depicting a succession of twelve ruling couples in San Mateo Macuilxochitl (Oaxaca, Mexico) from the thirteenth century to a generation following the Spanish conquest; and the *Mapa del Tecuichitle*, a cartographic accompaniment to a *relación geográfica* that documents the Mixtón War of 1539–42, which marked a considerable reversal in the forward movement of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. It was in this war that Pedro de Alvarado lost his life.

4. See for example Florine Asselbergs, *Los conquistadores conquistados, el* Lienzo de Quauhquechollan: *una visión nahua de la conquista de Guatemala,* Eddy H. Gaytán, trans. (South Woodstock, VT: Plumsock Mesoamerican Studies; Antigua, Guatemala: Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica; and Puebla: Secretaría de Cultura de Puebla, 2010); and W. George Lovell and Christopher H. Lutz, with Wendy Kramer and William R. Swezey, *"Strange Lands and Different Peoples": Spaniards and Indians in Colonial Guatemala* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013).

5. For context and discussion, see Robert M. Carmack, *Quichean Civilization: The Ethnohistoric, Ethnographic, and Archaeological Sources* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 85. Arnold J. Bauer, in *The Search for the Codex Cardona: On the Trail of a Sixteenth-Century Mexican Treasure* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009) writes about his adventures in the archives with allure and erudition. So too does Gesa Mackenthun in "The Conquest of Antiquity: The Travelling Empire of John Lloyd Stephens," in *American Travel and Empire,* Susan Castillo and David Seed, eds. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2009), 99–128, with respect to "the invention and discovery of antiquity." For Mackenthun, "the conquest of antiquity" is exemplified by the life and works of the American adventurer cum diplomat cum archaeologist, John Lloyd Stephens (1805–1852). See also Robert D. Aguirre, *Informal Empire: Mexico and Central America in Victorian Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); and Kramer, Lovell, and Lutz, "Pillage in the Archives,"155–159.

to be precise) offered him by the German bookseller and publisher, Karl W. Hiersemann (1854–1928), a year before the outbreak of the Great War.[6]

TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN HUNTINGTON AND HIERSEMANN

The relationship between Huntington and Hiersemann, and the deals they struck even while continents apart, is key to understanding how the impressive collections of the Hispanic Society—over 600,000 books, documents, and manuscripts—came to be. John O'Neill, head librarian and archivist of the institution, dates the relationship from the 1890s, but the frenzy of buying and selling between the two men was at its height between 1905 and 1913.[7] For this period, Wilhelm Olbrich records 23 catalogues having been prepared by Hiersemann with Huntington in mind.[8] Mitchell A. Codding, director of the Hispanic Society, reckons that number at closer to 30, "amounting to over two hundred thousand Hispanic manuscripts and rare books"—roughly one-third of all the institution's holdings.[9]

According to O'Neill, by 1890 Huntington already had a library that "comprised more than 2,000 books."[10] Twelve years later, his insatiable appetite culminated in the acquisition of the library of the Marqués de Jerez de los Caballeros, considered the best collection of books in all Spain, for which he paid 592,000 francs.[11] The sale of the marqués's library incensed the Spanish intelligentsia, among them Francisco Rodríguez Marín, who condemned it as vehemently as he did its affluent buyer, the only son and principal heir of Collis Porter Huntington (1821–1900), American magnate and industrialist extraordinaire.[12] Writing to Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo on January 15, 1902, Rodríguez Marín declared:

6. Karl W. Hiersemann, *Middle and South America, the West Indies, and the Philippines: A Catalogue of Choice and Valuable Autographs, Manuscripts, and Printed Books,* Catalogue 418 (Leipzig: Karl W. Hiersemann, Bookseller and Publisher, 1913).

7. O'Neill, "Archer M. Huntington," 145.

8. Wilhelm Olbrich, *Hundert Jahre Hiersemann, 1884–1984* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1984), 26.

9. Codding, "History of the Library," 18.

10. O'Neill, "Archer M. Huntington," 144.

11. O'Neill, "Archer M. Huntington," 145; John O'Neill, "Don Manuel Pérez de Guzmán, Marqués de Jerez de los Caballeros, bibliófilo y académico," in *Boletín de la Real Academia Sevillana de Buenas Letras* 37 (2009): 341.

12. For details of Huntington family history, father and son in particular, see Beatrice Gilman Proske, *Archer Milton Huntington* (New York: Hispanic Society of America, 1963); and Mitchell A. Codding, "Archer Milton Huntington, Champion of Spain in the United States," in *Spain in America: The Origins of Hispanism in the United States,* Richard L. Kagen, ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 142–170. Shelley M. Bennett, *The Art of Wealth: The Huntingtons in the Gilded Age* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library Press, 2013), elaborates at even greater length.

> I write to you stricken by bad news, that of a great loss for our poor letters. As of this afternoon, the library of the Marqués de Jerez is no longer his. It has been sold, in its entirety, to Huntington. What a huge disgrace! The sea has not swallowed up that treasure—no, even worse, it will now end up in New York! Mr. Huntington, alone, has done us more harm than all his countrymen combined![13]

Two years earlier, Menéndez Pelayo had lamented to Rodríguez Marín that "our friend the Marqués de Jerez is trying to dispose of, or already has disposed of, his unique and marvellous collection of Spanish literature. This amounts to a greater and more irreversible disaster than Cavite and Santiago de Cuba." For good measure, Menéndez Pelayo added, "I have no direct or indirect dealings with Mr. Huntington, [but] I confess to you that I view him with profound antipathy, because he has come to sack Spain of its best books, making a show of his wealth."[14] Menéndez Pelayo was later to change his tune, accepting an offer from Huntington to become an associate of the Hispanic Society after its founding in 1904 and to sit on its advisory board from 1905 to 1912.

The spectacular acquisition of the Marqués de Jerez's library served to embolden Huntington, convincing him, as Codding succinctly puts it, of "the enormous efficiency of buying entire libraries and collections," which led to Huntington "engaging Hiersemann to assist him in further expanding the Hispanic Society's already exceptional library." Hiersemann rose to the challenge with gusto, the right man for the job. According to Codding, the goods he assembled for purchase two or three times a year eventually resulted in "[an] increasing number of duplicate[s]," but it was the outbreak of war that caused Huntington "to terminate the exclusive relationship with Hiersemann," thus bringing an end to "Huntington's active pursuit of manuscripts and rare books."[15]

Before the start of war, however, both men worked together to mutual advantage. Correspondence at hand in the Hispanic Society, voluminous and still to be catalogued, reveals that on at least two occasions Huntington and

13. Francisco Rodríguez Marín to Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, in O'Neill, "Pérez de Guzmán," 342. His precise words are: "Escribo a usted afligidísimo por una triste noticia, por una gran pérdida para nuestras pobres letras. La biblioteca del Marqués de Jerez ya, desde esta tarde, no es suya: la ha vendido, toda entera, a Huntington. ¡Qué gran desgracia! ¡Como si se hubiera tragado el mar ese tesoro, peor [sic], puesto que irá a parar a Nueva York! . . . ¡Más daño nos ha hecho Mister Huntington sólo que todos sus paisanos!"

14. Menéndez Pelayo to Rodríguez Marín, November 6, 1900, in O'Neill, "Pérez de Guzmán," 342. His precise words are: "[N]uestro amigo el Marqués de Jerez trata de enagenar [sic] o ha enagenado [sic] ya su singular y maravillosa colección de libros de literatura española. Mayor desastre y más irremediable sería este que los de Cavite y Santiago de Cuba. Yo no tengo relación directa ni indirecta con el señor Huntington, y confieso a usted que le miro con profunda antipatía, porque ha venido a despojar a Espanã de sus mejores libros, haciendo como alarde de su riqueza." The allusion to "Cavite y Santiago de Cuba" refers to two naval battles that saw Spain defeated by the United States in the Spanish American War, resulting in the loss to Spain of its last two colonies, Cuba and the Philippines.

15. Codding, "History of the Library," 17–18.

Hiersemann crossed the Atlantic to meet face to face, thereby adding a more intimate touch to their business transactions. On October 5, 1906, lodged at the Hotel Ritz in Paris, Huntington wrote to his librarian, Mansfield L. Hillhouse, "I have purchased from Karl Hiersemann of Leipzig catalogues 326 and 327, the former being called *Americana* and the latter *America*. [Catalogue] 326 was purchased in its entirety [except for] all books not bearing upon our work or not suitable for the Hispanic Society." Huntington notes, with more than a hint of satisfaction, that he had received a discount of 60 percent on both catalogues, significantly more than a regular discount of 35 percent mentioned in other correspondence, reflecting his status as a cherished client, to say nothing of his negotiating prowess.

Hiersemann himself confirmed the final purchase arrangements with Hillhouse. "My Dear Sir," he wrote, "I met with Mr. Archer M. Huntington in Paris and he was very kind enough to give me an order for the whole of my catalogue No. 326, *Americana,* and for the whole of my catalogue No. 327, *America*, with the exception of items 183 to 331," titles deemed not to lie within the Hispanic Society's established fields of interest. Item 31(a) from catalogue 326 ("sold as per our agreement for 6,200 marks," down from the initial asking price of 15,550 marks) was one that Huntington was especially pleased to acquire, a book printed in 1535, author unknown, containing descriptions of the "Newen Lands" so recently discovered in the Western Hemisphere. Hiersemann states that he made delivery of the title, in person, to his esteemed client. Of the benefits of maintaining a special relationship with Hiersemann, Huntington was in no doubt. "The advantage of dealing with a single man," he remarked to Hillhouse on March 28, 1913, "is also evident when we wish to begin other collections, such as photographs for example. Knowing exactly our field, Hiersemann will be able to look over the collecting possibilities as well as we could."

Seven years after his rendezvous with Huntington in Paris, though they corresponded by letter and telegram in the interim, it was Hiersemann's turn to be accommodated in lavish quarters while business matters were attended to. Turmoil in Europe and Asia Minor meant that the war that would be fought to end all wars loomed on the horizon, its ominous portents surely not lost on either of the two men when they greeted each other in New York, likely for the last time. Writing from the Waldorf Astoria hotel on March 8, 1913, Hiersemann summed up negotiations thus:

> My dear Sir: I beg to confirm our verbal agreement as follows: I sold you the Contents of my catalogues 417 and 418 (Mexico and South America) with a discount of 85%, to be shipped December next, but to await your special

> instructions whether it has to go to one address or two. On the same terms and usual conditions, I sold you the Spanish Music Portions of my catalogue 382. I suppose, although it wasn't touched upon, that I am to bind them as usual. Pray accept once more my sincere thanks for your kind order.

Hiersemann's letter, neatly typed on Waldorf-Astoria letterhead and declaring him "very truly yours," is marked "payment sent" and dated "6 [June] 1914."

On April 3, 1914, with war in the offing, Hiersemann approached Huntington concerning "a work comprising 150 drawings by Spanish masters from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century." On November 16, most likely with respect to other potential acquisitions, Huntington informed Hiersemann: "I regret that in regard to the last catalogue sent, the Hispanic Society does not care to purchase." The declaration of war on July 28 appears not to have stopped altogether business dealings between Huntington and Hiersemann. At the head of one "Rechnung" (invoice) of Hiersemann's, dated February 18, 1915, is an official statement that reads "Proforma note for the Hispanic Society, New York: Exportation prohibited during war-time." However, another item of correspondence registered the very following day, from Hiersemann to Huntington, states: "Today I have shipped 20 (twenty) cases of books." Three months later, on May 29, 1915, Hiersemann notes "the capture through the English of the American steamer *Ogeechee*," adding that a letter he received from Bremen reported that the *Ogeechee* "is said to have arrived in New York from Stornoway, but that there is some uncertainty as to the cargo, all communications being intercepted by the English." A notice in the *New York Times* of June 11, 1915, helps clarify the matter. The notice, headed "OGEECHEE PRIZE CASE UP: First American Cargo Going Before British Court Monday," reads:

> London, June 10 – The cases affecting goods shipped on the American steamer *Ogeechee*, which was seized while on the way from Bremen to New York, will be held in prize court on Monday. This will be the first instance in which such a case has actually reached prize court since the Order in Council became effective.
>
> The *Ogeechee* had a general cargo consigned to various persons, several of whom already have procured the release of their goods without recourse to prize court.

Another notice in the *New York Times* seven weeks later, datelined London, July 28, reads, "The case of the *Ogeechee*, the American steamer which was seized by the British Government in April while bound from Bremen to New York, is now in the hands of Referee Holman Gregory, who, on August 2, will begin sittings to hear evidence regarding the American ownership of the various items

of the vessel's cargo." According to Hiersemann's May 29 letter, the *Ogeechee* "carried on board one copy of the *Handzeichnungen Spanischer Meister* by Dr. [August L.] Mayer," a title that later appeared in print as a co-publication of the Hispanic Society and Karl W. Hiersemann, featuring sketches by (among many others) El Greco, Goya, Murillo, and Velázquez.[16]

THE GERMAN CONNECTION

From the outset, there was a distinct sleuthing element to the research endeavor that led us to the *Libros de Cabildo*, and there still is. Having established that the books were not "lost" but, along with countless other documents, had been part of the Hispanic Society's holdings for some time, the most persistent and nagging question was not how Huntington acquired such items, but how Hiersemann did. As with Van Doesburg alerting us to what lay waiting in New York, another Dutch colleague of ours, Ron Van Meer, advised us of the potential for finding out more, not only in Leipzig, Hiersemann's base of operation, but also in Berlin. Van Meer shared the results of his investigations most willingly and furnished pivotal contacts.[17] All roads now led to Germany.

The German connection with Mesoamerica, Guatemala in particular, dates back to the late nineteenth century. Capital investments in the coffee industry saw German nationals, and then their Guatemala-born offspring, assume major stakes in what would become the country's leading export, which it still is today, at least among legal commodities. Coffee-driven development saw German-owned plantations come to figure prominently in Guatemala's emergence as a modern nation, but the German presence was also notable in other economic pursuits.[18] A consequence of the dynamic was that German scholars of the day, some of them eminent in their field, the likes of archeologist Eduard Seler (1849–1922) and geographer Karl Sapper (1866–1945), took up residence in Guatemala, often for years on end, to further their careers and advance scientific inquiry.

16. August L. Mayer, *Handzeichnungen Spanischer Meister: 150 Skizzen und Entwürfe von Künstlern des 16. bis 19. Jahrhunderts* (New York and Leipzig: Hispanic Society of America and Verlag Karl W. Hiersemann, 1915).

17. Van Meer has a long-standing interest in Mesoamerican culture and civilization, the Zapotec calendar more specifically. Two of his articles focus on nineteenth-century collecting practices that saw many emblematic artifacts from Mesoamerica taken to Europe, where to this day they are displayed in museums in Austria, Germany, and other countries. See Ron Van Meer, "Philipp Joseph Becker: A German Businessman and Collector in 19th-Century Mexico," in *Baessler-Archiv: Beiträge zur Völkerkunde* 53 (2005): 27–41; and "The Forgotten Collector: Josef Anton Dorenberg (1846–1935)," in *Jahrbuch der Staatlichen Ethnographischen Sammlung Sachsen* 45 (2010): 77–101.

18. See Regina Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala,* 2nd ed. (Guatemala: Edición de la Autora, 1996), for the German presence in Guatemala in general; and Regina Wagner, *The History of Coffee in Guatemala* (Guatemala City: ANACAFE, 2001) for the formative role of German investment in the coffee economy.

During one lengthy sojourn, from September 1895 to October 1897, Seler was invited to Guatemala by his countryman, Gustav Kanter, a German immigrant who ran an extensive cattle ranch at Chaculá, in a remote area of the Department of Huehuetenango adjacent to the border with Mexico. Kanter, whom Seler declared "rules here as a petty prince over a wide kingdom," was an avid bibliophile and collector of artifacts, making a library and a museum part of his living quarters at Hacienda Chaculá.[19] The *hacendado* invited Seler and his soulmate wife, Caecilie Seler-Sachs (1855–1935), to stay at Chaculá while they were engaged in archaeological excavations in the region. When composing his classic work *Die Alten Ansiedlungen von Chaculá* (1901), Seler drew heavily not only on what he and Caecilie had surveyed and unearthed at sites on Kanter's property but also on the contents of Kanter's legendary collection. Seler recorded his stay at Chaculá as "the happiest and most rewarding of our entire trip, without any interference whatsoever to explore and carry out excavations,"[20] a view echoed by his wife, whose descriptions of day-to-day camp life and observations of Mesoamerican mores often register nuances that escaped her husband's attention.[21]

"Seler was not immune to the 'collectionist fever' that afflicts almost all archaeologists," María Teresa Sepúlveda y Herrera states bluntly, "obsessed as he was to form 'complete' collections for their study. In his efforts to augment the holdings of the Museo Etnográfico in Berlin, he wasted no opportunity to hold on to any archaeological object he found in the field." She quotes him as having asserted: "We came to this country to study its antiquities, which is to say, make collections of them." [22] Seler's mindset, we do well to remember, was very much in keeping with how American and European collectors then thought, but in later years even he sensed that the halcyon days of "entrada y saca" were coming to an end, at least in Mexico. Of laws promulgated there to protect national patrimony, Seler wrote:

19. Eduard Seler, *The Ancient Settlements of Chaculá in the Nentón District of the Department of Huehuetenango, Republic of Guatemala*. John M. Weeks, ed. (Lancaster, CA: Labyrinthos, [1901] 2003), 1. For an account of Kanter's notable collection—and its sad pillage and demise—see Carlos Navarrete, *Las esculturas de Chaculá, Huehuetenango,* Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, Cuaderno 31 (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1979).

20. Eduard Seler, "De México a Guatemala por tierra," in María Teresa Sepúlveda y Herrera, *Eduard Seler en México* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, [1897] 1992), 68, his words rendered in Spanish as "el tiempo más grato y alegre de todo nuestro viaje, sin molestias de ningún género a hacer excavaciones y exploraciones."

21. Caecilie Seler-Sachs, 1900, *Auf alten Wegen in Mexiko und Guatemala: Reiseerrinnerungen und Eindrücke aus den Jahren 1895–1897* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1900), 261–292.

22. Sepúlveda y Herrera, *Eduard Seler en México,* 16. Her precise words are: "No permaneció Seler inmune a la enfermedad del 'coleccionismo' que ataca a casi todos los estudiosos de la arqueología; obsesionado por formar colecciones de estudio 'completas', y de aumentar los acervos del Museo Etnográfico de Berlín, no desaprovechó la oportunidad de recoger cuanto objeto arqueológico [que] encontró a flor de tierra." The words she attributes to Seler, rendered in Spanish, are: "Venimos al país a estudiar sus antigüedades, es decir para hacer colecciones de ellas."

> In most parts of the regions we surveyed we had to limit ourselves to observing, taking notes, and collecting pieces in a casual manner or from the odd excavation that presented itself. The short time at my disposal, the restrictions imposed by the authorities on archaeological excavations, and the legal prohibition of exporting antiquities dampened our desire and proclivity to be collectors.[23]

The man whom archaeologist Michael D. Coe considers "the greatest iconographer who ever lived" had the same avidity for collecting books, documents, codices, manuscripts, maps, and other such material.[24] The destiny of these collections, however, was not to prove so providential. Noting that Seler's archaeological collections in time became part of the holdings of the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin, Sepúlveda y Herrera rues the fact that "many colonial-period manuscripts, maps, and documents acquired by him were lost in the bombardments of World War I."[25] Given that Seler was a known contact, contemporary, and source of counsel for Hiersemann – it was on Seler's advice, Van Meer has established, that Hiersemann decided not to purchase for Huntington two Mexican codices deemed to be forgeries – I wondered if perusal of some of Seler's extant papers might shed light, if not on the *Libros de Cabildo,* then on other items that found their way to Germany at the turn of the twentieth century.[26]

Berlin was my first stop. Two institutions there, the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut and the Ethnologisches Museum (the latter known until 1999 as the Museum für Völkerkunde), contain archival materials relating to Seler's six trips to the Americas that began toward the end of 1887.[27] Documentation pertaining to Seler's archaeological excavations, and the collecting and recording practices associated with them, predominates, with

23. Seler, as cited by Sepúlveda y Herrera, "Seler en México," 16, his words rendered in Spanish thus: "En la mayor parte de las regiones recorridas por nosotros tuvimos que limitarnos a ver, a tomar notas y a coleccionar piezas que la casualidad o excavaciones accidentales han hecho aparecer. El poco tiempo de que podía yo disponer, las restricciones impuestas por las autoridades a las excavaciones arqueológicas y la prohibición legal de exportar antigüedades, frenaban nuestro ardor y propensiones de coleccionistas." Mexico's restrictive clamp-down appears not to have had a Guatemalan equivalent.

24. See Donna Urschel, "Love and War: Shell Pendant Reveals Clues to Ancient Toltec Culture," *Library of Congress Information Bulletin* 68:2 (2009), for further praise of Seler on the part of Coe.

25. Sepúlveda y Herrera, "Seler en México," 16–17. She states that "las colecciones arqueológicas reunidas por Seler pasaron a formar parte de los acervos del Museo de Berlín. Pero muchos de los manuscritos, mapas y documentos de la época colonial por él adquiridos, se perdieron durante los bombardeos de la Primera Guerra Mundial." Sepúlveda y Herrera may have meant "los bombardeos de la Segunda Guerra Mundial," as it was during World War II, not World War I, that the elegant Seler mansion at Kaiser-Welhelm Strasse 3 in Steglitz was destroyed. It housed not only a library but a studio where Caecilie indulged her passion for photography. For confirmation of the destruction of the property, see the introductory remarks to Eduard Seler and Caecilie Seler-Sachs, *Cartas de viaje desde México,* Gerardo Hugo Álvarez García, trans. (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, [1889] 2008).

26. Ron Van Meer, "The History of a Falsified Mesoamerican Pictorial Manuscript: The *Codex Moguntiacus*," *Indiana* 27 (2010): 212.

27. Sepúlveda y Herrera, "Seler en México," 7.

far more correspondence related to Mexico than to Guatemala.[28] In the Ethnologisches Museum, archaeological treasures abound, showcased there (with some notable attrition) since the late nineteenth century.[29] Besides stately stelae (Figure 2) from Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa—Albert Napp removed these from the site between 1880 and 1886, severing them from their bases to facilitate packing and transportation—the museum houses artifacts that Seler arranged to have shipped to Berlin, where he had them displayed with no little fanfare in its Mesoamerican gallery.[30]

28. Regarding Seler's exploits in Oaxaca, for example, Adam T. Sellen, *Re-evaluation of the Early Archaeological Excavations from Oaxaca: A Trip to the Seler Archives in Berlin* (Los Angeles: Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, 2006), is most incisive. Sellen's two-week sojourn in Berlin, spent combing through "copious documentation," allowed him "to recuperate provenience and contextual data for artefacts that over time have been divorced from this vital information." Some 13,000 objects from Mexico and Guatemala found their way into the Ethnologisches Museum as a result of the six field excursions undertaken between the years 1887 and 1911 by Seler and his wife, Caecilie.

29. The museum's website (www.smb.museum) offers a comprehensive virtual tour, but nothing compares with seeing its collections in situ. The Mesoamerican gallery is a notable highlight. There, surrounded by artistic expressions from all over the region, the beauty of some Maya pieces is spectacular. While perusing a museum catalogue, I was struck by one object in particular, a Chamá-style painted vase dating to late Classic times (AD 700) that had been found in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, by Erwin Paul Dieseldorff, a German coffee planter and ardent archaeologist. A photograph of this vase appears, in color, as plate 21 in the volume on Maya art by Nikolai Grube and María Gaida, *Die Maya: Schrift und Kunst* (Berlin and Cologne: SMB-Du Mont, 2006). When I went to look at the vase, all I found was an empty space in the display case where it was supposed to be. Maria Gaida, curator for Mesoamerican holdings, informed me that it had been missing since the end of World War II, when the fall of Berlin to the Red Army coincided with widespread looting. In 1991-92, Gaida noted, 55,000 objects taken to the Soviet Union were returned to the Ethnologisches Museum, but the painted vase was not among them. How many artifacts the museum was relieved of is not known. For a Dieseldorff-Seler connection, in which the two men collaborated with Ernst Förstemann to analyze Chamá-style ceramics at length, see Erwin Paul Dieseldorff, Eduard Seler, and Ernst Förstemann, "Two Vases from Chamá," in *Mexican and Central American Antiquities, Calendar Systems, and History* (Washington, DC, Government Printing Office, 1904).

30. Oswaldo Chinchilla Mazariegos, "Las esculturas de Cotzumalguapa en el Museo Etnográfico de Berlín," in *X Simposio de Investigaciones Arqueológicas en Guatemala,* Juan Pedro Laporte and H. Escobedo, eds. (Guatemala: Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología, 1997), 214–226. Chinchilla Mazariegos offers a detailed discussion of the stelae of Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa and how they made their way from Guatemala to Germany. I took the stelae, positioned near the entrance to the Mesoamerican gallery in the Ethnologisches Museum, to be replicas when I first saw them, only for closer inspection to reveal that in fact they are the originals. Seler's acquisitions deserve similar painstaking scrutiny, and, as Sellen has shown in his *Early Archaeological Excavations* with regard to Oaxaca, would surely yield fruitful results. Edward T. Heyn, writing from Berlin on October 10, 1902, and published in *The New York Times* nine days later, offers some trenchant observations, made in anticipation of Seler's visit to New York to attend the International Congress of Americanists later that month. "He [became] Director of the American department of the Museum der Völkerkunde in 1891," Heyn states, noting that same year "Prof. Seler was commissioned by the German Government to attend the American historical exhibition in Madrid, and by order of the royal library of that city wrote an explication of Mexican pictures brought to Europe by Alexander von Humboldt. The work was published in honor of the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America. In 1895 he made a second trip to Mexico and Guatemala at the expense of the Duke of Loubat. He visited the state[s] of Oaxaca, Tehuantepec, and Chiapas. In Oaxaca he found most valuable remains of Zapotec and Mixtec antiquities. While the former are not new to the modern ethnologist, the latter have opened up an entirely foreign civilization. Seler's visit to Guatemala is also of great interest. The large collections of antiquities he brought back were divided between the Berlin Museum and the New York Museum of Natural History." Heyn concludes: "The May[a] people, fortunately for us, have not disappeared in the dark chaos of prehistoric ages, for not only are records written by them [still in existence], but their Spanish conquerors have also given an account of them. Seler's excavations have helped to complete our knowledge of the high state of civilization of these people."

FIGURE 2
Stelae from Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa, Guatemala, Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin

Source: Photo by the author.

Among the other items displayed in the Mesoamerican gallery are stone figures and a stela (Figures 3 and 4) from Quen Santo, a site that captivated Seler during his time at Chaculá. One stone figure (Figure 5) was the subject of a special exhibit during my visit in March 2013, described as "Die Geschichte des Mayakopfs IV Ca 21664/The Story of Maya Head IV Ca 21664."

The following text accompanied the exhibit:

> Maya head IV Ca 21664 was found by Eduard Seler, the pioneer of pre-Columbian studies in Germany, during an expedition through Guatemala at the end of the 19th century. The proprietor of the Maya artifacts excavated by Seler was the financier of this expedition, the American Joseph Florimond Duc de Loubat. He was also the one who, in 1899, offered a collection of American antiquities, including the Maya head, as a donation to the Royal Museum of Ethnology, the predecessor institution of the Ethnological Museum in Berlin. After the head became part of the holdings

FIGURE 3
Stone Figures from Quen Santo, Guatemala, Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin

Source: Photo by the author.

of the Royal Museum of Ethnology, Eduard Seler filled out a catalog card for it in his own hand, which he also furnished with a sketch (Figure 6).

Nothing like this recorded trail came of my combing through the card catalogue of the museum library with document provenance in mind, whether linked

FIGURE 4
Stelae from Quen Santo, Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin

Source: Photo by the author.

to Seler himself or any of his scholarly compatriots. Hoping for better luck elsewhere, I headed off to Leipzig.

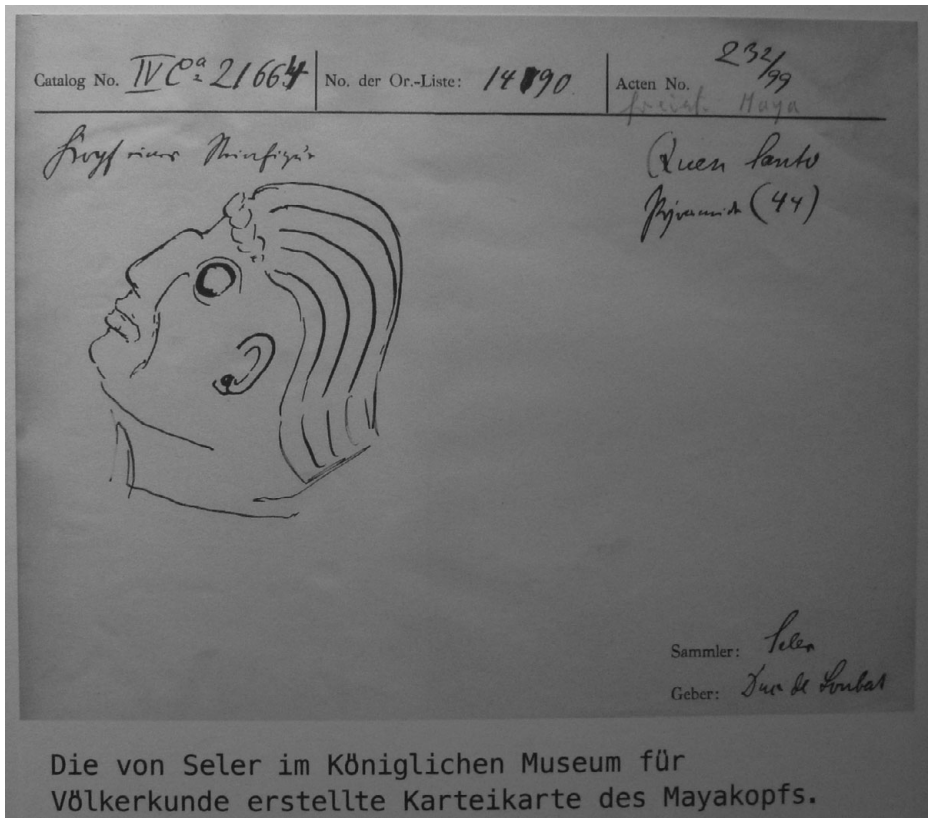
Wilhelm Olbrich records that on September 3, 1884, the date of his 30th birthday ("an seinem 30 Geburstag"), Karl Wilhelm Hiersemann opened

FIGURE 5
Stone Head from Quen Santo, Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin

Source: Photo by the author.

a bookshop and publishing company, a modest two-room affair, under his own name, at Turnerstraße 1 in Leipzig. Capital investment amounted to a mere 6,000 marks. From an early age, Hiersemann's heart had been set on involvement in the world of books, and as a teenager he attended a school in Leipzig that offered appropriate training. Prior to opening his Turnerstraße

FIGURE 6
Register and Sketch by Eduard Seler: Stone Head, Quen Santo, Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin



Source: Photo by the author.

shop, he spent five years, 1876 to 1881, learning more about what would become his distinguished profession by working for book dealers David Nutt and Trübner and Company in London before heading back to Germany, where he was hired by K. F. Koehler's elite Antiquarium in Leipzig. Starting out on his own, Hiersemann identified himself as a "Spezialbuchhandlung für Kunst, Architektur und Kunstgewerbe," a book dealer specializing in art, architecture, and the applied arts. At the time, he made no reference to history, or to the Hispanic world. These were areas of expertise he developed later.

In 1909, four years into his "special relationship" with Huntington and having seen his firm outgrow two interim locations, Hiersemann moved his enterprise

to a stately five-story building at Königstraße (now Goldschmidtstraße) 29, where he employed 70 assistants. The establishment boasted not only office space but a library and exhibition rooms that were much frequented—a veritable "Bücherpalast" (book palace) in the eyes of two of his contemporaries. A printing press on the premises ran off quality imprints (230 titles published by 1924) and Hiersemann's distinctive catalogues, in themselves artistic creations as well as utilitarian compendia of often minutely detailed bibliographical data, provenance, and asking price.[31]

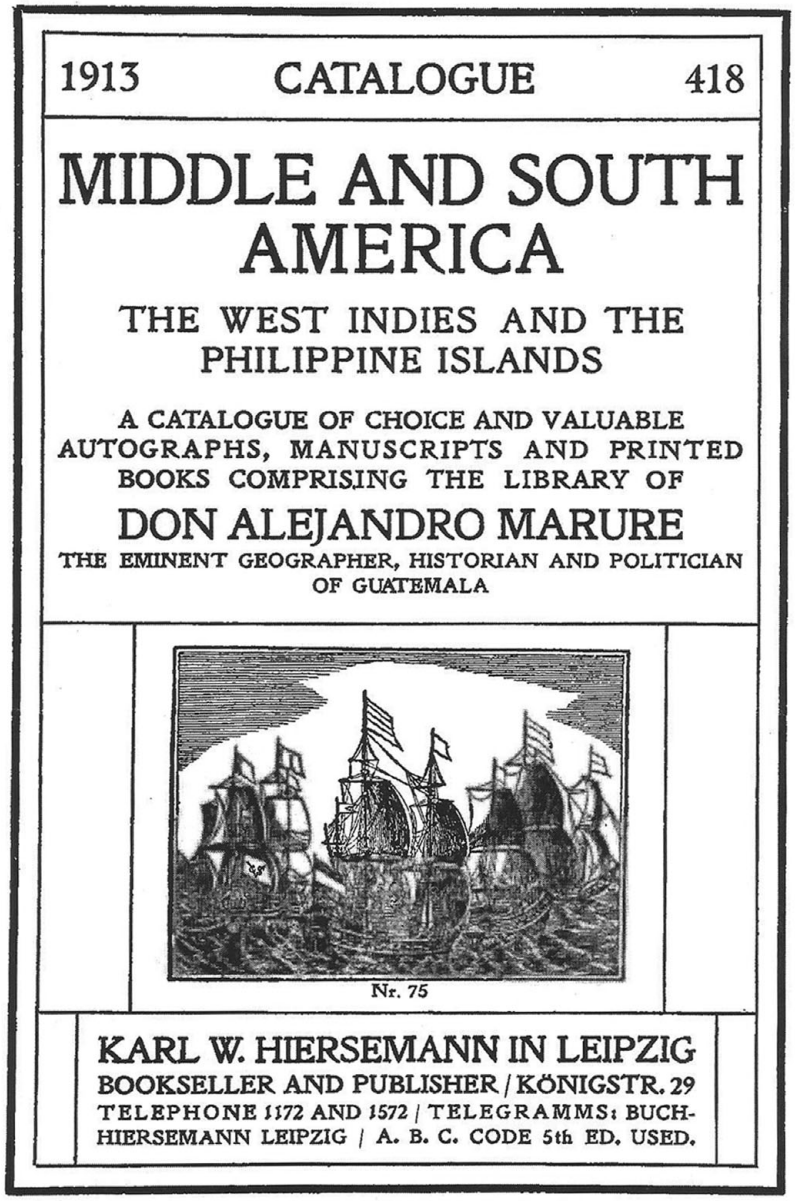
Hiersemann's first catalogue appeared in 1885; some 40 years later his catalogue count had reached 540. The catalogues were wide-ranging but often of singular importance, and regarded internationally as such. In many instances, they featured books and manuscripts Hiersemann had acquired by purchasing notable collections outright—more than 100 libraries in his lifetime. The cover of Hiersemann Catalogue 418 (1913) labels its regional focus as Middle and South America, with the West Indies and the Philippine Islands also represented (Figure 7). Items for sale are said to be "choice and valuable autographs, manuscripts and printed books comprising the library of don Alejandro Marure, the eminent geographer, historian, and politician of Guatemala." In his preface to the catalogue, Hiersemann states that Marure (1803–1851) "had collected quite a considerable number of documents, manuscripts, and books relating to the history of Central America, some of which [are] of exceptional value and importance."[32]

The entries in Catalogue 418, extracts from which are rendered verbatim, are written predominantly in Spanish, with some commentary about the material for sale rendered in German or in English. For example, notes accompanying entry 269, a run of the "Periódico semanario de amigos del estado de Guatemala," state that the wares on offer "[f]ehlt im British Museum" and that they "umfaßt die Periode vom 3. XII 1846 bis 26. IV. 1848." Entry 272 is an "original cloth" edition "with 6 plates" of María Soltera's *A Lady's Ride across Spanish Honduras*, published in London in 1884, "title stamped." An item's state of repair is often noted and, in the case of unpublished documents, the legibility of material commented on. Entry 265, concerning the administration of the "convento de N. Padre Santo Domingo" in the city of San Salvador, mentions that the eighteenth-century manuscript is "muy bien condicionado" and "de letra española menuda, muy regular y bien legible." Entry 245, dealing with "el convento de Nro. P. Sto. Domingo" in Santiago de Guatemala, today

31. Olbrich, *Hundert Jahre Hiersemann*, 10; and Fedor von Zobeltitz and Martin Breslauer, "Als Einführung," in *Werden und Wirken: Ein Festgrüss [für] Karl W. Hiersemann,* Martin Breslauer and Kurt Koehler, eds. (Leipzig: Verlag von K. F. Koehler, 1924), 1–18.

32. Hiersemann, *Middle and South America*, 1.

FIGURE 7
Front Cover of Hiersemann Catalogue 418 (1913)



Source: Photo by the author.

Antigua Guatemala, is a 358-page "manuscrito original de fines del siglo XVI hasta mediados del XVII," with some of its seven distinct parts regrettably "dañadas de humedad" (damaged by humidity) and others written in "letra procesada ó encadenada, bastante difícil á leer." The origin of certain items is noted: entries 233, 234, 235, 236, 248, and 250 are marked "Mit dem Stempel der 'Biblioteca de la univ. de Guatemala'"; entry 238 includes the note "mit dem Stempel der 'Biblioteca de la univ. de Guatemala' und der 'Soziedad econom. de amigos de Guatemala.'"

Of the 563 entries listed in the catalogue, Hiersemann singled out item 239, the "Libros segundo y tercero del Cabildo de la ciudad de Guatemala, de los años 1530–53," as the pick of the lot. He called it "an original manuscript in two volumes," for which he was asking (before Huntington negotiated his hefty discount) 80,000 marks, at the time some $425,000. Hiersemann dedicated almost three catalogue pages to the two volumes, describing their condition and physical appearance as well as their content, which includes the names of dozens if not scores of "the celebrities of the time, conquistadores, governors, bishops, lawyers, etc.," whose actions and deeds are intimated, folio after folio, in this "manuscrito original y único." Careful not to divulge too much, Hiersemann's disclosures serve to whet one's appetite. The opening lines of both *Libros de Cabildo* are transcribed directly into the catalogue, suggesting either that Hiersemann himself had paleographic skills that allowed him to read sixteenth-century Spanish script, or that he knew—and could trust—someone who did.

The catalogue descriptions indicate an impressive command of early Guatemalan history, although in two instances the founding of a former capital (known today as Ciudad Vieja) is attributed incorrectly to Pedro de Alvarado rather than to his brother Jorge. The feats of the former are summed up as follows: "Without doubt, Don Pedro de Alvarado was one of the most outstanding conquistadors of all, having fought in Cuba, México, Guatemala, Yucatán, and even in Perú. A friend of Cortés, Alvarado took part in organizing expeditions to explore the Pacific and was headed for the Moluccas when he died on July 5, 1541."[33] As to how he had got hold of his prize catch, Hiersemann was tight-lipped, remarking only at the close of the entry: "The

33. Hiersemann, *Middle and South America*, 32. The entry in the original reads: "Sin duda D. Pedro de Alvarado fue uno de los aventajados conquistadores, quien peleó en Cuba, México, Guatemala, Yucatán y aun en el Perú. Amigo de Cortés, tomó parte en la organización de expediciones extendidas en el mar Pacífico, y fué para ir á las Islas Molucas, cuando murió el 5 de julio de 1541." Adrián Recinos, *Pedro de Alvarado, conquistador de México y Guatemala* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1952) remains the best study to date of Alvarado and his exploits. The conquistador's hold on Guatemala is examined at length in W. George Lovell, Christopher H. Lutz, and Wendy Kramer, *Atemorizar la tierra: Pedro de Alvarado y la conquista de Guatemala, 1520–1541* (Antigua, Guatemala: Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica and Guatemala City: F & G Editores, [2016] 2017).

volumes carry a most curious Italian seal from the seventeenth century, bearing the inscription 'Giovan Batta. Bombozzo in Crema,' proving that, for three centuries, the books had not been housed in the Guatemala City archive, where they had originally been deposited."[34]

This assertion we know not to be true. Juan Gavarrete assiduously records the existence of the two Cabildo books in an inventory he made—not of Marure's library, but of the holdings of the Biblioteca de la Sección Etnográfica del Museo Nacional. The books were still there when Adolph Francis Bandelier (1840–1914) visited Guatemala City, five years after Gavarrete's *Catálogo de las obras impresas y manuscritos* (1875) was published.[35] We also know that a photographic copy of the *Libros de Cabildo* was made in 1892, and that the originals stayed in Guatemala while the reproduction was sent to Madrid. There it was displayed at the Exposición Hispano-Americana celebrating the 400th anniversary of Columbus's first voyage of discovery.[36] By alluding to "un sello italiano, muy curioso" and emphasizing its antiquity, did Hiersemann truly believe that the *Libros de Cabildo* had not been in a repository in Guatemala for the better part of three centuries prior to his acquiring them? Or did he simply not want to disclose how the cherished books fell in to his hands? How did they make their way into Marure's library in the first place? Might papers in the Hiersemann archive throw any light on how entry 239 in Catalogue 418 so erroneously ends?

REQUIEM IN LEIPZIG

Hiersemann's greatest achievement had nothing to do with books per se. Rather, it was steering his business through World War I and continuing to run it successfully until his death in September 1928, whereupon his son Anton took over. Perhaps even more remarkable is that the Hiersemann premises on Königstraße were spared the devastating aerial bombardment that adjacent parts of Leipzig suffered during World War II, when in December 1943 and again in February 1944 much of the city center was leveled. In April 1945, the main building of the venerable Universität Leipzig, the Augusteum, as well as the famous Gewandhaus (the city concert hall), also suffered near-total destruction. Both are a ten-minute walk from Königstraße.

34. Hiersemann, *Middle and South America*, 33. The entry in the original reads: "Los volúmenes llevan un sello italiano, muy curioso, del siglo XVII, con la inscripción 'Giovan Batta. Bombozzo in Crema,' lo que prueva que los libros fueron desde tres siglos enajenados al archivo de la ciudad de Guatemala, donde pararon originariamente."

35. Juan Gavarrete, *Catálogo de las obras impresas y manuscritos de que actualmente se compone la Biblioteca de la Sección Etnográfica del Museo Nacional* (Guatemala: Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, 1875).

36. Exposicion Hispano-Americana, *Catálogo general de la Exposición Hispano-Americana de Madrid, 1892,* Vol. 1 (Madrid : Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1893).

Figure 8

Front Façade, Former Hiersemann "Bücherpalast" at Königstraße 29, Leipzig

Source: Photo by the author.

Overseeing the Hiersemann enterprise under Soviet strictures in the German Democratic Republic proved problematic, culminating in liquidation and its being relocated to Stuttgart in 1950. There, Anton's son Gerd assumed charge after his father's death in 1969. Gerd's son, Florian, has been at the helm in Stuttgart since 2005, marking four generations of Hiersemann book dealing. Königstraße has long since been renamed Goldschmidtstraße, after Henriette Goldschmidt (1825–1920), an educator, social worker, and women's rights activist, but the building at number 29, now refurbished as elegant apartments, retains its Hiersemann heritage and architectural insignia (Figures 8 and 9).

Despite the decision to move the Hiersemann Verlag to Stuttgart, an encyclopedic but quirky Zettelkatalog (card catalogue) remained in Leipzig, entrusted for safekeeping to the city's Zentralantiquariat before being acquired by the Bibliotheca Albertina of the Universität Leipzig, where it is housed today in the library's Special Collections. This I learned courtesy of Ron Van Meer, who informed me by email on August 2, 2012 that the card catalogue

FIGURE 9
Detail, Front Façade, Former Hiersemann "Bücherpalast" at Königstraße 29, Leipzig

Source: Photo by the author.

contains not only "detailed information on most of the books, manuscripts, and documents that were purchased and sold by K. W. Hiersemann" but also "sometimes contains information about the former owner, purchasing price, and so forth." Lest I get my hopes up too high, Van Meer added, "However, it is not complete, as I have found out when consulting this catalogue." Following a flurry of exchanges between us, Van Meer wrote on November 22, 2012 to the head of Special Collections at the Hauptbibliothek, Thomas Döring, after I had let him know which item (number 239) in which catalogue (number 418) interested us most. "Is there a card in the card catalogue that can tell us something about the provenience of this manuscript," Van Meer inquired of Döring, only for Döring to reply: "I regret, but I can't find any card in the Zettelkatalog relating to the manuscript [in which] you are interested."

A few weeks ahead of a much anticipated trip to Leipzig in March 2013, ever hopeful, I wrote to Döring myself. "What we are most interested in is how those two *Libros de Cabildo* fell into Hiersemann's hands," I stressed. "Finding out any details about that acquisition and sale is the main purpose of my visit

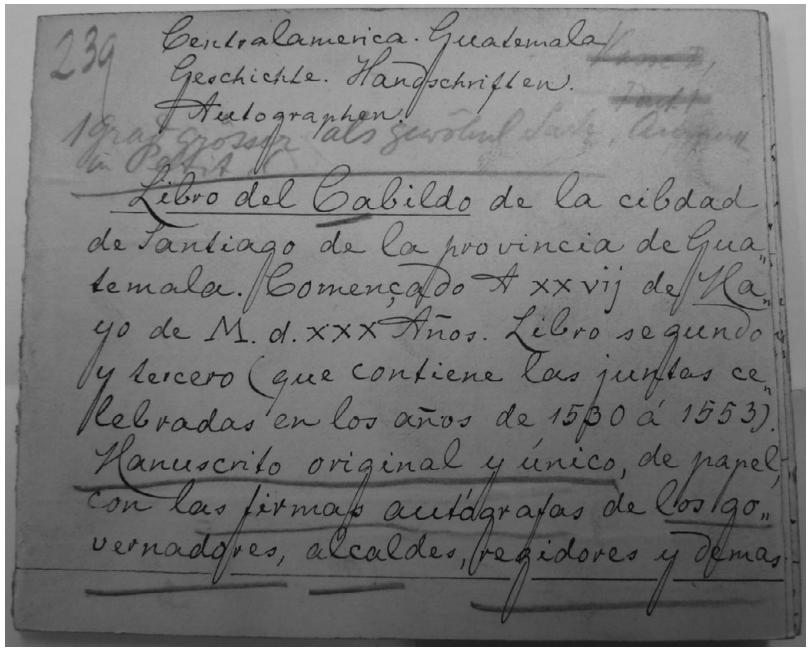
to Leipzig." In the interval between Van Meer's inquiry and my own, Döring had taken another look at the Zettelkatalog and found some items that were indeed of interest. His response raised my spirits and sped me on my way. "I have picked [out] the cards about the [L]ibro[s] de Cabildo and have deposited them in the Reading Room for you," he informed me. "But you can see other cards, if you want." Off I went.

Not even the cold of a bitter April morning—snow had fallen and the entrance to the Bibliotheca Albertina had just been cleared—could extinguish the glow I harbored knowing that in Special Collections something lay waiting. Döring was unable to greet me but referred me to Steffen Hoffmann: "[He] is your contact person. He knows the score." Hoffmann welcomed me, assigned me a desk, and brought me what Döring had pulled from the Zettelkatalog. Pointing to one item, he said: "Thomas told me to show you this first." What he gave me was a small booklet, 11 cm x 9 cm. Inside, I found 18 pages of neatly handwritten text worded identically to the notes for entry number 239 in catalogue 418 (Figure 10). The script, in ink, has key words underlined in pencil, which is also used to provide layout instructions for the printer. In the bottom left corner of the last page of the booklet is scribbled "913 Lambert LC 6 [or 0] 8."

Perusal of other cards in the Zettelkatalog suggests a system whereby the name of the person from whom Hiersemann acquired an item appears on it as an identifier, as may be the case with "Lambert." The name of the person who purchased an item appears on the back of some cards, often along with the location of where the transaction took place, for instance a book fair outside of Germany if business was not conducted in or from Leipzig. The carefully composed draft of the booklet was penned most likely by Hiersemann himself – or so believes Van Meer, with whom I later shared a copy that Hoffmann authorized be made. I asked Van Meer if he thought the handwriting could be Seler's, or that of his former student and associate, Walter Lehmann, who was in Mexico and Central America between 1907 and 1909, around the time the *Libros de Cabildo* might have been spirited away.[37]

37. Shortly before his death on September 12, 2014, I had occasion to speak with the noted historian and genealogist of Guatemala, Ramiro Ordóñez Jonama. He made some off-handed remarks about the fate of the *Libros de Cabildo* at a book launch we were attending, which took place on July 26. He followed these up, on August 8, 2014, with an email regarding the *Libro Segundo*, making specific reference to Beatriz de la Cueva, the wife of Pedro de Alvarado. Sharing what he had to say with mutual friend and colleague Jorge Luján Muñoz, Ordóñez Jonama informed us: "Some 40 years ago, during a conversation I had with Don Edgar [Juan] Aparicio (1910–1982), he told me that Doña Beatriz de la Cueva had signed herself as 'la sin ventura' (The Unfortunate One) in the *Libro Segundo de Cabildo de la Ciudad de Guatemala*. He also told me that the book was lost, and that it had been lent, in confidence, to Dr. Guillermo Salazar, who wished to consult it for a work he was writing. However, Salazar was an opponent of the regime of Manuel Estrada Cabrera, and for political reasons, had to flee Guatemala precipitously. He headed for

FIGURE 10
Handwritten text of Entry 239 in Hiersemann Catalogue 418 (1913)



Source: Photo by the author. Entry 239 describes the second and third books of the Cabildo de la Ciudad de Guatemala, from the years 1530–53. The Zettelkatalog in which a booklet was found for entry 239 is housed in the Special Collections of the Bibliotheca Albertina at Universität Leipzig.

"It's definitely not Seler's handwriting," Van Meer volunteered when he wrote to me on July 19, 2013. "And it's not Lehmann's either. In fact, it appears to me that the handwriting was either Hiersemann's or from a close collaborator.

Mexico, and it was never established whether he took the book with him or left it behind in Guatemala, perhaps in the care of a trusted friend or a member of his family. Although Salazar was able to return to Guatemala, he never offered any satisfactory explanation, and there the matter has rested. This little tale has always stuck in my mind, with a feeling of frustration and sadness. One might suppose that, while in exile, Salazar sold the book to obtain some necessary resources, and that the book had thus ended up in the hands of some bibliophile or collector. But this is mere conjecture."

I had earlier told Luján Muñoz about my conversation with Ordóñez Jonama, which prompted him to propose to Ordóñez Jonama that "since he had gathered novel, hitherto unknown information, it would be worthwhile to write an article about it." Ordóñez Jonama declined Luján Muñoz's overture, considering what he had to relay no more than an "anecdote" that "did not warrant writing an article." He was content to close our exchange by stating that I could make use of what he had told me as best I saw fit. "It's what don Edgar Juan Aparicio y Aparicio told me about the *Libro Segundo de Cabildo* de Guatemala, which has fortunately reappeared." In his remarks, he made no reference to the *Libro Tercero de Cabildo.* The man who Aparicio y Aparicio implicates, Guillermo Salazar, was one of the student activists who, in 1898, founded the satirical newspaper *No Nos Tientes.* President Manuel Estrada Cabrera, heavy-handed ruler of Guatemala from 1898 to 1920, banned the paper in 1908 for its anti-government rhetoric. Salazar fled to Mexico, supposedly to escape the retribution of Estrada Cabrera, in the early 1900s, perhaps (as Ordóñez Jonama suggests) taking the *Libro Segundo de Cabildo* with him.

However, the handwriting was on purpose written in a very clear hand so that the text could be copied easily by the typesetter when preparing it to appear in the sales catalogue. I've come across the exact same handwriting for other entries, such as the 'Genealogy of Macuilxochitl,' now in the Hispanic Society of America" – and which also found its way to New York via Hiersemann's office in Leipzig.[38]

In vain, I scoured the booklet for any trace of provenance more definitive than the "sello italiano, muy curioso" and the enigmatic "Lambert" on its last page. Hoffmann gave me permission to enter the stacks of Special Collections and browse through the Zettelkatalog's 200 or so wooden boxes with his assistant, Marcel Schneider. This concession I relished but it did not lead me to any further reward for the task then immediately at hand. More exhaustive scrutiny of the Hiersemann archive one day may reveal the source from which the Leipzig bookseller acquired the *Libros de Cabildo*. For now, we must content ourselves with knowing that a source long believed lost is most decidedly not, while the search for others also thought lost continues.[39]

Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario

W. GEORGE LOVELL

38. See Codding, *Tesoros de la Hispanic* Society, 254. Van Meer is convinced that the handwriting on Figure 10 is not that of Eduard Seler, a view supported by comparing it with the handwriting featured in Figure 6, which is known to be his. The Hiersemann-Seler connection alluded to earlier resulted in at least part of Seler's library being acquired by Hiersemann, as von Zobeltitz and Breslauer, in Breslauer and Koehler, *Werden und Wirken*, 11, diligently record. This transaction took place in 1921, one year before Seler's death. Cards in the Zettelkatalog in Leipzig also indicate that Seler purchased books from Hiersemann, as did Lehmann, who sold him items too.

39. Regarding the whereabouts of other missing documents, for instance *Libros de Cabildo* numbers five (1562–1571), six (1571–1577), and eight (1589–1599), we are as much in the dark as before. However, a register found by Miguel Alberto Paredes Vides, director of the Archivo Histórico Municipal de la Ciudad de La Antigua Guatemala, indicates that in 1835 books six and eight (but not book five) formed part of a run of *Libros de Cabildo* then in the archive's holdings. See "Por orden del Gobierno de 1 de mayo de 1835 se mandaron volverse los libros de actas desde el año de 1530 hasta 1775" (Gobierno de la República de Guatemala, 1835), an inventory found by Paredes that spans the years from 1530 to 1775 and lists 48 *Libros de Cabildo* in all. After that inventory was made, the *Libros de Cabildo,* like so many other documentary treasures, became an endangered species. The loss of Guatemalan national patrimony, in which the complicity of Guatemalan nationals is manifestly clear, despite the best efforts of others to prevent it, is discussed at length in Kramer, Lovell, and Lutz, "Pillage in the Archives" and *Saqueo en el archivo.* It saddens me immensely – see W. George Lovell, *Conquest and Survival in Colonial Guatemala: A Historical Geography of the Cuchumatán Highlands, 1500-1821* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, [1985], 2015), 92 and 150 for two specific instances – to return to Guatemala for research forays in the Archivo General de Centro América, only to find that documents I had consulted on previous visits could no longer be located.