

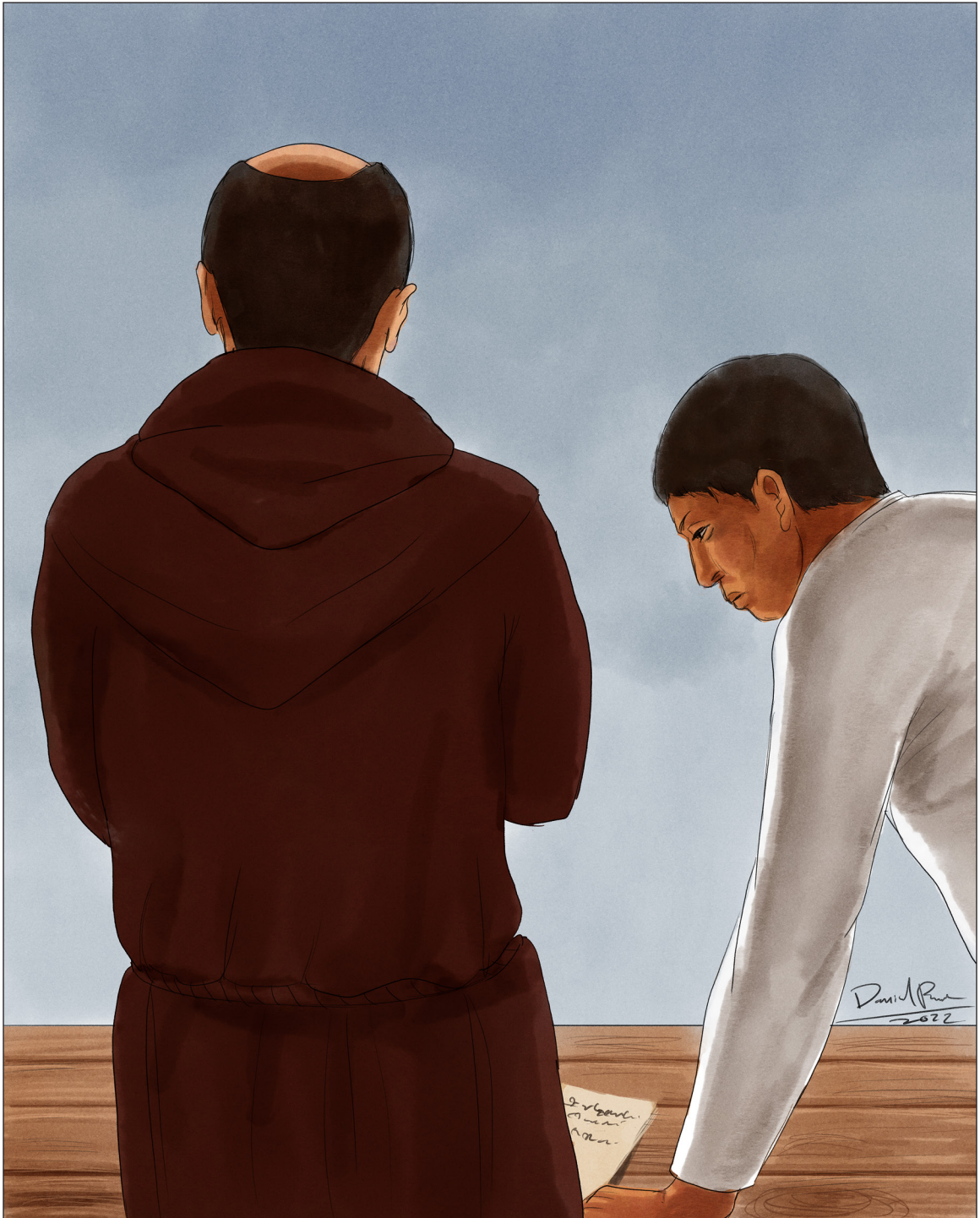
“*Que los indios de Yucatán merecen que el rey les favorezca*” – A New Understanding of the Structure, Composition, and Copyists of Diego de Landa’s *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*

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Centrally important for our current knowledge of many aspects of Maya culture, the manuscript known as the “Account of the Things of Yucatan” (Relación de las cosas de Yucatán), attributed to the Franciscan friar Fray Diego de Landa, is still shrouded in many mysteries. In terms of understanding the origin, authors, context, creation, copyists, and sources of this “Account” or Relación, many issues remain unresolved. Doubts remain as to its authorship, its strange structure and curious maps and illustrations, as well as who actually composed the Account we know today. In this article, we examine the history of this enigmatic Account and offer evidence to help resolve the matter of the origins of the manuscript, offering information on its copyists, its purpose, and the what, when, who, how, why, and where of its creation.

Keywords: *Diego de Landa; Relación de las cosas de Yucatán; Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas; Juan López de Velasco; quire marks.*



Fray Diego de Landa's *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* is arguably the most important primary source for any understanding of contact period Maya culture and religion. Serving both as a "Rosetta Stone" for the decipherment of the phonetic nature of the Maya script, as well as an important eye-witness missionary account of Maya culture and religion, Landa's *Relación* is a crucial source of information on Maya culture. In January 2022, we worked on Landa's *Relación* in Bonn, Germany, as part of the forthcoming critical edition of the manuscript. While going through detailed photos of the manuscript folios, we realized that the current binding of the manuscript is out of order—and consequently, so are all its published versions and translations. The key to this new understanding of the manuscript's composition is based on four complementary analyses: (1) determination of the order of the quire marks¹; (2) examination of the damage on the edges of the folios; (3) study of the scribal hands; and (4) analyses of internal evidence based on the contents of the manuscript. Based on these analyses, the authors were able to rearrange the manuscript's folios.



The examination of the structure of the manuscript led us to expand the study towards a more comprehensive analysis of its composition and contents, as well as the probable identity of its copyists. These analyses bring together recent studies of copyists' handwriting by John Chuchiak and the dating and physical appearance of the Account by Harri Kettunen (2020). In this article, we offer evidence to help resolve the mystery of the manuscript itself, offering information about its purpose and the *what, when, who, how, why* and *where* of its creation.

What? – What is the Account

What exactly is the Account? Beyond a doubt, the compilation that we know, and that scholars since the 19th century believed to be Fray Diego de Landa's *Relation of the Things of Yucatan*, is not what it seems (see arguments in Restall et al. 2023). It is not an *Account* so much as an extracted copy of notes taken from an original manuscript or manuscripts, or a *Recopilación*, authored by Landa. But what manuscripts or papers did the copyists have access to for their extraction of information from Yucatan?

The title page, copied by one of the scribes from the manuscript held in the archive of the *Escribanía de Cámara* of the Council of the Indies, tells us clearly that it was an "Account of the things of Yucatan taken from the writings of the padre fray Diego de Landa of the order of St. Francis." How and when could a scribe or copyist have gained access to Landa's papers in Spain?

The handwriting and paper analysis of the watermarks recently published by Harri Kettunen (2020) reduced the possible period in which this extract or copied notes could have been made from the original manuscript. In his study of the provenience and dating of the watermarks known as the *peregrino* Kettunen (2020:62) reveals that 1574 is the mean date for (and has the highest concentration of) all instances of dated and "provenanced *peregrinos* in the consulted sources." A second "hand with a flower" watermark, dating to between 1561 and 1591, is also found on the paper

¹The term "quire" is used in bookbinding to denote a "gathering" or a "section," of "folded sheets gathered together each gathering or section constituting a *quaternion*, from which the name of our word "quire" is derived." See Diehl (1980:14).

of the *Account*, mostly on the blank pages at the beginning and end of the manuscript which appear to be made from paper produced and used in and around Madrid and Toledo during roughly the same period (Kettunen 2020:63). These two instrumental observations indicate that the earliest date that the scribes of the *Account* could have made their notes is during the final three decades of the 16th century.

At the top of folio 1r of the *Account* is the Roman numeral date of **MDLXVI** (1566), which the scribe indicates as being the date of the original manuscript from which he took his notes. Clendinnen (2003: 125) suggested that in 1566, “after the committee had entered its judgement, in the quiet of a Spanish monastery, he wrote his *Relación*.” However, this (i.e., writing the *Relación* after the judgment) is not possible as Landa did not receive his “judgment” until 1569. Most scholars have observed that the surviving manuscript was an incomplete text, yet as scholars have recently shown, they otherwise accepted and treated it as a single work produced by Landa in 1566 (Restall et al. 2023). This brings us to the question of when could any paper or manuscript written by Landa have arrived in Spain? And more importantly, when did the scribes make their notes on the *Account*’s late 16th century paper?

When? – When did Landa present his writings and when was our Account written?

The Landa-Toral affair concerning Landa’s alleged illegal usurpation of the inquisitorial jurisdiction of a bishop in his infamous 1562 *auto-da-fé* of Mani created the need for Landa to present information before the Council of the Indies and the Crown (Chuchiak 2005:614-618; Clendinnen 2003:97-100; Restall et al. 2023:22-27). After having received information against Landa, the King issued a royal order on February 26th 1564 for Landa and three of his fellow friar-inquisitors to be returned to Spain.² Before being recalled in 1564, however, Landa decided in late March 1563 to leave to personally meet “face to face” with King Philip II and give him “an account of the things of this land” (Lizana 1633:folio 66v). Shortly after his arrival in Spain, he traveled to Toledo and then to Madrid where he prepared to present himself to the Council of the Indies and request a personal visitation with the King. He brought with him a massive amount of information: letters, *memoriales*, and other writings which he “submitted to the Council of the Indies” during one of his two audiences before the Council from 1564-1566.³

Landa first appeared before the President of the Council of the Indies, Francisco Tello de Sandoval (President from 1564-1567) and his councilors, presenting them with his evidence in late 1564, including a *recopilación* of materials he had compiled and brought with him to justify his actions and to speak to the natives’ idolatries needing remedy. Tello de Sandoval, a royal *visitador* in Mexico who personally had conducted idolatry trials against Zapotecs in Oaxaca in 1543-1544,

² See *Real cédula al alcalde mayor de Yucatán que Fray Diego de Landa, Fray Pedro de Ciudad Rodrigo, Fray Miguel de la Puebla, y Fray Juan Pizarro de la orden de San Francisco sean enviados a estos reinos con la informaciones y autos en contra de ellos*, 26 de febrero, Barcelona, 1564, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B, 4 folios.

³ See *Memorial de Fray Diego de Landa al Rey y al Consejo de Indias presentando varias probanzas y documentos para su defensa en el asunto de la idolatría de los indios*, Sin fecha, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B; also see *Catalogo de las consultas del Consejo de Indias*, pp. 366, 624.

was sympathetic, preferring to take no action against Landa. In their decision and accord with the King to remit the case to the Franciscan order, they noted that they had “reviewed the testimonies, information, and other documents and reports presented before us.”⁴ Shortly after, on February 13, 1565, the Crown ordered that copies of the materials and documentation be made and sent to the Provincial of the Order.⁵

After this, Landa was ordered to stay close to Court and finally notified of the formal charges against him on March 6, 1565.⁶ Landa spent 1565 to 1566 in Toledo and Ocaña compiling even more information, including most probably completing the text or *recopilación* from which the *Account* came and which he no doubt had begun in Yucatan (Restall et al. 2023:325-326). He hinted at this later in 1565, stating that besides what he had already submitted he also had “other papers and *memorias* which if Your Majesty should be served I will submit, and they will greatly help in knowing and inquiring about the truth of these things.”⁷ In 1566, Landa reported that while at Court in Madrid he wrote and submitted a longer report to the Council detailing that the Maya were “very evil idolaters” which he argued “can be confirmed in the summary information that I presented before the Council” (see discussion in Restall et al. 2023:394-395).⁸

Landa also personally met twice with King Philip II, once in 1566 (as part of the process of Landa’s trial in the Council of the Indies) and again in 1569, at the request of the monarch who wanted to “consult and communicate with him on several very important matters” (Ayeta 1695, folio 21r). Philip II was undoubtedly in the process of ordering the creation of Inquisition Tribunals in the New World (and he may have consulted with Landa about his eventual exemption of the Indians from the Inquisition’s jurisdiction) on January 25, 1569 (Chuchiak 2012:81). Curiously, Landa’s own exoneration came shortly after in the form of the decision of Fray Antonio de Cordoba, the new Provincial Minister of the Order in the province of Castile, just days after the King created the Inquisition tribunals of the New World.⁹

Based on this timeline, Landa likely presented some or all of the papers at various meetings with the Council of the Indies from 1564-1566. We do have records that Landa submitted materials which amounted to more than 321 folios (more than 642 pages) worth of documentation.¹⁰ It may be possible that the now lost *recopilación*, or some part of it, was submitted to the Council of the

⁴ See *Auto del Consejo de las Indias, por el cual mandan que se remite al Provincial de Castilla el negocio de Fray Diego de Landa*, Madrid, 30 de enero, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B, 1 folio.

⁵ *Cedula de su Majestad para que el Provincial de San Francisco haga justicia en el negocio de Fray Diego de Landa*, 13 de febrero, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B, 2 folios.

⁶ *Cargos hechos contra Fray Diego de Landa por Fray Francisco de Guzmán*, 6 de marzo, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B, 10 folios.

⁷ *Memorial de Fray Diego de Landa sobre su llegado a corte y su negocio con el Consejo de Indias*, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B, 16 folios.

⁸ See *Respuesta de Fray Diego de Landa a los cargos hechos por Fray Francisco Guzmán*, 1566, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B, 2 folios.

⁹ *Sentencia del padre Fray Antonio de Córdoba, Ministro Provincial de la Orden de San Francisco de la Provincia de Castilla*, Toledo, 29 de enero, 1569, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B.

¹⁰ See *Inventario de los papeles que existen en la Escribanía de Cámara del Consejo de Indias y causas que en él tuvieron origen y se fenecieron*, Volumen 1, 1547-1738, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Códices, Libro 1135, folio 136r.

Indies in 1566, the date on the *Account* (Restall et al. 2023:395). But the question remains: who were the scribes, and how and why did they make the copy of the *Account* we have today?¹¹

Who, How and Why? – Who were the scribes or copyists, how did they transcribe extracts in the Account, and why did they do it?

Who would have had access to Landa's papers and a possible *recopilación*? The answer to that question requires a brief description of the secret nature of the Council of the Indies' documentation and the restriction of access to those papers (see Restall et al. 2023:390-404). All papers, memorials and letters submitted to the *Consejo de las Indias* became property of the Crown and held in absolute secrecy. As the Crown ordered, all papers submitted were not to be "returned to the said parties" but were "to remain in the custody of the secretaries" and "shall be kept secret, so as to prevent their being seen or read by anyone not in possession of the secrets of the Council."¹²

Documentation like Landa's *recopilación* was privileged and only seen or transcribed by officials with permission of the Council. Initially only the *Cronistas* and the Secretaries of the *Escribanía de Cámara* of the Crown could access or see the documentation. The ordinances required that the secretary of the Chamber of the Council of the Indies keep "a book where they should place the names of those who took papers out of the archive."¹³ This book was kept in the *armarios* where the papers of the Indies were archived. The Secretaries had to "take notice which persons were given or had documents handed over to them" so that "they could know which papers are missing, and who has them, and from whom they should ask for them."¹⁴ Luckily the original inventory list for the judicial papers of the period still exists, and it notes on folio 136r that, in the case against Landa, 321 folios of documents existed in the archive.¹⁵

Although initially very few, outside of the Councilors and the official secretaries, would have had access to the originals, this changed in 1571 when the Crown created the position of *Cronista y Cosmógrafo Mayor*.¹⁶ After 1571, then, the hands who copied from the original would have been those of the *Cronistas* themselves. The secretaries of the *Cámara* were not authorized to copy the notes. Instead, the new law required the *Cronista* to make his own notes and copies by hand and that "all descriptions thus made should be organized, kept and held in total secret without communicating them, nor allowing anyone else to see them, only allowing those whom the Council

¹¹ Tozzer believed that it would be "impossible to ascertain the date in which this copy was written." (p. viii), but as argued below this is not the case.

¹² See *Recopilación de las Leyes de Indias*, Lib. II, Tit 2, Law 55 (Vol. 1, p. 245).

¹³ Ley 90: "Que ay libro donde se asienten los que sacaren del archivo," in *Ordenanzas reales sobre el Consejo de Indias*, Valladolid: Imprenta del Licenciado Varez de Castro, 1603, folio 16v.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, folio 16v.

¹⁵ *Inventario de los papeles que existen en la Escribanía de Cámara del Consejo de Indias y causas que en él tuvieron origen y se fenecieron*, Volumen 1, 1547-1738, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Códices, Libro 1135, folio 136r.

¹⁶ In a *consulta* the Council deliberated and proposed candidates for the two now separated positions. See *Siendo conveniente la separación de los oficios de cosmógrafo y cronista mayor de Indias*, Madrid, 12 de febrero, 1596, AGI, Indiferente General, 743, N. 209, 2 folios. The King's response in the margins stated "Concerning the position of *cronista*, give it to Antonio de Herrera, giving him the office and stipend of the current holder."

permits by special order to consult them.”¹⁷

Knowing this, Chuchiak began the painstaking compilation of handwriting samples of the *Cronistas of the Indies*, who were the only people with access to the secret archives and papers that arrived from the Indies. However, even the *Cronistas* often needed special permissions to access specific documents.¹⁸ In sum, the *Cronistas* by law had to extract notes from the official documents and reports and carefully return the originals to the archive. No one besides the secretaries of the Council or the *Cronista Mayor* was allowed access to any of the reports of the Indies, or the letters and *memoriales* of the friars and colonists, as these were essentially state secrets.

After a review of the minutes of the Council of the Indies, the *cedulario* of the royal orders issued during the time period, the lives and work of the first five *cronistas* were reviewed in detail. Out of the first five chroniclers, López de Velasco’s successor served merely a month, a third (Juan Arias de Loyola, 1591-1594) was fired for lack of production after several years; and a fourth (Pedro Ambrosio Orderiz, 1594) served for a little under half a year.¹⁹ Arias de Loyola left behind few written or extracted notes, and for this reason he was eventually terminated in 1594 for not doing his job.²⁰ After Arias, the Council appointed Pedro Ambrosio Orderiz²¹ who was replaced in less than a year after he was sent to Seville to conduct astronomical and other scientific observations.²²

Having had serious problems with the holders of the dual office of Cosmographer and *Cronista*, the Council of the Indies decided to separate the two positions in February of 1596, only four months after the last holder of the office left the post.²³ The Crown agreed and issued new orders for the post of *Cronista Mayor* which were communicated in March 1596 to the new holder of the office, Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas.²⁴

After this review – and considering the paleography and dating of most of the handwriting (which appears to date from the period 1560-1630) and the evidence of the watermarks (1561-1595)

¹⁷ Ibid., folio 22r.

¹⁸ For instance, the Chronicler Juan López de Velasco needed a special royal order to access and have the entire library and collection of the writings of Fray Bartolome de las Casas brought from the Dominican *Colegio de San Gregorio* in Valladolid to Madrid, where he worked in the Royal Palace. See *Real cédula a Juan López de Velasco, cronista, para que tenga en su poder las obras del obispo de Chiapa que se trajeron de Valladolid*, San Lorenzo, 25 de septiembre, 1579, AGI, Indiferente General, 426, Libro 26, folio 178r.

¹⁹ *Real Provisión al licenciado Juan Arias de Loyola, dándole título de cronista de Indias, en lugar de Juan López de Velasco, asignándole 400 ducados de salario*, San Lorenzo, 19 de octubre, 1591, AGI, Indiferente General, 426, Libro 28, folios 110v-112r.

²⁰ *Sobre la conveniencia de denegar la pretensión del licenciado Arias de Loyola, cronista, de que se le pague su salario, no habiendo cumplido con su obligación de escribir la historia*, Madrid, 8 de abril, 1594, AGI, Indiferente General, 742, N.153, 2 folios.

²¹ *Real Provisión a Pedro Ambrosio Onderiz, cosmógrafo mayor, dándole título de cronista mayor de Indias y señalándole un salario de 400 ducados*, San Lorenzo, 16 de septiembre, 1594, AGI, Indiferente General, 426, Libro 28, folios 217r-218r.

²² *Carta acordada del Consejo a Diego Ruíz Osorio, su receptor, dándole orden de pago de 400 reales a Pedro Ambrosio Orderiz, cosmógrafo y cronista mayor, para gastos de su viaje hasta Sevilla*, Madrid, AGI, Indiferente General, 426, Libro 28, folio 225r-225v.

²³ *Consulta del Consejo de Indias sobre la separación de los oficios de cosmógrafo y cronista mayor de Indias*, 12 de febrero, 1596, AGI, Indiferente General, 743, N.209, 2 folios.

²⁴ *Consulta del Consejo para informar a Antonio de Herrera de las condiciones puestas por su majestad para hacerle merced del oficio de cronista de Indias*, Madrid, 28 de marzo, 1596, AGI, Indiferente General, 743, N.229BIS, 2 folios.

– it became obvious that only two contenders had potential access to extract material from Landa’s original papers submitted to the Council from 1564-1566. The first was a prolific compiler and extractor of documentation on cosmography, geography, and history – Don Juan López de Velasco (years in office as cosmographer and royal chronicler: 1571-1591) – who appears to have been Scribe A²⁵ (see Chuchiak’s arguments in Restall et al. 2023:411-413) and a prolific historian – Don Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas (arguably Spain’s first professional historian) – who appears to be Scribe B (see Chuchiak’s arguments in Restall et al. 2023:413-417) (see Table 1).²⁶

Based on a comprehensive paleographic analysis of the handwriting of the manuscript, in conjunction with recent work on the dating of the watermarks on the paper of the *Account*, this article offers a robust argument for when the *Account* was written, and how many stages and additions were made after the initial copying began as early as 1571. In another forthcoming article we will present more conclusive documentation and evidence to offer definitive proof of the identities of the two major copyists of the Landa Account (Scribe A and Scribe B).

Where? – Where did the Scribes extract their notes from Landa’s Account?

The final question to answer about the composition of the *Account* is where might the two major copyists have consulted the original manuscript and subsequently written their extracted notes? All evidence points to the Royal Palace or *Alcazar* of Madrid, where the Council of the Indies took up residence in the late 1540s and remained until a terrible fire destroyed the Palace in 1734, taking with it a great deal of precious artwork and a considerable amount of the papers, documents, volumes, and original relations of the Council of the Indies (see Castaño Perea 2012:181-183 and Checa 1994:7,17).

In 1571, shortly before naming the first *Crónista Mayor y Cosmografo de las Indias*, King Phillip II ordered “that henceforth the Council of the Indies shall reside together with a president thereof in our capital near our person.”²⁷ This order ceased the Council’s previous re-locations that

²⁵ A comparative analysis of Juan López de Velasco’s handwriting and the script of Scribe A in the *Account* share a majority of their characteristic brush strokes, inclination, curvature and all of the other diagnostic characteristics which mark the individual style of handwriting of a scribe. Even with the subtle variance in the scripts seen in the *Account*, an examination of all examples of a letter within each sample, offers us the underlying structure of a given individual’s handwriting. The systemic similarities between the samples all tend to show the similar characteristics of Scribe A and López de Velasco’s handwriting. A comparison of these letter forms across a three decade period of documents produced by Juan López de Velasco suggests evidence that he was indeed Scribe A in our *Account*.

²⁶ As argued elsewhere, a paleographic comparative handwriting analysis of the script of Scribe B, compared to the known handwriting of Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, also suggests a positive identification of Antonio de Herrera as the identity of Scribe B. Just like in the case of Juan López de Velasco, the systemic similarities between the samples, including the major characteristics of the use and direction of the quill and writing, as well as the relative height of capital and lowercase lettering, all tend to show these characteristics of Antonio de Herrera’s handwriting. A similar comparison of these letter forms across a three-decade period of documents in the varied types of handwriting styles produced by Antonio de Herrera suggests strong evidence that he was indeed Scribe B in our *Account*.

²⁷ See *Cédula de Felipe II de 29 de septiembre 1571* in Libro II, Título 2 “Del Consejo Real de las Indias,” Ley 1, “Que el Consejo Real de las Indias resida en la Corte y tenga los ministros y oficiales que esta ley declara,” in *Recopilación de las Leyes de Indias*, Volume II, fo lios 228-229.

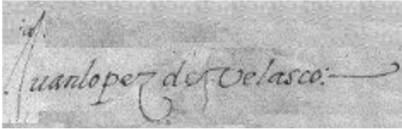

Primary Scribal Hands	Folios in the original MS	“chapters” or “sections” [Themes & overlap with published histories]	Documented date of handwriting (Dates for the watermarks of the paper: 1548-1591)
<p>Juan López de Velasco</p>  <p>(Cronista Mayor de las Indias, Cosmógrafo de las Indias, 1571-1591) Rapid Transcription Hand</p> <p>[Tasked with writing the <i>Historia y Cartografía de las Indias</i>, compiled materials, maps, charts, and geographic studies, but never completed it as he was promoted to Royal Secretary of King Philip II]</p>	1r-17v	I-XXIII [Contact/Conquest history]	1571-1591
	18r-45r	XXIII-XLI [Maya religion, culture and calendar]	1571-1591
	46r-49v	XLI-XLII [Maya calendar, architecture]	1571-1591
	59r-66v	XLVIII-LII [Natural history]	1571-1591
<p>Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas</p>  <p>(Cronista Mayor de las Indias, 1596-1625) Polished Book Hand</p> <p>[Compiled materials on natural history from the Account and Cervantes de Salazar's <i>Cronica</i> for his <i>Descripción de las Indias</i> (1601)]</p>	50r-58v	XLIII-XLVIII [Natural history]	1596-1601
	55v-56r (paragraph headings)	XLIII-XLVIII [Natural history]	1596-1601

Table 1, part 1. Solving the Mystery: Identifying the various Scribal Hands in the *Account*.

Secondary Scribal Hands or Additions	Folios in the original MS		
<p>Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas (<i>Cronista Mayor de las Indias</i>) Rapid Transcription Hand</p> <p>[Corrected earlier transcriptions and re-consulted original to add in unfamiliar Maya terms, names and places for his Volumes of <i>Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las Islas y Tierra Firme del mar Océano que llaman Indias Occidentales</i> (1601-1615)]</p>	3v-4r (13-line inserted passage)	I-XXIII [Contact/Conquest history-themes <i>Decadas</i> , v. II (1601)]	1598-1601
	4v-7r (inserted phrases and names)	I-XXIII [Contact/Conquest history-themes <i>Decadas</i> , v. II (1601)]	1598-1601
	11v (inserted lines)	I-XXIII [Contact/Conquest history-themes <i>Decadas</i> , v. II (1601)]	1598-1601
	11r (6-line inserted passage)	I-XXIII [Contact/Conquest history-themes <i>Decadas</i> , v. II (1601)]	1598-1601
	20v, 21v, 26r (inserted lines)	XXIII-XLI [Maya religion and culture in later <i>Decadas</i> , (1601-1615)]	1599-1625
	26v-45r (inserted names)	XXIII-XLI [Maya religion and culture in later <i>Decadas</i> , (1601-1615)]	1599-1625
	34r-43v (calendrical inserts)	XXIII-XLI [Maya religion and culture in later <i>Decadas</i> , (1601-1615)]	1599-1625
<p>Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas (<i>Cronista Mayor de las Indias</i>) Polished Transcription Hand</p> <p>[Prepared schematic maps for his <i>Descripción de las Indias</i> (1601)]</p>	46v, 47r, 48v (drawings with captions)	XLI-XLII [Maya religion and culture in later <i>Decadas</i> , (1601-1615)]	1599-1625
	67-68 (maps)	[Geography and Cartography]	1596-1601
<p>Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas (<i>Cronista Mayor de las Indias</i>) Marginal Note Hand</p>	15v-16r, 16r-v (inserted passages)	I-XXIII [Contact/Conquest history-themes <i>Decadas</i> , v. II (1601)]	1596-1625
	23r, 23v, 24r (marginalia)	XXIII-XLI [Maya religion and culture in later <i>Decadas</i> , (1601-1615)]	1596-1625

Table 1, part 2. Solving the Mystery: Identifying the various Scribal Hands in the *Account*.

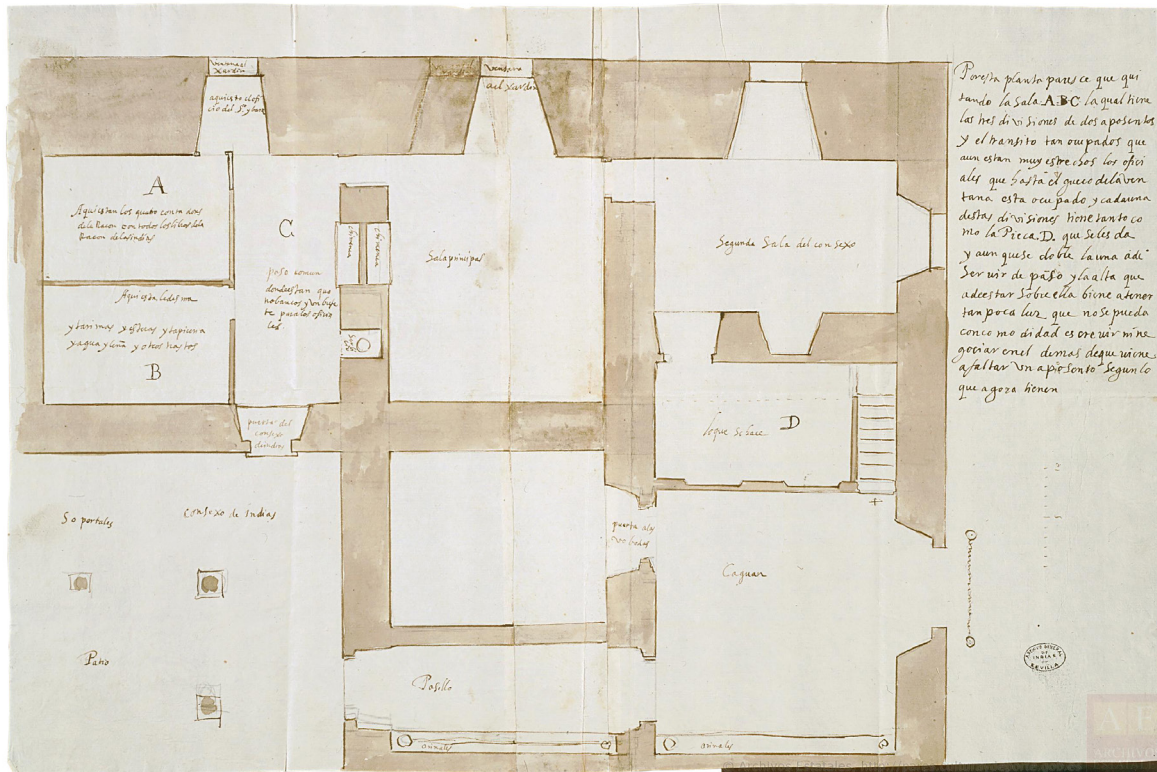


Figure 1. Hand drawn plan and map of the Office Suite of the Council of the Indies with the Scribal and Chronicler’s offices (Mapa y plano de los aposentos del Consejo de Indias en el Palacio Real, Madrid, 13 de agosto, 1598, AGI, Mapas y Planos, Europa y Africa, 5, 1598)

occurred sporadically under the orders of Charles V. After 1571, the Council and its central offices, archives and the *Cronistas* offices would be located in the Royal Palace of Madrid.

We can pinpoint exactly where the *Account* would have been written based on an illustration. An anonymous drawing of the Royal palace of Madrid (1596-1597) illustrates the place where, earlier, the *Account* would have been extracted by the two copyists who occupied the office of the *Cronista* in the Palace. The next year, in 1598, a fascinating hand-drawn annotated map of the office suite of the council of the Indies indicates where the libraries and writing room existed for the *cronista mayor* and the secretaries (see Figure 1).²⁸

It was in this suite of offices that both Scribe A and Scribe B made their extracted copies from the Landa materials archived within the *Escribanía de Cámara* of the Royal palace. Landa’s original manuscript must have been placed here after his 1565-1566 *consultas*. Unfortunately, the fact that so many works of art, archives, and documents were destroyed in the great fire on Christmas Eve in 1734 may explain why the original Landa manuscript is no longer extant. Luckily for us, at least

²⁸ See marginal note in the hand of Antonio de Herrera, *Mapa y plano de los aposentos del Consejo de Indias en el Palacio Real*, Madrid, 13 de agosto, 1598, AGI, Mapas y Planos, Europa y Africa, 5, 1598.

the *Account* and its extracted notes survived the fire and eventually arrived at the Royal Academy of History (Restall et al. 2023:396).

The saga of the *Account* and its creation continued with the final scribes who added minor materials on the document sometime in the later 17th century. Final pieces of the puzzle appear to be sporadic additions from the workshop of the 18th century Royal Historian Juan de Muñoz, when the manuscript moved from the archives of the *Consejo de las Indias* to the *Real Academia* in 1744, where the Abby Charles Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg found the *Account* over a century later.

The copyists' assembling of the *Account*: Internal evidence for the analysis of the manuscript from paper purchases, manuscript production, and preparation of the manuscript for binding.

An internal look into the copyists' construction of the manuscript we know as the *Account*, and how the copying and eventual binding of the manuscript occurred is useful in order to understand the contents and their original ordering before being bound. Between 1572 and 1578, the royal chronicler and cosmographer of the Indies, Juan López de Velasco, acquired massive quantities of paper for his duties. On several occasions he ordered anywhere from 6-8 *resmas* or reams of paper at a time, each one containing 500 full sheets.²⁹ These full sheets would then be folded or cut to make books and manuscripts of the sizes 2° (*folio*), 4° (*quarto*), and 8° (*octavo*) (the *Account* was made into an 8° booklet). In 1578 alone, he ordered more than a *balon* of paper for his work, amounting to over 16,000 folio sheets!³⁰ Most of this paper came from papermakers in Madrid and Toledo, who during these years were using variations on the *peregrino* watermark in their paper manufacture.³¹ Moreover, there is evidence that royal chroniclers like López de Velasco prepared and marked many of their manuscripts and booklets for later binding or publication. Our *Account* also has the characteristics of a booklet that was similarly organized and compiled into groupings of folded and sewn sets of folio pages known as “quires.”

In order to properly assemble their manuscripts, scribes used “quire marks” or “signature marks” which often were letters, numbers, or other symbols placed at the bottom of the first page of a quire or bundle of folded sheets.³² These markings helped book binders assemble the sheets in

²⁹ Each time López de Velasco wished to buy paper he had to have a royal order to approve his purchase. For several examples from 1571–1585 see *Carta acordada del Consejo de Indias a Antonio de Cartagena, su receptor, dándole orden de pago de 80 reales a Juan López de Velasco, cosmógrafo y cronista por 4 resmas de papel para imprimir ciertas instrucciones para la observación de eclipses*, Madrid, 27 de agosto, 1580, AGI, Indiferente General, 426, Libro 26, folio 214v; and *Carta acordada del Consejo de Indias a Antonio de Cartagena, su receptor, dándole orden de pago de 12 ducados a Juan López de Velasco, cosmógrafo y cronista mayor, por 6 resmas de papel*, Madrid, 12 de agosto, 1583, AGI, Indiferente General, 426, Libro 27, folios 60r-60v. All told he was authorized to purchase more than the equivalent of 16,000 sheets of paper during those years.

³⁰ A “*balon de papel*” was a crate or package filled with 32 reams made up of 500 sheets of paper each. Equivalent to 16,000 sheets of paper. See *Diccionario de Autoridades*, Tomo I (1726), folio 539.

³¹ See Valls i Subirà (1982). For an excellent analysis of similar “*peregrino*” watermarks in another important Mesoamerican document see Batalla Rosado (2010:229–248).

³² The term “signatures” describes the “small letters and numbers printed at the beginning of each quire or section to enable these to be bound in order.” See Marks (1998:89).



Table 2. Evidence of the “quire” letter markings script at the bottom pages of the *Account* (Photos by Harri Kettunen, © Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid.)

the right order. As in other manuscripts, we see the organizational “quire” letter markings at the bottom of certain pages in the *Account* (see Table 2). A full analysis of these pre-print or pre-binding “letter markers” reveals that either these letters were copied by Scribe A from an original published or pre-publication Landa manuscript, or that he annotated them for his own organization, binding, or possible later publication (Restall & Chuchiak 2002:662).

Quire marks regularly occurring at the bottom of every 8 folios in a properly bound manuscript also allow us to conjecture the original order in which the manuscript of the *Account* was laid out (Restall et al. 2023:413-414). Consequently, we would expect groupings of 8 folios to have been marked on the first facing front “recto” side of a bunching of folios in a proper “quire” notation. The letters marking the *Account* quires were clearly bound out of sequence (lettered quire sections “b” and “c” were bound out of order), and some quire sections contain an irregular number of unmarked pages. A manuscript with the proper markings for a volume labeled alphabetically (a-k) would have had at least 11 quires or 88 folios (176 pages). Our current *Account* has a total of 68 folios (136 pages). This suggests that, based on the regular style of numbering, our present *Account* is missing approximately 20 folios (40 pages) of text.

We can also posit that, in several sections missing obvious intervals of 8 folios (i.e., 16 pages), we may indeed be missing folios from the original extracted notes. This occurs in sections with only 2 or 6 folios between the quire numbers, which would be an irregularity. Furthermore, numerous letters that should have been used to mark “quires” are also missing (the manuscript is missing a section labeled “j” skipping instead to “k”).

This organizational schema also involved marking the ends of specific quires with special offset words, called “catchwords.”³³ Catchwords were composed of the first words of the first line of the following quire and they commonly wrote them in the lower right-hand margin of the last “verso” page of the preceding marked and lettered quire. Although catchwords are not rare, and they do occur throughout numerous pages of the *Account*, they are especially important for unraveling the corresponding sections of folios of specific quires. The use of these catchwords in the case of the end folios of specific sections also helped the binder ensure the correct order of quires in their binding. The indication of the sequence of quires by numbers or letters was introduced in the later 15th century, adopting it from medieval manuscript markings. The same scribe who copied the text wrote these signs and symbols to inform the binder of the order in which to join quires (see Table 3 below with examples from the *Account*).

This same ordered structure of manuscript assembly occurs in the *Account* as well. For example, the final folio of the quire labeled by Scribe A as “e” ends on folio 12v with a catchword in the

³³ For an illustrated detailed discussion of the use of signatures and “catchwords” in marking specific quires in manuscripts in the medieval and Renaissance periods, see Shailor (1988:52-55).

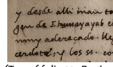
<p>Marked Quires and Folios of the Account</p>								
	<p>Folio 5r (Beginning of Quire "e")</p>	<p>Folio 13r (Beginning of Quire "f")</p>	<p>Folio 32r (Beginning of Quire "b") Out of order</p>	<p>Folio 40r (Beginning of Quire "c") Out of order</p>	<p>Folio 46r (Beginning of Quire "g") Out of order</p>	<p>Folio 50r (Beginning of Quire "h") Apparently marked by Velasco but left blank— Added to by Scribe B</p>	<p>Folio 62r (Beginning of Quire "y")</p>	<p>Folio 66r (Beginning of Quire "k") Apparently last quire marked by Velasco</p>
<p>"Catchword" on last "verso" folio of preceding marked "quire"</p>					<p>No preceding "catchword"</p>			
	<p>(Bottom of folio 4v, ending of Quire "d")</p>	<p>(Bottom of folio 12v ending of Quire "e")</p>	<p>(Bottom of folio 31v ending of Quire "e")</p>	<p>(Bottom of folio 39v ending of Quire "b")</p>		<p>(Bottom of folio 61v ending of Quire "h") Last part of quire "h" reverts back to Scribe A</p>	<p>(Bottom of folio 65v ending of Quire "y") Last part of quire "h" reverts back to Scribe A</p>	<p>(Bottom of folio 66v Marks end of Quire "k") As well as end of the manuscript written in hand of Scribe A</p>
<p>First word on the first "recto" page of the next marked quire of pages</p>								<p>No connection of this final section with the Maps, probably added later</p>
	<p>(Top of folio 5r Beginning of Quire "e")</p>	<p>(Top of folio 13r Beginning of Quire "f")</p>	<p>(Top of folio 32r Beginning of Quire "b")</p>	<p>(Top of folio 40r Beginning of Quire "c")</p>	<p>(Bottom of folio 49v appears to be the final part or ending of Scribe B's work at end of Quire "g")</p>	<p>(Top of folio 62r Beginning of Quire "y") Return of Scribe A's text</p>	<p>(Top of folio 66r Beginning of Quire "k") Return of Scribe A's text</p>	

Table 3. Example of "quire" letter markings and "catchwords" used by the Copyist (Photos by Harri Kettunen, © Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid.)

lower right hand of the page: "que no." This "catchword" is repeated and begins the first "recto" folio of the quire that Scribe A labeled as "f" on folio 13r.

Besides the quire marks, water damage on the folios provides us with an additional indication of the original order of the folios within the manuscript. On folios 17r-27v and 31r-33r we have light color stains at the bottom of the folios, while folio 11 has a darker color stain that looks independent from the other stains. Furthermore, and more importantly to our understanding of the beginning of the *Relación*, folios 13-17 show matching patterns of minor stains along the top edge of the folios.

It is interesting that folios 14 and 15 have disconnected contents, even though the water stains continue throughout. This might have happened after the folios were reorganized or the scribe just copied the contents of folios 14-15 even though they were probably not connected in the original manuscript. This gets us back to the beginning of Landa's surviving *Relación* which does not appear to be folio 1 but, instead, appears to be folio 15 – based on (1) internal evidence (context & contents); (2) the quire marks; and (3) water damage.

Folio 1 has a quire mark <d> which indicates that the copyist later reorganized the notes so that Folio 1 became the start of the compilation. This may be because he was more concerned about geography than the cultures of New Spain. Quire mark <a> is found on the title page of the manuscript, which makes perfect sense. However, when we proceed, we go (out of order) from quire marks <e> and <f> to and <c>, and then to <g> and <h>, and <y> and <k>. To find the starting point of Landa's *Relación* – if it indeed survives – we should backtrack from folio 32r (= quire mark) all the way back to folio 28r (=4 folios). This can be done without a break in contents or noticeable difference in the wear or damage to the folios (see Table 4 for a quire-by-quire analysis of the *Account*).

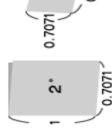
Pagination of "marked" sections of folios of the bound "quires" or groupings of 8-folios pages sewn together (Compilation order of the original Account)—Marked by lowercase letters at bottom of page	Marked folios	Sequence of pages between the "recto" marked pages of the Account and the next section	Sections and Themes of the Account in the folio Spread of the "quires"	Observations
18r-45f, 1r-17v, 46r-68r Groupings of sheets in an 80 sized book like the Account are marked on a "recto" folio of the first page of a "quire" for binding or printing. 	1r-49v, 58, 63	1r-68r		Watermarks usually occur on the second "recto" folio in a collection of a "quire" in a manuscript bound and ordered evenly for binding or printing.
 <p>"Quire" or sewn paper section labeled "a"</p>	Folio Or  Or	Initial "recto" page of the manuscript	Title Page	Sections "b" and "c" are bound out of order

Table 4. part 1. Pagination of "marked" sections of 8 folios, or "quires" marked by the scribes in the *Account* which give us a hint of the original order of the text.

 <p>“Quire” or sewn paper section labeled “d”</p>	<p>Folio 1r</p>  <p>1r</p>	<p>2 folios later</p>	<p>Sec. 1. Description of Yucatan. Variety of seasons. Sec. 2. Etymology of the name of this province. Its situation. Sec. 3. Captivity of Gerónimo de Aguilár. Sec. 4. Expedition of Cortés to Cozumel.</p> <p>[f. 1r-1v] [f. 1v-2r] [f. 2r-3r] [f. 3v-4v]</p> <p>Themes include the geography and early discovery of Yucatan</p>  <p>Watermark (1532-1610)</p>  <p>f-1r: uppermost part of the Peregrino B1 (part of the circle and top part of the hat)</p>	<p>Beginning of the manuscript here, but it is out of order</p> <p>Folio 1r starts off with capitalized “Q” and a heading signifying that it was the start of a chapter</p> <p>Themes include the geography and early discovery of Yucatan</p>
 <p>“Quire” or sewn paper section labeled “e”</p>	<p>Folio 5r</p>  <p>5r</p>	<p>8 pages (4 folios later)</p>	<p>Sec. 5. Provinces of Yucatan. Sec. 6. Cuculcan-Foundations of Mayapan. Sec. 7. Government, priesthood, sciences Sec. 8. The arrival of the Tutul-Xiuc, Mayapan.. Sec. 9. Chronological Monuments of Yucatan. Sec. 10. Calamities before the conquest: hurricane, wars, etc. Sec. 11. Prophecies of the coming of the Spaniards. Sec. 12. Montejo sails for Yucatan and takes possession of the country. Sec. 13. Montejo leaves Yucatan and returns to Mexico. Sec. 14. Yucatan after the departure of the Spaniards. Sec. 15. Cruelties of the Spaniards toward the Indians. Sec. 16. State of the country before the conquest Sec. 17. Arrival of the Spanish Franciscan friars in Yucatan.</p> <p>[f. 4v-5r] [f. 5r-6r] [f. 6r-6v] [f. 6v-7r] [f. 7r-7v] [f. 7v-8r] [f. 8r-8v] [f. 9r-10r] [f. 10r-11r] [f. 11r-11v] [f. 11v-12r] [f. 12r-12v] [f. 12v-13r]</p> <p>Themes include the pre-conquest history, and the early Conquest history</p>  <p>Watermark (1532-1610)</p>  <p>f5r: Peregrino A (head, hat, and part of the staff)</p>	<p>Folio 5r has an odd space and then starts again with a capitalized “Q” signifying that it was the start of a chapter</p> <p>Themes include the pre-conquest history, and the early Conquest history</p>

Table 4, part 2. Pagination of “marked” sections of 8 folios, or “quires” marked by the scribes in the *Account* which give us a hint of the original order of the text.

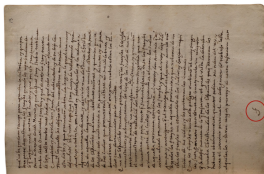

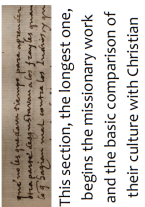
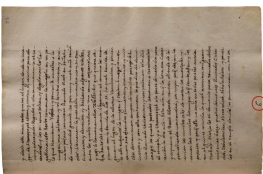

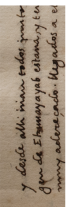
 <p>“Quire” or sewn paper section labeled “4r”</p>	<p>Folio 13r</p>  <p>13r</p>	<p>16 pages (8 folios later)</p>	<p>Sec. 18. Vices of the Indians. Sec. 19. Arrival of Bishop Toral and release of the imprisoned Indians. Sec. 20. Construction of the houses of Yucatan. Sec. 21. Food and drink of the Indians of Yucatan. Sec. 22. Painting and tattooing of the Indians. Sec. 23. Industry, commerce and money. Sec. 24. Method of counting of the Yucatecans. Sec. 25. Nuptial customs. Sec. 26. Method of baptism in Yucatan. Sec. 27. Kind of confessions among the Indians. Sec. 28. Sacrifices and self-mortifications, both cruel and obscene. Sec. 29. Arms and War of the Yucatecans. Sec. 30. Penalties/punishments for adulterers, homicides, and thieves. Sec. 31. Clothing and ornaments of the Indian women Sec. 32. Chastity and education of the Indian women of Yucatan. Sec. 33. Funerals. Burials of the priests. Sec. 34. Count of the Yucatecan year. Characters of the days. Sec. 35. Festivals of the “unlucky” days. Sec. 36. Sacrifices for the new year of the character Muluc. Sec. 37. Sacrifices for the new year with the sign Ix. Sec. 38. Sacrifices of the new year of the letter Cauac.</p>	<p>Folio 13r is one of only three marked quire sections that does not start with a capitalized letter. The start of the section is on 12v and it does have a capital letter</p>  <p>This section, the longest one, begins the missionary work and the basic comparison of their culture with Christian practices (sacrament of matrimony, baptism, confession, death and burial)</p> <p>Mostly even coverage between the themes (1-2 folios per topic)</p>	<p>[f. 13r-14v] [f. 14v-15r] [f. 15r-16r] [f. 16r-16v] [f. 17v-18v] [f. 18v-19r] [f. 18v-19r] [f. 19v-20r] [f. 20r-21v] [f. 21v-22v] [f. 22v-23v] [f. 23v-24v] [f. 24v-25r] [f. 25r-25v] [f. 27r-27v] [f. 28r-29r] [f. 29r-30r] [f. 30r-30v] [f. 30v-31v] [f. 31v-32r]</p>
 <p>Quire” or sewn paper section labeled “b”</p>	<p>Folio 32r</p>  <p>32r</p>	<p>40 pages (20 folios later) No markings in-between Section of 40 pages out of order with the page/ binding/ printer markings</p>	<p>Sec. 39. The author’s explanation of the various things in the calendar. Sec. 40. Months and festivals of the Yucatecan calendar.</p>	<p>Folio 32r is one of only three marked quire sections that does not start with a capitalized letter. The start of the section is on 31v and it does have a capital letter.</p> <p>Section “b” out of order</p>  <p>(Partial) fingerprint of Scribe A on folio 27r</p> <p>Watermark (1532-1610)</p>  <p>f32r: Peregrino B1 (part of the head and hat)</p>	<p>[f. 32r-34r] [f. 34r-39v]</p>

Table 4, part 3. Pagination of “marked” sections of 8 folios, or “quires” marked by the scribes in the *Account* which give us a hint of the original order of the text.




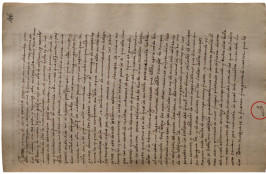

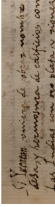
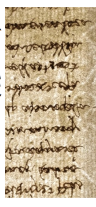
 <p>Quire^e or sewn paper section labeled "c"</p>	<p>Folio 40r</p>  <p>40r</p>	<p>16 pages (8 folios later)</p>	<p>Sec. 40. Months and festivals of the Yucatecan calendar [continued]. Sec. 41. Cycle of the Mayas. Their writings.</p> <p>[f. 40r-43v] [f. 44r-45v]</p>	<p>Section "c" out of order</p> <p>Folio 40r is one of only three marked quire sections that does not start with a capitalized letter.</p> 
 <p>Quire^e or sewn paper section labeled "g"</p>	<p>46r</p>  <p>46r</p>	<p>12 pages (6 folios later)</p> <p>Folios appear to be missing, irregular jump</p>	<p>Sec. 42. Multitude of buildings in Yucatan.</p> <p>[f. 46r-49v]</p> <p>Note: Only an eye-witness of the buildings could have been able to draw them. The originals from which these were copied would no doubt have been drawn by Landa.</p>	<p>Separate contained section on the buildings and monuments of Yucatan (6 folios of complete coverage)</p> <p>Folio 46r starts off with capitalized "S" (added later) and an initial capitalized "Y" for the heading signifying that it was the start of a chapter</p>  <p>Watermark (1532-1610)</p>  <p>f46r: part of the head and hat of Peregrino Bt</p>

Table 4, part 4. Pagination of "marked" sections of 8 folios, or "quires" marked by the scribes in the *Account* which give us a hint of the original order of the text.

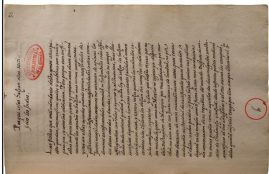

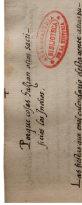
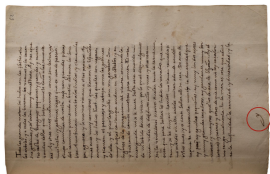

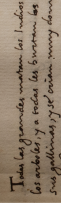
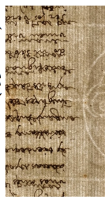
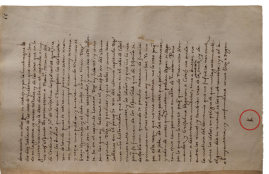

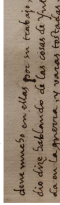




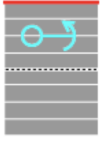


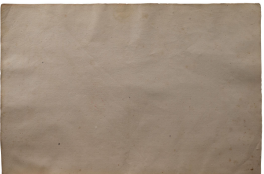

 <p>Quire" or sewn paper section labeled "4"</p>	<p>50r</p>  <p>50r</p>	<p>8 pages (4 folios later)</p> <p>Handwriting change to Scribe B</p>	<p>Sec. 43. For what other things the Indians made sacrifices. Sec. 44. The soil and its products. Sec. 45. The waters and the fishes found in them. Sec. 46. How there are serpents and other poisonous animals. Sec. 47. Of the bees and their honey and wax. Sec. 48. Of the plants, flowers, and trees; of the fruits and other edibles. Sec. 49. Of the birds.</p> <p>[f. 50r-51v] [f. 51v-53r] [f. 53r-55v] [f. 55v-56r] [f. 56r-56v] [f. 56v-60v] [f. 61r-61v]</p>	<p>Folio 50r starts off with a chapter heading and a capitalized "L" signifying that it was the start of a chapter</p>  <p>This is the only quire with the handwriting of Scribe B</p>
 <p>Quire" or sewn paper section labeled "4"</p>	<p>62r</p>  <p>62r</p>	<p>24 pages (12 folios later)</p> <p>Folios appear to be missing, irregular jump</p>	<p>Sec. 49. Of the birds. Sec. 50. Of the larger animals, and of the smaller ones. Sec. 51. The author's conclusion and appeal. Sec. 52. Criticism and correction of certain statements.</p> <p>[f. 61r-62v] [f. 63r-64v] [f. 65r-65v] [f. 65v-66r]</p>	<p>Folio 62r starts off with Capitalized "T" for the heading signifying that it was initially the start of a chapter</p>  <p>Watermark (1532-1610)</p>  <p>f62r: head and hat of Peregrino B2</p>
 <p>Quire" or sewn paper section labeled "1"</p>	<p>66r</p>  <p>66r</p>	<p>8 pages (4 folios later)</p>	<p>Sec. 53. Criticism and correction of certain statements.</p> <p>[f. 66r-66v]</p>	<p>Folio 66r is one of only three marked quire sections that does not start with a capitalized letter.</p> 

Table 4, part 5. Pagination of "marked" sections of 8 folios, or "quires" marked by the scribes in the *Account* which give us a hint of the original order of the text.

	<p>67r</p>  <p>67r</p>	<p>Map 1 (Province of Tabasco) Occupies one page on folio 67r</p>	<p>This map served as the basis for the Cronista Juan López de Velasco's <i>Descripción de las Indias</i> (1578)</p> 	<p>Map of the coastline and important ports, towns and landmarks of the coasts of the Province of Tabasco</p>
	<p>67v-68r</p>  <p>67v 68r</p>	<p>Map 2 (Province of Yucatan) Occupies two page spread across folio 67v-68r</p>	<p>This map aided Cronista Juan López de Velasco's <i>Descripción de las Indias</i> (1578)</p>  <p>Later copied and re-worked by Antonio de Herrera from notes he wrote on the side of folio 68r for his 1601 Map in <i>Historia General de los hechos de los Castellanos</i></p> 	<p>Map of the coastline and important towns in the Province of Yucatan As expected, there is a partial watermark on folio 68r Watermark (1532-1610) f68r: Peregrino A (torso, head, hat, beard, and the staff) Watermark (1561-1591)</p>
	<p>69r</p>  <p>69r</p>	<p>8 unmarked pages (4 folios) Mostly blank after the maps</p>		<p>f72r: flower with nine petals (part of hand-and-flower watermark) f72r: part of a hand (part of hand-and-flower watermark) The "hand with a flower" watermark appears on the empty folios at the beginning and end of the manuscript</p>

Note: Watermarks reproduced from Kettunen (2020: 59-60); information on quire markings see Restall and Chuchiak, "A Re-evaluation of the Authenticity."

Table 4, part 6. Pagination of "marked" sections of 8 folios, or "quires" marked by the scribes in the *Account* which give us a hint of the original order of the text.

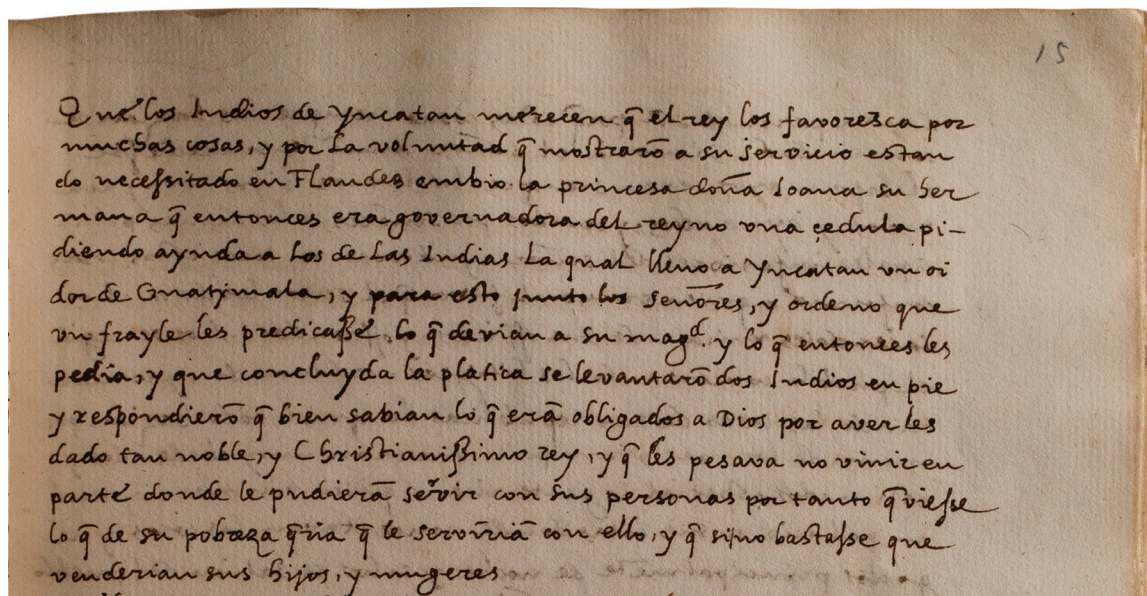


Figure 2. Upper section of folio 15r – the most probable starting point of the surviving copy of Landa’s *Relación* based on the “quire” mark organization (Photo by Harri Kettunen, © Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid.)

However, folios 27 & 28 do *not* connect in terms of content, or based on wear or damage. Consequently, folio 15r is the best candidate especially based on context and content. Interestingly, however, folio 14v does not connect to folio 15r content-wise either. Furthermore, although folio 15 is followed by an empty folio, folio 15v connects to folio 16r. This means that folio 15 recto (see Figure 2) is our best candidate for the “new” beginning of Landa’s *Relación*, starting (instead of “Yucatan is not an island” on folio 1) with:

Que los indios de Yucatán merecen que el rey les favorezca... Or:
 “That the Indians of Yucatan deserve that the king favors them...”

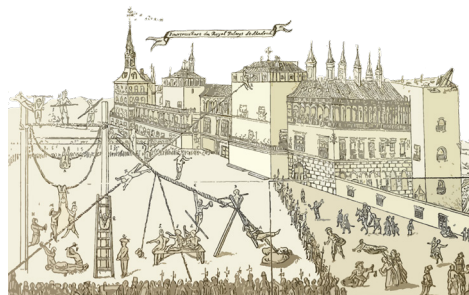
Conclusions

The manuscript titled *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* attributed to the Franciscan friar Fray Diego de Landa has been an enigmatic work since its rediscovery in Madrid in 1862 by Charles Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg. The many mysteries around the manuscript have been centered around the (1) identity of the author(s) and the copyists of the manuscript; (2) the dating of the only known copy of the manuscript; (3) the missing sections of the original work; and (4) its somewhat odd structure and composition (Clendinnen 1988; Kettunen 2020; Pagden 1975; Restall & Chuchiak 2002; Restall et al. 2023; Tozzer 1941). This study offers new evidence to answer many of these questions by identifying the people and timeline behind the creation of the manuscript – as well as by innovatively documenting its internal structure.

In reality, the “Account of the things of Yucatan” is not really an *Account* but an extracted copy of materials taken from an original manuscript (or even several manuscripts) written by Landa

(Restall & Chuchiak 2002; Restall et al. 2023:390-397). The watermarks on the folios of the only surviving copy of the manuscript point to a date during the final three decades of the 16th century, making this time period the earliest that the *copy* could have been made (Kettunen 2020). As with the *original* manuscript, folio 1r of the *Account* bears the date 1566, which is three years after Landa decided to leave for Spain to personally meet with King Philip II and give him “an account of the things of this land,” i.e., Yucatan (Lizana 1633, folio 66v). Consequently, the date on the *Account* matches the historical records. The first *notes* or *copies* of the manuscript (or sections thereof) were written soon after the original papers were submitted to the Council of the Indies between 1571 and 1591, most likely by Scribe A (Juan López de Velasco), the copyist of a majority of the *Account*. The second copyist, Scribe B, evidently Antonio de Herrera, added his sections between 1596 and 1601. Thus, most of the *Account* was copied and extracted from Landa’s papers between 1571 and 1601.

A later binding of the *Account* saw a reordering of the manuscript, which is evident based on the disordered quire marks in the present-day version of the *Account*. Besides this, the water-damaged folios provide us with additional information on the original order of the folios within the manuscript. These details have led us to conclude that the extant copy of Landa’s manuscript may have originally started on folio 15r rather than folio 1r. Hence the main title of this article, *Que los indios de Yucatán merecen que el rey les favorezca*.



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Auto del Consejo de las Indias, por el cual mandan que se remite al Provincial de Castilla el negocio de Fray Diego de Landa, Madrid, 30 de enero, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009 B, 1 folio

Cédula de su Majestad para que el Provincial de San Francisco haga justicia en el negocio de Fray Diego de Landa, 13 de febrero, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009 B, 2 folios.

Cargos hechos contra Fray Diego de Landa por Fray Francisco de Guzmán, 6 de marzo, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009 B, 10 folios

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