

early modern Aristotelianism, a homunculus . . . was known as an artificial human created in the alchemical flask” (332). This, Bauer demonstrates, is what Sepúlveda had in mind as he argued that just war could be waged on such beings in the New World.

In a final section of the book, Bauer persuasively joins the ambitions and justifications of Spanish conquest to the English projects of settlement, exploration, and yes, “discovery.” Francis Bacon’s ideas for scientific reform and his elaboration of a paradigm of discovery, Bauer argues, were modeled on Spanish imperial knowledge production. Bauer’s restless, determined exploration in this volume effects its own form of alchemy, transforming ideas that had seemed lusterless—discovery, conquest, conversion—into surprising and compelling categories of thought.

Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts
sellersg@bc.edu

SYLVIA SELLERS-GARCIA

SIXTEENTH-CENTURY NEW SPAIN

The Codex Mexicanus: A Guide to Life in Late Sixteenth-Century New Spain. By Lori Boornazin Diel. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018. Pp. 240. \$55.00 cloth.
 doi:10.1017/tam.2021.12

The *Codex Mexicanus*, as Diel describes it with precision and insight, “straddles the European and Aztec worlds” (3). It is a pocket-sized, 51-folio miscellany, written on bark paper (*amatl*) that had been covered in gesso, inscribed with pictorial and alphabetic text, and bound like a European book. Most likely produced in the final decades of the sixteenth century, at a time of epidemic disease and attendant loss of life and cultural knowledge, it was authored by unnamed Nahua intellectuals who were in some way affiliated with the Augustinian Colegio de San Pablo (founded in 1575). The *Mexicanus* was a living document that was added to over time and meant to be consulted as a resource on time, religion, astrology, medicine, and history. Diel’s book provides the first comprehensive study of this extraordinarily compelling text, but her insights into the *Codex Mexicanus* go far beyond that specific book and allow us a window onto the ways in which native peoples and societies survived the Spanish invasion and occupation.

The *Mexicanus* reflects numerous textual traditions, from both Anahuac (the Nahuatl-speaking basin of Mexico) and Europe. The range of topics covered and the organization are tightly linked to the European genre of the *repertorio*. The *Mexicanus* predates the publication of the first *repertorio* in the New World, Enrico Martínez’s *Repertorio de los tiempos* (Mexico City, 1606), which though it was based on Spanish tradition was updated to serve those living in colonial Mexico. As Diel demonstrates, the *Mexicanus* too was intended as a resource for its readers.

Chapter 1 is titled “The Codex Mexicanus and Its World of Production,” and it provides an introduction to the text. It is followed by four chapters that address specific aspects of the Mexicanus, a conclusion and epilogue, a complete color reproduction of the Mexicanus text, and two appendices. The first appendix offers an interpretation of the pictorial catechism, and the second provides a transcription of the Nahuatl text associated with the 12 zodiac signs.

Chapter 2 is titled “Time and Religion in the Aztec and Christian Worlds.” The Aztecs maintained two calendars, the 260-day day-count calendar, or *tonalpohualli*, and the 365-day solar calendar, or *xihuitl*. Although the first was more associated with prognostication and the second with civic activities, both had sacred resonances. The Mexicanus references both calendric systems within a Christian framework, thus, as Diel argues, bringing the Aztec and Christian systems into balance.

Chapter 3, “Astrology, Health, and Medicine in New Spain,” demonstrates how the Mexicanus was used as a reference book about the impact of heavenly bodies on human health, which was an area of astrology not prohibited by the Church, unlike divinatory astrology. The European repertorio incorporates astrology and medicine, but it is also the case that Nahuas consulted the stars as a means of understanding and managing health. In this chapter, Diel explores how the Mexicanus reflects both traditions.

In Chapter 4, “Divine Lineage,” Diel studies the pictorial genealogy of the Mexica royal house, which ties together rulership from the pre-Christian past with the Christian present by tracing *tlatoque* of Mexico-Tenochtitlan from the fourteenth century through 1565. Chapter 5, “A History of the Mexica People,” deals with the year-count annals, or *xiuhpohualli*, found in the Mexicanus, which trace the history of the Mexica from migration through the growth of the imperial seat of Tenochtitlan to the Spanish invasion and the emergence of Mexico City.

In Chapter 6, Diel presents conclusions and an epilogue and emphasizes that though the Codex Mexicanus is modeled on the European *repertorio*, it does not simply imitate that genre. Rather, the native authors compiled a range of Nahua and European resources that would have been useful to the native community in sixteenth-century New Spain. Diel expertly places the Codex Mexicanus amid the large corpus of native-produced manuscripts from sixteenth-century New Spain, emphasizing that this miscellany was curated and guarded within a closed community of readers and users until the eighteenth century. Her exquisitely well-researched study of this extraordinary document is essential reading for scholars and students of colonial Mexico and colonialism more broadly, especially as it relates to the survival and adaptation of indigenous cultural knowledge and traditions.

University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa
amber-brian@uiowa.edu

AMBER BRIAN