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The manuscript and the Internet: digital repatriation of cultural heritage

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Abstract:

Three recent cross-national projects of digitizing displaced cultural heritage material are presented. It is argued that libraries and archives that have among their holdings unique cultural heritage material from other cultures should dedicate appropriate resources to the presentation of these materials on the Internet, not only involving local librarians and archivists but also the most pertinent international university scholars, who are invited to contribute with their expertise, so that such websites serve the most relevant scholarly and educative purposes.

The focus of this paper is a presentation (in English) of the Guaman Poma Website, opened in 2001 by the Royal Library (Copenhagen, Denmark): www.kd.kd/elib/mss/poma/

As a background to the presentation, some remarks are made on Danish involvement in cultural heritage repatriation during the past two centuries. Particular attention is paid to two fairly recent cases where the repatriation and recontextualization of dispersed manuscripts and manuscript collections have been based on cross-national collaboration and use of Internet technology, either as a sequel or as an alternative to physical repatriation. I will first mention the ongoing construction of a *common computerized catalogue* of the Arnamagnæan collection (18th c.) of medieval Icelandic manuscripts, which in 1971 was divided between two research institutes, in Reykjavik (Iceland) and in Copenhagen (Denmark), respectively. Secondly, I will make a brief presentation of a recent Danish-Swedish

project, the outcome of which is a digital facsimile of the oldest manuscript of "Jyske Lov" (The Law Code of Jutland), which is the earliest Danish Law Code (1241). The manuscript in question, *Codex holmiensis C 32*, has been preserved in Stockholm (Sweden) since the beginning of the 18th century.

1. Reuniting on Internet the Dispersed Medieval Manuscripts and Documents of Iceland

Background: A Half Century of Dispute

I will not recount the long saga of the Icelandic medieval manuscripts and documents in Copenhagen, how they came to Denmark in the early 18th century, and how more than 3.000 items, including the two most famous, the *Flateyjarbók* and the *Codex Regius*, were returned to Iceland in 1971 and onward, after more than 50 years of sometimes intense political and scholarly debate. The "case" has been described in English by Jeanette Greenfield, in the first chapter of her well-known *The Return of Cultural Treasures* (1989). She has hailed the "solution" that was finally reached by Denmark and Iceland, as being nothing less than "the outstanding example of a major state-to-state return of cultural property", and "an unusually civilized and rational act" (Greenfield 1989, 307). More recently, in a very detailed study of the debates, from the Iceland Home Rule Act of 1918 to the return of the last of the ca. 1750 manuscripts in 1997, Sigrún Davídsdóttir (Davídsdóttir 1999) has documented how the "manuscript issue" was part of the "Nordic" foreign policy of Danish governments, particularly of those led by the Social-Democratic Party, and especially after 1945. However, if it was pushed forward – ruthlessly, some said – by politicians, the terms of the Treaty of 1971 by which it was agreed between the two sovereign states that the manuscripts were to be "returned", were based on genuine scholarly concerns, aiming primarily at furthering the scientific study of the manuscripts within the context of the modern, technologically developing world. The "idea"of the agreement was conceived in 1954 by Julius Bomholt, Danish Minister of Culture, and formalized by Alf Ross, Professor of International Law at the University of Copenhagen. As finally ratified in 1971, the manuscripts and documents that were returned became the shared property of Iceland and Denmark, to be preserved in two Research Institutes, in Reykjavik and Copenhagen, respectively, which would be under the supervision of a joint Executive Committee. Modern photographic technique was used to ensure that ongoing research projects in Copenhagen would suffer as little as possible from the physical division of the once unified Arnamagnaean Collection. This solution, which deprived the manuscripts of much of their importance as national or nation-building symbols, was first turned down by the Icelandic government, but it finally endorsed the Danish plan on condition that the returned manuscripts include the two most famous Icelandic parchment manuscripts in the Royal Library: the *Flateyjarbók* and the *Codex Regius* mentioned above.

The solution of the highly complicated and politicized issue of the return of Icelandic manuscripts was radically "modern". It played down the aggressively postcolonial and nationalistic aspects of the problem, stressed the scholarly aims of the whole "repatriation" transaction, and took into account the most modern surrogating technology available at the time, i.e. high quality colour photography. Rather than stress the generosity and "civilized" Danish behaviour, or be overly concerned by the fact that a long and complicated political process was necessary before a "good" and viable solution could be found, I would like to suggest that the case of the return of Icelandic manuscripts is of interst today because, from 1954 and onward, Danish politicians did not lose sight of the only "civilized" aim: the advancement of scholarship, and were open-minded towards the importance of modern technology in the furthering of this aim. Scholarship had also been the aim of the Icelander Arni Magnusson, professor of history at the University of Copenhagen, who had created the collection and in 1730 bequeathed it to the University of Copenhagen.

Prospect: A Common Computerized Catalogue

So it was in a spirit of collaboration between brethren, not of forced decolonization or revenge, that the vast majority of medieval Icelandic manuscripts and documents were returned. This can be seen as the background for a recent ongoing project, common computerized catalogue of a virtually reunited Arnamagnæan Collection, using the new MASTER standard.

MASTER (Manuscript Access through Standards for Electronic Records) was an international project whose goal was to define and implement a general purpose standard for the description of manuscripts and other primary source materials using SGML, subsequently XML. The MASTER standard was from the outset designed to work within the larger encoding scheme developed and maintained by the international Text Encoding Initiative consortium (TEI), which is the de facto standard for scholarly work with digital texts.

A new electronic catalogue of the entire Arnamagnæan collection had long been a desideratum; preliminary work on such a catalogue, based on Kristian Kålund's *Katalog over Den Arnamagnæanske Håndskriftsamling* (Copenhagen, 1888-1894), but supplemented by more recent scholarship, was begun at both institutes as part of the MASTER project. During the project period itself some 500 records, the majority of them minimal, but a number also very detailed, including a good deal more information than can be found in the printed catalogue, were produced in Copenhagen. Since the end of the period very minimal records – comprising little more than shelfmark, date and place of origin and an identification of the contents – have been made for the remainder of the collection. And work on detailed cataloguing continues, if at a slower pace owing to reduced manpower. In Iceland basic cataloguing began in the year 2000. Here it was decided to include all information regarding each manuscript from the printed catalogue, but, in the initial stages at least, no more than that. In October 2002 "complete cataloguing" was begun; that is, the manuscripts are examined, and their contents and appearance described in detail. At the present time about one-third of the manuscripts in the Icelandic half of the collection have been catalogued in this way.

Simultaneous access to the two halves of the new electronic catalogue will be achieved through a common portal. Although still in its early stage, this pathbreaking project, based on cooperation and sophisticated new technology, opens up for the possibility of creating a virtual common catalogue of all extant medieval Icelandic manuscripts. It has been estimated that their total number is ca. 10.000, preserved in ca. 10 libraries.

2. The Digital "Return" of the Oldest Manuscript of the Earliest Danish Law Code

Modern Internet technology has also been at play in a recent Danish case of so-called "repatriation". During the late 1990s, a Danish political party with strong nationalistic roots (Dansk Folkeparti), again and again urged the Danish government to make a formal demand of restitution from Sweden of a manuscript that was considered to have been part of Swedish war-booty in the 17th century. The prehistory of this case was that in 1977, a young Danish historian, Thomas Riis, now Professor of history at the University of Kiel in northern Germany, argued cogently for antedating a manuscript in the Royal Library in Stockholm (*Code holmiensis C 32*) containing the "Jyske Lov", or Law Code of Jutland, the oldest Danish Law Code that was formally approved (1241). From being the oldest *parchment* manuscript of this Law Code, written ca. 1350, the Stockholm manuscript became the oldest manuscript, *in any material*, of the oldest Dansh law, written ca. 1280. In the eyes of a small group of right-wing politicians, redefined as "the original manuscript of the Law Code of Jutalns", it became a national symbol of considerable importance. Asked for his opinion by the Ministry of

Culture, the director of the Royal Library in Copenhagen, where a number of other manuscripts of this Law Code are preserved, answered that it was not obvious that *Codex holmiensis C 32* had come to Sweden as war-booty. But, at the same time, he suggested to the director of the Royal Library in Stockholm that the two libraries establish a joint project and publish on Internet a digital facsimile of the entire manuscript. The Royal Library in Stockholm agreed to digitize the manuscript, and the Royal Library in Copenhagen set up a website for the digital facsimile. Professor Riis agreed to be a consultant to the project. Beside the facsimile of the Stockholm manuscript itself, the wbsite of the Law Code of Jutland contains the normalized text of the Law Code, and a number of introductory texts. In connection with the establishment of the website, additional efforts were made to settle more accurately than before the problem of provenance of *Codex holmiensis.*. As now shown by Professor Riis, the available evidence does not corroborates that the manuscript came to Sweden in the 17th century as war-booty. On the contrary, it probably came to Sweden legally, through gift or purchase, when the last Danish owner that can be identified died in 1717. The website was launched in 2003, and it has widely mentioned in the Danish press. Surely, the old manuscript has now become a part of Denmark's cultural heritage, probably in a more efficient way than if it had been repatriated physically and hidden in the vault of the Royal Library. In the future, other important manuscripts of the Law Code of Jutland will be added to the website and integrated into the digital presentation of this important historical monument and the history of its textual transmission during the middle age and later.

3. Constructing an International Digital Research Center (*Nueva corónica y buen gobierno*)

One of the Royal Library's greatest treasures – second to none – is neither Danish in origin nor Nordic or Scandinavian. It is not even European. But it is the object of the most developed website of the Royal Library.

The Guaman Poma website opened in May 2001. It is dedicated to an item of prime importance for the cultural heritage of Latin America, the *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (1616) of the native Andean, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala. This unique colonial text is known only through the author's autograph manuscript, which has been in the collections of the Royal Library since ca. 1660. The manuscript consists of nearly 800 pages of text, and 399 full-page drawings, which denounce the abuses of colonial rule. The manuscript is frail, partly damaged by ink corrosion, but in other respects it is remarkably well preserved. It became known to the scholarly world only 70 years ago, through a facsimile edition that has long been outdated, but it was not superseded until 2001. Since the late 1960s, Guaman Poma has been widely appreciated as an outstanding representative of native protest against the evils of colonization and ethnic prejudice.

The website was planned partly for security reasons, partly as a preservation measure. Today, the original manuscript is not made available to scholars when it is deemed that they can do just as well with a high quality digital surrogate that is available freely and globally through the Internet. The website has been designed throughout for international use, in Spanish and in English. It was created under the scholarly editorship of the world's leading expert on Guaman Poma and the *Nueva corónica*, Professor Rolena Adorno of Yale University, and it has benefited from the help and collaboration of numerous scholars in Peru and in the United States. Due to the widespread interest and encouraging reactions of scholars in Latin America and elsewhere, the website has evolved far beyond the "simple" digital facsimile edition that was initially envisaged. Thus, it now includes not only a selection of authoritative studies of the *Nueva corónica*, but also digital facsimile editions of a number of pertinent documents from libraries, archives and private collections in Peru and elsewhere. In its latest version (August 2004), the website features a searchable transcription of the manuscript, which includes

critical and exegetical annotation. Further development of the website as a "Digital Guaman Poma Research Center" will continue.

By way of conclusion: libraries and archives that have among their holdings unique cultural heritage material from other cultures should dedicate appropriate resources to the presentation of these materials on the Internet, not only involving local librarians and archivists but also the most pertinent international university scholars, who are invited to contribute with their expertise, so that such websites serve the most relevant scholarly and educative purposes. The costs involved amount only to fractions of the costs of producing facsimiles on paper, and have a much wider audience and impact. In many cases links between such portals, or cross-national projects encompassing groups of documents or artefacts, will recreate and display the multiple interconnections and historical contexts of particularly remarkable cultural heritage materials that have been fragmented and dispersed during the course of history. The distant goal is a single manuscript collection, virtual, but integrated, global in its scope, and globally accessible as well-presented digital facsimiles. It is a goal that is evidently well beyond today's horizon. But every small step towards the achievement of such "global repatriation" of all variants of human culture and history must be welcomed.

Books and websites:

1. Davísdóttir, Sigrún: *Håndskriftsagens Saga*. Odense [Denmark]: Odense Universitetsforlag. 1999. 408 pp.
    Greenfield, Jeanette: *The Return of Cultural Treasures*. Cambridge: cambridge University Press. 1989. 361 pp.
    Kristian Kålund: *Katalog over Den Arnamagnæanske Håndskriftsamling.* Copenhagen. 1888-1894. 2 vols.
    MASTER reference manual: www.tei-c.org.uk/Master/Reference/
    TEI Consortium homepage: www.tei-c.org
    Website of the Arnamagnæan Institute in Copenhagen: www.ku.dk/ami/
    Website of the Arnamagnæan Institute in Reykjavik: www.am.hi.is

2. Website of "Jyske Lov", Law Code of Jutland: www.kb.dk/elib/mss/holm

3. Adorno, Rolena: Guaman Poma and His Illustrated Chronicle from Colonial Peru: From a Century of Scholarship to a New Era of Reading / Guaman Poma y su crónica ilustrada del Peru colonial: un siglo de investigaciones hacia una nueva era de lectura. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen & The Royal Library. 2001. 88 pp. (With an extensive bibliography).Website of Guaman Poma de Ayala's Nueva corónica y buen gobierno: www.kb.dk/elib/mss/poma

Guaman Poma - *El primer Nueva corónica y buen gobierno*

A New Chronicle

Several decades after the fall of the Inca empire, a native Andean from the area of Huamanga in the southern Peruvian Andes writes to King Philip III. Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's aim is to seek the reform of Spanish colonial governance in order to save the Andean peoples from the destructive forces of colonial exploitation, disease, and miscegenation.

Finding his most persuasive medium to be the visual image, he organizes his 1200-page *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* around his nearly four hundred drawings, all skillfully executed by his own hand.

Scholarly consultant of this Internet Edition: Rolena Adorno, Yale University, U.S.A.

Versión español

Other manuscripts

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Glossary-index

Index of onomastics

Ethnological index

Håndskriftafdelingen
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/ *EL PRIMER NVEVA CORÓNICA I BVEN GOBIERNO* (1) CONPVESTO POR DON PHELIPE GVAMAN POMA DE AIALA, S[EÑ]OR I PR[ÍN]CIPE. / SV S[AN]TIDAD / S[acra] C[atólica] R[eal] M[agestad] / F. G. P. D. AIALA, préncipe / EL REINO DE LAS INDIAS / quinientas y nobe[n]ta y [siete] oxas - 597 foja / ciento y quare[nt]a y ssays pliegos - 146 (2) /

(1) El primer título del manuscrito era *El primero i nueva corónica i buen gobierno*. La "o" de "primero" y la conjunción "i" fueron suprimidas cuando Guaman Poma introdujo, con tinta negra, motivos decorativos que las obscurecieron. Su título final corregido, *El primer nueva corónica i buen gobierno*, es más conciso. Para sus posibles significados, véase en este sitio Adorno 2002, apartado 4.8.

(2) [2003:] La fotografía de alta resolución aclara que Guaman Poma hizo cuatro cálculos diferentes, en esta secuencia: 579 hojas, 144 pliegos, 146 pliegos y 597 hojas. El cálculo de 579 hojas o 1158 páginas se dio tomando su paginación inicial del libro hasta la conclusión del capítulo de las posadas, o *tanpu*, en el camino real, esto es, la página 1083 (página consecutiva 1103), y añadiendo los números de página que corresponden respectivamente a los capítulos "Camina el autor" y "los meses del año": 1083 + 36 + 39 = 1158.

Hizo luego después un ajuste de diez páginas al descubrir un error hecho previamente (véanse pp. 527, 1004 y notas). Comenzando en su página 986, añadió 10 al total previo de 1158 páginas para dar 1168 páginas: 1158 + 10: 1168. Dividiendo ese número entre 8 para obtener el número de pliegos de ocho páginas, debió haber sacado el número incorrecto de 144. Repitiendo el ejercicio de dividir 1168 entre 8, resultó el número correcto de 146: 1168 ÷ 8 = 146; por lo tanto, corrigió "144 pliegos" a "146 pliegos."

Su cuarta y última cuenta de "597 fojas," que le dio por resultado 1194 páginas, debió haberse hecho en un momento aun más tardío. Quizás olvidando que había ya incorporado dentro de sus cálculos los dos cuadernillos del capítulo "Camina el autor", sumó de nuevo sus 18 páginas a su cálculo anterior de 579 hojas y obtuvo un total de 597 hojas. 579 + 18 = 597 x 2 = 1194. Para realizar la corrección, Guaman Poma insertó un 9 antes del 7 en la cifra 579 y luego borró el 9 final. Sin embargo, este último es todavía legible. La cifra 5979 es un número sin sentido en la serie y debe leerse 597. Aunque su cálculo final de 597 hojas fuese incorrecto, representa la culminación de un proceso que terminó cuando cerró su manuscrito, por última vez, en 1616. Véase en este sitio Adorno 2002, apartado 4.7.

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Carta de don Martín *Guaman Mallque* de Ayala, hijo y nieto de los grandes señores y rreys que fueron antiguamente y capitán general y señor del rreyno y *capac apo* (a) , ques préncipe (1) , y señor de la prouincia de los Lucanas, Andamarcas y Circamarca y Soras y de la ciudad de Guamanga y de su juridición de Sancta Catalina de Chupas, príncipe de los Chinchay Suyos y segunda persona del *Ynga* deste rreyno del Pirú, a la rreal Magestad del rey don Felipe nuestro señor el ssegundo (2) . Dize ací:

S[acra] C[atólica] R[eal] M[agestad]: Entre las cosas questa gran prouincia destos rreynos a prosedido útiles y prouechosos al seruicio de Dios y de vuestra Magestad, me a parecido hazer estima del engenio y curiucidad por la gran auilidad del dicho mi hijo lexítimo, don Felipe *Guaman Poma* de Ayala, *capac* (b) , ques préncipe (3) , y gouernador mayor de los yndios y demás caciques y principales y señor de ellos y administrador de todas las dichas

/ qhapaq apu / qhapaq /

(a) señor poderoso | (b) poderoso

(1) Enmienda del autor: "Cacique prencipal" fue cambiado a "*capac apo*, ques préncipe". A lo largo de la primera parte de la obra encontraremos esta adición de títulos honoríficos referentes a la familia del autor; en la segunda mitad hacen parte de la redacción inicial. [2003:] Guaman Poma corrige la frase "cacique prencipal" a "*capac apo*, ques préncipe y".

(2) Por debajo de "ssegundo" se lee "tercero". Esto apoya la hipótesis de que Guaman Poma preparó esta versión de su obra no en 1587, como indica en la carta que es supuestamente de su padre (p. 7), sino durante el reinado de Felipe III, después de 1598. Véase p. 10.

(3) Otra transformación de "cacique prencipal" en "*capac* ques préncipe". [2003:] La corrección de Guaman Poma es de "cacique prencipal" a "*capac*, ques préncipe y".

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