

An Unexpected Influence

Photostat Machines in Colonial Libraries, 1895-1915

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The John Carter Brown Library



How did the Photostat
transform the
bibliographic imagination?

How did the Photostat
shape the circulation of
historical information?

How did the Photostat shape
the circulation of historical
information in the context of
post-colonial librarianship?

How is the Photostat like the digital?

How is the Photostatic legacy present in digital work?

Part 1: The photostat in the bibliographic imagination.

Photolithography

¶ **Alqui comiença vn vocabula-**
rio en la lengua Castellana y Mexicana, Compuesto
por el muy reuerendo padre fray Alonso de
Molina: Guardia del couento de sant Antonio de
Tetzucuo de la orde de los frayles Menores.



¶ **Indorum nimia te fecit prole parentem.**
qui genuit moriens, quos pater alme foues.
Confusus viuis, langues: cum mente reuolus,
vulnera, cum spectas, stigmata carne geris.

Taffado por el Audiencia Real en dos pesos y vn nombr

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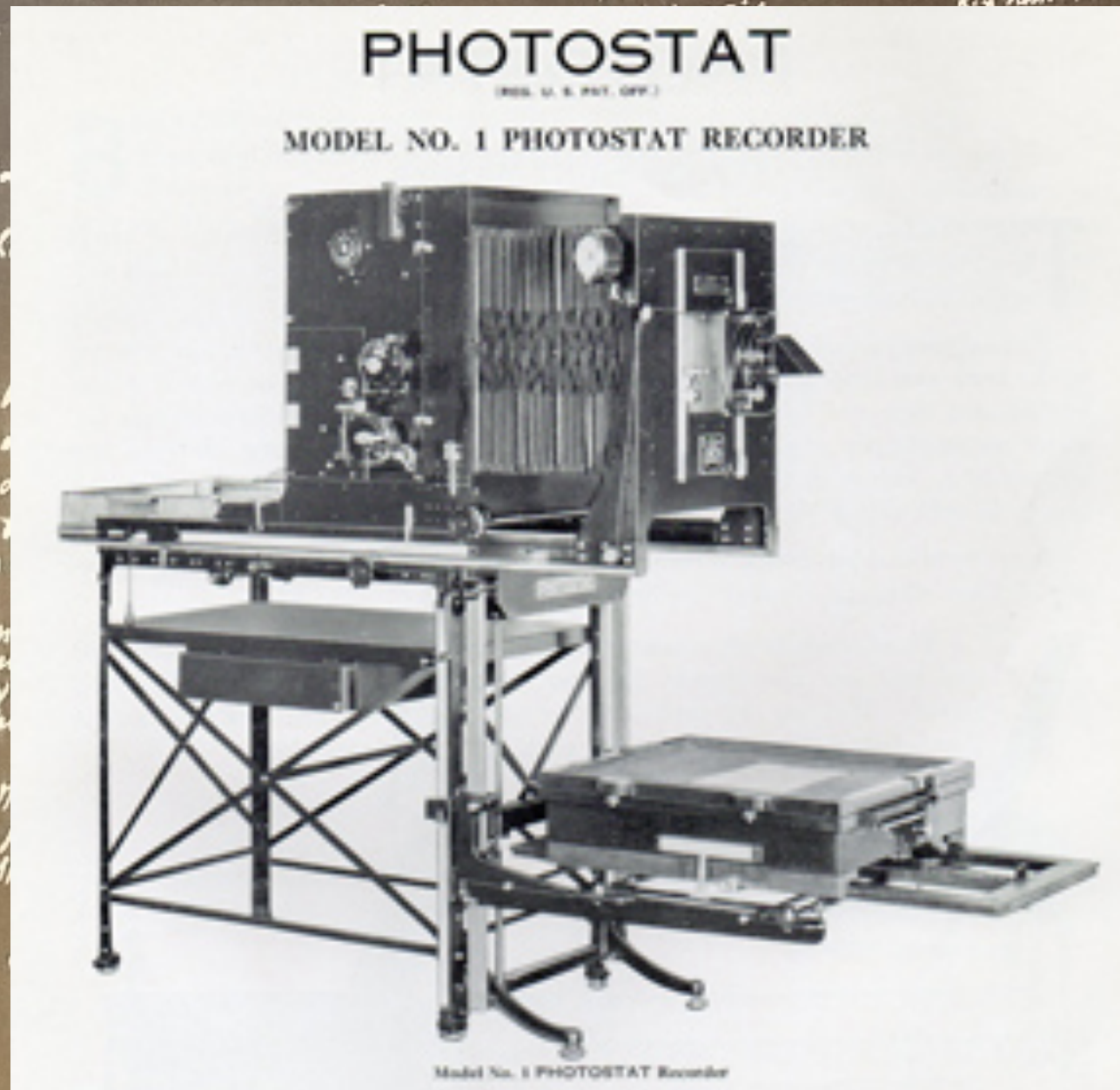
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Photostat

A purchase which has had an unexpected influence upon the development of the Library is that of a mechanical photographing machine

- George Parker Winship (1913)

Photostat



Joseph McCoid

Photostat

“The photostat has worked a complete revolution in bibliographical and research work by furnishing a comparatively inexpensive means of comparison between different copies of the same book.”

- George Watson Cole (1922)

Photostat

1922 Report

Grow collections
Circulate fragile materials
Complete damaged volumes.

Photostat

At the JCB

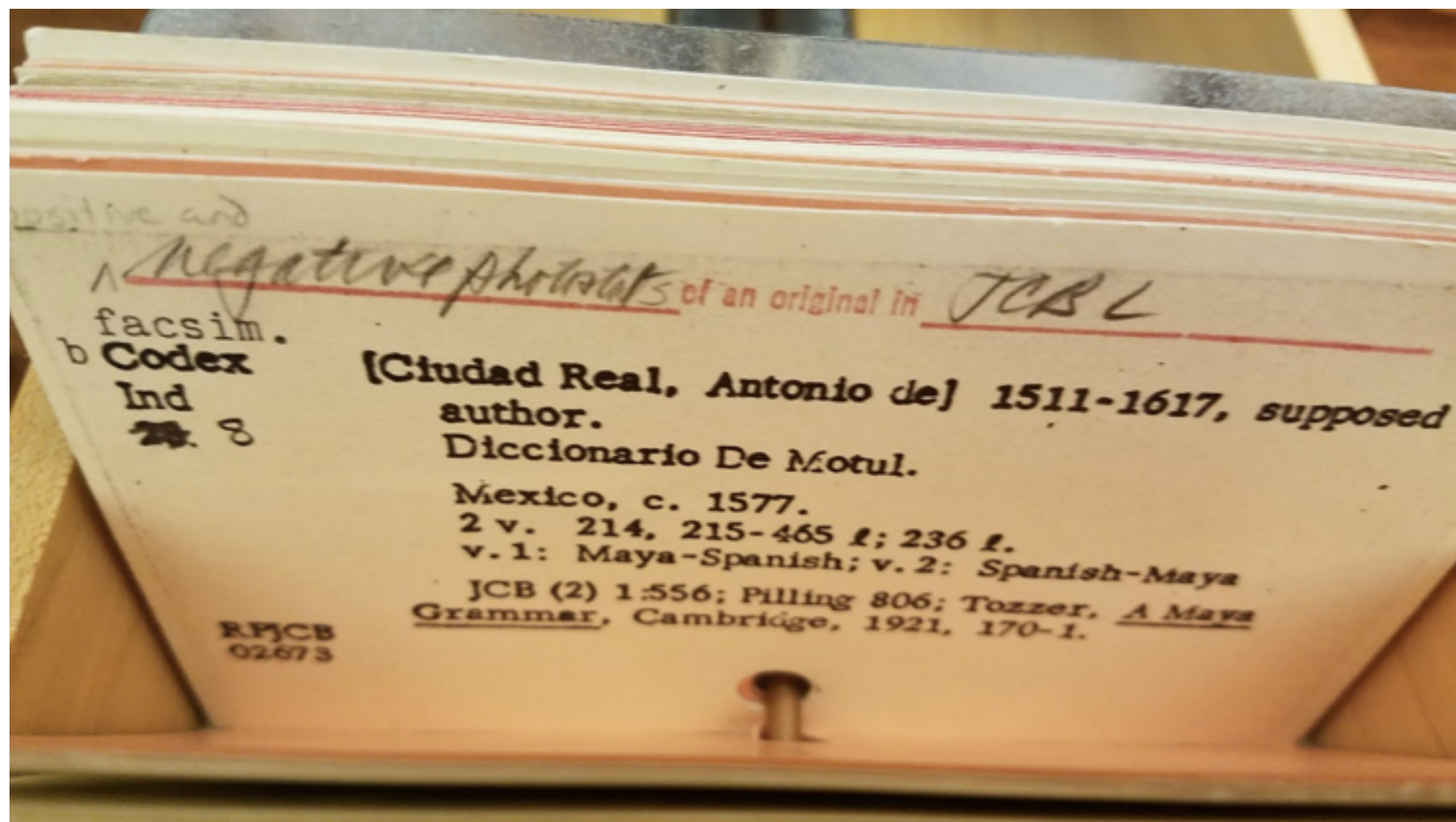
Establish and circulate
canonical materials.

Part 2: Photostating Mexican Documents

malah, vehue'ia humen melacal toe.
Lay vehum, laix vxut melacal xan-
e. Hungep iumil bil Dios, yoklal
manaah, vehue'ian pinhuon Dios.
manaan cappel, manaan oppel
Dios; humilili' hahal Dios. Lay
iumil bil, yoklal vppel bil yum,
yah menut melacal. Lay vehue
nunen iumil le xan, yoklal in hu-
nati yotah li'ul yotacimic melacal
in tahun golah. Laix yah ihcch-
ulil; xan, yoklal vqih yah iumil
himabal enchi. vppel inthan vqih-
yah laan, himabal laan; luum;
himabal luum; ik, himabal ik; kak-
nab; himamabal kaknab: laix v-
pelil inthan xan, vqih melacal ian
ichil laan; yokal luum; ichil ik, ichil
kaknab.

[illegible]

The Motul Maya photostat



The Motul Maya photostat

William H. Gates
POINT LOMA, CALIFORNIA

O.P.W. : 10-27-13 : 2

then on Apr. 21st, \$135, for the Guzman, Copioso, Miracle Play and San Buenaventura of 1684; then May 20th, \$65, for the large modern copy of the Cakchiquel dict., and Urbano.

The price on the first vol. Motul was about 20 cents, but that was a specially hard piece as you said, and it was your first days. For the others I see you figured about 12-1/2 cts., which would make the second Motul, 202 prints, and apparently ordinarily easy work, somewhat over \$25.00. Then the Zoque Dict., 171 prints, you never sent a charge for, but that must be more as there were words that had to be touched in, in the fold. Anyhow, on these two vols. I have no statements from you.

For the rest of the work I have your statements aggregating \$295, on which I sent you a check once for \$150, and enclose another for same amount herein - leaving something like \$50. still due you. Please let me know, as I want to get all things of the kind cleared up before the first of the year.

So much for the past; now the next thing.

You have a few imprints which I want, to fit in with some of my Phil-
lipps mss.:

- 136 - Gaona, Colloquios, 1582; I have a ms. of this in Mayahua.
- 185 - Wajera Yanguas, Mayahua, 1637.
- 116 - Roldan, Chuchona, 1580; I have a Chocho ms., which I take is same dialect.
- 56 - Feris, Zapotec Doctrina, 1567.
- 22 - Barrada, Chinantes, 1730.
- 22 - Levanto, Zapotec, 1776.

Then there are the following mss.: (the nos. from León's little catal.)

- 131 - 11 Arte Zapoteca, 4to, about 100 leaves.
- 144 - 16 Basalenque, Matlalimka. The description is not clear, but there seem to be about 500 leaves: one short and one long Arte, and Vocab. M-C and C-M.
- 164 - 21 Botello Movellán, Catecismo: lémo, about 50 leaves.
- 287 - 61 Devocionario en Tarasca, 4to, 39 leaves.
- 41 - 61 Gilberti, Textos: 8vo, 129 leaves.
- 222 - 76 Diccion.: folio, 148 leaves.
- 77 - 77 Sernopes: 4to, 198 leaves.
- 242 - 78 Sahagún, Fragments: lémo.
- 126 - 156 Serra, Praga. Diccion.
- 138 - 165

You may do for me any of the above, in such order as suits the convenience of your machine. I would like also to say that, quite apart from the saving of prints in your copying, smaller, and reduced sizes are easier for me to handle and work from. I have my re-copying now thoroughly systematized, and wherever a page can be brought within not over 6 inches tall atized, and wherever a page can be brought within not over 6 inches tall atized, on the negative, that is quite an added convenience to me. Of course not, on the negative, that is quite an added convenience to me. Of course not, where you can copy two books at once, so much the better; but in any case, a negative that I can trim down to 4x6 inches per single page is a mechanical advantage, the way I have things fixed.

I hope the year has been a successful and happy one with you; I do not have to wish it has been a busy one; that goes without saying.

By the way, Wilkinson is going to have an auction clearance next year early. I am going to bid, but very cautiously; I got stuck on some things I bought from him, and he is only "cleaning out."

With my best regards to Mrs. Winship and yourself,

William H. Gates

Photostat as Repatriation

"Of course you know the circumstances under which Dr. León was compelled to sell off his material ... It was a straight question of bread and butter for his family ... I formed the intention of asking you, as soon as the copying became practical, to let me copy a number of the pieces you got from him, and then surprise him by presenting him back with working copies of his own mss. etc.

William Gates, June 7 1912

Photostat as Scholarly Edition

“I greatly doubt if the Mexican people can print the
Maya ms. in a manner that will please either you or
Mr. Brown”

Albert Gatschel, 15 June. 1898

The Motul Maya photostat

You say León writes that the Mexican Museum, he expects, may publish it in enlarged facsimile. Now I am in pretty close touch with things there, and I know León would like to do this, as well as a whole lot of other things. But there are a hundred things in the way.

William Gates, 6 Mar 1913

The Motul Maya photostat

I know you will understand me when I say it is a delicate matter. I particularly do not wish to wound Leon's feelings, and very particularly not to discourage any efforts in linguistics he has made. But Government publications are notoriously inadequate,

William Gates, 14 April 1913

The Motul Maya photostat

Still I did not wish to suggest to Leon that he drop the work and let me go on with it, for that hardly seemed the thing to do. ... But as he understands from Wilkinson that I have a facsimile edition within early and satisfactory reach, that will save him the laborious and costly effort, and therefore that only in case I resolve not to carry it out, will he try to do so.

William Gates, 14 April 1913

Photostats and the Digital Age

Textual reproduction has always been more diverse than we remember.

Photostats and the Digital Age

Mechanisms for textual reproduction can be used to justify and reinforce inequity.

Photostats and the Digital Age

There are no Maya in the
history of the Photostat