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XML Multiple–Layered Encoding as an Editorial and Pedagogical Strategy for Colonial Latin American Studies

Clayton McCarl

This study considers an approach that can potentially contribute to the revitalization of editorial practice within colonial Latin American studies.¹ I first reflect upon the current place of editorial work within this interdisciplinary field. I then describe a method for the digital markup of manuscript and rare print materials that allows us to represent at once multiple textual states. I outline some possible benefits of this approach to editors and readers, as well as to the field of colonial Latin American studies. By way of example, I describe the specific implementation of this model on three projects I have undertaken in collaboration with students at the University of North Florida.

The method discussed in this study represents one of many possible approaches to employing digital textual editing in the context of research and pedagogy. I therefore offer my thoughts and experiences as examples of a process, not as best practices or editorial dogma in any sense. I do believe, however, that the fundamental concepts underlying this study—dealing with the value of transparency and student engagement—hold promise across many editorial projects, as well as for other types of digital humanities endeavors within colonial Latin American studies, Early Modern Iberian studies more broadly, and indeed, within other fields.

This study represents a preliminary attempt to articulate ideas surrounding an emerging practice. In doing so, I seek to promote connections between colonial Latin American studies and larger conversations around textual editing in a digital age. I do not attempt to argue here for specific ways that “multi–layered encoding” or other editorial approaches might alter the intellectual landscape of colonial–era studies in fundamental ways. Indeed, I offer this essay as a step toward laying the groundwork for such considerations, which are surely critical to colonial Latin American studies going forward.

Scholarly Context

Since the 1980s, the study of colonial Latin America has expanded in important ways. Types of cultural production once undervalued have been validated as objects of study, and historical actors and tendencies once overlooked

¹ This article speaks most specifically to colonial Latin American studies as practiced in the US academy, a community that encompasses scholars from around the world, but which may approach its work differently than communities of researchers based within national traditions within the Hispanic world.

or made invisible have taken prominence.² Scholars have investigated the material and visual culture of the colonial world, and have expanded geographical understandings of the period, emphasizing the place of Spanish and Portuguese possessions in the Americas within complex, integrated Atlantic and global economic and cultural systems.

These tendencies have not been accompanied, however, by a parallel investment in advancing editorial theory and practice. Despite that fact that much scholarship on the period depends on written artefacts, as a field colonial Latin American studies has placed little emphasis on exploring, improving and teaching the ideas and methods that underlie the transmission today of such documents. Scholars in the field have approached archival sources as editorial raw material with a relative lack of frequency, and have often worked out of necessity with outdated editions of even canonical texts.

Such a movement away from editorial work is not particular to the study of colonial Latin America. In the second half of the twentieth century, a marginalization of editorial methods occurred throughout the academy. This change was correlated, in part, to the rise of critical theory, in the context of which editorial pursuits were often viewed as quaint, characterized by pedantry, lacking in academic rigor or otherwise suspect.³

To a certain extent, the modern field of colonial Latin American studies emerged from within this scholarly environment. Informed largely by post-colonial theory, the transformation of colonial studies in the 1980s involved the questioning of a canon that privileged hegemonic voices. In the process, the philological methods that had supported that canon over the centuries were—consciously or unconsciously—likewise thrown into question. Such methods may have been regarded by some as more associated with Spanish Peninsular letters, and in particular, with more conservative scholarly traditions surrounding the “Golden Age.”

During these same decades, at least two forces worked to counter negative attitudes toward editorial practice. First, editors began to organize to theorize about

² Mónica Díaz summarizes and reflects upon this process in her article “El ‘nuevo paradigma’ de los estudios coloniales latinoamericanos,” *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 48, no. 3 (2014): 519–47.

³ In his introduction to *Devils and Angels: Textual Editing and Literary Theory* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), Philip G. Cohen asserts that “[t]his rift is unfortunate because literary theory and textual criticism have much to teach each other. Both are profoundly theoretical enterprises, concerning themselves with the same first questions that precede serious criticism. Nevertheless, literary theorists and textual critics often fail to interact with one another and even occasionally view each other with disdain” (ix). Amanda Gailey uses the term “second-rate scholarship” to describe how scholarly editing came to be viewed in the second half of the twentieth century. See “Cold War Legacies in Digital Editing,” *Textual Cultures: Text, Contexts, Interpretation* 7, no. 1 (2012): 13–14.

edition and establish standards. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Center for Editions of American Authors (CEAA) operated as a committee of the Modern Language Association, and in 1978 became the MLA Committee on Scholarly Editions (CSE). That same year, the Association for Documentary Editing (ADE) was founded, as was, the following year, the Society for Textual Scholarship (STS). These groups played—and continue to play—leading roles in positioning scholarly editing as a critical realm in its own right, and securing its status as an area of legitimate professional practice.⁴

Secondly, technological changes led to collaborations among scholars, librarians, and archivists that have, in turn, enabled the rise of digital textual editing as a space of transformation and interdisciplinary discovery across the Humanities.⁵ The development of the Guidelines of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI), first released in 1990, and the ongoing work of the TEI Consortium (TEI-C), founded in 2000, have been central to this process.⁶ Digital editing endeavors today comprise a fundamental subset of the work carried out by scholars associated with the Alliance for Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO) and its member organizations, as well as others.⁷

Participation by those who study colonial Latin America—and the Early Modern Iberian world more broadly—has historically been low at the meetings and

⁴ For the history of the CSE, see “Committee on Scholarly Editions,” MLA Commons, <https://scholarlyeditions.mla.hcommons.org/history>, accessed December 13, 2018. For 1978 as the year ADE was founded, see the Association’s website, <http://www.documentaryediting.org>, accessed December 13, 2018. John K. Young, executive director of STS, provided 1979 as the year of that organization’s founding via email correspondence with the author, December 11, 2018.

⁵ For an overview and analysis of this process, see Matthew James Driscoll and Elena Pierazzo, “Introduction: New Wine in Old Bottles,” in *Digital Scholarly Editing: Theories and Practices* (Cambridge, England: Open Book Publishers, 2016), 1–15. Other publications that illustrate the arrival of digital textual editing as a mature area of scholarly practice include Lou Burnard, Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, and John Unsworth, eds., *Electronic Textual Editing* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2006); Elena Pierazzo, “A Rationale of Digital Documentary Editions,” *Literary & Linguistic Computing* 26, no. 4 (2011): 463–477; Julianne Nyhan, “Text Encoding and Scholarly Digital Editions,” in *Digital Humanities in Practice*, ed. Claire Warwick, Melissa Terras and Julianne Nyhan (London: Facet, 2012), 117–137; Jerome McGann, “Why Digital Textual Scholarship Matters: or, Philology in a New Key,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Textual Scholarship*, ed. by Neil Fraistat and Julia Flanders (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 274–288; Daniel Apollon, Claire B elisle, and Philippe R egnier, eds., *Digital Critical Editions* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014); Jerome McGann, *A New Republic of Letters* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014); and Elena Pierazzo, *Digital Scholarly Editing: Theories, Models and Methods* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2015).

⁶ “TEI: History,” TEI Consortium, accessed December 11, 2018, <http://www.tei-c.org/about/history>.

⁷ See the list of member organizations on the ADHO website, <https://adho.org>, accessed December 13, 2018. For a listing of some TEI-based projects, see the TEI-C website, <http://www.tei-c.org/activities/projects>, accessed December 13, 2018.

in the publications of organizations like those mentioned. These groups have, as a consequence, largely missed out on the perspective that colonial-era scholars can offer. More importantly, textual editing has continued to be seen as a marginal pursuit within colonial Latin American studies, perhaps in part through a lack of engagement with the dialogues those organizations represent.

An episode at the inaugural meeting of the interdisciplinary Colonial Section of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) in 2013 illustrates the problem. As members discussed the types of annual awards the section might sponsor, a prize for best critical edition was suggested. The idea was quickly dismissed, after one member noted that there are simply “too few—only one or two a year.”

Since that time, however, this situation has begun to change, as evidenced by conference programs and recent publications. The joint meeting of the ADE and STS in 2015 featured a series of two panels titled “Points of Contact in Latin American Editorial Practice” and “Problems in the Editing of Colonial Latin American Texts,” co-sponsored by the Colonial Section of LASA. The 2016 LASA congress included the round table “The Electronic Edition of Colonial and Nineteenth-Century Latin America Texts: New Tools, New Models for Collaboration.” Sessions titled “Digital Humanities and Colonial Latin American Studies” and “Bridging Divides, Colonial Archives” were held at Digital Humanities 2018, the annual congress of ADHO, in Mexico City. At that same conference, a group convened to plan a translation of the TEI guidelines into Spanish. The Colonial Section is organizing a workshop around editing and the expansion of the colonial cannon for LASA 2019, and a proposed panel at that same congress, co-sponsored by the Colonial Section and the Libraries, Archives, and Research Section, will look at the use of pedagogical applications of DH methods in working with special collections. Another workshop at LASA 2019 will discuss the formation of the new transnational organization Alliance for Digital Research on Early Latin America (ADRELA).

Multi-Layered Encoding⁸

By *multi-layered encoding*, I refer to a process of developing electronic editions that can be viewed in various textual states. For the purposes of my own research, this has meant encoding in a dual mode that I would term *documentary/presentational*. The *documentary* dimension of the encoding seeks to record the original text, to the extent possible, as it appears on the page. The *presentational* mode, in contrast, attempts to tailor the text to the needs or expectations of contemporary readers. This dual approach to editing can yield

⁸ This section and the following further develop ideas I first presented in the talk “Towards an Edition that Remembers (and Reveals) Its Secrets” at the 131st Modern Language Association Annual Convention in Vancouver, B.C., January 8–11, 2015.

editions that provide careful witness to unique archival documents and also present accessible versions to scholars and other readers concerned primarily with their content, not the accidents of a particular textual incarnation.⁹

Such an approach to editing does not imply the preparation of two separate texts, but rather the encoding of one textual instance that reflects these two modalities. Following the TEI standard, I achieve this layering by encoding both versions within a single <text> element, using <choice> to provide original and regularized or emended readings. The former include the documentation of such features as changes of hand, struck text, inserted material, and gaps. The latter include the expansion of abbreviations, the modernization of spelling, and the correction of evident errors.¹⁰ To display these two versions of the text, as well as the manuscript images and an intermediate version highlighting the changes, I use an adaptation of TEI Boilerplate.¹¹

One undertaking in particular led me to implement this documentary/presentational mode of editing. This was a small-scale electronic edition I published in 2014 in the journal *Scholarly Editing*. With this project I sought to address a problem I experienced when preparing a previous print edition of a similar text. This was the desire to maintain the diplomatic transcription as an integral part of the modernized edition, instead of having it relegated to oblivion as a stand-alone file located somewhere—most probably my own personal file system, or eventually, nowhere at all.¹²

Though I adopted the approach described here with this practical objective, I quickly came to see it as offering other benefits. This process results, effectively, in a scaffolding of information that details the editorial interventions involved in two transformations: the passage of the text from the manuscript image to the transcription, and from the transcription to a modernized version. Such an informational structure has advantages for readers, editors, and the field of colonial Latin American studies.

⁹ Matthew James Driscoll, “Layers of Transcription,” in *Electronic Textual Editing*, eds. Lou Burnard et al. (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2006), 254–261.

¹⁰ For a more detailed explanation, see the section “XML Encoding” in Clayton McCarl, introduction to “Avisos a pretendientes para Indias (A Warning to Those Seeking Office in the Indies)” by Francisco de Seyxas y Lovera, ed., trans. Clayton McCarl, in *Scholarly Editing: The Annual of Association for Documentary Editing* 35 (2014), <http://scholarlyediting.org/2014/editions/intro.avisos.html>

¹¹ TEI Boilerplate is an application for displaying TEI-encoded documents on the web, developed at Indiana University by John Walsh, Grant Simpson, and Saeed Moaddeli. See the TEI Boilerplate website, <http://dcl.ils.indiana.edu/teibp>, accessed December 13, 2018,

¹² See McCarl, introduction to “Avisos.” The previous edition mentioned here is Francisco de Seyxas y Lovera, *Piratas y contrabandistas de ambas Indias, y estado presente de ellas* (1693), ed. Clayton McCarl ([La Coruña]: Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza), 2011.

Benefits

Readers benefit from this approach to editing primarily because it provides transparency, enabling them to see into editorial processes and better understand the decisions editors have made.¹³ In a print age, readers could—rightly or wrongly—make certain assumptions about the authoritativeness of editions. A fairly rigid structure existed around the process of scholarly publishing that assured that only certain researchers, presumably qualified, served as gatekeepers to the world of written texts. Such editors may have explicitly stated their editorial criteria, but if they did not, the reader might, according to the logic of this system, trust that such guidelines existed, were sensible, and had been applied consistently in the preparation of the text.

The rise of personal computing and the internet profoundly altered that scenario, with the ability of nearly anyone with access to the web to publish almost anything. Ascribing authority to scholarly texts that exist on the internet can therefore be difficult. We can look to the credentials of editors, when such individuals can be identified, but such attributions may be unreliable. Work that is somehow vetted or curated by institutions in which we place trust may seem more dependable, but unless unambiguous statements about editorial principles are present, and unless we have compelling reason to believe those standards were actually applied, the situation may not be much clearer. Indeed, in many cases, such intermediaries may be more focused on aggregating texts than on articulating and enforcing standards.

¹³ Studies focused specifically on ideas of transparency in editorial practice are scarce, though such concerns figure more generally in some existing scholarship. For instance, in the introduction to the third edition of *A Guide to Documentary Editing* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), Mary-Jo Kline and Susan Holbrook Perdue address what they assert is a historical failure of documentary editors to clearly outline the principles and methods that underlie their work: “[P]ractitioners have typically neglected to furnish the public with careful expositions of the principles and practices by which they pursue their goals. Indeed, it was editors’ failure to write about editing that made the first edition of this Guide necessary in the 1980s” (available online at <http://gde.upress.virginia.edu/index.html>, accessed August 30, 2018). The “Guidelines for Editors of Scholarly Editions” by the Committee on Scholarly Editions of the MLA addresses such concerns, arguing that “[t]he scholarly edition’s basic task is to present a reliable text: scholarly editions make clear what they promise and keep their promises” (“Guidelines for Editors of Scholarly Editions,” last modified June 29, 2011, accessed August 30, 2018, <https://www.mla.org/Resources/Research/Surveys-Reports-and-Other-Documents/Publishing-and-Scholarship/Reports-from-the-MLA-Committee-on-Scholarly-Editions/Guidelines-for-Editors-of-Scholarly-Editions#guidelines>). Some organizations have developed peer-review standards for digital projects more broadly. See, for example, the “General Guidelines and Peer Review Criteria for NINES Content” published by NINES (Networked Infrastructure for Nineteenth-Century Electronic Scholarship), available at “Peer Review,” NINES, accessed August 30, 2018, <http://www.nines.org/about/scholarship/peer-review>. See also the 2016 “MLA Statement on the Scholarly Edition in the Digital Age” by the Committee on Scholarly Editions, accessed December 14, 2018, <https://www.mla.org/content/download/52050/1810116/rptCSE16.pdf>.

The documentary/presentational mode I propose here, on the other hand, offers the reader a radical option: to view all editorial interventions, tracing them back to the source—diplomatic transcriptions, and when possible, the document images on which they are based. Oversights, inconsistencies or even the willful violation of an editor’s own principles can therefore be investigated. Even if an individual reader does not choose to interrogate an edition in this way, the opportunity to do so nonetheless promotes an atmosphere of accountability that benefits readers collectively.

This model of encoding not only holds advantages for readers, but also for editors themselves. First, this approach may maximize the longevity of editions. By including within a project the source material, or at least a transcription thereof, and by recording at a granular level the steps taken to convert that source into a final product, we better equip readers in the future to make decisions about the quality of the work, and consequently, about its continuing relevance, potentially extending the life of our work.

In a related fashion, this approach also may maximize the “reusability” of editions. Should an editor choose to return to and improve upon their own work, the documentary/presentational text—with transcription built in and previous editorial activity meticulously recorded—offers the opportunity to, in a sense, pick up where one left off. Likewise, should another editor propose to undertake a new edition, now or in the future, this self-documenting edition will provide a propitious starting point. Such a text potentially obviates the need to repeat much of the mechanical work involved in preparing an edition, allowing that new editor to make informed judgements about what can be preserved and what might be improved.

An obvious—though imperfect—analogy may be drawn to the open source movement in software engineering. By making the “source code” of our editions freely available, we enable them to be adapted and improved upon in ways we cannot anticipate. We also make it possible for our editions, which we may have understood previously as atomic objects, to instead be incorporated into larger systems or textual environments. In all cases, we send our editions off into the world not as proprietary, closed, finished products, but rather as agile entities that reveal their secrets and seek continued life through processes of transformation and renewal.

Most importantly, perhaps, this approach provides to editors an avenue for reflection. It offers an opportunity to scrutinize our own editorial practices, forcing us to think critically about matters we might otherwise overlook. Even the most scrupulous of editors may make unconscious decisions that fall entirely outside stated criteria. Indeed, such an editor will likely be the first to admit that this is so, though by the very nature of the problem, evidence—in the form of examples—is difficult to produce. While a multi-layered method cannot prevent such oversights

from happening, it provides a structured environment in which their likelihood is reduced.

This editorial model likewise presents us with the chance to reflect upon our roles in larger processes of textual transmission. By conceptualizing editions as objects that must be accountable, and that must yield themselves to adaptation and improvement by others, we position ourselves differently as scholars. We are, in this context, not primarily individuals grappling with the specific challenges of a particular text. Rather, we are members of a larger scholarly ecosystem that, as a whole, is moving toward a cultural change in how we edit in a digital age.

This approach to editing offers pedagogical opportunities, providing a hands-on forum in which to introduce students to topics including textual materiality, the production and circulation of Early Modern manuscripts and print texts, the history of the Spanish and Portuguese languages, and contemporary methods of textual transmission. As in other applications of digital humanities methods in a pedagogical setting, students in this context are not merely consumers or users of technology, but rather active participants in the process of knowledge production, contributing directly to the creation of editions destined for publication.

A particular advantage of this approach as a teaching tool is that students can experiment with the modernization of texts without making changes that could become permanent. The scholar serving as general editor of the project will review and proofread all the students' work, of course, but knowing this does not always alleviate students' insecurities. Because they record original readings alongside their regularized versions, however, they can easily review their work and identify possible problems, as can their peers and any teaching assistants who may be involved.

As a field, colonial Latin American studies stands to benefit from this approach. By challenging students' expectations of the type of work that can be carried out in an academic course, we stand to capture their attention in ways we might not with more traditional methods. Likewise, by involving them directly in the preparation of texts destined for publication, we offer them a level of engagement that may spark their desire to pursue further studies. This may be a positive outcome with respect to levels of enrollment in undergraduate courses and majors, and may also motivate more students to pursue graduate work in colonial-era studies.

By advancing such digital humanities agendas, we also provide a point of entry for new generations of scholars who do not fit neatly within defined disciplinary categories. Such individuals currently exist, somewhat on the margins of the field, and are likely to be more numerous in the future. Despite their often innovative research agendas, they may face challenges in securing positions as assistant professors in institutions and disciplinary departments that seek to hire candidates that meet a more traditional, and perhaps increasingly obsolete, profile.

If we can redefine colonial Latin American studies as an area of inquiry that openly embraces digital work, and break down the barriers that still exist between literary scholars, historians, art historians, and others, we can make mainstream the practices and visions of this new type of scholar, creating opportunities for such individuals to rise and have a transformative impact.

The field of colonial Latin American studies would also benefit directly from the scholarly output of such a new generation of textual scholars. A greater number of researchers engaged in the transmission of writings from the colonial world could result in a significant expansion of the textual material at our disposal and an increase in its availability. Given the vast amounts of documents related to colonial Latin American held in archives around the world, we can only speculate about the new directions such an editorial windfall might make possible. Electronic representations of such texts, furthermore, can be marked up not only in the multi-layered fashion described here, but also encoded in semantic terms, allowing us to conceptualize, query and engage with them in new ways. This process could allow new constituencies—scholarly and otherwise—to connect with such material, and by extension, colonial Latin American studies as a field.

Three Examples

Working with undergraduate students at the University of North Florida (UNF), I have experimented with this documentary/presentational approach on three projects. I have undertaken these editions under the umbrella of *coloniaLab*, a digital editing workshop I founded at UNF in 2015 as an affiliated project of the UNF Digital Humanities Institute (DHI).¹⁴ These endeavors all involve materials in Spanish pertaining to the Early Modern maritime world.

The first project is an edition of the “Compendio historico de las navegaciones [. . .] sobre las costas septentrionales de las Californias,” an unpublished manuscript from 1799.¹⁵ The text begins with an introduction addressing the Spanish expansion into California starting in the sixteenth century, and then presents what it frames as the most recent chapter in that history, Spain’s attempts in the second half of the eighteenth century to explore and fortify the regional known today as the Pacific Northwest. Those efforts responded to the incursions into the area by Russia, England and the fledgling United States, related to the expansion of the fur trade. The “Compendio historico,” is a unique document,

¹⁴ I examine the development and functioning of *coloniaLab* more broadly in another article currently under review (“*coloniaLab*: Towards a Model for Student Collaboration in the Edition of Colonial Latin American Texts”).

¹⁵ The full title is “Compendio historico de las navegaciones practicadas por oficiales y pilotos en buques de la Real Armada sobre las costas septentrionales de las Californias, con el objeto de descubrir y determinar la extension y posicion de sus distritos e islas adyacentes. Ordenado por un oficial de la Marina Real Española. Año de 1799.” I reproduce the titles of the archival and print works discussed in this section as they appear in the originals, without modernization.

celebrating the efforts of a generation of mariners whose careers were defined by this ill-fated campaign in the final years before Spain would lose its empire.

In the spring of 2015, UNF Spanish majors Buddy Delegal and Kalthoum Elfasi began the transcription and markup of the “Compendio historico,” working from images of a manuscript held at the Hispanic Society of America in New York City, one of two known witnesses. In subsequent semesters, Spanish majors Cameron Adelsperger, Kathlina Brady and Nicole Rolland worked on the text, along with criminal justice majors Krysten Ross and Adam Striebel. Together, these students have completed the transcription and first round of encoding of the 193-folio manuscript.

The second project that has employed this multi-level encoding strategy is a collection of archival documents related to an English expedition to Chile in the late seventeenth century. Captained by John Narborough, the journey involved a mysterious foreigner known as Carlos Enriques Clerque, who abandoned his English companions in Valdivia, Chile, to be executed in Lima in 1682. While the identity of Clerque remains a point of confusion, the work of Peter Bradley and José Miguel Barros in the 1980s clarified that Clerque was, in fact, the instigator of the voyage. The publication of Francisco de Seyxas y Lovera’s 1693 history *Piratas y contrabandistas de ambas Indias* provided an extensive, if unverifiable, contemporary account from a Spanish perspective, and more recent archival research has uncovered additional material that bears on this singular case.¹⁶

Carlos Enriques Clerque and the Narborough Expedition to Chile (1669–1671): A Critical Edition of Essential Documents gathers that archival material in once place. In the fall of 2015, Kalthoum Elfasi began the TEI-XML encoding of transcriptions I had made at the General Archive of the Indies and the British Library, as well as the transcription and encoding of documents images from the National Historical Archive (Madrid), the Bodleian Library (Oxford), and the National Archives (London). Kathlina Brady, John Pello-Wasko (psychology/sociology), and Ali Alsaman (international studies) continued work on those materials, and most are now ready for a second round of editorial work.

¹⁶ Peter T. Bradley, “Narborough’s Don Carlos,” *The Mariner’s Mirror* 72, no. 4 (1986): 465–475; José Miguel Barros, “La expedición de Narborough a Chile: Nuevos antecedentes,” *Serie Ciencias Sociales. Anales del Instituto de la Patagonia* 18 (1988): 35–59; Peter T. Bradley, *The Lure of Peru: Maritime Intrusion into the South Sea, 1598–1701* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989), 86–102; Peter T. Bradley, *British Maritime Enterprise in the New World: From the Late Fifteenth to the Mid-Eighteenth Century* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999), 434–442; Seyxas, *Piratas*, 144–150; Clayton McCarl, “Carlos Enriques Clerque as Crypto-Jewish Confidence Man in Francisco de Seyxas y Lovera’s *Piratas y contrabandistas* (1693),” *Colonial Latin American Review* 24, no. 3 (2015): 406–420; Clayton McCarl, “The Aftermath of the John Narborough Expedition (1669–1671) in the Viceroyalty of Peru” (forthcoming in *Colonial Latin American Review*).

The third project to employ this strategy is an edition of Seyxas y Lovera's treatise *Descripcion geographica, y derrotero de la region austral magallanica*.¹⁷ In this rare print text from 1690, Seyxas addresses the geography and strategic vulnerability of the extreme Southern Cone. As a mariner and merchant, Seyxas had passed through the region several times himself, and the urgency of preventing transit by foreigners through the area is a central theme not only of *Descripcion geographica*, but also much of his other writing.¹⁸ Over the centuries, numerous scholars have cited Seyxas' book in other scholarship about the region, and it appears to be the sole source for at least two episodes—the journeys of Antonio de la Roche and Thomas Peche—both of which have been widely repeated by historians.¹⁹

In the spring of 2018, Spanish majors Nicole Mills and Teri Pepitone undertook the transcription and encoding of this text, working from images of a copy in the National Library in Madrid. In one semester, they prepared a draft edition of nearly the entire book. I hope to complete the edition by 2020, the 500th anniversary of European discovery of the strait and region that Seyxas addresses.

As these descriptions make clear, all three projects remain currently in development. Indeed, to a large degree, the processes involved have so far been an end in themselves, independent of whatever final editorial products we may complete. In coordinating these undertakings, I have sought to develop a model for involving students in editorial work in a fashion that both contributes to my research and provides them with formative experiences. To this end, I have sought to deploy the multi-layered strategy described in this paper in ways that allow students to understand the texts within their broader historical and linguistic contexts. Kalthoum Elfasi summarized this approach in reflecting on her experiences in the spring of 2015:

The documents we read at the beginning of the semester, such as *A Guide to Documentary Editing* by Mary-Jo Kline and Susan Holbrook Perdue and the editorial criteria from *Avisos a pretendientes para Indias*, served as accessible resources for the rules and norms of transcribing and the logic behind them. Reading *The Nootka Connection* by Derek Pethick helped me to understand the international political context of the “Compendio Historico” and to read the names of places and people. Moreover, when it came to deciphering words, learning about the establishment of the Real Academia Española (RAE) and reading part

¹⁷ Francisco de Seyxas y Lovera [“Seixas y Lovera”], *Descripcion geographica, y derrotero de la region austral magallanica* (Madrid: Antonio de Zafra, 1690).

¹⁸ See Clayton McCarl, Introduction to Seyxas, *Piratas*, xli–xlvi; Clayton McCarl, “The ‘Taboas geraes’ of João Teixeira Albernaz I as a Mediated Textual Object,” *Quaerendo* 48, no. 2 (2018): 106–126; Clayton McCarl, “‘Tosco e imperfecto, con mucho de fabulado’: El mapa de Francisco de Seyxas y Lovera de la Región Austral Magallánica” (under review).

¹⁹ For the Roche story and a review of the authors that have followed Seyxas' version, see Clayton McCarl, “‘Tosco e imperfecto’” (under review).

of Rafael Lapesa's *Historia de la lengua española* were very helpful as they shed light upon old ways of spelling. In addition, this experience gave me the opportunity to gain knowledge of how to use TEI–XML, which is a skill that is not normally gained by undergraduate humanities students.²⁰

Conclusion

By transmitting written material, editions are sites of memory. They allow us to recover and preserve the knowledge of the past, and to document the present. Scholarly editions serve as bridges across time, permitting us to recover what has been lost, and to communicate with those who will come after us. In producing such work, we transmit not only written objects, but also metatextual information about those objects and the ways we, as editors, decide to approach them. In doing so, we combine textual entities with our own thinking about those objects, forging products that are separate and new, and which bear the marks of our learning, as well as our prejudices, idiosyncrasies, cultural assumptions and judgments of value.

If an edition is a site of memory in this way, the corollary must be equally true: that an edition is a site of forgetting. Through the various processes of transcription, remediation and regularization involved in an editorial project, we make countless decisions. Editors typically expound in some way the criteria underlying their method, though with varying degrees of detail and precision. Even when editors are explicit about the standards they employ, we cannot know the degree to which these are actually met. Editions may fall short due to negligence, but also, despite editors' best intentions, to the inherent complexity of a given texts, which frequently frustrate even the most rigorous of theoretical approaches.

The multi-layered approach to digital editing I have described seeks to address this situation by producing editions that both document the particulars of archival texts and make available accessible versions to scholars and other readers concerned with the content of these documents, in literary, historical, geographical or other terms. While this dual mode of editing allows us to explore a notion of transparency as an ideal in today's editorial practice, it also offers broader benefits, to readers and editors. This model also holds promise for the larger field of colonial Latin American studies, presenting an opportunity to develop new generations of scholars who can expand the ways we engage with and transmit the complex textual history of the colonial world.

²⁰ Final reflective essay, April 28, 2015. Kalthoum is now pursuing a Master of Arts degree in Latin American Studies at the University of Florida.