

PATRIOTISM AND THE RISE OF LATIN IN EIGHTEENTH- CENTURY NEW SPAIN:



Disputes of the New World and the Jesuit construction of a Mexican legacy

By Andrew Laird

During the 1700s, Jesuit authors from New Spain sought to promote the richness of Mexico's nature and culture, in response to Enlightenment polemics about the degeneracy of human and natural life in the Americas. This paper will explain why they wrote in Latin in order to do so – even though creole writers of the later 1600s had followed European practice in adopting the vernacular as a literary and intellectual medium. Consideration of some works produced by these Mexican authors between 1750 and 1780 (including Alegre's Latin translation of Homer's Iliad, Abad's Dissertatio ludicro-seria, López's Aprilis Dialogus, Eguiara y Eguren's Bibliotheca Mexicana) indicates the principal reason: the creole Jesuits sought to construct a legacy for Mexico to match the monumental representation of Iberia's august Greco-Roman past and of the Spanish Golden Age in the Bibliotheca Hispana nova and the Bibliotheca Hispana vetus which the Sevillian scholar Nicolás Antonio had compiled in Latin in the mid-1600s.

In an essay entitled *On the Study of Latin* which first appeared in 1851, Arthur Schopenhauer lamented that the

abolition of Latin as the universal language of learned men, together with the rise of provincialism which attaches to national literatures has been a real misfortune for the cause of knowledge of Europe.¹

Latin was not only a key to the understanding of Roman antiquity and of the Middle Ages; it also facilitated historical understanding of more modern times, up to about 1750: Eriugena in the ninth century and Ramon Llull in the thirteenth wrote in Latin, as did Bacon in the seventeenth. Had these

¹ Schopenhauer 2007, 29.

authors written in the languages of their own times and countries, argued Schopenhauer, much of their meaning would now be lost. This realisation prompted the philosopher to offer a related reflection:

Here let me observe, by way of parenthesis, that when patriotism tries to urge its claims in the domain of knowledge, it commits an offence which should not be tolerated. For in those purely human questions which interest all men alike, where truth, insight, beauty, should be of sole account, what can be more impertinent than to let preference for the nation to which a man's precious self happens to belong, affect the balance of judgment, and thus supply a reason for doing violence to truth and being unjust to the great minds of a foreign country in order to make much of the smaller minds of one's own!²

Recent accounts of the role of Latin in the early modern period concur that use of the language rapidly diminished from 1750 to 1800, whilst they emphasise its importance (and that of classical learning generally) for a coherent understanding of Western culture.³ Schopenhauer's recognition of a tension between Latin and the claims of patriotism, also anticipated – if it did not directly inspire – an observation by the twentieth-century historian Benedict Anderson:

the universality of Latin never corresponded to a universal political system[...] No sovereign could monopolize Latin and make it his-and-only-his language-of-state, and thus Latin's authority never had a true political analogue.⁴

Anderson further argued that printing consolidated the position of regional vernaculars in the early modern period, strengthening perceptions and definitions of linguistic identity which would lead to the emergence of nationalism in the nineteenth century.

Yet from the 1740s onwards, at the very time when the currency of Latin began diminishing in Europe and the "creole patriotism" of Spanish Americans was becoming more pronounced, there was a marked increase in the number and in the scale of works of general literary and intellectual interest being produced in Latin. This trend appears all the more surprising because the Latin authors – creole Jesuits who now constituted New Spain's intelligentsia – were well aware of the acclaim accorded earlier poets and historians who had followed European practice in adopting the vernacular.⁵ The

² Schopenhauer 2007, 30.

³ Waquet 2001, 274; Leonhardt 2009, 291–292.

⁴ Anderson 1991, 40–41.

⁵ A comment of Eulàlia Miralles in this volume has ramifications for colonial Mexico: "The relationship, in the early modern period, between Latin and the vernacular was not merely, in historiography and other genres, one of linguistic preference. As a rule, Latin

present paper will show that this rise of Latin literary production was related to the growth of patriotic feeling among creole Mexicans, and it will explain – by moving from effects to their causes – the contingent occurrences which inclined the Jesuits to adopt Latin as the vehicle for their forceful defences of New Spain’s heritage.

1.

By the eighteenth century the Spaniards born in the Americas, now widely referred to by historians as *criollos* (creoles), could no longer identify with those born in Spain, for all that they distinguished themselves from indigenous Americans (whom they called *Indios*, “Indians”), *mestizos* (people of mixed race), blacks, and other groups.⁶ The Crown had long regarded its interests as best served if economic and political control in the colony remained in the hands of peninsular Spaniards, making it difficult or impossible for educated creoles to secure positions in the colonial administration. The tough economic conditions imposed by Charles III’s Bourbon Reforms of the mid-1700s help to explain why the intellectual elite, in New Spain at least, was effectively confined to the Society of Jesus, which had become the most prominent and powerful religious order in Spanish America.⁷

The leading lights among the Mexican Jesuits of the later eighteenth century – the philosophers Juan Benito Díaz de Gamarra and Andrés de Guevara y Basozábal, the historians Francisco Javier Clavigero, Andrés de Cavo and the biographer Juan Luis Maneiro, scholars and poets such as Diego José Abad, Francisco Javier Alegre, Rafael Landívar, Andrés Diego de la Fuente and Agustín Pablo de Castro – were all disciples of Padre José Rafael Campoy (1723-1777), an advocate of the *Nova Scientia*.⁸ “No one could write an encomium of any of these men”, wrote Maneiro “without frequently mentioning Campoy’s name.”⁹ Although none of José Rafael Campoy’s own writings survive, his reform and expansion of the Jesuits’ curriculum came to accommodate mathematics, Greek, modern languages, and the ideas of Descartes, Bacon, Gassendi, Locke, and Newton. But in

was used for general works aimed at an erudite readership both within and outside the Iberian Peninsula. By contrast, the vernacular[...] was reserved for a local and perhaps less cultured audience and for works with studied political intentions.” Heath 1972 and Laird 2010 discuss the role of Latin for missionaries in sixteenth-century Mexico.

⁶ Brading 1991 is a comprehensive account of the evolution of creole patriotism in Spanish America.

⁷ Knight 2002, 202–331 explains the consequences of the Bourbon reforms for Mexico, which precipitated independence.

⁸ Essays in Owen Aldridge 1971 survey the “Enlightenment” in Spanish America; Navarro 1948 and Navarro 1983 treat thought and philosophy in later colonial Mexico.

⁹ Maneiro 1988, 282, 284 = Maneirus 1791, 2, 58–59, 64.

addition to their studies in philosophy and theology, the Jesuits inspired by Campoy were also addressing Mexican themes in texts, which would appear to have been aimed at secular readers or students as well as their Jesuit colleagues.

As a result of Charles III's reformist legislation, which led to the expulsion of the Jesuits from all Spanish territories in 1767, Campoy and his colleagues were among the 700 members of the Society exiled from New Spain, most of whom settled in the Papal States of Italy.¹⁰ Had it not been for this migration, their writings might never have been published to reach European readers.¹¹ Their literary achievements were significant: Alegre's Latin verse translation of the *Iliad*, his *Alexandrias*, an original Alexander epic with an apologetic essay (Bologna 1776), De la Fuente's epic on the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, *Guadalupana Imago* (Faenza, 1773), Landívar's *Rusticatio Mexicana* (Modena 1781, Bologna 1782), and Abad's theological epic in forty-three books, *De Deo Deoque Homine Heroica Carmina* (Cesena, 1780, with several reprintings). Major prose works produced included Abad's *Dissertatio ludicro-seria* (1778), Maneiro's *De vitis aliquot mexicanorum* (Bologna 1791-1792), and Guevara y Basoazábal's progressive philosophy text book *Institutiones philosophicae ad usum mexicanae iuventutis* (Rome, 1796). Alegre's study of political ethics on theological principles, *Institutiones Theologicae Libri 7* (Venice, 1789-1791) was published posthumously in 1797 and Andrés de Cavo wrote a lengthy "civil and political history of Mexico" in Latin prose – though only his Spanish version was published.¹²

This energetic production of these works in Latin was certainly not because the exiled authors were unable to write in Italian. Clavigero, who himself translated his history of pre-Hispanic Mexico into Italian, *Historia antica di Messico* (Bologna, 1780), also produced a *Breve Ragguaglio della Prodigiosa e Rinomata Immagine della Madonna de Guadalupe* (Cesena, 1782), a collection of sources on the apparition of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe in Mexico, while the South American Juan Ignacio Molina published his *Saggio sulla storia naturale del Chili* (Bologna, 1782). Pedro Marquéz

¹⁰ Batllori 1966 is the standard study of the Spanish American Jesuits in Italy; see further Guasti 2006.

¹¹ Abad's *Dissertatio*, De la Fuente's *Imago*, and Guevara y Basoazábal's *Institutiones* are not in the bibliography of works published by Spanish American Jesuits in Italy in Deck 1976, 96–99, but further vernacular items are listed. See also Aymerich 1784, a contemporaneous *Bibliotheca* of work by exiled Jesuits. Burrus 1959, Guzmán 1964, Revelli 1926, Torre Villar 1980 list further sources in European collections: Todá y Güell is a five volume bibliography (in Catalan) of works by Spaniards printed in Italy from the introduction of printing until 1900.

¹² Cavo 1836.

was another New Spaniard whose writings were printed in Italian: his accounts of two ancient Mexican archaeological sites, *Due antichi monumenti di Architettura Messicana* (Rome, 1804) was followed by *Esercitazioni architettoniche* (Rome 1808) on architectural theory in Vitruvius and various classical sources.¹³ Moreover, the fact that this group of Jesuits also made Spanish rather than Latin translations of texts in other languages shows that they were well aware of the benefits of propagation in the vernacular: José Ignacio Vallejo produced his translation of Binet's French lives of Saint Joachim and Saint Anna, along with his own hagiographies of Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary (Cesena, 1774). Alegre rendered or, more precisely, rewrote in Spanish a version of Boileau's *L'art poétique* (Bologna, 1776); Agustín García de Castro, another member of Campoy's group, published *Fábulas de Fedro, liberto de Augusto* (Madrid, 1781), a translation of Phaedrus' fables, and he also planned to put the Greek of Longinus and Hermogenes and the Latin of Bacon's *De Scientiarum dignitate atque incremento* into Spanish.¹⁴

The Spanish American Jesuits reserved Latin for ambitious original works which were meant to endure – with the apparent exception of Clavigero's history. And these substantial, more often literary texts, some of which must have already been in progress when their authors were still in New Spain – were either wholly or partly devoted to Mexican themes.¹⁵ Landívar's *Rusticatio Mexicana*, for example, was an ambitious didactic poem in fifteen books on country living in Mexico and Guatemala. Again, Alegre's short epic poem on Alexander the Great culminated in an encomium of the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe. Alternatively works signalled their author's Mexican or American provenance: the frontispiece of the 1788 Rome edition of Alegre's Latin verse *Iliad* billed him as "Mexicani Veracrucensis" (a Mexican from Veracruz), and an engraving of the author's portrait in his *Institutiones* was appropriately subscribed "Americanus Civis Veracrucensis" (an American citizen of Veracruz). Again, in at least one of the early incomplete editions of his *De Deo Deoque Homine* (Ferrara, 1775) and in his *Dissertatio ludicro-seria*, Diego José Abad gave *Se-*

¹³ Marquéz 2007.

¹⁴ Castro's translation of Bacon (attested in Maneiro 1791–1792, 172 = 1988, 503) is now lost.

¹⁵ Along with Alegre's own testimony (in an apologetic essay accompanying his poem the *Alexandriad* as "a work written by a young man of around twenty" ("juvenis vigesimum circiter annum agentis opus est"), Ms 1600 (see III below) shows his Latin translation of the Homeric *Batrachomyomachia* was written in Mexico; "pirated" excerpts from the *De Deo* published by the philosopher Díaz de Gamarra as *Musa americana seu de Deo carmina* (Cádiz, 1769) indicates Abad had begun the poem before the 1767 expulsion: Kerson 1991, 361.

lenopolitanus, “citizen of the Moon”, as his *nom de plume*. That is a Hellenization of the original etymology of the word “Mexican”: in the indigenous Mesomamerican language of Nahuatl, Mexico derives from *metzli* and the locative suffix *-co*: “place of the moon”.¹⁶ The eulogies of Mexico and Mexican traditions which are to be found in all of these works suggest that the linguistic and literary medium of Latin served as a further *de facto* demonstration of the richness of creole culture.¹⁷

2.

Unfortunately, not one of the New Spanish Jesuits who wrote in Latin in the eighteenth century explains why he did so, or offers a direct reflection on where he perceived Latin to stand in relation to the vernacular. However, in the 1770s and 1780s, the three pre-eminent Mexican Latinists in Italy, Rafael Landívar (1731–1793), Francisco Javier Alegre (1729–1788) and Diego José Abad (1727–1779) all comment on their diction and usage in seeking to defend themselves from potential detractors.¹⁸ In his preface to his *Iliad*, Alegre, after explaining that certain charms and qualities of one language cannot be conveyed in another, made an apparently general point which can be construed as an apologetic for his own Latin usage:¹⁹

Quod autem de unaquaque lingua universa, id etiam de propriis uniuscujusque gentis, Provinciae, immo & urbis loquutionibus dicendum est, quamobrem & Livius Patavitatem, & Virgilius Mantuanitatem redolere dicitur. Idem etiam quod de verbis, de Heroum moribus judicandum est. Quid enim Achillem carnes scindentem, ac distribuentem, aut Nausicaam ad fluvium lavantem, reprehendant, qui ejus gentis, eorumque temporum mores satis cognitos, ac perspectos habeant?²⁰

(What may be said about each and every language taken as a whole may also be said about particular forms of speech among each and every people, province, and city, so that Livy is said to have a whiff of

¹⁶ Karttunen 1992, 144 gives *metzli* as the word for “moon” in Nahuatl: see further Kerson 1991, 364, Laird 2003.

¹⁷ Aspe Armella 2007 on *criollismo* in Alegre’s *Institutiones*; Laird 2003, 2004, and 2006 respectively on aspects of Mexican identity in Alegre’s *Alexandriada*, Abad’s *De Deo* and Landívar’s *Rusticatio Mexicana*.

¹⁸ Laird 2006, 52–53 on Landívar’s *Monitum*, 262–281 on his sometimes apotropaic notes; the annotations in Alegre 1778 also justify the poet’s Latin diction, especially in relation to Virgil. For Abad’s *Dissertatio* see below.

¹⁹ Alegre’s translation is an impressive accomplishment: his short preface reviews previous Latin and vernacular translations but does little to explain his own endeavour or its purpose.

²⁰ Alegre 1778, ix (my translation).

his Patavinity and Virgil of his Mantuan identity. In fact judgment to be made about diction is same as that made about the customs of [epic] heroes. For why would people reproach Achilles for carving and distributing pieces of meat or Nausicaa for doing her washing by the river, if they have examined and become very familiar with the customs of that race in those times?)²¹

The likelihood of Alegre's comment amounting to a covert defence of his Latinity is strengthened by the fact that Diego José Abad in his *Dissertatio ludicro-seria* (published in same year as the preface to his *Iliad* was printed in Rome) also appealed to Livy's Patavian Latin, somewhat playfully, as a precedent for the *peregrinitas* (foreignness) of his own style:

Fuerunt nonnulli, qui Tito Livo etiam, quia Patavii ultra Rubiconem erat natus, aspergent hanc eandem labem peregrinitatis. Si modo est ejusdem farinae peregrinitas, quam Robertus exteris assignat, ferent illi, ut opinor, patientissime peregrinorum censu scribi et annumerari. Quod ad me attingit longe, longeque sim contentus magis T. Livii peregrinitate, et "Patavinitate", quam omnium ejus obtrectatorum urbanitate.

(There have been several who cast this same stigma of foreignness even on Livy, because he had been born in Padua, beyond the Rubicon. If this foreignness is of that same kind which Roberti attributes to non-Italians, then these individuals, I believe, will endure very patiently being enrolled and counted in the list of foreigners. As far as I am concerned, truly, I would be more content by far with the foreignness of Livy and with his Patavinity, than with the refinement of all his detractors.)²²

The purpose of Abad's *Dissertatio* – on "whether any born outside of Italy can write Latin well, contrary to what Roberti asserts" ("Num possit aliquis extra Italiam natus bene latine scribere, contra quam Robertus pronuntiat") – was to rebut that very claim made by the academician Giambattista Roberti in a letter to a fellow Jesuit scholar Francesco Maria Zanotti.²³ Abad had no shortage of arguments: he pointed out for instance that if Roberti had been born in the Netherlands or France he would be reviling the Latin of the Italians, when authors like Erasmus, Grotius, Vossius, Lambinus and Muret were infinitely better than Italians of the same period.²⁴

Roberti's provocation came to Abad's attention in the wake of other charges about Spaniards' capacities in Latin by Clementino Vannetti, secre-

²¹ The references to Achilles and Nausicaa allude to *Iliad* 9.210 and *Odyssey* 6.48–109.

²² Abad 1991, 402–403 (translation by Kerson).

²³ Roberti 1797, vol 10, 305–310, cited in Kerson 1991, 363.

²⁴ Abad 1991, 384–385.

tary of the Rovereto *Accademia degli Agiati*, and in works of other prominent Italian Jesuits, such as Gerolamo Tiraboschi's *Storia della letteratura italiana* (Modena, 1771–1782) and *Del Risorgimento di'Italia* (Bassano, 1775) by Saverio Bettinelli.²⁵ The immediate sentiments behind these polemics have been explained by Miguel Battlori:

Just as some [Italians] were annoyed that the Spaniards ventured to speak to them of music, others were displeased that they considered themselves as Latinists no less accomplished than the natives of Italy. The idea that the spread of bad taste – both the baroque tendency at the end of the Renaissance and the decline of classical Latin literature – was due to Spanish influence had great currency, and the names of Lucan, Seneca, and Martial were cited as corruptors of a prior “good taste”.²⁶

But it is important to realise that these sentiments were in turn triggered by a broader historical consideration. Productive exchange and rivalry between the cultures of Spain and Italy had continued unabated since the Renaissance. Whilst Iberia and the Americas always accommodated Italian culture, not least the currents of humanism, the Crown of Aragon had ruled Sicily and Sardinia in the fifteenth century, formally establishing a capital in Naples and controlling much of the Italian peninsula. From 1735 Naples and Sicily came under the rule of Philip V, Spain's first Bourbon monarch. In the late 1700s Italy thus remained fragmented: the Bourbon kingdoms of Naples and Milan and the kingdom of Savoy bordered the Republics of Genoa and Venice, and the Papal States (now Lazio, Romagna, Marche and Umbria, where the exiled Jesuits mostly settled). A sense of Spain's hegemony and its influence all over Italy, along with the fact that Spain had been politically united since the late 1400s, naturally caused resentment amongst Italians who had a strong sense of their shared linguistic and cultural heritage, and explicit articulations of Italian nationalism were to follow the collapse of Napoleon's rule in the early 1800s.²⁷ Thus insecurity about identity was in play for both the groups involved in these polemics: a sense of aggrieved patriotism, if not a kind of incipient nationalism, was motivating the Italian Jesuits as much as it was prompting the responses of the Spanish creoles to whom they were opposed. Given that the two groups faced the same

²⁵ Deck 41 n. 16. Kerson 1991, 367: “It was a certain Théophile Blanchard, to whom the *Dissertatio* [of Abad] is dedicated, and whom we have been unable to identify positively, who brought this epistle to Abad's attention four years after its appearance and who urged the Mexican to reply to the alleged boasting of Roberti and Ferri.”

²⁶ Battlori 1966, 35 (my translation).

²⁷ Pécout 2000.

kind of predicament, it is not surprising that they were eventually reconciled.²⁸

Whether or not Latin should be used as a literary or scholarly medium was another issue. Abad was well aware of debates provoked by the French Encyclopédiste Jean le Rond d'Alembert about the role of Latin as a universal language.²⁹ D'Alembert had argued for the cultivation of modern languages, principally on the basis that no modern author could write good Latin, in his *Réflexion sur l'harmonie des langues... et sur la latinité des modernes* (Amsterdam 1767), although in the *Discours préliminaire* of his *Encyclopédie* (1751), D'Alembert did concede the utility of Latin as a *lingua franca*.³⁰ Some indication of Abad's own perception of the larger role of Latin are given in an emotional apostrophe in his *Dissertatio* to his friend and mentor Rafael Campoy, who had died the year before it was published:

Memini tui, Josephe Campoi[...] Tu sublimiorum et gravissimarum scientiarum cognitione instructissimus, ab ipsismet Scripturarum et Conciliorum, et sanctorum Patrum fontibus theologiam imbiberas. Tu regnorum, provinciarum, urbium distantiam, situm, descriptionem sic animo comprehenderas, tanquam si de specula quadam altissima totum terrarum orbem contueris, Tu longum historiarum filum a mundi exordio ad aetatem nostram tenebas manu, et saniore semper critice adhibita, involutissima quaeque expectabas. Tibi antiqui omnes Latinitatis Patres, prae me, qui assidue a puero tecum vixi, erant familiares. Quoties tu mihi de orationis ducti et dicendi genere aliquo, aut de multiformi et versatili verbi alicujus us dubitanti lucem majorem ea quam Pareus, aut Popma, aut Nizolius, aut Stephani *Thesaurus* attulerant, attulisti! Quoties Plinii majoris, aliorumque antiquorum locos tenebrosos et implicatos dilucidius et planius quam interpretes docti, quos ante consulueram explanasti!³¹

²⁸ Landívar's poem was praised by Tiraboschi; Vannetti's acclamation in his *Epistula ad Abadium* of Abad's *De deo* is quoted in Fabri's Latin biography of Abad, *Specimen Vitae Auctoris*: Fernández Valenzuela 1974, 86. Ugo Foscolo later praised Alegre's translation of the *Iliad*: *Enciclopedia Italiana* ii 1929, 288.

²⁹ Roberti 1797, 310 incorporated a reference to Girolamo Ferri's response to D'Alembert's charge that no modern could be "a good Latin author" ("bonum scriptorem Latinum"): Kerson 1991, 367.

³⁰ The full title of the treatise in D'Alembert's *Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie* (Amsterdam, 1767) vol 5, 523–568 was: *Réflexion sur l'harmonie des langues et en particulier sur celle qu'on croit sentir dans les langues mortes; et à cette occasion sur la latinité des modernes*: see further Waquet 2001, 263–264. The Catalan Jesuit exile Mateu Aymerich (note 11 above) published a counterblast under the pseudonym of Quintus Moderatus Censorinus: *De vita et morte Latinae linguae paradoxa philologica* (Ferrara, 1780).

³¹ Abad 1991, 391–393: translation by Kerson.

(I remember you José Campoy[...] Most learned in both the knowledge of the sublimest and weightiest sciences, you had imbibed theology from the very founts of the Scriptures, Councils and Holy Fathers. You had comprehended in your mind the distance, place, definition of kingdoms, provinces, cities, as if you gazed upon the whole world from a certain very high place of outlook. You held in your hand the long thread of history from the beginning of the world to our own age, and always by applying sounder critical principles, you explained whatever things were most complicated. All the ancient Fathers of Latinity were more familiar to you than to me who lived with you since childhood. How often when I was unsure about the structure of a sentence, about the style of expression, or the multiform and versatile use of some word, did you provide me with more illumination than Pareus, Popma, Nizolius or the *Thesaurus* of Stephanus could bear. How often did you explain the dark and tangled passages of Pliny the Elder and other ancients more lucidly and learnedly than the learned interpreters whom I had consulted before.)

This touching tribute is also highly ideological. Campoy is presented as a visionary – comparable to Epicurus at the beginning of the third book Lucretius' *De rerum natura* or to the allegorical figure of Homer's Odysseus as a philosopher, who looks upon the different men and cities. But this sage, in his contemplation of the full course of history, is characterised by Abad as applying a kind of philological method to everything he sees. While Campoy's contemporaneous biographers presented him as a progressive philosopher who broke the mold of scholastic influence in the colleges and seminaries of New Spain, Abad puts language and Latinity at the very centre of Campoy's broad intellectual reach. The implication is that knowledge of Latin can transcend time and space, and constitutes the basis for scientific, humanistic and theological understanding.

The penning of the *Dissertatio* in response to Roberti's provocative allegation that non-Italians had an inferior command of Latin has been considered an "overreaction", attributable to Abad's condition as an exile and to the forced dissolution of the Jesuits ordered in 1773 by Pope Clement XIV.³² But Abad and his *confrères* were not just suffering taunts about their capacities in Latin from local Italian *savants*. The ambitious intellectual endeavours of the exiled New Spanish Jesuits were being conceived partly to counteract an astonishingly polemical study in French, *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains* (Berlin, 1768), by the Dutch clergyman Cornelius de Pauw. De Pauw, commending Newton, Leibniz, Descartes, Locke

³² Kerson 1991, 374.

and others, held that no book worth reading had ever come out of America. He characterised the indigenous Americans as a

race of men who have all the faults of a child, as a degenerate species of humanity, cowardly, impotent, without physical force or vigour, and without elevation of spirit.³³

The calendars and magnificent buildings of the Aztecs were simply the fabrication of cynical, unscrupulous Spaniards. De Pauw partly rested his arguments on the thesis of George-Louis Leclerc Buffon who had argued that America was an immature continent in geological terms, with an unhealthy climate, so that all forms of life (including human beings) which inhabited it were deficient, and weaker than those in Europe.³⁴

That attack on American nature was addressed in the first part of Clavigero's vernacular history, aimed at a wider public. There can be little doubt that Landívar's detailed encomium of the natural wonders, culture and production of Mesoamerica in the *Rusticatio Mexicana* was also in part prompted by the writings of Buffon and De Pauw. Landívar laid considerable emphasis on the extent to which his account was informed by eyewitness testimony, as an implicit retort to claims about the Americas which had no basis in firsthand experience.³⁵ The idea that there was a correlation between the condition of a land's geography and climate and the capacities of its people was taken up by Abad. He made the point that being in Italy is no more conducive to good Latinity than being anywhere else:

Si quod multi existimant verum esset, qui sub mitiore caelo nascuntur, eos ut plurimum mitiore quoque praeditos esse ingenio, atque ad omnia promptiore et meliore, oportebat profecto Mexicanos esse mortalium ingeniosissimos, quandoquidem caelum nacti sunt indulgentissimum[...] Omnia ibi, et studiis fovendis et alendis ingeniis videntur conspirare concorditer. Sed si verum facere iudicium volumus et seposita amoris affectione decernere, ubi homines nati simus, ex eodem luto coagmenti sumus omnes.³⁶

(If it were true, as many believe, that those who are born under a milder climate are usually endowed with a milder disposition, more

³³ "Si nous avons dépeint les Américains comme une race d'hommes qui ont tous les défauts des enfants, comme une espèce dégénérée du genre humain, lâche, impuissante, sans force physique, sans vigueur, sans élévation d'esprit, nous n'avons rien donné à l'imagination en faisant ce portrait, qui surprendra par sa nouveauté, parce que l'histoire de l'homme naturel a été plus négligée qu'on ne pense." De Pauw 1768, *Préliminaire*, p. VIII.

³⁴ Buffon 2007–2009. Cañizares-Esguerra 2001 explores Buffon's role in the eighteenth-century "dispute of the New World"; compare note 37 below.

³⁵ Laird 2006, 51–53.

³⁶ Abad 1991, 396 (translation by Kerson).

fitted and better for all things, indeed Mexicans would have to be the most ingenious of mortals since they enjoy a most indulgent climate[...] Everything there seems to conspire harmoniously to nurture studies and nourish genius. But if we want to pass true judgment[...] having set aside prejudice we would conclude that wherever we men are born, we are all made of the same clay.)

Thus it is concluded that clever or stupid people can be born anywhere. The claim Abad showed to be tendentious – that the quality of a land could determine the intellectual capacities of its people – was in many respects a reprise of arguments given particular prominence by Julius Caesar Scaliger’s ferocious response, more than two centuries before, to the natural historical theses of Girolamo Cardano’s *De subtilitate*.³⁷ But it is far more likely that the writings of Buffon and De Pauw precipitated Abad’s apparent “overreaction” to Roberti. Roberti was only talking more generally about non-Italians, and he had made no mention himself of Spaniards or Spanish Americans. For Abad there was more at stake than just the aptitude of Mexicans for Latin: beneath the surface of his tract he was fighting a bigger battle.

In this respect an epistle to the “flourishing youth of Mexico” by Abad’s biographer Manuel Fabri, *E[mmanuelis] F[abri] Florentissimae Mexicanae Iuventuti*, which prefaced the posthumous third edition of his *De Deo* (Cesena, 1780), is highly pertinent.³⁸ Fabri urged young Mexicans assiduously to cultivate Latin to the highest level, specifically in order to make “foreign peoples”, i.e. Europeans, aware of the natural riches with which their country is endowed:³⁹

Agite igitur, Mexicani, Juvenes, in idque totis viribus incumbite, ut puram tersamque Latinitatem, e Tulliano potissimum fonte caeteri<s>que aetatis aureae Principibus petitam, serio et constanti studio multorumque annorum labore et perseverantia possideatis. Id enim a vobis in primis carissima Patria expectat, ut quas in ejus sinum opes plenis natura manibus profudit, preciosiores apud exteris Gentes efficiatis: Id familiarum vestrarum dignitas exigit; sic enim avitam gloriam, maiorumque decora virtute parta, hoc etiam clarissimo hon-

³⁷ Scaliger 1557 §99, 131 (and passim); Cardano 1550. That seminal Renaissance controversy, explored in detail by Maclean 1984, is overlooked in Gerbi 1973 and other accounts of the “dispute of the New World”. Cañizares-Esguerra 1999 explains the context of Scaliger’s polemic in sixteenth-century Europe and its ramifications for Spanish America.

³⁸ Abad 1974, 62–69.

³⁹ Compare the *Appendix* (94–112) to the *Rusticatio Mexicana* (Laird 2006, 258) in which Landívar, the poet of Mexican nature, writing from Bologna, exhorts the *florens iuventus* in Mexico to cultivate knowledge of science.

ore auctam, posteris vestris magis, magisque augendam hereditatem relinquetis.

(Up then, Mexicans in your prime, apply all your strength to this end, that you may, after serious and constant study and years of steadfast toil, lay claim to pure and succinct Latinity, sought from the spring of Cicero and the other princes of the Golden Age. For your most beloved *Patria* expects this from you above all, that you render the treasures which Nature with hands full has poured forth into her bosom all the more precious among foreign peoples. That is what the merit of your families demands: in this way the glory of your ancestors and the pride of your elders will be secured by virtue, and increased in honour and renown, it will grow all the more as an inheritance you leave your descendants.)⁴⁰

These sentiments are significant, in part because they run counter to the tenets of D’Alembert and the *Encyclopédistes*, but mostly because of the remarkable advocacy that the most elegant Latin should be the vehicle of Mexican patriotism, in order to secure an enduring legacy for the future.

3.

The exiled creole Jesuits’ tendency – to address their patriotic concerns by using voluminous Latin works as a sledgehammer to smash the walnut of glancing or misconceived invective from Europe – had a significant and conspicuous precedent: Juan José Eguiara y Eguren’s monumental *Bibliotheca Mexicana* (Mexico City, 1755).⁴¹ The *Bibliotheca* was designed to provide a dynamic demonstration of Mexican intellectual achievement through a catalogue of every Mexican author from the conquest up to the time when the first volume was published. Arranged in alphabetical order of authors’ first names, the entries of the *Bibliotheca Mexicana* gave their biographies, followed by a list of works, extant or not, quoting critical verdicts on them and assessing their legacy. Only the entries from A to C went into print before Eguiara died in 1763 – the remaining text in manuscript goes up to the letter J. There is also a series of *Anteloquia*, prologic excursuses, by Eguiara on the achievements of both pre-Hispanic Mexico and colonial New Spain, the headings of which are reproduced in the Appendix below.⁴²

There may have been a variety of peripheral stimuli for this ambitious undertaking – for example an apocryphal account of the Bourbon excavations in Herculaneum printed in Mexico in 1748 evidently engendered cre-

⁴⁰ Abad 1974, 66 (my translation).

⁴¹ Eguiara y Eguren 1986.

⁴² Eguiara y Eguren 1944 is an edition and Spanish translation of the *Anteloquia*.

oles' interest in Mesoamerican archaeology.⁴³ But it is well known that Eguiara's endeavour was primarily a response to a particular European polemic about the paucity of culture and learning in the New World: a Latin letter in the collected *Epistulae* of Manuel Martí, Dean of Alicante in Spain, first published in Madrid in 1735. In letter 16 of Book 7 Martí offered a bleak picture of intellectual life in Spanish America to a pupil named Antonio Carillo, who had thought about continuing his studies in Mexico:

Quo te vertes apud indos, in tam vasta litterarum solitudine? Quem adibis, non dicam magistrum, cuius praeceptis instituaris, sed auditorem? Non dicam aliquid scientem, sed scire cupientem? Dicam enucleatius a litteris non abhorrentem? Ecquosnam evolves codices? Equas lustrabis bibliotecas? Haec enim omnia tam frustra quaeres, quam qui tondet asinum vel mulcet hircum. Eugepae! Abice has nugae atque eo iter converte, ubi et animum excolere queas et honestum vitae subsidium tibi parare et novos honores capessere: ita tamen cum animo tuo reputa, non te idcirco urbem petiisse, ut vias, et compita tereres, ut aedificiorum magnificentiam admirare, ut inertem vitam ageres, ut in salutationibus, caeterisque Candidatorum officiis contabesceres: his enim artibus quid refert Romae ne sis, an Mexici?⁴⁴

(Why do you turn to the Indies, a vast wilderness when it comes to literature? Whom will you go to? – I won't say "which teacher will instruct you?", but whom will you find even to listen to you? I won't say "will you find anyone who knows anything?", but will you even find anyone who *wants* to know anything? In a nutshell: will you find anyone who doesn't recoil from the study of literature? What documents will you unroll? What libraries will you consult? You'll search for all these things with as much success as someone who tries to shave an ass or milk a he-goat. Oh very good! Forget such nonsense – and put yourself on a path where you'll be able to cultivate your mind, make a decent living for yourself, and acquire new prestige. So reflect carefully not on looking for a city just in order to tread the streets and crossroads, to admire the magnificence of buildings, leading a lazy life and wasting away on networking and other chores of those seeking office: for those skills what does it matter whether you should be in Rome or Mexico?)

Martí's letter was quoted at length in *Anteloquium* I; shorter passages of it were cited again through all of the *Anteloquia* of the *Bibliotheca Mexi-*

⁴³ The anonymous *Relación del maravilloso descubrimiento de la ciudad de Heraclea, o Herculanea, hallada en Portico, Casa de Campo del Rey de las dos Sicilias, sacada de los mercurios de septiembre, y noviembre del año pasado de 1747*, Mexico City, 1748 is discussed in López Luján 2008.

⁴⁴ Martí 1738, ii, 38–39 (my translation).

cana.⁴⁵ Another Latin work by Eguiara, *Selectae dissertationes Mexicanae* (Mexico City, 1746) was prefaced by a eulogy of the University of Mexico, which was devised as another retort to Martí, although there he is not explicitly mentioned.⁴⁶

Eguiara y Eguren was far from alone in responding to the Dean of Alicante's invective: it was rebutted in a Latin inaugural lecture at Mexico University by Juan Gregorio de Campos y Martínez in 1745, which was published in the same year.⁴⁷ The preliminaries of the small volume contain letters, also in Latin from those holding the highest offices in the Royal University of Mexico, including the Rector, Ignacio Rodríguez who wrote to Philip V himself to protest at Martí's calumny of the Americas and of Mexico in particular. Another less commonly explored response to Martí, included in its entirety in the opening pages of the first printed volume of the *Bibliotheca Mexicana*, is the *Aprilis Dialogus* by Vicente López.⁴⁸ The dialogue, between a Spaniard, a Belgian, and an Italian, is first conducted under a shady plane tree in a villa outside Mexico City, recalling the setting of Plato's *Phaedrus*.⁴⁹ Leonardo Bruni Aretino and other writers of dialogue in Renaissance Italy favoured such settings, but the environs of Mexico City had also offered an idyllic backdrop for the Latin *Dialogi* by the sixteenth-century humanist Francisco Cervantes de Salazar.⁵⁰ López's staging of his dialogue in April may allude to the date of viceregal *imprimatur* for the first volume of the *Biblioteca Mexicana*, 28 April 1755, but Antony Higgins has also suggested the spring time symbolises an intellectual reawakening in Mexico:

⁴⁵ *Anteloquia* I, II, VII, VIII, IX, in Appendix below.

⁴⁶ Eguiara y Eguren 1991. As with the *Bibliotheca Mexicana*, only the first volume of this philosophical work was published: three were projected.

⁴⁷ Copies of Campos y Martínez' *Oratio apologetica* (1746) are in the Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library and the Lafragua Collection of the National Library of Mexico: Heredia Correa 1991, xxvii–xxxvi; Osorio Romero 1976, 124–130. Brading 2002, 131, 154–155, 235 details other responses to Martí's remarks by Bartolomé Felipe de Ita y Parra (1743); José de Mercado and José Torrubia who each remarked in 1744 that Martí was echoing Nicolás Antonio's comment that "all is traded in the Indies, save books". Brading 2002, 235 also outlines the later reaction of the bibliographer José Mariano Beristáin de Souza in *Biblioteca hispano-americana septentrional* (Mexico City, 1816–1821).

⁴⁸ Eguiara y Eguren 1986 = 1755 (López's text has no pagination); López 1987 is a modern edition.

⁴⁹ *Phaedrus* 230b–c. Plato's opening is recalled both by Cicero's use of an oak tree and by a corresponding discussion of myth (Roman rather than Greek) myth at the beginning of the *De legibus* Book 1.

⁵⁰ Bruni, *Ad Petrum Paulum Histrum Dialogus*: Garin 1952, 76; Cervantes de Salazar's *Dialogi* (facsimile in León-Portilla 2001) were appended to his text of Juan Luis Vives *Exercitationes latinae* (Mexico City, 1554).

as a place in which humanist scholarship is being reelevated to the state of vitality it enjoyed in Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries[...] the intellectual culture of New Spain is projected as a scene in which standards of erudition and eloquence similar to those set in motion by humanism in Western Europe are being attained.⁵¹

López's interlocutors in the *Aprilis Dialogus* commend Eguiara y Eguren's enterprise, and, among other topics, address the availability of books in America, the benefits of chocolate for intellectual inspiration, and the painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Martí's negative view of the Americas is first criticised by the Spanish speaker, before his arguments are rebutted in detail by the Belgian. Even the *locus amoenus* in which the narrator situates the latter part of the work is turned against him:

eratque loco facies aspectu mirabilis, variis peregrinisque plantis, et stirpibus consita densis etiam arboribus inumbrata, in quibus plures, et apprime canorae aviculae nidificabant. Ut qui aderant nec Ciceronis Academiam requirerent, aut Tusculanum; nec ipsius Alonensis decani villam cui describendae omnes ille orationis lepores et charites advocavit.⁵²

(The place was of a beauty worthy of admiration, abundant in varied and extraordinary plants, strewn with bushes and shaded by leafy tree tops, where songful little birds were making their nests. So that those who were there did not miss Cicero's Academy, or Tusculanum, nor the villa of the Dean of Alicante himself, for the description of which he had summoned all the charms of expression, and the Graces.)

On several occasions Martí had proudly praised his *Villa Popiliana* in the countryside near Alicante, and it is mentioned with remarkable frequency by the Dean as the location in which many of his letters were written. However, López's invocation of Mexico's appealing natural richness and its clement climate primarily serves to indicate their capacity to stimulate learning and intellectual accomplishment.

Thus, in the 1740s in New Spain, just as in the 1780s in Italy, creoles were composing lengthy and elaborate discourses in Latin in order to address European prejudice. But unlike the onslaughts of De Pauw, Martí's disparaging of the Americas was brief and it was made *en passant*: the hapless Dean's central concern appears to have been the formation of his addressee Antonio Carillo. While it is easy to see why his remarks caused antagonism in New Spain, why did they provide the impetus for such vehement replies from so many prominent figures and lead to more than

⁵¹ Higgins 2000, 34.

⁵² López 1987, 11. (my translation).

three decades of toil for Eguiara on an encyclopaedic work in Latin, when his previous publications had been shorter works – panegyrics, sermons and theological tracts – mostly in the vernacular?⁵³ The answer to that question lies in *who* Martí was, and that leads to the fundamental explanation for the New Spanish Jesuits’ inclination to express their creole, or more specifically Mexican, patriotism in Latin.

4.

Manuel Martí was a formidable scholar.⁵⁴ In the 1680s he came to Rome as a young man and drafted several works, including *Notae in Theocritum*, a commentary on Theocritus, a didactic poem on the currents of the Tiber, *De Tyberis alluvione sylva* (Rome, 1688) which he dedicated to the influential Cardinal José Sáenz de Aguirre.⁵⁵ During his time in Rome Martí considered following the example of Fulgentius the sixth century bishop of Ruspe and committing all of Homer to memory, but abandoned the idea when he realised this would leave no time for his other pursuits.⁵⁶ The industrious Spanish antiquarian also drafted a playful *Oratio pro crepitu ventris* and the *Satyromastix*, a response to an invective against the academician Gian Vincenzo Gravina.⁵⁷ Diego José Abad himself would later note in his *Dissertatio* the significance of the fact that the Italian Gravina not only praised the celebrated Spanish grammarian Sanctius “as prince of both ancient and modern grammarians”, but was also prepared to dedicate his treatise on the Latin language, *De lingua latina dialogus*, to Martí.⁵⁸ But Abad’s phrasing conveys that the Dean was far from unique in meriting such commendation:

Et quod meo iudicio plusculum est, *Dialogum*, quem de *Lingua Latina* composuit, Emmanuelli Martino, homini item Hispano inscripsit et attribuit, quasi nullum Gravina alium agnosceret Decano Alonensi praestantior, cui difficilem provinciam de Latina lingua digne deserendi committeret.

⁵³ De la Torre 1986, cxi–cxii attributes 442 works to Eguiara, of which only fifteen were published.

⁵⁴ Guglieri Vázquez 2001 and Gil’s introductory study in Mayans y Siscar 1977 are overviews of Martí’s achievements. Hernando Sobrino 2006 examines his significant contribution to epigraphy during the Spanish Enlightenment.

⁵⁵ A’Becket 1907 is a short biography of Sáenz de Aguirre.

⁵⁶ Mayans y Siscar 1977, 73–74.

⁵⁷ Guglieri Vázquez 1995; 1996.

⁵⁸ Gravina’s *De lingua latina dialogus ad Emmanuelem Martinum* was printed in *Jani Vincentii Gravinae opuscula ad historiam litterariam, et studiorum rationem pertinentia*, (Oxford, 1792), 169–233 is discussed in Teodoro Peris & Pomer Monferrer 2008.

(And something of more note in my opinion is that Gravina inscribed and devoted the *Dialogue on the Latin language* he composed – again to a Spaniard – as if he could discern no one more outstanding than the Dean of Alicante to whom to entrust the difficult domain of expounding competently on the Latin language.)⁵⁹

Martí's *Oratio pro crepitu ventris* is worth mention because a copy of the text was included in a Mexican manuscript of orations and poems (including a version of Alegre's *Alexandriad* and his *Batrachomyomachia*) dated to 1750, now in the National Library of Mexico (Ms. 1600) and which is believed to come from the Jesuit College of Tepozotlan.⁶⁰ The full title of the treatise is given as *Oratio pro crepitu ventris habita ad PP. crepitantes ab E. M. E. A. D.*, "Speech in defence of farting delivered before the Farting Fathers by E.M.E.A.D." The initials stand for *Emmanuelis Martini Ecclesiae Alonensis Decanus*, "Manuel Martí Dean of the Church of Alicante". His name and title are given in that sequence in full, in the first edition of the *Oratio* (Madrid, 1737) and in the *Bibliotheca Mexicana*.⁶¹ The fact that no more explicit indication of Manuel Martí's identity is offered in Ms. 1600, which was presumably copied after the controversy provoked by his letter to Carillo, might tell its own story. At any rate, it is unlikely to be coincidence that in a notice of the contents of Ms. 1600, the nationalistic Mexican bibliographer Joaquín García Icazbalceta omitted any mention of the *Oratio* itself, as well as of its unpopular author.⁶²

Appointed Dean in Alicante by the Pope in 1696, Martí returned to Spain where he began translating Eustathius' collations of Homeric scholia.⁶³ After a chance discovery in a library in Valencia, he published the Latin poetry of Hernán Ruiz de Villegas, a sixteenth-century Spanish disciple of Vives and a friend of Budé.⁶⁴ Martí also visited the ancient theatre of Saguntum and the Roman town of Italica near Seville.⁶⁵ His letters were collected in

⁵⁹ Abad 1991, 388 (my translation).

⁶⁰ Yhmoff Cabrera 1975, 255–256.

⁶¹ Martí 1737; compare the designation of Martí in the title of Eguiara's *Anteloquium* I in the Appendix to this paper.

⁶² García Icazbalceta (Alegre 1889), viii–ix.

⁶³ Martí's manuscript *Eustathii Patriarchae Thessalonicensis Excerpta in Homeri Iliada* with a printed frontispiece, acquired of by his biographer Gregorio Mayans, covered *Iliad* Books 1–5.

⁶⁴ *Ferdinandi Ruizii Villegatis Burgensis, quae exstant Opera; Emmanuelis Martini Alonensis Decani, studio emendata et ad fidem Casteliniani Codicis Correcta a Bernardo Andrea Lama, iterum recognita ac recensita, nunc primum prodeunt iussu excellentissimi Domini J. Basilii a Castelvi*, Venice 1734. Nicolás had provided a brief notice of Hernán Ruiz de Villegas in the *Bibliotheca Hispana nova* (under the name of *Rodericus Fernandez de Villegas*).

⁶⁵ Mayans y Siscar 1977, 106, 156.

twelve books which came out in Madrid two years before his death in 1737 – the following year a second edition was printed in Amsterdam.⁶⁶ That publication secured Martí's reputation for posterity, but not at all in the way that the Valencian scholar would have expected: he is known to Mexican historians simply because of that letter advising the young Antonio Carrillo against travelling to the New World.

But there is more. When he was still in Rome in his twenties, Martí had been called upon by Cardinal José Sáenz de Aguirre to edit and complete the *Biblioteca Hispana vetus*, “Old Library of Spain”, the ambitious inventory of Spanish authors from classical antiquity to the end of the fifteenth century, which had been projected by the Sevillian bibliographer Nicolás Antonio (1617–1684) and was posthumously published in his name. Antonio's imposing “New Library of Spain”, *Bibliotheca Hispana nova*, on which he worked through the 1640s originally appeared first, in 1672, and remains indispensable for literary historians of early modern peninsular Spain.⁶⁷ This is a dictionary of biography in Latin, of all the Spanish authors writing from 1500 until 1672 – which was the year of the *Bibliotheca Hispana nova*'s first publication in Rome. The period covered by the *Nova* thus spans Spain's Golden Age of art and literature.⁶⁸ Accounts of the authors' lives are followed by detailed descriptions of the editions of their works so that the two volumes of the *Bibliotheca Hispana nova* alone come to a total of 1,500 folio pages in double columns of dense text.

The *Bibliotheca Hispana vetus* (Rome, 1696) consisted of ten books, again in two volumes, amounting to more than 1,020 folio pages in double columns, with several extensive marginal notes. The arrangement of the *Vetus* was chronological, as Book 1 covered the period from the reign of Augustus to the end third century AD; Book 2 treated the fourth century and so on – although each volume was preceded by an alphabetic *Index auctorum*. In the second volume, alphabetic inventories of authors of uncertain period (*Scriptores incerti temporis*) and of Arabic writers (*Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana*) also formed a coda to the principal ten books, along with a series of chronologies. Though the importance of Manuel Martí's contribution is nowadays little recognised, the extent of his involvement was made explicit in the *Monita quaedam ad lectorem* (Advice to the Reader), at the beginning of the first Roman edition of the *Bibliotheca Hispana vetus*:

Ut autem editio haec accuratissima & correctissima esset, idem D. Cardinalis, illam dirigendam plenè & omnino curandam commisit

⁶⁶ Martí 1738.

⁶⁷ The *Bibliotheca Hispana nova* and the *Bibliotheca Hispana vetus* were reprinted in 1788 = Antonio 1996a, 1996b.

⁶⁸ The dates of the *Siglo de Oro* are contested: see e.g. Ward 1978, 545.

Bibliothecario & convictore suo D. Emmanuelli Marti, natione Hispano & patriâ Valentio, satis noto Romae ob singularem eruditionem Graecam & Latinam, qui ingenti cura & pertinaci labore duo haec volumina Bibliothecae veteris fidelissimè edenda & corrigenda curavit, ac praeterea ad marginem quibusdam locis adiecit notulas aliquot opportunas eiusdem Cardinalis nomine. Si qua autem plura circa auctorem, aut opus ipsum Bibliothecae Hispanae, praesertim huius veteris, quae nunc primum prodit, praefari oportuerit, seu praemonere lectoribus, idem D. Emmanuel in se recipiet, prout opportuniùs ipsi fuerit visum.

(In order then that this publication might be as accurate and correct as possible, the same Lord Cardinal [De Aguirre] fully and utterly entrusted its care to his librarian and colleague Don Manuel Martí, a Spaniard from the country of Valencia, very well known in Rome on account of his unique learning in Greek and Latin. With great attention and unstinting toil he ensured that these two volumes of the *Bibliotheca Hispana vetus* would be very reliably produced and corrected, and furthermore he has added a number of useful short notes to certain passages, in the name of the said Cardinal. If then in any respect it is appropriate to say more about the author or the actual text of the *Bibliotheca Hispana* by way of a preface or advice to readers, especially with regard to this *Vetus* now coming out for the first time, let the same Don Manuel take it to himself, as it should be regarded as more fitting for him to do so.)⁶⁹

Folio xxxvi of the original 1696 edition of the *Bibliotheca Hispana vetus* also contained an *Additio*, “An Addition in which Manuel Martí provides several prefatory notes with regard to this part of the *Bibliotheca*”, and Eguiara reveals, on just one occasion, in his *Anteloquia*, that he was aware that Martí had “corrected and embellished” Antonio’s *Vetus*, at Sáenz de Aguirre’s behest (“Martinus ipse iussu cardinalis de Aguirre Bibliothecae hispanae veteris editionem accuraverit adornaveritque”).⁷⁰

Historians today are well aware of the impact in New Spain of the dismissal of American learning in Martí’s letter to Carillo. What is not so well understood is the extent to which creole intellectuals felt threatened by the daunting reputation for learning of the writer who was responsible for it, a reputation now largely forgotten. Moreover, Martí’s authority was inevitably consolidated by that of Nicolás Antonio, who had received a canonry in Seville

⁶⁹ This text “To the reader”, *Lectori*, was also included in the Madrid 1788 edition: Antonio 1996b, xx (my translation).

⁷⁰ Antonio 1996b, xxvi; Eguiara y Eguren, *Anteloquium* IX, (1944), 112.

from Pope Alexander VII and the Order of Santiago from Philip IV, and at the end of his life was in the service of Charles II.⁷¹ Even so Antonio's own comment that "in the Indies all merchandise is traded, save books" acquired notoriety in New Spain. Some further remarks in the letter from Antonio to Juan Luis Cortés originally written in 1663 and published in 1742 could also have had a part in prompting the infamous views Manuel Martí would later express himself: "Those unhappily exiled [from Europe]" wrote Nicolás Antonio, "lack interaction with *literati* and contact with works of learning, with which the ground of this part of the Old World is so fecund, especially today."⁷²

At any rate, Martí's caustic comments about the America and Mexico could not be simply ignored or brushed off: they needed to be countered by the production of an equivalently colossal display of Latin learning. As Martí and Antonio were pre-eminent antiquarians and literary historians, the potential charge that Mexico could not produce comparable scholars, simply because it had no antiquity or literary heritage of its own, also had to be addressed. The *Bibliotheca Mexicana's* conspicuous resemblance to the Antonio-Martí *Bibliothecae* was thus far from accidental. Eguiara followed the bio-bibliographical arrangement of the *Bibliotheca Hispana nova* (again listing authors under their first names), while his prefaces offered a symbolic equivalent to the *Bibliotheca Hispana vetus: Anteloquia* II–VIII extolled the "antiquities" of Mexico, conferring a classical status upon the indigenous Mexicans (*Indi* or *mexicani*), particularly the Aztecs and Tlaxcaltecs, who were shown to have used hieroglyphs, built monuments and practised oratory (III, IV, VI).⁷³ That conception of an ancient legacy for Mexico, purportedly equivalent to that bequeathed to Europe by Greece and Rome also meant that New Spain's own antiquarians and chroniclers of pre-Hispanic culture such as Fray Andrés de Olmos, Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, Francisco Cervantes de Salazar and Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora could be included. And finally, like the *Bibliotheca Hispana* of the previous century, the *Bibliotheca Mexicana* was written in Latin. Eguiara's creole pride naturally led him to call his work, "Library of Mexico" – but the obvious alternative, "Library of New Spain", *Bibliotheca Novohispana* or *Bibliotheca Novae Hispaniae*, would have risked confusion or unwelcome association with the *Bibliotheca Hispana nova* which was the very model and inspiration as well as the foil and butt of his own *magnum opus*.

⁷¹ Mayáns y Siscar's life of Antonio is in Antonio 1742, i–xxxv.

⁷² Antonio 1742, 644.

⁷³ See Appendix below.

5.

Sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spanish and creole vernacular authors who had written about pre-Hispanic and colonial Mexico were more or less reconciled to their works achieving more circulation in the colonies than in Spain. In contrast, the creole Jesuits publishing in the 1770s and 1780s were committed, even more than Eguiara had been thirty years before, to securing a readership outside New Spain and the Hispanic world. The printing of so many of the exiled Jesuits' books in Europe, as a consequence of their expulsion, does not mean that the expulsion was what led to those books being conceived or written in the first place: as indicated above, many of them were underway *before* the Society of Jesus was driven from the colony in 1767.

The Jesuits of the later eighteenth century did not all regard themselves as champions of Eguiara's ultimately unsuccessful venture. Francisco Javier Clavigero, though he admired his predecessor's work and drew extensively from it, was far more accomplished as an analytical historian.⁷⁴ Francisco Javier Alegre was aghast at the suggestion from a Spanish Jesuit that he might himself continue the *Bibliotheca Mexicana*:

You are making fun of me. Eguiara filled a whole folio volume with three letters; you propose that I make up for everything Eguiara left from item 672, that I should add the authors from the missing letters of the alphabet, when they were born, when they died, what occupations they had etc. [...] *quarum miseranda peritia est* ["experience in those kinds of things is pitiful"]. I do not concern myself with that sort of thing[...] Dictionaries, *bibliothecas*, character sketches, parallels, compilations, histories of physics, of theology, and other referential works, in which one talks about writers without having read them and which do not convey scientific knowledge, but only words, personalities, and fancies are not my thing.⁷⁵

Alegre's expressed disdain for "*bibliothecas*" in general conveys that he was distancing himself from both Nicolás Antonio and Eguiara y Eguren.

Yet there were continuities: Clavigero's amusing reference to Cornelius de Pauw (who lived in Cleves) as "Monsieur de Pawl, *Dean* of Berlin" reflects the fact that the Dean of Alicante's spectre was still looming large in

⁷⁴ Brading 1991, 388–390 hints at the contrasts of methods and circumstances distinguishing Eguiara and Clavigero; Ronan 1977, 204 and *passim* indicates Clavigero's admiration for Eguiara whom he may have known personally.

⁷⁵ Alegre, Letter to Hervás y Panduro, 1 November 1786 ed. Burrus 1953, 201 (my translation).

the 1780s.⁷⁶ Charles III had ordered the Royal Librarian Francisco Pérez Bayer to follow in Manuel Martí's footsteps by annotating a new Madrid edition of the *Bibliotheca Hispana vetus* and the *Bibliotheca Hispana nova*. With lettering and illustrations by Jerónimo Antonio Gil, who was appointed chief engraver of the mint in Mexico City, the four meticulously produced folio volumes were printed by Joaquín Ibarra in 1788: the exiled creole Jesuits' scholarly contacts and connections to the Spanish court meant they would have been well aware that this project was underway.⁷⁷

Latin had always served as the Spanish American Jesuits' standard vehicle for their researches in theology, philosophy and rhetoric, but in eighteenth-century New Spain it became a vehicle of broader cultural concerns. This trend was spearheaded by Juan José de Eguiara y Eguren's attempt to construct a monument for Mexico, as a response to Martí's searing invective about the Indies. But Eguiara could hardly compete with the extraordinary testament to Spain's historical and literary traditions offered by the Antonio-Martí *Bibliothecae*. His *Bibliotheca Mexicana* was more poetic than scientific, expressed in diffuse and inelegant Latin, and had little appeal for the Jesuits of the next generation, who were inspired by the progressive rationalism and philological rigour of José Rafael Campoy. They were still impelled to continue the process of constructing a monument for Mexico, but not by completing Eguiara's unfinished project. Instead Alegre, Abad, Landívar and others produced ambitious works of their own, availing themselves of

pure and succinct Latinity drawn from the spring of Cicero[...] in order to inform foreign peoples of the greater value of the treasures Nature poured forth into the bosom of the *Patria*, and[...] to bequeath their ancestors' glory as a legacy to their descendants.⁷⁸

For all that Schopenhauer might generally object to the incursion of patriotism into the domain of knowledge, he would probably have recognised that these Mexican Jesuits were using the medium of Latin in order to rectify injustices to truth, not to perpetrate them.

⁷⁶ Clavigero 1944, 380 playfully situates De Pauw in Berlin because the *Recherches philosophiques* were published there in 1768.

⁷⁷ Manuel Luengo, *Diario* vol. 24 1790, 235–236, cited in Deck 1976, 36 mentions that Angel Sánchez was an intermediary between Alegre and the court of the king of Spain.

⁷⁸ E.F. *Florentissimae Mexicanae Iuventuti* 1780, in Abad 1974, 62–69, quoted above.

Appendix. Titles of the *Anteloquia* to the *Bibliotheca Mexicana* (1755)

ANTELOQUIA occasionem operis, argumentum, methodum, cetera iis affinia opportune aperientia.

ANTELOQUIUM I Occasio scriptionis propalam ut detur, Emmanuelis Martini, ecclesiae alonensis decani, Epistola xvi, libri VII, qua habetur tomm. eius ii, excscribitur.

ANTELOQUIUM II Quanta decanus alonensis mexicanarum ignoratione antiquitatum laboraverit commo[n]stratur priscorumque eruditio indorum ostenditur codicibus ipsorum et bibliothecis in theatrum productis.

ANTELOQUIUM III num litteratura mexicanorum proprie hieroglyphica dici possit?

ANTELOQUIUM IV Illustria aliquot monumenta traduntur, quibus proxime dicta illustrantur atque firmantur ulteriusque priscorum eruditio mexicanensium valide asseritur.

ANTELOQUIUM V Antiquorum collegia et gymnasia mexicanensium indorum a gravissimis scriptoribus bono in lumine collocantur.

ANTELOQUIUM VI Mexicanorum in poetica studium et oratoria traditur; peritia in rebus physicis exhibetur, et quibus utebantur leges innuuntur; tum alia ingenia signa paucis notantur.

ANTELOQUIUM VII Priscos mexicanos non iniuria sapientes inter censendos esse, recta demum consecutione ex hactenus datis infertur, iniustusque eorundem nationi alonensis decanus probatur, si eos in Epistola sua indigitavit et stilo confodit.

ANTELOQUIUM VIII Emmanuelis Martini ignorantia de mexicana eruditione ab eo tempore quo excoli ab hispanis America coepit ad usque aetatem nostram aperitur et in scribendo temeritas confutatur.

ANTELOQUIUM IX De codicibus et bibliothecis mexicanis Emmanuelem Martinum latentibus, quem notissima eruditus, imo etiam indoctis multis monumenta effugisse monstratur.

ANTELOQUIUM X Bibliothecae mexicanae aperiuntur, in quas alonensis decanus urbanissime excipiendus atque tractandus.

ANTELOQUIUM XI De americanorum ingenio et in literas amore ac studio.

ANTELOQUIUM XII Ingeniorum maturatio americanorum expenditur; eruditissimi ac gravissimi critici M.F. Benedicti Feijoo sententia de ea propulsatur.

ANTELOQUIUM XIII Praepropera americanorum ingeniorum defectio conficta ostenditur et ad fabulas amandatur.

ANTELOQUIUM XIV Ex memorandis in BIBLIOTHECA nostra scriptoribus aliqui enumerantur aetati grandiori iuxtaque insigni pollentes ingenio.

ANTELOQUIUM XV P. Petri Murillo Vearde de re americanorum litteraria iudicium vestigatur et aperitur.

ANTELOQUIUM XVI Insignes aliquot indicantur mexicani eruditi et pridem et aetate nostra conspicui admodum et notissimi.

ANTELOQUIUM XVII Argumento proxime dato insistimus et colophon addimus.

ANTELOQUIUM XVIII Materiae de quibus mexicani scripserunt paucis innuntur et brevissima in tabula collocantur.

ANTELOQUIUM XIX Quid de indorum eruditione ex quo ab hispanis excoli litteris coeperunt sit pronuntiandum.

ANTELOQUIUM XX Titulus BIBLIOTHECAE MEXICANAE aperitur et ab obiectionibus vindicatur.

(PREFACES revealing the motivation for this work, its argument, method and other things suitably pertinent to them:

PREFACE I That the motive of this written work may be revealed, Letter 16 of Book 7 by Manuel Martí, Dean of Alicante, is excerpted from his 2 volumes.

PREFACE II The great ignorance of Mexican antiquities under which the Dean of Alicante has laboured is pointed out, and the learning of the ancient Indians is demonstrated by bringing their codices and libraries into the arena.

PREFACE III Can the writing of the Mexicans be properly termed “hieroglyphic”?

PREFACE IV A number of glorious monuments are recorded, which glorify and confirm what has been said, and which further give forceful affirmation of the learning of the ancient Mexicans.

PREFACE V The colleges and schools of the ancient Mexican Indians are presented in a positive light by the most authoritative writers.

PREFACE VI The Mexicans’ dedication to the arts of poetry and oratory is recorded; their accomplishment in medicine, and the laws they used are touched on; other indications of their intelligence are noted.

PREFACE VII As it duly follows from the information so far provided, the ancient Mexicans are very rightly amongst those peoples judged to be wise, and the Dean is shown to have been quite unjust if he was referring to them in his letter and pierced them with his pen.

PREFACE VIII Manuel Martí’s ignorance about learning in Mexico from the time when America was first settled by Spaniards to our very own age is revealed, and his rash writing is refuted.

PREFACE IX It is shown that there are conspicuous testaments (from the learned as from many who are unschooled) on the Mexican books and libraries unknown to Manuel Martí which have escaped his notice.

PREFACE X The Mexican libraries are laid open into which the Dean of Alicante may be admitted and shown around in the most civil fashion.

PREFACE XI On the Americans' talent, love and enthusiasm for letters.

PREFACE XII The rapid growth of Americans' talents is considered; a judgment on it by the most learned and authoritative thinker Fray Benito Feijoo.

PREFACE XIII The rapid diminishing of Americans' faculties is shown to be a fiction and may be despatched to the realm of fable.

PREFACE XIV Of the authors commemorated in our *Bibliotheca* several may be counted whose talents were flourishing at a rather advanced age.

PREFACE XV The opinion of Father Pedro Murillo Vearde on the Americans' accomplishment in literature is sought and revealed.

PREFACE XVI Several Mexicans are shown to be illustriously learned, of those who are renowned and well known from former times and our own.

PREFACE XVII We continue the argument just advanced and add a coda.

PREFACE XVIII Themes on which Mexicans have written are briefly indicated and presented in a summary.

PREFACE XIX What verdict may be given about the learning of the Indians after they began to be cultivated by Spanish letters.

PREFACE XX The title of the *Bibliotheca Mexicana* is revealed and defended from objections.)

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