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# Manuscript Cultures in the Print Era: The New Kingdom of Granada in the Early Seventeenth Century

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Atlantic history<sup>2</sup> has assumed an important place in international historiographical output in recent years. Within book history, which has not been updated and transformed for at least four decades, Atlantic history has rightly found a prominent place, making a significant contribution to the field.

Although historiographical foundations and discoveries are often given more prominence in book history scholarship, twentieth-century historians in Mexico, Chile,

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jean-Paul Zuñiga, "L'Histoire impériale à l'heure de l'histoire globale. Une perspective atlantique," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 54-4bis (2007), 54-68. The article presents a broad overview of these historiographical changes, describes both the rise and the contents of Atlantic history, as formulated in the United States, and subsequently disseminated to other historiographical cultures, and sets out its own analysis.

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Argentina, and the United States<sup>3</sup> did in fact practice an unspoken form of Atlantic history in studying how books circulated in territories far distant from the imperial metropolis. Like Molière's Monsieur Jourdain in *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, Spanish American book historians and, to a lesser degree, cultural historians practiced Atlantic history without realizing it, while today's historians do so with a powerful historiographical awareness of the approach and its implications.<sup>4</sup>

Many of these recent works, however, take little account of the parallel development of book history, expanding from a focus on the book as object (which of course remains important) to incorporate reading and the central role of readers and emphasizing unique differential appropriations which have ushered in new questions about how books circulate and how they are used. This in turn has modified the questions that researchers seek to answer.

These historiographical changes go hand in hand with broader conceptualizations of the book, incorporating manuscripts, and of printing itself, as well as with the newfound importance of written culture. These developments have radically modified the entire historiographical field by opening up a new singular research space for reading, writing, books and printing.<sup>5</sup> The opposition between print and manuscript,

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<sup>3</sup> In recognition of its importance, its pioneering character and the detailed analysis, cf. Irving Leonard, *Books of the Brave* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949). Leonard's scholarship builds on work on this subject commenced at least two decades earlier.

<sup>4</sup> See Carlos Alberto González, *Los mundos del libro. Medios de difusión de la cultura occidental en las Indias de los siglos XVI y XVII* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla-Diputación de Sevilla, 1999), and Pedro J. Rueda Ramírez, *Negocio e intercambio cultural: El comercio de libros con América en la Carrera de Indias (siglo XVII)* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla-Diputación de Sevilla, CSIC, 2005). Both are outstanding works of scholarship with extensive bibliographies, in the tradition of research and thorough empirical work for which the historians of the University of Seville are known. See also the article by Eliana de Freitas Dutra in this issue.

<sup>5</sup> The idea of the manuscript text was presented and described in Harold Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts. Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). See also François Moureau ed., *De bonne main. La communication manuscrite au XVIII siècle* (Paris: Universitas; Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1993). An expanded concept of print can be found in Roger Chartier *et al.*, *Les usages de l'imprimé* (Paris: Fayard, 1987). The new directions taken by written culture are presented in Alberto Cue, ed., *Cultura escrita, literatura e historia. Conversaciones con Roger Chartier* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999), in particular "Primera jornada: La cultura escrita en la perspectiva de larga duración," 19-74.

present in early studies of printing but now long criticized, should today return to the center of debate – not as an opposition *per se* but rather to foreground the reciprocal relationship between print and manuscript, particularly in societies with a significant market for books from Europe but no local printing or small presses that could only produce loose sheets, or societies where there was no stable, socially significant role for print until the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. This was the situation in the majority of Hispano-America from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, with the exception of New Spain and the Kingdom of Peru, both of which have been described in detail by twentieth-century historians.

Manuscript culture still survived in New Spain and Peru as an important presence, and assumptions to the contrary simply reinstate the binary opposition between print and manuscript. It can be hypothesized that local print output and the numerous books that arrived by the Atlantic route combined with other forms and functions of manuscript culture in the same period, forming a unique written culture distinct from Spain's other American possessions. The present article draws on comparative analysis to test this hypothesis.<sup>6</sup>

The absence of regular printing led to the intense circulation of manuscript texts, superbly described by Fernando Bouza as a *corre manuscrito*, or manuscript circuit.<sup>7</sup> Taking this new historiographical panorama as its starting point, this article seeks to explore transatlantic cultural connections with a case study of a document describing events in the New Kingdom of Granada – an area corresponding roughly to modern-day Colombia – celebrating the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, and the

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<sup>6</sup> It can be stated with some certainty that at least some fundamental aspects of social and cultural activity differed as a result of significant printing activity. These include the activities of the Spanish administration itself, advances in literacy, and university teaching methods which, in light of the greater number of books arriving from Europe or printed locally, were to a large extent freed from the practice of compulsory copying of the *lectio* in those places where there was no printing.

<sup>7</sup> Fernando Bouza, *Corre manuscrito. Una historia cultural del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2001), with an extensive bibliography. This work is crucial in understanding the importance of manuscripts, their coexistence with printing, and the dissemination of written culture. Cf. in particular chapter 1 on the circulation of manuscripts in the renewal of cultural history, 15-25.

controversial doctrines, insults and disputes between supporters of the dogma of Mary conceived without original sin and those who opposed such beliefs.<sup>8</sup> This document reveals that the events of 1616 in the New Kingdom of Granada echoed celebrations held some time earlier in Seville and other parts of the Atlantic world, providing a rare opportunity to study an instance of quasi-simultaneous transatlantic cultural transfer and shedding light on the aforementioned historiographical issues. The following analysis draws on a detailed account by an anonymous Jesuit of the 1616 celebrations marking the Immaculate Conception, reporting on disturbances of the public peace in towns and cities across the New Kingdom of Granada and giving his Jesuit superiors in Spain and Rome a detailed report on the events held in worship of the Virgin Mary.<sup>9</sup>

The anonymous Jesuit's *Relación* offers a useful basis for the present article's principal objectives: identifying how information circulated in an *ancien régime* colonial society and describing its complex relationship between print and manuscript, highlighting the transitions between written cultures and various modes of oral transmission, and defining the role of writing in relation to imagery in a transatlantic cultural process experienced almost simultaneously across Europe – mainly in Spain,

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<sup>8</sup> *Relación de las fiestas que se hicieron en Santa Fe de Bogotá, del Nuevo Reino de Granada, de la Inmaculada Concepción de la Virgen María Nuestra Señora, en el mes de mayo del año de 1616*. National Library of Spain, Manuscript room, sig. Mss. 9956, hereafter *Relación*. The original document is easily accessed at the National Library in Madrid. A good transcription by Carlos E. Mesa is available in *Revista Bolívar* 44 (1955), 759-788. Quotes from the *Relación* are easily identifiable in Mesa's transcription. *Revista Bolívar* can be consulted, among other places, at the National Library in Bogotá (Colombia). All unsourced quotations are from this document. Based on this text and on other documentary sources, I studied the sermon, the elements it contained to shape opinion, and its uses in terms of collective social movements, but the emphasis was primarily on a political analysis of an *ancien régime* colonial society. See Renán Silva, "El sermón como forma de comunicación y como estrategia de movilización: Nuevo Reino de Granada a principios del siglo XVII," *Sociedad y Economía* 1 (2001), 103-130. Although the analysis focuses on the civilization of the written word and the relationship between print and manuscript, some political analysis must be included here, as written culture cannot be understood without reference to its context.

<sup>9</sup> The role of correspondence and of written communication in general for the Jesuit mission is well known and should be seen as one of its most important pillars of coordination and centralized governance, on a par with visits. In Colombia, the Jesuits have made great efforts in recent years to publish such sources. For an overview of the importance of correspondence, the most typical form of Jesuit manuscript culture, see Antonella Romano and Luce Giard, "L'usage jésuite de la correspondance. Sa mise en pratique par le mathématicien Christoph Clavius (1570–1611)," in *Rome et la science moderne: Entre Renaissance et Lumières*, ed. Antonella Romano (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2009), 65–119, a far more wide-ranging analysis than its title suggests.

France and Italy and to a lesser extent in Ireland and Poland<sup>10</sup> – where disputes broke out around the cult of the Virgin Mary, conceived without original sin, with learned academic syllogisms and dialectics, liturgical celebrations in churches followed by public processions, and sometimes inflammatory sermons that led to open confrontations, insults, and even physical fights.<sup>11</sup>

The anonymous Jesuit wrote,

On the last day of 1615 there came to Cartagena [de Indias] the fleet of Spain and among other good things that it brought was the devotion of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady the Virgin without original sin, bringing a diversity of reports of the great festivals that had been celebrated first in Seville and then in other cities of Spain and also of France and Italy, the sermons that had been given by great preachers and other treatises touching upon this mystery, both printed and by hand, and a great quantity of *coplas* and *títulos*<sup>12</sup> to be fixed to the doors of houses and churches and similar places, which ignited the fire of devotion to the purity of the Virgin Mary in that city [...] where so many festivals, processions and acclamations were celebrated, as has been written elsewhere.

This clearly establishes the sphere of analysis for this article and outlines the transatlantic relationship between Europe and America. For the territories habitually (if misleadingly) referred to as colonial possessions,<sup>13</sup> the relationship with the Spanish metropolis

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<sup>10</sup> Olivier Christin, “La mundialización de María. Topografías sagradas y circulación de imágenes,” *Relaciones* 139 (2014), 305-333. The article draws on painstaking research into the construction of the Virgin Mary in the seventeenth century through printed material, studying a seventeenth-century Jesuit priest’s inventory of shrines and exploring the hagiographical literature and images accompanying the history of each place of devotion. Christin describes the globalization of the image of the Virgin and its iconographic export to the New World, pointing out that the New World in turn exported its own creations – a fact that is often overlooked. On the New Kingdom of Granada, cf. Olga Isabel Acosta, *Milagrosas imágenes marianas en el Nuevo reino de Granada* (Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Numerous seventeenth-century chronicles record the Marian debates, many giving similar accounts, particularly in Seville. See Juan Francisco Bonefoy, “Sevilla por la Inmaculada en 1614–1617,” *Archivo Ibero-Americano* XV, 57-58 (1955), 3-33.

<sup>12</sup> *Coplas* are a traditional form of Spanish folk poetry, consisting of four rhymed lines of eight syllables. *Títulos* or titles typically consisted of a single line of text (translator’s note).

<sup>13</sup> John Elliott has questioned the term “colonial,” explaining how it applies to England’s American colonies but not to territories generally defined as viceroyalties. The Spanish monarchy has been described as a

highlighted the continuity of the spiritual community connecting the king of Spain's subjects worldwide, linking them to Europe in multiple ways.<sup>14</sup> This gradually led to the formation of a diverse, hybrid Euro-American culture<sup>15</sup> as elements originally imposed by the colonizer gradually came to be incorporated, assimilated and sometimes transformed, particularly in the fields of religion, law and politics. The resultant cultural forms have survived down to the present day in the Hispano-American world.

The *Relación* mentions various modes of print and manuscript communication. After a long voyage from Europe, “the sermons that had been delivered by great preachers and other treatises touching upon this mystery [of the Immaculate Conception] [...] printed and by hand,” arrived at the port of Cartagena de Indias. Some sermons were printed and subsequently copied out by hand – a change of medium that also entailed changes to the contents, through abridgment and omission, fragmentation, and modification of the context of circulation.<sup>16</sup> These consisted of reports on religious

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“compound monarchy.” John Huxtable Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Roger Chartier, “La conscience de la globalité,” *Annales, Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 56, n. 1 (2001), 119-123. Chartier's brief commentary is important for two reasons. Firstly, with respect to the need to consider a “conscience de la globalité” [awareness of globality] as part of the globalization process; secondly, because it invites us to think about the process in a non-linear manner. In Hispanic America, all social groups then shared a greater global consciousness of belonging to the Spanish monarchy than was the case in the nineteenth century, when the construction of the nation state drove nationalism and internal explanations of national histories.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind*, trans. Deke Dusinberre (London and New York: Routledge, 2003). This ground-breaking book rejects racialist and ethnicist interpretations of “the mestizo mind” and extends its use to an extremely wide range of cultural phenomena, connected as a result of processes that brought societies across the globe together. These processes were renewed and strengthened from the fifteenth century onwards and modified both Europe and the various parts of the world connected by European domination. Cf. Serge Gruzinski, *Les quatre parties du monde. Histoire d'une mondialisation* (Paris: La Martinière, 2004).

<sup>16</sup> The mutual significance of the Virgin Mary, conceptionist debates, and printing is explored in Daniel Atienza, *La controversia de la Inmaculada Concepción a través de los impresos de los siglos XVII y XVIII* Documento de Trabajo / Biblioteca Histórica (Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2016). Atienza gives a comprehensive list of print artifacts, including books and all manner of minor print material, and of printers who advocated or opposed the Immaculate Conception. Images played a prominent role in this typographical struggle, published independently, as book illustrations, or directly as works of art for churches and palaces, particularly when the conceptionist cause was adopted by the monarchy. Cf. Juan Isaac Calvo Portella, “La monarquía hispánica defensora de la Inmaculada Concepción, a través de algunas estampas españolas del siglo XVII,” *Anales de Historia del Arte* 23 (2013), 155-168.

festivals and displays of piety, which circulated as an additional form of religious literature for moral edification, soon finding its place alongside major treatises and works on the same topic, albeit in a different form and register. The great truths were broken down into less complex parts, sometimes separated into arbitrary sequences, and given a new form: the new, shorter formats, printed for a specific occasion, rapidly reached a wider audience via preachers. Many such texts became models of religious knowledge for their audiences, giving rise to collections of sermons, a common form of manuscript culture among priests who wished to focus on preaching.<sup>17</sup> Copies of these sermons, carefully prepared by priests skilled in the use of language, were sometimes commissioned by priests and literate worshipers. Little is known about this process of manuscript copying, such as the number of copies or how they circulated, on loan, as gifts, in exchange for other texts or objects etc. Much of the manuscript culture in the New Kingdom of Granada is *terra incognita*. Manuscripts are, however, known to have been a permanent presence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as indicated by numerous library inventories.<sup>18</sup>

Some sermons spoken in the New Kingdom of Granada were indeed printed. But in a society that lacked the wherewithal to print locally, manuscript circulation remained dominant, not only for sermons and religious literature in general, but also for teaching

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<sup>17</sup> Recent studies have shown the importance of preachers as cultural agents in the New Kingdom of Granada and the effects of the divine word on their listeners. Cf. Viviana Arce Escobar, “Los poderes del sermón. Antonio Ossorio de las Peñas, un predicador en la Nueva Granada del siglo XVII,” *Fronteras de la Historia* 14–2 (2009), 342–367, which studies the sermons of a cleric who, unusually, could see his printed texts. See also Santiago Robledo Páez, *El Quinquenio Sacro de José Ossorio Nieto de la Paz. Retórica, oralidad y cultura de lo impreso en una comunicación neogranadina de 1712* (Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2010) and *id.*, *Escribir una autobiografía en el Nuevo Reino de Granada: estudio sobre las Observaciones curiosas y doctrinales de Joseph Ortiz Morales* (Bogotá: ICANH, 2018), for the case of an author whose work did not appear in print but who wrote numerous manuscript books.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Ildelfonso Leal, *Libros y bibliotecas en Venezuela colonial (1633–1767)*, 2 vols. (Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de Historia, 1978), which contains numerous examples of manuscripts in library inventories, and José Manuel Rivas Sacconi, *El latín en Colombia: Bosquejo histórico del humanismo colombiano* (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1993 [1949]), on a neighboring society where print did not become common until well into the eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

philosophy and treatises dictated by professors in their lectures: students would customarily copy out texts as part of their philosophical practice.<sup>19</sup>

Again, little is known about such copying practices. It is known that lessons were copied, teaching involved professors dictating and students copying print books from Europe, New Spain, and the Kingdom of Peru, and that such books were found in school and private libraries. Nothing is known about specific techniques or controls on copying, or how the resulting texts circulated. There does not appear to have been any organized commercial copying system: personal copies and non-institutional forms of copying make up the wealth of manuscripts in the colonial archives of the New Kingdom of Granada, representing a “rich manuscript culture.”<sup>20</sup>

In addition to sermons presenting the life of the Virgin Mary, the saints, and other Biblical and theological motifs, university philosophy, and administrative documents produced by the authorities, a further common manuscript form was biographical and mystic writing produced in convents. In the seventeenth-century New Kingdom of Granada, the prime example is the poetess nun Sister Josefa del Castillo, who also wrote an autobiography on the recommendation of the confessor who revised and corrected her writing. The manuscript circulated beyond the convent and returned to it after correction.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Francisco Quecedo, “Manuscritos teológico-filosóficos coloniales santafereños,” *Ecclesiastica Xaveriana* 2 (1958), 191-211, is a pioneering essay on theological and philosophical manuscript production.

<sup>20</sup> The use of manuscripts to teach philosophy and theology and complaints about the lack of printed books both remained prevalent throughout the twentieth century in Colombia. Manuscripts as a material phenomenon and how they circulated were not studied by cultural historians: as a result, the manuscripts of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New Granada have been the subject of very few thorough analytical studies.

<sup>21</sup> The interplay between print and manuscript is also present here, not just as a result of the libraries that inspired the manuscript but as a result of the models imposed by the texts that Sister Josefa read. These formed a kind of “ideal library” which acted as a reference for manuscript writing. Cf. *Obras Completas de la Madre Francisca Josefa de la Concepción del Castillo*, Introduction, notes and indexes by Darío Achury Valenzuela, 2 vols. (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1968), for the best-known case of a seventeenth-century mystical female author in the New Kingdom of Granada.

As well as the extensive print and manuscript Marian literature imported from Europe or produced locally, there was an abundance of *coplas*, *títulos* and other forms of minor printed material, some as short as a page and almost certainly destined to be learned by heart. The *títulos*, crucial to the local Marian movement of 1616, are short in length, almost always consisting of a single sentence, never more than one paragraph. Though short, they were highly significant: according to contemporary accounts, they were generally brought to Cartagena by travelers bringing news of the Marian festivities in Seville.<sup>22</sup> *Coplas*, another common text type, typically bore a religious message. The best-known surviving *copla* predates 1615-16 and derives from a selection of culturally embedded *coplas* difficult for modern social historians to decipher. It was a kind of slogan that summed up the dispute and popular devotion to the idea of conception without original sin – a phenomenon that cannot be explained solely due to the influence of religious communities.<sup>23</sup> *Coplas* and *títulos* were familiar forms that were easily learned, which ensured both their use in teaching and their replacement by the mechanisms of oral transmission.<sup>24</sup>

*Coplas* and *títulos* were not only easily replaced by oral transmission but also by manuscript, which ultimately became the dominant form of circulation in the New Kingdom of Granada, without access to printing. Once print copies of *coplas* and *títulos* sold out following their arrival in Cartagena de Indias, manuscript versions took over, shaped by the dispute over Mary's immaculate conception, fiercely proclaimed by Franciscan monks, Jesuit priests, fraternities of the faithful, and ordinary worshipers

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<sup>22</sup> On cheap popular printed matter that was easy to read and widely circulated, see Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1500–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). I am not aware of any research into cheap popular printed material for large audiences in the New Kingdom of Granada, although there are frequent mentions in the archives of print catechisms, reading books and religious literature consisting of just a few pages.

<sup>23</sup> This is a very interesting problem, which encapsulates the persistent intellectual illusion that books and ideas are in themselves the major determinants of beliefs and opinions. For a detailed discussion of this illusion, typical of scholars, see Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991), chapter 4: “Do Books Make Revolutions?” 67-91.

<sup>24</sup> On the uses of memory in a society that made extensive use of it, cf. Mary Carruthers's classic *The Book of Memory. A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

under the spiritual leadership of the orders that defended the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity. *Coplas* and *títulos* were also the basis of forms of public, collective reading, being affixed to the walls of houses and churches, ensuring their dissemination through multiple readings by individual readers over several days. Print and manuscript communication, sometimes illustrated, became part of the urban landscape.

As a consequence of the public nature of the texts, “the fire of devotion to the purity of the Virgin Mary in that city [Cartagena de Indias]” appears to have been ignited, “there being celebrated in that place so many festivals, so many processions, so many acclamations as has been written.” Sermons were naturally an essential part of such celebrations, as no religious festival could be without a preacher.<sup>25</sup>

The narrator of the *Relación* has a touching faith in the capacity of written information to spark a flood of fervor in the inhabitants of Cartagena de Indias, Santafé de Bogotá, Tunja, and many other towns.<sup>26</sup> Evidence shows “that the fire of [Marian] devotion was ignited,” stoked not only by the church, the civil authorities and Spanish colonists, but also by the majority of the native inhabitants themselves after a century of occupation and rapid evangelization. This suggests that by this date, society as a whole shared a form of cultural syncretism.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The theatricalization of the word through facial expressions, body movements and voice has been described by experts in preaching and sermons. The author of the *Relación* states that one preacher ended his sermons with “his face covered in tears.” Cf. Viviana Arce Escobar, “Los poderes del sermón.” Roger Chartier has rightly compared preaching and performance: sermons are “texts to be spoken or read aloud” and “to be shared by a collective audience.” They are texts “that obey the rules of oral and community performance.” Roger Chartier, *Pluma de ganso, Libro de letras, Ojo viajero* (Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana), 28.

<sup>26</sup> The *Relación* does not track the movement beyond Cartagena de Indias, Santafé and Tunja, but many other sources provide convincing evidence of the central presence of the Catholic saints and the place of the Virgin Mary elsewhere. Cf. Orián Jiménez, “Devoción, fiesta y poblamiento de las fronteras del Nuevo Reino de Granada, 1650–1800,” *Diálogos* 18, no. 2 (2017), 36-58.

<sup>27</sup> For the most populous region of the New Kingdom of Granada in the seventeenth century and the work of Franciscan advocates of devotion to the Virgin Mary conceived without original sin, see María del Rosario Leal del Castillo, *Mecanismos de reproducción y prácticas devocionales de la Limpia Concepción en el altiplano cundiboyacense, siglos XVII y XVIII* (Bogotá: Universidad Externado de Colombia, 2017), which quotes much valuable material.

The dominant forms of sociability, which apparently extended almost across the entire social spectrum, reinforced this fire of devotion, as “festivals, processions and acclamations” of a religious character were at the very heart of celebrations in a society where the civil sphere was largely undifferentiated from the cultural sphere, controlled to a large extent by the church.

Marian fervor in the New Kingdom dated back to the sixteenth century, with the worship of the Virgin of Chiquinquirá and the metropolitan church of Santafé, devoted to the Immaculate Conception. As a result, the celebrations were not limited to Cartagena de Indias: as the *Relación* recounts, “this same devotion crossed the sweet and bitter waters of seas and rivers and reached cities and towns and even the most far-flung settlements, and in time reached the city of Santafé.” It did so hand in hand with manuscript culture, first through letters – an essential form of communication in this society – and *avisos*, short informational texts composed on the basis of equally short printed examples, recounting the celebrations in Spain and Cartagena and the fervor that was spreading among the population as the news traveled. The *avisos* were followed by reports and testimonies by various travelers from Spain and residents of the Port of Cartagena, who set out for different parts of the New Kingdom “to plant here the same fervor that they had seen there.”

Back in Europe, the Marian movement had experienced a new wave of growth in several European cities since the early seventeenth century and had found new vigor in Seville. The devout testimony of direct witnesses and printed texts and manuscripts such as small fliers bearing stamps and images of the Virgin now brought the movement to Spain’s overseas possessions. In the New Kingdom of Granada, a stopover of a few days in Cartagena de Indias brought further impetus from the city’s inhabitants. It then continued its journey into the interior, beyond Tierra Firme, up the Magdalena River, leaving its mark in riverside settlements as far as Puerto de Honda, following a route

known since the sixteenth century. It was carried into the mountains by *indios*<sup>28</sup> driving mules all the way to the regional capital, Santafé, and on to other towns and villages.<sup>29</sup>

Santafé was the principal center of the Jesuit and Franciscan orders that defended the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and controlled the majority of doctrinal schools, curacies, parishes, university chairs, and schools teaching reading, writing and the basics of the catechism. News of the tributes to Mary Immaculate was well received and swiftly disseminated, above all by schoolchildren, who quickly learned the refrain “*todo el mundo en general*,”<sup>30</sup> so that by the time the important festival of Lent drew near, “hardly anything else was sung in the schools of reading and doctrine.” The children seem to have been copied by adults, as “more people are arriving and moving the hearts of the devotees of the Virgin to do here that which had been done in other cities [Seville and Cartagena de Indias].”

Many days before the Marian festivals of December, Santafé was fraught with confrontation between religious orders, as the Franciscans and Jesuits opposed the Dominicans and occasionally the Augustinians. Public opinion was similarly divided between people from differing backgrounds. In this context, the written word again demonstrated its strength, through *títulos* “both printed and hand-written,” affixed to

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<sup>28</sup> The terms *indios* and *negros* were historically used by the Spanish viceroyalty to categorize autochthonous American people and people of color. *Mestizos* were people with both autochthonous and *Criollo* (Spanish born in America) ascendance or mixed autochthonous and foreign ascendance (editors’ note).

<sup>29</sup> The importance of the Atlantic front, in the case of the New Kingdom of Granada, and the role of Cartagena de Indias, a major slaving port in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, should not overshadow the Pacific front, which was a source of contraband from Panama along the long coastline dotted with small landing sites as far as Lima, Quito and the extensive department of Popayán. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that the members of the religious orders were one of the most cosmopolitan, globalized, and mobile groups in this society: their travels were an opportunity to spread the true faith and disseminate books and written culture in all its varieties.

<sup>30</sup> The full text of the *copla*, with slight variations, is the same as the one learned in Colombia and in many other countries by primary school children until the mid-1950s: *Todo el mundo en general a voces / Reina escogida / diga que sois concebida / sin pecado original* [The whole world together out loud / Chosen Queen / say that you are conceived / without original sin]. The story of the composition in Spain is recalled by Father Mesa. Cf. Juan Luis Bastero, “La devoción Mariana en las universidades españolas,” *Scripta Theologica* 20, no. 1 (1998), 201–220.

“church doors, the corners of the busiest streets” and doors of “houses and shops,” and *avisos* praising “most holy sacrament of the Immaculate Conception,” read aloud in public.

“[A] great fervor and burning desire to demonstrate their love and devotion to the Virgin with outdoor celebrations was easily ignited” in the hearts of Franciscans, Jesuits, child readers influenced by schools of doctrine and of reading run by religious orders, other worshipers in fraternities or congregations,<sup>31</sup> students at the Jesuit-run seminary college, and nuns. All were faithful devotees of the Virgin and the Immaculate Conception, although it seems that there was some hesitation in expressing their faith in public, as initially “nobody ventured out in public to demonstrate, until the fathers of Saint Francis resolved to do so.”

In a context apparently so favorable to Marian devotion and religious sentiment in general, why did nobody dare to demonstrate their devotion in public, when the public sphere had already been won through propaganda and opinion? The question again shows how many of the modes of circulation of written culture and the struggles around it must be understood in a wider context.

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<sup>31</sup> On the fraternities in the New Kingdom of Granada, which played a fundamental role in the circulation of written culture, cf. Gary W. Graff, “Cofradías in the New Kingdom of Granada: Lay Fraternities in a Spanish American Frontier Society, 1600–1755” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1973), which contains a good analysis and excellent archive references. A *cofradía* or fraternity is “A lay institution closely linked to the Church. Founded with the aim of propagating Christian observance, promoting beneficent activities, and favoring the salvation of the soul. The most recent origins of this body date to the high Middle Ages in Europe, while their more ancient origins date back to the Roman Empire. This institution possessed no territorial jurisdiction but did have social jurisdiction [...] having been founded upon certain constitutional statutes approved by the ecclesiastic and civil authorities, which granted its members certain rights and privileges.” Natalia Silva, “Cruce de jurisdicciones: tensión política en los cabildos y cofradías novohispanos del último cuarto del siglo XVIII,” *Fronteras de la Historia* 3, no. 3 (1998), 119-154, cited on p. 120, note 3. The role of fraternities and artisan guilds in Marian affairs and the defense of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception has been extensively documented in the case of Spain and Hispano-America: see Fermín Labarga García, “El posicionamiento inmaculista de las cofradías españolas,” *Revista del Instituto de Historia de la Iglesia* 13 (2004), 23–44; María Jesús Sanz, “El problema de la Inmaculada Concepción en la segunda década del siglo XVII. Festejos y máscaras. El papel de los plateros,” *Laboratorio de Arte* 8 (1995), 73–101, which recounts the struggles around Marian beliefs and stresses the role of both manuscript and print culture in festivals and celebrations.

This question can only be answered with reference to the specific conditions of the dispute that in large measure determined the progress and radicalism of events. As has been suggested, the hesitation in displaying devotion in public is related to the fact that the other major religious order established in the New Kingdom, the Dominicans, did not share the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Their devotees and supporters did not believe Mary was conceived without original sin: the “consensus of the city” proved illusory as the Marian movement deepened internal divisions within the church and society. These divisions impacted society as a whole as the religious orders clashed over doctrine, dogma, modes of evangelization, and the interests of their clients and patrons. Both sides aimed to develop doctrines that would let them exploit indigenous labor and enjoy its fruits and form relationships with more powerful social groups and with the authorities, demonstrating the complex dimensions of all forms of social and intellectual interest in this and any other society.<sup>32</sup>

The confrontation involved every sector of ecclesiastical society – religious orders, Diocesan clerics, nuns, young men studying for a career in the church, doctors of theology, and schoolchildren – reflecting the complex system of interests of a very diverse order. It also involved society in general – *indios, negros, mestizos*, and leading families – to various degrees, all with different levels of awareness of the background to the dispute. These groups were not simply passive bystanders, mobilized at will by their respective religious denominations: they were active participants in the debate. The dispute also reached the authorities as stakeholders in the networks of interest and power formed by the religious orders and leading families.

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<sup>32</sup> The purely instrumentalist interpretation of the truths of the faith and the idea that it hides unspoken intentions of ideological control continues to permeate studies in these areas. This work is well documented but its analytical orientation reduces the complexity of social interests and the sincerity and profundity of the beliefs of a given period to little more than malleable raw material. See Viviana Arce Escobar, “Los poderes del sermón,” 342, where she introduces her own text with the following words: “The sermons of the New Granada preacher, Antonio Ossorio de las Peñas, are taken as an example to show the real intentions of these doctrinal messages, which enable us to identify the programmatic lines of transmission of Christian values and virtues.” For a complex image of these kinds of relationships of interest and power in this type of confrontation, see José Domínguez Búrdalo and Antonio Sánchez Jiménez, “El dogma de la inmaculada concepción como arma de confrontación territorial en la Sevilla del siglo XVII,” *RILCE. Revista de Filología Hispánica* 26, no. 2 (2010), 303–324.

Society was split into two religious camps and the oppositional process foregrounded differences and definitions of identity between individuals. Seventeenth-century society was starting to develop new social forms that were more complex than the period of colonial occupation in the first half of the sixteenth century. It was beginning to become a society of orders – the “republics” which were its most clearly defined institutional form. However, its most dynamic social element, the *mestizos*, had not yet found a clearly defined institutional space, despite forming a social majority.<sup>33</sup> They would not do so even in the eighteenth century.

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Having obtained the approval and support of all city authorities including the Royal Court, the Franciscans informed their “brothers in devotion,” the Jesuits, that they would hold a procession on Easter Sunday, with their “banner, cross and image of Our Lady the Virgin.” They also asked for students at the Jesuit-run seminary college to sing in the street and in church and received a favorable response from the students of grammar, philosophy and theology, “as most of them were of the congregation of Our Lady and were discussing whether they should make some external display of their devotion to this ministry.”

The Jesuits not only joined the public demonstration organized by their Franciscan brothers, but also paraded with signs of their own design and “composed a large banner with the names of Jesus and Mary conceived without original sin.”<sup>34</sup> They set out for the

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<sup>33</sup> An interpretation along these lines with regard to New Spain can be found in Octavio Paz, *Sor Juana Inés de la cruz o las trampas de la fe* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982); for the New Kingdom of Granada, Jaime Jaramillo Uribe’s classic interpretation appears in “Mestizaje y diferenciación social en el Nuevo Reino de Granada en la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII,” in *Ensayos sobre historia social colombiana* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1968), 163-203.

<sup>34</sup> On purely intuitive grounds, as there are no systematic studies, there are reasons to believe that the popular classes remained largely illiterate in the New Kingdom of Granada. However, the displays of devotion are full of written culture, along with songs, images and banners: it may be assumed that people were able to decipher some basic written signs. Short words, seen repeatedly, such as “Jesus,” “Virgin,” “Mary,” and “Our Lady” were likely decoded by people who were otherwise unable to read. Literacy is a question of degree: mastery of reading and writing ranges from basic comprehension to expert understanding. Cf. Jean Hébrard, “Comment Valentin Jamerey-Duval apprit-il à lire? L’autodidaxie exemplaire,” in *Pratiques de la lecture*, ed. Roger Chartier (Marseille: Rivages, 1985), 29-75. The processes

Church of San Francisco, “singing the *copla* of *todo el mundo en general*,” and listened to “a most solemn service and sermon.” After the service, the worshipers and pastors, preceded by the banner, the cross and the image of the Virgin, set out for the Cathedral church, “at whose door they were received by the dean and the chapter, with all the clergy, and were led to the high altar, where they sang their *coplas* and a motet” and said the “mass of Our Lady.”

The procession then headed for the Jesuit church, decked out for the occasion with “a very smart infant Jesus with the *título* in his hands that said, ‘my mother conceived without original sin’” – a combination of text and image common in the churches and along the route of the procession. The participants held reliquaries, flowers, and silver candelabra with candles – all the accoutrements of a great religious festival: “and there were prayers and a motet sung to the accompaniment of the organ.” This combination of image and text is a significant characteristic of the visual culture of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, although it has generally been interpreted as a form of art similar to that of modern society.<sup>35</sup>

The Virgin then returned home to the Church of San Francisco, carried “down the street where the hospital was, with the monks and nuns, the clerics, laypeople and students, singing the *coplas* with great devotion [...] and another prayer was pronounced.”

Thus concluded an enthusiastic, well-attended demonstration of the faith of the people of Santafé, united in their devotion to the Virgin above and beyond their differences in wealth, rank, age, gender, ethnicity, and cultural condition. However, two

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of reading and writing always refer to uses that are historical and socially determined: cf. Fernando Bouza, *Del escribano a la biblioteca. La civilización cristiana europea en la Alta Edad Moderna (Siglos XV–XVII)* (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 1987), esp. chapter II: “Usos distintos de la escritura,” 33-70.

<sup>35</sup> Fernando Bouza has described the complexity of the process linking hearing, seeing and writing and points out that these functions vary according to era and social group. He considers it vital to analyze the various expressions linked to knowledge, learning and experience within the context of the wider movement in which they occur. Bouza, *Del escribano a la biblioteca*, esp. chapter 1, “Conciencia lingüística y escritura,” 15–32.

incidents proved to be ill omens. The first involved a Dominican monk, who stood in the doorway of his church on Calle Real and shouted “where are these idiots going?” He gave public voice to a doctrinal and theological conflict that extended to universities: Jesuits held classes open to the public, while the Dominicans held a monopoly on granting degrees with royal and papal approval.<sup>36</sup>

The second incident was possibly more serious in its cultural repercussions for seventeenth-century Hispanic American society, as it infringed not only an urban norm but also a widely accepted, indeed compulsory, convention of symbolic language. It again involved the Dominicans who, “when the procession passed by their house did not ring the bells” by way of greeting; “nor did they come to the doorway [...] thus upsetting the people” who reacted angrily to what seemed to be a calculated insult to their devotion. Ringing bells – a core form of music in this society – and coming to stand in the doorway were two common ways of showing respect and participation that implied reciprocity in the anthropological sense, creating an obligation involving both parties and representing an alliance or at least respect and recognition.

Violence soon broke out. The following night, “stealing the clapper from the choir and armed with mortars and other instruments, [the devotees of the Virgin] went to the door of the Church of Santo Domingo” and “sang the *coplas* ‘conceived without original sin’.” At this “carnival of mockery,” harsh insults were hurled, and the *Relación* noted that “other words were said which exceeded what was right and what respect for these men of religion required.”

The Dominican fathers immediately appealed to the authorities for justice and reparation. The Bull of Sixtus IV defining the Church’s official stance on the Immaculate Conception was ordered to be translated from Latin into Spanish “and be read publicly in the Iglesia Mayor on the day of the Ascension, with everyone being instructed [...] to be present at the publication [i.e. reading] and that the preacher declare in his sermon

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<sup>36</sup> The dispute is well known but no less significant for that; it has been studied on numerous occasions and the basic documents have been published several times. Cf. Agueda María Rodríguez Cruz, *Historia de las universidades hispanoamericanas* (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1973).

and say what could and should be believed regarding that mystery.” All parties to the dispute were urged “to swear off all disputes and confrontations which they did not understand and which did not concern them, leaving these to the schools.” Ordinary worshipers should be content with “devotion to the Virgin.”

Some aspects of the authority’s intervention in a worsening dispute are directly related to the cultural order of society in seventeenth-century Hispanic America. First is the weight of orthodoxy and the role of papal authority and doctrine in establishing the precise nature of a belief and the limit between opinion and heresy. This is why the population had to attend a public reading of the Papal Bull. Second is the immediate translation into Spanish, which indicates a desire to reach the majority, not just scholars who could understand Latin, thereby actively involving all worshipers in belief but not in discussions of its nature. Third is the social hierarchy that determined the right to give an opinion: the vital debates touched not only on theology, but also politics. Both forms of knowledge were deemed to require sophisticated reasoning, particularly mastery of syllogisms and *disputatio*, the sole preserve of learned clerics and doctors. Other believers had to be content to follow the orthodoxy and not seek to grapple with disputes “that they did not understand and which did not correspond to them.”<sup>37</sup> Finally, preachers and sermons played a vital role in the endeavor to ensure conformity with the established truth, as shown by the insistence that the preacher must “declare and say what could and should be believed regarding that mystery.”

The separation between scholars educated in doctrinal debates and rhetoric and ordinary believers without cultural training did not lead to a wholesale breach between two cultural forms arising from the two distinct social positions. Forms of “cultural

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<sup>37</sup> It is important to keep sight both of the existence of politics within theology in this society and the centrality of theology as a region of sacred knowledge subject to taboos and conditions regarding use of the “authorized word.” As Michel de Certeau notes: “A historical perspective must take into consideration [...] the fact that in the thirteenth century the theological code played the role that today is attributed to sociological or economic codes. The difference among the frames of reference in terms of which a society organizes its actions and thoughts cannot be held as insignificant. Reducing one to the other would mean that the very labor of history is denied.” Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 120.

bilingualism” enabled participation in the common cultural heritage.<sup>38</sup> Sermons and popular preaching bridged a cultural gap that risked creating two separate societies, as has been argued in some interpretations of Hispanic American society of the time by historians who appear to believe that recognizing a shared cultural heritage means denying the existence of elaborate forms of culture in supposedly subaltern circles or postulating the absolute domination of dominant forms of discourse. The *Relación* noted that preachers intervened constantly in the Santafé dispute of 1616: the Jesuit father Luis de Santillán preached “in the Iglesia Mayor, to a large audience, including the President and all the gentlemen of the Court,” giving a sermon that was “very serious, very learned, very well received by all the common people.”

[He] proved with great clarity the antiquity of this opinion in favor of the Immaculate Conception, mentioning the saints who had held it since the beginning of the church, the councils that have favored it, the emperors and kings who with their privileges and their devotion have aided it; he brought [with his words] the most notable places in the sacred scripture where it can be inferred and finally showed that the glorious Saint Dominic held it, and that Saint Thomas did not completely repudiate it [...].

This is an accurate synthesis of the basic forms by which an argument was deemed true in a society such as seventeenth-century New Granada. It was also an excellent rhetorical strategy in terms of the Santafé debates of 1616, ending the list of authorities who defended the Immaculate Conception with Saint Dominic and Saint Thomas, two great teachers and authors to whom the Dominicans looked for inspiration. Interestingly, the texts of the two authorities cited actually established an intermediate position, with some doubts calling for further clarification.

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<sup>38</sup> On the ongoing debate on cultural bilingualism, whether extreme or relative, and the lines of separation, frontiers and cultural contact in societies that combine ethnic and racial groups of diverse backgrounds and subject to relationships of exploitation and forced acculturation, see Lawrence W. Levine’s classic *Highbrow/Lowbrow. The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), and Richard C. Trexler, “We Think, They Act: Clerical Readings of Missionary Theatre in 16th Century New Spain,” in *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Steve L. Kaplan (Berlin, New York and Amsterdam: Mouton, 1984), 189–227.

Many other elements in the *Relación* not only refer to visible forms of popular devotion, but also point to common elements that found expression during the celebrations, demonstrating the presence of shared cultural heritages despite social heterogeneity and doctrinal differences. The account in the *Relación* is enlightening, though perhaps somewhat exaggerated:

the children studying to read and write and those studying Latin did [...] by day and by night, at home and in the street, sing nothing other than the *coplas* of Our Lady, forgetting completely the mean and profane verses they sang formerly, to such a degree that *indios* and *negros* who knew not how to speak, aged three and less, sang the tune as best they could. And many children joined their processions, bringing out their white standards and images of the Immaculate Conception [...] going through all the streets [...] and were joined by many people of the city, who followed them without further exhortation [...] than that of the Holy Spirit and devotion to Our Lady the Virgin [...]

As the confrontations, accompanied by *coplas*, *avisos* and *títulos*, continued to grow, the authorities had to intervene to maintain public order. They tried to contain the dispute to cloisters and classrooms by banning public demonstrations by other social categories, limiting the clash of opinions to churchmen and doctors of theology.

Despite the ban, the sermons, processions, fliers, banners, and images continued. According to the *Relación*, “the following Sunday, Ascension Day, a most solemn procession set forth from San Francisco for the Iglesia Mayor.” It was a heterogeneous crowd of friars, priests, nuns, students, *negros*, *indios*, artisans, and “lay men and women,” as well as court officials swept up in the fervor who found themselves taking part in the celebrations. Traditionally, their social rank placed them prominently in the church ceremonies and public processions. The Marian movement in Santafé grew in intensity and spread to other cities and settlements across New Granada, and the climate of social unrest lasted for days. The *Relación* describes one such episode:

that evening and the following day there was non-stop singing at Vespers and other times, with much music, songs, carols and *coplas*, both by the people and the nuns themselves,

the singers with their organ and their *chirimías*,<sup>39</sup> as is the custom at great ceremonies, and they sang Mass very well and the sermon was preached by Fray Pedro Simón, definitor of San Francisco and teacher of theology at the convent [...]

The group of city notables that had sided with the Dominicans to form a faction had made their concerns known to the authorities, requesting that “*todo el mundo en general*” should not be sung in the procession and that only “hymns to Our Lady in Latin” be sung, “not the *coplas*,” as singing in Spanish was against Roman Church customs. This argument was not entirely true, as the liturgy and sacrament used both Latin and the vernacular: only indigenous languages were excluded.

The reason for the protest was that the Marian *coplas*, deeply rooted in popular tradition, and other songs and prayers in Spanish recited in this context, had become a rallying point for supporters of the dogma of Immaculate Conception and slogans for Franciscan and Jesuit allies and supporters. The use of Spanish was a longstanding concession by the religious orders to ensure the majority of the population kept attending religious services and public acts of worship. This growing belief in the total sanctity of the Virgin was not a Hispanic American idiosyncrasy or a manifestation of popular religiosity alien to Europeans. Such expressions of religious fervor – celebrations and disputes alike – should not be seen as unique to culturally backward societies, but as transatlantic imports from Europe representing beliefs and disagreements found simultaneously on both continents. As the *Relación* put it:

it is very normal in processions in Europe to sing carols and other *coplas* [...] and in those of Our Lady of the Rosary [to sing] her *coplas* and *gozos*,<sup>40</sup> and in those of the saints to sing their praises in Romance or other verse, and on Good Friday in the processions of the disciples of the Mystery of the Passion to sing verses in Spanish, and in those of Corpus [Christi] to sing the *pange lingua* and the *sacris solemnis* in Spanish meter.

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<sup>39</sup> A double-reeded woodwind instrument like an oboe (translator’s note).

<sup>40</sup> A *gozo* was a popular song form in praise of the Virgin Mary (translator’s note).

By the end of 1616, after many months of open confrontation between the religious orders and their followers, the religious authorities were forced to intervene. The ecclesiastical council produced a decree instructing the religious orders “to order their preachers to exercise moderation in sermons on the most pure conception to prevent the feared disturbances coming to pass.” At the same time, the President of the Royal Court and other civil authorities went further, calling for the suspension of all public displays relating to the Immaculate Conception, even within churches, due to the “scandal that arose from the preaching of different opinions in this regard” and the potential for “disturbances and commotions.” The chapter of Santafé adopted the same measures and gave orders for them to be read in the Iglesia Mayor, adding “that there be no processions, instructing that these matters should not be addressed from the pulpit.” As a result, Santafé appeared to have returned to calm, at least temporarily.

The rival orders likewise had to come to terms, as the need to ensure the unity of ecclesiastical society and of the faithful called for more than a mere decree. The President of the Royal Court, Juan de Borja, launched negotiations to restore “the former peace and brotherhood.” The parties appear to have accepted his mediation with great reluctance: neither was prepared to compromise on their position, while the Jesuits also accused Borja of favoring the Dominicans.

As a first step towards reconciliation, the Jesuits attended the Dominican convent to witness the exposition of a set of theses and propositions by philosophy students, again foregrounding the significance of written culture. The *Relación* notes that the Jesuits were unmoved “and remained strongly and vigorously of the opinion that the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady and the liberty to sing the *coplas* in her praise were not to be touched.”

The result was a shaky peace that soon broke down. Hostilities resumed in other cities in the New Kingdom, giving voice to a dispute that had been a source of discord among theologians and believers for centuries and would continue to be so for another

two hundred years, giving rise to conflicts in which print, manuscript, image and word would all play a prominent role. To quote the *Relación*:<sup>41</sup>

it may be possible that agreement is reached and that peace continues, but this will be difficult when the causes of discord have not ceased completely. The Lord can do anything. He puts things right as is best. Amen.

Early in 1617, Juan de Borja wrote to Philip III of Spain with an account of his steps to procure peace between the orders and his attempt to restore calm to the city. He also asked for instructions as to how spiritual and temporal ministers should act in such matters. Borja's letter contains insights that shed light on conflicts of this nature and potential outcomes for society as a whole.<sup>42</sup>

Borja begins by describing the religious orders as "factions and bands" and accusing them of maintaining the conflict not only through the word, in the pulpit (where at least, he wrote, they "disguise their passions") but also through their actions, with the "most serious mutterings, insults and maltreatment." He also insists that the factions have sufficient power to draw the entire population into their quarrels, which meant "the laypeople fighting for devotion to one or other of the orders; and this conflict involved not just the common people but also the most prominent of all the estates, thus threatening the peace of the republic." Borja insisted on the collective nature of the struggles, although neither he nor the *Relación*, which gave such a detailed account of the events, gives any information about the specific interests driving the powerful groups and families who were central to the dispute and who maintained alliances among themselves and with the different religious orders. In the *Relación* and in Borja's letters,

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<sup>41</sup> The "conceptual dispute" did not reach a solution until the mid-nineteenth century, when in December 1854 the Papal authority determined that the divine conception of Mary formed part of Catholic dogma. The origins of belief in the divine conception are unclear: some trace them back to the Eastern church, many centuries before. Experts agree that the distinctive features of the Marian discussion in the seventeenth century are that the dispute involved popular believers and parish priests on a massive scale, it was not limited to senior theologians and doctors of the Church and it involved a genuine power clash.

<sup>42</sup> A copy of a fragment of Borja's letter is included at the end of the *Relación* in Father Carlos Mesa's transcription, although it does not appear in the document in the National Library in Madrid, which contains only the *Relación* itself.

these “special interest groups” are only a background voice, offering little insight into the alliances between such groups and the religious orders.

For Borja, the most controversial point of the conflict was the policy on indigenous and other peoples, which brought division to the heart of indigenous societies and other subject groups endangering the peace of the republic and the task of evangelization:

the religious orders... have in their charge the doctrinal education of *indios* and each [of the parties to the conflict] seeks to imbue them with their opinion, and so they are confused by the disagreement and worst of all, not understanding the point of the altercation, believe that the doubts about the purity of the mother of God are of another kind [...]

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The dispute continued beyond 1616, resurfacing several times during the seventeenth century both in Spain and its overseas territories and remaining a latent presence throughout the eighteenth century, until the debate was definitively settled in the mid-nineteenth century. It raises a number of interesting historiographical issues. While the history of the book as an object of transatlantic trade has been an important source of empirical knowledge, particular in terms of quantities and genres, the pioneering work by scholars such as Carlos Alberto González and Pedro J. Rueda sometimes gives the impression of a wholesale, uncritical adoption of the approach that dominated Huguette and Pierre Chaunu’s *Seville et l’Atlantique*.<sup>43</sup> Though ground-breaking in its time, the limitations of the Chaunu study soon became clear, although it should be noted that this work was produced some sixty years ago and that the authors subsequently developed their analysis in numerous publications.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Huguette Chaunu and Pierre Chaunu, *Seville et l’Atlantique, 1504-1650* (Paris: Armand Colin and S.E.V.P.N., 1955-59), 11 vols.

<sup>44</sup> More recent studies reflect a similar perspective and apply the same methods, such as Cristina Gómez Álvarez, *Navegar con libros. El comercio de libros entre España y Nueva España (1750–1820)* (Mexico City: Trama Editorial, 2011). The work’s subtitle is “A cultural vision of independence” though there is little clue to the nature of the cultural vision in question.

Just like 'global' histories written in the United States, much research remains firmly attached to the center/periphery model that has dominated European and North American historiography on Hispanic America for so many years. This seems to be due to the fact that ultimately the focus is on exports of books recorded in the archives: since the analysis almost always ends with the consignment's arrival at the port of destination, customs controls and initial distribution, little to nothing is known about who *read* the imported books, and how. There is a need, then, to travel inland, not just to trace the movement of an object but to describe the distinctive uses to which it was put.<sup>45</sup>

The problem is due to the absence of a notion of appropriation, of differential uses, one of the most innovative notions in cultural history in recent years and one that has radically modified studies of the book. Roger Chartier has noted how figures and images of Don Quixote were the object of games and festivals in the Viceroyalty of Peru in 1607, arguing that these celebrations were part of an expanded concept of the history of the book and of literature and form part of Don Quixote's history in the Americas.<sup>46</sup> There is a fascinating yet complex relationship between a history of the book that is primarily quantitative, focusing on commercial registers and discussing circulation simply as the external trajectory of an object, and a cultural history aiming to understand cultural processes including books, printing, manuscripts and so on through the lens of the conflicts they are involved in, shedding light on how contexts of circulation and use determine the processes by which groups, institutions and individuals assign meaning. It is by no means clear that an approach focusing on the study of port registers, with little sensitivity to the uses of and struggles around print and books, can combine with a cultural history that seeks to read objects in the context of their struggles. The broad

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<sup>45</sup> Changing our perspective requires us to modify our concept of circulation beyond merely tracing the trajectory of an object from one place to another to focus on all identifiable elements of mobility, which may at times be paradoxical or contradictory. Cf. Claude Markovits, Jacques Pouchepadass, Sanjay Subrahmanyam eds., *Society and Circulation. Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia, 1750–1950* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Roger Chartier, *Cardenio between Cervantes and Shakespeare: The Story of a Lost Play*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Polity, 2013). For the original documents analysed by Chartier, see *Literatura. Teoría, historia, crítica* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional, Departamento de Literatura, 2005).

historiographical question of social and cultural importance is linked to the need to move beyond a view of Hispanic America as a periphery that largely reproduces European processes but appears not to form an active, constituent part of the global history which, paradoxically, it drove and transformed.<sup>47</sup> Some examples counter this prevailing reading, such as the transatlantic “globalization” of the Virgin Mary. Indeed, as Olivier Christin writes, some Hispanic American shrines were listed in a seventeenth-century inventory of places of worship and pilgrimage dedicated to the Virgin:

European missionaries and artists exported images of Mary and the saints to the new World, but they also imported them, finding new resources in this treasury of Christian devotion in the Americas for their intellectual and spiritual enterprises back in Europe.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> For instance, Michel de Certeau’s efforts to include the discovery of the New World simply transform native Americans into a passive condition of the rise of European ethnography. A major step in this direction would be to decisively accept the proposition that the construction of the Spanish monarchy developed within the context of the “American experience” which was one of its constitutive elements. Cf. François-Xavier Guerra’s note on “L’État et les communautés: comment inventer un empire?” in *Le Nouveau Monde / Mondes Nouveaux. L’expérience américaine*, eds. Serge Gruzinski and Nathan Wachtel (Paris: EHESS, 1996), 351-364.

<sup>48</sup> Christin, “La mundialización de María,” 315.