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Libraries at the Intersection of ‘*Las Dos Majestades*’ in Colonial Mexico: The Biblioteca Palafoxiana as Emblem of Change and Continuity from Habsburg to Bourbon Rule

Michael M. Brescia

Introduction

The enlightened statesman and ardent supporter of the Bourbon monarchy in Spain, the Asturian Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes (1723-1802), responded to a questionnaire prepared by the Paris-based Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres in 1788. French scholars and bibliophiles had spent considerable time identifying and cataloguing the manuscript and print collections scattered throughout the capital and their nation at large; now they were turning their bibliographic gaze toward the Pyrenees and made a formal inquiry into the nature and scope of Spain’s collections, particularly those designated as public libraries. As president of the Council of Castile, founder of the Real Sociedad Económica de Madrid, and a leading member of the prestigious Real Academia Española and Real Academia de Historia, Campomanes was the ideal candidate to gather the necessary data.

Published that same year, his *Noticia abreviada de la bibliotecas y monetarios de España* (*Abridged Notice of the Libraries and Coin and Medal Collections of Spain*) was, in essence, an enumerated and descriptive guide to the extant libraries—both public and private—in eighteenth-century Spain.¹ Campomanes listed and described fifty libraries, of which the majority were private collections with royal, aristocratic, or ecclesiastical origins. The first two questions posed by the French academy, however, reflected the preoccupation among many enlightened thinkers of the time with the public character ascribed to certain repositories of print and manuscript culture: “Which libraries in Spain are public?,” and “Do the King, convents, monasteries, churches, and nobles open their libraries to the public, especially to professors?”²

Campomanes drafted his response to the French query at a time when ‘public’ libraries were becoming part and parcel of the Bourbon cultural landscape. The Spanish crown had founded the Biblioteca Pública de Palacio, now the Biblioteca Nacional, in 1711, for example, and the Academia Española two years later in 1713, while the establishment of the Academia de Historia followed in 1735. In an age when scientific discovery and intellectual curiosity promoted the growth of scholarly infrastructure in support of various national

¹ In his assessment of early modern Spanish libraries, Justo García Morales included the *Noticia abreviada* in its entirety. For this essay, I have drawn from García’s reproduction of the Campomanes document. See his “Un informe de Campomanes sobre las bibliotecas españolas,” *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos* 75, nos. 1-2 (1968-1972): 91-126. I want to thank Alejandra Alducin, Kevin Gosner, and the anonymous reviewers of the manuscript for their thoughtful feedback.

² The original Spanish reads, “¿Cuáles son las bibliotecas públicas de España?” and “¿El Rey, los conventos, los monasterios, las iglesias y los señores abren las suyas al público y, con especialidad, a los profesores?” Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes, *Noticia abreviada*, in García Morales, “Un informe,” 107.

projects related to bureaucratic efficiency and modernization, libraries opened their doors to the literate and enlightened public in an effort to strengthen state power and rev the economic engines of the emerging nation-state. As the historian John Lynch has argued, Campomanes himself sought to strengthen royal authority as an instrument of reform, “placing yet greater power in the hands of the monarch to enable him to mobilize men and resources, transform institutions, and change government policy.”³ And the ‘public’ in the Spanish public library that so piqued French curiosity referred not to the municipal libraries common today in Europe and North America but, rather, to the repositories of print culture made available to certain sectors of the population that were working to advance the political, economic, and social interests of the absolutist State.⁴

The desire to count the number of books and manuscripts in a particular library, moreover, as well as provide bibliographic annotation, demonstrated systematic efforts on the part of eighteenth-century bibliophiles and literati to arrange knowledge into meaningful categories.⁵ In-house catalogues and inventories, for example, allowed for the efficient dissemination of ideas, as scholars and other library patrons were able to identify and locate more quickly specific books and manuscripts germane to their interests, as well as discern the relevance of their content to the task at hand. Evidence of innovation could be found in Spain’s major libraries, but what about those located in its vast overseas empire?

Campomanes’s *Noticia abreviada* lacked any discussion of libraries and book collections in the Spanish colonies. Perhaps a reflection of Europe’s dim view of the Americas’ intellectual prowess, such oversight no longer characterizes

³ John Lynch, *Bourbon Spain, 1700-1808* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 258.

⁴ Roger Chartier draws our attention to the nuances of the use of ‘biblioteca’ in early modern Spanish. For example, a biblioteca could simply be a collection of books, but it also referred to a substantial book collection under private ownership or that of a religious order. By the time the first volume of the *Diccionario de autoridades* was published in 1726, however, ‘biblioteca’ included collections of books that “were common for public benefit, of which there are various [libraries like these] in Europe, and our lord, the King, has one [such library] in his Royal Palace.” See Chartier, “De Alejandría a Angelópolis: bibliotecas de piedra y bibliotecas de papel,” *Artes de México* 68 (2003): 23-29. The entry for ‘biblioteca’ in the *Diccionario de autoridades* can be accessed at <http://web.frl.es/DA.html>.

⁵ For a comprehensive view of these Enlightenment efforts to systemize knowledge, see Richard Yeo, *Encyclopaedic Visions: Scientific Dictionaries and Enlightenment Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Wayne Bivens-Tatum explores the impact of Enlightenment principles on the growth of libraries in the western world in *Libraries and the Enlightenment* (Sacramento: Litwin Books and Library Juice Press, 2012). Examples of scholarly works that assess the different dimensions of the Enlightenment in Spanish America include, for example, Matthew O’Hara, *The History of the Future in Colonial Mexico* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018); Bianco Premo, *The Enlightenment on Trial: Ordinary Litigants and Colonialism in the Spanish Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Martha Few, *For All of Humanity: Mesoamerican and Colonial Medicine in Enlightenment Guatemala* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015); Sharon Bailey Glasco, *Constructing Mexico City: Colonial Conflicts over Culture, Space, and Authority* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Neil Safier, *Measuring the New World: Enlightenment Science and South America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Nature, Empire, and Nation: Explorations of the History of Science in the Iberian World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

the scholarly discussion related to libraries and book culture in Latin America.⁶ Mexican library history, in particular, which often displayed antiquarian tastes at the expense of broader context, has moved beyond annotated lists of the names of directors, librarians, and curators, titles of books and manuscripts, incunabula, maps, and ephemera.⁷ Studies that go beyond the intrinsic value of a particular repository and provide historical analysis fit into three broad categories: the decades immediately following Hernán Cortés's conquest of the Aztec confederation, when the printing press and monastic libraries supported the conversion of Native peoples to Christianity as part of the broader colonial enterprise under 'las dos majestades,' or the two majesties of Crown and Church; the emergence and maturation of Baroque literary tastes during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a time when the Catholic Reformation and religious wars in Europe fashioned the Habsburg monarchy's approach to governance and empire; and the establishment of the Holy Office of the Inquisition and its efforts to regulate print culture.⁸ As Antonio Barrera-Osorio reminds us, "technology and

⁶ Not all Europeans, of course, held such negative views of the Americas, including *peninsulares*. Some continued to identify Spain's American empire as the source of abundance, economic opportunity, and a fresh start. For a careful reassessment of the debate, see Tomás Pérez Vejo, "Criollos contra peninsulares: la bella leyenda," *Amérique Latine Histoire et Mémoire. Les Cahiers ALHIM* 19 (2010): <https://doi.org/10.4000/alhim.3431>. Spanish and Latin American book history in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries reflects an interdisciplinarity that bridges intellectual, cultural, and social history, often with the Inquisition and book censorship in mind. The first substantial effort culminated in the massive five-volume study edited by María Luisa López-Vidreiro and Peter Cátedra, *El libro antiguo español* (Salamanca and Madrid: Ediciones de la Universidad de Salamanca, Biblioteca Nacional de España, and Sociedad Española de Historia del Libro, 1989-1999). Others include Magdalena Chocano Mena, *La fortaleza docta: élite letrada y la dominación social en México colonial, siglos XVI-XVII* (Barcelona: Ediciones Bellaterra, 2000); Angel Alcalá, *Literatura y ciencia ante la Inquisición Española* (Madrid: Ediciones del Laberinto, 2001); Pedro Guibovich Pérez, *Censura, libros e inquisición en el Perú colonial, 1570-1754* (Seville: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 2003); Fernando J. Bouza Álvarez, *Communication, Knowledge, and Memory in Early Modern Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); and Pedro Rueda Ramírez, "Presentación del dossier: circulación y venta de libros en el mundo americano en la Edad Moderna – de los circuitos atlánticos a los mercados locales," *Anuario de estudios americanos* 71, no. 2 (2014): 415-421.

⁷ Rosa María Fernández de Zamora provides a systematic look at this genre in her essay, "Mexican Library History: A Survey of the Literature of the Last Fifteen Years," *Libraries and Culture* 32, no. 2 (1997): 227-244. Published works of an antiquarian cast include Juana Zahar Vergara, *Historia de las librerías de la Ciudad de México* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1995); María Isabel Grañén Porrúa, Miguel Díaz Rivera, Elvira Quintero García, and Francisco José Ruiz Cervantes, eds., *Las joyas bibliográficas de la Universidad Autónoma "Benito Juárez" de Oaxaca: la Biblioteca Francisco de Burgoa* (Mexico: Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C., 1996); Columba Salazar Ibargüen, *Una biblioteca virreinal de Puebla (siglo XVIII) – Fondo Andrés de Arze y Miranda* (Puebla: Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades-BUAP, 2001); and, more recently, the lavishly illustrated work, *De los libros ingeniosos de la Biblioteca Palafoxiana y un manuscrito de leyes* (Puebla: Consejo de Ciencia y Tecnología del Estado de Puebla, 2018).

⁸ Examples include W. Michael Mathes, *The America's First Academic Library: Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco* (Sacramento: California State Library Foundation, 1985), Irving A. Leonard's now classic, *Baroque Times in Old Mexico* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), María Águeda Méndez, *Catálogo de textos marginados novohispanos, siglo XVII: Archivo General de la Nación (México)* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México and Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las

God were not enough to establish an empire; an empire was and is, above all, the product of communication and information.”⁹

When Habsburg rule gave way to the French-influenced Bourbon dynasty in the wake of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), the Age of Enlightenment, with its emphasis on scientific discovery in the service of political authority, economic modernization, and administrative efficiency, anchored colonial libraries squarely in the political culture and material progress of empire. What is missing from the conceptual debates surrounding the Spanish crown’s ability to harness and exercise power is the manner in which the colonial library functioned as both a source and subject of state power that imparted the Enlightenment ethos. The theoretical literature tends to interrogate the archive rather than the library as the bureaucratic site of colonial authority, whereby the accumulation and internal ordering of papers (official, private, and public) “concealed, revealed, and reproduced the power of the state.”¹⁰

In her assessment of recent contributions to the literature, Maria Pia Donato found that historical research has focused on uncovering the “epistemic violence of the archive” in an effort to overturn the bureaucratic mechanisms of domination and oppression in the post-colonial world.¹¹ She identified several trends in recent years that have pushed historians and archivists to revisit their approach to the archive, including, for example, the shift from seeing the archive as a state apparatus to a collective of social memory and cultural heritage, and as a place that coheres raw data and, once filtered through best practices, transforms information into knowledge.¹² Donato concluded that historians should reconsider

Artes, 1997), Rosa María Fernández de Zamora, *Los impresos mexicanos del siglo XVI: su presencia en el patrimonio cultural del nuevo siglo* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2009), Martin Nesvig, *Ideology and Inquisition: The World of the Censors in Early Mexico* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); and the theoretically provocative work by Anna More, *Baroque Sovereignty: Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora and the Creole Archive of Colonial Mexico* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013). For the period immediately following Mexican independence from Spain, Phillip Jones examines the transition from colonial libraries to the establishment of the Biblioteca Nacional de México. See his essay, “Indispensable in a Civilized Society”: Manuel Payno’s “Las bibliotecas de México,” *Libraries and the Cultural Record* 42, no. 3 (2007): 268-290.

⁹ Antonio Barrera-Osorio, *Experiencing Nature: The Spanish American Empire and the Early Scientific Revolution* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 128.

¹⁰ Ann Laura Stoler, “Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 97. Stoler expands the theoretical framework to include archival labor and production as acts of imperial governance in her critically acclaimed book, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). In the context of the early modern Spanish world, Sylvia Sellers-García provides a compelling look at the impact of distance on the creation of local documents and archives within the context of power relations in colonial Guatemala. See her *Distance and Documents at the Spanish Empire’s Periphery* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), while David F. Slade examines the Bourbon creation of epistemological spaces in archives to better categorize more efficiently its vast overseas holdings. See his “An Imperial Knowledge Space for Imperial Spain: Juan Bautista Muñoz and the Founding of the Archivo General de Indias,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 20, no. 2 (2011): 195-212.

¹¹ Maria Pia Donato, “Archives, Record Keeping and Imperial Governance, 1500-1800,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 22 (2018): 313.

¹² Donato, “Archives, Record Keeping,” 313.

“archives among those repertoires of imperial power to which early modern empires resorted, provided that emphasis on the centripetal movement triggered by imperial governments’ desire to exert control from a distance is counterbalanced by the awareness that centrifugal forces were also strong in shaping archives.”¹³

Among those repertoires of state power, libraries were ideally suited to the Spanish colonial enterprise. Drawing from Alberto Manguel’s assertion that the value of the early modern library resided not in the number of books it possessed or the rarity of its collection but, rather, in the scope of its contents and how patrons made use of those contents, the few libraries that existed in early colonial Mexico achieved remarkable success.¹⁴ As noted earlier, monastic libraries provided the religious orders with the appropriate books, tracts, and devotionals that were necessary for the evangelization of Native peoples following the Spanish conquest, while the emergence of the colonial university and local cathedral schools in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries included libraries, so budding luminaries such as Juan Ruiz de Alarcón y Mendoza, Francisco Cervantes de Salazar, Juan de Cárdenas, and Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora could develop and refine their pursuits of science, law, literature, and natural history, among other subject matter.

Despite the lack of scholarly attention afforded colonial libraries as public spaces that encapsulated administrative reform and social order, there were plenty of libraries that deepened Spain’s imprint on its most prized New World colony, New Spain, that is, colonial Mexico: the libraries of the Real y Pontificia Universidad, Real Academia de San Carlos, Real Colegio de Minería, and the Biblioteca Turriana, which flourished in the mid-eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries as the first public library designated as such in colonial Mexico City. An exemplar of a public library as purveyor of state power *and* ecclesiastical authority—‘las dos majestades’—resided not in the vice-regal capital, however, but rather eighty miles to the southeast in the city of Puebla de los Ángeles—home of the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, the first in the colony to enjoy the appellation of ‘public library.’ It is colonial Puebla where historians can suss out the links between Church and State and the establishment of public libraries from Habsburg to Bourbon rule.

Spaniards founded Puebla in 1531 to provide newly arrived settlers from the Peninsula with a place of their own after the spoils of conquest had dried up in the central valley.¹⁵ Due to its ideal climate and fertile land, Puebla soon became the second largest city in the colony and remained so throughout the colonial period. As a city founded by Spaniards for Spaniards, Puebla was home to a strong mix of merchants, farmers, artisans, professionals, clerics, and nuns who

¹³ Donato, “Archives, Record Keeping,” 314.

¹⁴ Alberto Manguel, *The Library at Night* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 92.

¹⁵ For broader historical discussions of Puebla, see Leonardo Lomelí Vanegas, *Breve historia de Puebla* (Mexico: El Colegio de México, Fideicomiso Historia de las Américas, and Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001); Ida Altman, *Transatlantic Ties in the Spanish Empire: Brihuega, Spain and Puebla, Mexico, 1560-1620* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); and Sonya Lipsett-Rivera, *To Defend Our Water with the Blood of Our Veins: The Struggle for Resources in Colonial Puebla* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999).

defined the rhythms of daily life amid the hustle and bustle of colonial urbanity. By the middle of the eighteenth century, for example, Puebla enjoyed a population in excess of 50,000 people, with some 2500 clerics and nuns competing for income from multiple sources, including Native communities, urban elites, and wealthy landowners whose diversified holdings included farms, ranches, and urban real estate.¹⁶

Puebla proved so attractive to the diocesan and regular clergy, as well as to various female religious orders, that it took on the veneer of the ecclesiastical cities that had thrived in Europe during the Middle Ages. Sprawling convents and monasteries occupied several city blocks; a towering cathedral cast a shadow over the city square known as the *zócalo*. Multiple parish churches and chapels were built in Indigenous *barrios* and Peninsular neighborhoods, although many of the Spanish areas of the city became multiracial over the course of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Puebla also was home to one of the leading Jesuit colleges in the Americas (Colegio del Espíritu Santo), while a host of lay confraternities and sodalities (*cofradías* and *hermandades*) organized public displays of veneration of their patron saint and also sponsored masses for the repose of the souls of deceased members. Among the many historical descriptions of colonial Puebla, the one offered in 1746 by the Dominican friar, Juan Villa Sánchez, stands out: “the City of Angels is truly the neck and throat of the enormous body of this North America [colony]...[everyone knows of] Puebla de los Angeles, applauded and famous in the annals, celebrated in [written] histories, delineated on maps, copied on paintings and noted by all geographers in their works...[and even though much has been written in defense of its rights and privileges as a city] it is sufficient enough [just] to exalt the greatness of its name.”¹⁷

Juan de Palafox y Mendoza and the Origins of the Biblioteca Palafoxiana

Into the Habsburg milieu of seventeenth century Puebla stepped Juan de Palafox y Mendoza (1600-1659), an ambitious cleric from Aragón, Spain, who overcame the stain of illegitimacy and quickly ascended the ecclesiastical hierarchy. He curried favor with the court of Philip IV (r. 1621-1665) and was appointed to the Royal Council of the Indies. Advisors to the king recognized Palafox’s efforts there, and soon the cleric was consecrated a bishop and found himself headed to Mexico wielding the authority of ‘*las dos majestades*.’ Philip

¹⁶ Frances L. Ramos, *Identity, Ritual, and Power in Colonial Puebla* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012), 17. By the middle of the eighteenth century, however, due to a series of epidemics and increased competition from New Spain’s Bajío region, Puebla experienced economic doldrums. Its once thriving wheat and livestock-producing areas that had generated prosperity in the early to mid-seventeenth century struggled to meet the growing demands of a revived mining sector under the Bourbons. Despite the economic setback, Puebla remained an attractive city for the clergy and religious in the eighteenth century because the elite continued to spend a portion of their income and wealth on pious works and private spiritual activities such as mass offerings for deceased family members. For a discussion of Puebla’s economic decline, see Lomelí Vanegas, *Breve historia de Puebla*, 100-101.

¹⁷ Fray Juan Villa Sánchez, *Puebla sagrada y profana: informe dado a su muy ilustre ayuntamiento el año de 1746* (Puebla: Impreso en la Casa del Ciudadano José María Campos, 1835), 2.

IV had appointed Palafox as the bishop of Puebla, the colony's second largest diocese that, due to its rather large and productive agricultural and ranching sectors, made it arguably wealthier than the archdiocese of Mexico City.¹⁸ The king also entrusted Palafox with the powerful secular posts of visitor-general, whose primary task was to review the outgoing viceroy's administration of the colony and prepare for the arrival of his successor, and captain-general of New Spain, or the highest-ranking official in charge of colonial defenses.¹⁹

Upon his arrival in 1640, Palafox discovered that the decrees of the Council of Trent—issued between 1545 and 1563 as the institutional response to Martin Luther's Reformation—had languished in Mexico without any firm resolve on the part of his predecessors or the Spanish crown to implement the reforms, particularly those related to education and priestly formation. And much to the newly consecrated bishop's chagrin, neither the municipal nor ecclesiastical authorities had established a printing press in the city, making it quite difficult to disseminate royal decrees and colonial legislation, not to mention the variety of religious matters so crucial to the exercise of episcopal power, such as canonical and diocesan regulations, Inquisition edicts, theological treatises, and popular devotionals, among others. By 1642, however, thanks to Palafox's support, Puebla had its own printing press, and, along with Mexico City's growing network of printers, Puebla's robust output of printed matter by the end of the seventeenth century helped make Spain the first 'empire of paper' in the early modern world.²⁰

While convents, monasteries, and the schools operating under the auspices of the regular clergy had their own private libraries—and a few wealthy colonial subjects also collected books—not one library in Puebla, or New Spain for that matter, was placed in the public domain, as Palafox himself often pointed out. Rooted in Tridentine reforms of episcopal authority and Habsburg prescriptions for the common good, he was moved in 1646 to donate his personal library of five thousand volumes to the city of Puebla—specifically, the seminary colleges that

¹⁸ David A. Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State, 1492-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 229, 233-234.

¹⁹ He also served briefly as interim viceroy of New Spain in 1642 and was offered, but turned down, the archbishopric of Mexico City. The standard biography of Palafox, although certainly one with a hagiographical hue, remains Sor Cristina de la Cruz de Arteaga, *Una mitra sobre dos mundos: la de don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, obispo de Puebla de los Angeles y de Osma* (Seville: Artes Gráficas Salesianas, S.A., 1985). Engaging scholarly assessments include Cayetana Álvarez de Toledo, *Politics and Reform in Spain and Viceregal Mexico: The Life and Thought of Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, 1600-1659* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), and Rafael Sánchez Vázquez, *Juan de Palafox y Mendoza humanista y promotor de la cultura jurídica mexicana* (Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 2003).

²⁰ Elías Trabulse, "Prólogo," *Cien impresos coloniales poblanos* (Mexico: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José María Luis Mora, 1991), 10. In the early twentieth century, the prolific Chilean historian and bibliophile, José Toribio Medina, published what remains the most comprehensive inventory of the printed matter that rolled off Puebla's printing press during the colonial period. See his *La imprenta en la Puebla de los Angeles (1642-1821)* (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Cervantes, 1908). Medina's inventory of the Mexico City printing press, however, yielded an astonishing eight volumes: *La imprenta en México (1539-1821)* (Santiago de Chile: Impreso en Casa del Autor, 1908-1912). New Spain's colonial presses clearly provided enough 'printed pulp' for Spain's empire of paper.

he had founded and consolidated two years earlier.²¹ Quite tellingly, the bishop made clear in the act of donation that, while his personal library was to activate the educational reforms of Trent, it was to be open to the public and not simply limited to seminarians and clerics. At the time, Palafox's collection of books and printed matter was probably the largest private library in the Americas. In the notarized instrument of donation, however, he emphasized the public character of the library, stipulating time and again that "everyone" and "all ecclesiastical and lay persons of this city and diocese" should have access to the collection.²²

Palafox employed the term 'public' because he wanted his library to serve a particular public good, that is, the formation of boys and young men into priests. In the early modern Spanish world—in fact, throughout western Europe at this time—the use of "público" as an adjective indicated "*lo que saben todos*," that is, "known by all" and was applicable to the "power, jurisdiction, and authority" of secular and ecclesiastical officials to 'get stuff done,' as opposed to private initiative.²³ In the seventeenth-century Spanish House of Habsburg, with the wars of the Reformation still smoldering, a reformed and better educated clergy played multiple roles in the public sphere: servants of Christ who could properly administer the sacraments to the faithful; preachers who could make accessible the abiding mysteries of the faith and complicated theological constructs; promoters of popular devotion to Mary, Mother of God, and the communion of saints; and defenders of the vertical rendering of political hierarchy that so buttressed Habsburg understandings of power. What Palafox found discomfiting was that, from his vantage point of having served the court in Madrid and the Royal Council of the Indies as a cleric, the reform of seminary education and training was 'known by all' as a public good, but not much had been done about it despite the conciliar decrees from the previous century. Such reform, consequently, required the very 'public' jurisdiction of a bishop to make it happen.

Palafox understood quite well that the clergy—both secular (diocesan) and regular—neither operated nor functioned in a social vacuum; rather, they were fundamental to the vitality of daily life and were as much a part of colonial society as bureaucrats, merchants, miners, farmers, and ranchers.²⁴ Wielding

²¹ For a critical assessment of Palafox's donation, including a transcription of the instrument of donation, see Michael M. Brescia, "Material and Cultural Dimensions of Episcopal Authority: Tridentine Donation and the Biblioteca Palafoxiana in Seventeenth-Century Puebla de los Ángeles, Mexico," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 8, no. 2 (1999): 207-227. A recent study that conceptualizes the Biblioteca Palafoxiana as a space of transition from private book collection to modern library in Mexico is Amado Manuel Cortés, *Del manuscrito a la imprenta: el nacimiento de la librería moderna – la Biblioteca Palafoxiana* (Mexico: Ediciones y Gráficos Eón, 2012).

²² Brescia, "Material and Cultural Dimensions," 222-223.

²³ See the various entries for 'público' in the *Diccionario de autoridades*, vol. 5 (1737) at <http://web.frl.es/DA/html>.

²⁴ For a fuller appreciation of Palafox's understanding of the priesthood and how it shaped daily life in the larger Habsburg world of the seventeenth century, see the various works that he wrote for the clergy, particularly his pastoral letters (*cartas pastorales*), practical manuals (*manuales*), and spiritual devotionals (*devociones espirituales*). These can be found scattered throughout the

secular and ecclesiastical authority simultaneously, Palafox worked to ensure fealty to the Habsburg political order by nurturing a new Tridentine Catholic identity among his flock. By donating his substantial book collection to the city and diocese of Puebla in a very public way, the bishop created the intellectual infrastructure required to sustain his various reforms, with the education and training of seminarians and priests chief among them.²⁵ In truth, not everyone would enjoy access to the library; it is difficult to imagine the illiterate blacksmith, laundress, or streetcleaner being allowed entry in 1646. Still, everyone in the city and diocese of Puebla would come to know the Biblioteca Palafoxiana because everyone would be touched by it in a straightforward way, that is, seminarians and priests would graduate from Palafox's seminary having utilized its scholarly infrastructure in their priestly formation; afterward, they would be better trained to publicly and privately impart the tenets of the faith and direct their parishioners in the appropriate devotional practices of Tridentine Catholicism.

Sometime between 1646, when he donated his personal library, and 1649, when the king recalled him back to Spain, Bishop Palafox issued instructions on how to administer and maintain the collection.²⁶ He had intimated in the notarized instrument of donation that such directives were forthcoming: "And since [public] use of the library is the primary objective of our donation, we retain the right to define as we see appropriate this use in a separate document, which will order us to safeguard and comply with this donation, that remains perfect in everything else."²⁷ Consisting of twelve parts, his *Instrucciones* remind us how sensitive Palafox was to the state of print culture and learning in colonial Puebla, and that he had exercised the power of episcopal office to activate the Tridentine reforms related to the formation of young men to the priesthood and, in the process, promote Habsburg understandings of the common good. For example, Palafox reminded colonial officials that neither the Diocese of Puebla nor New Spain had a public library to serve the needs of the colony, "where the settlers and others who do not have an abundance of books...can comfortably study."²⁸ What books could be found in the colony fell victim both to the moths that consumed their pages and humans who often removed books from their cartons to make room for

thirteen volumes of his collected works, *Obras del ilustrissimo, excelentissimo, y venerable siervo de Dios Don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza* (Madrid: En la Imprenta de Don Gabriel Ramirez, 1762).

²⁵ Brescia, "Material and Cultural Dimensions," 211-214. Palafox founded the Colegio Seminario del Glorioso Apóstol San Pedro in 1644. In the act of foundation, he articulated his reform of the structures of seminary education and priestly formation: The Colegio Seminario de San Pedro would function as a minor seminary, that is, the formation and cultivation of vocations in young boys, followed by formal seminary education in the Colegio Seminario de San Juan Evangelista. A third step, what we might call today the continuing education of priests, took place in the Colegio Seminario de San Pablo.

²⁶ Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, "De la Librería y Bibliotecario" in *Instrucciones del Venerable Siervo de Dios Juan de Palafox y Mendoza*, Papeles Varios, Archivo del Venerable Cabildo Angelopolitano [hereinafter AVCAP], Puebla, Mexico, n/d and n/p.

²⁷ Cited from the transcription in Brescia, "Material and Cultural Dimensions," 226.

²⁸ Palafox y Mendoza, "De la Librería y Bibliotecario," AVCAP, n/p.

“chocolate and other unforgivable things,” for which the bishop promised to prohibit through ecclesiastical censure.²⁹

In addition to insects and the necessity to store goods in appropriate containers, Palafox noted the initial paucity of printers in Puebla and infrequent commerce between Spain and the viceroyalty as reasons for the lack of a thriving print culture in the service of learning. He even went so far as to describe as “useless” the few books that survived the biannual transatlantic voyages. As a consequence, Palafox stipulated that the *Instrucciones* were part of his efforts “to preserve for the public good those [books] that are useful and convenient.”³⁰ Much like the 1646 act of donation, these instructions reflected quite clearly Palafox’s view of seminary formation as vital to the spiritual well-being of his flock and, therefore, to the public good. As the historian David Brading put it so aptly: Palafox was “anxious to define New Spain as an integral part of the Tridentine Church...where the truths of the Faith shine resplendent.”³¹

A third reason given in the *Instrucciones* for the donation of his library reveals Palafox’s acute understanding of Spain’s diminished power in early modern Europe, and how the colony’s remoteness put it beyond the direct gaze of the Habsburg court in Madrid. Palafox identified public libraries as “very necessary” to correct “the confusion of opinions” to which “human intelligence and the accidents of time” are exposed. Such confusion unfolds as “general controversies and [can] awaken schisms and divisions [in society].”³² Clearly, the bishop was thinking of the Portuguese revolt against the forced union with Spain (1640-1668), the Catalan Revolts (1640-1652), continuing uncertainty in the Spanish Netherlands due to the Peace of Westphalia (1648), and the growing conflict in his own backyard with the Society of Jesus over ecclesiastical jurisdiction (1647-1649). Exercising the secular post of visitor-general, for example, Palafox maneuvered to oust the sitting viceroy amid the growing anti-Portuguese sentiment among royal officials. By donating his private library to Puebla, therefore—and, by extension, to the larger colony—the bishop hoped that its contents—books and treatises free of heresy and sedition that imparted both scholasticism and piety—would inculcate in His Majesty’s overseas subjects (via a reformed clergy) a Tridentine Catholic identity and Habsburg political ideals. Spain’s increasingly precarious position in the post-Westphalia global order could undermine the colonial fealty to the Habsburg ethos, however, thus promoting uncertainty and tumult in the colonies while inviting foreign intrigue. Only an educated and properly trained clergy could promote and naturalize among the faithful a proper rendering of ‘las dos majestades’ that was necessary for the maintenance of an overseas empire.

²⁹ Palafox y Mendoza, “De la Librería y Bibliotecario,” AVCAP, n/p. Palafox’s apparent distaste for chocolate reflected early Peninsular attitudes that tended to equate certain foods and food preparation techniques with lower social status. See Rebecca Earle, “The Pleasures of Taxonomy: Casta Paintings, Classification, and Colonialism,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2016): 436-438.

³⁰ Palafox y Mendoza, “De la Librería y Bibliotecario,” AVCAP, n/p.

³¹ Brading, *The First America*, 241, 251.

³² Palafox y Mendoza, “De la Librería y Bibliotecario,” AVCAP, n/p.

Bishop Palafox focused even more on seminary education as the fourth and final reason for having a public library. As a practical matter, libraries located inside schools made it convenient for professors and students of all academic backgrounds to teach and learn in comfort. He ordered the librarian, Bartolomé de Hoz, who also served as rector of the seminaries, to keep the library open between 7:00 AM and 10:00 AM, and from 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM, although Palafox recognized that the library might have to close to accommodate professors and students who were using it for a specific activity. Finally, the bishop reminded his flock that the pope himself provided for ecclesiastical censure of anyone who removed books from the library—even if the person called such removal a loan—or entered the library without the appropriate supervision (either by the librarian or an approved student).³³

Unlike the efforts undertaken a century later by the Bourbon reformers to promote social order and best hygienic practices in the service of enlightened absolutism—as we will see later in this essay—Palafox spent little time discussing such things. Users of the library were to consult but one book at a time from the shelves or out of the drawer. Upon finishing the book, the professor or student was to return it to its proper place. Not surprisingly, only the librarian or his assistant were allowed to have keys to the library. Palafox ordered the librarian to have the students clean the books every two months and use cotton to preserve the books; these students would earn twenty pesos for their efforts. Finally, without specifying a cataloguing system, the bishop required the librarian and the treasurer of the seminary to maintain an inventory of the collection. In order to assist the librarian and treasurer to fulfill this task, Palafox created the ‘curator of the library’ and appointed the prefect of the seminary to serve in the position.³⁴

Palafox concluded the *Instrucciones* by reiterating that his original donation consisted of approximately 5000 volumes, some of which had gone missing: “...it is best they should be bought again,” he wrote, mandating that 300 pesos be set aside annually from the seminary’s budget to purchase books from Spain, “in conformity with what the Royal Treasury of the Indies disburses” to the colony. The bishop stipulated that these new acquisitions would become part of the library’s collection.³⁵

Despite Palafox’s recall in 1649, his library endured. Some of his successors added books and new bookshelves to accommodate the influx of acquisitions. For example, Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz (1637-1699)—better known as the bishop of Puebla who assumed the guise of Sor Filotea and engaged Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648/51-1695) in a series of letters related to the patriarchal structures of the Catholic Church and female spirituality and learning—followed in his predecessor’s footsteps by donating his own personal collection of books, as well as expanding the area in the seminary that housed

³³ Palafox y Mendoza, “De la Librería y Bibliotecario,” AVCAP, n/p.

³⁴ Palafox y Mendoza, “De la Librería y Bibliotecario,” AVCAP, n/p.

³⁵ Palafox y Mendoza, “De la Librería y Bibliotecario,” AVCAP, n/p.

Palafox's original donation.³⁶ So impressed was the bishop with the library's expansion that he wrote a letter to the president of the Royal Council of the Indies in 1679, affirming that in many ways the state of learning in Puebla was much better than that of the vice-regal capital. He even suggested that students would do better enrolling in the schools under his episcopal auspices than matriculate in Mexico City schools.³⁷ Palafox's library had made teaching and learning not only possible and accessible in the colony's second largest city and diocese, but it also allowed church and municipal authorities to promote Puebla as a serious competitor and rival of the vice-regal capital.

Francisco Fabián y Fuero and the Bourbon Reforms in Puebla

The transition to Bourbon rule in the eighteenth century adds a conceptual wrinkle to what we know of the new dynasty's centralizing policies and their impact on the colonial leaders whose ecclesiastical purview included the Biblioteca Palafoxiana. As a library clearly marked as 'public' when it was founded during Habsburg rule in the previous century, the Biblioteca Palafoxiana evolved with the times and became a fixture of the urban landscape. Another Spanish prelate from Aragón arrived in Mexico as the bishop of Puebla and he, too, would wield the power invested in his office to promote Spain's colonial enterprise in North America. Francisco Fabián y Fuero (1719-1801) was one of three reforming bishops to arrive in New Spain during the reign of Charles III (r. 1759-1788).³⁸ Eager to move the king's subjects away from the more ostentatious displays of Tridentine Catholicism and toward a simpler internal piety, Fabián y Fuero and the other two reformers—Francisco Antonio Lorenzana (1722-1804) and Alonso Núñez de Haro y Peralta (1729-1800), both archbishops of Mexico City, drew from the Enlightenment to articulate religious reforms for their respective dioceses.

Rather than employ the pomp and circumstance of liturgical splendor to stir up the interiority of one's faith, for example, these Bourbon prelates advocated for the laity to experience the eternal truths of Catholicism through "a cognitive understanding of God's word, eminence, and goodness."³⁹ It was reason, coupled with a sedate piety, that brought the faithful to Divine Providence; lavish displays of sacred objects so central to the Mexican Baroque served only to distract the individual from having a relationship with God manifested in Jesus Christ, 'His only Son, who was born of the Virgin Mary.' Drawing from the historian Brian Larkin's cogent argument, Fabián y Fuero and

³⁶ Pedro A. Palou, *Breve noticia histórica de la Biblioteca Palafoxiana y de su fundador Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, y los colegios de San Juan, San Pedro, San Pablo y San Pantaleón* (Puebla: Gobierno del Estado de Puebla, 1995), 17.

³⁷ Trabulse, "Prólogo," 9.

³⁸ For a comprehensive examination of Fabián y Fuero's tenure in Puebla, see Jesús Márquez Carrillo, *Política, iglesia y modernidad en Puebla: las ideas y proyectos reformistas del obispo Francisco Fabián y Fuero, 1765-1773* (Puebla: Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 2017).

³⁹ Brian Larkin, "The Splendor of Worship: Baroque Catholicism, Religious Reform, and Last Wills and Testaments in Eighteenth-Century Mexico City," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 8, no. 3 (1999): 406.

the other ecclesiastical reformers “twisted the baroque understanding of the use of sensuous display in sacred ritual” and directed a fundamental shift in Catholicism, where ‘the word’ and ‘understanding’ replaced ‘the image and the sensual.’⁴⁰

Undoubtedly, the official push to reform Catholic practice in eighteenth-century New Spain paralleled the administrative and economic reforms of the Bourbon court. Larkin argues that neither set of reforms required the other to thrive, however, but certainly, when bundled and viewed as a whole, the reformist agendas of Church and Crown manifested the broader principles of the Enlightenment.⁴¹ But no matter how often the ecclesiastical hierarchy and its supporters at the royal court repeated the ‘dos majestades’ platitude, the Spanish king, despite his own faith and fervent religious practices, controlled the church.⁴²

Fabián y Fuero and the other prelates were “perfect examples of what the absolutist state expected of its bishops.”⁴³ Committed to implementing religious reform in their dioceses, these prelates cooperated with and promoted Bourbon regalist policies related to education, agriculture and manufacturing, clerical conduct, and popular religiosity. One way to gauge Fabián y Fuero’s exercise of episcopal power in light of the Bourbon reforms is to examine his relationship with the Biblioteca Palafoxiana. Following in his predecessors’ footsteps, for example, he donated his own personal collection of books to the library, but he also expropriated Jesuit libraries, the order’s printing press, and issued his own set of rules—called a *Reglamento*—that reflected the ecclesiastical dimensions of Bourbon order and efficiency within the broader framework of the Enlightenment.

On December 9, 1771, in the presence of several witnesses, Fabián y Fuero met with Manuel del Castillo, one of the public clerks in Puebla who could notarize transactions, to sign an instrument of donation.⁴⁴ The bishop decided to donate “all the books that the present Most Illustrious Lord has and possesses, and any that he might acquire in the future, and that might be discovered in his study or other areas of his residence at the time of his death, without the exclusion of any [book], in order that immediately upon his death, [the books will] transfer and [will be] placed in the Library of the said [Royal and Pontifical] colleges.”⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Brian Larkin, *The Very Nature of God: Baroque Catholicism and Religious Reform in Bourbon Mexico City* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 136-137.

⁴¹ Larkin, *Very Nature of God*, 152-153.

⁴² The historian William B. Taylor used the parental metaphor to describe ‘las dos majestades’ under Habsburg rule, that is, the Spanish crown was the father and the Church was the mother of the larger Hispanic family. Together, the two majesties became the collective head of the social body. Under Bourbon rule, however, the crown dropped the feminine component and the king became an all-powerful single parent who was the unitary head of the family, as a masculine conception of royal power and authority emerged. See his magisterial work, *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 13-14.

⁴³ William Callahan cited in Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 16-17.

⁴⁴ Francisco Fabián y Fuero, *Donación de libros*, 9 December 1771, Archivo General de Notarías del Estado de Puebla [hereinafter AGNEP], Notario #3, Manuel del Castillo [clerk], años 1770-1779, Puebla, Mexico, f. 151v.

⁴⁵ Fabián y Fuero, *Donación*, AGNEP, f. 151v. He served as bishop of Puebla from 1765 to 1773, when he returned to Spain as the newly appointed archbishop of Valencia. Fabián y Fuero served there until he resigned in 1795 due to conflicts with the secular authorities over the protection that the archbishop had afforded to French clerics and nuns who were exercising their religious

Mirroring Palafox's donation in the previous century, Fabián y Fuero waived any of the laws related to donation that might have placed restrictions on his actions. He also promised not to abrogate the donation in his last will and testament or through other legal means. For their part, the witnesses, including Melchor Julián de Pastrana, treasurer of the seminary colleges, and Victoriano López, a canon in the Cathedral of Puebla, as well as several of the bishop's retainers, expressed their "most reverent and expressive thanks to His Most Illustrious Lord, for such a fruitful donation."⁴⁶

Unlike what Palafox had stipulated in his act of donation, however, Fabián y Fuero failed to enumerate the number of books in his personal library that had so pleased the witnesses who gathered to affix their signatures to the legal instrument. Before long, an unmistakable assertion of power on the part of the Bourbon monarch would add even more printed matter to the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, with Bishop Fabián y Fuero on the colonial frontlines directing the local trajectory of that power.

The intensity to which events unfolded in Puebla after the expulsion of the Society of Jesus in 1767 was due, in part, to Fabián y Fuero. Jesuits had been part of the spiritual geography of the city and diocese since 1578 when they arrived to set up several schools there. Just like the elites in other urban areas of the Spanish empire, well-to-do residents sent their boys to these Jesuit centers of learning, where scholasticism and Ignatian discipline shaped the contours of teaching and learning. When Charles III, the most reform-minded of the Bourbon kings, decreed the order's expulsion from all Spanish territories on March 27th, for "urgent, just, and necessary reasons that I retain to my Royal self," he deployed the power of the monarchy to eliminate what he considered a grave threat to Bourbon absolutism: a religious order known for its intellectual bona fides but also for its international composition and strong links to the papacy.⁴⁷ German-speaking, Italian, French, and Portuguese Jesuits were scattered throughout the Spanish empire; the royal court in Madrid remained suspicious of their loyalties just as the first seeds of nationalism had started to germinate. What an absolutist Spain needed in 1767 was an unfettered projection of royal authority across the empire that removed a global competitor capable of sowing discord and disunion. Fabián y Fuero acted quickly to expropriate the entire Jesuit enterprise in Puebla—literally, lock, stock, and barrel—and then harness the confiscated infrastructure to serve the political aspirations of Bourbon absolutism, not to mention fortify his own ecclesiastical jurisdiction by putting his imprimatur on reformist policies.

ministries in the archdiocese of Valencia. He returned to his native Aragón, where he died in 1801. Any books or printed matter that Fabián y Fuero collected after he left Puebla probably accompanied him to Aragón when he left Valencia, or, perhaps he donated the books to the archdiocesan seminaries in Valencia.

⁴⁶ Fabián y Fuero, *Donación*, AGNEP, f. 151v.

⁴⁷ The original Spanish reads, "otras [causas] urgentes, justas, y necesarias, que reservo a mi Real ánimo." A digital image of the decree can be accessed at the Raab Collection website: <https://www.raabcollection.com/foreign-figures-autographs/charles-iii-1767>. A looser, more lyrical rendering might read: "for other reasons that I keep close to my heart."

Shortly after colonial officials had forcibly removed the Jesuits from the city in compliance with the royal decree, Fabián y Fuero authorized the transfer of the five Jesuit schools to the diocesan seminaries that his predecessor, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, had established in the 1640s—by the mid-eighteenth century, the seminary complex was called the *Real y Pontificio Seminario Palafoxiano*, or the Royal and Pontifical Palafoxiano Seminary.⁴⁸ By 1772, Fabián y Fuero's efforts to eradicate the Jesuit's material presence in his diocese was nearly complete. He set out to finish the Bourbon king's anti-Jesuit agenda by transferring ownership of all Jesuit books and printed matter to Palafox's library. These former Jesuit schools not only lost their professors and students, but now the bibliographic patrimony that the religious order had carefully stewarded since the sixteenth century was gone.

Unlike his contemporary in Mexico City, however, Archbishop Lorenzana, who followed royal fiat and prohibited all books promoting the Jesuit way in the vice-regal capital, Fabián y Fuero shied away from a complete rejection of the order's intellectual acuity. Jesuit works dealing with moral theology, for example, were included in the transfer of Jesuit libraries to the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, despite Bourbon efforts to push schools and universities toward the pedagogical innovations of the Enlightenment, which, in turn, sought "to subordinate faith to the tutelage of reason—or, of the State."⁴⁹ The bishop of Puebla's approach diverged strikingly not only from that of his brother-bishop, Lorenzana, but also from Bourbon policy: Charles III and his advisors saw in the Jesuit texts and treatises related to moral theology the promotion of insubordination before civil and church authorities.⁵⁰ So far, the extant documentary record hints little at Fabián y Fuero's motives, although the French

⁴⁸ For a discussion of the transfer of Jesuit colleges to the diocesan seminaries, see Lomeli Vanegas, *Breve historia de Puebla*, 114-115, 166; and Ernesto de la Torre Villar, *Historia de la educación en Puebla (época colonial)* (Puebla: Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 1988), 128. A microhistory of the distribution of expropriated Jesuit books and printed matter is found in H. Bradley Benedict, "The Sale of the Hacienda de Tabaloapa: A Case-Study of Jesuit Property Redistribution in Mexico, 1711-1781," *The Americas* 32, no. 2 (1975): 171-195. Scholars interested in tracking down expropriated Jesuit libraries in Spain and other parts of Europe will find much value in the website created and maintained by historians and librarians at Georgia Southern University: "The European Jesuit Libraries Provenance Project," available at <https://www.jesuit-libraries.com/>.

⁴⁹ Guillermo Zermeño, "Libros jesuitas incautados y proscritos," *Artes de México* 68 (2003): 61-68. Bianca Premo demonstrates the extent to which the Bourbons pushed teaching and learning away from the Jesuit model and toward Eclecticism, a philosophy sensitive to royal concerns, or, as Premo argues, "a conscious feature of regalist thought." Setting aside moral philosophy, moral theology, and metaphysics, proponents of eclecticism emphasized practical experience and reason, for example, at the expense of revelation, as the basis for natural law. See her *Enlightenment on Trial*, 70-71.

⁵⁰ Zermeño, "Libros jesuitas incautados y proscritos," 61-68. In many ways, according to Zermeño, the eighteenth-century confiscation of Jesuit books dealing with moral theology was a political outcome of the sixteenth-century theological dispute between the Jesuits and the Dominican order over the question of human freedom in the face of an all-powerful God. See also Premo, *Enlightenment on Trial*, 83, for certain Enlightenment thinkers' rejection of "the commentator-obsessed casuistic Jesuit juridical and ethical method that had long supported customary, local colonial control...."

historian, Roger Chartier—a member of the acclaimed Annales school and a leading authority on print culture—provides some conceptual guidance.

Fabián y Fuero may have been responding to two contradictory concerns of early modern Europeans. The first, according to Chartier, was the fear of loss, of disappearance, of forgetting, which catalyzed the search for books and manuscripts, as well as the establishment of royal libraries that would house “all fields of knowledge.”⁵¹ Such accumulation of books and texts, however, fostered a second concern—the fear of “unruly excess, of confounding abundance.”⁵² By transferring the Jesuit books to the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, Fabián y Fuero simultaneously increased the size of its collection—thus gilding Puebla’s prestige among the learned sectors of colonial society that had been educated by the Jesuits without explicitly abandoning his own anti-Jesuit sensibilities—and ensured that the content of these new acquisitions remained in plain view of his episcopal gaze. While the exact number of expropriated books and manuscripts remains unknown, an inventory undertaken in 1836 counted some 22, 300 volumes in the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, with 5000 of these coming from Palafox’s initial donation of 1646.⁵³

In some ways, expropriation was the easy part for Fabián y Fuero. Now he had to find space appropriate enough to accommodate the new acquisitions, which the bishop promptly did by having an exquisitely ornate cedar bookcase built and placed inside a massive barrel vault—a *bóveda* in Spanish—on the second-floor of the seminary.⁵⁴ Even the artistic style of the bookcase betrayed the bishop’s resistance to a full embrace of the neo-classical art and architecture that had reflected European tastes during the Enlightenment. The bookcase may very well have been the last major artistic expression of the baroque in Puebla, what art historians call the Churrigueresque style of the Salamanca School.⁵⁵

While reforming bishops such as Fabián y Fuero might remove baroque retablos and altars from churches and attack popular manifestations of Catholicism, he made room for the boveda’s ornate decorative forms to coexist with its structural functionality, the latter being a hallmark of the Spanish Enlightenment.⁵⁶ The prelate’s willingness to accommodate local expressions of

⁵¹ Chartier, “De Alejandria a Angelópolis,” 23-29.

⁵² Chartier, “De Alejandria a Angelópolis,” 23-29.

⁵³ *La Biblioteca Palafoxiana de Puebla* (Puebla: Junta de Mejoramiento Moral, Cívico y Material del Municipio de Puebla, 1989), 3-4.

⁵⁴ In addition to cedar, Pedro Guibovich Pérez identified the use of *ayacahuite* (Mexican white pine), *coloyote*, and other tropical woods in the making of the bookcase. See his well-crafted essay, “Library,” trans. Jason Dyck, in Evonne Levy and Kenneth Mills, eds., *Lexikon of the Hispanic Baroque: Transatlantic Exchange and Transformation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 198.

⁵⁵ *La Biblioteca Palafoxiana*, 5. The fault lines that separate each major artistic movement are not always clear. For an engaging and accessible view of the complexities of distinguishing between the various art and architectural forms that came to dominate colonial Mexico, see Michael Schreffler, *The Art of Allegiance: Visual Culture and Imperial Power in Baroque New Spain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007).

⁵⁶ For the ecclesiastical dimensions of these anti-baroque sensibilities, see Larkin, *The Very Nature of God*, *passim*, and for an examination of the anti-French attitudes in Spain and New Spain that contributed to the longevity of the Baroque alongside the Enlightenment’s broader embrace of order and functionality, see *La Biblioteca Palafoxiana*, 5-8.

the baroque—the massive cedar bookcase that he ordered built, for example, or leaving intact the seventeenth-century retablo of the Virgin of Trapani that Palafox had donated along with his books—recalls the French historian Serge Gruzinski’s observation: “Let us not hastily conclude that the Church was sharply breaking away from the worship of images...but in wanting to privilege public order and decency motifs, they [reforming bishops] drained the baroque *imaginaire*...the control of the Enlightenment bureaucracy would subsequently be substituted for the oft-eluded constraints of the baroque image....”⁵⁷



Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library.

In addition to the expropriation of Jesuit libraries, Fabián y Fuero also confiscated the Jesuit printing press and had it sent to the diocesan seminary. It is impossible to know, of course, if the irony of the confiscation was lost on the bishop. The Jesuits had been churning out anti-Palafox tracts just a few years earlier in an effort to stymie Charles III’s support of Palafox’s canonization. And their frenzied efforts proved successful, as the Tridentine prelate’s cause never advanced beyond the designation of ‘Servant of God.’ Fabián y Fuero removed the Jesuits’ printing press and placed it at the disposal of the very seminary colleges that their seventeenth-century nemesis had founded.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Serge Gruzinski, *Images at War: Mexico from Columbus to Blade Runner (1492-2019)* trans. Heather MacLean (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 213.

⁵⁸ Trabulse, “Prólogo,” 14. Trabulse notes that, after Fabián y Fuero’s confiscation of the Jesuit printing press, he sold it to the seminary colleges for 2500 pesos. And drawing even more comparison from the Palafox-Jesuit connection, the seminaries used the printing press in 1768 to publish a tract relating the city’s euphoric reaction to the news that Palafox’s cause for canonization was moving forward, although, as noted earlier, the cause would eventually stall in the Vatican bureaucracy due to Jesuit and anti-Spanish pressures. After lying dormant since 1777, Palafox’s cause was revived in 2003 under Pope John Paul II. His successor, Benedict XVI, recognized Palafox’s “heroic virtues,” which afforded him the title of Venerable in 2009. After a miracle was attributed to Palafox’s intercession, Benedict approved his beatification a year later. On June 5, 2011, Palafox was declared “Blessed” in a ceremony that took place in the Cathedral of the Assumption, Burgo de Osma, Soria, Spain, which served as Palafox’s last episcopal

Taken together, Fabián y Fuero's actions augmented the Biblioteca Palafoxiana's prestige in the eyes of his contemporaries. For example, one of colonial Puebla's leading men of letters, Mariano Fernández de Echeverría y Veytia (1718-1780), remarked that the library "remained so stocked and complete that there is no equal in this kingdom, and even in Spain there are few outside the Royal Libraries that can compete with it on the whole."⁵⁹ Such a favorable comparison reveals the immense pride of the city's favorite son, no doubt, but, as a staunch anti-Jesuit regalist, Fernández de Echeverría y Veytia had expurgated the Jesuit books and printed matter that became part of the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, thus assuring the new acquisitions neither contravened nor disparaged Bourbon efforts to project royal power.⁶⁰ Indeed, from his perspective, once the nefarious elements of each Jesuit tome had been scrubbed, the Biblioteca Palafoxiana was worthy of comparison to the peninsular libraries under Bourbon patronage. The only thing missing, it seemed, was for the bishop of Puebla, Fabián y Fuero, to manifest his episcopal authority in a set of rules and regulations that would align the Biblioteca Palafoxiana more systematically with the reformist agenda of Bourbon absolutism and his own episcopal office.

The *Reglamento de la Biblioteca* as an Exercise of Episcopal Power

Fabián y Fuero promulgated the *Reglamento* in 1773 from San José Chiapa, a remote highland village located some thirty miles northeast of downtown Puebla. It was the same village where Palafox sought refuge in 1647 after his dispute with the Jesuits erupted into conflict. On March 11, 1773, however, in a political display of episcopal collegiality, Palafox's eighteenth-century successor—an ecclesiastical exemplar of Bourbon Enlightenment—chose to issue his comprehensive regulations for the very library whose origins dated to Habsburg rule during the Age of Baroque from San José de Chiapa.⁶¹

assignment before he died in 1659. Part of his remains, though, were transferred to the Cathedral of Puebla. In the Catholic liturgical calendar, Palafox's feast day falls on October 1. For a nicely conceived historical assessment of the controversies surrounding the cause of canonization, see Gregorio Bartolomé Martínez, *Jaque mate al obispo virrey: siglo y medio de sátiras y libelos contra don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1991).

⁵⁹ Cited in Torre Villar, *Historia de la educación*, 128, and also in Efraín Castro Morales, *La Biblioteca Palafoxiana de Puebla* (Puebla: Editorial del Gobierno del Estado de Puebla, 1981), 7.

⁶⁰ Márquez Carrillo, *Política, iglesia y modernidad*, 171. Apparently, Fernández de Echeverría y Veytia conducted his expurgation exercise after the confiscated books made their way to the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, with Bishop Fabián y Fuero's approval. It is difficult to imagine a layman, even someone as well-known and respected as Fernández de Echeverría y Veytia, gaining access to the library with the express purpose of censoring books without the bishop's knowledge, if not his explicit authorization.

⁶¹ *Reglamento de la Biblioteca de los Colegios Seminarios, Estudios Generales de la Puebla de los Angeles dado por el Obispo Don Francisco Fabián y Fuero*, 11 March 1773, Papeles Varios, AVCAP, fs. 1-6v. The Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas, Austin, has a copy of these rules: "Copia de las ordenanzas para la librería," Genaro García Collection, Ms 212a, fs. 12-20v. The author thanks Dylan Joy, the Latin American Archivist there, for securing a digital image of the document for comparative purposes. In honor of his Habsburg predecessor, Fabián y Fuero built a sanctuary near the hacienda in San José Chiapa where Palafox had taken refuge and celebrated mass for over six months. On March 25, 1772, with the assistance

In the preamble, Fabián y Fuero heralded seminary education as “a spiritual and temporal good...one that was of great utility to the State,” particularly in light of Puebla’s growing population and the accompanying “just desires” to promote “better upbringing and instruction of the youth.”⁶² The bishop also stated that the seminary colleges were the only centers of learning in the diocese available to provide instruction, especially to the poor, “whose lack of books have frustrated their desire to progress.”⁶³ With the Jesuits removed from teaching, it fell to the diocesan system to provide instruction. In fact, the bishop recognized in the *Reglamento* that seminary education, in particular, was expensive; the cost was well worth it, however, considering that bishops “aspire...to develop [in these seminaries] the most worthy Ministers of the Church,” which, once again, was “of great utility to the State.”⁶⁴ Unlike Palafox’s exercise of power in the age of the Habsburg Baroque, when a rhetorical symbiosis characterized the union of Church and Crown, Fabián y Fuero wielded his crozier in the shadow of a Bourbon monarch deploying royal power at the institutional church’s expense. At first, it was the Jesuit order that bore the brunt of Bourbon attacks against the Church; royal power directed at broader clerical privilege and institutional wealth would come later.⁶⁵

In effect, the web of Church-State power relations that had been spun a century earlier under a decentralized Habsburg State had now given way to an increasingly absolutist Bourbon State that tended to view the Church as one of several competitors at the royal court. Fabián y Fuero employed the *Reglamento*, at least partly, to remind royal officials in both Mexico City and Madrid that the Church’s mission to prepare boys and young men for the priesthood remained essential to the success of the Bourbon project, notwithstanding the fact that a significant feature of that modernizing project was the erosion of Church authority. In addition to their sacramental and canonical duties, parish priests functioned as ‘cultural brokers’ who negotiated with civil and ecclesiastical authorities the many needs and demands of the public, despite Bourbon intentions “to redefine the clergy as a professional class of spiritual specialists with fewer judicial and administrative responsibilities and less independence than in Habsburg times.”⁶⁶

of the archbishop of Mexico City, Lorenzana, and the bishop of Yucatán, Fray Antonio Alcalde, O.P., Fabián y Fuero consecrated the sanctuary in the presence of numerous dignitaries and the faithful. For a brief description of the event, see the webpage maintained by the Archdiocese of Puebla:

<https://www.arquidiocesisdepuebla.mx/index.php/arquidiocesis/obispos-y-arzobispos/obispos/35-ecxmo-sr-don-francisco-fabian-y-fuero>.

⁶² *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 1.

⁶³ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 1v.

⁶⁴ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 1v.

⁶⁵ For an examination of the Bourbon attacks on ecclesiastical immunity, see Brading, *The First America*, 512, and Lynch, *Bourbon Spain*, 209, 272. The classic example of Bourbon hostility to Church wealth remains the promulgation of the *Consolidación de Vales Reales* in 1804, which confiscated the church’s liquid capital and deprived merchants, miners, and landowners in New Spain from using these church funds for their economic activities.

⁶⁶ Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 14.

Regardless of the unique historical contexts that fashioned each prelate's approach to the exercise of ecclesiastical office, an enduring episcopal collegiality surfaces in the *Reglamento*, as the Bourbon prelate fraternally acknowledged his Habsburg predecessor. "We have followed in this [renovating the space and adding books to the collection] the spirit of the incomparable founder [of the library], the Venerable[,] Most Illustrious and Excellent don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, whose tireless zeal, not content with [just] laying the foundations and completing the work of the aforesaid seminaries, he gave them the most expressive proof of his love in the donation that he made[,]in allowing the public to use all of his library."⁶⁷ Acclaimed bibliophile Alberto Manguel might interpret these lines differently, of course, perhaps as an example of the library "not [as] temples of learning...but temples to a benefactor, founder or provider."⁶⁸ The Bourbon prelate's institutional memory, however, recalled his predecessor's efforts to transform Catholic identity in ways that, although quite distinct from his own, demonstrated a robust assertion of ecclesiastical prerogative and the authority invested in episcopal office.

After the preamble established the bishop's chief objectives, the *Reglamento* addressed five major areas of concern. In the first—the organization of personnel and general maintenance—Fabián y Fuero designated two clerics "of learning, respect, and prudence" to serve as the librarians, preferably "those who had been raised in the same colleges," that is, graduates of the seminary who had experience with the collection.⁶⁹ Once appointed, these librarians had to name two assistants or porters "for the indispensable care of cleaning the library, and dusting the bookcases and books."⁷⁰ In another sign of the Bourbon preoccupation with *calidad* or social status, Fabián y Fuero prohibited both 'sanchos' and servants from filling these posts. Although similar in socio-economic status to the boys who were servants, *sanchos* were probably poor Spaniards (*los españoles pobres*) who, because of their whiteness, the bishop believed were "not made to sweep, dust, nor [do the] other things that are necessary" to a porter's position.⁷¹ Servants, on the other hand, simply had too many other tasks to complete each day and, therefore, would be unable to keep the library clean. The bishop even acknowledged that the servants aspired to exercise the many other ministries

⁶⁷ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 1v.

⁶⁸ Manguel, *Library at Night*, 40-41.

⁶⁹ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 2.

⁷⁰ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 2.

⁷¹ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 2. Of the definitions given for *sancho* in the *Diccionario de la lengua española*, the second one denotes: "para expresar que alguien da con otra persona semejante a él o de su ingenio." When applied to the *Reglamento*, context suggests that 'alguien da con otra persona semejante' refers to people of similar background, while 'ingenio' points to the skills and talents required for a particular task or job. As an elite Spanish prelate, Fabián y Fuero knew that *sanchos* and servants in New Spain came from similar social and economic backgrounds, and, therefore, both were technically available to assume the duties of porter. The Enlightenment's racialized milieu, however, had shaped the bishop's assumptions about race and social status, particularly in the way he saw each group's capabilities as naturally or biologically determined. Online access to the *Diccionario* is found at <http://www.dle.rae.es>.

available in the seminary system, but if they were allowed to do so, their primary duties would suffer.⁷²

After he addressed personnel matters, the bishop turned his attention to cleanliness. He was emphatic on this point: the preservation of books—in effect, the preservation of knowledge—was predicated upon the library’s cleanliness. Heat, humidity, dust, and moths had caused considerable damage to books throughout the Americas, he noted, especially those books that were consulted less frequently than others.⁷³ And much like Palafox had recommended in the previous century, his Bourbon successor ordered the use of “reams of cotton” as part of the conservation efforts to absorb any moisture. In addition to frequent dusting, the bishop ordered the porters to open the windows on the northside of the library, whereby the “air [entering the library] cleans [the books] and protects them from the moth.”⁷⁴

In a more detailed section of the regulations concerning cleanliness, Fabián y Fuero directed the librarians to make sure that the porters cleaned four to seven bookshelves, including the books that resided on those shelves, twice a week, preferably on Mondays and Saturdays between 7:00 and 9:00 AM. Upon finishing their task, the porters were to open the windows to air out the library while sweeping the entire library. Moreover, he prohibited the seminary leadership from organizing community-based cleaning projects: “Although in some communities there is the custom of each month, or of [every] two or three months, [whereby] the respective individuals come together to clean the books, this is not permitted...because [the seminaries here in Puebla] also consist of many children.”⁷⁵ The bishop added, “in addition to not achieving the goal of cleanliness and tidiness...[everything is] reduced to a game that ruins [the library’s] beautiful adornment, and that [community cleaning] destroys its books, which has happened a few times.” Instead, the librarians and porters should alternate shifts: a librarian would be paired with a porter for the morning shift, for example, followed by the second librarian supervising the maintenance work of the second porter. Neither porters nor servants were allowed in the library unsupervised.⁷⁶

⁷² *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 2. The historian Juan Pedro Viqueira Albán summarized it this way: “[The colonial Mexican elite] tried to create separate spaces for respectable people that could not be infiltrated by the common people...they tried to put an end to the worldly mingling of the different social classes.” See his *Propriety and Permissiveness in Bourbon Mexico*, trans. Sonya Lipsett-Rivera and Sergio Rivera Ayala (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999), 213.

⁷³ In his brief study of public libraries in colonial Mexico, José Luis Martínez reviewed the first catalogues developed for the Biblioteca Turriana in Mexico City. Within the pages of those catalogues, he found a set of rules in Latin for library patrons. Written more like pithy commands, the fifteen rules included directives such as, “don’t mark up the books; don’t fold the pages; don’t use ink; don’t lend to others; avoid rats, moths, mosquitoes; avoid water, fire, dirtiness; and once you have read the book, return it in the same condition as you received it.” The final directive offered a warning of sorts, which, freely translated, reads: “He who follows these rules, although he shall remain unknown, will become part of the Friends of the Library, while the patron who flouts these rules will be removed.” See his essay, “Las primeras bibliotecas públicas en Nueva España,” *Libros de México* 6 (1987): 29-32.

⁷⁴ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, fs. 2-2v.

⁷⁵ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, fs. 2v-3.

⁷⁶ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 3.

The second area of the *Reglamento* concerned access. Once again, the bishop emphasized the public dimensions of the Biblioteca Palafoxiana. “In order for the public to enjoy the utility that the foundation of [this] our library offers...the library [is to] be open in the morning from 9:00 until 12:00, and on Thursdays of the year even if they [fall on] feast days.”⁷⁷ Fabián y Fuero expected the librarians to meet the needs of the seminary and enlightened public despite the campus closure due to the feast day, employing such language as “useful recreation of the academy of fine arts” and “laudable and useful exercise.”⁷⁸ In the Age of Enlightenment, unlike its predecessor, the Age of Baroque, secular inquiry competed more openly with spiritual exercises and popular piety. It was, after all, a time when scholars sought to deemphasize religious explanations of natural phenomena and, instead, apply the methodology of their respective disciplines. Finally, once closing time arrived, the librarian or porter was to ring a bell alerting the patrons that it was time to place their books on the table, or, alternately, they could return the books directly to the librarian. Patrons, students, and professors were to “leave without delay [and] in silence.” Soon afterward, the librarians and porters were to reshelve the books in their proper place.

Fabián y Fuero also viewed public and scholarly access to the library through the prism of Mother Nature and the liturgical calendar. For example, he recognized that the days became longer in springtime and, therefore, the library would remain open until 6:00 PM, but “in the rest of the year from 3:00 until 5:00, [although] with regard to [it getting darker] sometime earlier [than 5:00 is allowed].”⁷⁹ But even a prelate who had embraced the fundamental tenets of the Enlightenment, Fabián y Fuero could still point to the communion of saints, with their respective feast days, as a marker of time, particularly when the liturgical calendar defined the academic year, notwithstanding a previous clause that made the library accessible even on feast days. For example, peninsular and Mexican-born Spaniards (*criollos*) celebrated the feast day of Saint Augustine on August 28 and, despite the festivities and merriment that lasted several days, the bishop could still envision patrons making use of the library.

He expected the librarians to attend to the needs of those patrons—professors and students alike—who visited the library, making the library accessible on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays from 9:00 AM until 12:00 PM. The other days were set aside “to dedicate themselves to the care of [the library]...[to] clean and remove the dust from all the books and bookshelves....”⁸⁰ Not indifferent to their workload, however, Fabián y Fuero considered it “reasonable to permit [the librarians] some days of vacation...from the first of October until the 18th of October, which the prelate grants them if they attest to the important business of having dusted and cleaned all the bookshelves and books in the month immediately preceding....”⁸¹

⁷⁷ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 3.

⁷⁸ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 3v.

⁷⁹ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 3v.

⁸⁰ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 3v.

⁸¹ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 3v.

The third area of the *Reglamento* reveals the bishop's understanding of classification and physical control of a collection. Each book and manuscript was to carry the identifying mark of the seminary, that is, the branding mark or *marca de fuego*.⁸² Similar to a hot branding iron that seared a rancher's identity on the hide of his livestock, the *marca de fuego* seared the individual or institutional owner's identity on the top edge (head), fore-edge, or lower edge (tail) of a book. In the private libraries of Renaissance Europe, where relatively fewer books graced the shelves, there was neither a need to mark books nor arrange them in any orderly fashion, since the user, primarily the owner, knew where to look and how to identify "each of his books by size and thickness, by color and texture of binding."⁸³ The growth of university, royal, and cathedral libraries in Europe, however, required a more systematic approach to establishing the physical control of a substantial book collection, as did the massive efforts undertaken by the religious orders to convert the Native peoples of Mexico to Christianity.

The use of the *marca de fuego* became standard practice by the mid-sixteenth century in New Spain, where both imported books and those of the local printing press had replaced incunabula as the principal feature of print culture. Religious orders, in particular, used the *marca de fuego* to stamp their unique sign on the books that lined the shelves in their growing libraries, although books in the possession of the diocesan clergy, as well as those in the hands of private individuals, also bore the charred marks of ownership.⁸⁴ In addition, Fabián y Fuero required another ownership label—an *inscripción* or inscription—be placed on folios 10, 20, and 40 of each book in the library.⁸⁵ The lack of detail beyond identifying the label as an inscription and where it should be placed suggests that the bishop was referring to a species of *ex libris* ("from the books [library] of," and, in Spanish, "*de entre los libros*"). While an *ex libris* could take the form of an ornate illustration placed inside the front cover of a book, other forms included smaller, less stylistic labeling that could be handwritten inside the front cover or directly on the pages of a book.

At the same time, the *Reglamento* stipulated that each book should have a printed card containing a unique location number so librarians and porters could determine where to find the book in the library. No two books were to share the same location number, of course, thus making it easier for the librarians and their assistants to keep better track of the collection, and, consequently, become more familiar with its holdings. Unlike a private library, for example, which allows for "a whimsical and highly personal classification," a public library "must follow an

⁸² For an explanation of the various marks of book ownership used in the early modern world, replete with illustrations, see the online essay by Lia González, "Marcas de propiedad en los libros: exlibris, superlibris, ex dono y marcas de fuego," at the *Bibliopos* website: <https://www.bibliopos.es/marcas-propiedad-los-libros-exlibris-superlibris-exdono-marcas-fuego/>.

⁸³ Henry Petroski, *The Book on the Bookshelf* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 119.

⁸⁴ For a superb resource that provides online access to the different *marcas de fuego* associated with the religious orders and other entities in colonial Puebla, visit the richly adorned website maintained by the Biblioteca José María Lafragua, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, and the Biblioteca Franciscana, Universidad de las Américas, both located in Puebla: <http://www.marcasdefuego.buap.mx:8180/xmLibris/projects/firebrand/>.

⁸⁵ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 4.

order whose code can be understood by every user and which is decided upon before the collection is set upon the shelves.”⁸⁶ The development of an index, therefore, was a conscious effort to make the library more accessible to the scholarly and general publics. Fabián y Fuego recognized, however, that an efficient classification system was not enough to safeguard each book: “In order that all books are in their appropriate places, the librarians also have to be zealous, they will have the key [to access the shelves] in their care [and should not leave the key] inside the doors [that provide access to] the bookshelves, nor entrust [the key] to any person.”⁸⁷ Furthermore, the librarians had to ensure that patrons could consult the various indexes to the collection, which were to be placed “on their respective tables.” Once a student or professor reviewed the index relevant to the broader subject heading of their topic—for example, Philosophy—and identified a particular work, the porter would retrieve the requested item. Once consulted, the patron would return the work to the porter who, in turn, was to put it back in its proper place on the bookshelf.⁸⁸

The fourth area that Fabián y Fuego addressed in his *Reglamento* dealt with proper etiquette and decorum. Proper attire was expected of everyone who entered the library; all patrons, moreover, were forbidden to cover their faces. And while in the library’s reading room, professors and their assistants had to wear either the traditional biretta (black cap for faculty) and buttoned cloak or their ceremonial robes, as a way to draw attention to the “splendor” of the seminary colleges and the library as an “object of the public...and of the scholarly and learned [professions].”⁸⁹ In addition to attire, the bishop prohibited small groups from gathering in the library to talk or debate, which could “occasion quarrels” and, therefore, cast “embarrassment” on the library as a place of study.⁹⁰

A fascinating dimension of this fourth area of concern is the bishop’s view of the intersection between daily social habits and the spiritual dimensions of material culture. In order to avoid causing a fire, for example, smoking was prohibited in the library, as was the use of candle-lit lamps. As a practical matter, his prohibition was routine and made sense in an age when an increasingly literate society gathered in public spaces to discuss politics, literature, and local social events over coffee, chocolate, spirits, and tobacco.⁹¹ But he added that it would be “very indecent” to have the smoke from cigars and candles contaminate the “room [where located] above [one finds the] altar,” whose images of the Virgin Mary and Saint Thomas Aquinas “one venerates and ought to venerate.”⁹² While Fabián y Fuego wanted to move the faithful away from the external practices of

⁸⁶ Manguel, *Library at Night*, 40-41.

⁸⁷ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 4.

⁸⁸ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 4.

⁸⁹ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 4v. For Brian Larkin, “Splendor was intended to trigger pious sentiments and thoughts among spectators, to alter the consciousness and elevate it toward the sacred.” See his *Very Nature of God*, 76.

⁹⁰ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 4v.

⁹¹ For more on consumption in public spaces, see Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

⁹² *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 4v-5.

Tridentine Catholicism, allowing sacred images to be covered with soot and dust showed little appreciation for the Enlightenment's emphasis on cleanliness and good hygiene. Filthy objects, moreover, could also distract students, professors, and patrons from fulfilling their immediate objectives (for example, studying for an exam, preparing for lecture, etc.), thus undermining efforts to use one's time efficiently.

The bishop added that it was already disconcerting to find books "noticeably" stained with cigar ash. If librarians found it difficult to "remedy these things," they were to "immediately inform the Prelate."⁹³ Finally, Fabián y Fuero reiterated the relationship between proper attire and the reverence due to religious imagery, but he now added the Bourbon preoccupation with *calidad*. Although professors and their assistants were allowed to wear birettas, nobody else, including students, could don hats, "because of the reverence owed to the sacred images located in the library, and at the same time [to show] respect, and good correspondence, which ought to be maintained between inferiors [that is, someone of lower social standing] and persons of dignity, and even between individuals of the same [social] station."⁹⁴

The fifth and final area of the *Reglamento* reflects not only Fabián y Fuero's views of the episcopal office but also the prescriptive manner in which he deployed his power to promote the vigilance and order so important to Bourbon absolutism. In order to prohibit the removal of books and manuscripts from the library, Fabián y Fuero secured a papal bull of excommunication that was to be displayed prominently for everyone to see.⁹⁵ Palafox had done the same when he donated his library in 1646. Excommunication was the ultimate censure that church officials could impose on transgressors. In effect, it removed the guilty party from full participation in the life of the Church, including the reception of the sacraments and the right to a Christian burial. A return to full communion with the Church was possible only when the person repented, and the penalty was lifted by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority. Unlike Palafox, however, Fabián y Fuero failed to specify in the *Reglamento* if the penalty was incurred *latae sententiae* (automatic excommunication) or *sententiae ferendae* (upon judicial review), although, at first glance, it is not too difficult to imagine the bishop's preference for the latter in light of his defense of episcopal prerogative in other contexts.⁹⁶ The immediate effect of the *latae sententiae*, however, seems more likely considering that Fabián y Fuero imposed the penalty of automatic

⁹³ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 5.

⁹⁴ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 5. Here, Fabián y Fuero combined the older Baroque emphasis on reverence owed to sacred images with the Enlightenment's preoccupation with, and maintenance of, social distinctions.

⁹⁵ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 5v.

⁹⁶ Palafox secured a papal brief in 1648 that gave him the right to raise a "reserved ecclesiastical censure," which was akin to *sententiae ferendae*. See Brescia, "Material and Cultural Dimensions," 219, 226. Much like Palafox had done in the seventeenth century, when he asserted ecclesiastical jurisdiction in his fight with the Jesuits over payment of the tithe and the exercise of sacerdotal faculties, Fabián y Fuero pushed back against Bourbon absolutism in several areas, including royal efforts to restrict ecclesiastical immunity and prohibit the possession of Jesuit printed matter.

excommunication for a wide-range of transgressions when he issued diocesan regulations.⁹⁷

The *Reglamento* concludes with the bishop ordering the librarians to acquire for the library the “papers, sermons, and other works” that are printed in the colony. He expressed concern that the diocese had neglected the practice of obtaining what the printing presses had been producing. In fact, the lack of regular acquisition and archiving of printed matter, according to Fabián y Fuero, had taken place “in a country in which nobody even knows the complete history of it, [and] to that [end] one of these works can convey much [information].”⁹⁸ Due to the individualized nature of printed matter—such as ordinances, edicts, sermons—the bishop directed the librarians to bound the printed sheets according to their subject matter, or what he called “a competent body of work.” He wanted the library to preserve “whatever documents they can find in America, be they printed matter or manuscripts, or in Indigenous languages, or of another mode [of writing] whatever it might be....”⁹⁹

The physical integrity of the library’s collection remained a worry for Fabián y Fuero. Once the librarians received notice of a missing book or document, they were expected to search for it diligently. Inaction would make it “more difficult...if not impossible to find it.” In light of his concern, he mandated that the rector of the seminary and the librarians set aside one day each month to search for missing items.¹⁰⁰ And returning to the topic of indexes, the bishop reiterated their importance for establishing the location of each book: “...with the best handwriting and with the best clarity, order, and expression, in the method that one sees in the most celebrated Libraries,” these indexes allow the librarian to

⁹⁷ Francisco Fabián y Fuero, *Colección de providencias diocesanas dadas por el ilustrísimo y excelentísimo señor Don Francisco Fabián y Fuero, obispo que fue de la Puebla de los Angeles y actual arzobispo de Valencia*, 2 vols. (Valencia: En la Imprenta de D. Benito Monfort, 1792-1793). For example, in an edict issued on November 13, 1767, the bishop reacted to the apparent loss or theft of several important papers and instruments in the cathedral’s accounting office by raising the *latae sententiae* penalty on anyone who removed books, papers, or instruments (specifically *cédulas*) from there. See Edicto XLV, in *Colección de providencias diocesanas*, vol. 1, 280-283.

⁹⁸ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 5v. Exiled Jesuits such as Francisco Clavijero, and foreign scholars like Alexander von Humboldt, would write some of the first histories of Mexico illustrative of the Enlightenment ethos, therefore cultivating the seeds of creole patriotism and eventual independence from Spain.

⁹⁹ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 5v. Despite the bishop’s call for the preservation of printed matter in Indigenous languages, he had forbidden parish priests from speaking in any language other than Castilian when they interacted with Native peoples, which, at first glance, simply reflected the pastoral instructions issued by the Fourth Mexican Provincial Council (1771). Fabián y Fuero took it a step further, however, and insisted that Native children be taught Spanish within a year, and that within four years these same Native children should be able to recite the fundamentals of Christian doctrine in Spanish. See Brading, *The First America*, 497. So, why call for the inclusion of matter printed or written in Indigenous languages when his own clergy would not be using those languages? Such texts were incorporated as part of the bishop’s efforts to centralize and impose order on the collection. Moreover, by adding even more printed matter to the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, Fabián y Fuero was, in effect, gilding Puebla’s bibliographic lily and, by extension, his own.

¹⁰⁰ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 5v-6.

establish a book's whereabouts "with ease."¹⁰¹ The seminary rector was to provide the bishop with a monthly account of the library's collection. Finally, Fabián y Fuego directed the librarians to maintain an inventory not only of the collection but also of its "adornment," that is, the bookshelves, tables, and inkwells. In effect, each piece constituted a physical element that made the library a center of learning in Puebla.

The bishop ordered the seminary rector and the librarians to obey the *Reglamento*, but he also included "the rest of the people of whatever status, condition, and quality" who might walk through its doors. He wanted to be made aware of issues that could not be "remedied on their own" through compliance with his regulations.¹⁰² Finally, in addition to the rector and the two librarians possessing an "authentic copy" of the *Reglamento*, Fabián y Fuego ordered another copy to be posted "in public in the same library near its entrance by the interior part [of the building], [with] the original remaining in its archive, and [for] equal reason in our secretariat of government."¹⁰³ And just like that, Spain's empire of paper grew by an inch.

Conclusion

The origins of the Biblioteca Palafoxiana resided in the seventeenth-century exercise of power fashioned by Habsburg understandings of "*las dos majestades*," whereby Bishop Palafox donated his own private library to Puebla in an effort to activate Tridentine reforms related to the formation of young boys and men to the priesthood, which he identified as a public good in the service of the Spanish crown. In effect, he created a public library that became a site of colonial authority in the colony's second largest city and diocese, a place where imposing baroque edifices, religious institutions, and clerics and nuns transformed Puebla into an ecclesiastical city of sorts. The Spanish crown relied, in part, on the clergy to promote the Habsburg ideals of justice and the common good within the broader religious framework of Spanish Catholicism. In his capacity as bishop of Puebla, Palafox imbued these Habsburg ideals with Tridentine understandings of Catholic identity, which required a competent, well-trained clergy to administer the sacraments, preach the Good News, and uphold the vertical rendering of royal and ecclesiastical authority that had defined the Habsburg dynasty. Palafox's public library, therefore, contained books, texts, and devotionals that—echoing Ann Laura Stoler—"revealed and reproduced" the power of the Habsburg state, although, ultimately, access to the collection was given mainly to seminarians and clerics who, in Palafox's world, came from the public and remained part of the public sphere once ordained to the clerical state. In that sense, the Biblioteca Palafoxiana also "concealed" the power of the State from most of the city's residents, since the contents of its collection were limited to a particular sector of society, albeit a very public sector.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 6.

¹⁰² *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 6.

¹⁰³ *Reglamento*, AVCAP, f. 6v.

¹⁰⁴ Stoler, "Colonial Archives," 97.

The transition to Bourbon rule in the early eighteenth century shows that the new dynasty “resorted” to libraries as a “repertoire” of colonial power that was exercised to promote an absolutist State aligned with Enlightenment principles.¹⁰⁵ Bourbon monarchs appointed a number of reform-minded prelates to Mexican sees as a way to advance the broader framework of royal absolutism and administrative efficiency. Bishop Fabián y Fuero moved quickly to expand his own ecclesiastical jurisdiction after Charles III expelled the Jesuits from all Spanish territories in 1767. In addition to donating his books to the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, the Bourbon prelate substantially increased the collection by confiscating Jesuit libraries and the order’s printing press. He also issued rules and regulations—the *Reglamento* of 1773—that, as an exercise of episcopal power, sought to identify and direct appropriate behavior, maintain social distinctions, and promote the best indexing practices, preservation techniques, and personnel policies of his time. In that vein, Fabián y Fuero represented the centrifugal forces that Maria Pia Donato discussed for archives, that is, local movements of institutional power that shaped repositories of knowledge in order to serve the needs of local circumstances, while the Bourbon court in Madrid acted as the centripetal force drawing obedience from a great distance.¹⁰⁶

Fabián y Fuero resisted the royal impulse to denigrate all things Jesuit, for example, by maintaining the Jesuit books and treatises on moral theology and transferring those to the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, thus augmenting simultaneously the quantity and quality of its collection, Puebla’s reputation as a center of learning, and his own episcopal legacy. It took a fervent anti-Jesuit, pro-Bourbon absolutist layman, Fernández de Echeverría y Veytia, to review and censor the acquisition. And despite the bishop’s religious sensibilities that privileged quieter, less ostentatious displays of faith and spirituality, at least in the case of the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, he modified the reformist predilection for Enlightenment aesthetic principles and encouraged local expressions of the Baroque in the construction and adornment of the massive bookcase carved from a variety of Mexican woods. Seminarians and the clergy who taught them deserved a well-equipped, orderly, and clean library, whose convenient location and exquisite setting inspired academic study and priestly formation.

Much like his seventeenth-century Habsburg predecessor, Fabián y Fuero viewed the clergy as arbiters of the intersection of the sacred and profane. In order to socialize, educate, and train these men to fulfill the responsibilities conferred upon them at ordination, the Biblioteca Palafoxiana became a site of State power that nurtured a particular dimension of ecclesiastical authority, that is, the power to accumulate, locate, classify, and deploy the myriad components of knowledge in ways that served *‘las dos majestades’* without undermining the specifically local contexts from which the bishops operated. The royal court in Madrid had a vast empire to govern, for sure, and the city and diocese of Puebla had their parts to play, so in order to bridge the gulf between their local circumstances and the broader concerns of empire, both bishops exercised power to safeguard the

¹⁰⁵ Donato, “Archives, Record Keeping,” 314.

¹⁰⁶ Donato, “Archives, Record Keeping,” 314.

integrity of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Each did so, however, under a different state of affairs.

Palafox wielded his Baroque crozier in a Habsburg world besieged by revolts and insurrections, with global rivals such as France and England reducing Spain's imprint across Europe. He sought to cultivate a new Tridentine identity for his colonial flock that would naturalize a Habsburg rendering of authority that had lost much of its luster. The library allowed the bishop to initiate the reform of priestly formation and training; an educated clergy was necessary if Palafox was to restore the splendor of the Habsburg Baroque. His sudden recall to Spain in 1649 ended his exercise of episcopal office in the service of such efforts. By that time, Philip IV and his advisers became quite concerned that Palafox's conflict with the Jesuits over episcopal jurisdiction had cleaved Puebla *and* New Spain into two hostile camps. Although the king sided with Palafox in the dispute, that is, the Jesuits were subject to the bishop's authority, he also refused to countenance the use of violence to which each side's supporters had resorted. In effect, Philip IV imposed a respite on the colony in order to reduce tensions and avoid further embarrassment. Palafox returned to Spain with a Pyrrhic victory, while the Jesuits stayed put and faced periodic resistance from other bishops throughout the colony during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. But ultimately such episcopal pushback was negligible compared to what the Jesuits endured when the Bourbons assumed the Spanish throne and, working through a multilayered array of reformist bureaucrats and advisers, began to deploy its power under the umbrella of 'enlightened absolutism.'

Fabián y Fuero donned his miter, accordingly, during a resurgence of royal authority in an age that privileged rational discourse and social order within the context of religious austerity.¹⁰⁷ He worked to ensure that the Biblioteca Palafoxiana could advance his reformist agenda and expand the limits of his ecclesiastical authority, but he operated in the shadow of an assertive monarch. '*Las dos majestades*' had come to mean something different for the Bourbon dynasty: a robust expansion and projection of power that reduced the Church to one of several competitors succoring favor at the royal court. Habsburg understandings of the symbiotic relationship had given way to a Bourbon restructuring that "found little value in the religious orders, asceticism, elaborate liturgy, and popular devotion which had been encouraged by [the] Tridentine Catholicism" of the Habsburgs.¹⁰⁸ The Bourbons retained episcopal jurisdiction and the diocesan clergy, of course, and they supported religious reforms at home and abroad but such royal backing was done in the service of nascent modernization. In the words of the historian Brian Larkin: "The attempt to reform religious culture was a necessary corollary to the Bourbon effort to stimulate economic activity."¹⁰⁹ Yet, as we have seen, Fabián y Fuero still managed to

¹⁰⁷ Broadly speaking, both Habsburg and Bourbon monarchs embraced social order and hierarchy, so the transition between the two dynasties displayed plenty of continuity in terms of advancing political and social ideals. See the now classic essay by Michael C. Scardaville, "(Habsburg) Law and (Bourbon) Order: State Authority, Popular Unrest, and the Criminal Justice System in Bourbon Mexico City," *The Americas* 50, no. 4 (1994): 501-525.

¹⁰⁸ Brading, "Tridentine Catholicism," 5.

¹⁰⁹ Larkin, "The Splendor of Worship," 408.

exercise some dimensions of episcopal power on his own terms, at least when he wore the miter in Puebla.

Both men remained ardent defenders of the episcopate. Little wonder, then, from a purely institutional perspective, that the portraits of Palafox and Fabián y Fuero that hang in the Cathedral of Puebla's *sala capitular* (chapter house) contain similar inscriptions: Palafox was a "tireless, most zealous defender of pastoral authority...for which he was persecuted," while his eighteenth-century successor was a "hard worker, very observant of Church norms."¹¹⁰ In a bit of irony, though, Fabián y Fuero's inscription also suggests that he was "*opuesto a las dádivas*," or opposed to charitable alms, gifts, or handouts. Surely the prelate's embrace of a simpler, inward piety discouraged overt displays of gift-giving that clamored for the crowd's attention, but, as we have seen, his routine exercise of power transformed the Biblioteca Palafoxiana into an undeniable source of episcopal prerogative and cultural prestige. Even Campomanes, a firm adherent of the Bourbon state's supremacy over the Church, might have marveled at Fabián y Fuero's ability to harness the library's local prominence in the service of the larger Bourbon project had he included non-peninsular libraries in his reply to the French request for information on Spain's repositories. And that undeniable source of episcopal prerogative and prestige noted earlier had its origins in Palafox's exercise of authority a century earlier when he founded the library as a public space where priestly formation took place. An essential feature of Spanish colonialism under the Bourbons, therefore, was the continuity of episcopal collegiality, whereby bishops such as Fabián y Fuero drew on the cultural authority of their predecessors to effect the necessary reforms in their dioceses despite the steady erosion of the Church's jurisdiction at the hands of '*la única magestad*,' the Crown. Even so, at the end of the day, much of the same happened in Habsburg times, for it was the royal court in Madrid that determined how far and wide a prelate could wield his crozier.

¹¹⁰ Justino Cortés, ed., *Antología conmemorativa: 450 aniversario de la erección de la Arquidiócesis de Puebla* (Puebla: Impresos ELITE, 1977), 46, 51. Today, researchers walk past both portraits just before they enter the Cathedral archive.