

Louisiana's fixed regiment flag. Archivo de Indias. Spain.

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# HISPANITY

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## INTRODUCTION: CIVILIZATION AND EMPIRE

“Civilization” can be defined as the action by which individuals are enabled and skilled to harmoniously coexist within a human group by spontaneously living upon intellectual, material and cultural common principles and beliefs. Its forge is very slow, and is founded upon values concerning the human being, “the be and the must be” within a specific environment. The survival of a civilization relies upon the stable relationship of those members who live according to its foundations. Social structures, beaucocratic organization and government arise.

Therefore, many different human groups (Islamic, Aztec, Japanese, Christian...) occasionally enemies, may all well be considered

civilizations, according to the above referred conceptual approach. The key element is whether the group is viable in the long term.

Further on, different and distant civilizations can be gathered around common new values and a superior administrative organisation (hierarchical, political, military and legislative) that balances, protects and executes both former and newly incorporated principles. An Empire emerges. Even though weapons are normally (but not always) relevant in first stages of conquest and integration, they cannot alone support empires in the long term: Empires fall as soon as their members abandon their common shaping values. From the coexistence and stable exchanges among gathered civilizations, a new one may arise, compatibilizing pre-imperial civilizing elements with the new common ones. Welcome to Hispanity.

## HISPANITY: CONCEPT AND EMPIRE

Despite the term Hispanidad (Hispanity) enjoys no more than 100 years of use, it boasted a rapid wide diffusion from the very beginning: writers, philosophers, historians, politicians and lawyers with different ideologies (Menéndez Pelayo, the Dominican González Arinteo, Ramiro de Maeztu, Manuel García Morente, Unamuno, Rubén Darío, Juan Valera, etc.) contributed to it. Its “discovery” is attributed to the Biscayan Jesuit Zacarias de Vizcarra, which came to happen after his 25-year stay in Argentina. According to him, he did not invent the term because it existed already, as it glimpsed a way of understanding life, of being, of spirit, of artistic manifestations, etc ... In this line the Granadinian Federico García

Lorca asserted: Spaniard who has not been to America, does not know what Spain is. Rafael Altamira, professor in seven south American universities, highlighted feelings and principles, he qualified as “hispanic modality”. They are just a few examples of intellectual individuals, who would have concluded the same if they had been in the Philippines in the first years of the 20th century. Today, Hispanity is the spiritual and cultural expression of what was a civilizing empire, which on four continents led a Hispanic minority. In our opinion, its seven main features were:

a) **High level of stability:** it was neither the most extensive —the Russian was the largest— nor the most populous (the British —which was not an empire stricto sensu but a non-integrating colonial power, surpassed 20% of the world population), nor the most lasting (Roman or Chinese lasted longer). But simultaneously accumulated high records in all magnitudes: its extension reached a maximum of about 25 million km<sup>2</sup>, its population reached around 13% of the world and lasted 400 years.

b) **Cooperation of the vast majority of integrated civilizations and their members:** up to the end of the 18th century, peninsular emigration to América ranged between 150,000 and 300,000 individuals, including estimates of clandestine emigration. According to the most catastrophic sources, the indigenous population was reduced to about 12 million in the 16th century. It is worth recalling the words of Cardinal Richelieu: So true is that the Spaniards aspire to rule the world, as only their small number prevents it. According to Humboldt the American population amounted to about 15 million at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when in Spain there were about 11. These figures and assertions display a permanent population imbalance that would have produced in 1812 that the political center of the Hispanity had moved both to the Viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru, due to the constitutional recognition of the right to vote to Indians and half-blood, in the Constitution of Cadiz.

The Creole Neogranadinean Juan de Acuña, Marquis of Casa Fuerte, was Viceroy of New Spain. Mexico had 8 Philippine governors. During the Napoleonic invasion, the third Junta de Regencia (Regency Board) appointed a Neogranadinean as its President: Joaquín Mosquera y Figueroa, the highest authority of the Monarchy to replace the captive King, Ferdinand VII. He signed and sanctioned the Constitution of 1812. And many other examples that were appointed for the highest positions as War Advisors, Royal Treasurers, Captains General, etc... From 1750 on, in the Cabildo (Townhall) of Santa Fe de Bogotá (today Colombia) there was a Creole majority, and in 1789 there was no Spanish-European. The Crown granted more than 400 titles of nobility in America, mainly in Peru, Mexico and Cuba, each territory surpassing 100 ones. Due to demography and protagonists both of political events and conventional daily life, the integration was necessary and in fact happened.

c) **Balanced economic and administrative structure** of Viceroyalties, Audiencias, Captaincies General, and Cabildos (Townhalls) **covering local and imperial needs:**

The administrative and justice administration was replicated from the Mediterranean to the Philippines.

Hispanic silver currency “real de 8”, called Spanish dollar, was the strongest one in the world until the beginning of 19th century, as well as the main business currency from China to Europe. In the United States, it boast legal use until 1857. During the US War of Independence, the Congress issued promissory notes backed up by the Spanish dollar, to dilute the high risk the newly born one bore. As a result of those backed up promissory notes, today US dollar’s symbol preserves the two columns of Hercules, which stem from the national shield of Spain. There were autonomous Mint Houses in New Spain, Rio de la Plata and Peru, the first one founded in Potosí by Felipe II in 1572, while the last one by Felipe V in the 18th century. Contrariwise today, the monopoly of the central banks on currency issuance is total.

The tax system was similar throughout the whole empire: the alcabala —from 2% to 6%—, the almojarifazgo —customs tax, between 2.5% and 6%—, the ecclesiastical tithe —10% on agricultural and livestock farms—, and the Quinto real —20% only on precious metals—. The rest of the imperial wealth remained where it was generated. Only today’s VAT is 21% of the transaction value.

The imperial urban system was firstly defined in 1573 by Felipe II with the Ordenanzas de Poblaciones, a genuine first Treaty of Urbanism. General requirements for settlements and urban structure were passed, even for those Indian ones, which maintained both an Indian mayor and main Indian life style, ensuring the continuity of native population within the overall imperial design. In 1630 there were some 330 cities in all America, some of them reaching striking monumentality, in some cases superior to many European cities, which was not only self-evident in the past, but in some cases still obvious today. Such was the case of Mexico city, Veracruz, La Habana, Lima, Quito or Buenos Aires, among others.

The defense system worked as a whole to preserve the imperial territory, which due to its large size was very difficult to maintain. The role of La Habana shipyard was crucial for the defense of the Caribbean, and complementary to those in Spain (4), continental New Spain (2) and some minor ones in the rest of empire. In la Habana, 200 ships were built in 97 years of the 18th century. Some vessels were very well known for its tonnage and firepower such as the Santísima Trinidad or San Hermenegildo, both endowed with the most powerful artillery of their times.

d) **The Crown embodies the foundational principles of the empire,** resulting from the Queen Isabel I’s last will in 1504. The main principles were:

1. *Double limit to royal power:* From above, the Catholic Religion to honor God, His Holy Faith and the

commandments of the Holy Roman Church. From below, the political treaty: the *fueros* (local treaties) and freedoms... good customs practiced by the Kings, present and past ones.

2. *Preservation of the supreme jurisdiction and justice under Royal Authority*, which ensured a principle of public audience and litigants' contradiction before the Crown, against abuses of public authorities. Such power is inalterable and imprescriptible, and hence could not be alienated or removed from the Royal Crown.

3. *Diligent government and treatment to the Indians*, so that they do not receive any grievance in their persons or goods, they are well and fairly treated, and if any grievances were provoked, they be duly compensated. The prohibition of granting public and ecclesiastical offices to foreigners should not apply to the Indians.

In spite of the individual abuses, after only ten years from the Catholic Queen's last will, a codification process was begun to give effect to the referred universal principles that the Crown was committed to respect and to implement: *Leyes of Burgos* (1512) and *Valladolid* (1513), *Ordenanzas of Granada* (1526), *New Laws of the Indies* (1542), *Ordenanzas de Poblaciones* (1573), *Ordenanzas of Alfaro* (1612). The *Compilation of the Laws of the Kingdoms of the Indies* (1680) is the best document to know the political, religious, social and economic principles that inspired the government of the Spanish monarchy. Some mandates regarding Indians were: daily minimum diet not included in the salary for their work, prohibition of punishment to Indians by their direct bosses who should go to a higher justice instance, work for pregnant women and children under 14 were forbidden, maximum working hours/day and compulsory rest, Spaniards had to build accommodation for the Indians, punishment against Spaniards who provoked turmoil against the aborigines, the presence of two clergymen in the conquering

forces to audit good treatment of the prisoners, prohibition of slavery (even in case of war), etc...

Due to these laws and/or their principles, such an important person as C. Columbus was taken prisoner to Spain to be tried in 1500... only 8 years after Spain reached America. The New Laws of 1542 and those of Alfaro of 1612 provoked revolts and protests among the peninsular settlers due to the excessive protection awarded to the Indians. It is also noteworthy the *Juicio de Residencia* —a kind of accountability— to which all Crown officials, including Viceroys, were subjected at the end of their governing period.

e) Even though armed conflicts happened mainly in the beginning, considering that over the first 100 years less than 59,000 peninsulares emigrated to America, **it was difficult to carry out a 20 million Indian extermination:**

Thanks to the evangelizing commitment of the Crown, it was mandatory to give chances to peaceful integration. The method was known as "*Requerimiento*": Similar to the Roman empire but with higher humanitarian implications, it consisted on several prior offers of peaceful integration, supervised by religious representatives. Translators were needed indeed and sometimes there were not available, what obviously caused problems and limited the efficiency of the *Requerimiento*.

Despite weapons having been initially and selectively used to conquer, the Hispanic integration of violence survivors was legally complete, unlike Rome. In many cases the spearhead of the empire were small redoubts occupied by friars who were literally massacred by Indian tribes, while trying to evangelize. The army was often late for them. This motivated the reorganization of the border defense lines against the apachery in the north of today's Mexico during the reign of Carlos III. In the conquest and civilization of California the protagonism of Franciscans was critical.

The main cause of death were diseases that suffered both Spanish and indigenous. Smallpox on one side and coccoliztli virus on the other, among other diseases, are examples of universal health ignorance at that time. As soon as science allowed, the remedies were put in place: mass vaccination, as we shall see later.

f) An **extensive network for cultural and scientific education** was

created: The first university in the New World was that of St. Thomas in the city of Santo Domingo (today Dominican Republic), created by the bull *In Apostolatus Culmine* issued on October 28, 1538 by the Pope Paul III, raising to that category the educational institution that the Dominicans runned since 1518. The University of Alcalá de Henares (Spain) was its model. The last one was founded in Merida, Venezuela, in 1810. 25 universities were fully operational until the 19th century when the independence process began. Today six survive, although with changed names. The University of Mexico was created by royal certificate of Carlos V, on September 21 1551. Its courses were inaugurated in January 1553 under the Viceroy don Luis de Velasco. Years later, it was known as Royal and Pontifical University of Mexico. In 1579 the first autopsy was performed on a corpse, one year earlier than the first one made in Europe, by doctor Felix Platter in Basel (Switzerland).

From the first quarter of the 16th century, almost 20 Schools were founded, where cultural teachings (both European and native), industrial, medical, legal, humanities, etc. were taught. The first school for orphans was incorporated in 1556. On the Iberian peninsula six universities were founded over the same period: Seville, Granada, Zaragoza, Oviedo, Valencia and Santiago de Compostela.

A well-known historical figure is the "prince of writers of the new world", the Incan Garcilaso de la Vega, son and grandson of the Inca royal family. His life had very similar elements to Lope de Vega's or

Cervantes'. Already in the second half of the 16th century there were hundreds of perfectly educated Indians, with university degrees, who even communicated directly with the King.

The first printing press in America was established in Mexico City around 1537, the last was founded in 1820 in Panamá. Until 1575, books were published in 12 indigenous languages. With these translations and the studies carried out by monks, priests and other religious representatives native languages were enriched with grammar, dictionary and literature. This assured their knowledge and/or use until today, as well as preserved many data of pre-Columbian civilizations: Quechua, Nahuatl, Guaraní, Tarasco, Aymara, Mapuche, Aztec, Mayan, Otomí, Tepeguana, Lacandonese, Tzendal, Zapotec, Mixtec, etc. ...

Overseeing previous scientific expeditions, three stand out among those carried out under Hispanic patronage in the century of Enlightenment:

Firstly, the one headed by Alejandro Malaspina (1789), who traveled along America to Alaska, the Philippines, Marianas, New Zealand and Australia. After five years, he researched and gathered massive scientific knowledge on natural history, cartography, ethnography, astronomy, hydrography, medicine, political, economic and social aspects of these territories. Valuable backlog of information is still useful today for researchers.

Secondly, the one headed by the Prussian Alexander von Humboldt (1799-1804) under the protection of Carlos IV of Spain, covered most of Hispanic America. His work, summoned in 30 volumes titled "Travel to the equinoctial regions of the New Continent", dealt with a great variety of matters, highlighting the vulcanology and the earth's crust. The most famous stream of the Pacific was later named to honour this Prussian scientist.

Thirdly, also supported by Carlos IV of Spain, was the expedition headed by the doctor from Alicante, Francisco Javier Balmis (1803-1814). He brought the first smallpox vaccine to the Canaries, America, the Philippines, the Chinese region of Canton and the English island of St. Helena, among others. It was the first humanitarian mission of preventive medicine in history. The discoverer of the vaccine, Edward Jenner, wrote: In the annals of history, I cannot imagine that a nobler and more extensive example of philanthropy would be provided.

**g) The Hispanic Empire was shaped upon Catholic principles and contemporary Law:** Let us return to Isabel la Católica's last will:

"... our main intention was ... to send to the said Islands and territories, Prelates and Religious ... to instruct their inhabitants in the Catholic Faith". In such text, the Queen highlights the reason why Pope Alexander VI granted her and her husband rights over the new territories and the obligation of the Crown to enforce their descendants to take care of persons and

their properties. The kings would be accountable to God, which also the Queen's will highlights.

The great principle of Hispanity is having recognized in conquered individuals their condition of human beings, therefore recognized as sons of God and consequently enjoying a worth protecting dignity. This dignity empowered every Indian with both legal entitlements and means to confront the most powerful Empire of that time, as creditors of personal and property rights that should be diligently protected. In this sense, the Crown attributed to the religious orders a crucial role as a counterweight to civil and military power, and a tool for evangelization. The Empire, by its technological and military superiority, had capacity to have razed the entire population. But it was not the case. Rather on the contrary, as it can be seen today, just going for a walk on the streets of every Hispanic country.

The 16th century witnessed two unprecedented events in universal history: The paralysis of the Conquest and the birth of international law. Carlos I stopped the advances of conquistadores in the New World between 1550 and 1556 to reconsider the entitlement of the Crown on the new territories, what implied questioning the secular Roman law of conquest and the canonical rights granted by the Pope. Within this scenario, and headed by the Dominican Francisco de Vitoria, the School of Salamanca comprising philosophers, jurists, theologians, humanists, economists, etc., witnessed lively discussions, analysis, wrote reports and conclusions, which all were seed of modern international law and the first proper legislation on the Indies.

In order to dipen in the aftermath of such work, it is worth comparing two different mentalities, each one preminent in two different centuries: On one side, the positive-voluntaristic natural law of french Enlightenment and Absolutism (18th century) established that the free will of the legislator was enough to pass laws. In contrast, on the other side, the natural law of Vitoria and his School of Salamanca (16th century) was based on the human being and its dignity as an intelligent free person, rooted in being created as image and likeness of God.

From this position, universal rights were born as applicable to every individual and stronger than any government's decision. Hispanic law anticipated almost 400 years the United Nations and the Court of the Hague. In the words of the Mexican indigenist Miguel León Portilla: "Spain had what no other European power did, censors of its works". Therefore, as the School of Salamanca maintained, the domination of a country over another one should only be used to improve the latter far from damaging it, promoting all spiritual and material manifestations.

Even so, the empire was slow in granting similar treatment to black individuals. However, although they suffered slavery, black population was treated under much more human standards than those provided by English, Dutch or French. As a matter of fact, Jamaican slaves fled to Central America risking their lives. It is also worth recalling the Mose fort in Florida, refuge for

black slaves fleeing from the English colonies of North America: mainly Georgia and the two Carolinas. This Spanish stronghold defended itself with multicultural troops (including indians) several times against English attacks, as Britain tried to recover their slaves, whom Spain had already granted freedom. Moreover, there were cases of free blacks who enjoyed military or religious careers reaching mid-level positions.

The Constitution of Cadiz (nicknamed “La Pepa”) was the swan’s song of this joint integration called Hispanity: every individual was considered equal holder of the same National Sovereignty, therefore citizen. Maybe, “La Pepa” could have been the germ of the Hispanic United States. In 1813 relatively free elections were held across large areas of Spain, America and Asia, especially those that remained under the control of the Crown. Finally, such paramount project did not bear fruit, as Hispanity lost two wars:

1. The civil turmoils provoked by the political-commercial greed inoculated in the leading Creoles by the traditional enemies of Spain (while fighting against Bonaparte invasion), for the indians paid in lives and properties a very high price. Queen Isabel I last will heritage blew up in pieces.

As a consequence of this, the term “Latin America” was fructified, which served powerful Creoles and European nations traditionally adversaries to Spain, as a further twist in the elimination of the collective consciousness of any Hispanic glance.

During the second half of the 19th century, the court of Napoleon III drew imperial plans for Mexico and part of South America. At that time, France aspired to be the first power in continental Europe and meant to fish in troubled waters elsewhere. Using the prefix “latin”, France found a way to link with Hispanic America through latin roots and Catholic religion, opposing United States and Canada, two Anglo-Saxon and mainly Protestant countries. The French cultural imprint is clearly predominant in the northeastern Canadian territory

of Quebec, but extremely scarce in the rest of America. However, Canada is not considered “Latinamerica”, why should central and south America be?

Contrariwise, both Hispanic America and Ibero America accurately grasp the secular links between Spain and Portugal with the largest extension of the American World and the Phillipines. The first one uses the political and cultural prefix of the Roman province Hispania (hence including Portugal and Spain), while the other one uses the Greek geographical prefix, Iberia (equally including both nations as well). As quoted by Wikipedia, the concept of a culturally “Latin” America as opposed to the “Anglo-Saxon” America was introduced by the French politician and economist Michel Chevalier in a book he published in 1836, after traveling through the United States, Mexico and Cuba. Hispanic Americans began to use the Latin prefix in the same sense in the early 1850s, preferring it to the secular “Hispanic”, because of the domination significance that the latter was meant to have by running creoles of that time.

Anyhow, “Latinos” (inhabitants from the Italian region of Lazio) did not discover or civilize the New World. Spain suffered a new clash from France to minimize its prestige and its enormous civilizing work, trying to appropriate part of the merit with the invention of the word “Latin America”, which rooted, helped by the nationalisms of the time, which shedded much blood during more than a century, specially on the aborigenes which supposedly protected.

Today it is more than evident that Spain never had colonies: It is meaningful the racial richness in old Hispanic nations, as opposed to the practically nonexistence of native population in the old British colonies, current United States and Canada. Or the striking monumental wealth in Hispanic America, with almost a hundred monuments declared World Heritage by Unesco, of which a overwhelming part date both from the Hispanic period and pre-Hispanic one.

2. The second war lost by Hispanity has been the defamatory

propaganda against Spain which, spread throught Europe, began even before Columbus set sail for America. As John Elliott has pointed out, “perceptions are more influential than facts”. We talk about the Black Legend, a story-fiction parallel to reality. But about it, a new enlightening masterpiece has emerged: the extraordinary work of Elvira Roca (Imperiofobia y Leyenda Negra, Ed Siruela 2016), which will probably bring about a revolutionary and complete revision of the History of Humanity and of course the role of Spain in it.

Finally, we would like to recall Mr. Erasmus Darwin’s (1731-1802) description on the Hispanic Empire. He was a scientist, inventor, poet, doctor, natural philosopher, physiologist, slave trade abolitionist... and grandfather to Charles Darwin. His intelectual capacities were so widely acknowleged as to be invited to become physician to the King George III, what Mr. E. Darwin refused. His description very well summarizes the evidences and ideas, this article encompasses:

In my travels through the boundless Spanish empire I have been amazed at how the Spaniards treat the Indians, just like others, even forming half-blood families and creating hospitals and universities for them. I have met indigenou mayors and soldiers, even bishops, which results in the social peace, well-being and general happiness that we already wanted for us in the territories that with so much effort, we are taking from them.

It seems that the London fogs cloud our hearts and minds, while the clarity of sunny Spain makes us see and hear God better. Your Lordships should consider the policy of depopulation and extermination since Spanish faith and intelligence are clearly building, not like us an empire of death, but a civilized society that finally will eventually be imposed as by divine mandate.

Spain is the wise Greece, the imperial Rome, England the Turkish corsair.

# THE black legend AND THE construction OF THE history OF Europe today



**T**HE black legend is a meant manipulation of both Spanish and European history. It began many centuries ago and still lasts today. It can be considered a specific case of universal imperiophobia, understood as the animosity that a leading group awakens as it operates as imperial engine comprising other groups, which either oppose or orbit around the leading one. As an example of imperiophobia, the Spanish black legend is an effect of the complex of inferiority, of admiration and envy, as in the case against Rome or anti-Americanism today.

An empire is a multinational organization that governs diverse groups of people, which had no prior relationship, and live under different traditions, languages and religions. Its extension covers millions of square kilometers, sometimes in different continents. Empires also bring about complex structures and workflows that are internally self-replicated. They are like fractals, those fascinating mathematical objects that have the peculiarity that each part is similar to the whole.

It is interesting how empires are initially led by a small human group (the inhabitants of Latium in Rome, Castilians in the Spanish Empire, the Genghis Khan clan in the Mongolian case). This group expands in a few decades over a huge extension of terrain warring and agreeing with other human groups they encounter in their path. It is clear that if the initial group is formed by a few thousand individuals, stability is impossible



to be achieved only by arms. Hence, conquest campaigns are followed by subsequent policies of integrating treaties, which will ultimately lead to the consolidation of the territories that constituent the empire.

In order to clearly understand what an empire is, it is advisable to make a clarification so that further confusion is avoided. We must not confuse empires with other phenomena of expansion, and certainly not with colonialism. While the former integrates people from the most diverse origins and incorporates them into the same political-social structure, the colonies have a sole commercial purpose, and only benefits one of the parties involved. Colonial individual rights are quite different from those enjoyed by people living in the metropolis. Emperors Adrian or Trajan are typically imperial examples: however having been born thousands of miles from Rome they became emperors. The Hispanic constitutional Cortes of Cadiz in 1812 were presided by a Puerto Rican, among others presidents from different parts of the empire. Something like this is unthinkable in a colonial organization. It is not conceivable that an inhabitant of Calcutta be appointed as prime minister of Victorian England.

As the Spanish Empire went on, successive updated versions of its black legend accumulated over time, turning out to be a thick story today. Truth can only be seen through such steaky confusing story with patience and effort. Among many other reasons, because this interested deformation of history is never presented as such, but as an impolite clear truth.

Italian humanists began to write the Spanish black legend, for the simple reason that the first Hispanic imperial expansion was directed toward the Mediterranean, guided by the Kingdom of Aragon. It was annoying, to see Spaniards

coming to Italy, however it was necessary to face up to the Turkish danger. Later on, anti-Spain manifestos where shaped in the form of anti-Semitism: Spaniards were half Jews, hence racially inferior and bad Christians due to the Semite contamination. Due to that, marrani (pigs) and Spanish were synonyms in Italy in the 16th and 17th centuries.

But the most virulent of Hispanophobia manifestations came undoubtedly from European religion wars in the 16th century. In 2017 this is noteworthy to underline, as the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran schism is taking place. Most importantly, because Lutheran version of the black legend holds the idea, universally accepted in Europe and the Western world, that Catholics in general and Spaniards in particular, are morally inferior to Protestants.

It is not difficult to remove piece by piece the sacred list of self-justifications traditionally used by Protestantism. Any approach leads to the same removal. For example, let us approach the so-called “religious freedom”. In any ancient or modern text, it can be read that Protestantism defends religious freedom. This “religious freedom” of Luther has nothing to do with what we understand today as religious freedom, although both understandings overlap each other and have been intentionally mixed over centuries. Lutheran “religious freedom” crystallized in the principle known as *cuius regio, eius religio*, by which the prince can decide what the subject’s religion should be. If a German prince became Protestant, not only had he the right to confiscate the Catholic Church assets, but also could legally impose his beliefs on the population. Who did not obey his prince, had to leave the prince’s territory and his assets will also undergo the same fate as those of the Catholic Church.

Such principle is the cornerstone of the Protestant “religious freedom”: the embodiment of a theological umbrella to justify the rebellion of the Lutheran princes against the emperor Carlos V. Naturally, the *attrezzo* created around the figure of Luther to emphasize his image as *princeps libertatis*, needs an intolerant world, where freedom did not exist. Such *attrezzo* stays strong after 500 years for the same justification: today whoever visits Germany or another Protestant country where Lutheran celebrations take place, will encounter a staging that essentially relies on the black legend.

Religious freedom did not exist anywhere, either Catholic or Protestant Europe, either in the sixteenth century or long after. Respect of individual religious beliefs is a relatively new born idea which gained momentum equally in Catholic and Protestant countries. Moreover, Catholic areas took the lead on many occasions: for instance in 1831 the English cemetery of Malaga (Spain) was opened 16 years before Catholic clergy in England was legalized.

Through the Catholic Carlos V, his Spanish Empire is blamed in Europe for being the evil that all nationalism needs to thrive and to justify its failures. As we have seen, Germanic nationalisms emerged from the Lutheran justification. If Germanic territories were in a situation of historical prostration that lasted well over two centuries, the wave of fanaticism and intransigence that Lutheranism brought with it was not to be blamed, but the corrupt Spanish devil from the south: an extreme defender of Catholicism prevented Lutheranism from bringing Germany to its yearned summit.

There was no religious freedom in Protestantism. Protestants persecuted Catholics, as did Catholics to Protestants, and the different Protestant factions



pursued each other with identical or even more fury. So the accusation of intolerance poured out against the Spanish Empire is nothing more than the Protestant denial of its own reality. Prosecution laws against Catholics and those with which Protestant churches massacred each other can be found online.

Protestantism did not bring to Europe either religious freedom or tolerance. Moreover, it also blurred boundaries between religion and State. The Queen of England remains the head of the Anglican Church, Prince Frederick of Saxony was proclaimed, with the approval of Luther, head of his own territorial confession and King Haakon of Norway has been the pontiff of his church until 2012, when it was decided that it was high time to separate one thing and the other in this very modern Scandinavian land.

Europe has not enjoyed religious tolerance anywhere until well into the 19th century, and this has happened in both Catholic and Protestant worlds almost at the same time. Catholic nations took the lead to take up religious freedom. In 1813 Spanish Inquisition was officially abolished, after having been long dead -Grand Inquisitor was not even appointed-. Today there are still binding anti-Catholic laws in the United Kingdom. In no Catholic nation ever happened something similar to Bismarck's Kulturkampf, in the second half of the 19th century.

Inquisition was intentionally used as the evil icon of the Catholic intolerance, being transformed into a monster of a gigantic dimension. This institution was once and again falsely blamed for hundreds of thousands of deaths over centuries, without any piece of supporting evidence. Most Westerners (including Spaniards) even with higher education still believe today that Inquisition was a Spanish invention.

Finally in 1976, Henningsen and Contreras reviewed the 44,674 cases filed between 1540 and 1700 in historical archives to conclude the figure of 1346 deaths by Inquisition. Only the night of St. Bartholomew in France caused more deaths. Until 1976 no Spanish historian came up with the idea that the truth could be ascertained. It is not difficult to understand the origin of this colossal defamation. Spaniards are far from being exculpated, for either their active contribution or their passive silence helped such humbugs circulate over centuries around the world without any answer.

Moreover, Karen Armstrong has just been awarded with the Principe de Asturias prize. In her masterpiece "Origins of Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Tusquets, 2004)", she asserts European intolerance begins with the Catholic Kings and quotes again the referred musty figures of hundred of thousands of deaths, a blatant lie uncovered 40 years ago. It would be advisable to request bibliographic update for candidates to such a famous prize.

The monstrous Inquisition is one of the soundest foundations of the black legend. The other one are the massacres carried out by the Spaniards in America. This other foundation has in the friar Bartolomé de las Casas its iconic star, who was used to fuel William of Orange's huge propaganda effort. It was translated into several languages, garnished with engravings of De Bry and spreaded throughout the continent. Surprisingly in 2017, friar Bartolomé still is an issue of discussion. Until 1700 it is very difficult that more than 250,000 Spaniards emigrants had traveled to America. So, who filled those big cities, some according to European standards? Hispanic America is full with Indians and half-blood. Not so much North America. And this fact is what should concerned Spain, if there is still capacity to feel concerned about our own dignity.

As time went by, new fashions arised while the Spanish Empire remained. When Enlightenment arrived, the Spaniard could no longer be denigrated as sons of the Antichrist and begotten of the Devil. This was adequate in the past apocalyptic environment of Protestantism, but not among anti-clerical enlightened wigs. It became necessary to look for other denigrating insults and difamations: Spaniards were then protraited ignorant and unskilled for science or culture.

All in all, each time added a new version of Hispanophobia, according to new fashions and trends. Such versions were incorporated into the self-justification machine of Protestantism, some European nationalisms, and cultural waves. It is a very long complex process, which is still very vivid.

Spain was the heart of an empire, whose surviving remain is the black legend that was invented against it. Still today, the denail of the Spanish black legend necessarily brings along the denail of the Spanish empire existance: the latter is not to be accepted or understood without its black legend. The Hispanic empire was mother of many nations, who also shaped Spain. There may be no rebirth for the Hispanic nations, including today's Spain, until both Atlantic sides do what Europe did with Rome in the fifteenth century: embrace the empire that engendered us, proudly proclaim our common origin and learn from it.



BORJA CARDELÚS

# SPAIN FOOTPRINT IN THE UNITED STATES

## A PROVIDENTIAL SWAP

Admiral Cristobal Colón (C. Columbus) inspects all means and supplies that are about to be embarked to the New World second voyage: plants, implements, tools, livestock and horses, superb ones. Their proud traders exhibit Hispanic-Arab stallions and mares, confident of the Admiral's approval. They would become the seed of a new American domestic species, until now unknown in the new continent.

But unexpectedly, as the sailing day arrived, the Admiral got sick. Apparently, rogues took advantage of the situation and swapped the state-of-the-art horses for rough ones, nicknamed "matalones", just

vulgar nags. This is what it was believed.

However, the actual embarked breed was not matalones: indeed, recent ADN analysis have unveiled that the to-be American-horse seed came from the marshes surrounding Guadalquivir river: a horse breed known as Retuerta. Despite its sullen anatomy, it boasted an unbeatable working capacity, resulting from hundred of years of tough life on marshy plateaus in South Spain, under extreme wet winters and dry summers. Similar American environments welcomed Retuerta horses from la Patagonia, to La Pampa, los Llanos up to north of New Spain (today US south west).

On meadows, both cowboys and Indians settled, worked and fought with Retuerta horses' vital help, precedent to Mustangs, the well-known Hollywood films horses.

## TEXAN LONGHORN

Guadalquivir marshes turned out to be an ethnological quarry to rural America, as they encompass, still today, a rich rural life settled just off Seville port, the former headquarter of commercial sea traffic between European and American Spain over centuries. The Texan longhorn is another livestock originated in Guadalquivir area.

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Its ancestor was the “mostrenca” cow, a very brave thick-horned old breed, which today can still be seen on the Spanish marshy plateaus. Although they found a similar natural environment as they arrived to America, unfortunately, they also went through many difficulties due to the unknown predators (coyotes, wolves and pumas), who found out “mostrencas” were a much easier prey to catch than bison.

Recalling Darwin’s evolution laws, the Spanish breed developed long horns after few generations, as only the best- armed species survived predators and were better skilled in cattle fights, therefore more capable of preserving their genes. This is how the “mostrencas” became the Texan longhorn, process which was accelerated by US breeders.

## GUADALQUIVIR MARSHES AND HOLLYWOOD

Another example of Guadalquivir marshes performing as an ethnological quarry for rural America, is “vaquero” (name that comes from “vaca” -cow- in Spanish, i.e. cowboy), the master in arts of dealing and guiding livestock cattle on horseback in very large farms, typically pictured in Hollywood “western” films.

Not only did cowboys inherit the referred “vaquero” arts, but consequently also some of its traditions (the rodeo, iron-branded cattle, for instance), tools, harness (saddle, spur), etc... the Guadalquivir marsh rider transformed into both the US and the Mexican cowboy.

## DOLLAR’S SPANISH ROOTS

In the 18th century, the Hispanic currency unit “real de a ocho” was precious and of common use in Europe, America and Asia, where it was exchanged in Japan and China from New Spain via the Philippines. As soon as the British American colonies emancipated, they quitted the British currency and began to coin the federal one. Due to comprehensible difficulties to introduce a reliable new coin in international markets after a war, the US new currency backed-up its face value on the soundest international coin by that time: The Spanish thaler (then called Spanish daller and finally dollar). The Spanish dollar boasted great prestige due to its silver purity and international mass use.

Hence, the vast majority of the US citizens preferred to use it, despite its face value parity with the US one. Both coins coexisted until 1857, when the Spanish dollar was banned in the US.

## MOSE FORTRESS

Hispanic Florida in the south, and both Georgia and the two Carolinas in the north, had had an unfriendly neighbourhood for long. While the British colonies hosted Black slavery as legal for their cotton and sugar plantations, the Hispanic Crown officially banned it, following Christian humanism. Moreover, every single black refugee from the north was awarded with letters of freedom by the Spanish authorities.

Even more, due to the surge of fled slaves, Spain ordered to build a fortress to host them. It was named Fuerte de Gracia Real de Sant Teresa de Mosé, whose abbreviation resulted in Fuerte Mosé (Mosé fortress).

Once and again, English troops attacked this fortress, the gate to Liberty for black slaves. Two English Governors, Moore and Oglethorpe, each tried to conquer the stronghold twice. They succeeded once, but it was soon reconquered by Spanish and black troops fighting together.

However, Fuerte Mosé disappeared eventually. Florida Government means to rebuild it, as it is considered in modern United States the first place where black people could enjoy their right to Liberty.

## THE FIRST THANKSGIVING DAY

Thanksgiving Day is one of the paramount traditions in the USA, resembling the first time Europeans gathered the harvest in North America. It took place in 1621. However, that was not the first one. Half a century before (1565), the Spanish “conquistador” (conqueror), Pedro Menéndez de Avilés celebrated a solemn Te Deum and big feasts to thank and honour God for the foundation of the oldest remaining European settlement in the USA, the city of San Agustín.

But there is another previous thanksgiving: as Juan de Oñate crossed Río Grande northwards, the last Spanish frontier by 1597. He took possession of that huge land, named New Mexico: Holy Masses and other celebrations took place as a way to give thanks for all the achievements.

Every April 30, the southwestern Hispanic community in the US celebrates such thanksgiving, which took place 25 years before the currently official one.

## SPANISH PLACE-NAMES IN THE USA

Hispanic traces in the US stand out from east to west, from south to north. The first city founded was Santa Elena, by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, though it quickly disappeared, being followed by San Agustín,

officially the first US remaining city.

Many cities have been named after Christian Saints, according to the tradition of old discovery times: San Antonio (Texas capital), Santa Fe (New Mexico capital), San Diego (eldest Californian city, originally founded as a Franciscan Mission), Santa Barbara, Los Angeles (its full original name being Our Lady Queen of Angels in Porciúncula—in English translation—).

California is also a Spanish name, which stems from the Knight literature: the book “Las Sergas de Esplandián”. Queen Calafia ruled the kingdom of California. Along the Californian coast many Hispanic place-names stand out: Cabo Mendocino (Mendocino Cape) in remembrance of Antonio de Mendoza, the first Viceroy of New Spain, a large territory spreading from today’s Panama up to the Canadian border and

encompassing the vast majority of the Caribbean Sea. Bahía Bodega (Bodega Bay) is named after the first Spanish sailor to reach Alaska on board of a small 11m length ship, beating, until then, an unbreakable natural barrier for Europeans. Most of that coast was renamed as Captain Cook and other seamen sailed along that coast years after.

All in all, travelling throughout the US means encountering a rich heritage of Spanish place-names.



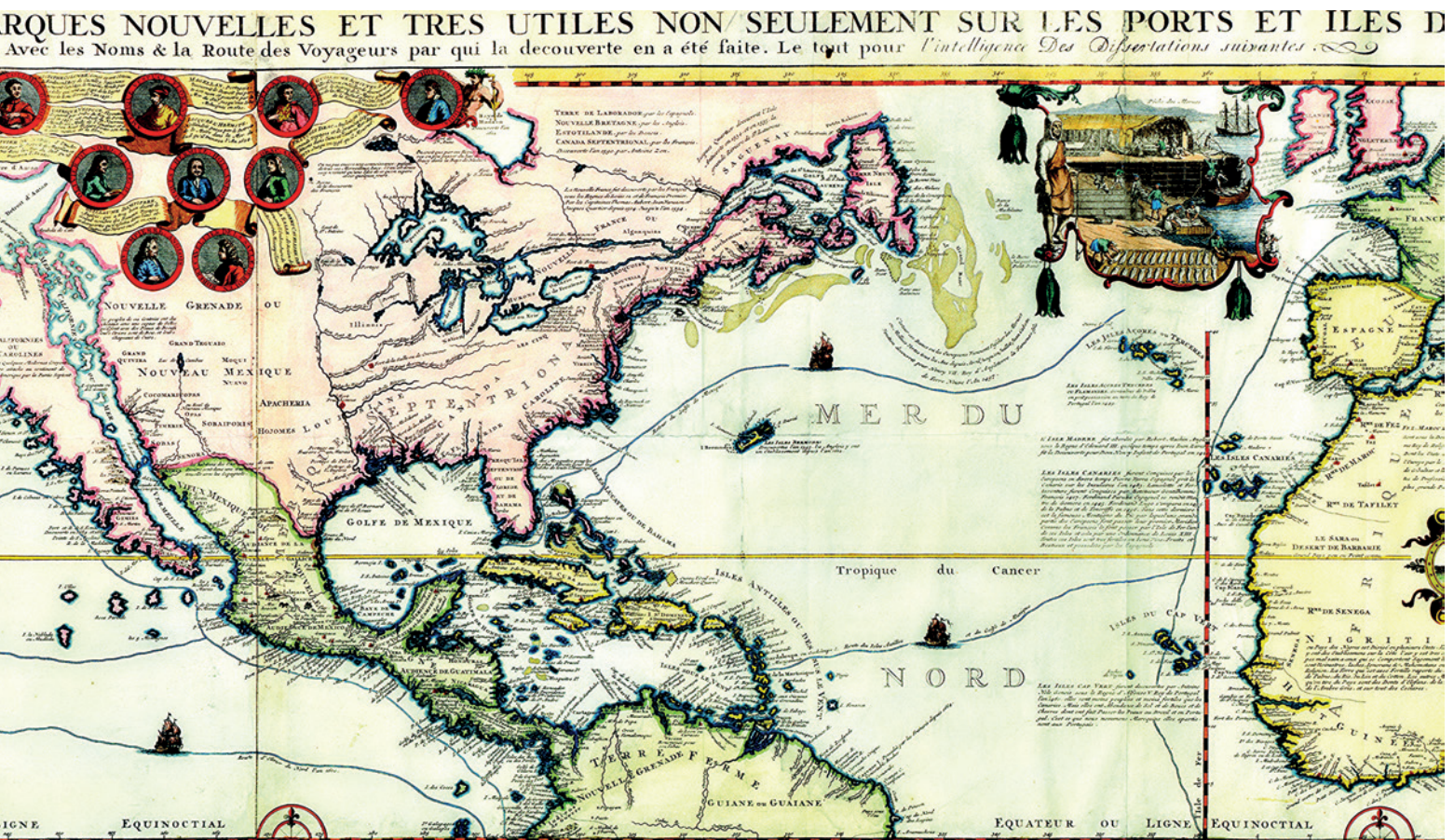
# THE FIRST SPANISH EXPLORATIONS TO ALTA CALIFORNIA

MARCELINO GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ

**I**N the beginning of the sixteenth century, it was widely believed paths through North America linked both Pacific and Atlantic Oceans—the mythical Anian Straits—. That belief encouraged Hernán Cortés to promote the exploration of North American western coasts. Since 1539, they were reached by different explorers, who progressively discovered the area. Among others stand out Francisco de Ulloa and Fernando de Alarcón: they

proved that the coast known as Baja California (today México) was an isthmus and not an island, as it was wrongly pictured on the maps of that time.

Lands located north of that isthmus were called Alta California. During the aforementioned explorations, Ulloa had reached in 1539 the Colorado River. In 1540, Alarcón sailed up to the Colorado-Gila river junction. From then on, the first Spanish explorations took place along the coasts of Alta



California ultimately to settle a safe seaport for the Manila galleon on its way back from the Phillipines some decades after. Pedro de Alvarado had organized in 1541 an expedition to know the area, but he died short before it was ready. Alvarado's attempt was followed by others, such as Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in 1542.

## JUAN RODRÍGUEZ CABRILLO

In 1542, Rodriguez Cabrillo was commissioned by the Viceroy of New Spain, Antonio de Mendoza y Pacheco, to carry out the exploration. At the end of June he sailed from Navidad port (Colima, Mexico). He discovered Magdalena bay, island of Cedros, on September 17 he arrived at the port of Ensenada, and on the 28th he settled down on what he described as "a very good and safe harbor", in a bay initially called San Miguel, whose today's name is San Diego. He went on sailing northwards, naming various key points on that coast.

After some time in search for shelter against strong winds, he arrived on November 11 at Santa María and San Martin, where new storms scattered the fleet. On the 15th, they gathered again and discovered los Pinos bay, which today is known as Monterrey Bay. Due to storms, on November 18 the expedition headed south to take shelter on the island of San Miguel. It arrived on the 23rd, and remained there for three months. Cabrillo died in San Miguel on January 3 1543, as a result of injuries suffered in encounters with aborigines. The exploration continued under the command of Bartolomé Ferrello, who had to face a harsh winter before returning to Acapulco.

In view of unimportant results, mainly due to the lack of linking

paths between the two oceans and scarce lands with worthwhile wealth, further explorations to Alta California ceased. Cabrillo's reports, navigation courses, maps and other documents produced in this expedition, were qualified as "top secret". Hence, they were kept away from England, Holland or Portugal. These secret documents went into oblivion. That may well be the reason why, many years later, during Sebastián Vizcaíno's expedition many of those lands were again rediscovered and renamed.

## NEW EXPLORATIONS

From 1565 on, thanks to the Agustinian priest Urdaneta, who safely sailed from the Phillipines to America, an important commerce route was opened for the Manila Galleon (New Spain). The possibility of constructing a seaport in Alta California was strongly considered, to shelter, supply and support the said galleon.

Meanwhile something alarming happened for the Spanish government: In 1579 the English sailor Francis Drake, after several profitable piracy attacks on Hispanic ships and ports on the Pacific coast, looked for some safe coastal point to give rest to his men and careen his boat the Golden Hind. He then reached the coast of Alta California, where he took possession of a place he named New Albion, on behalf of Great Britain. Some consider it was San Francisco Bay, although it probably was the place called today Drake Bay (south of Punta Reyes).

The Spanish government reacted to protect those who considered its territories. From 1584 Francisco de Gali, Pedro de Unamuno and Sebastián

Rodríguez de Cermeño were sent to explore those coasts. These explorations enjoyed however little success and very scarce results, since they were carried out taking advantage of the Manila galleon cabotage along the Alta California coast, on its way back from the Phillipines to Mexico.

## FRANCISCO DE GALI

Francisco de Gali left for Acapulco on board of the Manila Galleon in July 1584. He explored the coasts of Alta California, near of today's Santa Cruz Bay. Upon arrival at Acapulco in January of 1585, he reported the trip to New Spain's Viceroy Moya. Gali's manuscript was published in several languages, although the whereabouts of the original documents is unknown. The Viceroy then commissioned him to search for a safe port for the Manila galleons. In March, Gali returned to the Philippine capital to organize the return trip and search for such port, but he died in January 1586.

## PEDRO DE UNAMUNO

Francisco Gali's discoveries encouraged the Viceroy to organize a new expedition, which was carried out by Pedro de Unamuno. In 1587 he sailed from the Phillipines and arrived at the Monterrey Bay, where he bumped into a lasting thick fog that hindered his mission. He returned to Acapulco without problems, although in that year of 1587, some English corsairs were in the area: Cavendish captured a Spanish galleon near San Lucas cape. In his reports, Unamuno advised the foundation of a new settlement in Banderas bay.

## SEBASTIÁN RODRÍGUEZ CERMEÑO

The new Viceroy Luis de Velasco y Castilla, considered that California should be explored again to try to find the right location for the belonged port to support the Manila galleon on its journey to Acapulco. Sebastián Rodríguez Cermeño was commissioned to carry it out on a return voyage from Manila aboard the San Agustín galleon.

On November 4 1595 Cermeño sighted American lands somewhere between Punta de San Jorge and Trinidad, in California. He sailed on to the south, and on the 6th he arrived at Drake Bay. He took possession of that land, where at the end of November the San Agustín galleon was shipwrecked, as strong winds pushed the vessel against rocks. Several men died and the cargo was lost.

Another ship was built with the remains of the galleon, where almost 80 men sailed on December 8. After suffering a great shortage of provisions, hunger and many hardships, they sailed south, unintentionally passed by San Francisco Bay, and in January 1596 they arrived in Chacala, Mexico.

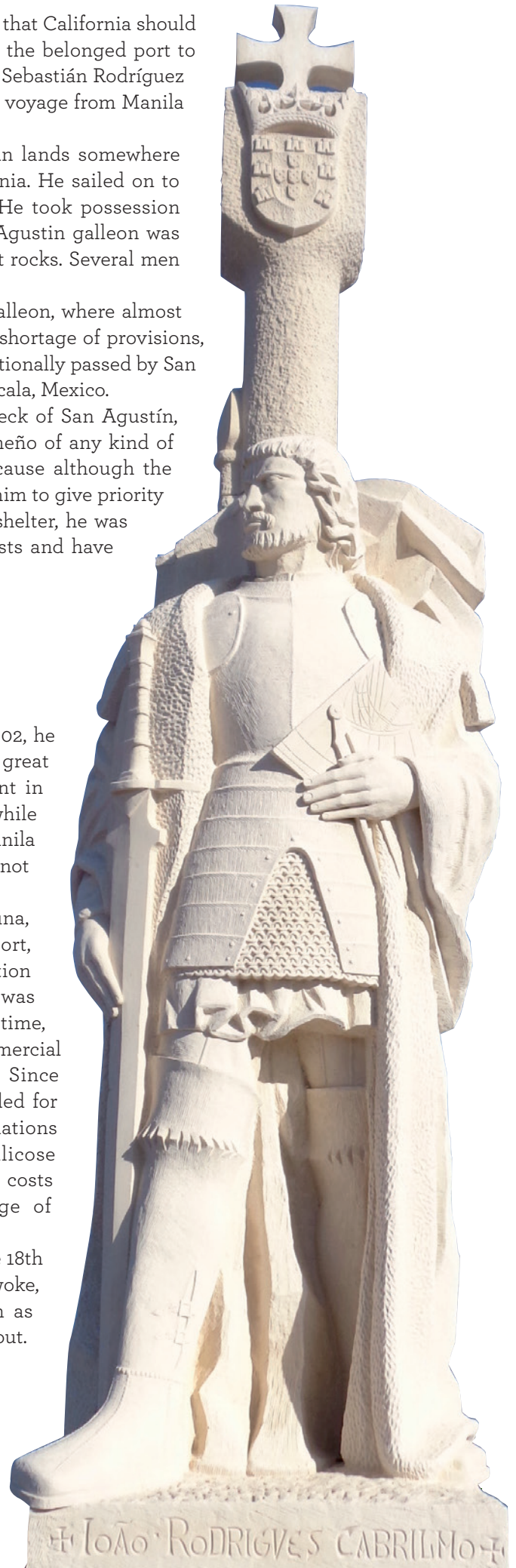
In spite of the great work developed, the shipwreck of San Agustín, which transported large private cargo, deprived Cermeño of any kind of reward. His expedition was considered a failure, because although the sailor argued that hunger and bad weather had forced him to give priority to his navigation to the south in search of food and shelter, he was blamed for not having adequately explored such coasts and have passed by several adequate inlets viable seaports.

## EXPLORATIONS ARE LONG CANCELED

When Vizcaíno returned to Acapulco on March 21, 1602, he presented a very attractive report, which provoked great enthusiasm about the possibility of a new settlement in Monterrey. Finally, the Viceroy set out to colonize it, while Vizcaino was rewarded with the command of one of Manila galleons. However the expedition for colonization did not occur, and the project postponed.

When the new Viceroy Juan de Mendoza y Luna, learned of the partial inaccuracy of Vizcaino's report, Vizcaino's command was taken away and the expedition suspended. Vizcaino, who boast great sponsors, was appointed ambassador to Japan, at an appropriate time, when priority was given to the consolidation of commercial relationships between Japan and the Philippines. Since then the expeditions to Alta California were suspended for different reasons: absence of rich indigenous populations (like Inca or Aztec ones), presence of very bellicose aborigenes, frequent contrary sea streams and winds, costs greatly outweighed potential returns, and shortage of resources of the Viceroyalty.

It was necessary to wait until the second half of the 18th century, when interest in Alta California once again awoke, with companies in which various personalities such as José de Gálvez, Portolá and fray Junípero Serra stood out. But this is an other history.





Don Matías de Gálvez en México. Año de 1785

*José Alberto Ruiz de Oña*  
**MATÍAS DE GÁLVEZ**

**Third centenary. From gunner to viceroy**

**INTRODUCTION**

In 2017, the 300<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of a memorable hero from Malaga (Spain) is taking place. Sadly, his biography has almost been forgotten since his death.

Don Matías de Gálvez y Gallardo was born on July 24 1717 in Macharaviaya, a small village in the province of Malaga (Spain). He spent both his childhood and adolescence living on farming and livestock breeding. He was the oldest of four brothers. The sudden death of his father, forced him to take over the responsibility of bringing up his brothers and taking after the whole family. He only was 11 years old.

Matías de Gálvez became a great soldier, leader and ruler, who honored the reign of Carlos III of Spain with

exceptional triumphs in Central America. He was a true hero, and deserves to be raised prominently in the annals of Hispanic history.

**BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY**

In 1745 D. Matías married Dña. Josefa Gallardo, who gave him two children: Bernardo, born in 1746, and Jose, who was only 8 years old when he died. By then, D. Matías was already an officer in the Royal Artillery Corps. Shortly after Dña. Gallardo's death, he married Dña. Ana de Zayas.

In 1757, he moved to Tenerife (Canary Islands) with his whole family. Since then, he run Hacienda La Gorvorana, today part of the

municipality of Los Realejos, in the Orotava Valley. It was the 2nd largest farm on the island, producing a great quantity of wine and other agricultural products. Due to his expertise both on farming and agriculture, together with his organisation skills, he transformed La Gorvorana in a bench farm within the Canary archipelago. For his good work he was also appointed Administrator of the island's Royal Customs and responsible for the Royal Tobacco Income at la Orotava Port, today Puerto de la Cruz. From this port, most of the isle's import-exports happened.

Additionally, D. Matías concurred these duties with his military career, while he inspired his soldier spirit to his son Bernardo. In

( PAGES 118-137 )



1774 he was appointed captain of the Artillery Militia of Puerto de la Orotava.

D. Matías de Galvez made recurrent journeys to the peninsula due to professional or family reasons. Upon D. Matías departure in 1774, the writer Alvarez Rixo recalled in his “Annals of the Puerto de la Cruz de La Orotava”:

*This gentleman was now absent for the Peninsula, where he came from. He rendered great services to the Monarchy. It is a pity that Tenerife hasn't taken advantage of the good affection and inclination that he felt for the Island, mainly to this Puerto de la Cruz, where he enjoyed public acknowledgement over so many years.*

But D. Matías hankered his vocational call: the military career. In 1776, thanks to his brother Jose he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and appointed governor of the Paso Alto castle in 1776, in Santa Cruz de Tenerife. He was later appointed Second Military Chief of the Canary Islands, as Viera y Clavijo told us: *Madrid Court has just promoted to King's lieutenant in the Canary Islands to D. Matías de Gálvez, governor of the Paso Alto Castle, gentle and beloved neighbour of our islands ...*

In the meantime, his cultural activity continued and he never ceased to go to La Laguna, then Tenerife capital, where Matías de Gálvez was one of the founding promoters of the Royal Economic Society in Tenerife.

After his ascent to colonel (March 1777), he was ordered to recruit 700 men to join the second battalion of the Regiment of Louisiana, under his son Bernardo's command.

D. Matías gathered more than 3000 people who settled down in Louisiana, and whose descendants still today maintain their customs, folklore and Spanish language: they are known as the “islanders” of Louisiana.

In 1778, he was promoted to Second Commander General and Inspector of the troops and Militias of Guatemala. His first mission was to move the capital of Guatemala to a new place, as the former one Antigua, had been destroyed by an earthquake in 1773. In the new capital, he incorporated a new Mint and initiated the construction of the new Cathedral. He improved trade and agriculture, incorporated an Indigo Harvest Trust and organised livestock fairs. His work was of such importance that Guatemala's Creole Town Council acknowledged him as Homeland's first Father.

His genius made him anticipate Lake Nicaragua's strategic importance: He committed architect Miguel Galisteo with the project of leveling such lake both with Atlantic and Pacific oceans. This study was later used for the construction of the Panama Channel.

In 1779, he was promoted to brigadier, and a few months later to Quarterback. As Captain General of Guatemala and President of his Royal Audience, his

jurisdiction included the present states of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and the Mexican Chiapas.

When Spain declared war on England in June 1779 a large part of the coast of Central America, specifically Costa de los Mosquitos, was under the control of Jamaica's governor. The English tried to occupy an area of Central America that would have allowed them to domain the link between the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean sea, and thus divide Spanish dominions. Galvez's mission was to prevent it, for which very little forces were available, despite the large territory to defend. Its main objectives were: Bacalar, the base of English smuggling in the Caribbean and center of exploitation of dye stick; Omoa, key to commerce and prosperity for Guatemala territory; and Río San Juan, key enclave for Central American security.

Initially, D. Matías de Galvez sent a military detachment to the Fort of San Felipe de Bacalar, in Yucatan, lately the base from which the English strong hold of San Jorge in Belize was conquered in September 1779. He could then secure an important area of that Caribbean coast.

## HONDURAS: OMOA

In October 1779 England besieged the Omoa castle, but Galvez anticipated that move with over a thousand soldiers. By such anticipation, he led one of the harshest marches of that war, through 500 km of difficult jungles and steepy mountains. Shortly before arriving in Omoa area, the castle of San Fernando had fallen in English hands.

Omoa was the natural entrance to Guatemala through a main road in the Royal Network, but it was a “mortal trap” for those who did not know the area, very humid with abundant marshes and covered with mangroves. Several endemic diseases such as yellow fever, caused many casualties. Fortunately for Spain, the Crown had the monopoly of the precious quinine, the only remedy by that time.

The Spanish garrison amounted to less than 100 men, including officers. It was commanded by the engineer Simón Desnaux. On October 16 1779, 14 English ships appeared in the horizon; after a 4-hour crossed fire, the damage provoked on an English frigate, made the invading troops carry out a land attack. The defense of the fort of San Fernando lasted until October 20.

Later, on November 28 1782, Spanish forces commanded by D. Matías recovered the castle of San Fernando. Thereby, he managed to expel the English from other enclaves of the Gulf of Honduras: Puerto Limón, Criva, Quepriva and Mosquitos. Hundred of prisoners were taken. On August 23 1782, when the British initially conquered the Fort of Quepriva, they beheaded all their defenders, including all officers.

## NICARAGUA: SAN JUAN RIVER

The British expedition commanded by Captain John Polson's departed from Jamaica to San Juan River. It was reinforced with militias recruited on the Costa de los Mosquitos, and aimed at reaching Lake Cocibolca and capturing the city of Granada. Spanish America would then be split in two and England would get a direct access to the Pacific Ocean.

D. Matías de Gálvez forecast the danger of the English incursions and hence moved to the province of Nicaragua. He established his headquarters in Granada and prepared for the defense of lake Nicaragua and the forts of the San Juan river. However, he did not arrive in time to prevent the fall of the forts, although he would soon recover them.

The main fort surrendered after 18 days of siege. Its small epic garrison, slightly increased to 130 men, could not longer resist against more than 9,000 Englishmen, once they ran out of water, ammunition, and unable to take care of the wounded.

Due to the tropical climate and the difficult ground, it was expected that only the fort could be attacked from November to March. Such expectation was wrong: The English arrived at the river mouth on March 24 and on April 11 stood in front of the castle. The English naval force, commanded by Hinchinbroke, included a 21 year old captain called Horatio Nelson, who almost died in the attack. Due to the British unpredictability, its military logistical problems, and diseases, the expedition was ultimately a costly failure.

On April 9, Nelson conquered a Spanish battery on the island of Bartola. Eight kilometers upriver emerged the castle of the Immaculate, which was besieged since April 13. Due to poor planning and loss of supplies, the British soon fall short of artillery ammunition

and food. After the tropical rains that began on April 20, men began to get sick and die, probably from malaria and dysentery.

Nelson soon fell ill and stayed in bed on April 28 when the Spaniards finally surrendered. Night attacks had prevented defenders from drinking water and were forced to capitulate, exhausted by constant fatigue and thirst. They were assured life guarantee and war prisoner treatment. About 4500 British reinforcements arrived on May 15 to attempt to reach Lake Nicaragua up San Juan river.

The English invaders had spent nearly two months in sailing the river up and seizing the castle. For that reason Matías de Gálvez had time to prepare an appropriate defense, fortifying the mouth of the lake of Nicaragua. The Spaniards became increasingly strong with the aid they received from San Miguel Guancapla (Choluteca) and other immediate provinces, while disorder spread on the English fleet.

Consequently, the British expedition had to retire on November 30, 1780. Brigadier Matías de Gálvez chased them down to the castle of the Inmaculada, which was easily recovered on January 3, 1781. More than 200 prisoners were taken. English casualties amounted to 3500, this expedition turned out to be the most expensive British disaster of the whole war. In recognition of his extraordinary merits, Don Matías de Gálvez was promoted to Field Marshal on July 17. Almost at the same time his son Bernardo was promoted to lieutenant general.

## HONDURAS: ROATÁN

In Guatemala, England had long been engaged in the exploitation of dye stick, in today's Belize and on the Costa de los Mosquitos. The British lost their offensive capacity after being expelled from Nicaragua. Galvez took advantage

of the situation and continued its offensive on the north coast of Honduras during 1782. There, England had several enclaves, the main one being the city of Port Royal, on Roatán island. It was commanded by Edward Marcus Despard.

Gálvez gathered a force of more than 3000 men in Trujillo and set sail for Roatán on March 14, 1782 with the frigates Santa Matilde, Santa Cecilia, Antíope, the corvette Europa and some gunboats. The following day bombings began on the city, that surrendered 3 days later, after some Spanish troops disembarked. More than 400 prisoners were taken.

Taking advantage of such victory, Galvez continued the campaign to seize the area of Rio Tinto, called Black river by the English, on the Atlantic coast of Honduras. It was finally reconquered by the Spaniards on April 16, 1782. In recognition of such extraordinary victories, Matias de Gálvez was promoted to lieutenant general on June 7, 1782. There was thus a singular case: father and son enjoyed the highest military ranks.

In March of 1783 Don Matías reported the King Spain was the only master of all the Honduras bosom. He had finished his glorious and heroic campaign against the English, which also meant distracting important British military capacity from participating in the US Independence war. For that reason, the Independence of the United States, specially relied not only on D. Bernardo de Gálvez, but also on his father D. Matías.

## MEXICO

As acknowledgement to his brilliant successes, King Carlos III appointed Don Matías de Galvez Viceroy of New Spain on October 14, 1782. He left Guatemala on March 8, 1783, and after a 52-day journey he arrived in the vicinity of the capital of the Viceroyalty, today Mexico D.F..



Following the tradition, he received the baton in the small town of San Cristóbal Ecatepec. He was the forty-eighth viceroy of New Spain, which stretched from Panama to Canada, west of Mississippi river, including Florida, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and today Dominican Republic. The following day, he was solemnly received in Mexico City.

His mandate was short but very fruitful: among other outstanding achievements, he contributed to the incorporation of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Carlos, organised the city of Mexico in specific quarters to improve local administration and street security, and embellished the Zócalo.

He initiated the construction of Chapultepec Castle, which his son Bernardo continued, although works were only finished in the middle of the 19th century. He also ordered the cleaning of sewage ditches, street pavement, ordered the first census of vehicles, promoted the journal *Gazeta de México* and was very concerned about Mexican people. As to them, he publicly referred: "They should be privileged and cared with consideration by laws, as for many fair reasons they are qualified as creditors of their protection and favor.

Among other initiatives, he developed trade, agriculture and mining, regulated the excessive number of lawyers, and supported new projects to improve the drainage of Mexico, perhaps the city's major problem. He couldn't witness the construction of a new canal for that purpose, due to his short mandate.

Don Matías de Gálvez is remembered for his ethical and wise government. He died at the age of 67 years on November 3, 1784. He was buried in the church of San Fernando in Mexico City, where he still rests. The king appreciated his work so much, that D. Matías was exempted from the Trial of Residence: a sort of compulsory audit on the government and decisions carried out by all public servants including highest ones: viceroys.

## EPILOGUE

Throughout his whole life, Don Matías de Gálvez y Gallardo carried out as many duties as he was entrusted, with great effectiveness in both hemispheres. It is noteworthy the immense workload carried out by the "Bernardo de Gálvez Association of Malaga" in the research and diffusion of the biographies of the Galvez family members. It is also remarkable the effort of D. Carlos Cologan to research and make public the valuable content of his family's private archive, that is preserved in Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

On June 16, 2016, thanks to the City Council of Puerto de la Cruz a bust of D. Matías was uncovered in the historic building of the Royal Customs Office in Puerto de la Cruz, where he had worked 250 years ago. Such bust is a copy of the existing one in the cemetery of Macharaviaya (Málaga), and has been funded by popular subscription.

It was the first tribute paid to his memory. Unfortunately, today very few still know of his memorable figure, who deserves to be honored among the greatest heroes of the Spanish Army, similarly to his son Bernardo. With these lines we have tried to acknowledge this hero's life and achievements, who has distinguished records in the service to Spain and ultimately helped the independence of the USA, thanks to the diversion of the British military power D. Matias de Galvez y Gallardo had to encounter.



Laws and Ordinances newly drafted by order of His Majesty, which must be honored by Governors, Royal Councils, Courts and Judges, for the government of the Indies and the good treatment and protection of the Indians. Imperial privilege. Alcalá de Henares, 1543.



First Book of Provisions, Licenses, Ordinances, Instructions and Letters, delivered and dispatched at different times by his Majesties the Catholic Kings Isabel and Fernando, the Emperor Don Carlos and His mother the Queen Doña Juana, and the Catholic King Felipe II, with the agreement of the Presidents and their Royal Council of the Indies for their good government and administration. In Madrid, Edition of the Royal Printing, 1594.