THE BOOK IN THE AMERICAS

A Prospectus for Renewed Study of the Role of Books in the Development of Latin American Culture with a Bibliography

by

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and

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THE BOOK IN THE AMERICAS

1. Introduction

The history of the book has undergone enormous reorientation and expansion over the past two decades as its focus has broadened from the documentation of the physical aspects of bookmaking to encompass the exploration of the book's role in society. This desire to achieve greater balance between the development of technology and its relationship to social and cultural history has generated renewed interest in the subject, especially in Europe, and the enthusiasm and productivity of European scholars have inspired those in the United States. Conferences of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division of the Association of College and Research Libraries and of the American Antiquarian Society held in Massachusetts in 1980 have been instrumental in the restructuring of book history as a discipline, and such book-length studies as Elizabeth Eisenstein's *The Printing Press As an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge and New York, 1979), Robert Darnton's *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopédie* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), *Printing and Society in Early America* edited by William L. Joyce, David D. Hall, Richard D. Brown, and John E. Hench (Worcester, Mass., 1983) and *Books and Society in History* edited by Kenneth E. Carpenter (New York and London, 1983) highlight the most recent achievements in research. In addition to these advances, future progress has been assured by the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture at the American Antiquarian Society and by the creation of the Center for the
Despite this optimistic outlook, however, voids continue to exist which hinder progress in placing the book universally within this new critical framework. A striking example of this occurs in the area of Hispanic studies. As the Australian bibliographer Wallace Kirrop notes in his article "Literary History and the Book Trade: The Lessons of L'Apparition du livre" [Australian Journal of French Studies, 16 (Nov.-Dec., 1979), 485-495], la historia del libro lags significantly behind l'histoire du livre and Geschichte des Buchwesens, as well as their English-speaking counterpart, and some of the most recent scholarship on the Spanish book must be regarded with caution. He praises the contribution of Maxime Chevalier's Lecture y lectores en la España del siglo XVI y XVII, for example, but chides scholars such as Christian Peligry for failing to complement their view of book history in Spain with descriptive data provided by prominent bibliographers.

The problem plaguing la historia del libro, however, is lamentably more profound than the one Kirrop describes because he does not specifically mention the book in Spanish America. This geographical region is of particular relevance to historians striving to attain a total picture of human progress in the Western Hemisphere and so comparativist of a variety of disciplines interested in New World studies. United States citizens in general have also become more aware of their southern neighbors as Spanish Americans experience persistent political and economic problems and at the same time demonstrate exceptional creativity, especially in literature. This, together with the fact that fifteen million people in the United States are of Hispanic origin, underscores a need for both concern and understanding. The quincentennial celebration of Columbus's landfall will be observed in 1992, and this important event can be not only a reminder of our common heritage but also an invitation to reflect upon the past. In the case of book history, such an undertaking would yield information about books of pre-Columbian origin and the earliest expansion of Western culture to the New World. In order to shed light upon this neglected yet fascinating chapter in the history of the book the following prospectus for a conference on the "Book in the Americas" has been prepared.

II. Rationale

A conference on the "Book in the Americas" with primary emphasis on colonial Latin America would be a significant contribution to the universal history of the book for two main reasons: first, a review of past studies undertaken in the area reveals their limited perspective and their incompleteness, and second, a glance at the research possibilities underscores the uniqueness of the book's development in the New World.

Previous investigations into the book in the Spanish American colonies have tended to follow the Anglo-American approach to the discipline. Books were perceived more as physical objects than as instruments of change, and the resultant scholarship took the form of descriptive bibliography. José Toribio de Medina (1852-1930) pioneered the field in his book-length overview, Historia de la imprenta en los antiguos dominios españoles de América y Oceanía, and his numerous bibliographies document the production of presses in virtually all centers of colonial Spanish America. They have been reprinted since his death and continue to be an invaluable bibliographical resource. Other notable bibliographers who concentrated their efforts on the viceregalies of New Spain or Peru were Joaquín García Icaza and José María Vargas Llorente in their Bibliografía mexicana del siglo XVI and Rubén Vargas Ugarte in his Biblioteca peruana.

Although the Anglo-American approach has dominated initial efforts to document the book's development in Spain's territories, scholars who followed in the footsteps of these
descriptive bibliographers were not insensitive to the social milieu in which the book emerged and flourished. José Torre Revello’s El libro, la imprenta y el periodismo en América durante la dominación española, Agustín Millares Carlos’s Introducción de la historia del libro y de las bibliotecas, and Irving A. Leonard’s excellent work, Books of the Brave, all contain some social commentary, and more recent scholarly endeavors such as Printing in Colonial Spanish America by Hensley C. Woodbridge and Lawrence S. M. Thompson and “Publishing in Colonial Spanish America: an Overview” by Stephen C. Mohier have continued this trend. None of these studies, however, integrates the book within society to the extent that the most current approach to book history dictates. This new critical framework, devised by the French, has gained international acceptance and was first outlined in L’Apparition du livre by Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin (Paris, 1958). David Gerard has done a translation of this work entitled The Coming of the Book (London, 1976).

The presence of advanced civilizations in the New World, the Spaniards’ conquest and settlement of major portions of two continents, and Spain’s ability to maintain an overseas empire for three hundred years provide an extraordinary backdrop for the history of the book in the Americas. By the time Cervés arrived on the Mexican mainland in 1519, a form of the book or codex had already existed for several centuries in Mesoamerica. Professional scribes of a number of pre-Columbian cultures routinely prepared these rolled or folded tiritus and carefully inscribed them with pictographs or ideographs of Mayan invention. Efforts to eradicate paganism by newly arrived clergymen from Spain resulted in the destruction of all but a few, and this tremendous loss has been lamented by Americanists ever since. The production of pictorial manuscripts, however, did not cease with the conquest and became the earliest means of written communication that the Spanish friars had with the Indians.

The religious conversion of American natives followed soon after the military conquest, and the printing press proved to be an indispensable part of it. Mexico’s first bishop, Fray Juan de Zumárraga, who assumed his post in 1528, was instrumental in securing its introduction into the colonies. At his insistence, Juan Cronberger established a branch of his Sevillian publishing house in Mexico City where his agent and later owner of the press Juan Pablo printed the first book in 1539. America had not been discovered when the Gutenberg press was invented in Europe, yet less than a hundred years after its invention, it was introduced into the New World. Pablo’s initial publication, Breve y más comprensiva doctrina cristiana en lengua mexicana y castellana, que contiene los easos mas necessarios de nuestra santo fe catholica, para aprovechamiento destos indios naturales y salvación de sus animas, antedated the first book printed in the British colonies by a century. The printer Esteban Martín, who came to Mexico in 1534, may have preceded Pablo; however, no example of his work has ever been found.

The printing press experienced steady growth following Pablo’s arrival. Antonio de Espinosa, Pedro Charte, Pedro Balli, and Antonio Ricardo succeeded him in New Spain’s capital, and their diverse nationalities—two Italians, two Frenchmen, and one Spaniard—assured their access to the latest European technology and equipment. With the press firmly established in the New World, Mexico’s fifth printer, Antonio Ricardo, was encouraged to move to Peru and set up shop there. The cultural activities of the viceregal court and the intellectual life of the University of San Marcos, founded in 1551, demanded the operation of a press, and religious orders again found it necessary for the publication of Christian doctrine in indigenous languages. Using the facilities provided by the Jesuits, Ricardo began at once preparing materials for the Church but was forced to delay this work to print Pragmática sobre los días días del año. This 1584 document was the earliest printed in South America and deals with the change to the Gregorian calendar that had already taken place in Europe.
Just as Pablos was followed by capable printers in Mexico City, so, too, notable professionals such as Francisco del Canio, Pedro de Merchán, and the Contreras family continued Ricardo’s tradition in Lima. Presses began to appear in smaller cities by the end of the seventeenth century and were even transported to remote areas of the interior. This valiant attempt to establish a network of communications over almost eight million square miles containing some of the earth’s most extreme geographical land formations must be considered among the Spaniards’ greatest undertakings. The first printed document in Guatemala was produced in 1660, and during the 1700s published materials originated from many parts of South America. The Jesuits continued to rely on the printing press in Paraguay for the indoctrination of the residents of the Guaraní missions, and in Argentina it was used for intellectual pursuits of both students and professors at the University of San Ignacio in Córdoba. The latter press, however, was moved to Buenos Aires by orders of the Viceroy José de Vértiz y Salcedo after the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767. Also during this century, Father Carlos Haimhausen is credited with importing the press to Chile, and in the northern territories of present-day Colombia, numerous books and documents were printed. In 1794 the controversial and inflammatory Derechos de hombre y del ciudadano, translated from the French by Antonio Narillo, appeared in New Granada, and a period in which the press would participate in revolutionary activity had begun.

The history of the book in colonial Latin America provides a wide range of research opportunities for scholars and presents them with an enormous challenge for the future. Dictionaries, grammars of Indian languages, histories of exploration, legal codes, religious material, literary works such as plays and poetry, and political propaganda all served the needs of colonial society, and an analysis of their importance both as an object and as an instrument of change sheds light on such diverse topics as the intellectual achievements of pre-Columbian cultures, the education of the Indians, the university during the sixteenth century, the Inquisition, life at viceregal courts, and the influence of the Enlightenment in the wars for independence. By placing the book within the latest critical context, it quickly becomes incorporated into the mainstream of history, and its effects are felt throughout a number of other related disciplines.

III. Scope and Objectives

In 1978 the symposium “Mexico Today” was held at the Library of Congress with the purpose of celebrating Mexican cultural achievements in the United States. “The Book in Mexico,” a symposium chaired by Charles Gibbons, was an important part of this event, and its enthusiastic reception has inspired this “Book in the Americas” prospectus. Instead of just one country, however, the present proposal includes all territories that formerly belonged to Spain and Portugal from the southwestern United States to Tierra del Fuego and traces the development of the book to 1830 when the Spanish empire was dismantled.

With the current concept of book history in mind, the conference we propose is designed to create a forum with the following objectives:

1) to provide a survey of available sources and past bibliographical information,
2) to identify inadequacies in existing scholarship, and
3) to open up new areas of research and stimulate interest in their investigation.

The conference itself will be held at the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island, early in 1987. Eight sessions will be scheduled over a two-day period on such topics as the following:

1) the traditional study of the history of the book in Latin America: bibliography and bibliographers;
2) the distribution of books in colonial Latin America: booksellers and printers,
marketing, clandestine trade, non-Spanish books, Latin vs. the vernacular;
3) readers and readings: literacy, education, changing tastes;
4) the Church and the book: the religious press;
5) printing and publishing, including legal constraints and censorship; the genres or categories of publishing;
6) authorship;
7) the formation of libraries: institutional, private, and church;
8) the physical character or form of New World books, including binding, paper, and format.

Approximately seventy-five scholars from here and abroad will participate in this event and will represent a wide range of disciplines.

In addition to discussion groups and the presentation of a special program on pre-Columbian codices, an exhibition will be mounted at the John Carter Brown. The Library's holdings of Latin American imprints are among the finest in the world and document every aspect of the exploration, conquest, and settlement of the New World to 1850. Collections of particular importance to the "Book in the Americas" conference include that of Mexican imprints produced between 1539 and 1600. It is the largest one pertaining to this time period that has ever been gathered by a single institution, and a cataloguing project is presently underway that will make information about it readily available to researchers. Another extensive collection belonging to the Library is comprised of books printed in native American languages. It is reported to represent sixty-eight percent of all of these works known to be still in existence.

Single items of interest trace the development of the book from the post-conquest pictorial manuscript to the pre-independence periodical. The John Carter Brown owns three of the Testorian catechisms, for example, and is the only library with the exception of Harvard to have a copy of the first South American imprint. It also has one of the few complete sets of the Mercurio Peruano, a journal printed in Lima between 1791 and 1795.

These are only a few of the many manuscripts and books appropriate to the Conference's theme, and more will be chosen for the exhibition to illustrate precisely the topics under discussion. A partial list of items to be included in the exhibition follows.
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THE BOOK IN SPAIN


### Preliminary List of Titles
From the John Carter Brown Library Collection
To Be Exhibited at the Conference

**Original Pictorial Manuscripts**

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<td>Tovar, Juan de. Historia de la boda de los indios.</td>
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**Copies of Pictorial Manuscripts**

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**Tecoaoyan Manuscripts**

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**Tugterian Manuscripts**

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**Prose Manuscripts: Central Mexico**

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Early Printing in Mexico

B604

This literary work contains a poetic description of Mexico written by the Bishop of Puerto Rico.

B609

This reference book was written by the author of the famous picaresque novel, Guzmán de Alfarache.

Early Printing in Peru

B613
Alemán, Mateo. Sucesos de Fray García Cere Arcoblanco de Melico, a cuyo cargo estuvo el goyernio de la Nueva España. A Antonio de Belazar Canonigo de la Santa Iglesia de Mejico, mayordomo i administrador jeneral de los díezmos i rentas de ella. Por el contador Mateo Alemán, criado del rey nuestro señor. Con licencia en Mexico. En la emprenta de la Viuda de Pedro Balí. Por C. Adriceno Cesar. Año 1613.

Alemán's first work written in the New World contains a description of the arrival of the tragic Archbishop-Viceroy Fray García Guerra.

See also the following items from the 1965 JCB exhibition: "Spaniards in their New World":

B668
Mexico (City) - Universidad Estatutos, y Constituciones Mexico [1668]

RA675
Luis Becerra Tanco Felicidad de Mexico. Mexico, 1675

B389f
Contains the first Mexican engraving of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

B674
Gregorio López L864* Inventario de Medicinas Mexico, 1674

Codex
Ind. Antonio de Ciudad Real.

B
Motul dictionary

Early Printing in Peru

BB
Praximática sobre los diez días del año. Impresa en esta dcha Ciudad de los Reyes. 1627

1627
Por Antonio Richardo, 1584.

This is the first imprint produced in South America. It deals with the change to the Gregorian calendar.
This religious work was translated into indigenous languages and used in the conversion of the Indians.  

This religious work was signed by the Jesuit Padre José de Acosta who served as an ecclesiastical censor at the time. He was the author of the Historia natural y moral de las Indias, Sevilla: Juan de León 1590, and one of the first intellectuals to believe that the American Indians had originally come from Asia. (See Book I, Chapter 24, 80–82. B590A/185h).  

This early grammar of the Quechua language was published by Peru’s second printer.
**Vocablos de la lengua Española.** Impreso en la casa de la Compañía de Jesús de Lima, Pueblo en la Provincia de Chili. Por Francisco del Canto, 1612.

**D1**

**Mercurio Peruano de historia, literatura, y noticias públicas.** Impreso en Lima en la Imprenta Real de los Niños Huérfanos. (1791-95). 12 vols.

This journal was the finest periodical produced in colonial Spanish America.

**B766 C3181**

Carrió de la Vadera, Alonso. **El jardillo de cien caminantes desde Buenos-Ayres hasta Lima con sus itinerarios según la más puntual observación, con algunas noticias útiles a los nuevos comerciantes que tratan en realos y otras historias.** Guijon, impr. de la Rovada, 1773.

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First book illustration published in the Western Hemisphere.

**B8583 S151p**

Sahagun, Bernardino de **Pazimodi Christians** (Mexico., 1583).

Ritmos translated into Aztec . (Might this be compared with the Bay psalm book?)