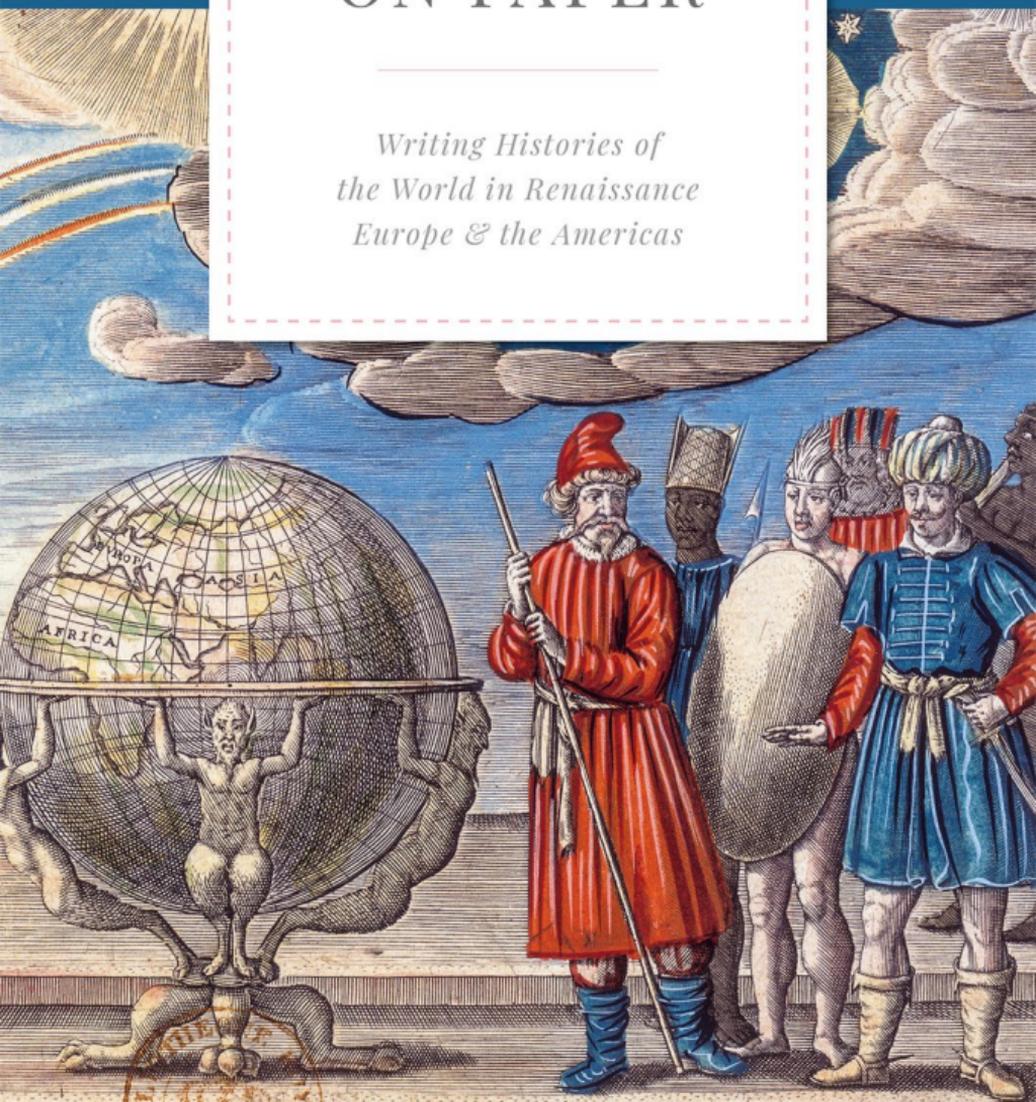


GIUSEPPE MARCOCCI

THE GLOBE ON PAPER

*Writing Histories of
the World in Renaissance
Europe & the Americas*



The Globe on Paper

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*Writing Histories of the World in Renaissance
Europe and the Americas*

GIUSEPPE MARCOCCI

Translated by

RICHARD BATES

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Acknowledgements

I started working on this book in 2012, when the rise of global history was on the crest of a wave and a still brighter future seemed to be assured. In more recent times, the practice of global history has been the subject of some debate. The current international situation also looks less favourably on its aims. The imperatives of global history nonetheless still meet with general approval. This popularity is in stark contrast to the trajectory experienced by the histories of the world written a few centuries ago in response to the challenge which the age of exploration posed to established knowledge. Most of these works were innovative, imaginative, and bold. Yet, those composed, at least, in Renaissance Europe and the Americas received limited recognition. They were, in a word, a relatively unsuccessful, if fascinating, experiment. It is exactly the difference in their fate when compared to present-day global history that first intrigued me. Thus, I realised that I wanted to study them for the material they offer for thinking about more general problems related to history written on a large scale, including the conditions, questions, and urgencies that may encourage or obstruct the writing of such history.

A preliminary version of this research was presented in a series of four lectures that I was invited to give at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*, Paris, between May and June 2013. I am very grateful to Serge Gruzinski for this opportunity. In the two memorable months that I spent as short-term fellow at the John Carter Brown Library, Providence, Rhode Island, in April and May 2015, I had access to invaluable manuscripts and rare prints and could discuss my ideas with fantastic scholars and colleagues, including Kathryn Burns, Harold Cook, Roquinaldo Ferreira, Bérénice Gaillemain, Felipe Rojas Silva, Nancy van Deusen, and of course, Neil Safier. The first draft of this book was completed at the European University Institute, where I was Fernand Braudel Senior Fellow from January to March 2016. I wish to thank Jorge Flores for his wonderful hospitality there.

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This book is dedicated to my son Giacomo, with love.

Exeter College, Oxford

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Introduction

Renaissance Historians and the World

There was a time when writing about the world could be hazardous. The Augustinian chronicler Jerónimo Román (1535–97) must have felt a mixture of satisfaction and relief when a new version of his *Republicas del mundo* was finally published in 1595. From youth he had been attracted by the idea of recreating the globe on paper, thus reducing its ‘diversity of things’ to ‘history’.¹ Román always used the word ‘history’ to describe the *Republicas*. Conceived and written in Castile, at the heart of a monarchy that aspired to be universal, the first edition saw the light of day in 1575. This original work surveyed beliefs, institutions, and customs according to an order that at first sight looks bizarre: the ancient Jews, the Christians, Northern Europe, Venice, Genoa, England, Lucca, Switzerland, Ragusa, the ancient Romans, the indigenous peoples of Mexico and Peru on the eve of the Spanish conquest, the Turks, and the kingdoms of Tunis and Fez.

Leafing through the *Republicas* today, we might be reminded of a treatise of comparative ethnography, but a sixteenth-century reader turning its pages probably had the impression of taking a journey in time as well as space. Granted, Fray Román skipped ‘battles of armies, falls of princes, and twists of fate’, but he did not ignore societies belonging to different periods of history, though he gave them strikingly unequal attention.² This choice confirmed a hierarchy founded on the presumed superiority of the Christian religion, whose effects, however, were far from uniform. Thus, while the laws in force in the Islamic world were indiscriminately dismissed as ‘foul and filthy’, prehispanic America, by contrast, ‘differed in no way from a fine republic’.³ To speak in this way of the Romans might have seemed quite normal in Europe at the time, but certainly not of the ‘Indians’, as Román collectively called the native inhabitants of the New World, their state of

¹ Jerónimo Román, *Republicas del mundo divididas en XXVII libros . . .*, 2 vols. (Medina del Campo: Francisco del Canto, 1575), vol. 1, fol. ¶ 2v. The reference work on Román is still Fidel Villarroel, *Fray Jerónimo Román: Historia del Siglo de Oro* (Zamora: Ediciones Monte Casino, 1974).

² Román explained that he had devoted another work on the ‘monarchies of the world’ to the narrative of political events (Román, *Republicas del mundo divididas en XXVII libros*, vol. 1, fols. ¶ 2v and ¶ 6v).

³ Román, *Republicas del mundo divididas en XXVII libros*, vol. 2, fols. 425r and 368v, respectively. On Román’s discussion of the Islamic world see Francisco Elías de Tejada, ‘Fray Gerónimo Román y el studio politico del Islam en España’, *Revista de la Facultad de Derecho de Madrid* 18–19 (1950–1951): pp. 35–68. The topic, however, deserves further investigation.

barbarity being often invoked to justify their recent subjection by the Spaniards. In addition, Román roundly condemned destruction of precolonial Mexican codices: 'it would be excellent to have them', he wrote, deploring those 'Dominican fathers' who had had them burnt, 'as if they could not have been safeguarded, or sent to Spain', and cautioning that 'ancient memories should always be preserved and protected'.⁴

Román could imagine a colonial archive and how it might be used, even though the *Republicas* relied solely on European sources, which were also quite often scantier than he was willing to acknowledge. Notably, the wide-ranging section on the Indians proved to be no more than a reworking of the *Apologética historia sumaria* by the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas (1484–1566).⁵ An erudite librarian and collector of rare texts, Román somehow managed to gain access to this monumental work on the beliefs and customs of the indigenous societies of Central and South America, although it remained unpublished for centuries. The result of long fieldwork, Las Casas insisted on the value of prehispanic cultures.⁶ This was in line with his battle for the rights of the Indians and his condemnation of colonial violence in the New World, which had rendered him an increasingly controversial figure in Spain and its empire. The decision to draw so fully on the *Apologética historia*, from which Román also borrowed some of its polemical tone, explains the repeated censorship of the *Republicas*. Irritated by the criticism of the conquistadors and the legitimacy of Spanish rule in the Americas, the Council of the Indies intervened as soon as the first edition was published in 1575, as the Inquisition was also to do in 1583–4, when it ordered some parts concerning Jews and Christians to be eliminated from the first volume. In fact, these were the only pages to be removed from the expurgated edition on which Román had quickly set to work.⁷

The removal of the pages censored by the Inquisition was not the only novelty in the version that finally appeared in 1595. Far from being shortened, the *Republicas* was enlarged from two to three volumes, thanks to the inclusion of new regions outside Europe. Román's transfer to Lisbon in 1586 partly

⁴ Román, *Republicas del mundo divididas en XXVII libros*, vol. 2, fol. 402r.

⁵ Henry Raup Wagner (with the collaboration of Helen Rand Parish), *The Life and Writings of Bartolomé de las Casas* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1967), pp. 288–289.

⁶ Bartolomé de las Casas, *Obras completas*, edited by Paulino Castañeda Delgado, 15 vols. (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988–1995), vols. 6–8.

⁷ A sophisticated, if a bit conjectural, interpretation of the censorship of Román is provided by Rolena Adorno, 'Sobre la censura y su evasión: Un caso transatlántico del siglo XVI', in *Grafías del imaginario: Representaciones culturales en España y América (siglos XVI–XVIII)*, edited by Carlos Alberto González Sánchez and Enriqueta Vila Vilar (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003), pp. 13–52. In 1582, however, it was still possible to send the *Republicas* to the New World. See the list of Antonio Dávalos's books recorded at the moment of his boarding, in Seville, Archivo General de Indias, Justicia, 483, fol. 7367r, published in Teodoro Hampe Martínez, *Bibliotecas privadas en el mundo colonial: La difusión de libros e ideas en el virreinato del Perú, siglos XVI–XVII* (Frankfurt: Verveurt, 1996), p. 243.

contributed to the new edition's broader perspective. His lengthy stay in this 'global city' at the head of the worldwide Portuguese Empire that had only recently been incorporated in the Hispanic monarchy (1580), exposed Román to a constant flow of information from parts of the world he had ignored in the first edition.⁸ But more importantly the plan of the work also changed. In particular, the third volume mixed together, under the heading of 'minor republics', not only Genoa, Lucca, and Venice, but also, more puzzlingly, the Ottoman Empire and China. Furthermore, alongside the section on the Indians, which remained unchanged, there were now parts on Ethiopia and Tartary (Central Asia). The accent on the global character of the *Republicas* sounded like a direct response to the censorship the first edition had received: 'leaving aside religion', wrote Román in the prologue to the third volume, 'in the government of each republic or city we can note so many things useful to all the others that this effort of mine will seem most necessary to anyone endowed with wisdom'.⁹ Román also stressed the importance of local sources. A case in point was the manuscript report by Fray Martín de Rada, one of the Augustinian missionaries who visited China in 1575 as part of the growing interest in East Asia that followed the start of the Spanish colonization of the Philippines (1565). Román particularly valued Rada's report because it was said to be based on the reading of 'various books in the Chinese tongue, many of which dealt with their antiquities'.¹⁰ In the same way, the information on Ethiopia drawn from the 'papers and memoirs' that the Portuguese noble Luís César had made available to Román was presented as more credible because it had been confirmed by conversations with some 'Indians' passing through Lisbon.¹¹

The case of the *Republicas* can be told as a story of editorial doggedness, the importance of which was increased by its having helped transmit, even in mediated form, one of Las Casas's principal writings. But if I have chosen to open my book with Román's work, it is on account of its special interest in bringing

⁸ Annemarie Jordan-Gschwend and Kate J. P. Lowe, eds., *The Global City: On the Streets of Renaissance Lisbon* (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2015). While focusing on material culture, research like this reminds us how much we need a detailed study of sixteenth-century Lisbon as a centre of production for global knowledge.

⁹ Jerónimo Román, *Republicas del mundo... Añadidas en esta segunda impresion diversas Republicas que nunca han sido impressas...* 3 vols. (Salamanca: Juan Fernández, 1595), vol. 3, *Prólogo*. The importance of this passage has escaped Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'The Concept of a Gentile Civilization in Missionary Discourse and its European Reception: Mexico, Peru and China in the *Repúblicas del Mundo* by Jerónimo Román', in *Missions d'évangélisation et circulation des savoirs, XVI^e-XVIII^e siècles*, edited by Charlotte de Castelneau-L'Estoile, Marie-Lucie Copete, Aliocha Maldivsky, and Ines G. Županov (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2011), pp. 311-350.

¹⁰ Román, *Republicas del mundo...*, vol. 3, fol. 213r. Román also remarked that after a copy of the manuscript had been stolen from him, he was able to get another one with 'other papers of great curiosity' (fol. 212v) from Rada's brother. On Román and Rada, see Charles R. Boxer, ed., *South China in the Sixteenth Century: Being the Narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr. Gaspar da Cruz, O.P., Fr. Martin de Rada, O.E.S.A., 1550-1575* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1953), pp. lxxxii-lxxxiii.

¹¹ Román, *Republicas del mundo...* vol. 3, fol. 99v and *Prólogo*, respectively.

together the plurality of the globe and its inhabitants. In addition, the vicissitudes of the *Republicas* reveal the ambition and travails that tended to be the lot of many of the authors of histories of the world that I will analyse in the following pages. These works had a genuine Renaissance nature, which lay in the creative relationship they maintained with the Bible and classical literature. While clearly stemming from a Judeo-Christian and Graeco-Roman background, what made these historical writings distinctive was their ability to stretch Renaissance models and references to the point of encompassing the globe's multiple pasts. Thus, drawing on knowledge of distant societies and cultures that an age of exploration and empires had made possible, the world historians considered in this book crafted narratives that, while still evincing typically Renaissance features, nonetheless challenged traditional accounts of human history. The repeated attempts to censor the *Republicas* illustrate how sensitive material of this kind was and just how much it could unnerve the political and religious authorities of the time.

Román considered his work to be 'history'. This reminds us of how much broader the meaning of the term was in early modern Europe than it is today—a feature to bear in mind if we are to understand fully the composite nature of the histories of the world this book deals with. The example of the *Republicas* also helps us highlight two recurring characteristics of these histories: on the one hand, their recognition of the importance of local sources and informants for reconstructing the past of different societies around the globe, even when direct access to these materials was effectively precluded by their loss or the inability to understand them; and, on the other, the imbalance of their narrative and its tendency to grow erratically. In fact, scholars have not paid sufficient attention to Renaissance histories of the world. For that reason it should come as no surprise that, just like Román, many of the authors considered in this book are little known except to a handful of specialists. By studying their works and the specific contexts in which they were written, read, and reused, we can nevertheless bring to light the contours of a landscape that have long since been forgotten.

Old Worlds and the Globe

Global history is widely recognized today as being at the forefront of historical research. It is praised for its radical questioning of old geographies centred on Europe and for breaking the traditional link between world history and the rise of Western imperialism.¹² What has not been considered in sufficient detail is that

¹² The debate over global history has been particularly intense in recent years. Here I limit myself to Maxine Berg, ed., *Writing the History of the Global: Challenges for the 21st Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), and Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

there was a moment in the early modern period when historians were confronted by similar challenges. If multiple contacts with remote cultures and societies revealed the extraordinary plurality of the past, how was it possible to weave together its many threads into a single history of the world? This book is a study of the trans-imperial cross-fertilization of historical writing in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It follows in the wake of the imaginative solutions to this dilemma found by a few historians around the globe. In doing so, this book is not searching for a genealogy of modern-day global history, nor trying to understand the corpus of texts it considers as being a specific episode in the long development of universal history, from ancient times to the present.¹³ Renaissance histories of the world are presented as a break with that tradition, being instead a brief season when historians were finding surprising answers to questions that still matter today.

The period between the first half of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century saw a growing awareness around the globe that most of its different parts had histories that were worth being put on paper. The discovery of America in particular made evident for the first time the existence of continents that had been mutually unaware of each other, and it ultimately led to a convergence of chronologies that until then had been separate, like tributaries before they flow into the main course of a river. In this way, the globe began to look like a container of many different pasts that had followed trajectories that were at first sight independent, as witnessed by a vast number of material traces and memories transmitted in a great variety of forms. In any case, the Europeans were not alone in taking up the challenge of searching for that polyphony by writing history. What has usually been described as a problem in the alignment between ‘the Old World and the New’, to use the title of John Elliott’s classic work, actually involved redefining the relation between many different old worlds and the globe.¹⁴

As Sanjay Subrahmanyam has underlined, in more or less the same decades of the sixteenth century a number of authors who belonged to distinct cultures or used different languages began to write histories of the world.¹⁵ While some of them had travelled and had personal experience of lands and peoples of whose existence they were previously unaware or had heard mentioned only confusedly, others took advantage of an unprecedented circulation of knowledge through reports, maps, and books. In this sense, their writings may be seen as extremely

¹³ Examples of these two approaches can be seen in Patrick O’Brien, ‘Historiographical Traditions and Modern Imperatives for the Restoration of Global History’, *Journal of Global History* 1, no. 1 (2006): pp. 3–39, and Hervé Inglebert, *Le monde, l’histoire: Essai sur les histoires universelles* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2014), respectively.

¹⁴ John H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New, 1492–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

¹⁵ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘On World Historians in the Sixteenth Century’, *Representations* 91, no. 1 (2005): pp. 26–57. For further considerations, also see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘On Early Modern Historiography’, in *The Cambridge World History*, vol. 6, *The Construction of a Global World, 1400–1800 CE*, edited by Jerry H. Bentley, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, part 2, *Patterns of Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 425–445.

creative solutions to the more general need to manage the explosion of information that marked their age.¹⁶ In this context, some men of letters who lived in Asian regions also felt a pressing need to redefine the image of the world by rewriting its history. Inevitably, the outcomes were varied, as the authors of these works belonged to distinct intellectual traditions and often had fragmentary knowledge at their disposal. They were also dealing with empires that were competing with each other and tended to be interested in a precise interpretation of the past that might prove controversial or polemical.

By the time its account reached the sixteenth century, the Persian chronicle completed in 1607 by the poet and historian Ṭāḥīr Muḥammad Sabzavāri kept the victorious feats of Akbar the Great (r. 1556–1605) at the centre, while ranging well beyond Mughal India as far as Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka. In addition, thanks to information collected by Ṭāḥīr Muḥammad himself during a diplomatic mission to Goa, the capital city of Portuguese Asia, this work described, however confusedly, the events leading up to the recent annexation of Portugal to Spain; it even mentioned an island that may be identifiable as St Helena but not the Americas.¹⁷ About a quarter-century earlier, on the other hand, a long account of the ‘West Indies’ had been written in Istanbul. Christopher Columbus’s voyage, the penetration of the Caribbean, the conquests of Mexico and Peru, as well as the expedition of Miguel López de Legazpi to the Philippines, were narrated there, closely following the Italian translations of European writers who had published some of the earliest texts on Spanish America.¹⁸ These ‘fresh news’ (*Hadis-i nev*), as the chronicle was significantly called by its anonymous author, gave Turkish readers additional knowledge of the dimensions of the Spanish Empire at a time when the universal ambitions of the Ottoman Caliphate were contending with the global claims of the Iberian monarchies.¹⁹

The examples discussed above suggest we abandon once and for all the idea of the supposed exceptionalism of the historiography produced in early modern Europe, and instead interpret the histories of the world that were being compiled at the time as local manifestations of what was a global trend. Nonetheless, to understand the characteristics of these histories, their specific background matters. Written in the shadow of the Iberian empires and Dutch, English, and French attempts to challenge Spain and Portugal, these works overlapped with and cut

¹⁶ Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

¹⁷ Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam. *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), pp. 98–115.

¹⁸ Thomas D. Goodrich, *The Ottoman Turks and the New World: A Study of Tarih-i Hind-i Ğharbi and Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Americana* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1990). On this work, also see Serge Gruzinski, *What Time is There? America and Islam at the Dawn of Modern Times*, translated by Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

¹⁹ Giancarlo Casale, ‘Tordesillas and the Ottoman Caliphate: Early Modern Frontiers and the Renaissance of an Ancient Islamic Institution’, *Journal of Early Modern History* 19, no. 6 (2015): pp. 485–511.

across the retrieval of classical antiquity that the humanists had been engaged in for some time, revealing a wider Renaissance culture than that to which we are accustomed.

This book challenges conventional interpretations, which see the authentic expression of historical writing exclusively in works produced by European humanists and scholars that dealt with biblical and classical antiquity, or recounted events in the recent political and military history of European cities, republics, or monarchies.²⁰ The consensus is that only in this limited, selective corpus of texts, whether written in Latin or in the vernacular tongues, did historical practice mark a real advance in the direction of a modern discipline that only finally developed clear and shared rules in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, carving out so carefully and precisely the confines of a genuinely Renaissance canon of historical writing has prevented us from grasping the complexity of histories of the world, and has reduced them, alongside the chronicles of discoveries and conquests, to a minor variant in the extensive field of travel literature.

The artificial divisions introduced by the classifications of modern academic scholarship can be overcome by tracing the extraordinary mobility of men, books, and models of historical writing across the oceans.²¹ To do so, the tendency to maintain a rigid separation between the presence of Europeans in the Americas and in other parts of the world must be rejected as something that inevitably leads to sacrificing how the globe was contemplated in the round in the age of exploration.²² Indeed, much of what has been written on the relation between the authority of the classical tradition and the shock of discovery also applies to regions other than the New World.²³ Moreover, reducing the unknown to the known by references to the customs, myths, and figures of Greek and Roman antiquities was just one of the reactions, and not always the first, that contributed to redefining the European image of the world, including that of its past. This depended not only on the fact that the biblical account provided a repertoire of names, episodes, and explanations that could provide formidable answers to the doubts and questions

²⁰ Anthony Grafton, *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). See also Gianna Pomata and Nancy G. Siraisi, eds., *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

²¹ Important remarks on this point, with special reference to the Hispanic world, have been recently made by Alejandra B. Osorio, 'Of National Boundaries and Imperial Geographies: A New Radical History of the Spanish Habsburg Empire', *Radical History Review* 130, no. 1 (2018): pp. 100–130.

²² Despite its fundamental contribution, the classic study by Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965–1993) also is a demonstration of this. Partial exceptions are Stuart B. Schwartz, ed., *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and Anthony Pagden, ed., *Facing Each Other: The World's Perception of Europe and Europe's Perception of the World*, 2 vols. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

²³ Anthony Grafton, (with the collaboration of April Shelford and Nancy Siraisi), *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992).

opened up by Portuguese and Spanish exploration.²⁴ For example, recent work has demonstrated the importance of recovering the active role of local cultures in modelling early modern Europe's knowledge of other regions of the world.²⁵

While the production of Renaissance histories of the world can be understood only in the light of global exchanges, one should also note that their chronology contributes to revising the idea of an uncertain and blunted impact of America on Europe.²⁶ The first signs of an attempt to cope with the multiple pasts of the world date from the late 1520s. Such an early start also depended on the accidental nature of the discovery of the New World in a larger process of reducing global distances and increasing interaction across the world that was already at an advanced stage in 1492. No less importantly, these histories of the world were written in parallel with the humanist effort to retrieve the legacy of classical antiquity. In that context, the complex, slippery past of societies which seemed to have left no trace either in Greek and Latin authors or in the Bible posed a dramatic challenge to European historical knowledge. Suddenly, the universal histories from the creation of the world onwards which had been so popular in the Middle Ages seemed too cramped as they were limited to information traditionally available in their authors' own cultures. Their legacy survived, however, in the updated editions and vernacular translations of works like the *Supplementum chronicarum* (1483) by the Augustinian friar Giacomo Filippo Foresti, which were widely published in the sixteenth century.²⁷

Renaissance histories of the world have been the subject of little research. Peter Burke has suggested the first step to identifying them would be to list the titles of works dealing with regions outside Europe.²⁸ The problem with this approach is that, by including texts that concentrate on just one territory or continent, one easily risks ending up with a corpus of writings that is too vast and fragmented. Granted, they also include the history of the kings of Persia by the Portuguese *converso* Pedro Teixeira, who had the virtue of drawing on local sources, 'the authors whereof being nearer at hand, delivered their actions with less confusion

²⁴ The best study on this topic is still Giuliano Giozzi, *Adamo e il Nuovo Mondo: La nascita dell'antropologia come ideologia coloniale: Dalle genealogie bibliche alle teorie razziali, 1500–1700* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1977). See also David N. Livingstone, *Adam's Ancestors: Race, Religion & The Politics of Human Origins* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

²⁵ A clear example of this is Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Europe's India: Words, People, Empires, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

²⁶ Elliott, *The Old World and the New*, pp. 1–27. For a first reconsideration, see John H. Elliott, 'Renaissance Europe and America: A Blunted Impact?', in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, edited by Fredi Chiappelli with Michael J.B. Allen and Robert L. Benson, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), vol. 1, pp. 11–23.

²⁷ Achim Krümmel, *Das Supplementum Chronicarum des Augustinermönches Jacobus Philippus Foresti von Bergamo: Eine der ältesten Bilderchroniken und ihre Wirkungsgeschichte* (Herzberg: Hautz, 1992).

²⁸ Peter Burke, 'European Views of World History: From Giovio to Voltaire', *History of European Ideas* 6, no. 3 (1985): pp. 237–251.

and more certainty than those of other nations'.²⁹ The overall effect of this methodology, however, is that of mistaking a variegated galaxy of works for world history. At the same time, in the specific case of the impact of the discovery of America, Burke has proposed we look at the number of pages on the subject in encyclopaedic works with an historical bent. Hence his conclusion that the vision of world history in the sixteenth century remained almost unaltered in the face of the constant flow of information on the New World.³⁰

Strategies like this risk being short cuts to studying a phenomenon that was actually extraordinarily complex. Nor do they allow us to appreciate other decisive aspects: from the changes that had to be introduced in the forms of historical narratives in order to incorporate new pasts, to the constraints imposed by imperial powers that became ever more hostile to the writing of the history of precolonial societies.³¹ Finally, one should not forget tensions and rivalries affecting Renaissance culture in Europe and beyond. They emerge even more when we look not only at the controversial content of histories of the world, but also their production, including the editorial strategies of the printers and their reception, which can partly be traced through the study of inventories and library catalogues.³²

Recovering a Global Renaissance

The writing of histories of the world was a minority line in Renaissance literature. While the intellectual trajectories that are reconstructed in this book prove that historical cultures were in constant communication across the globe, there was no shortage of obstacles. The first histories of the world composed after the discovery of America involved demanding dignity and substantial respect for peoples that had recently been subjugated or who were, at the very least, culturally different and geographically distant. This clashed with the official projects of political and religious powers that supported a representation of the past which legitimized their action in the present. Not surprisingly, several world historians wrote from the margins, in exile, hospital, or jail, their works often having a troubled

²⁹ Pedro Teixeira, *The Travels . . . with his 'Kings of Harmuz', and Extracts from his 'Kings of Persia'*, edited by William F. Sinclair (London: Hakluyt Society, 1902), p. ciii. The original edition was published in Spanish in 1610. Teixeira made explicit reference to the fifteenth-century Persian encyclopaedic work *Rauzat al-Safa'* (Garden of Purity) by Mir Khwand.

³⁰ Peter Burke, 'America and the Rewriting of World History', in *America in European Consciousness, 1493–1750*, edited by Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 33–51.

³¹ This is a major difference with respect to the later period considered by Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

³² Important considerations about this are developed in John H. Elliott, 'Final Reflections: The Old World and the New Revisited', in *America in European Consciousness, 1493–1750*, edited by Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 391–408.



Figure 0.1 Nodes of production of Renaissance histories of the world.

publication history, or just remaining in manuscript form. Conversely, others provided much less upsetting narratives and adapted their accounts to the taste of a quickly growing general readership, while those who aligned what they wrote to the perspective of an empire or confession contributed to establishing models that narrowed the space for autonomy and experimentation in writing histories of the world. Those who felt the need to attempt a history of the world often had unusual lives. The resulting account therefore winds its way from Mexico to China, passes through the Molucca Islands and Peru, stops off at the shops of Venetian printers, and visits the rival courts of Spain and England (see Figure 0.1). Its pages teem with a wide range of historical actors, including humanists, librarians, forgers, missionaries, imperial officials, and indigenous chroniclers. Therefore, my discussion of the actual dissemination of the various histories of the world and how they were read is never separated from the specific context in which they were produced.

Between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the globe began to be perceived more and more as a shared object. Those who tried to write its history could be aware that it was a joint effort with other writers across the world, to the point that sometimes they read and inspired each other. Something of this process was captured in an engraving made in 1637 by Jean Picart (see Figure 0.2) for the title page of a new five-volume edition of the monumental compilation by Pierre d'Avity, titled *Le Monde, ou la Description generale des ses quatre parties*.³³ A globe displaying the eastern hemisphere is the focal point of the scene. It attracts the

³³ Pierre d'Avity, *Le monde, ou la description generale des ses quatre parties avec tous ses empires royaumes, estats et republicques* (Paris: Claude Sonnius, 1637).



Figure 0.2 Two groups of men from different regions of the world standing at the sides of a globe. Engraving by Jean Picart from the title page of Pierre d’Avity’s *Le Monde, ou la Description generale de ses quatre parties* (Paris: Claude Sonnius, 1637). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Arsenal, FOL-H-85 (1).

eyes and gestures of two groups of men who stand at its sides in the same posture. On the left, there are six Europeans, wearing fine clothes that follow the fashion of their respective countries. On the right, there are six other men whose origins are in Africa, the Americas, and Asia, and whose attires correspond to what Europeans then attributed to the inhabitants of the parts of the world they came from. Placed at the front of a work that enjoyed remarkable success from the start (1613), so much so that each new edition was longer than the previous one, Picart’s image expressed a clear religious hierarchy. A representation of God as the source of light with the tetragram ‘Yahweh’ written in Hebrew, dividing the sky into two parts, dominates the globe. The six Europeans are in the sunny part, enlightened by the Christian faith, while the other six men are shrouded in the darkness of error. This asymmetry mirrored the most common opinion among d’Avity’s readers and mid-seventeenth-century Europeans in general as to their own superiority. However, it did not negate the overall message of the picture, particularly in its lower section: understanding the world was a matter for all its inhabitants. A similar feeling had been evident in a certain number of historians in the previous century. But in Picart’s day the intensity and creativity with which these earlier historians had turned to the multiple pasts of the world to understand

its unprecedented entanglement with the present had now faded. Though without maps, the declared aim of d'Avity's work was to provide knowledge useful for politics, starting from geography. It was not, nor did it claim to be, a history of the world, although it rested on the vastness and variety of the materials that were the basis of many works of this nature.

The materials in question were not only various kinds of written and oral sources, but also inscriptions, remains, and ruins. Physically touching the traces of societies that had disappeared was no less significant for understanding how limited historical knowledge of the globe was at the time. The sight of those fragments, sometimes produced by the violence of conquest, was profoundly disconcerting, especially in the New World. Some Europeans reacted by studying local languages, making an effort to understand forms of communication that were radically different from their own, and identifying evidence that might provide a glimpse of a past that had not yet entirely disappeared. Others began to wonder about that past and its stratifications, collecting, describing, and classifying (not without misunderstanding) its relics. There were also some who, without travelling around the globe, managed to procure objects from distant lands. Little by little, pieces of a statue or potsherds, rare fabrics or other things with unusual or bizarre shapes found their place in collections that were often kept in cabinets and libraries.³⁴ On the other hand, it had been standard practice from the first long-distance voyages to bring back objects from the regions visited, offering them to patrons or keeping them in one's home. Before long, indigenous artisans were producing them to order, following styles that would best satisfy the tastes and expectations of the recipients in Europe. Hernán Cortés had already done exactly this immediately after his conquest of Mexico.³⁵

Unsurprisingly, these fakes enjoyed an ambivalent relationship with scholarship.³⁶ A growing number of humanists were engaged in studying the past through artefacts, coins, and other objects, so as to suggest more reliable chronologies, reconstruct myths and genealogies, or penetrate the significance of the social organization and the customs of populations distant in time. As Alain Schnapp has highlighted, alongside the study of Roman remains, the broadening of the spatial horizons of European culture made a decisive contribution to the

³⁴ Anthony Alan Shelton, 'Cabinets of Transgression: Renaissance Collections and the Incorporation of the New World', in *The Cultures of Collecting*, edited by John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), pp. 177–203; Isabel Yaya, 'Wonders of America: The Curiosity Cabinet as a Site of Representation and Knowledge', *Journal of the History of Collections* 20, no. 2 (2008): pp. 173–188; Daniela Bleichmar, 'Seeing the World in a Room: Looking at Exotica in Early Modern Collections', in *Collecting Across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World*, edited by Daniela Bleichmar and Peter C. Mancall (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp. 15–30.

³⁵ Alessandra Russo, 'Cortés's Objects and the Idea of New Spain: Inventories as Spatial Narratives', *Journal of the History of Collections* 23, no. 2 (2011): pp. 229–252.

³⁶ Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

definition of Renaissance antiquarian sensibility.³⁷ At that time, this approach had not yet acquired full autonomy and was not always distinguished from history.³⁸ That is one reason why the relation of antiquarianism to Renaissance histories of the world was particularly intense. There was also a significant intermixing with an incipient archaeological activity that was cultivated almost unawares. One example is provided by European explorers who claimed to have come across on their travels a cross or the footprint of an apostle, thus confirming that other Christians before them had visited the places they had reached. Meanwhile, some missionaries started to burrow into the ground or under remains of buildings to find, and destroy, votive objects, and other tangible signs of the survival of local cults among the populations they sought to convert. However paradoxical it may appear, these efforts too played a part in that slow ‘discovery of the past’ that consisted in exhuming its material remains.³⁹ Disinterred or not, the circulation of objects from distant lands was important in transforming the sense of the past. They were commonly called ‘antiquities’ even when they were relatively recent. Significantly, this humanist notion was for the first time applied to vestiges from outside Europe in early colonial America, thus confirming how quickly the classical legacy made its way across the Atlantic.⁴⁰ Moreover, like the writing of histories of the world, antiquarian sensibility was by no means the exclusive prerogative of European culture either: scholars have increasingly focused on comparing different attitudes towards the materiality of the past all around the globe, including their possible interconnection from the sixteenth century onward.⁴¹

The close relations with collecting and antiquarianism throw light on a more general parallel between the composite cross-cultural universe in which the histories of the world studied in this book took form and the global character of Renaissance culture. Historians of material culture have been the first to insist on the open character of a movement that is habitually regarded as distinctively European. The objects that were displayed in public rooms or held in private ones

³⁷ Alain Schnapp, ‘European Antiquarianism and the Discovery of the New World’, in *Past Presented: Archaeological Illustration and the Ancient Americas*, edited by Joanne Pillsbury (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2012): pp. 49–67.

³⁸ Arnaldo Momigliano, ‘Ancient History and the Antiquarian’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13, no. 3–4 (1950): pp. 285–315.

³⁹ Alain Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past: The Origins of Archaeology* (London: British Museum Press, 1996), pp. 121–219.

⁴⁰ Reference works include David A. Lupher, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003) and Sabine MacCormack, *On the Wings of Time: Rome, the Incas, Spain, and Peru* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007). However, there is new important research in the field, as exemplified by Andrew Laird and Nicola Miller, eds. *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2018).

⁴¹ Peter N. Miller and François Louis, eds., *Antiquarianism and Intellectual Life in Europe and China, 1500–1800* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012); Alain Schnapp (with Lothar von Falkenhausen, Peter N. Miller, and Tim Murray), ed., *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspectives* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013); Benjamin Anderson and Felipe Rojas, eds. *Antiquarianisms: Contact, Conflict, Comparison* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2017).

are a good example. Both Renaissance inventories and paintings show that a considerable number of these objects came from afar, or consisted of parts and materials, some of which had originated outside Europe: glasswork, ceramics, and metal furnishings from Syria, Turkish carpets, silks and velvets from South Asia and China, marble from West Africa, or American pigments used to make colours for dyeing clothing or for paints. At the same time Renaissance products like Genoese maiolicas were influenced by Chinese porcelain, with which they were only able to compete on the markets because they cost less.⁴² One central feature of this ‘global Renaissance’, made up of everyday interactions that went far beyond the confines of Europe and the Mediterranean, is to be found in the histories of the world explored in the following pages.⁴³

Chapters in Renaissance Histories of the World

A main argument of this book is that Renaissance histories of the world circulated, fostered debates, and went through adaptations and translations from one language to another. This multilingualism was an essential part of the creative attitude of their authors. History was loosely defined at the time and it was this very malleability that made it possible to produce highly experimental works across different cultures. Yet, there were not many options available if one wished to write a history of the world. More particularly, those venturing on such an enterprise chose as their models texts that are now rarely included in the canon of Renaissance historiography. Some of them were nonetheless very popular among sixteenth-century readers, on both sides of the Atlantic and beyond, and their success certainly helped make them a reference point for world historians at that time. Some of these writings continued to tell of imaginary lands peopled by men and animals with the most improbable forms, monstrous creatures that, from Herodotus and Pliny the Elder down to John Mandeville, had long filled the gaps in real knowledge.⁴⁴ In any case, they were reworked, not through a desire to correct these errors, but because those works used ways of organizing and presenting historical knowledge that seemed most effective to those who were then trying to compose histories of the world.

⁴² Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Luca Molà, ‘The Global Renaissance: Cross-Cultural Objects in the Early Modern Period’, in *Global Design History*, edited by Glenn Adamson, Giorgio Riello, and Sarah Teasley (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 11–20. A pioneering study in this field is Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (London: Reaktion, 2000).

⁴³ The case of historiography is substantially ignored by Peter Burke, Luke Clossey, and Felipe Fernández-Armesto, ‘The Global Renaissance’, *Journal of World History* 28, no. 1 (2017): pp. 1–30.

⁴⁴ They also were widely present in Renaissance cartographic production, as has been recently recalled by Surekha Davies, *Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds, Maps, and Monsters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

At this point it will be worth commenting briefly on the internal structure of this book, which describes and analyses four ways of narrating the history of the world, with the problems they raised, but also the reasons that led to the end of these variants of Renaissance historiography. Chapter 1 focuses on a model of genealogical history through the example of the Franciscan missionary Toribio de Benavente, better known by his Nahuatl name Motolinía (c. 1490–1569), who arrived in Mexico in the aftermath of the collapse of the Aztec Empire. It is argued that Motolinía was one of the first writers to apply the concept of antiquities to the prehispanic past, as it supported his attempt to incorporate the indigenous peoples of the Americas into world history. This he achieved by stretching local sources and oral accounts as part of a monogenetic theory of humanity deriving from the work of the Italian humanist and Dominican friar Annius of Viterbo (1437–1502), the most infamous Renaissance forger. Largely based on fabricated etymologies, Annius's fakes gave rise to a sharp dispute about the New World, which also involved Fray Bartolomé de las Casas. Nonetheless, the model provided by Annius went global and was even used by the Portuguese writer Fernão Mendes Pinto to forge narratives about the ancient foundation of the Chinese Empire.

China is the starting point of the following chapter, which explores the history of the world centred around the constant mobility of its people and goods written by the Portuguese captain António Galvão (d. 1557). Among other things, he claimed to have collected the story of an ancient Chinese dominance over the Indian Ocean directly from the voices of the local inhabitants of the Moluccas, the so-called Spice Islands in Southeast Asia, where he had spent a few years in the service of the Portuguese Empire. In his unique work, published posthumously in 1563, Galvão backdated that story to the most antique times, describing the Chinese as the first world explorers and even the original populators of the Americas. Inspired by the ideas of the Venetian humanist and librarian Giovanni Battista Ramusio (1485–1557), Galvão's history would not be reprinted in Portugal until 1731, but was rediscovered towards the end of the sixteenth century by the French historian La Popelinière (c. 1541–1608) and the English geographer Richard Hakluyt (c. 1552–1613), who used it in their campaign to relaunch the colonial efforts of their respective kingdoms.

Roughly in the same period, the indigenous writer from Peru, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (c. 1535–c. 1616), was completing a chronicle in Spanish, which he sent to King Philip III of Spain (r. 1598–1621). This original experiment in comparative history will be considered in chapter 3, which will discuss how Guaman Poma merged local memories and traditional accounts of the prehispanic ages of the Andean populations with other events in the history of the Old World. It is suggested that this mixture relied on the positive view of the cultural variety of the world presented in a Renaissance encyclopaedia about the customs of people from around the globe written by the German humanist Hans Böhm (c. 1485–1535), also known as Johannes Boemus. This treatise, which Guaman

Poma quoted from without having read it directly, was a bestseller in sixteenth-century Europe. The reconstruction of the vicissitudes of its circulation, including translations, rewritings, and plagiarisms, reveals the extent to which Böhm's work could inspire the writing of histories of the world across the Atlantic.

A less intricate case is examined in chapter 4, which analyses the series of *Historie del mondo* by the Italian *poligrafo* Giovanni Tarcagnota (1508–66) with additions by his continuers. It is contended that these massive volumes, published in Venice from the early 1560s onwards, were inspired by *Histories of His Own Times* (1550–2) by the humanist Paolo Giovio (1486–1552). Like Giovio, Tarcagnota and his continuers used a narrative strategy based on simultaneity in order to connect different events. The extraordinary success that *Historie del mondo* enjoyed among readers encouraged many imitations. One of the late sixteenth-century works published at a hectic pace by the Venetian printers to satisfy the demand of a seemingly insatiable market was that of Cesare Campana (c. 1540–1606). It also included a discourse in defence of the writing of histories of the world, which I take to be the first real attempt to theorize this genre in Europe.

The book concludes with a final chapter describing the twilight of Renaissance histories of the world in the conflictual period marked by the Dutch and English penetration of the Americas and Asia. It starts by considering the case of histories of the East and West Indies written by Jesuits, such as Giampietro Maffei (1533–1603) and José de Acosta (1540–1600), to celebrate the global reach of their missionary order. Then it shows how the threat of the expansion of Protestant empires led to the emergence of a more static geopolitical body of knowledge, as exemplified by the works of the Italian Giovanni Botero (1544–1617), a former Jesuit, and the English adventurer Anthony Sherley (1565–c. 1635). By this time, the parallel attempt to write histories of the world such as those by the Spanish royal chronicler Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas (1549–1625) and the English courtier and explorer Walter Raleigh (c. 1554–1618), had come to an end. The latter only managed to publish the first volume of his *History of the World* (1614). Four years later, after returning from a disastrous expedition to America in search of the mythical El Dorado his execution in London brought the curtain down on the writing of Renaissance histories of the world.

As will be clear by the end of this book, despite reworkings and rewritings from one language to another, Renaissance histories of the world never acquired the fully autonomous status of a genre. They were a series of endeavours, sometimes highly experimental, but they never formed a definite and consistent tradition. Nonetheless, until the first decades of the seventeenth century, those histories had an authentic global projection, or at least had the world as a backdrop: they faced the difficult challenge of trying to give an account of an extraordinary extension of perspectives, and its repercussions on European perceptions of the globe and its past.

1

Genealogical Histories

Forging Antiquities from New Spain to China

An obsession with origins has often dominated historical studies. Rarely has this idol proved more attractive than in the aftermath of the discovery of the New World. Where did its inhabitants spring from? Why did the Bible not say a single word about millions of people who had been living in a continent hitherto unknown to Europeans? With all their religious implications, these questions undermined conventional ideas about humanity's common past. Sometimes, they encouraged Renaissance authors to reconstruct genealogies that allowed them to include the 'Indians'—as the indigenous peoples of the Americas were collectively named by the Europeans at the time—in world history. A major drawback to this technique was, however, that it relied largely on forgery.

The main focus of this chapter is on the understanding of the prehispanic ages and their relics as 'antiquities' in early colonial Mexico. While this classification entailed inevitable mistakes, it nonetheless allowed the early Franciscan missionaries to manipulate historical knowledge in a way that would make it readily intelligible to the readers of their works. This was especially true in the case of the accounts that were said to be recorded by pictorial codices and the oral memory of natives, which remained ambiguous and elusive in the eyes of those who collected them. As their conclusions were often the subject of much debate, narratives establishing worldwide genealogical connections became rife. Ultimately, what made them so popular was their ability to fine tune the past of the world so as to avoid its fragmentation into an archipelago of isolated histories.

Franciscan Antiquarians in the New World

The first Spaniards moving around Central Mexico in the aftermath of the fall of the Aztec Empire (1521) found themselves surrounded by a landscape that was still marked by the visible traces of the time before the conquest. These included buildings and temples, which sometimes the newcomers described as Egyptian pyramids or Islamic mosques. The initial impulse was to destroy the former cultural order, including the stones that kept its memory alive across Tenochtitlán and the numerous other cities inhabited by tens of thousands of Nahuatl peoples in Central Mexico.

The Spaniards also launched themselves into a systematic and ultimately incomplete attempt to eradicate any trace of local beliefs and ceremonies. These practices were usually labelled as 'idolatry', a notion encompassing what Christian theology understood as the many different faces of the worship of Satan.¹ The Observant Franciscans led by Fray Martín de Valencia played their part in this colonial project. They arrived in Mexico in 1524 with collective salvation on their minds. This first group of friars was allegedly twelve in number, in imitation of the apostles. They came from Estremadura, a Spanish region characterized by strong mystic and reforming tendencies. These missionaries firmly believed that they had quickly to establish a Christian society, even at the cost of resorting to mass baptisms, or accepting the violence of the conquerors, as lesser evils. The difficulty experienced in converting the Nahua peoples, however, triggered what we may call the antiquarian direction which the Franciscan mission took. The resilience of the native inhabitants led the friars to realize the importance of understanding their vision of the world, which only careful study of the local past could disclose. They put great effort into collecting and cross-checking information and evidence about the indigenous cultures, learning local languages, interpreting pictograms, and dating material remains. Thus, history emerged as a form of knowledge of the highest importance in Spanish America.²

The search for the lost past of the native inhabitants of Mexico was to condition the first century following the conquest. It was a tale of much misapprehension on the part of the Spaniards, attempts to acquire information from prehispanic codices and oral accounts, and often hasty and incomplete writings composed by Franciscans in the pauses between their religious activities. Usually called 'chronicles', the friars' works were a composite of travel literature, description of precolonial societies, and reports on missionary achievements. Often lacking a strictly chronological narrative, they tended to be organized on taxonomical principles. Encouraged by superiors who aimed to survey the most significant missionary attempts, these writings catalogued what were considered indigenous customs, rites, and beliefs in the expectation that this would help extirpate idolatry. Thus, the early Franciscans took an increasing interest in the origins of the peoples of Mexico, their alleged lineages, the foundations of cities, and the ruins of buildings and monuments, as well as in their votive objects, artworks, and pictorial codices. While they were acting in a colonial present that was in constant change, these friars were also travelling back in time. But a question of taxonomy

¹ Serge Gruzinski, *The Conquest of Mexico: The Incorporation of Indian Societies into the Western World, 16th–18th Centuries*, translated by Eileen Corrigan (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993). See also Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Theology, Ethnography, and the Historicization of Idolatry', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 4 (2006): pp. 571–596.

² Georges Baudot, *Utopia and History in Mexico: The First Chroniclers of Mexican Civilization, 1520–1569*, translated by Bernard R. Ortiz de Montellano and Thelma Ortiz de Montellano (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1995).

arose: how to select information that appeared scattered, disorganized, and often contradictory, and transform it into a reliable and fluid historical reconstruction? How to make sense of local narratives, organized by cyclic conceptions of time and often already emended over the centuries?

Recounting the history of Mexico meant explaining the existence of a hidden humanity that the Bible had not even hinted at, but it also had to justify why on earth God had decided to make the Spaniards his chosen instrument in revealing the Americas to the rest of the world. The religious approach of the Franciscans led them to structure their writing along the lines of a binary opposition: the prehispanic ages, marked by false beliefs and cruel practices inspired by the devil (above all, human sacrifice), were followed by an age of spiritual regeneration, attested by the legendary initial successes of the missionary work, which were recounted in exceptional detail.³ Nevertheless, the pre-conquest period was not simply condemned in its entirety. On the contrary, the Franciscans tried to establish a relation between the Nahuatl peoples and the rest of humanity through a globalizing narrative.

The inclusion of the Americas in Renaissance histories of the world was largely made possible by the application to the prehispanic societies of the classical notion of 'antiquities', originating from a work on Roman culture and institutions by Marcus Terentius Varro. In doing so, the Franciscans were imitating the way the humanists in fifteenth-century Europe had begun to rethink the pre-Christian past as a whole, with special reference to the Graeco-Roman world.⁴ However, scholars in Europe saw themselves and their own culture as the successors of a remote past which they considered superior to their own present, while the antiquities that the missionaries were studying in Mexico often dated back to an alien past which they unanimously condemned as inferior. This was a major difference from Europe, where the complex process of retrieving classical culture had also led to the elaboration of the idea of 'middle ages', which marked an almost impenetrable break with ancient times. A further element in this theory was that these 'middle ages' were inaugurated by what the humanists first regarded as 'barbarian' invasions.⁵ Paradoxically, in the New World this role was performed by the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors, who were nonetheless soon keen to classify indigenous people as barbarians. More crucially, the understanding of the conquest as an instantaneous shift that had changed the history of the Americas forever reduced the distance between prehispanic and colonial times to a thin line. Ultimately, the tripartite chronology that humanists adopted for

³ This binary opposition, it has been argued, would derive from Joachim of Fiore's *Book of Concordance* and the parallel between the history of the *Old Testament* and the history of the time since Christ. See Julia McClure, *The Franciscan Invention of the New World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 172–175.

⁴ Kathleen Wren Christian, *Empire Without End: Antiquities Collections in Renaissance Rome, c. 1350–1527* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

⁵ Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969).

European historical time collided with the binary distinction used in the case of the New World: as far as Renaissance authors were concerned, there were no 'middle ages' in the Americas. Yet the fact that the notion of antiquities was used with reference to both the Old World and the New helped missionaries draw a parallel that was of paramount importance in developing a scholarly interest in the indigenous past.

The opening stages of this process occurred as early as 1495. In the context of his second journey to the Caribbean, Christopher Columbus asked a Catalan Hieronymite friar called Ramón Pané to write about a group of native inhabitants from Hispaniola who in all probability spoke an Arawak language. Pané completed his report in 1498, but the version that we have today only corresponds to the Italian translation of a later transcription included in the life of Columbus written by the discoverer's son Hernando. Therefore, it is difficult to be certain how close to the original is the current title, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*. Nonetheless, in a passage which is said to incorporate Columbus's exact words, we can read that he had commissioned 'a certain Fray Ramón, who knew their language . . . to collect information on their rites and antiquities'.⁶ As Arnaldo Momigliano observed, while the 'the word *antiquitates* meant in the book-titles of the fifteenth century . . . simply history', these works could also include information about successive dynasties and kings, mythologies, and traditions—a set of topics which only later became the subject of a separate antiquarian interest.⁷ Pané's report seems to correspond perfectly to Momigliano's description.⁸ Merely to mention 'antiquities of the Indians' immediately raised the question of sources. This was a matter of grave concern for Pané. In particular, what worried him most was the orality of the local stories on which his account was based: 'because they have neither writing nor letters', he wrote, 'they cannot give a good account of how they have heard this from their ancestors, and therefore they do not all say the same thing, nor can one write down in an orderly fashion what they tell.'⁹ Without fear of contradiction, Pané nonetheless reassured his readership that he had accurately recorded the words of his native informants: 'everything I write, they tell it thus, in the manner I am writing it, and thus I set it down as I have understood it from the people of the country.'¹⁰

⁶ This passage is in chapter 62 of Hernando's biography of his father, first published in 1571. See Ramón Pané, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, edited by José Juan Arrom, translated by Susan C. Griswold (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 45. On Hernando Columbus, see Edward Wilson-Lee, *The Catalogue of Shipwrecked Books: Young Columbus and the Quest for a Universal Library* (London: William Collins, 2018).

⁷ Arnaldo Momigliano, 'Ancient History and the Antiquarian', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13, no. 3–4 (1950): pp. 289–290.

⁸ Rather surprisingly Pané is not quoted in the otherwise excellent collection by Andrew Laird and Nicola Miller, eds., *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2018).

⁹ Pané, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, p. 8.

¹⁰ Pané, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, p. 1.

Listening to the voices of indigenous people and how they narrated their past was a necessary step for those who wished to write about local antiquities in the Americas. The oral character of these sources clashed with the humanist idea that history should rest on reliable written evidence, as the work of philologists like Lorenzo Valla had demonstrated. This tension clearly troubled Pané. It would become an even tougher challenge for later accounts which incorporated multiple antiquities from around the globe and which led to the haphazard merging of very different chronologies, thus generating what we might call, with Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, the ‘anachronic Renaissance’ of historians.¹¹ The study of the ancient times of the Old World could rely on a body of written texts, starting from the Old Testament, along with Greek and Latin literature, but there was nothing of the kind for the antiquities of the New World, despite their being much closer in time. Modern scholars have hotly debated the position of early modern Spanish writers on the possible use of indigenous pictorial codices as historical sources.¹² However, one should never forget that these materials could only ever be interpreted through the oral explanation of local informants.

The invention of the ‘antiquities of the Indians’ was clearly the outcome of a negotiated process that was partly similar to what we find in other forms of cross-cultural exchange in early colonial Mexico. The increasing commensurability between the Renaissance idea of history and that of the Nahuatl peoples never quite managed to make the one fully translatable into the other.¹³ The mediation of indigenous people in the mid-sixteenth century was inescapable. Many of them had personal memories of the last days before the arrival of the Spaniards. They were the only custodians of the precolonial world and the only possible decipherers of its relics. Very soon, however, it was clear that the attempt to narrate the past of the Indians of ‘New Spain’, as Hernán Cortés rebaptized Mexico, also meant a further, complex transition.

The First Inhabitants of New Spain

Conceiving world history in a way that included fragmentary materials selected from American antiquities was a Renaissance experiment that took place

¹¹ Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

¹² See Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), pp. 125–169, and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 60–129.

¹³ I draw inspiration here from Alessandra Russo, *The Untranslatable Image: A Mestizo History of the Arts in New Spain, 1500–1600* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014). See also Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘Par-delà l’incommensurabilité: Pour une histoire connectée des empires aux temps modernes’, *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine* 54, no. 4bis (2007): pp. 34–53.

unequivocally in the New World. This experiment first occurred in early colonial Mexico, when several Franciscan missionaries took it upon themselves to write about the myths, beliefs, rituals, and customs of the Indians. They included Toribio de Benavente, one of the twelve friars who had landed in New Spain in 1524.¹⁴ At the end of February 1541 he was in the convent of Tehuacán, about 250 kilometres southeast of Mexico City. It was here that he completed his *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*, addressed to his patron in Spain, Antonio Alfonso Pimentel, the influential Count of Benavente. The work summarized the results of more than fifteen years of missionary and scholarly activities: since his arrival, Fray Toribio had visited many places, including Guatemala and Nicaragua, had been inquisitor and guardian of Franciscan convents, and had learnt some local languages, particularly Nahuatl, the *lingua franca* of Central Mexico. He had also developed an interest in the material remains of prehispanic societies, although the ruins he studied had often been caused by the destruction of temples and votive objects during campaigns against Indian idolatry which he had been directly involved in. His humble appearance was the origin of the Nahuatl name by which he was universally known—Motolinía, ‘he who is poor’. In 1532–3 his religious zeal drove him to take part in an attempt to extend universal conversion as far as China. To this end he had moved to Tehuantepec, a city in Southern Mexico overlooking the Pacific Ocean, where, with Martín de Valencia and other Franciscans, he wasted seven months waiting in vain for the ships promised by Cortés for the enterprise.

Motolinía was therefore a global-minded missionary by the time he had completed his *Historia*. He may have sent a copy of the work to the Count of Benavente as early as 1542. This version was written in haste, probably to affect the debate on the rights of the Indians, which had exploded in Spain in the wake of the accusations of the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas and which culminated in the New Laws (1542) whereby the Emperor Charles V (r. 1516–56, as king of Spain) banned the enslavement of indigenous people. Fearful that the colonists might revolt and thus endanger the missionary achievements in Mexico, Motolinía came out against Las Casas. His *Historia* was intended to celebrate the success of the Franciscans in New Spain in transforming idolatrous peoples into a docile flock of devout Christians. What reached the Count of Benavente, and the circle of theologians and humanists that met in his famous library, is generally regarded as an adaptation of a general chronicle which Motolinía had been working on since at least 1536, on the orders of his superiors.¹⁵ The final version

¹⁴ The best introduction to Toribio de Benavente’s biography is still Baudot, *Utopia and History in Mexico*, pp. 247–325.

¹⁵ Three sixteenth-century manuscripts of the *Historia* survive, as well as one from the eighteenth century. See Baudot, *Utopia and History in Mexico*, pp. 355–371. Motolinía’s authorship has been rejected by Edmundo O’Gorman since 1969. See his *La incógnita de la llamada Historia de los indios de la Nueva España atribuida a fray Toribio Motolinía* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982).

was lost at some point.¹⁶ All that is left are his working materials, known as *Memoriales*—they also give us an idea of the significant alterations to the chronicle which were made at least until 1549.¹⁷

The manipulation of the prehispanic past in the *Historia* was evident in the proemial epistle examining the ‘origin of those who peopled and made themselves lords of the New Spain’.¹⁸ Motolinía quickly interjected that he intended to deal only ‘briefly’ with the complex subject of the ‘antiquities and remarkable things of this land’.¹⁹ Moreover, his exposition adopted a genealogical approach, identifying various migrations that seemed to have left a trace in the names of peoples and localities. This choice was not neutral, but was considered the best way of explaining to Spanish readers the obscure past of the Indians.²⁰

In his introduction, Motolinía displayed his sources in a revealingly ambiguous way. Initially he stated that his information was derived from ‘ancient books . . . of symbols and pictures’. Although he explicitly asserted that they were difficult to read because the Indians ‘had no letters’, his definition of the pictorial codices as ‘books’ proved that Europeans did not always see them just as curiosities. He claimed that he had collected and understood, ‘through their pictures some things on the antiquity and succession of men who dominated and governed this great land’. Yet, his insistence that he would not speak of all this in detail, ‘as it does not seem necessary to give an account of individuals and names that one can hardly understand or pronounce’, raises doubts as to how conversant he was with indigenous sources. One might reasonably imagine that Motolinía was repeating bits and pieces of information obtained through local interpreters, as he acknowledged that he also drew on the ‘memories of men’, no matter how often these differed. However, there was no reference to help from them when, in an admirable attempt to equate the prehispanic codices with the historiographical annals of European tradition, he introduced in detail the ‘most truthful history books’ of the Indians, explaining that they were ‘five’ in number. One of them was considered

¹⁶ It is unclear when a copy of the 1541 manuscript entered the archive of the Council of the Indies. It has not been noted that the version that Motolinía sent to the Count of Benavente might be the same as the work titled *De los avitadores de la Nueva España*, which is recorded in the 1633 inventory of the library of the counts of Benavente, published in James Harold Eldson, *The Library of the Counts of Benavente* (Annapolis: 1955), p. 32.

¹⁷ Toribio de Benavente Motolinía, *Memoriales (Libro de oro, MS JGI 31)*, edited by Nancy Joe Dyer (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1996). A problematic attempt to reconstruct Motolinía’s lost chronicle through an integrated edition of this manuscript is Toribio Motolinía, *Memoriales, o Libro de las cosas de la Nueva España y de los naturales de ellas*, edited by Edmundo O’Gorman (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1971). Nonetheless, the introduction by O’Gorman is still very useful.

¹⁸ Toribio de Motolinía, *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*, edited by Georges Baudot (Madrid: Castalia, 1985), p. 97.

¹⁹ Motolinía, *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*, pp. 98–99.

²⁰ Motolinía’s historical work is the subject of much attention in Serge Gruzinski, *La machine à remonter le temps: Quand l’Europe s’est mise à écrire l’histoire du monde* (Paris: Fayard, 2017), pp. 37–109, whose analysis, however, does not take into account the role of genealogies.

particularly useful, as it contained a calculation of the years and a calendar of the days, as well as a memory of 'the achievements of victory and the conduct of wars; the succession of chief lords; weather conditions, noteworthy signs in the heavens, and general epidemics; at what time and under which lord these things occurred; and all the lords who took a leading part in subjugating New Spain up to the time that the Spaniards arrived'. This codex, identified as *xiuhtonalamatl* ('the book of the count of the years') in the *Memoriales*, could be 'trusted', explained Motolinía, as the Indians, 'though barbarous and unlettered, observed close order in reckoning time—days, weeks, months, and years—and also feasts'.²¹

Like most of the codices composed before the conquest, this source is now lost. Motolinía claimed that he took from it the history of a succession of 'three kinds of peoples': the 'Chichimecs', the 'Culhuas', and the 'Mexicans', or Mexicas (that is, the Aztecs).²² Proof of the presence in New Spain of the first group, described as wanderers, was no older than eight hundred years, he said, 'though it is regarded as certain that they are much older'. The problem was that 'they had neither the art of writing, nor of making pictures, as they were a barbarous people and lived as savages.' Only the Culhuas had begun 'to write and make records with their symbols and pictures'. Of the origins of this civilized, agricultural, Nahuatl-speaking people, Motolinía knew only that they had arrived thirty years after the Chichimecs. Along with an account of this succession of three migrations, which had intermixed over time, he also described the main settlements deriving from them. There was some confusion though, as Motolinía did not distinguish the Culhuas from the Acolhuas, who inhabited the province of Texcoco, the second largest urban centre and part of the Triple Alliance that ruled Central Mexico at the time of the conquest.²³ Finally, when he got to the Mexicas, the treatment tended to be limited to a genealogical succession of lords up to the recent fall of Moctezuma II (r. 1502–20). In this respect it was not unlike the first section of the Codex Mendoza, a manuscript with traditional Nahuatl pictograms and Spanish text which may have been commissioned by the first viceroy of

²¹ Motolinía, *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*, pp. 99 and 102, to compare with Motolinía, *Memoriales (Libro de oro, MS JGI 31)*, pp. 121–122. On the ways of writing in pre-conquest Mexico see James Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 327–328. For this typology of codices see Elizabeth Hill Boone, 'Aztec Pictorial Histories: Records without Words', in *Writing without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes*, edited by Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter D. Mignolo (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 50–76.

²² On population migrations in Nahuatl sources, see Michael E. Smith, 'The Aztlan Migrations of the Nahuatl Chronicles: Myth or History?', *Ethnohistory* 31, no. 3 (1984): pp. 153–186.

²³ The two names are often interchangeable in early colonial sources. Commenting on Motolinía's three migrations in the late sixteenth century, the Franciscan friar Gerónimo de Mendieta still wrote: 'Culhuas, who are the Texcocans'. See Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, edited by Joaquín García Icazbalceta, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1997), vol. 1, p. 273.

New Spain, Antonio de Mendoza (r. 1535–50), in the early 1540s.²⁴ In wider terms, while any attempt of ours to find a consistent parallel between Motolinía's tripartite narrative of these original migrations and the humanist division of historical time is doomed to failure, later in the *História* specific analogies were suggested between Mexican and European histories on the basis of material evidence: for example, commenting on the spectacular remains of Tenochtitlán's secular buildings, Motolinía exclaimed that the 'Mexicans in this land were like the Romans in other times.'²⁵

Returning to the introduction, right after the account of the migrations from which the Indians of New Spain descended, Motolinía introduced another version of their origins. He denied there was any 'contradiction' of the previous account, although it significantly complicated the tripartition proposed. Moreover, it derived from another even less verifiable source: an informant, 'very clever and with a good memory', who belonged to those Indians who 'remembered and were able to recount and refer to everything they were asked about'. Based on 'his opinion and their most authentic books', the story told by the anonymous Indian began by referring to the myth of Chicomoztoc ('which in our Castilian tongue', Motolinía specified, 'means Seven Caves'), numerous references to which can be found in later Spanish and Nahuatl chronicles. The Indians of New Spain had originated from this place. Their common ancestor was a 'lord' who had 'seven sons'.²⁶ In the *Memoriales* Motolinía identified him with the ancient Iztac Mixcóatl ('white-cloud serpent'), the god of hunting in Aztec mythology. His divine nature, however, was played down to underline that from his progeny 'proceed great generations, almost like those we read of for the sons of Noah'.²⁷ We shall return to this intriguing comment shortly.

The first six sons were scattered through the regions of Central America, founding cities and giving rise to new peoples. In the three cases where Motolinía mentioned their names, he suggested an etymological connection that each time followed the same formal logic: 'From the second son, called Tenuch, came the Tenochcas, who are the Mexicans, and so Mexico City is called Tenochtitlán'; 'From the fifth son, called Mixtecatl, came the Mixtecas. Their land is now called Mixtecapán'; 'The last son gave rise to the Otomis, so called from his name, Otomitl.' The Chichimecs also descended from the Otomis, added Motolinía, without bothering to explain how the order of this genealogy combined with the chronology of the three migrations presented earlier.²⁸ In the *Memoriales*

²⁴ Motolinía, *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*, pp. 102–107. On the similarities with the Codex Mendoza, see Frances F. Berdan and Patricia Rieff Anawalt, eds., *The Codex Mendoza*, 4 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), vol. 4, pp. 7–35.

²⁵ Motolinía, *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*, p. 318.

²⁶ Motolinía, *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*, p. 107.

²⁷ Motolinía, *Memoriales (Libro de oro, MS JGI 31)*, p. 126.

²⁸ Motolinía, *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*, pp. 107–110.

we also read the names of Iztac Mixcóatl's three other sons, including 'Xicalancatl', from whom the 'Xicalancas' derived.²⁹

The anonymous Indian's account also mentioned a seventh son, borne by another wife. He was called Quetzalcóatl ('feathered serpent'), 'an honest and calm man', with neither wife nor caste. An Indian named Chichimecatl bound his upper arm (*acolli*) with a leather strap, and so he was also known as 'Acolhuatl, and it is said that those from Culhua descended from him.' Motolinía did not include the story, promoted by Spanish chroniclers, that Moctezuma II had identified Cortés with Quetzalcóatl, merely recalling that 'the Indians regarded Quetzalcóatl as one of their main gods, they called him God of the air, and everywhere built him an infinite number of temples, they erected statues to him and painted his form.'³⁰

At this point Motolinía considered other versions the Indians had of their origins, only to drop these stories and devote the end of the proemial epistle to discussing ideas that were then circulating in Europe. According to an interpretation based on a text misattributed to Aristotle, the ancient Carthaginians had first colonized New Spain: 'a land so large and populated everywhere seems rather to take its origin from other foreign parts', replied Motolinía. His general view, drawn from 'some clues', was that Mexico had been peopled in the context of 'the division and distribution between the grandsons of Noah'. In any case, Motolinía disagreed with the opinion of 'some Spaniards' who believed that the 'rituals, customs, and ceremonies' of the Indians of New Spain showed they were of the 'generation' of Muslims or Jews. It was an insidious connection, given the climate of suspicion and persecution that still surrounded the descendants of these religious minorities in Iberia after the age of expulsions and forced conversions in the late fifteenth century. This probably explains why Motolinía ended up opting for the 'most common opinion'—that they were indeed 'gentiles'.³¹

The Indian Descendants of Noah

The view that the Indians descended from Noah, yet had neither Muslim nor Jewish blood, had the result of reintegrating the prehispanic history of Mexico into the providential perspective of Christian salvation. This also emerged from chapter 1 of the *Memoriales*, in which the mission of the twelve friars guided by

²⁹ Motolinía, *Memoriales (Libro de oro, MS JGI 31)*, p. 127.

³⁰ Motolinía, *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*, pp. 110–111. On Quetzalcóatl see David Carrasco, *Quetzalcoatl and the Irony of Empire: Myths and Prophecies in the Aztec Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). The idea that the Indians took the first Spaniards for deities has been rejected by Camilla Townsend, 'Burying the White Gods: New Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico', *American Historical Review* 108, no. 3 (2003): pp. 659–687.

³¹ Motolinía, *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*, p. 113.

Martín de Valencia was presented much more extensively than it was in the *Historia*. Among other things, Motolinía clarified the meaning of the Nahuatl name ‘Anáhuac’, used by the Mexicas to indicate the extension of their empire and translated in the *Memoriales* as ‘dry land and almost the world, not the whole world because the term *cem* is missing, but a great land which in vulgar parlance we call world’. This explanation established a providential connection between the discovery of America and the arrival of the Franciscans: ‘now that our God has revealed this other world, new for us’, he ‘has inspired his vicar, the supreme pontiff, and Francis himself [has inspired] our father general . . . to send the said religious men and the sound of their voices’, proclaimed Motolinía in inspired tones, ‘has come forth and resounded in all the rotundity of this new world as far as its confines, or for the greater part of them.’ He then paraphrased a passage in the medieval treatise *De imagine mundi*, attributed to Anselm of Aosta (though the real author was Honoré d’Autun), in which he read that ‘in the western parts there is an island bigger than Europe and Africa, where God enlarged Japheth, and now more than ever is fulfilled that prophecy or benediction of the patriarch Noah who told his son Japheth: “God shall enlarge Japheth”. From him descend the Spaniards, now enlarged not only in three parts of the world in faith, lordship, science and arms, but here too enlarges them in all these things in this great land.’³² The passage, however, was altered by Motolinía to suit his own end: the original referred explicitly to Plato’s myth of Atlantis and made no mention of Japheth.³³

Evidently Motolinía was anything but a proto-ethnographer trying faithfully to register the reality of Mexico in the early decades after the Spanish conquest. Rather he was a friar willing to modify even the texts of Christian theology so he could offer an interpretation of historical facts that answered to his aim of exalting the Franciscan mission in the New World. Still more complex, and somewhat more intriguing, was how he rearranged his fragmentary information on the peoples of Anáhuac and invented their ‘antiquities’. Why did he do this? Are we to imagine a Motolinía so confused in the face of the composite universe of myths, legends, and oral accounts of the Indians, as to feel the need to forge their past?

Motolinía had collaborated with other Franciscans in locating information and writings. Fray Andrés de Olmos had also set about writing ‘a book on the antiquities of the Indian natives, with special regard to Mexico, Texcoco, and Tlaxcala’, at least according to the *Historia eclesiástica indiana*.³⁴ It is to the author of this work, the Franciscan chronicler Gerónimo de Mendieta, that we owe most of our information on the lost treatise on the antiquities of Mexico that Olmos had

³² Motolinía, *Memoriales (Libro de oro, MS JGI 31)*, pp. 133–134.

³³ Honoré d’Autun, *Opera omnia*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris: Frères Garnier, 1854), cols. 132–133. Motolinía also added a reference to the *Book of Genesis* 9: 27.

³⁴ Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia Eclesiástica Indiana: A Franciscan’s View of the Spanish Conquest of Mexico*, edited by Felix Jay (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), p. 34.

composed in Tlatelolco in 1533–9.³⁵ Motolinía had access to Olmos's treatise, but it is not clear who derived what from whom. They probably exchanged much material and may have discussed their respective interpretations. Several missionaries in Mexico in the 1530s were interested in the past of the Indians, often sharing notes, notebooks, and rough drafts. Bartolomé de las Casas also was one of them. He met Motolinía in Tlaxcala in 1538 and was allowed to copy an early version of the *Historia*, which he later made use of in his own writings—and this despite the heated words which had passed between them on the administering of baptism to Indian adults.³⁶

This hectic climate may help understand Motolinía's surprising treatment of the origins of the Indians and their place in world history. He needed to produce a coherent narrative. Therefore, he rearranged elements taken from local traditions, which had anyway been reworked by the Mexicas in the centuries before the Spanish conquest, within a genealogical account apparently inspired by the Bible. All this was reinforced by Motolinía's tendency to explain the names of the peoples of Anáhuac through striking etymological connections. In consequence, the Nahua vision of historical time based on the belief in a succession of five solar ages played no part in Motolinía's invention of the antiquities of the Indians of New Spain. In the *Historia*, there was no explicit mention of the solar ages, which made their appearance only in a later chapter of the *Memoriales*, written in 1542. Although the chronology for the fifth age suggested in it was consistent with Motolinía's dating of the migration of the Chichimecs in his introduction, he did not modify the rest of his work accordingly.³⁷

The local belief that before the creation of the Indians the world had undergone four conflagrations was impossible to reconcile with the biblical account and the Christian idea of linear chronological development, which structured Motolinía's narrative. He regarded the indigenous peoples of the Americas as also descending from the patriarch Noah after the Flood, thus confirming mankind's common origin. It was unclear, however, from which of his three sons they came from. Motolinía seemed only to exclude Shem, therefore explicitly denying blood ties with Jews and Muslims, but he left it open whether the Indians of New Spain originated from Japheth, like the Spaniards, or from Ham. In any case, his position was that Mexico had been peopled in the context of 'the division and distribution between Noah's grandsons'. The analogy between the generations descended from Noah's sons and the sons of Iztac Mixcóatl, which was explicitly stated in the

³⁵ Baudot, *Utopia and History in Mexico*, pp. 170–193.

³⁶ I follow here Baudot, *Utopia and History in Mexico*, pp. 280–281. The alternative date of 1546 is suggested in Henry Raup Wagner (with the collaboration of Helen Rand Parish), *The Life and Writings of Bartolomé de las Casas* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1967), p. 202. On the characteristics of the version of the *Historia* to which Bartolomé de las Casas had access, see his *Obras Completas*, edited by Paulino Castañeda Delgado, 15 vols. (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988–1995), vol. 6, p. 244.

³⁷ Motolinía, *Memoriales (Libro de oro, MS JGI 31)*, pp. 547–551.

Memoriales, was a clear indicator of the genealogical model presiding over Motolinía's version of the history of the world.

Iztac Mixcóatl's story made it possible to reduce the complexity of the antiquities of New Spain to a common ancestor, with many peoples and localities taking their name after his sons. Motolinía could have hardly worked out by himself such a sophisticated narrative while, wrapped in his humble friar's cowl, he walked the length and breadth of Central Mexico as a missionary. Had he simply misunderstood the local accounts? Such a hypothesis does not solve the problems. For example, it would offer no explanation for the early interaction between the Franciscans and the Indians that was responsible for the first examples of historical works in Nahuatl transcribed into phonetic characters by means of the Latin alphabet, such as the *Annals of Tlatelolco*. This is the name of a miscellany manuscript, whose oldest sections were composed in the mid-sixteenth century. Both their chronology and narrative form were radically different from Motolinía's. Even when the *Annals* expounded the origin of the Indians, quite apart from the differences in names, there were no genealogical successions based on etymological concatenations.³⁸

Genealogical series of this particular kind cannot be found either in a previous autograph note by Motolinía on a pictorial codex explicitly indicated as 'xihutonal amat', from which he allegedly took the story of the three migrations that had peopled Mexico. This fragment was to become part of the introduction of 1541, but was written much earlier, probably in 1527–8, when Motolinía was guardian of the convent of Texcoco in Acolhuacan.³⁹ The influence of the local nobility, with whom he enjoyed close relations, seems evident in that note. For example, referring to the Mexicas, he claimed that 'all agree in saying they are of the generation of the Culhuas, and their tongue accords with this; whether they are or not, they insist that the Culhuas arrived before and say that no lord of significance or high lineage came from the Mexicans.'⁴⁰ In the introduction more than ten years later, this opinion, which evidently reflected the local pride of the inhabitants of Texcoco, was attributed only to 'some', and the polemical

³⁸ Hanns J. Prem and Ursula Dyckerhoff, 'Los anales de Tlatelolco: Una colección heterogénea', *Estudios de cultura Nahuatl* 27 (1997): pp. 181–207. See also Rafael Tena, 'Introducción', in *Anales de Tlatelolco*, edited by Rafael Tena (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2004), pp. 11–20. For indigenous genealogies and their reshaping in Spanish America, see María Elena Martínez, 'Indigenous Genealogies: Lineage, History, and the Colonial Pact in Central Mexico and Peru', in *Indigenous Intellectuals: Knowledge, Power, and Colonial Culture in Mexico and in the Andes*, edited by Gabriela Ramos and Yanna Yannakakis (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), pp. 173–201.

³⁹ Georges Baudot, 'Les premières enquêtes ethnographiques américaines: Fray Toribio Motolinía: Quelques documents inédits et quelques remarques', *Cahiers du monde hispanique et luso-brésilien* 17 (1971): pp. 7–35, which reproduces the 1527–8 fragment kept at the Real Academia de Historia of Madrid.

⁴⁰ Baudot, 'Les premières enquêtes ethnographiques américaines', p. 31.

note of the passage was toned down.⁴¹ But there were other, far more significant differences.

First of all, in the fragment of 1527–8 there was a sense of uncertainty as to the information contained in the indigenous codex. Motolinía described the version given there of the origins of the Indians of New Spain as ‘the most common’, but stated at the outset that ‘many symbols composed by those who take the opposite view disagree with it.’ The migrations of Chichimecs, Culhuas, and Mexicas, which were described in 1541 following a clear chronological order, also appeared more summarily in the older note, with uncertainties and lacunae. On the origins of the Chichimecs, Motolinía wrote ‘there are no records or writings except in the form of poetry’, while the Culhuas ‘are not certain where they come from’ but ‘they say that their writings show that they have been in this land for seven hundred and thirty three years, including the present one.’⁴² The fragment from the late 1520s had all the roughness of a working draft. Nor did it yet mention the anonymous Indian who supposedly told the story of Iztac Mixcóatl and his sons, whose names were so similar to those of the peoples descended from them.

In Olmos’s treatise on the antiquities of Mexico there was apparently no trace of Motolinía’s mysterious Indian informant’s story about the origins of the Indians of New Spain, at least according to the Franciscan chronicler Mendieta—he also reproduced the story exactly, but attributed it to ‘books’ of the Indians ‘that were five in number’.⁴³ So why did Motolinía choose to force the prehispanic past of the Indians into a model of etymological concatenations? Was he drawing on one example in particular? The recurrence of the number seven—the caverns of Chicomoztoc, the sons of Iztac Mixcóatl—might suggest he was reworking a narrative structure from medieval legends. His identification of a direct link between the origin of the names of the peoples and that of their supposed eponymous ancestors recalled the formula proposed by Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologies*, a seventh-century work that still enjoyed great popularity. Various copies of it were to be found in the library of the counts of Benavente, to which Motolinía might have had access.⁴⁴ In book 14, on the Earth and its parts, Isidore suggested a direct connection between the names of some of Noah’s sons and grandsons and those of the lands they supposedly peopled, such as Canaan from Ham; Assyria from Assur, son of Shem; and Gothia from Magog, son of Japheth. Isidore’s technique seems to fit in well with the analogy, adopted by Motolinía after 1541, between the sons of Iztac Mixcóatl and the descendants of the sons of Noah, but also with his suggestion that the origins of the Indians of New Spain

⁴¹ Motolinía, *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*, p. 104.

⁴² Baudot, ‘Les premières enquêtes ethnographiques américaines’, p. 31.

⁴³ Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, vol. 1, p. 270.

⁴⁴ Besides Eldson, *The Library*, see Isabel Beceiro Pita, ‘Los libros que pertenecieron a los Condes de Benavente, entre 1434 y 1530’, *Hispania* 43, no. 154 (1983): pp. 237–280.

went back to the division of the world between the patriarch's grandsons.⁴⁵ However, while Isidore had resorted to this particular etymological link only episodically and merely offered a connection between already existing names, Motolinía applied the method more systematically while manipulating information he had somehow gathered in Mexico.⁴⁶

What was hiding behind those mysterious colonizers of Anahuac? Any answer is made more difficult by our limited sources about Motolinía's reading, or his life before leaving for the New World. His theological and humanist training was certainly significant.⁴⁷ However, we do not know exactly what texts were available to him in Spain. The same goes for the libraries he could use in New Spain, particularly that of the convent of Tlaxcala, where he was guardian while writing the version of the *Historia* sent to the Count of Benavente. In any case, it is the cultural context in which Motolinía operated that one needs to look at to discover which model of historical writing he was drawing on. From Central Mexico in the aftermath of the Spanish conquest, this research now leads us back to Renaissance Europe.

The Renaissance Archforger and His Giants

Scholars have not considered the extent to which Motolinía's introduction echoed the technique of the popular narrative about the peopling of the world provided by the Dominican friar Giovanni Nanni, better known as Annio of Viterbo. He was the most successful Renaissance forger, whose invented genealogies and incredible etymologies fooled many erudite humanists for decades.⁴⁸ Having trained as a scholastic theologian, he also cultivated interests in natural philosophy. While in Genoa, where he alternated preaching with the teaching of grammar, his interests extended to astrology and the interpretation of biblical passages in a millenarian perspective. He thus established himself as the author of apocalyptic prophecies

⁴⁵ This point has been made by Patrick Lesbre, 'Mythes d'origine préhispanique et historiographie médiévale (Mexique centrale, XVI^e siècle)', in *Les généalogies imaginaires: Ancêtres, lignages et communautés idéales (XVI^e-XX^e siècle)*, edited by Pierre Ragon (Mont-Saint-Aignan: Publications des Universités de Rouen et du Havre, 2007), pp. 163-189.

⁴⁶ On the Indo-Hispanic collaboration in shaping the narratives of the origins of the Mexican peoples see Danna A. Levin Rojo, *Return to Aztlan: Indians, Spaniards, and the Invention of Nuevo México* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014).

⁴⁷ For Motolinía's humanistic education and his possible readings see Nancy Joe Dyer, 'Introducción', in Toribio de Benavente Motolinía, *Memoriales (Libro de oro, MS JGI 31)*, edited by Nancy Joe Dyer (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1996), pp. 31-61.

⁴⁸ For the biographical details provided here I follow Roberto Weiss, 'Traccia per una biografia di Annio da Viterbo', *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 5 (1962): pp. 425-441 and Riccardo Fubini, 'Nanni, Giovanni (Annio da Viterbo)', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 77 (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana fondato da Giovanni Treccani, 2012), pp. 726-732.

on the triumph of the Christians over the Turks but also of horoscopes and writings on magic.

When the Dominican order obliged him to return to Viterbo in 1489, Annius was a well-known cleric. He was developing a new interest in antiquities, which at first sight he approached with the tools of humanist philology. In the following years he began radically to criticize the enthusiastic admiration of contemporary humanists for the classical past. Annius's was an early reaction to the Renaissance's prevailing canon. He was representative of a localism that, in the wake of *Italia illustrata* (1474) by the humanist Flavio Biondo, led to long debates between scholars on the origins of Italian cities, on their geography, their history, and their monuments. Annius contested above all the idea that they had been founded by the Trojans, that is, the Greeks.⁴⁹ He questioned the myth of Aeneas and his family coming to land on the coast of Lazio, which ultimately gave rise to Rome and its empire. The popularity of the genealogical links with that founding event was fed by the fame of Virgil's epic poem. As Annius well understood, the *Aeneid* could be countered by the Bible.

The biblical account nevertheless did not provide a coherent and unified narrative to oppose to the certainties of the humanists, which had been reinvigorated by the rediscovery of numerous manuscripts of various Greek and Latin texts. Versed in pre-Christian and pre-classical chronology, Annius decided to counterfeit the past. He came up with a narrative of the history of the world that revolved around the migration and colonization by eponymous progenitors of various peoples, whose genealogies could be reconstructed from their names.

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of Annius's forgeries for Renaissance historiography. The main reason for their success consisted in their effect of truth in the eyes of their contemporaries. In a parody of the humanists, who discovered in convent libraries codices containing copies of classical texts and prepared their first critical editions for the press, Annius claimed to have come across the lost manuscripts of many Greek authors who had really existed, such as Archilocus, the Chaldean Berossos, and the Egyptian Manetho, as well as invented ones, for example Methastenes, and of Roman writers such as Cato the Elder, Fabius Pictor, and Propertius. Their authority at last threw light on the most ancient history of humanity—of all humanity—and made it possible to fill in the gaps in the biblical story and the universal chronologies available at the time. The result of this original enterprise was a properly annotated collection in Latin, known as *Antiquities*, published in Rome in 1498.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ E.N. Tigerstedt, 'Ioannes Anniius and *Graecia mendax*', in *Classical, Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies in Honor of Berthold Louis Ullman*, edited by Charles Henderson, Jr, 2 vols. (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1964), vol. 2, pp. 293–310.

⁵⁰ Anniius of Viterbo, *Commentaria . . . super opera diversorum auctorum de antiquitatibus loquentium* (Rome: Eucharius Silber, 1498). On this work, see Anthony Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,

By this time, Anniius had left Viterbo, where in the early 1490s he had converted a course of grammar supported by citizens' money into a chair in local antiquities and he had constructed the Etruscan myth of Viterbo, presented as the first city to be founded in Italy after the Flood, resorting not only to summaries of 'most ancient authors', but also stones and inscriptions. These included the so-called Osirian Marble, an agglomerate of medieval fragments that sought to prove that Viterbo had been founded by the Egyptian deity Osiris. These sources had one thing in common: they were forgeries.⁵¹ After Rodrigo de Borja had ascended to the throne of St Peter as Alexander VI (r. 1492–1503), Anniius moved to Rome, where he held the prestigious position of master of the sacred palace from 1499 until his death (possibly poisoned) three years later. Meanwhile, he had completed and published the *Antiquities*, which became a bestseller in sixteenth-century Europe, particularly after the Burgos and Paris editions, both of which saw the light of day in 1512.⁵²

Having all the appearances of a true humanist and a learned editor of ancient manuscripts, Anniius circulated fakes with two main formal characteristics: on the one hand, the constant recourse to dizzying chains of astonishing genealogies, which led back to the origins of every people; on the other, the tendency to explain unexpected links and connections through invented etymologies.⁵³ Anniius's extraordinary success depended on the possibility of inventing tradition using the authors included in the *Antiquities*. Berossos, a third-century BCE astronomer and priest of the god Bel Marduk, wrote a history of Babylon in Greek, only fragments of which survive. An alleged translation of this work into Latin, the *Historia Chaldaica* by Berossus Chaldaeus gave Anniius a consistent chronological narrative for his history of humanity, which followed the ramifications of Noah's descendants across the globe.⁵⁴ This work, which Anniius claimed to have received in Genoa directly from two monks from Armenia—the very region where Noah's ark had supposedly landed—grew in value as it claimed to be founded on the direct consultation of official sources held in the public archives of Babylon.⁵⁵

1991), pp. 76–103; Walter Stephens, 'Complex Pseudonymity: Anniius of Viterbo's Multiple Persona Disorder', *MLN* 126, no. 4 (2011): pp. 689–708.

⁵¹ Giovanni Baffioni and Paola Mattiangeli, eds., *Annio da Viterbo: Documenti e Ricerche* (Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1981), pp. 15–251; Amanda Collins, 'Renaissance Epigraphy and its Legitimizing Potential: Anniius of Viterbo, Etruscan Inscriptions, and the Origins of Civilization', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 44, Supplement 75 (2000): pp. 57–76.

⁵² A list of known editions can be found in Walter Stephens, *Giants in Those Days: Folklores, Ancient History, and Nationalism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), pp. 344–345.

⁵³ Christopher R. Ligota, 'Anniius of Viterbo and Historical Method', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987): pp. 44–56.

⁵⁴ Walter Stephens, 'From Berossos to Berossus Chaldaeus: The Forgeries of Anniius of Viterbo and Their Fortune', in *The World of Berossos*, edited by Johannes Haubold, Giovanni B. Lanfranchi, Robert Rollinger, and John Steele (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013), pp. 277–289.

⁵⁵ For an introduction to this work and its implications, see Stephens, *Giants in Those Days*, pp. 98–138.

Berosus quickly established himself as the author who made it possible for historians at last to fill in the gaps in the biblical account. To understand why, one need only read the opening pages of the *Historia Chaldaica*: 'Before that famous calamity of waters in which the entire globe perished', began Berosus, 'many centuries passed, the events of which were faithfully preserved in writing by our Chaldeans.' He was describing an age dominated by giants, inventors of arts and techniques, but also oppressors of humanity and subverters of the divine order (they were cannibals and practised incest). At that time, 'many preached and prophesied and inscribed in stone things concerning the impending destruction of the world', but the only giant to take any notice was one 'who was more reverential towards the gods, and wiser than the others'. This was Noah, with his three sons Shem, Japheth, and Ham, and his wives. A pious and just giant, Noah was a gifted astrologer well able to note the signs from the heavens and started to build his ark seventy-eight years before the Flood—this degree of precision made Annius's chronologies look more reliable.

Noah weathered the Flood until he landed in Armenia, 'atop Mount Gordieus. And it is said that some part of his boat remains there still.' Only from that point on could one write a detailed history of the world, tracing the genealogies of Noah's grandsons—giants themselves—who repopulated the whole Earth, while Noah himself settled in Italy, changing his name to Janus. But, to cut the historians' 'wearisome discussions' short, concluded Berosus, 'the origins, seasons, and kings of only those realms which are now deemed great' were set down.⁵⁶ This led to an original reconstruction, subdivided by kingdoms founded after the Flood by the migrations of Noah's descendants, leaving unequivocal signs in the names of the lands they had inhabited and the peoples to whom they had given origin. Historians needed only follow these lines to reconstruct the most distant past.

This technique could be applied to the antiquities of any people either forgotten or never even cited in the Bible, as long as one could retrace the thread between their origins and Noah's progeny which had been broken with the passage of centuries. America went unmentioned in the *Antiquities*, though Annius was certainly aware of its recent discovery. The final draft of his work was carried out in the ambit of the papal curia, where, in 1493, the news of the discovery of some islands in the Atlantic Ocean had created a sensation. Be that as it may, Annius's forgeries were to leave their mark for a long time in the representations of the prehispanic past of the Indians.

The first edition of the *Antiquities* was dedicated to the Catholic monarchs—partly as the printing costs were covered by the Spanish ambassador in Rome, Garcilaso de la Vega. This probably explains why at the last minute Annius added a final section on the antiquities of Spain and its first twenty-four kings. Needless

⁵⁶ I quote from the English translation provided by Stephens, *Giants in Those Days*, pp. 113–114.

to say, the work in the appendix claimed that Spanish greatness predated by far the period of domination by the Romans and the Visigoths. One should bear in mind that early modern Iberians were obsessed with lineages and genealogies, which also intersected discourses on race.⁵⁷ Moreover, Annius's probable source of inspiration was the humanist and grammarian Elio Antonio de Nebrija, who, like many other Spanish men of culture at the time of Alexander VI, resided in Rome and since 1495 had been working on a treatise entitled *Antigüedades de España*. Annius's relation with Nebrija was very close, to the point that the latter was responsible for the first edition of the *Antiquities* published in Spain (1512).⁵⁸ Certainly, both admired as their model the ancient Greek writer of Jewish origin Josephus, author of the *Jewish Antiquities*, which, among other things, had already indicated Tubal, fifth son of Japheth, as the first colonizer and king of the Iberian peninsula. The same idea was expressed in Annius and later repeated by the humanist Florián de Ocampo, a disciple of Nebrija, who was nominated royal chronicler by Charles V in 1539 and, in this capacity, gave some official status to Annius' theory of the Spanish nation's descent from the giant Tubal, grandson of Noah and father of Iber, the eponymous ancestor of the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula.⁵⁹

As it was so flexible and adaptable, countless sixteenth-century authors reused the Annian technique—if sometimes only implicitly—to give an appearance of plausibility to narratives about the origins of a people, a city, or a dynasty, as well as to provide consistent historical accounts. The *Antiquities'* popularity was still growing when Motolinía sent his *Historia* to the Count of Benavente. This makes it even more plausible that he looked to Annius's fakes as a source of inspiration. If this conjecture is correct, the example of Berosus allowed Motolinía to offer Spanish readers a composite account of the origins of the Indians that sounded both familiar and reassuring. It allowed them to be included in world history on the basis of a monogenetic theory of humanity.⁶⁰ Annius's shadow behind the

⁵⁷ For an introduction, see Max S. Hering Torres, María Elena Martínez, and David Nirenberg, eds., *Race and Blood in the Iberian World* (Zürich: Lit, 2012); Antonio Feros, *Speaking of Spain: The Evolutions of Race and Nation in the Hispanic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017). Specifically on genealogy, see David Nirenberg, 'Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities: Jews and Christians in Fifteenth-Century Spain', *Past and Present* 174, no. 1 (2002): pp. 3–41 and María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

⁵⁸ Francisco Bautista, 'Patriotic Historiography: Annius of Viterbo in Antonio de Nebrija', in *Disciplining History: Censorship, Theory and Historical Discourse in Early Modern Spain*, edited by Cesc Esteve (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 13–25.

⁵⁹ Alexander Samson, 'Florián de Ocampo, Castilian Chronicler and Habsburg Propagandist: Rhetoric, Myth and Genealogy in the Historiography of Early Modern Spain', *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 42, no. 4 (2006): pp. 339–354.

⁶⁰ Annius's importance was already highlighted in a remarkable chapter on the Americas included in the study by Don Cameron Allen, *The Legend of Noah: Renaissance Rationalism in Art, Science, and Letters* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949), pp. 114–116. On the diffusion of the Annian model in the early modern Spanish historiography, see José Antonio Caballero López, 'El "Beroso" de Annio

manipulation of the Mexican past seems to have extended to the legend of the seven giant sons of Iztac Mixcóatl, which modern dictionaries of Aztec mythology record with exactly the names provided in the *Memoriales*.⁶¹ Motolinía never said that Iztac Mixcóatl and his sons were giants like Noah, his sons, and grandsons in Berosus's account.⁶² However, giants abounded in post-conquest sources related to ancient Mexico. A case in point was the so-called Codex Ríos, in which we find an early reference to an indigenous tradition of the existence of giants (*tzocuillix-eque*) (see Figure 1.1).⁶³ This pictorial codex with Italian annotations partly reproduced an original version from the mid-sixteenth century in the Tehuacán Valley which was made by order of the Dominican friar Pedro de los Ríos, who recounted that local artists had drawn local glyphs in it.⁶⁴ At that time, Fray André de Olmos had already attributed to the Mexicas a belief in giants, as Mendieta explicitly recalled.⁶⁵ In this context, it should come as no surprise that in his work *Monarchia Indiana* (1615), another Franciscan friar who was familiar with Olmos's writings, Juan de Torquemada, explicitly cited the authority of the 'Annian Berosus' as evidence that once there were giants 'in the world, not in small, but abundant number'.⁶⁶

The result is that the oldest known reconstruction of the history of precolonial Mexico by a European author claimed to be founded on indigenous sources, yet might have actually been the result of the encounter between local traditions and the Renaissance archforger. In the Americas too, Anniius's technique was often employed by those who forged antiquities in order to disclose a higher providential order.⁶⁷ It is difficult to say when Motolinía could have read the *Antiquities*. Renaissance works very quickly found their place on the library shelves of the first Franciscan convents in the New World, but, given Anniius's early popularity in Spain, as well as Nebrija's intellectual influence on Motolinía, he could just as well

de Viterbo y su presencia en las Historias de España', *Beroso: Revista de investigación y reflexión histórica sobre la Antigüedad* 11–12 (2004): pp. 81–128.

⁶¹ See, for instance, Cecilio Agustín Robelo, *Diccionario de mitología nahuatl*, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Editorial Innovación, 1980).

⁶² Motolinía hinted at the existence of giants in the second solar age, without making any connection to Iztac Mixcóatl and his sons. See Motolinía, *Memoriales (Libro de oro, MS JGI 31)*, p. 548. See also Gruzinski, *La machine à remonter le temps*, pp. 98–99.

⁶³ Ferdinand Anders, Maarten Jansen, and Luis Reyes García, eds., *Religión, costumbres e historia de los antiguos mexicanos: Libro explicativo del llamado Códice Vaticano A (Codex Vatic. Lat. 3738 de la Biblioteca Apostólica Vaticana)* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996), pp. 58 and 60.

⁶⁴ Interestingly, in the early seventeenth century, the Codex Ríos captured the attention of the antiquarian Lorenzo Pignoria, a passionate follower of Anniius. See Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World*, pp. 96–97.

⁶⁵ Mendieta, *Historia Eclesiástica Indiana*, p. 41.

⁶⁶ Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana*, edited Miguel León-Portilla, 7 vols. (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1975–1983), vol. 1, pp. 52–53.

⁶⁷ Nicholas Temple, 'Heritage and Forgery: Annio da Viterbo and the Quest for the Authentic', *Public Archaeology* 2, no. 3 (2001): pp. 293–310.



Figure 1.1 Prehispanic giant, or *tzocullixequ*, second half of the sixteenth century. © 2019 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 3738, fol. 4v. Reproduced by permission of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, with all rights reserved.

have had access to this work before he left for Mexico.⁶⁸ Certainly, when Motolinía was preparing the draft of the *Historia* for the Count of Benavente, Berosus's encounter with the Americas had already taken place.

Berosus Across the Atlantic

Did the ancients have any knowledge of the New World? Motolinía firmly denied this possibility in the introduction to the *Historia* when he wrote about the Carthaginian navigations. Clearly, his stance was a response to the humanist Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés (1478–1557), as Motolinía was well aware of his *Historia general de las Indias*, published in 1535, under the auspices of Charles V.⁶⁹ In book 2 of his chronicle, Oviedo had mentioned the account of the Carthaginian voyages attributed to Aristotle and had conjectured that the 'island . . . might be one of those that are in our Indies, like this island Hispaniola or that of Cuba, or perhaps part of dry land.' But Oviedo nonetheless preferred an alternative theory: 'I regard these Indies as those famous islands Hesperides (so called by the twelfth king of Spain, known as Hesperus.)'⁷⁰

Berosus inevitably made his appearance in these pages on the islands of the Hesperides. Oviedo even included a quick summary of the *Historia Chaldaica* for his readers, also referring to Annius's history of the first twenty-four kings of Spain. After all, Oviedo had already drawn inspiration from this model in a genealogical catalogue of the monarchs of Castile starting from Tubal, which was then extended to other Hispanic and European kingdoms and completed around 1532.⁷¹ The etymological connection between the Hesperides and Hesperus, highlighted in the *Historia general*, led Oviedo to conclude that 'we should certainly identify them with these Indies: and reckon that they have been in the dominion of Spain from the time of Hesperus, its twelfth king, who, according to Berosus, lived 1658 years before the Saviour of the world was born.'⁷²

⁶⁸ On Nebrija and Motolinía, see Dyer, 'Introducción', pp. 43–45.

⁶⁹ Kathleen Ann Myers, *Fernandez de Oviedo's Chronicle of America: A New History for a New World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007). Oviedo's chronicle was explicitly quoted in Motolinía, *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*, p. 347.

⁷⁰ As modern editions rely on manuscript versions of the work, I quote from the first printed edition, which was the text that Motolinía would have read in Mexico: Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *La historia general de las Indias* (Seville: Juan Cromberger, 1535), fol. 3r.

⁷¹ The first part of the manuscript is kept in Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, cod. H-j-7. For its transcription see Evelia Ana Romano de Thuesen, 'Transcripción y edición del *Catálogo Real de Castilla*, autógrafo inédito de Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés' (PhD Dissertation, University of California Santa Barbara, 1992). Its missing part seems to correspond to the manuscript kept in London, British Library, Additional, Ms 15.568. See José Manuel Nieto Soria, '¿La segunda parte del *Catálogo Real de Castilla* de Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo en un manuscrito de la British Library?', *En la España Medieval* 37 (2014): pp. 403–434.

⁷² Fernández de Oviedo, *La historia general de las Indias*, fol. 4r.

Annius's forgeries clearly provided an opportunity to incorporate precolonial America into world history, but Oviedo's theory about the origins of the Indians was inextricably wound up with justifying Spain's imperial presence in the New World.⁷³ It therefore ended up provoking a debate that inevitably affected historical writing. Viceroy Mendoza himself resorted to etymological arguments that were similar to those made by Motolinía and Oviedo. In a letter sent to the latter in 1541, he maintained that the 'Mexicans' came from the north, adding that 'where they came is evident in the ancient buildings and the names of places . . . they came as far as Guazacalco with a leader called Quetzalcóatl.'⁷⁴ Certainly, the publication of Oviedo's *Historia general* had a significant impact on the missionaries engaged in reconstructing the antiquities of the Indians of New Spain. It may have proved to be the decisive impulse that induced Motolinía to recast the uncertain materials collected on the prehispanic past of Anáhuac in a way that allowed Spanish readers to accept as reliable names and events that were radically alien to them. One may wonder if Motolinía and Las Casas spoke of Oviedo's theory on their meeting in Tlaxcala in 1538, when the former passed on to the latter a version of his *Historia*. Did it already show any sign of Annius's influence? It is difficult to say. For sure, there was no trace of Motolinía's invented etymologies in the writings of Las Casas, who did extensive research on the New World and its indigenous inhabitants.⁷⁵ He had begun in 1527, roughly at the time when the first fragment of Motolinía's future *Historia* was being drafted. Since then, Las Casas had been gathering materials on the American natural world, the forms of social and political organization of the Indians, and their customs. These topics would later become the subject of his *Apologética historia sumaria*. This treatise was initially conceived as a single project along with the *Historia de las Indias*, a work meant to reconstruct the history of the Spanish conquest of the Americas. Missionary duties obliged him to interrupt writing in 1534, but as his request to have a copy of Motolinía's work four years later also shows, his interest in the history of the New World was as strong as ever.

Las Casas resumed his works after his final return to Spain (1547) and the famous Valladolid debate of 1550–1 with the humanist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, who, like Oviedo, regarded the Indians as inferior and their effectively enslaved condition as natural. In the ten years following, Las Casas worked both on the

⁷³ Surprisingly, this point, as well as the influence of Annius, is neglected by Álvaro Félix Bolaños, 'The Historian and the Hesperides: Fernández de Oviedo and the Limitations of Imitation', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 72, no. 3 (1995): pp. 273–288.

⁷⁴ The letter, dated to 6 October 1541, was included by Oviedo in the second part of his *Historia general y natural de las Indias*. I quote from the English translation published in Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint, eds., *Documents of the Coronado Expedition to Tierra Nueva: The 1540–1542 Route Across the Southwest* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1997), p. 311.

⁷⁵ For an introduction to Las Casas as historian, see Lewis Hanke, *Bartolomé de las Casas Historian: An Essay in Spanish Historiography* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1952) and Wagner, *The Life and Writings of Bartolomé de las Casas*, pp. 195–208. See also Gruzinski, *La machine à remonter le temps*, pp. 197–250.

Apologética historia and on the *Historia de las Indias*, making of them two masterpieces, though they remained incomplete and in manuscript form. One of his sources of information was the huge collection in the library of Hernando Columbus, son of Christopher, which held at least one copy of Annius's *Antiquities*.⁷⁶ Moreover, on precolonial Mexico, as well as the draft of the *Historia* that Motolinía had given him, Las Casas could also make use of a summary of the lost treatise by Olmos, which had come into his possession around 1546, after his return to New Spain to take up the bishopric of Chiapas.⁷⁷

In the *Apologética historia* Las Casas did not deal with the thorny question of the origins of the Indians. On Mexico, in particular, he discussed only the beliefs of its ancient inhabitants, offering constant comparisons with the Greeks and Romans on the basis of their shared heathenism and thus confirming the Indians as fully rational. His reconstruction of the antiquities of the whole of Spanish America rested on a close relation with the classical authors whose works of history and geography enabled him to go beyond the more familiar confines of Europe and the Mediterranean world: Herodotus, Aristotle, Varro, Diodorus Siculus, Livy, Pliny the Elder, Josephus, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who were also discussed through Eusebius of Caesarea and Augustine of Hippo. Writing about the 'multiplication of human lineage', Las Casas even launched into a long, passionate defence of Annius's *Antiquities*: Noah's efforts to repopulate the world as recounted by Berosus 'are fully credible', he wrote in response to the censure, due to 'not a little arrogance', with which the Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives had treated his writings, comparing them to 'mere dreams, worthy of the commentaries of Joannes Annius': 'in the same way one might say that much of what Holy Scripture recounts in *Genesis* of the story of the Flood and Noah are dreams', objected Las Casas, concluding that Annius 'in the ancient stories of the world should not be less regarded than the well-read and learned Luis Vivas'.⁷⁸

In Las Casas's history of prehispanic America, however, there was no room for Annius. Or rather, for his fabrications, which he regarded as true but cited only in passing in the *Apologética historia*. Las Casas does not seem to have known of the pitiless exposure of Annius as a forger in book 11 of *De locis theologicis* by his fellow Dominican, Fray Melchor Cano.⁷⁹ An influential scholastic theologian who held a chair at the University of Salamanca, Cano had completed this part of the

⁷⁶ Seville, Biblioteca Capitular y Colombina, 2-5-1. It is a copy of the Paris edition of 1515 by Jean Petit and Josse Bade, which was purchased in Nuremberg in 1521.

⁷⁷ Baudot, *Utopia and History in Mexico*, pp. 140-141.

⁷⁸ Las Casas, *Obras completas*, vol. 7, pp. 815, 819-820. The reference is to a passage by Vives in Augustine of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei libri XXII: Ad priscae venerandaeque vetustatis exemplaria denuo collati, eruditissimeque insuper commentarijs per undequaque doctissimum virum Ioannem Ludovicum Vivem illustrati et recogniti* (Basel: Hieronymus Froben and Nicolaus Episcopus, 1555), col. 378; a further attack can be read on cols. 992-993. The original edition of Vives's commentary had been published in 1522.

⁷⁹ Melchor Cano, 'De locis theologicis', in *Theologiae cursus completus*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, 28 vols. (Paris: Migne, 1839-1945), vol. 1, cols. 470 and 524-532.

work in 1553, but ten years went by before it appeared in print, along with the rest of the treatise. Meanwhile, in 1561 Las Casas had made the final changes to the *Historia de las Indias*. In book 1 he tackled the question of the origins of the Indians.

The target of his polemic was Oviedo. The first volume of his *Historia general*, a second edition of which appeared in 1547, remained very influential, although in 1550 publication of its second volume had been banned.⁸⁰ Las Casas began with the Carthaginian navigations. Unlike Motolinía, he did not deny the truth of their expeditions, but tried to keep them separate from Spanish America, suggesting they might have touched Brazil 'perhaps more than eight hundred years before the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, according to what we can discover from ancient stories'.⁸¹ This was a subtle way of insinuating that the Carthaginians might only have peopled a part of the New World that was now under the jurisdiction of the Portuguese crown, and therefore had no bearing on Spain's imperial claims. The reference to 'ancient stories' was a good way to introduce readers to Annius's *Antiquities*. But, when he turned to the Hesperides, Las Casas ended up criticizing Annius by using Annius. In other words, he used his direct knowledge of the *Antiquities* to refute the etymological explanation that had allowed Oviedo to identify those islands with the Antilles, which would have justified the Spanish crown's right of conquest by virtue of the dynastic link with the ancient king Hesperus. Las Casas dismissed Oviedo as 'the first imaginer of this subtlety'. His position left no room for ambiguity: 'that they were called Hesperides from the name Hesperus of some ancient king of Spain, and infer from this that they came under Spanish rule', thundered Las Casas, was a notion which 'anyone of average judgment, considering the thing, will not doubt is a thing that cannot rationally be said.' He then launched into an erudite argument centred on Annius and the 'treatise he composed of the kings of Spain... where he speaks of this same Hesperus', as well as on the 'treatise titled Berosus, book 5 of the *Antiquities*'. Once Las Casas had dissolved the link between Hesperus and the Hesperides, he established to his satisfaction that those the ancients spoke of were the Canary Islands.⁸²

Las Casas's was not the only writer to react to the debate inaugurated by Oviedo on the basis of Annian genealogies and etymologies. Francisco López de Gómara (1511–66), the private chaplain of Cortés after his return to Spain, also took a position on the controversy in his *Historia general de las Indias* (1552), a chronicle soon banned by the crown, despite its open support for the Spanish Empire. This was on account of the dark picture it painted of Peru in the years after the

⁸⁰ For a summary of the wider controversy between Las Casas and Fernández de Oviedo see Rolena Adorno, *Colonial American Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 38–46.

⁸¹ Las Casas, *Obras completas*, vol. 3, p. 391.

⁸² Las Casas, *Obras completas*, vol. 3, pp. 412, 414.

conquest.⁸³ In the final pages of the first volume López de Gómara, who had never himself been to the New World, returned to the myth of Atlantis, which, as we have seen, had been deliberately omitted by Motolinía. He claimed that ‘the Indies are the islands and dry land of Plato, and not the Hesperides’, ‘because the Hesperides are the islands of Cape Verde and the Gorgonas.’ Like Oviedo and unlike Motolinía and Las Casas, however, Gómara conceded that ‘it may be that Cuba, or Haiti, or some other islands of the Indies, are those found by the Carthaginians.’⁸⁴ Anyway, a little earlier, after an explicit mention of Las Casas’s committed defence of the Indians, Gómara gave his view of their origins, appealing to biblical genealogies, but without mentioning Berosus, even though he cited him elsewhere. For the first time he applied to the natives of the New World the idea that they had descended from Ham, whose progeny had been afflicted by Noah’s curse on him for mocking his nakedness while drunk—an argument that the Portuguese chroniclers had already used a hundred years before to justify the enslavement of Africans.⁸⁵

In the second volume of his chronicle, devoted to the conquest of Mexico, Gómara returned to Motolinía’s invented genealogies in the more detailed version of the *Memoriales* to which he somehow had access. He attributed them to ‘books’ by the Mexicas and to ‘common opinion’ widespread among their ‘wise and well-read men’. The names of the sons of Iztac Mixcóatl—who was explicitly cited—and their birth order were identical, but Gómara broke the etymological connection with the peoples of Anáhuac, systematically replacing them with localities: ‘Tenuch peopled Tenuchtitlán, and at first he was known as Tenuchca’; Xicalancatl ‘arrived at the North Sea, and set up many villages on the coast; but he called the two main ones with his own name. One Xicalanco is in the province of Maxcalcino, which is near Veracruz, while the other Xicalanco is near Tabasco’; Mixtecatl ‘travelled down to the South Sea’ and ‘all that extent of land is called Mixtecapán’; Otomitl ‘climbed the mountains around Mexico City’ and one of the centres he founded was ‘Otompán’. While Gómara both took up and altered Motolinía, his reservations regarding this account seemed evident from his clearly limited trust in indigenous memory: however hard they had tried, wrote Gómara, the Spaniards had been unable to ‘certify’ the ‘opinions’ they had collected.⁸⁶ A few

⁸³ Cristián A. Roa-de-la-Carrera, *Histories of Infamy: Francisco López de Gómara and the Ethics of Spanish Imperialism* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2005).

⁸⁴ Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias y vida de Hernán Cortés*, edited by Jorge Gurría Lacroix (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1979), p. 314.

⁸⁵ López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias y vida de Hernán Cortés*, pp. 310–311. There might be a touch of skepticism about the reliability of the *Historia Chaldaica* in the fact that Gómara wrote ‘the one whom they call Berosus’ (p. 20). On the curse of Ham and black slavery, see Benjamin Braude, ‘The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods’, *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1997): pp. 103–142.

⁸⁶ Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia de la conquista de México*, edited by Jorge Gurría Lacroix (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1979), pp. 321–322. The passage about Iztac Mixcóatl was rendered faithfully by the indigenous annalist Domingo Francisco de San Antón Muñon Chimalpahin

decades later, Fray Mendieta would expose the obvious parallel between these allegedly indigenous etymologies and those circulating in Europe: Tenochtitlán, he argued, could have well been ‘named after Tenuch, the first lord they chose when they peopled that place, just like some say that our old Spain was named Iberia after the famous river Ebro (called *Iber* in Latin), while others believe that it was named after Iberus, the first king to people it.’⁸⁷

Inventing Genealogies from the New World to China

The techniques behind Annius’s fgeries were particularly suitable for adaptation and modification, including the addition of new materials. For much of the sixteenth century the application of that genealogical model to world history was mainly limited to Europe and Spanish America—copies of Berosus’s *Historia Chaldaica* kept reaching the New World for a good while.⁸⁸ A further example came from Peru. In the early 1570s the explorer and cosmographer Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa (c. 1532–92) composed the *Historia general llamada indica*, another chronicle that remained in manuscript until the late nineteenth century. The information that its author collected during his inspections of the territories of the Andes and his interviews with their inhabitants provided the basis for a history of the royal lineage of the Incas from their origins until the recent Spanish conquest. Sarmiento de Gamboa’s work began with a story, of which he said only faint, contradictory traces could be found in the memory of the Indians, besides being made inaccurate and confused by the fact that his witnesses ‘were always without letters’.⁸⁹ In ancient times, wrote Sarmiento de Gamboa and drawing explicitly on the authority of Berosus, the Indies were part of a boundless territory, ‘the Atlantic Island’ of which Plato spoke, ‘larger than Asia and Africa together’,

Cuahutlehuantzin in his revised translation of López de Gómara’s chronicle into Nahuatl. See Susan Schroeder, Anne J. Cruz, Cristián Roa-de-la-Carrera, and David E. Tavárez, eds., *Chimalpáhin’s Conquest: A Nahua Historians Rewriting of Francisco López de Gómara’s ‘La conquista de Mexico’* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), pp. 443–445. This raises the question of how we can reconcile this choice with the description of Iztac Mixcóatl as the Mexica at the head of the seven family lineages (*calpolli*) that left Aztlan, which is provided in Domingo Francisco de San Antón Muñon Chimalpahin Cuahutlehuantzin, *Primer amoxtili libro: 3ª relación de las Diferentes historias originales*, edited by Víctor M. Castillo F. (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1997), pp. 3–7.

⁸⁷ Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, vol. 1, p. 274.

⁸⁸ Alonso Losa, a book dealer based in Mexico, received ‘1 Berosus, in 2 volume, paper for 6 reales’ from Diego Mexía, a Sevillian dealer, in 1576. See Natalia Maillard Álvarez, ‘Early Circulation of Classical Books in New Spain and Peru’, in *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America*, edited by Andrew Laird and Nicola Miller (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), p. 37.

⁸⁹ Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, *History of the Incas . . . and the Execution of the Inca Tupac Amaru by Captain Baltasar de Ocampo*, translated and edited by Clements Markham (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1907), p. 27.

that almost reached Spain around Cadiz. From here, after the Flood, it had been peopled both by Tubal and his descendants, the first inhabitants of Spain, and by the Mauritians. In fact, 'it was called the Atlantic Island from having been peopled by Atlas, the giant and very wise astrologer who first settled Mauritania now called Barbary', one of the sons of Japheth.⁹⁰ More importantly, the 'wonderful history' of 'the early Spaniards and the first Mauritanian vassals of King Atlas', who 'in conformity with the general peopling of the world' were 'probably' the first inhabitants of the Atlantic Island, also legitimized the Spanish Empire in the Indies. In fact, they were described as being simply the part that had remained above sea level after 'a great and continuous earthquake, with an unceasing deluge'. This was particularly true in the case of Peru, which had been unjustly subject to the 'tyrannical rule' of the Incas.⁹¹ Drawing on a reading of the *Primera parte de la Coronica general de toda España, y especialmente del Reyno de Valencia* (1546) by the scholar of German origin Anton Beuter, Sarmiento de Gamboa's *Historia* confirmed that explicit reference to the Annian Berosus was particularly appropriate in supporting attempts to legitimize colonial rule over the Americas. In this he followed the tradition inaugurated by Oviedo.

That may be one reason why this model was not used for Brazil, where Portuguese colonization was slow and difficult until the late sixteenth century. In any case, not even then were echoes heard of Berosus among the Portuguese historians of the Land of Santa Cruz, as the region was initially called. However, the debate surrounding Annian's forgeries partly explains the renewed interest in López de Gómara's theory on the origins of the Indians and its application to the Tupinambas of Brazil taken by the Huguenot explorer Jean de Léry. Mandated by John Calvin, he had crossed the Atlantic in 1557. Just over twenty years later, he published the *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil* (1578), in which he recounted the story of the short-lived colony of French Antarctique (1555–8), founded by the knight Nicolas Durand de Villegaignon in what is now Rio de Janeiro. Léry claimed that he had reached the conclusion that the Indians descended from Ham without any help from Gómara—'a thing that I had also thought and written in the notes that I made for the present history more than

⁹⁰ Sarmiento de Gamboa briefly referred to the presence of people in the Indies before the Flood, but did not dwell on this potentially very problematic point. The passage is translated wrongly in Sarmiento de Gamboa, *History of the Incas*, pp. 31–32. See the Spanish text in Aleksin H. Ortega, 'Segunda parte de la Historia general llamada indica (1572) de Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa: Estudio y edición anotada' (PhD Dissertation, The City University of New York, 2018), p. 128.

⁹¹ Sarmiento de Gamboa, *History of the Incas*, pp. 20–27. The importance of Annian in Sarmiento de Gamboa's *Historia* has been stressed by Soledad González Díaz, 'Genealogía de un origen: Túbal, el falsario y la Atlántida en la *Historia de los Incas* de Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa', *Revista de Indias* 72, no. 255 (2012): pp. 497–526. The article provides a partial interpretation, since it omits any reference to Mauritania and its King Atlas, on which a useful contextualization is provided by Pierre Vidal-Naquet, 'Atlantis and the Nations', *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 2 (1992): pp. 300–326. See also Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Atlantis Story: A Short History of Plato's Myth* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007), pp. 55–62.

sixteen years before I had seen his book.’⁹² Anyway, in the couple of decades between Léry’s return to France and the publication of his *History*—the source, by the way, of Michel de Montaigne’s famous essay on cannibals—Annius’s genealogies had been going global. They had been applied outside the history of the origins of the peoples of Europe and the Americas, giving rise to ever bolder reinterpretations.

The history of China was the first example of this process—which may be no accident. In the mid-sixteenth century the land that was still known to many Europeans as the Cathay of Marco Polo, where Columbus himself intended to drop anchor in the journey that took him instead to America, was thought to be part of the same continent as the New World. For Las Casas, for example, the West Indies were at the extremity of the East Indies, ‘as anyone can see who looks at the globe on which is depicted or painted all the earth’—an opinion confirmed by the famous planispheres produced by the Venetian cartographer Giacomo Gastaldi from 1546 on (see Figure 1.2).⁹³ Even Motolinía had thought he could easily continue his mission of evangelization by going on to China directly from Mexico. However, China’s encounter with Anninus and his false etymologies was not really an extension of the debate on the history of precolonial America and its inhabitants. It was more of a tacit recovery of a narrative technique that, as in the case of Motolinía, had no open design of legitimating political dominion, and so was more ambiguous and deceptive.

Fernão Mendes Pinto (d. 1583) had embarked for Goa in 1537, which was then the capital city of the Portuguese Empire in Asia. After many adventures that had even taken him to the Far East, he returned to Portugal in 1558.⁹⁴ Little more than ten years later, in the quiet suburb of Almada, across the Tagus from Lisbon, he began to write a fanciful account of his travels, in which reality is constantly mixed with fiction, amid shipwrecks, capture, and enslavement. It was the work of a man with no more illusions. Published posthumously, with possible modifications by the Jesuits no less, the *Peregrinação* (1614) was an original and critical description of the Portuguese presence in the East Indies. In particular, Pinto gave great attention to the account of the mission in Japan, undertaken with Francis Xavier and the Jesuits, as well as to China, although he hardly reached its southern border. It was in this section, which took up more than a third of the whole volume of the *Peregrinação*, that Pinto advanced a remarkable theory on ‘the strange origins of the Chinese Empire’. In what is a somewhat ironical historical

⁹² Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, Otherwise Called America*, translated and edited by Janet Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 151. For an introduction, see Frank Lestringant, *Jean de Léry, ou l’invention du sauvage: Essai sur l’Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999).

⁹³ Las Casas, *Obras completas*, vol. 6, p. 377.

⁹⁴ Rebecca Catz, ‘Fernão Mendes Pinto and His “Peregrinação”’, *Hispania* 74, no. 3 (1991): pp. 501–507.

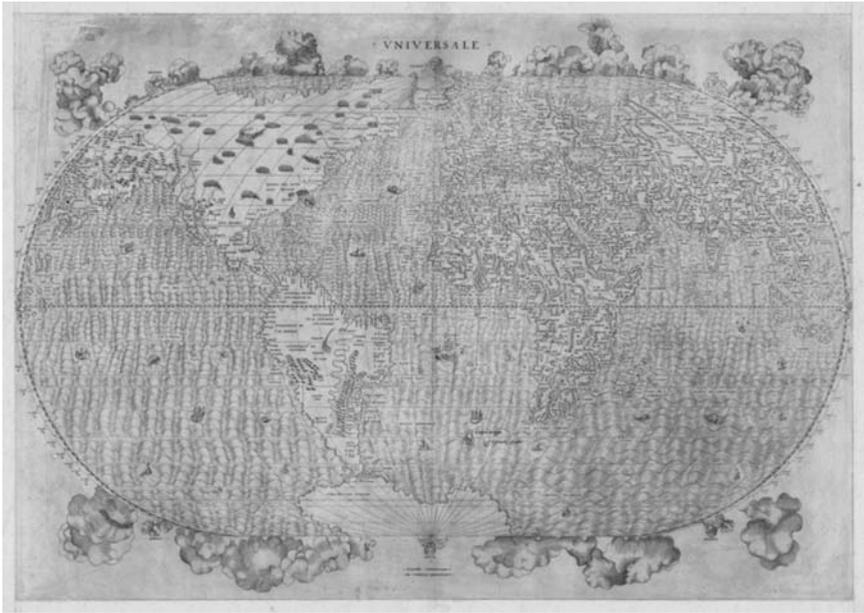


Figure 1.2 Planisphere showing the Americas and Asia as both part of one large mass of land. Giacomo Gastaldi, *Universale* (Venice: s.n., 1546). Copper engraving. Courtesy of the Houghton Library, pf 51–2492, Harvard University.

digression, he seems to have given way to Annian temptations, heedless of the Franciscan humanist Gaspar Barreiros's slating of the *Antiquities* as an 'infectious disease' that had been circulating in Portugal since 1561.⁹⁵

Perhaps Pinto was reacting to the *Tratado em que se contem muito por extenso as couzas da China* (1569–70) by the Dominican missionary Gaspar da Cruz, which had been published in Portugal just when he was writing the *Peregrinação*. Cruz claimed that 'it seems clear that China borders on the end of Almayne' and that, according to some Portuguese who had been imprisoned by them, 'the Chinas know of Almayne.'⁹⁶ Pinto started from this very point when he worked out a story allegedly derived from 'the first of the eighty chronicles of the kings of China', a rather transparent parody of the history of the first twenty-four kings of Spain by Annian.

⁹⁵ On Barreiros's criticism to Annian see Giuseppe Marcocci, 'Contro i falsari: Gaspar Barreiros censore di Annio da Viterbo', *Rinascimento* 50 (2010): pp. 343–359; more recently, Walter Stephens, 'Exposing the Archforger: Annian of Viterbo's First Master Critic', in *Literary Forgery in Early Modern Europe, 1450–1800*, edited by Walter Stephens and Earle A. Havens, assisted by Janet E. Gomez (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), pp. 170–190.

⁹⁶ I quote from Charles R. Boxer, ed., *South China in the Sixteenth Century: Being the Narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr. Gaspar da Cruz, O.P., Fr. Martin de Rada, O.E.S.A., 1550–1575* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1953), pp. 71–72.

Pinto wrote that ‘in the thirteenth chapter’, ‘which I heard read on many occasions’, it was written that 639 years after the Flood, in the town of ‘Kwantipocow’, on ‘the coast of our Almain’, lived Prince Turban, who, when young, without being married, had had three children from a certain Nankin.⁹⁷ His love for this woman, however, infuriated his mother, the widowed queen. So began a story of persecutions and flights, which, after the murder of Turban, ended with Nankin fleeing with her three children on board a stolen ship. After forty-seven days they reached the site of the future Peking.⁹⁸ ‘Five days after Nankin and her followers had landed in this place she swore in her eldest son as prince of all her people’—that is to say, the exiles from Almain. One is not surprised to discover that the name of Nankin’s son was ‘Pekin’. That afternoon, the new prince ‘marked out a site where they were to build a town’. He went there ‘dressed in ceremonial robes’, ‘preceded by a servant carrying a foundation-stone’, delivering a speech that began thus: ‘Brothers and comrades, to this foundation-stone of a new dynasty I give my own name: from this day forward it will be known as Peking.’ His words were later ‘engraved on a silver shield that hangs above the Pommicotau, one of the city’s main gates’. ‘That is a brief account’, Pinto continued, ‘of how the city of Peking was founded and the Chinese empire populated by Prince Pekin, the eldest son of Nankin.’ His two younger brothers, Pakan and Nakow, ‘founded two more cities, to which they also gave their own names’, just like their mother Nankin, who, as ‘one also reads in the chronicles’, ‘founded and named Nanking, which today is the second city of the empire’.⁹⁹

A chronicle that was indicated with apparent precision but could not be checked by the readers; an epigraph in memory of an adventurous story of founders and populators of cities and empires after the Flood; a trail of interconnected names that gave the Chinese common origins. These ingredients were easily recognizable to any person of learning in the early seventeenth century, now used to seeing Annius being exposed as a forger. He was both the inspiration for Pinto and at the same time the target of his parody.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Fernão Mendes Pinto, *The Peregrination*, edited and translated by Michael Lowery (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1992), p. 107. Although it is an abridged version, I prefer this translation to the complete edition available in Fernão Mendes Pinto, *The Travels*, edited and translated by Rebecca D. Catz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). I have used ‘Almain’ instead of ‘Germany’ for the Portuguese *Alemanha*.

⁹⁸ The events summarized here are taken from Chapters 92 and 93.

⁹⁹ Pinto, *The Peregrination*, pp. 111–113.

¹⁰⁰ Other scholars have concluded that ‘it is not completely impossible that [Pinto] in fact used Chinese sources in the construction of his book of memories.’ See Rui Manuel Loureiro, ‘Mission Impossible: In Search of the Sources of Fernão Mendes Pinto’s *Peregrinação*’, in *Fernão Mendes Pinto and the Peregrinação: Studies, Restored Text, Notes and Indexes*, edited by Jorge Santos Alves, 4 vols. (Lisbon: Fundação Oriente, 2010), vol. 1, p. 250. Also Manel Ollé’s comment on chapters 92–94, in volume 3 of Alves, ed., *Fernão Mendes Pinto and the Peregrinação*, maintains that this founding myth, although it ‘has not been identified as a specific story’, is ‘credible in the Chinese cultural context’.

From New Spain to China via Viterbo: in the late sixteenth century, one of the unexpected effects of the extraordinary success of the historical literature inspired by Anniius was the possibility of considering the history of humanity against a global background. This historiography had fragile foundations that would not survive later scholarly criticism, but until that time its influence ran wide and deep. In the face of the unexpected variety of the new worlds and their inhabitants encountered in the age of exploration, Anniius's forgeries managed to convince Europeans of the profound unity of human history.

2

Histories in Motion

Thinking Back to the Moluccas in a Lisbon Hospital

The mobility of people and goods across different parts of the globe over the centuries generated the perception of a shared history of the world. It does not come as a surprise that a vision of the past of this kind took shape in a period of long-distance travels and trade, such as in the first half of the sixteenth century. While the imperial rhetoric of Spain and Portugal insisted on celebrating how their early modern explorers had surpassed the ancients, Renaissance historians and geographers started wondering about the antecedents to the ocean navigations of their time and the reasons that drove people to cross great distances by land and sea. Some of their answers produced accounts which conflicted with the expectations of the Iberian monarchs, especially when they insinuated that there was still room for further discoveries around the world.

At the heart of this chapter is a small volume written in the mid sixteenth century by a disillusioned Portuguese captain who had served his empire in Southeast Asia. Drawing on local information, combined with the inspiration provided by the books that its author read after his return to Lisbon, this work should probably be regarded as the most successful Renaissance attempt to write a history of the world. Its content did not help make it popular in Portugal, where it was first published, but it ended up involuntarily supporting French and English dreams of overseas expansion in the following decades. Its study offers a persuasive example of how attractive historical writings could be that were able to embrace the globe and sew together its multiple pasts.

News from the East

The global circulation of people, ideas, and objects along the routes controlled by the Iberian empires in the sixteenth century was the main channel through which Europeans came into contact with Ming China. Their fascination with this distant empire and its great past was mirrored in the first pages of a history of the world published posthumously in Lisbon in 1563. It was a short, pocket-sized book in the Portuguese tongue, but its ambition was to disclose the secrets of a global

history. This was manifest in its long title, which in translation reads more or less as ‘Treatise . . . of the different and astounding routes by which in times gone by pepper and spices came from India to our parts, and also of all the discoveries ancient and modern which have been made up to the year 1550’. Its author was António Galvão. He was a former official of the Portuguese crown in the Moluccas, then also known as the Spice Islands, due to their exceptional production of cloves, mace, nutmeg, and pepper. His *Tratado* provided a history of the world centred on the incessant mobility of people and goods that voyages had made possible over the course of time.¹ It was one of the most original attempts to respond to the extraordinary novelty of the many lands that exploration had made accessible and the equally astonishing discovery that their inhabitants, too, had a rich past almost entirely unknown to the Old World.

Galvão’s work opened with an account of a primordial navigation which had seen the ancient Chinese as protagonists. Who were the ‘first inventors’ of long-distance journeys after the Flood? ‘Some write that they were the Greeks, others say the Phoenicians, others the Egyptians. The Indians do not agree with this.’ Thus, in a few opening lines, the *Tratado* radically broadened the perspective of European readers on ancient times. The ‘Indians’, a general name that was used here for the inhabitants of Asia, swore ‘they were the first that sailed by sea, especially the Taybencos, whom now we call the Chinese.’ Galvão did not clarify the origins of the name ‘Taybencos’, but supported the view that in the past ‘they were already lords of India as far as the Cape of Good Hope.’² Not only had the East African coast been inhabited by the ‘Taybencos’, he went on, following his Asian informants, but so had Java, Timor, Celebes, Makassar, the Moluccas, Borneo, Mindanao, Luzon, Japan, ‘and other islands’, as well as ‘the dry land of Cochinchina, Laos, Siam, Burma, Pegu, Arracan, to Bengal’. The list continued, claiming unexpectedly that the ancient Chinese had also reached ‘New Spain, Peru, Brazil, the Antilles, and the other islands close to them, as appears from the

¹ António Galvão, *Tratado . . . dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos, por onde nos tempos passados a pimenta & especiaria veyo da India ás nossas partes, & assi de todos os descobrimentos antigos & modernos, que são feitos até a era de 1550* (Lisbon: João de Barreira, 1563). For an introduction, see Rui Manuel Loureiro, ‘António Galvão e os seus tratados histórico-geográficos’, in *D. João III e o império: Actas do Congresso Internacional*, edited by Roberto Carneiro and Arturo Teodoro de Matos (Lisbon: CHAM, 2004), pp. 85–102; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘As quatro partes vistas das Molucas: Breve releitura de António Galvão’, in *Passeurs, mediadores culturais y agentes de la primera globalización en el mundo ibérico, siglos XVI–XIX*, edited by Scarlett O’Phelan Godoy and Carmen Salazar-Soler (Lima: PUC, 2005), pp. 713–730.

² ‘Taybencos’ derived from *Tāi-bin*, ‘great Ming dynasty’ in Amoy, the prestige vernacular of Southeast China. A clearer awareness of the origins of this name was evident in the *Relation of the things of China, which is properly called Taybin* written in 1575–1576 by the Augustinian friar Martín de Rada, according to which that name was given it by the King, Hombu, who drove the Tartars out of China’. I quote from Charles R. Boxer, ed., *South China in the Sixteenth Century: Being the Narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr. Gaspar da Cruz, O.P., Fr. Martin de Rada, O.E.S.A., 1550–1575* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1953), p. 260. This is an accurate reference to the first Ming emperor, Hung-wu (Hong-bú in Amoy vernacular), who ruled from 1368 to 1398.

features and customs of the men and women, their small eyes, flat noses, and other proportions that we see in them'. The comment on the somatic features of the American peoples the Iberians had only recently encountered preceded a reflection that was applied in particular to the archipelago of the Moluccas: 'even today many of these islands and lands are called Batochina and Bocochina, which mean land of China.'³ Thus, the debate over the origins of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, which was very heated at the time, extended to the theory that they descended from the Chinese.⁴

What kind of history of the world was this, which started from the idea of an ancient Chinese colonization of the Americas? To understand it, we should turn to the context in which Galvão wrote his *Tratado*. And to do this, we need not only to take account of his unusual life, but also to retrace the multiple references to Ming China in Renaissance historical writings. The Portuguese exploration in Asia was the trigger factor that led to everyday contacts with a land that had traditionally been material largely for fantasy in humanist literature. In the first half of the sixteenth century the accounts of the Venetian merchant Niccolò de' Conti were still popular. Transcribed in the mid fifteenth century by Poggio Bracciolini, they had relaunched the medieval myth of Cathay of Marco Polo, contributing, among other things, to the belief that the Chinese Empire was still in the hands of the Mongol dynasty of the Yuan (1271–1368).⁵ This mistake, no less than many other idealized notions about Chinese society, was only finally corrected a few decades later, mainly thanks to the surveys carried out on the ground by missionaries, such as the Jesuits and the Portuguese Dominican friar Gaspar da Cruz.⁶ A fundamental contribution came from the information circulated by Fray Martín de Rada, one of the first Augustinians to reach the Philippines in the early years of Spanish colonization. The result of regular contacts with the Chinese in the archipelago and of a personal stay in the Middle Kingdom (1575), his reports became the basis of two of the most authoritative printed works on China available to late sixteenth-century Europe, both written by Spanish Augustinians: the *Historia de las cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del gran reino de la China* (1585) by Juan González de Mendoza, and a long section on the

³ Galvão, *Tratado... dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fols. 1r–2r.

⁴ On this debate, see also 'The Indian descendants of Noah' and 'Berosus across the Atlantic' in chapter 1 and 'Between nature and culture' in chapter 5.

⁵ Niccolò de' Conti, *The Travels... in the East in the Early Part of the Fifteenth Century*, edited by John Winter Jones (London: Hakluyt Society, 1857). A Portuguese translation of this work was included in the edition of Marco Polo's *Travels*, published in Lisbon by Valentim Fernandes in 1502. See Francisco Maria Esteves Pereira, ed., *Marco Paulo: O livro de Marco Paulo, o livro di Nicolao Veneto, carta de Jeronimo de Santo Esteavam* (Lisbon: Oficinas Gráficas da Biblioteca Nacional, 1922).

⁶ A selection of early Portuguese texts can be read in Raffaella D'Intino, ed., *Enformação das cousas da China: Textos do século XVI* (Lisbon: INCM, 1989). Some of them are available in English translation in Boxer, ed., *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 1–239. For an introduction to the mid sixteenth-century Portuguese literature on China, see Rui Manuel Loureiro, *Fidalgos, missionários e mandarins: Portugal e a China no Século XVI* (Lisbon: Fundação Oriente, 2000), pp. 443–462.

subject included in the third volume of the second edition of the *Republicas del mundo* (1595) by Jerónimo Román.⁷

Since interest in China had increased, Lisbon had established itself as an essential port of call for anyone seeking reliable information on the Asian region in Europe. The traveller and adventurer Fernão Mendes Pinto had been very close to the Jesuits during his time in the East Indies (1537–58), when he had even become a member of the Society of Jesus for some years.⁸ When he finally returned home to take up residence in the Almada area, across the river from Lisbon, he emerged as one of the men to go to for information on China. This reputation helps explain why, around 1571, and despite his many connections with noble families in Portugal, Pinto contemplated dedicating the account of his travels that he was writing at the time to Cosimo I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany (r. 1569–74).⁹ The idea came to him in conversation with the Florentine ambassador Bernardo Neri, who often mentioned the Grand Duke's lively interest in the distant lands he had visited, particularly in the 'matters of China and its cities'. In his forthcoming book, Pinto assured Neri, there was all this information, 'describing what I have seen, learnt, and read in chronicles of the ancient kings of China'.¹⁰ Among the materials that the Florentine ambassador took back from Lisbon may have been a Buddhist codex from the Mekong Valley purloined from Pinto, but not the work its owner thought of offering to Cosimo I. The final draft was only completed some years after and remained unpublished until the next century, when it appeared under the title *Peregrinação* (1614).¹¹

⁷ On Rada and his reports see Boxer, ed., *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. lxxvii–xcv. For their context of production, see Manel Ollé, *La invención de China: Percepciones y estrategias filipinas respecto a China durante el siglo XVI* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000). See also Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965–1993), vol. 1, pp. 730–821. On González de Mendoza see Diego Sola, *El cronista de China: Juan González de Mendoza, entre la misión, el imperio y la historia* (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona Edicions, 2018). Román's section needs to be studied more in detail. A useful starting point is Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'The Concept of a Gentile Civilization in Missionary Discourse and its European Reception: Mexico, Peru and China in the *Repúblicas del Mundo* by Jerónimo Román', in *Missions d'évangélisation et circulation des savoirs, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècles*, edited by Charlotte de Castelnaud-L'Estoile, Marie-Lucie Copete, Aliocha Maldavsky, and Ines G. Županov (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2011), pp. 311–350.

⁸ Luís Filipe Barreto, 'Fernão Mendes Pinto and the Jesuit Connection', in *Fernão Mendes Pinto and the Peregrinação: Studies, Restored Text, Notes and Indexes*, edited by Jorge Santos Alves, 4 vols. (Lisbon: Fundação Oriente, 2010), vol. 1, pp. 55–87. See also 'Inventing genealogies from the New World to China' in chapter 1.

⁹ On Pinto's ties with military orders and noble families in Portugal, see Zoltán Biedermann and Andreia Martins de Carvalho, 'Home Sweet Home: The Networks of Fernão Mendes Pinto in Portugal', in *Fernão Mendes Pinto and the Peregrinação: Studies, Restored Text, Notes and Indexes*, edited by Jorge Santos Alves, 4 vols. (Lisbon: Fundação Oriente, 2010), vol. 1, pp. 29–53.

¹⁰ Letter from Pinto to Neri, Almada, 15 March 1571, published in Rebecca Catz, ed., *Cartas de Fernão Mendes Pinto e outros documentos* (Lisbon: Presença, 1983), pp. 114–116.

¹¹ The theft of the codex by a Florentine ambassador is reported in chapter 164 of the *Peregrinação*. On the materials from all around the world collected by the Medici, see Jessica Keating and Lia Markey, '“Indian” Objects in Medici and Austrian-Habsburg Inventories: A Case-Study of the Sixteenth-Century Term', *Journal of the History of Collections* 23, no. 2 (2011): pp. 283–300. More specifically

Initially, Neri had not intended to address Pinto but a much more famous Portuguese humanist of the period. On leaving Florence, he had been told to obtain a ‘copy of the cosmography of China’ which the elderly geographer and chronicler João de Barros (c. 1496–1570) ‘says he has translated from Chinese into Portuguese’. The Dominican cosmographer Egnazio Danti had expressed a particular interest in the work. He was then in Florence to design the series of splendid maps that decorate the *Sala della Guardaroba*, planned by Giorgio Vasari and Miniato Pitti for Cosimo I’s apartments in the *Palazzo Vecchio*, including maps of China which would be completed in 1575 (see Figure 2.1). Neri was also supposed to discover if Barros ‘has any map of that country and province of China, Mangi, and Cathay’ and ‘try to get a copy’: there could be no finer gift for the Grand Duke, Danti concluded, ‘since no good information of the aforementioned places exists.’¹²

Neri may not have met the aged Barros, who was then close to death. But Danti’s letter shows the extent to which China and the desire to know more about it were constantly in Cosimo I’s thoughts while he was deciding to decorate with maps of the regions of the world the room designated to house his great collection, which also included a host of Chinese ceramics.¹³ The result was the highest example of the attempt to bring the whole world under one’s gaze, a fashion that was spreading rapidly to the rest of Italy in the late sixteenth century.¹⁴ Globes and maps of the world popping up in the palaces of power were a response to a new taste that fed on geographical knowledge, but also reflected the aspiration to possess colonies which lay behind the attempts of some Mediterranean states, including the Medici’s Grand Duchy, to penetrate into spaces opened up first by Iberian exploration.¹⁵

The Chinese Lesson of Empire

The capital city of a global empire with a South Asian core and outposts stretching as far as Macau and Nagasaki, at that time Lisbon was the ideal place for gathering

on China, see Irene Backus, ‘Asia Materialized: Perceptions of China in Renaissance Florence’ (PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2014).

¹² Letter sent from Florence, 28 October 1569. I quote, with slight changes, from Francesca Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps: Art, Cartography and Politics in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 125. For an introductory study to Barros, see Charles R. Boxer, *João de Barros: Portuguese Humanist and Historian of Asia* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1981).

¹³ Backus, ‘Asia Materialized’, pp. 36–49. The importance of Danti’s letter appears not to have been noticed by the author of this dissertation.

¹⁴ Mark Rosen, *The Mapping of Power in Renaissance Italy: Painted Cartographic Cycles in Social and Intellectual Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

¹⁵ Brian Brege, ‘The Empire that Wasn’t: The Grand Duchy of Tuscany and Empire, 1574–1609’ (PhD Dissertation, Stanford University, 2014).

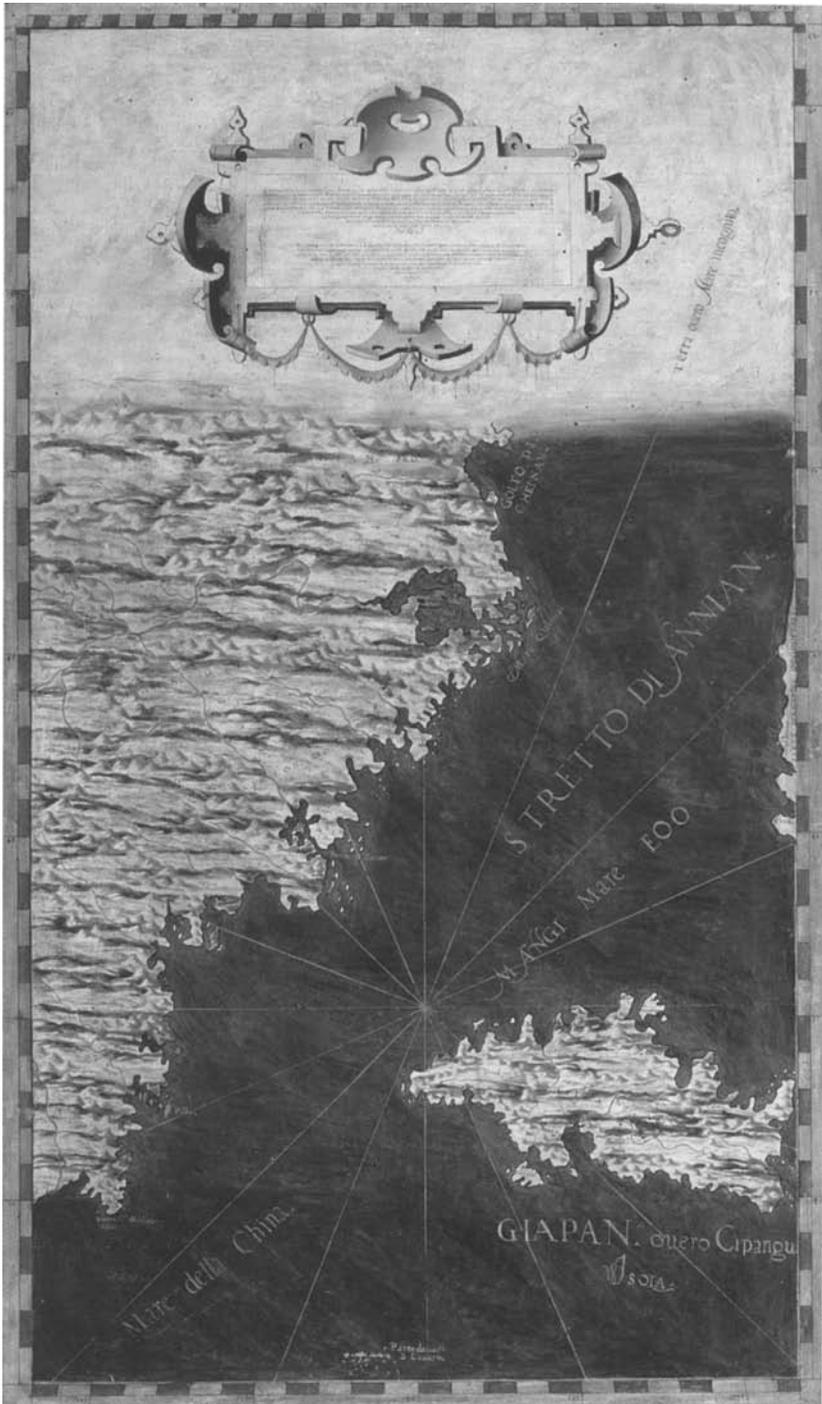


Figure 2.1 Coast of China and island of Japan in a map designed by Egnazio Danti, c. 1570–5. Florence, Museo di Palazzo Vecchio, Sala della Guardaroba. Fototeca Musei Civici Fiorentini.

fresh information about China. The Florentine ambassador Neri was directed to Barros as the latter was the author of the official chronicle of Portuguese feats in the East, the *Décadas da Ásia*, published in several volumes from 1552 on.¹⁶ A sophisticated and cultivated humanist, Barros organized his chronicle in sets of ten chapters (or ‘decades’), as the Milanese chronicler Pietro Martire d’Anghiera had already done in his *De orbe novo* (1511–25), a work on the Spanish conquest of America. Both of them drew inspiration from the structure of Livy’s *History of Rome*, but in Barros’ case an early enthusiasm for the *Discourses on Livy* (1531) by Niccolò Machiavelli probably mediated it.¹⁷ Barros’ predilection for classical culture, however, did not blind him to the limits of European knowledge of Asia, which he never visited personally. He was in charge of the *Casa da Índia*, the agency regulating Portuguese trade with Asia, and drew on its archives for writings, maps, and documents, also using the work of translators and interpreters.¹⁸

Barros began his chronicle by presenting Portuguese penetration of Asia as one stage in the worldwide holy war against Muslims.¹⁹ But his aggressive perspective was immediately balanced by recourse to a source indicated only as ‘Larigh’ (<*tārīkh*, ‘chronicle’). Barros described this work as ‘a summary of the feats of their caliphs in conquering those parts of the East’, written ‘in the Persian tongue’. The ‘Larigh’ was part of a shipment including ‘other volumes of Persian history and cosmography’ that he had received ‘from those regions’.²⁰ This was, very probably, the *Rawzat aṣ-ṣafā* (‘Garden of Purity’), the fifteenth-century encyclopaedic chronicle by Mir-Khwānd, a Persian-language historian who had spent much of his life in Herat, where he had witnessed the final days of the Timurid Empire.²¹ References like this must have intrigued the Venetian librarian and humanist Giovanni Battista Ramusio, as he seems to have shared the strong

¹⁶ For a quick introduction see Rui Manuel Loureiro, ‘Revisitando as *Décadas da Ásia*: Algumas observações sobre o projecto historiográfico de João de Barros’, *e-Spania* 30 (2018).

¹⁷ For a detailed discussion of Barros’s reading of Machiavelli, see Giuseppe Marcocci, ‘Machiavelli, la religione dei romani e l’impero portoghese’, *Storica* 41–42 (2008): pp. 35–68, and Giuseppe Marcocci, ‘Machiavelli, the Iberian Explorations and the Islamic Empire: Tropical Readers from Brazil to India (Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries)’, in *Machiavelli, Islam and the East: Reorienting the Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, edited by Lucio Biasiori and Giuseppe Marcocci (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 131–154.

¹⁸ On Barros and the *Casa da Índia*, see now Ângela Barreto Xavier, ‘The Casa da Índia and the Emergence of a Science of Administration in the Portuguese Empire’, *Journal of Early Modern History* 22, no. 5 (2018): pp. 327–347.

¹⁹ On this subject in Iberian literature of the period, see Vincent Barletta, *Death in Babylon: Alexander the Great and Iberian Empire in the Muslim Orient* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

²⁰ I quote from João de Barros, *Da Ásia*, 8 vols. (Lisbon: Livraria Sam Carlos, 1973), vol. 1, pp. 2 and 7 (dec. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1); vol. 3, p. 443 (dec. 2, bk. 5, ch. 2).

²¹ On this identification see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘Intertwined Histories: “Crónica” and “Tārīkh” in the Sixteenth-Century Indian Ocean World’, *History and Theory* 49, no. 4 (2010): p. 140; see also Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Europe’s India: Words, People, Empires, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), pp. 78–79.

interest in Asian materials that was common among other early readers of Barros in sixteenth-century Italy, including many in the urban elites of major centres such as Florence and Venice. Just two years after the publication of the *Primeira Década*, Ramusio included a selection from this work in the second edition of the first volume of his *Navigazioni et Viaggi* (1554). This was a monumental collection of historical and geographical writings on the ancient and modern world, organized by continent, with an overall effect of great unity, partly due to the translation of texts originally written in languages other than Italian.²²

In the introductory epistle to the extracts of the *Primeira Década* Ramusio underlined Barros' promise to 'have a book published of maps of the country of China, printed (as he relates) in that province and translated by a Chinese slave of his'.²³ It was this information that would lead to Danti's request to Neri in 1569. In his chronicle, Barros stressed the value of this rare source. He also praised the greatness of the Chinese Empire, superior to all others in Asia, in 'people, power, wealth, and civility', as well as with 'more income than all the kingdoms and powers of Europe'.²⁴ What Danti almost certainly did not then know, however, was that, in the meantime, Barros had also come into possession of 'a map of the whole of that land, done by the Chinese themselves', as well as 'some of their books'.²⁵ He had mentioned these materials in his *Terceira Década*, published in 1563, the same year as Galvão's *Tratado*, but never translated into Italian.²⁶

We do not know if the Chinese 'books' that Barros owned included chronicles, and whether they might have contributed to a discovery that Europeans then made, mainly thanks to the *Terceira Década*. This was that not only did the Chinese have an immense land empire, but they had also preceded the Portuguese in becoming lords of the Indian Ocean, operating with 'greater prudence than Greeks, Carthaginians, and Romans, who strayed so far from their homeland to conquer foreign countries that they ended up losing it'.²⁷ Though Chinese ships had visited Southeast Asia before, Barros' words clearly contained an echo of the famous expeditions of the imperial fleet, led by Admiral Zheng He. From 1405 on, hundreds of huge vessels had crossed the Indian Ocean seven times, compelling tribute from the major ports of South Asia, and even reaching the East African coast. However, this expansion was just a brief interlude

²² Massimo Donattini, 'Giovanni Battista Ramusio e le sue "Navigazioni": Appunti per una biografia', *Critica storica* 17 (1980): pp. 55–100. Also useful is Elizabeth Horodowich, *The Venetian Discovery of America: Geographic Imagination and Print Culture in the Age of Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 63–88.

²³ Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, edited by Marica Milanese, 6 vols. (Turin: Einaudi, 1978–1988), vol. 2, p. 1043. The first two decades by Barros were later translated entirely into Italian by Alfonso de Ulloa. See João de Barros, *L'Asia...* (Venice: Vincenzo Valgrisio, 1562).

²⁴ Barros, *Da Ásia*, vol. 2, pp. 320–321 (dec. 1, bk. 9, ch. 2).

²⁵ Barros, *Da Ásia*, vol. 5, pp. 188–189 (dec. 3, bk. 2, ch. 7).

²⁶ On Barros' treatment of China in the *Terceira Década*, see Loureiro, *Fidalgos, missionários e mandarins*, pp. 596–600.

²⁷ Barros, *Da Ásia*, vol. 5, p. 196 (dec. 3, bk. 2, ch. 7).

that partly coincided, among other things, with the period when Niccolò de' Conti was travelling in South Asia. The Ming dynasty put a stop to Zheng He's navigations in 1433 by means of an edict from the Xuande Emperor (r. 1425–35).²⁸

Where did Barros get this information from? It should be noted, first of all, that he was not the first Portuguese to mention evidence that the Chinese had ruled in the Indian Ocean in the past. Before him there had been, among others, his rival Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, but the only point in common in what we can read in his chronicle, published between 1551 and 1561, and the *Terceira Década*, seems to be the fact that Zheng He was never mentioned directly.²⁹ Barros gave no date for the Chinese exploration, but the comparison with Greeks, Carthaginians, and Romans suggests that he probably thought of those expeditions as happening in ancient times.³⁰ This possible mistake would be in line with the hypothesis that he had vicarious access to second-hand sources on those travels.³¹ However, Barros' fascination with this Chinese attempt at domination ran deep, not least because the sense of limitation which had led them to interrupt their ocean navigation, could serve as a warning to the excessive ambition of Portuguese explorers. Material evidence of that lesson of empire was everywhere. First there was the appalling state to which Mylapore, on the southeast coast of India, was reduced, when the Portuguese reached it in search of traces of the apostle Thomas, with 'almost everywhere in ruins from wars in the time of the Chinese, as it was their main centre'. Then there was the very name of Ceylon, as Sri Lanka was known at the time, which 'means dangers or the perdition of the Chinese', wrote Barros, recalling the supposed wreck of eighty Chinese craft in the shallows of the island. They were all signs of ancient Chinese dominion over South India as 'in addition to the natives' claims, there is the testimony of the buildings, the names, and the language they have left, as did the Romans among us Hispanics, thus preventing us from denying that they had conquered us.'³² The theme of language as the companion of empire, on which Barros had already insisted in his *Dialogo*

²⁸ Louise Levathes, *When China Ruled the Sea: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne, 1405–1433* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994).

²⁹ Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, *História do descobrimento e conquista da Índia pelos Portugueses*, edited by Manuel Lopes de Almeida, 2 vols. (Oporto: Lello & Irmão, 1979), vol. 2, pp. 20–21 and 799. The same is true for the rather accurate references to the Chinese expeditions in the Indian Ocean which can be read in Gaspar Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, edited by Manuel Lopes de Almeida, 4 vols. (Oporto: Lello & Irmão, 1975), vol. 1, pp. 69–70 and 186; vol. 3, p. 770. For an introduction to these and other sixteenth-century Portuguese sources on Zheng He, see Jorge M. dos Santos Alves, 'La voix de la prophétie: Informations portugaises de la 1^e moitié du XVI^e s. sur les voyages de Zheng He', in *Zheng He: Images & Perceptions*, edited by Claudine Salmon and Roderich Ptak (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), pp. 39–55.

³⁰ Interestingly, Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. 3, pp. 770, dated back them to almost five-hundred years.

³¹ With reference to Barros' treatment of China, it has been argued that he 'mainly relies on oral and written information from Portuguese who visited the Chinese coast' (Loureiro, 'Revisitando as *Décadas da Ásia*').

³² Barros, *Da Ásia*, vol. 5, pp. 107, 108 and 111, respectively (dec. 3, bk. 2, ch. 1). The importance of this comparison is also highlighted in Alves, 'La voix de la prophétie', pp. 41–46.

em louvor da nossa linguagem (1540), was also confirmed in the case of the Chinese.³³

The example of the Chinese Empire aroused Barros' admiration.³⁴ It had been the decree of 'a prudent king', he insisted, that had prohibited further exploration in the Indian Ocean. Thus, though he gave no precise date for that order, Barros had some knowledge of Xuande's measure. Moreover, in what sounded like an implicit warning to the Portuguese merchants only a few years after they had been authorized to settle in the port of Macau (1557), he also recalled that, following Xuande's decree, access to China was still forbidden to any strangers without a permit, and also that the Chinese were restricted in where they could sail, with the exception of the merchants of Canton (Guangzhou).³⁵ It was in this last city that Tomé Pires had ended up in prison after leading a disastrous expedition to the Zhengde Emperor (r. 1505–21). Pires and other Portuguese had disembarked in China in 1517, officially on a trading mission at the imperial court. But their behaviour irritated the Chinese, who even accused them of cannibalism.³⁶ After a brief meeting with Zhengde in Nanking, the Portuguese delegation was subjected to a long, humiliating wait in Peking, in the vain hope of being received in the Forbidden City. Problems of internal instability and the growing hostility towards the Portuguese for having conquered Malacca, whose ruler loyally paid tribute to China, also contributed to the failure of an enterprise that ran parallel with that of the conquistador Hernán Cortés in Mexico (1519–21).³⁷ By the time Barros was writing, the Portuguese had realized that relations with China required caution and respect.

³³ Once again, this was probably understood in relation to the Portuguese Empire, on whose eternal legacy Barros had written: 'Time can consume the Portuguese coats of arms and pillars erected in Africa, Asia, and countless islands beyond the three parts of the Earth for they are material, but will never consume the doctrine, habits, and language that the Portuguese will leave in these lands'. I quote from João de Barros, *Diálogo em louvor da nossa linguagem*, edited by Luciana Stegagno Picchio (Modena: Società Tipografica Modenese, 1959), pp. 84–85. The wider implications of Barros' intervention on this topos seem to have escaped both Eugenio Asensio, 'La lengua compañera del imperio: Historia de una idea de Nebrija en España y Portugal', in his *Estudios Portugueses* (Paris: Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, 1974), pp. 14–15, and Diogo Ramada Curto, 'A língua e o império', in *História da Expansão Portuguesa*, edited by Francisco Bethencourt and Kirti N. Chaudhuri, 5 vols. (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 1998), vol. 1, p. 432.

³⁴ On Barros's admiration for China, also see Zoltán Biedermann, 'Imperial Reflections: China, Rome and the Spatial Logics of History in the *Ásia* of João de Barros', in *Empires en marche: Rencontres entre la Chine et l'Occident à l'âge moderne, XVI^e-XIX^e siècles*, edited by Déjanirah Couto and François Lachaud (Paris: École Française de l'Extrême-Orient, 2017), pp. 23–47.

³⁵ Barros, *Da Ásia*, vol. 5, pp. 196–197 (dec. 3, bk. 2, ch. 7).

³⁶ Kai Cheong Fok, 'Early Ming Images of the Portuguese', in *Portuguese Asia: Aspects in History and Economic History (Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries)*, edited by Roderich Ptak (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1987), pp. 143–155.

³⁷ Paul Pelliot, 'Le Hōja et le Sayyid Husain de l'Histoire des Ming', *T'oung Pao* 38, no. 2–5 (1948): pp. 81–292. See also Serge Gruzinski, *The Eagle and the Dragon: Globalization and European Dreams of Conquest in China and America in the Sixteenth Century*, translated by Jean Birrell (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2014), and James Fujitani, 'The Ming Rejection of the Portuguese Embassy of 1517: A Reassessment', *Journal of World History* 27, no. 1 (2016): pp. 87–102.

Moluccan Tales

The Chinese and their achievements looked so attractive to Barros not only because they preceded the Portuguese in their expansion across the Indian Ocean, but also because they were said to have been the first to trade in spices. They would have started from the Moluccas, the Southeast Asian islands then at the centre of a bitter dispute between the Portuguese and the Spaniards, which was settled to the advantage of the former by the Treaty of Zaragoza (1529), a few years before Galvão's arrival as captain. Ever since the fifteenth century, the archipelago that was fully part of the great trading and cultural crossroads that revolved around the island of Java had seen its elite steadily converting to Islam.³⁸ Information on its 'ancient times', however, was uncertain, deriving only from 'songs in the form of ballads', explained Barros. The inhabitants of the Moluccas claimed not to originate from their islands, which in a distant past had been visited by Chinese, Malay, and Javanese junks. Local memory favoured the opinion that the first to settle had been the Chinese since 'there are still traces of this in the name of the great island called Batechina do Moro, along whose coast the others lie.' According to those who lived there, wrote Barros, 'Bate means Land and, followed by China, means Land of China, and they add Moro to it, which is the name of the land, to distinguish it from the other, called Batechina de Muar.' These pages of the *Terceira Década* closely resembled the opening of Galvão's *Tratado*, although Barros did not mention the Chinese colonization of the New World. However, he said that it was the Chinese, at the time when they were 'monarchs of that Orient', who had originally transformed cloves into a product much sought after throughout the world.³⁹ A similar idea also returned in the *Colóquios dos simples e drogas da Índia* (1563) published in Goa, the capital city of Portuguese Asia, by the *converso* physician and naturalist Garcia de Orta: 'the people of Maluco do not use these trees themselves. The Chinese came in their ships to this land, and took the cloves to their country and to India, Persia, and Arabia. They relate this', continued the passage referring to the inhabitants of the Moluccas, 'from ancient memories preserved among themselves.'⁴⁰ We should note that this piece of information could not be found in Galvão's *Tratado*, as one might have expected given the work's avowed interest in the spice trade.

³⁸ Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya. *A History of Early Modern Southeast Asia, 1400–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 82–129. Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988–1993), vol. 2, pp. 132–201, provides a useful comparative overview.

³⁹ Barros, *Da Ásia*, vol. 5, pp. 577–578 (dec. 3, bk. 5, ch. 5).

⁴⁰ I quote from Garcia de Orta, *Colloquies on the Simples & Drugs of India*, translated by Clements Markham (London: Henry Sotheran & Co., 1913), p. 218 (slightly modified). For a convincing reassessment of the figure of Orta and his treatise, see Juan Pimentel and Isabel Soler. 'Painting Naked Truth: The *Colóquios* of Garcia da Orta (1563)', *Journal of Early Modern History* 18, no. 1–2 (2014): pp. 101–120.

Actually, Galvão was behind both Barros' and Orta's writings, but not his history of the world, which saw the light of day only four months after the *Terceira Década*.⁴¹ The fact that all three texts were published in 1563 is just a coincidence, though a curious one. The thread linking the three authors consisted, rather, in the circulation of preparatory materials for a work on the nature of the Moluccas, their inhabitants, and their customs, in which Galvão planned to recast the knowledge he had acquired during his stay in the archipelago. Barros openly admitted that what he had written on the Moluccas, and Ternate in particular, in the *Terceira Década*, drafted between 1544 and 1558, was only the 'information' 'that we have had from António Galvão'.⁴² As for Orta, his contacts with Galvão must have gone back at least to 1536 when both of them had been travelling along the west coast of India in a fleet commanded by Martim Afonso de Sousa.⁴³ In Orta's case too, it is plausible that the undeclared source of what he wrote on the use and trade in cloves should be identified with a draft of the work that Galvão intended to compose about the Spice Islands.⁴⁴

Galvão was certainly the author of an anonymous manuscript containing a preliminary version of a lost historical treatise on the Moluccas. Written after his return to Lisbon, a copy of the text was given to the Spanish cosmographer and historian Alonso de Santa Cruz in 1545.⁴⁵ A quick glance seems to confirm Barros's and Orta's dependence on some version of this text in which Galvão made no secret of how puzzling he found the past of the Moluccas and their inhabitants (see Figure 2.2) as 'they have no chronicles nor written history and they keep no archives', he wrote, but only 'commit their past to memory by way of aphorisms, songs, and rhyming ballads'.⁴⁶ Almost the same details were mentioned by Barros in the *Terceira Década*, whereas Orta only spoke of 'ancient memories'.⁴⁷

Clearly, Galvão gave some credence to the oral traditions referring to junks arriving on the islands. It was not clear if they were Malay, Javanese, or Chinese, but the locals inclined to the Chinese, 'and that seems to be the truth', he glossed: 'they are said to have been masters of India and of its archipelagos, or at least to have sailed to them and to have traded there, as is proved by the buildings one finds there.' Barros took up this suggestion, as well as the idea that the various

⁴¹ However, Barros could have had access to the manuscript of Galvão's *Tratado*, according to Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, vol. 1, p. 603.

⁴² Barros, *Da Ásia*, vol. 5, p. 570 (dec. 3, bk. 5, ch. 5).

⁴³ Conde de Ficalho, *Garcia da Orta e o seu tempo* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1886), p. 104.

⁴⁴ Orta, *Colloquies on the Simples & Drugs of India*, p. 218.

⁴⁵ This is the surviving draft, which has been published in Hubert Jacobs, ed., *A Treatise on the Moluccas (c. 1544): Probably the preliminary version of António Galvão's lost 'História das Molucas'* (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1971).

⁴⁶ I quote from Jacobs, ed., *A Treatise on the Moluccas*, p. 85.

⁴⁷ Galvão's *Treatise on the Moluccas* is not considered among Garcia's possible sources by Rui Manuel Loureiro, 'The Matter of China in Garcia de Orta's *Colóquios dos simples e drogas da Índia* (Goa, 1563)', *Revista de Cultura* 52 (2016): pp. 7–30.



Figure 2.2 Moluccan inhabitants in a mid-sixteenth-century album produced in Portuguese Asia. Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, Ms. 1889, pp. 132–133. Reproduced by permission of the Biblioteca Casanatense Roma MIBACT.

islands called ‘Batachina’ by the Moluccans were named after the Chinese, something Galvão would later repeat it in his history of the world too, as we have seen in the beginning of this chapter. Clearly, this was a further if distant echo of the travels of Zheng He. Galvão then went on to discuss the theory that the Malays were the first to visit the islands. From what he had heard, the name ‘Chinese’, seemingly used by his Moluccan informants, was of Malaysian origin, while the Chinese called themselves ‘Taibencus’—another clue that connects this account to the original opening of his history of the world. Whatever the answer, Galvão concluded it was the ‘Taibencus’ who had begun the trade in cheaply priced cloves, an opinion that was repeated by Orta a few years later. The inhabitants of the Moluccas, however, had no idea ‘how this trade came to an end’, added Galvão, without mentioning the Chinese imperial decree referred to by Barros.⁴⁸

The information supplied by Galvão reworked fragments of oral memory. A century after the end of the great Chinese expeditions, the inhabitants of the Moluccas were said to have already placed them in an undefined past, some time before the advance of Islam.⁴⁹ Apparently, there was already at least a working

⁴⁸ Jacobs, ed., *A Treatise on the Moluccas*, p. 81.

⁴⁹ Leonard Y. Andaya, *The World of Maluku: Eastern Indonesia in the Early Modern Period* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), pp. 47–81.

knowledge of the main Iberian languages in the archipelago by the time Galvão was there. If we believe him, the 'chiefs' of Tidore spoke 'Portuguese and Castilian, sometimes mixing in Biscayan', while once he had met a 'Moor' who 'knew Portuguese as well as if he had grown up in Lisbon'.⁵⁰ Therefore, it may not be impossible that Galvão collected the local accounts on the ancient Chinese lordship directly from the mouths of those natives of the Spice Islands who knew some European languages.

If this is true, glimpses of a mysterious past transmitted by the stories then circulating in the Moluccas allowed Galvão to provide a portrait of ancient times that challenged the conventional geography of the Greeks and Romans. This is likely to be what made him open his history of the world with the Chinese navigations, placing spectacular imperial expeditions at the start of humanity's first voyages, though actually they dated back no further than the early fifteenth century. At the same time, Galvão's writings were meeting an increased demand for information on China and its past. This interest could also be noted in the *Tratado em que se contam as cousas da China com suas particularidades* (1569–70) by the Dominican friar Gaspar da Cruz, the first work to give a detailed description of the Chinese Empire. In Cruz's own words, South Asian peoples kept 'a perpetual memory' of the 'old time' when 'the Chinas did possess many parts of India and did conquer them of old time', as witnessed by 'some vestiges' including 'a great temple of idols' now used as 'a mark for the navigators' on the coast of Choromandel and called the 'Pagoda of the Chinas'. In Cruz's view, this expansion explained why, since China was 'a great part of Scythia', Herodotus opined that 'Scythia reached as far as India.' The signs of that past, at least two thousand years old, were evident in the external appearance of the Javanese, the Malays, and the Siamese, 'having small eyes, flat noses and broad faces, for the great commixture that the Chinas had with all of them'.⁵¹

Somatic features, material remains, and oral history: it was around these elements that an impassioned debate developed in Portuguese culture over ancient China. But what effects did the discovery of that past have on Galvão's history of the world? And why did he begin his account with China? Galvão's changing fortunes certainly played their part in this choice. The *Tratado* was not only the result of his experience in the Moluccas, but also of his own profound frustration. The scattered information we have on his life offers a divided image, with a new chapter beginning on his return to Portugal from the Moluccas around 1540.⁵² So, who was this man? For the Portuguese elites, he was essentially an illegitimate son

⁵⁰ Jacobs, ed., *A Treatise on the Moluccas*, pp. 259 and 239, respectively.

⁵¹ I quote from the English translation in Boxer, ed., *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 66–67. Clearly this passage was partly derived from Barros' *Terceira Década*.

⁵² For the biographical details, I follow Subrahmanyam, 'As quatro partes vistas das Molucas', pp. 716–721, and Loureiro, 'António Galvão e os seus tratados histórico-geográficos', pp. 85–91.

of the royal chronicler and court councillor Duarte Galvão, one of the great exponents of the political millenarianism that had supported Portuguese penetration of Asia at the time of Vasco da Gama.⁵³ António Galvão grew up in an environment in which the exaltation of overseas conquests provoked harsh tensions between the court factions battling over the structure that the empire should assume.⁵⁴

We do not know how Galvão reacted to his elderly father's decision in 1515 to leave in search of Prester John on an expedition that led him to his death just as he was nearing Ethiopia in 1517. The loss of his father while sailing to East Africa may have had some effect on Galvão's future links with Asia, which became a reality between 1522 and 1524, when he served as a soldier in the Indian Ocean. Two years later, in the middle of the dispute between Spain and Portugal over the Moluccas, Galvão set sail for Asia again, this time promoted to ship's captain. He travelled back in 1527, bringing with him the bones of his father, which he had received from the Portuguese priest Francisco Álvares, after an expedition in which the latter had finally met the real emperor of Ethiopia, Dāwīt II (r. 1508–40).

Galvão was named capitain of the Moluccas in 1532 but had to wait a few years in India before assuming his powers, serving the crown meanwhile in various military operations. War also marked the time he spent in Southeast Asia, where he arrived in 1536, settling on the island of Ternate. Notable interference in local conflicts and a strict imposition of Portuguese authority marked his stay in the archipelago, at a time when fear of Spanish infiltration never disappeared. Galvão resorted to violence and intimidation, which allowed him to consolidate control over the spice trade and encourage the local inhabitants to convert to Christianity. At the intersection of the Indian and Pacific oceans, in close contact with the Chinese Empire, the Moluccas were well placed to keep an eye on Asia. It was in this corner of the world, so far from Europe, that Galvão, a practical man but not unlettered, started to reconsider his understanding of the past.

Back in Portugal, Galvão expected a reward from the crown for services rendered. He was in desperate need of money, as living in the Moluccas—and perhaps acquiring the position of captain—had left him in debt. In the mid 1540s he was still hopeful, as is clearly demonstrated by the calculated eulogies of John III (r. 1521–57) in his treatise on the Moluccas. The Portuguese king was celebrated for having faced great difficulties 'as he had disagreements and wars with the greatest monarchs of the world, that is, with the Emperor Charles of Almain, King Francis of France, the Turkish ruler Sultan Suleiman, Tahmāsp

⁵³ Jean Aubin, 'Duarte Galvão', in Jean Aubin, *Le Latin et l'Astrolabe*, 3 vols. (Lisbon: CNCDP, 1996–2006), vol. 1, pp. 11–48.

⁵⁴ Luís Filipe F.R. Thomaz, 'Factions, Interests and Messianism: The Politics of Portuguese Expansion in the East, 1500–1521', *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 28, no. 1 (1991): pp. 97–109; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Making India Gama: The Project of Dom Aires da Gama (1519) and Its Meaning', *Mare Liberum* 16 (1998): pp. 33–55.

Pasha of Persia, Sultan Bahādur of India, and the Grand Khan of China', as Galvão erroneously called the Ming emperor, showing the limits of his knowledge of the Middle Kingdom.⁵⁵ The desire to ingratiate himself with John III also emerged from his careful account of the main steps in the construction of the Portuguese Empire, which was conceived as a succession of expeditions over the course of the years. He adopted a way of organizing his material that he also repeated in his history of the world. The speeches Galvão claimed to have made in the Moluccas revealed strong imperial pride, mixed with an awareness of the new global perspectives of his time. In 1537, he addressed local rulers and their regents, all of whom had agreed to offer up tribute to the Portuguese Crown, in order to persuade them willingly to accept Lisbon's control over the trade in cloves. He began by telling them that 'from there to Portugal it was almost four thousand leagues, which is more than half the roundedness'—that is, of the globe. In that huge space, he continued, John III 'possessed many and much better countries which could be exploited with less expense and risk'; the only reason for the Portuguese presence in the archipelago was the spices, 'and he asked of them no other favour but this. And that they agree that currency with the coat of arms of the king of Portugal should circulate in their countries; for they profess to be his vassals.'⁵⁶ Galvão clearly had set his sights on challenging the Chinese and their economic influence. Military strength was marching alongside a plan for financial advancement.

Some twenty years after he apparently uttered these words, Galvão ended his days in Lisbon in the royal hospital of Todos-os-Santos. He died a 'poor, abandoned courtier'. Wrapped in a simple shroud, he was buried at the charge of the court confraternity, probably in homage to his father. The memory of his passing was handed down to posterity by another veteran of India, Francisco de Sousa Tavares, an old captain of Cannanore, who edited Galvão's history of the world. In the dedication to João de Lencastre, Duke of Aveiro, Tavares recalled the glorious days of the battles Galvão had fought in the Moluccas, hoping to present him as a 'true Portuguese'.⁵⁷ All this was in stark contrast to his miserable end in Portugal.

Betrayed and indebted, Galvão had spent his last years writing history. Nominated as his executor, Tavares also found among his papers an advanced draft, in 'nine or ten books', of the history of the Moluccas, which he passed on to the humanist and royal archivist Damião de Góis (1502-74). That was the last act of an intense bond between the latter and Galvão, to judge from the long eulogy of Góis in the *Tratado*, who was celebrated 'alongside other discoverers and navigators', even though he had never left the Old World. Góis was depicted as a man of culture who 'saw and travelled across most of Europe, by his own free will', itself 'a

⁵⁵ Jacobs, ed., *A Treatise on the Moluccas*, p. 207 (slightly modified).

⁵⁶ Jacobs, ed., *A Treatise on the Moluccas*, p. 271 (slightly modified).

⁵⁷ Galvão, *Tratado . . . dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fols. A2v.

sign of noble thought'.⁵⁸ The solidarity between Galvão and Góis must also have reflected their shared experience as victims of a political and cultural climate that had changed since they had first left the kingdom. The rise of a bloc of court theologians had soon led, among other things, to the Inquisition (1536) and censorship (1540), putting an end to the most spirited and original period of Renaissance culture in Portugal.⁵⁹

The Renaissance of Travels

Galvão's *travails* after returning home help us understand why he paid little attention to the Portuguese exploration in his history of the world, even though his narrative concentrated on travels and the circulation of goods, particularly spices. Above all, there was no sign in the *Tratado* of the typical features of official rhetoric, which insisted on Portugal's primacy in ocean navigation, making one almost suspect Galvão had secretly developed anti-imperial feelings. However much Tavares asserted the superiority of the Portuguese over the ancients in the dedication to the Duke of Aveiro, the content of Galvão's work contradicted this. More generally, his short volume provincialized Europe, suggesting to its readers the complex entanglement of different pasts on which the global interaction of the time rested. A 'general history', this was how the *Tratado* was described in the early seventeenth century by a contemporary of Diogo do Couto, the imperial chronicler who resumed the writing of Barros's *Décadas da Ásia* directly from Goa, where he founded the first public archive and organized a team of translators and interpreters to facilitate consultation of written sources in oriental languages.⁶⁰

Let us look more closely at Galvão's *Tratado*. Despite the astonishing opening with the tale of ancient Chinese voyages, this vision nonetheless did not incorporate a single genealogical thread that might weave all the peoples of the world together. Unlike other contemporary historians writing about the globe, its author was not obsessed with origins. It was also clear from its very first lines that the *Tratado* was not following the traditional structure of the old universal histories, which invariably opened with the creation of the world and dated its ages on the basis of the Old Testament and the fathers of the church. Galvão was rather ironic about the many attempts to establish a general chronology and its possible use for a global history of mobility. Any effort to restore accurate connections between

⁵⁸ Galvão, *Tratado... dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fols. 59v–60r. Galvão's portrait of Góis perfectly corresponds to that provided by modern scholars starting from Marcel Bataillon, 'Le cosmopolitisme de Damião de Góis', in Marcel Bataillon, *Études sur le Portugal au Temps de l'Humanisme* (Paris: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1974), pp. 121–154.

⁵⁹ Giuseppe Marcocci, 'Conscience and Empire: Politics and Moral Theology in the Early Modern Portuguese World', *Journal of Early Modern History* 18, no. 5 (2014): pp. 481–483.

⁶⁰ Rui Manuel Loureiro, *A biblioteca de Diogo do Couto* (Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1998), pp. 83–84.

the most ancient peoples was pointless, if there was not even agreement on the date of the creation of the world: 'I found myself so confused,' Galvão wrote, 'that I determined to desist from such a purpose, because the Jews say there were 1,656 years from the creation of the world to the Flood, the Seventy Interpreters 2,242, and St Augustine more than 2,260.' And so he limited himself to stating that, after the Flood, the 'main long-distance discoveries were made by sea, particularly in our times.' There followed an account of the voyages of the 'Taybencos', which had reached the Americas and perhaps the northern coasts of 'Almain' too, where, according to the Latin writer Cornelius Nepos, 'some Indians' (that is, Asians) had ventured aboard 'a ship with goods from their land' that, added Galvão, 'must have been coming from China'.⁶¹

The Chinese too, of course, descended from Noah, but Galvão never mentioned Noah's sons or their offspring. He explicitly distanced himself not only from 'those who delighted in antiquities'—a caustic allusion to the followers of the Renaissance forger Annius of Viterbo—but also from their etymological fantasies. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo had claimed in his 'chronicles of the Antilles' that, at the time of the ancient Spanish monarch, Hesperus, these islands 'had already been discovered and were called Hesperides from the name of this king'. But how was this possible, Galvão caustically objected, if 'at that time and for many years yet men sailed more along the coasts than across the oceans, there was no altitude, nor compass needle, and sailors could not be so expert'?⁶²

The *Tratado* engaged with the contemporary literature on exploration, but claimed to be an empirical work, bringing together what was known about mobility as the main factor of historical change. Galvão surveyed the background to the present, an age of travel and discovery, marked by the reopening and creation of land and sea routes for long-distance trade, but also by large empires whose rulers aspired to universal lordship. He therefore gave significant space to events occurring beyond Europe, despite following a different approach in the two parts in which his history of the world was divided.

After solving the problem of integrating the Americas in the maritime routes of the ancients through the theory of a primordial Chinese colonization, the first part of the *Tratado* moved on to a series of long-distance voyages. They also included the maritime expeditions organized by the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Persians, and Carthaginians, along with those of the Greeks and Romans. Galvão also discussed the land routes that went from the ancient kingdoms of Sogdia and Bactria in Central Asia to the coasts of the Indian Ocean. Gradually a detailed image of the globe emerged that clashed with that promoted by sixteenth-century Iberian, and particularly Portuguese, culture. The latter insisted that the age of the great discoveries and the accompanying partition of the world were over, *pace* those

⁶¹ Galvão, *Tratado... dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fols. 1r–2v.

⁶² Galvão, *Tratado... dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fol. 3r–v.

countries which had missed out on it so far. As the royal cosmographer Pedro Nunes had written as early as 1537, the Portuguese had ‘so flattened the sea that no one now dares claim he has found an island, shoals, or even a rock that has not already been discovered by our navigations’.⁶³ Hence the Portuguese had overtaken the ancient Greeks and Romans, as Barros among others delighted to claim.⁶⁴

What was Galvão drawing on to set aside other Portuguese writers’ imperial perspective? To understand this, we must move to Venice, the city from which, a few years before, the process had started that would lead the cosmographer Danti to suggest Florence’s ambassador in Lisbon ask Barros for further information on China. The first of the three volumes of Ramusio’s *Navigazioni* had been published here in 1550. This collection, the first to show a full awareness of the world in both its plurality and unity, was clearly indebted to a volume that had appeared in Basle with the title of *Novus Orbis* (1532). Edited by the humanist Johann Huttich, it included a number of texts on the recent discoveries, translated into Latin, with the explicit aim of demonstrating their superiority to works of ancient geography that still dominated humanist culture. Some of these writings would also be translated in the *Navigazioni*, but the *Novus Orbis* did not have a comparable overall plan. Huttich’s collection also excluded the ancient authors, while Ramusio still considered them worth reading and publishing. As was clear from the title, the *Novus Orbis* was profoundly affected by the discovery of the New World. Conversely, Ramusio opened his first volume praising the ‘customs of the ancients, which has continued down to our days’. The knowledge and travels of the ancients was important, the *Navigazioni* suggested on many occasions. There was nothing to reject—far from it. It was simply a matter of correcting possible errors with appropriate more recent information, thanks to the works of ‘writers of our day’ and the ‘description of Portuguese sea charts’.⁶⁵

Ramusio was anything but a scholar trying to see the world with the eyes of others while sitting at his desk. Rather, he combined his work as a humanist and geographer with service to the Republic of Venice, secretary of the Council of Ten, and he carried out delicate missions that introduced him to some of the great protagonists of his time, explorers as well as men of culture. Particularly important was his connection with the aristocrat Pietro Bembo, one of the major Italian humanists, a historian of Venice interested in new worlds who later became a cardinal. In the 1530s he entrusted Ramusio with the Biblioteca Nicena (or Marciana, as it was to become), thus allowing him to collect many texts, reports, and historical and geographical writings from all over the world. There was nothing surprising in this. In Venice these interests were a vital part of the

⁶³ Pedro Nunes, *Obras*, 6 vols. (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1940–1960), vol. 1, pp. 175–176.

⁶⁴ See, for example, Barros, *Da Ásia*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 316 (dec. 1, bk 9, ch. 2).

⁶⁵ Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, vol. 1, pp. 3–5.

republic's political and trading strategies, which all too often were anti-Iberian. However, this did not prevent Ramusio from cultivating a close relationship with the Spanish chronicler Fernández de Oviedo, in which love of study combined with private commercial interests: as well as translating his writings, in 1537 Ramusio and Oviedo created a society to invest in the importing of 'liquor and sugar' from Santo Domingo.⁶⁶

The ambitious project behind the *Navigazioni* revolved around the idea of 'discovery', a word then having a complex geographical and political meaning, one in which knowledge overlapped with conquest. But how could a history of discoveries be assembled in Renaissance Europe? How could one deal with the evidence of the multiple pasts of the globe? It was not just a matter of setting down parallel chronologies of voyages of exploration. Starting from the mobility of men and goods to produce a history able to go beyond familiar geographies meant challenging the reductive vision of the history of conquests. Discoveries had to be understood as a key for interpreting the long-term relationship between history and the world as a whole, irrespective of imperial rhetoric.

This perspective must have immediately attracted Galvão when he held in his hands the first volume of the *Navigazioni*, which he could only have had access to through the help of a friend, perhaps Damião de Góis.⁶⁷ The latter had come into contact with Ramusio in the mid 1530s during his stay in Padua, when he made friends with various Veneto humanists, Bembo especially.⁶⁸ Thus, while the first chronicles of Portuguese Asia, written by Castanheda (1551) and Barros (1552), were being published, Galvão was reading accounts in the *Navigazioni* that offered a very different perspective on the Portuguese Empire. A case in point was the printed edition of the description of Africa by Ḥasan al-Wazzan al-Gharnati al-Fāṣī, also known as Leo Africanus, a name assumed by this diplomat from the Sultan of Fez after being given to Pope Leo X (r. 1513–21) by the pirates who had captured him at sea.⁶⁹ Completed in 1526, the work contained inglorious references to Portuguese violence in North Africa, as in the case of the abandoned city of Anfa, which had been reduced to 'ruins' after being sacked and burnt.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Donattini, 'Giovanni Battista Ramusio', pp. 84–85.

⁶⁷ Ramusio is only briefly mentioned as one of Galvão's sources in Loureiro, 'António Galvão e os seus tratados histórico-geográficos', pp. 94–95.

⁶⁸ Elisabeth Feist Hirsch, *Damião de Góis: The Life and Thought of a Portuguese Humanist, 1502–1574* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), pp. 90–114. Góis's works were the only printed texts on Portuguese and Spanish exploration existing in Bembo's library in Rome, whose inventory dates to 1545. See Massimo Danzi, *La biblioteca del Cardinal Pietro Bembo* (Geneva: Droz, 2005), p. 85.

⁶⁹ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).

⁷⁰ I quote from Leo Africanus, *The History and Description of Africa and of the Notable Things Therein Contained*, edited by Robert Brown, 3 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1896), vol. 2, p. 397. The text that Galvão read is in Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, vol. 1, p. 142. The manuscript version, titled *Libro de la cosmographia et geographia de Affrica*, was even more evocative, as it said that the city had been abandoned to 'wolves and owls' and 'makes you cry even if you do not want to'. See Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS. V.E. 953, fols. 119v.

For the relatively short sections on Africa, Galvão made use of Ḥasan al-Wazzan's cross-cultural masterpiece, but also the treatise on Ethiopia by Francisco Álvares. A censored version had been published in Portugal in 1540, but Ramusio provided his readers with a new and more complete edition, collating various manuscripts including one he had retrieved with the help of Góis.⁷¹

Relations between Ramusio and Góis had remained good, although their positions were so different on the legitimacy of the Portuguese monopoly over the spice trade. In an age dominated by great monarchies and empires, the ancient maritime Republic of Venice still pursued a strategy of hegemony in the Eastern Mediterranean, which in the Middle Ages had allowed its merchants, among other things, to control the sale of Asian spices in Europe.⁷² This lucrative trade had suffered after Vasco da Gama's arrival in India (1498), which redirected a significant part of the cargoes from the traditional land route to Egypt, transporting them by ship via the Cape of Good Hope to Lisbon. By the mid-sixteenth century Venice had partly made up for the disadvantage created by the foundation of the Portuguese Empire in Asia but the spice trade was still a controversial question. Reacting to the criticism of the Italian humanist Paolo Giovio, in 1539, Góis had published an apology for Portuguese profits.⁷³ Ramusio knew that work well enough to cite it obliquely in the short *Discourse on the Spice Trade* that he included in the first volume of the *Navigazioni*. A direct attack on the Portuguese, this text reflected the viewpoint of the Venetian elites who favoured a relaunching of the republic's merchant imperialism.⁷⁴

Galvão was captivated by the *Discourse*, in which the Moluccas occupied a prominent place. In the second part of his text, Ramusio even included a striking and almost certainly fictional dialogue which took place in Girolamo Fracastoro's house, where an unnamed 'gentleman', pointing at a 'large globe with all particulars of the whole world', discussed recent discoveries and those still to be made in great detail.⁷⁵ Among many other things, he even mentioned a 'book' that Antonio de Mendoza, viceroy of New Spain, had commissioned 'of all natural and wonderful things that were in those newly discovered countries'.⁷⁶

⁷¹ 'The copy that Damião de Góis sent to me is different in many places from the book that was printed in Lisbon', wrote Ramusio, 'so I had to make a whole from two mutilated and imperfect versions' (Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, vol. 2, p. 79). On Álvares' work see António Alberto Banha de Andrade, 'Francisco Álvares e o êxito europeu da "Verdadeira Informação" sobre a Etiópia', in *Presença de Portugal no Mundo: Actas do colóquio* (Lisbon: Junta da Investigação Científica do Ultramar, 1982), pp. 285–339.

⁷² Benjamin Arbel, 'Venice's Maritime Empire in the Early Modern Period', in *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400–1700*, edited by Eric R. Dursteler (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 125–253.

⁷³ For a quick summary, see Hirsch, *Damião de Gois*, pp. 16–18.

⁷⁴ Massimo Donattini, 'Ombre imperiali: Le "Navigazioni et viaggi" di G. B. Ramusio e l'immagine di Venezia', in *Per Adriano Prosperi*, vol. 2, *L'Europa divisa e i nuovi mondi*, edited by Massimo Donattini, Giuseppe Marcocci, and Stefania Pastore (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2011), pp. 33–44.

⁷⁵ Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, vol. 2, p. 979.

⁷⁶ Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, vol. 2, p. 985. This may or may not be a reference to the famous Codex Mendoza. The 'gentleman' claimed that he had read about the 'book' in Mendoza's letters at the

Ramusio's *Discourse* was above all a historical essay, which reconstructed the 'various voyages by which the spices were transported down to our times', as we can read in its full title. More particularly, its argument was based on an original reconsideration of the Renaissance theme of the decadence that had followed the fall of the Roman Empire first developed by the humanist Flavio Biondo in the mid-fifteenth century. Ramusio first extended that idea to long-distance mobility. He insisted on it from the start of his *Discourse*: 'the great change and alteration that the coming of the Goths and other barbarians caused in the whole Roman Empire' led to the extinction not only of 'all the arts' and 'all the sciences', but also of 'all traffic and commerce in the various parts of the world'. They were 'the shadows of a dark night, so much so that no one dared leave his native town and go elsewhere', while 'before the coming of said barbarians, when the Roman Empire flourished, one could navigate safely by sea throughout the East Indies.' The conclusion was a thrust at the Portuguese crown and its claim to exclusive rights of navigation and trade in the Indian Ocean as a result of Gama's journey. At the time of the Romans 'this voyage was as popular, famous, and familiar as it is at present thanks to the navigation of the Portuguese.'⁷⁷

The rise of the Goths in Europe was presented as the cause of a deep fracture that had also changed the history of relations between the continents. The first part of the *Discourse* drew on classical sources to defend the idea that the ancients had already sailed between Europe and Asia. This conclusion inevitably affected the present, including the matter of the spices managed by the Portuguese, who 'for the last fifty years have gone westward', 'masters of all the seas, so that no one can navigate without their licence'. Ramusio even mentioned the existing connection between the traffic in spices towards Europe and the resale of any surplus on the Asian markets, recalling that sometimes the Portuguese captains 'wanted to send them as far as towns of the said China and earned as much as if they had taken them to Portugal'.⁷⁸ His interest in the Portuguese trade could not be separated from direct competition though. Significantly, in the *Discourse's* final section, the mysterious gentleman even offered a review of more or less credible alternative routes to the East Indies, including one overland through Muscovy and the northwest passage by way of the Arctic Ocean.⁷⁹

imperial court in the Flanders in 1541. The source of this information is likely to be the Venetian diplomat Francesco Contarini, who was there at the time. Ramusio's passage is not mentioned in Frances F. Berdan and Patricia Rieff Anawalt, eds. *The Codex Mendoza*, 4 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), vol. 1, p. 2, which refers, however, to Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo's description of copy of a manuscript commissioned by Mendoza, which he had received from Ramusio.

⁷⁷ Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, vol. 2, p. 967.

⁷⁸ Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, vol. 2, p. 978.

⁷⁹ Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, vol. 2, pp. 981–988.

A World on the Move

From the Goths to the Arctic Ocean, via the profits the Portuguese made in Asia, while using sea routes already known to the Romans in antiquity, these were ‘the great revolutions and variety of voyages that these spices made in the space of 1500 years’, reconstructed by Ramusio from information in ‘books ancient and modern’, as well as from the very agents of this traffic in recent times.⁸⁰ These included Galvão, who must have immediately realized the value of Ramusio’s *Discourse*. His debt to this text emerged from the full title of the *Tratado*, with its insistence on ‘the different and astounding routes by which in times gone by pepper and spices came from India to our parts’, but with greater emphasis on ‘the discoveries ancient and modern which have been made up to the year 1550’.

Unlike Ramusio, Galvão wanted to write an account that really embraced the planet, extending potentially to the mobility of every people and culture. His history of the world nonetheless depended on the same vision as the *Discourse*. The *Tratado* emphasized classical sources, yet also showed a surprising lack of interest in wars and conquests, as well as evangelization, one of the main justifications of Iberian imperialism. In any case, the crucial point was Galvão’s adoption of the deep rupture brought about by the Goths. ‘When the Romans were lords of the best part of the world’, he wrote, ‘many remarkable discoveries were made, but then the Goths came, the Moors and other barbarians and destroyed everything.’ What followed was described in even more dramatic terms than by Ramusio: ‘the whole world was burning, and so it is said that it was for four hundred years so dead and dark that no people dared go from one part to another by sea, nor by land’, and ‘all was so shaken and transformed that nothing remained as it was: monarchies, kingdoms, dominions, religions, laws, arts, sciences, navigations and writings on them, all was burnt and consumed’, explained Galvão, ‘because the Goths were so avid for worldly glory, that they wanted another new world to begin with them and that no memory of the past remained.’ Along with the Vandals, Huns, Franks, Lombards, Aryans, and the Arabs united under the leadership of Muḥammad, the Goths were the symbol of this ‘new world’—a world without history.⁸¹

Finally this age of desolation ended. ‘Those who came after realizing how much had been lost, the profit that could be made in trade and communication between peoples, and how without them they could not sell their goods, nor have those of others without this means, decided to seek a way not to lose everything and ensure that the goods of the East returned to the West, as had been customary.’⁸² ‘Trade and communication between peoples’: this was the essence of history for Galvão,

⁸⁰ Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, vol. 2, pp. 978–979.

⁸¹ Galvão, *Tratado . . . dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fols. 12v–13r.

⁸² Galvão, *Tratado . . . dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fol. 13r.

along with the refusal to accept that discoveries had been made once and for all. This idea was combined with the theory that the Earth too had a history: 'it cannot be denied', it was argued in the *Tratado*, 'that time and the waters have consumed or separated many lands, islands, capes, isthmuses, coves, and creeks from each other, in Europe as in Africa, Asia, New Spain, Peru, and other places that are known but are hidden because of the constant difference between the humidity of the water and the dryness of the land'. Proof of this lay in the famous case of the 'great islands and lands called Atlantides, much larger than Africa and Europe'.⁸³ Galvão also thought of the ancient maps. Comparison with the most up-to-date cartographic knowledge led him to claim that 'it could certainly be that in times past the lands of Malacca and China ended south of the equatorial line, as Ptolemy depicts them.' After all, Galvão knew that part of the planet so well as to remember that some locals 'even today believe that the island of Sumatra was united to that of Java through the Sunda Strait'. Many other islands had once been part of Java, as 'appears to those who observe them from outside, as there are still in these parts islands so close to each other, that they all seem one single thing, and those who pass through can touch with their hand the branches of the trees on one and on the other coast'. 'Not long ago', he continued, 'in the east of the Banda islands many of them were massed together', and so, he concluded, 'one should not take too seriously what Ptolemy and other ancients have written and I will leave them too to go back to my subject.'⁸⁴

Galvão aimed to present the changes introduced into world history by the constant mobility of people and things. After the invasion of the Goths, it had been merchants who first re-opened the route between Asia and Europe. By crossing great rivers and the Caspian Sea, they had found a way that went from India to the city of Caffa on the Black Sea, which was then controlled by the Genoese. Later, another route had been adopted that reached Trebizond. When this too had been interrupted by wars, 'human industry' had found yet another way that went from Southeast Asia, via the Gulf of Bengal, the River Ganges, and the cities of Agra and Kabul, to Samarkand, which had become an important crossroads between China and Anatolia. Meanwhile, travels had also resumed across the Indian Ocean to the Strait of Hormuz, then sailing up the Rivers Euphrates and Tigris. In this way precious goods, herbs, and spices reached Basra and, from there, by land, Aleppo, Damascus, and Beirut, where they were loaded into the Venetian galleys that in exchange disembarked Christian pilgrims for Palestine.⁸⁵

Galvão did not usually date events. But when he did, as in the case of a canoe carrying indigenous people, arguably from Florida, which reached the Baltic

⁸³ Galvão, *Tratado... dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fol. 3v.

⁸⁴ Galvão, *Tratado... dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fols. 4v-5r.

⁸⁵ Galvão, *Tratado... dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fols. 13r-14r.

port of Lübeck in the time of the medieval emperor, Frederick Barbarossa (r. 1155–90)—an episode taken from Francisco López de Gómara's chronicle of the Spanish conquest of the New World (1552)—some howlers crept in, though they may be due to misprints or errors in reading the original manuscript.⁸⁶ For example, giving the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt and Syria the credit for relaunching the traffic in spices and other Asian goods across the Red Sea, 'as was customary before', Galvão retraced the first Atlantic navigations in the fourteenth century up to the Portuguese seizure of Ceuta in Morocco, but he got the date wrong, wavering between 1411 and 1416—it was actually 1415.⁸⁷ More oddly, though, when he was describing in some detail Iberian exploration of the Atlantic, following the annalistic approach already used in the treatise on the Moluccas, Galvão placed these fifteenth-century (and predominantly Portuguese) voyages among the ancient discoveries.

The watershed was 1492. Galvão had already paid homage to Columbus' discovery in the first part of the *Tratado*, observing that even if the ancient Carthaginians had managed to reach the Americas, as Fernández de Oviedo claimed, Columbus 'made it more certain'.⁸⁸ Galvão's decision to start the second part on modern discoveries from the voyage that had ended Portuguese control over Atlantic navigations sounded bitterly ironic. Even more so since contemporary Portuguese chronicles, when they did not actually omit Columbus's name, justified the dismissal of the project which he later submitted successfully to Castile, by describing him as a 'garrulous man who boasted of his abilities and seemed more fanciful and full of imagination . . . than reliable in what he said'.⁸⁹ Galvão also mentioned a rumour that in 1447 some Portuguese had come across an island, which according to 'some' was in the Antilles, and had been inhabited by the descendants of those who had fled Iberia at the time of the Arab invasion. He did not take an explicit stance on the veracity of this story, but his view was summed up in the caustic comment that, any way you looked at it, they had failed to realize that it was America.⁹⁰

The encounter between the New World and the three continents of the Old had been essential for the intensifying global interaction that Galvão had witnessed from the Moluccas. Now that he was confined to a hospital in Lisbon, he saw the Spaniards as the main actors in that historic process. Thus, despite providing a connected history of Iberian exploration, he gave much more space to the Spanish

⁸⁶ Galvão, *Tratado . . . dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fol. 14v, to compare with Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias y vida de Hernán Cortés*, edited by Jorge Gurría Lacroix (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1979), p. 21. A list of misprints is included on the overleaf of the *Tratado's* frontspiece.

⁸⁷ Galvão, *Tratado . . . dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fols. 14v and 15v.

⁸⁸ Galvão, *Tratado . . . dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fol. 7r.

⁸⁹ Barros, *Da Ásia*, vol. 1, pt. 1, p. 250 (dec. 1, bk. 3, ch. 11). There was no reference to Columbus in Castanheda.

⁹⁰ Galvão, *Tratado . . . dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fols. 19v–20r.

Empire than to the Portuguese one. The *Tratado* reflected full awareness of the circularity of the events that were transforming the surface of the 'rotundity', as Galvão called the world. His narrative encompassed all the regions that had been reached by the Iberians, from the Antilles and Brazil to Siam and the Southeast Asian archipelagos, from Mexico and Peru to the Philippines. This all-encompassing viewpoint was unprecedented in Iberian literature which until then had been restricted by the imperial rivalry between Spain and Portugal. Rather than presenting a series of military conquests, Galvão's history consisted of a myriad of movements of people and goods in many different directions, and in which the role of crowns and empires tended to disappear.

Portuguese protagonism was drastically reduced in the *Tratado*. While only a few lines were devoted to Gama, there was not even a mention of the protests at Spain's sponsorship of Magellan's circumnavigation of the globe, which was generally seen as a threat to Portuguese rights over the Moluccas. Galvão also cited the exploration supported by other European crowns, such as England and France. The real hero of the second part of his history of the world was none other than Hernán Cortés. His achievements were reconstructed well beyond the fall of the Aztec Empire. Cortés was described as 'victorious and peaceful' while continuing his advance into Central Mexico and laying the foundations for the Spanish Empire on American land. He was above all 'desirous' to establish cities and ports on the Pacific coast, convinced as he was that 'from there he would obtain the herbs of the Moluccas and Banda and the spices of Java with less effort and danger.' Once again spices emerged as a stimulus to opening new routes, so much so that Galvão measured the success of Cortés' expeditions in the New World, as far as the northern tip of today's bay of Sebastián Vizcaíno, in Baja California, from the simple fact they had reduced the distances from China.⁹¹

Behind Galvão's account lay López de Gómara's chronicle, especially its second part, which was almost entirely on Cortés and Mexico. Its first part, however, and to a lesser extent the first part of the chronicle of the conquest of Peru (1553) by Pedro de Cieza de León influenced the *Tratado's* account of the expedition of the Pizarro brothers, as well as the description of the nature and indigenous inhabitants of the Andes. Like Ramusio, Gómara thought that the ancient Romans had navigated the Indian Ocean many centuries before the Portuguese, and this might have corroborated Galvão's high opinion of his work.⁹² From this point of view, it is also significant that the *Tratado* concluded with a discussion of the world's physical dimensions, on its 'rotundity', comparing the measurements given of it by the ancients with the estimates of modern scholars. This allowed Galvão to reiterate his main point: 'all is discovered and navigated from east to west, as if following the direction of the sun, but from south to north there is much

⁹¹ Galvão, *Tratado... dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fols. 42r–69v.

⁹² López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias y vida de Hernán Cortés*, p. 160.

difference.⁹³ The discoveries were clearly not over. There still remained thousands of leagues to explore. World history as a history of the mobility of men and goods was not yet over.

Northern Obsessions with the Americas

Galvão's work was not reprinted in Portugal until 1731, nor was it ever published in other parts of Iberia in the early modern period. Its original narrative would have obscured the celebration of Iberian global power, particularly after the dynastic union, when the empires of Spain and Portugal were both under one crown (1580–1640). Nonetheless, in the late sixteenth century, the short volume in which Galvão had summarized information drawn from a wide range of authors, including D'Anghiera, Oviedo, Ramusio, Barros, Gómara, and Cieza de León, had no small impact on remarkable publishing ventures in France and England.

Spanish and Portuguese works on new worlds circulated across Northern Europe well beyond the limited circles of learned scholars wishing to update their historical and geographical knowledge. A study of the itineraries of these writings proves how far, despite rivalry and language differences, the rising imperial cultures of the Dutch Republic, England, and France, were indebted to late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth Iberian literature.⁹⁴ Translations of chronicles such as those used by Galvão as sources were of the greatest importance. But there was no shortage of mediators, whose deep familiarity with Spanish and Portuguese texts provided inspiration for original revisions.

Having survived the St Bartholomew's Day massacre in 1572, the Huguenot noble Henri Lancelot-Voisin, Sieur de La Popelinière, found temporary refuge in England. On returning to France he became more and more interested in studying the past. The shadows of the wars of religion were still hanging over his *Histoire de France* (1581), as they were too over his later anti-Machiavellian writings.⁹⁵ In 1599, however, La Popelinière published a treatise on historical method,

⁹³ Galvão, *Tratado... dos diversos & desvayrados caminhos*, fols. 79v–80r.

⁹⁴ For an introduction to the recovery of Spanish literature, see Jonathan Hart, *Representing the New World: The English and French Uses of the Example of Spain* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 85–153. See also John H. Elliott, 'Learning from the Enemy: Early Modern Britain and Spain', in his *Spain, Europe and the Wider World, 1500–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 25–51; Anthony Pagden and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Roots and Branches: Ibero-British Threads across Overseas Empires', in Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Empires Between Islam & Christianity, 1500–1800* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2019), pp. 186–233.

⁹⁵ George Wylie Sypher, 'La Popelinière's "Histoire de France"', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24, no. 1 (1963): pp. 41–54. The writings against Machiavelli have been published in Henri Lancelot-Voisin de la Popelinière, *Du 'Contre Machiavel' au 'Contre-Prince de Machiavel', suivi de 'Response pour l'Histoire' (1585)*, edited by Brigitte Lourde (Geneva: Droz, 2010).

L'histoire des histoires, in which he defended an idea of 'general' history as 'representation of all', 'that includes every thing', as 'it would be wrong to restrict the capacity of history, which is called a mirror of the world.'⁹⁶

Galvão may have influenced La Popelinière's interest in world history, if one is right to see in the *Tratado* a possible, if undeclared, inspiration for *Les Trois Mondes* (1582). In that work, which dealt with the physical globe and its history depicted through the voyages of discovery down the centuries, La Popelinière drew abundantly on Iberian chroniclers, as well as on Ramusio's *Navigazioni*. He may also have been partially reacting to Galvão's history of the world when he set out his account of ancient and modern navigations and trade. The main line of La Popelinière's narrative tied up the old world of three continents already known to the Greeks and Romans with the new world of America and a third world, still unknown but huge: 'There are as many if not more lands to discover', was the argument of *Les Trois Mondes*, 'than those recently discovered.'⁹⁷ Unlike the *Tratado*, however, La Popelinière had never left Europe and his history did not reconstruct ancient times in a global perspective. We can read of Egyptians, Assyrians, Phoenicians, Persians, Carthaginians, Greeks, and Romans, but not of Chinese, though La Popelinière's learned discussions on sources still provided an original synthesis of the many challenges that an age of global exploration could pose to the classical past. Moreover, dissatisfied with the answers provided by historians, he also rejected the opinion, supported by Ramusio and Galvão, that the ancients had faced the open sea—the Greeks being a possible exception—and that Roman ships had already ploughed the Indian Ocean.

The difference of views on the ancient navigations might have depended on the fact that, unlike the *Tratado*, *Les Trois Mondes* was a work with openly colonial designs. More particularly, it stressed the continuity between exalting the merits of the Iberian explorers and the 'Italians' (Genoese, Venetians, and Florentines) before them, and relaunching a French expansionism in Brazil after the failure of French Antarctique (1555–8). In those years both the *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil* (1578) by Jean de Léry, and the essay on cannibals (1580) by Michel de Montaigne were incentives to reconsider the question. Thus, while he pointed out to the 'French weakened under the veil of worldly pleasures' the example of the courage of the navigators in the service of the crowns of Portugal and Spain, La Popelinière denounced the partition of the globe by the Iberians on the basis of fifteenth-century papal bulls, as he regarded these as illegitimate.

⁹⁶ Henri Lancelot-Voisin de la Popelinière, *L'Histoire des histoires: L'Idée de l'histoire accomplie*, edited by Philippe Desan, 2 vols. (Paris: Fayard, 1989), vol. 2, pp. 71–72. On La Popelinière as historian see Myriam Yardeni, 'La conception de l'histoire dans l'oeuvre de La Popelinière', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 11, no. 2 (1964): pp. 109–126.

⁹⁷ Henri Lancelot-Voisin de la Popelinière, *Les Trois Mondes...* edited by Anne-Marie Beaulieu (Geneva: Droz, 1997), p. 69.

Sustaining the right of discovery alone, he expressed his conviction that the part of the ‘circumference’ he baptized ‘unknown world’ was awaiting the French.⁹⁸

La Popelinière tried to pass from words to deeds, and in 1589 embarked on a colonial expedition to Brazil, which failed. The same year, in the aftermath of the victory over the Spanish Armada in the English Channel (1588), the folio volume of *The Principal Navigations* was published in London. Edited by the Anglican pastor and geographer Richard Hakluyt, it was a major contribution to the rising genre of travel collections.⁹⁹ Conceived on Ramusio’s example, but centred exclusively on the English explorers, the *Principal Navigations* was later revised and a second edition in three volumes was published between 1598 and 1600.¹⁰⁰ The classical texts, of course, were not included in this collection, although the first edition’s dedication to Francis Walsingham, the vehemently anti-Catholic secretary of state of Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558-1603), mentioned the theory that the ancient Chinese ‘sent ambassadors to Rome, to intreat frindship, as moued with the fame of the maiesty of the Romane Empire’.¹⁰¹ Hakluyt’s project was intended to support the early English claims on the Americas, which were emerging at this time.¹⁰² The *Principal Navigations* shared the vision of the discoveries set out in the *Trois Mondes* by La Popelinière. The period Hakluyt spent in 1583–8 as chaplain of the English ambassador to France might not be unrelated to his interest in La Popelinière’s work.¹⁰³ Significantly, La Popelinière was the only Frenchman to be cited in Hakluyt’s collection, in the dedication to Walsingham, which repeated La Popelinière’s remarks against the English in his text *L’Amiral de France* (1584), criticizing them for their lack of commitment to long-distance exploration.¹⁰⁴ Hakluyt might have been behind the publication rights for *Les*

⁹⁸ La Popelinière, *Les Trois Mondes*, p. 70. For a more detailed discussion of La Popelinière’s colonial aspirations see the articles by Adrien Delmas, ‘Writing History in the Age of Discovery, according to La Popelinière, 16th–17th Centuries’, in *The Dutch Trading Companies as Knowledge Networks*, edited by Siegfried Huigen, Jan L. de Jong, and Elmer Kolfin (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 297–318 and Adrien Delmas, ‘L’écriture de l’histoire et la compétition européenne outre-mer au tournant du XVII^e siècle’, *L’Atelier du Centre de recherches historiques* 7 (2011).

⁹⁹ Joan-Pau Rubiés, ‘From the “History of Travayle” to the History of Travel Collections: The Rise of an Early Modern Genre’, in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 25–41.

¹⁰⁰ Margaret Small, ‘A World Seen through Another’s Eyes: Hakluyt, Ramusio, and the Narratives of the “Navigationi et Viaggi”’, in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 45–55, although the portrait of Ramusio as a pure humanist is questionable.

¹⁰¹ Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation*, 12 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1903–1905), vol. 1, pp. xx–xxi.

¹⁰² David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 64–81. See also David Harris Sacks, ‘Richard Hakluyt’s Navigations in Time: History, Epic, and Empire’, *Modern Language Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (2006), pp. 31–62; Peter C. Mancall, *Hakluyt’s Promise: An Elizabethan’s Obsession for an English America* (New Haven: Princeton University Press, 2007).

¹⁰³ The relation between La Popelinière and Hakluyt has been analysed by Frank Lestringant, *Le huguenot et le sauvage: L’Amérique et la controverse coloniale, en France, au temps des guerres de religion (1555–1589)*, 3rd ed. (Geneva: Droz, 2004), pp. 325–356.

¹⁰⁴ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, vol. 1, p. 5.

Trois Mondes in English, licensed in 1583.¹⁰⁵ What was released under his auspices in London in 1601, however, was Galvão's *Tratado*, translated as *The Discoveries of the World*, in which the plural in the title clearly indicated a process that was still ongoing.

The political nature of this edition was confirmed by the choice of the dedicatee, Robert Cecil, secretary of state since 1599, to whom Hakluyt was then chaplain. The many sources of Galvão that Hakluyt had managed to identify were reproduced in the margins of the printed text. The translation, however, was said to be by 'some honest and well affected marchant'.¹⁰⁶ In his dedicatory epistle to Cecil, Hakluyt complained of the quality of the English version, which he had possessed for twelve years, and explained that he had long been looking for a copy of Galvão's original text in Lisbon and elsewhere, but in vain. Apparently that Portuguese history of the world, so insidious for the legitimacy of the Iberian empires, had become unobtainable. This was one reason for Hakluyt's printing the work in English, in response to advice he had received to 'draw' the *Principal Navigations* 'into a short sum' to make it 'most acceptable to the world, especially to men of great action and employment'.¹⁰⁷

The publication of Galvão's 'briefe Treatie', which Hakluyt knew through the biographical indications in Castanheda's chronicle and in the history of the Jesuit missions in the East Indies (1588) by Father Giampietro Maffei, was closely linked to his major project. The *Discoveries of the World* also shared with the *Principal Navigations* one of its printers, George Bishop. This closed a circle around the composite tradition deriving from Ramusio's *Navigazioni*. Hakluyt noted that Galvão's *Tratado*, 'though small in bulke containeth so much rare and profitable matter, as I know not where to seeke the like, within so narrow and streite a compasse'. He suggested Cecil keep to hand 'a sea card or a mape of the world', which would help him follow the orderly account of 'who were the first discoverours, conquerours, and planters in every place, as also the natures and commodities of the soyles, together with the forces, qualities, and conditions of the inhabitants', both in East and West.¹⁰⁸ True, Hakluyt admitted, Cecil would find in this thousand-year history only a few mentions of 'our nation', but this was because Galvão was writing in the mid-sixteenth century, when the English were still sailing relatively little on the world's oceans. Moreover, he added, the English navigations had not 'come to ripenes' yet, being limited 'for the most part to places first discovered by others', but 'when they shall come to more perfection, and

¹⁰⁵ E.G.R. Taylor, ed., *The Original Writings and Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluyts*, 2 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1935), vol. 2, p. 241.

¹⁰⁶ António Galvão, *The Discoveries of the World, from Their First Original unto the Year of Our Lord 1555... Corrected, Quoted, and Published in England, by Richard Hakluyt*, edited by C.R. Drinkwater Bethune (London: Hakluyt Society, 1862), p. vi.

¹⁰⁷ Galvão, *The Discoveries of the World*, p. iii.

¹⁰⁸ Galvão, *The Discoveries of the World*, pp. iii–vi.

become more profitable to the adventurers, will then be more fit to be reduced into briefe epitomes, by my selfe or some other endued with an honest zeale of the honour of our country.¹⁰⁹

While respecting Galvão's vision of world history, just like La Popelinière, Hakluyt betrayed his approach to the point of making the work of a Portuguese Catholic the possible basis for future celebrations of the rising English Empire. The image of a globe moulded by the circulation of men and goods, which Galvão had given a glimpse of as he wrote from a hospital bed in Lisbon, was destined to clash with an age of aggressive empires in competition with each other. In that new context, though the *Tratado* continued to circulate in unexpected ways, it would not find anyone willing to take up its deep insights into the global polyphony of the past on which a Renaissance history of the world would need to rest.

¹⁰⁹ Galvão, *The Discoveries of the World*, p. vii.

3

Indigenous Comparisons

A Renaissance Bestseller in the Colonial Andes

Comparison was at the heart of the Renaissance intellectual project. Admiration for the ancients was built on the contrast between their superior culture and customs and those of the moderns. Religion was the main exception, as the superiority of Christians over pagans was not to be questioned. Things were not so straightforward, however. Widespread recourse to comparison could sometimes lead to unpredictable and disconcerting conclusions, all the more so when daring connections and parallels in time and space were suggested. Encounters across the globe with peoples whose past, if not their name, had hitherto been completely unknown offered ideal terrain for applying this technique.

The Europeans were not the only ones to make comparisons, however. So did indigenous writers in the Americas, with the aim of vindicating the full dignity of their cultures, particularly by writing histories of the world. Therefore, not only could Renaissance histories of the world be written far from Europe, but also by non-European authors. As this chapter on the unique chronicle composed by a Quechua Indian in early-seventeenth-century Peru will show, one of the hardest challenges for indigenous intellectuals producing this kind of history was justifying to potential European readers the use of local memories that allowed them to blend the native past with that of the rest of the globe in one single narrative.

Chronicling the World from Peru

The old idea of universal monarchy resurfaced yet again in the age of the Iberian Union (1580–1640). Spain's and Portugal's overseas possessions now formed what could be described as a 'composite empire' under the Habsburg dynasty.¹ Dreaming about a world made entirely Christian that was at last at peace under the Spanish crown was common at that time. Even subjects who were hostile to its rule, such as the Dominican friar Tommaso Campanella, found that prospect reassuring. On the eve of a failed rebellion which he tried to start in Calabria in 1599, he set down a first draft of his *Monarchia di Spagna*. In accord with the pope

¹ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Holding the World in Balance: The Connected Histories of the Iberian Overseas Empires, 1500–1640', *American Historical Review* 112, no. 5 (2007): p. 1360.

and the church, the ideal king that Campanella outlined in this work would gather all peoples under the Catholic faith in a regime of harmony and wellbeing.² This aspiration was cultivated as a reaction against an imperial regime which was perceived as unjust and violent. After his plot was revealed, Campanella spent almost thirty years in prison in Naples, where he feigned madness to avoid being put to death.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the globe but still under the authority of the Spanish crown, partly similar hopes inspired the chronicle composed by Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, a Quechua Indian of self-proclaimed noble origin. Like Campanella, he was having trouble with the law at the time. Guaman Poma had tried to reaffirm his family's rights to some land in the valley of Chupas, near the city of Huamanga (present-day Ayacucho), on the eastern side of the central-southern Peruvian Andes. But in 1600 the Chachapoya Indians from the north, whom the Spaniards had given those lands to farm, managed to have him tried as an impostor. He was therefore condemned to 200 lashes, had his goods confiscated, and was exiled from Huamanga for two years. The period immediately preceding this, from 1594 to 1600, is the least obscure part of Guaman Poma's life thanks to the proceedings of the trials in which he was involved, including some in which he had acted as witness and interpreter.³ Born after the Spanish conquest, he had been largely brought up a Castilian-speaking Catholic from childhood. He claimed to be a descendent of warriors and landowners, and boasted blood ties with two royal dynasties, the Yarovilcas of Huánuco through his father, Martín Guaman Mallqui de Ayala—the Spanish parts of his name testified his loyalty to the new colonial order—and their Inca successors through his mother, Juana Chuquitanta, a daughter of the tenth Inca ruler, Túpac Yupanqui (r. 1471–93).

Away from Huamanga, Guaman Poma wandered through the viceroyalty of Peru, where the indigenous people, though decimated by war, injustice, and disease, had not entirely forgotten their past, both recent and remote.⁴ Their divergent versions of the prehispanic ages, preserved by oral memories and *quipos*—a system of knotted strings for registering information—were already echoed in the tradition of Spanish chronicles on the conquest of Peru.⁵ The *mestizo* Inca Garcilaso de la Vega would pay them special attention in the first

² Tommaso Campanella, *La monarchia di Spagna: Prima stesura giovanile*, edited by Germana Ernst (Naples: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 1989). For a discussion see John M. Headley, *Tommaso Campanella and the Transformation of the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 197–246.

³ For Guaman Poma's biographical details see the introduction to Rolena Adorno, *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru*, 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), pp. xlii–li.

⁴ On the more recent one, see Nathan Wachtel, *The Vision of the Vanquished: The Spanish Conquest of Peru through Indian Eyes* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1977).

⁵ Isabel Yaya, *The Two Faces of Inca History: Dualism in the Narratives and Cosmology of Ancient Cuzco* (Leiden: Brill, 2012). Also see Rolena Adorno, ed., *From Oral to Written Expression: Native Andean Chronicles of the Early Colonial Period* (Syracuse: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 1982).

part of his *Comentarios reales de los Incas* (1609).⁶ Guaman Poma's examination of these local materials, however, developed into a narrative project that was in radical contrast with the writings of previous chroniclers.⁷ He wanted to highlight the full cultural dignity of the native inhabitants of Peru. This resonated with his delicate objective of restoring an indigenous monarchy, though one that was still under the king of Spain, lord of the four parts of the world.⁸

In a letter of 1615, Guaman Poma informed King Philip III that he had completed 'a chronicle or general history' based on his personal experience and 'on what I have learnt from the oldest leading lords of these kingdoms that had a full account and information of everything from their ancestors'. His work ought to allow 'Your Majesty's historians to have clearer light than I believe they have had so far', as well as to supply 'a broad narrative of how the natives of these kingdoms have been treated since they were conquered and peopled by the Spaniards', so that the crown might see 'to the remedy that such great injuries require'.⁹ We do not know if Philip III ever held Guaman Poma's chronicle in his hands, but in any case this ambitious work met with silence in Spain. Like other writings that gave too much space to the prehispanic past and the customs of the Andean peoples, ever since the second part of the *Chronica del Peru* by Pedro de Cieza de León, this manuscript of almost 1,200 pages remained unpublished.¹⁰ It fell into oblivion until it was rediscovered in the Danish Royal Library early in the twentieth century.¹¹

The title, *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, described the two parts into which Guaman Poma's work was divided: the first part gave an account of the history of Peru from its origins until the fall of the Incas, while the second part dealt with the system of administration that had begun with the second viceroy of Peru, Antonio de Mendoza (r. 1551–2). It was hoped that this 'good government' would lead to a new political order that assured greater respect for the rights of indigenous people, and, above all, avert what was seen as the greatest danger to

⁶ Sara Castro-Klarén and Christian Fernández, eds. *Inca Garcilaso & Contemporary World-Making* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), and James W. Fuerst, *New World Postcolonial: The Political Thought of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018).

⁷ Adorno, *Guaman Poma*, pp. 13–21.

⁸ Serge Gruzinski, *Les quatre parties du monde: Histoire d'une mondialisation* (Paris: La Martinière, 2004), p. 199.

⁹ Letter dated 14 February 1615, in Seville, Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Lima 145, published in Guillermo Lohmann Villena, 'Una carta inédita de Huamán Poma de Ayala', *Revista de Indias* 6, no. 20 (1945): pp. 326–327.

¹⁰ Only the first part of Cieza de León's chronicle was published, in 1553. See the introduction to Francesca Cantù, *Pedro de Cieza de León e il 'Descubrimiento y conquista del Peru'* (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per l'età moderna e contemporanea, 1979), pp. 9–119.

¹¹ Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Ms Gammel Kongelig Samling (GSK) 2232, 4^o. The manuscript is now available at <http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/poma/info/en/frontpage.htm> with a transcription and an updated critical apparatus, based on the revised version of the first critical edition of 1980. See Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Nueva crónica y buen gobierno*, edited by John H. Murra, Rolena Adorno, and Jorge L. Urioste, 3 vols. (Madrid: Historia 16, 1987).

their survival: the advance of a new social group, the *mestizos*.¹² The fear of descendants of mixed blood may seem paradoxical, as the *Nueva corónica* was itself a hybrid: 'based on unwritten accounts, taken from the *quipos* or memorials and reports from ancient times remembered by wise old Indian men and women, eyewitnesses', collected in a hesitant Castilian prose interspersed with words and sentences in local languages (mainly Quechua and Aymara), that history evoked the lost world of the Andes from which the author himself descended, placing it on the same level as the new world brought by the Spaniards.¹³ Guaman Poma, however, regarded himself as equally Spanish: he shared their language and, above all, the Catholic faith. Thus, on the one hand he denied that the Spaniards had carried out a real act of 'conquest', with all the rights deriving from it, claiming that they had been welcomed peacefully and the Incas brought down by divine intervention, though he did not hesitate to describe colonial violence in some detail.¹⁴ But on the other hand, he recognized the universal lordship of the Spanish crown, hoping indeed that Philip III would make himself guarantor of the restoration of an indigenous monarch in Peru, who should be Guaman Poma's own son, heir to the last two prehispanic dynasties.¹⁵

The nostalgic attitude of Guaman Poma's political position explains his aversion to the *mestizos*, symbol of the final defeat of the ancient Andean world. He was deliberately retrieving an option suggested more than half a century earlier by the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas, who had urged the return of an Inca to guide Peru as the way to remedy the injustice and violence of the Spaniards.¹⁶ Any real hope of this had finally faded with the decapitation of the last legitimate descendant of the Inca rulers, Túpac Amaru in the ancient capital of Cuzco in 1572. Thus ended the rebel king of Vilcabamba, who had been the focus for the hopes of the Indians who still opposed Spanish rule—his ignominious death would be remembered by Guaman Poma as an act of injustice against an 'innocent' and he wrote scathingly of the conduct of the Viceroy Francisco de Toledo (r. 1569–81).¹⁷ The *Nueva corónica* expressed the sorrowful vision of a vanquished who partly accepted defeat. Ultimately, what Guaman Poma really wanted was for the Indians simply to have more say in governing their lands after he himself had suffered harshly for demanding respect for the ancient rights of property.

¹² Adorno, *Guaman Poma*, pp. xli–xlii.

¹³ Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *The First New Chronicle and Good Government: On the History of the World and the Incas up to 1615*, translated and edited by Roland Hamilton (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), p. 7.

¹⁴ Adorno, *Guaman Poma*, pp. 27–32.

¹⁵ Adorno, *Guaman Poma*, pp. 140–141.

¹⁶ Rolena Adorno, *The Polemics of Possession in Spanish American Narrative* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 21–60.

¹⁷ Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 2232, 4°, pp. 451–454. For a contextualization see Brian S. Bauer, Madeleine Halac-Higashimori, and Gabriel E. Cantarutti, *Voices from Vilcabamba: Accounts Chronicling the Fall of the Inca Empire* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2016).

Despite concentrating on the Andean region, Guaman Poma's chronicle offered the vision of the world and its history that an indigenous chronicler of Peru might have had at a time when the Hispanic monarchy had become a global power. That vision mirrored the act of resistance that this work supported. Merely rejecting the direct authority of the Spaniards was no longer enough to set the arguments of the natives against the justifications of the conquest. An overall reinterpretation of history was now necessary in order to connect a multiplicity of pasts which would hold together the rights of the Indians along with the universal lordship of the Spanish crown.

A remarkable example of pictorial history, the *Nueva corónica* included hundreds of Guaman Poma's own drawings with captions.¹⁸ As well as helping construct an image designed to confirm the author's noble lineage and exalt his role as a political mediator in the eyes of the king of Spain, these illustrations were fragments of an indigenous visual archive that reflected the memory of ancient Andean times, just as it captured scenes of the recent Spanish conquest and numerous features of the first decades of the colonial life of the viceroyalty of Peru.¹⁹

The value of these drawings is not diminished by the fact that many of them had already been executed by Guaman Poma for the *Historia general del Peru* by the Mercedarian friar Martín de Murúa, an important source of the *Nueva corónica*, as well as a target of some of its harshest criticism.²⁰ Rather, the combination of visual and written materials in Guaman Poma's chronicle provides a particularly incisive example of the sophistication of indigenous literacies in the early colonial Andes.²¹ The ability to rework forms and materials of different origins in a single global perspective can be seen in the map of Tahuantinsuyo (see Figure 3.1), the 'four regions' in which the Inca Empire was divided. The spatial coordinates of the Andes were adapted to the typical contours of a European planisphere, but with Cuzco at the centre, while at the same time the map incorporated the insignias of the Spanish Empire and the papacy.²²

¹⁸ Rolena Adorno, Tom Cummins, Teresa Gisbert, Maarten van de Guchte, Mercedes López-Baralt, and John V. Murra, *Guaman Poma de Ayala: The Colonial Art of an Andean Author* (New York: The Americas Society, 1992); Valerie Fraser, 'The Artistry of Guaman Poma', *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 29–30 (1996): pp. 269–289. The relationship between history and illustration is explored in Daniela Bleichmar and Vanessa R. Schwartz, eds., *Visual History: The Past in Pictures, Representations* 145, no. 1 (2019): pp. 1–173.

¹⁹ Lauren G. Kilroy-Ewbank, 'Fashioning a Prince for All the World to See: Guaman Poma's Self-Portraits in the *Nueva Corónica*', *The Americas* 75, no. 1 (2018): pp. 47–94. On archival culture after the conquest, see Kathryn Burns, *Into the Archive: Writing and Power in Colonial Peru* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

²⁰ On the relationship between the two works, see Rolena Adorno and Ivan Boserup, 'The Making of Murúa's *Historia General del Piru*', in *The Getty Murúa: Essays on the Making of Martín de Murúa's 'Historia General del Piru'*, *J. Paul Getty Museum Ms Ludwig XIII 16*, edited by Thomas B.F. Cummins and Barbara Anderson (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008), pp. 42–43.

²¹ Joanne Rappaport and Tom Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered City: Indigenous Literacies in the Andes* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), pp. 1–26.

²² Adorno, *Guaman Poma*, pp. 89–99.



Figure 3.1 World map of the Indies of Peru, showing the quadripartite division of the Inca Empire of Tahuantinsuyo. Drawing from Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's *El primer nueva corónica i buen gobierno*, c. 1615. Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Ms. Gammel Kongelig Samling (GSK) 2232, 4^o, pp. 1001–1002.

The variety of literary genres blended by Guaman Poma, from chronicle to genealogies of kings, homiletics, and the dry administrative style of inspection registers, emphasized the cross-cultural character of a reconstruction meant to compare in order to integrate distinct histories. Not without errors of chronology and incongruities in the eyes of a European reader, the *Nueva corónica* opened with the two parallel accounts of the traditional ages of the world and those of the Indians, five in both cases. This attempt to harmonize the time of the Andean world with that of traditional universal histories was inspired by the model provided by an anonymous *Repertorio de los tiempos*, published in Valladolid in 1554.²³ Guaman Poma cross-referenced between the two narratives, including the theory advanced in the section on the second age of the world that the Indians descended from one of Noah's sons and had therefore reached the Americas after the Flood.²⁴ The fifth age consisted of a list of the ancient kings of Persia and Egypt up to Cleopatra's successor, the Roman emperor Augustus. Here the account was

²³ Soledad González Díaz, 'Guaman Poma y el *Repertorio* anónimo (1554): Una nueva fuente para las edades del mundo en la *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno*', *Chungara: Revista de Antropología Chilena* 44, no. 3 (2012): pp. 377–388.

²⁴ Guaman Poma de Ayala, *The First New Chronicle and Good Government*, p. 21.

interrupted to note the birth of Jesus, which was said to have occurred when the second Inca ruler, Cinche Roca (who actually lived in the thirteenth century) was aged 80.²⁵ Guaman Poma then resumed with a list of Roman emperors and their successors, the Holy Roman emperors, until the arrival of the Spaniards in the New World, followed by an account of the popes up to the present. He then introduced the history of the four generations of pre-Inca Peru, starting from the Vari Viracocha Runa, ‘descendants of the Spaniards that God brought to this kingdom of the Indies, the ones who came from Noah’s ark after the Flood’.²⁶ Though slightly equivocal, Guaman Poma seems to have been claiming that the first inhabitants of the Andes after the Flood were of Spanish origin. He also claimed they already possessed implicit faith as they believed in a creator god, one in three, and led morally blameless lives. After describing the following three generations (Vari Runa, Purun Runa, and Auca Runa), he moved on to the age of the twelve Inca rulers, again mentioning the birth of Christ when he reached Cinche Roca, but also the apostle Bartholomew’s supposed preaching in the Americas, which had referred explicitly to the faith of the Indians before it degenerated into ‘idolatry’.²⁷ This further delegitimized Spanish rule, as it denied the justification that, despite violence, abuse, and civil war, conquest had, after all, brought the Catholic faith to the Andes.²⁸

From the Andes to Bavaria

The *Nueva corónica* was an unprecedented experiment. From Cieza de León’s first part of the *Chronica del Peru* (1553) onwards, Spanish authors had at most suggested a comparison between the Incas and the ancient Romans.²⁹ Conversely, Guaman Poma aimed to put the histories of the New and the Old worlds on the same level right from the most remote times.³⁰ This was the project of a Quechua Indian whose reading may well have been limited, but who had

²⁵ Guaman Poma de Ayala, *The First New Chronicle and Good Government*, p. 24.

²⁶ Guaman Poma de Ayala, *The First New Chronicle and Good Government*, p. 38.

²⁷ Guaman Poma de Ayala, *The First New Chronicle and Good Government*, pp. 66–71. The description of the Inca rulers has a parallel in the captions of their contemporary portraits kept today at the Gilcrease Museum of Tulsa, Oklahoma. See Monica Barnes, ‘The Gilcrease Inca Portraits and the Historical Tradition of Guaman Poma de Ayala’, in *Andean Oral Traditions: Discourse and Literature*, edited by Margot Beyersdorff and Sabine Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz (Bonn: Holos, 1994), pp. 223–256.

²⁸ Adorno, *Guaman Poma*, pp. 32–35.

²⁹ Luis Millones Figueroa, *Pedro Cieza de León y su Crónica de Indias: La entrada de los incas en la historia universal* (Lima: IFEA, 2001). More generally, on the association between the Incas and the ancient Romans see Sabine MacCormack, *On the Wings of Time: Rome, the Incas, Spain, and Peru* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

³⁰ Frank Salomon, ‘Testimonies: The Making and Reading of Native South American Historical Sources’, in *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, vol. 3/1, edited by Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 45–48.

somehow acquired remarkable familiarity with the history of classical antiquity and the main sources of Christian and European literature, and tried to integrate them with the Andean past from an indigenous perspective.³¹

Disentangling the entwined strands in Guaman Poma's vision of world history is a difficult task. An accurate reconstruction of his reading and the direct sources for the *Nueva corónica* may be even more so, although precise borrowings have been identified, not only from Las Casas and Murúa, but also from the *Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Peru* (1555) by Agustín de Zárate and the *Memorial de la vida cristiana* (1566) by the Dominican friar Luis de Granada.³² In the final part of the work, there was also a prominent section on 'the first wise historians of the earlier chronicles'.³³ One must resist the temptation to read it as a recapitulation of the texts that Guaman Poma actually used in his the *Nueva corónica*. The authors cited include the Jesuit father José de Acosta, Juan Ochoa de la Salde, the Dominican friar Domingo de Santo Tomás, the Franciscan friar Luis Jerónimo de Oré, the priest and naturalist Miguel Cabello de Balboa, and Murúa. Referring to these 'historians' was predictable in early seventeenth-century Peru. Guaman Poma was in personal contact with some of them and was free with his criticism in some cases, but had he actually read them? The question was particularly relevant for the work he mentioned first, thus giving it special prominence.

'Juan Boemo, or Bantiotonio', Guaman Poma began, 'wrote the chronicle of this kingdom of the Indies, a very learned compendium called Yndiario. In it he compared all the temples, rites, kings, and regions with those of the native Indians of the New World, as they are summarized by the captain Gonzalo Pizarro de Oviedo y Valdés, head of the fortress of the island Hispaniola of Santo Domingo, Agustín de Zárate, and Diego Fernandes, chroniclers of this kingdom.'³⁴ This is a striking passage, not only for the peculiar linguistic mixture of the original in Castilian in which spelling mistakes are combined with hilarious oversights, such as confusing the name of the chronicler Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo with that of the conquistador Gonzalo Pizarro. What is particularly astonishing is the citation of the 'compendium' (misspelt in the original Castilian as the obscure word *combentio*) by 'Juan Boemo', that is the German humanist Hans Böhm (Johannes Boemus).

Born around 1485 in Aub, in Lower Franconia, Böhm studied theology before entering the Teutonic Order, a monastic-military organization founded at the

³¹ Rolena Adorno, 'Las otras fuentes de Guaman Poma: Sus lecturas castellanas', *Histórica* 2, no. 2 (1978): pp. 137–158; John V. Murra, 'Guaman Poma's Sources', in Rolena Adorno, Tom Cummins, Teresa Gisbert, Maarten van de Guchte, Mercedes López-Baralt, and John V. Murra, *Guaman Poma de Ayala: The Colonial Art of an Andean Author* (New York: Americas Society, 1992), pp. 60–66.

³² Adorno, *Guaman Poma*, p. 14.

³³ Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 2232, 4°, pp. 1088–1091.

³⁴ Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 2232, 4°, p. 1088.

time of the Third Crusade (1189–92) and that in the past had dominated vast areas of Eastern Europe.³⁵ Hence his epithet Aubanus Teutonicus (“Teuton from Aub”), which Guaman Poma mangled into ‘Bantiotonio’. Who was he? What kind of writing was his ‘Yndiario’? And why give him such a prominence in the *Nueva corónica*? Answering the last question means exploring how Guaman Poma wanted to place his work in the context of a broader debate on the nature and history of the Indians of Peru. More generally, considering Guaman Poma’s relation with Böhm entails reconstructing the intellectual background to his attempt to put the history of the Andes on the same level as the history of the rest of the world.

Böhm’s is not a familiar name in the early-modern bibliography on Spanish America. Finding a work of his at the head of a list for the precedents of the *Nueva corónica* confirms how vast and complex the ramifications of Renaissance histories of the world could be. Moreover, it serves as a reminder that we should avoid drawing arbitrary boundaries between colonial and European literature, thus making geographical distance or, still worse, differences in language or genre insurmountable obstacles to the circulation of texts and models. All the same, seeing Böhm cited by Guaman Poma remains a puzzle, all the more so as the first reference to ‘Bantiotonio’ introduced a very important passage commenting upon the main eyewitnesses whose oral accounts were crucial for Guaman Poma’s reconstruction of the remote and recent past of the Andean region. What encouraged this choice?

A Latin poet admired in southern German humanist circles, Böhm was a chaplain of the Teutonic Order’s house in Ulm when the Reformation began. At the time, he was preparing a Latin treatise that was to become a bestseller in Europe—and beyond. The first edition of *Omnium gentium mores, leges et ritus*, an elegant folio volume, was published in Augsburg in 1520.³⁶ Thus, an original encyclopaedia of the customs, institutions, and rites of the peoples of Africa, Asia, and Europe (but not the Americas), founded mainly on classical and humanist authors, saw the light of day in the heart of Bavaria. Over the sixteenth century Böhm’s treatise went through almost fifty editions, if we include reprints, translations, adaptations, and plagiarized versions in the main European tongues. Guaman Poma’s reference to a comparison with ‘all the temples, rites, kings, and regions’ seems to indicate unequivocally one of these editions, but we know of no work entitled ‘Yndiario’ that appeared under Böhm’s name. So what version was Guaman Poma referring to?

³⁵ For biographical details, see Hartmut Kugler, ‘Boemus (Böhm, Bohemus), Johannes, Aubanus’, in *Deutscher Humanismus 1480–1520: Verfasserlexikon*, edited by Franz Josef Worstbrock, 3 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005–2012), vol. 1, pp. 209–217.

³⁶ Hans Böhm, *Omnium gentium mores, leges et ritus ex multis doctissimis rerum scriptoribus...* (Augsburg: Sigmund Grimm and Marx Wirsung, 1520).

To find out, we must patiently retrace the route that took Böhms's treatise from Bavaria across the Atlantic to end up in the Andes. In this way we will realize what a malleable book *Omnium gentium mores* proved to be. Publishers, translators, and readers combined to make this Renaissance work a model for thinking of the world through a comparison of customs (*mores*), something that led to its being openly cited in the *Nueva corónica*. We should also observe that Böhms's treatise, however, was not an immediate success. The first edition went almost unnoticed. Popularity had to await the first reprint in Lyon in 1535, the year of Böhms's death. Almost immediately reprinted in Freiburg in Breisgau (1536) and Antwerp (1537), *Omnium gentium mores* quickly became part of the ideal library of every good humanist in the very years when works on the new worlds were for the first time enjoying an upsurge on the European book market.³⁷

The first French translation appeared in Paris in late 1539, dedicated to the Emperor Charles V and edited by Michel Fezandat, one of the printers of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* by François Rabelais.³⁸ This venture seems to have inspired William Watreman, the translator of the first partial version of *Omnium gentium mores* in English. Limited to the parts on Africa and Asia, this version was published in London in 1555.³⁹ In Venice, meanwhile, an Italian version by Lucio Fauno, pseudonym of the humanist Giovanni Tarcagnota had already appeared in 1542, published by Michele Tramezzino.⁴⁰ In his introductory epistle, Fauno celebrated the work as 'a sea of the most beautiful and useful examples' and invited the reader to take advantage of the personal edification the book provided: 'the manners and traditions of so many peoples, both those who once were and those now in the world, are no other than so many mirrors, through which we should mould our soul and body, adorning ourselves with the fine and good and scorning and throwing away as savage and evil the bad.'⁴¹

'Those who once were and those now in the world'. Fauno alluded to both the temporal dimension and the global scope of *Omnium gentium mores*, touching on two characteristics that were decisive for its future relation with Renaissance histories of the world. But, above all, he insisted on the fact that the act of

³⁷ John H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New, 1492–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 12–13.

³⁸ Hans Böhms, *Recueil de diverses histoires touchant les situations de toutes regions et pays contenez es trois parties du monde, avec les particulieres moeurs, loix, et caerimonies de toutes nations et peuples y habitans* (Paris: Michel Fezandat, 1539).

³⁹ Hans Böhms, *The Fardle of Facions Conteining the Aunciente Manners, Customes and Lawes of the Peoples Enhabiting the Two Partes of the Earthe, Called Affrike and Asie* (London: John Kingston and Henry Sutton, 1555). For a study, see Richard Raiswell, 'Medieval Geography in the Age of Exploration: "The Fardle of Factions" in Its English Context', in *Renaissance Medievalism*, edited by Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2009), pp. 249–285.

⁴⁰ For this identification, see Gennaro Tallini, 'Nuove coordinate biografiche per Giovanni Tarcagnota da Gaeta', *Italianistica* 42, no. 1 (2013): pp. 105–125.

⁴¹ Hans Böhms, *Gli costumi, le leggi, et l'usanze di tutte le genti, raccolte qui insieme da molti illustri scrittori...* (Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1542), fol. iijv.

comparing customs, which was at the centre of the work, had an intrinsically moral significance. At a time when Christian Europe was divided by the Reformation, this argument addressed directly the question of religion. In any case, Fauno introduced Böhm's treatise above all as a book of history and geography, in which the 'most beautiful and useful examples' represented by the customs, institutions, and rites of the world were described following an order that showed no immediate ethical connotations.⁴² In this sense, as Arnaldo Momigliano noted, *Omnium gentium mores* was something new, especially for its wide-ranging information on the world's religions: the work was part of a trend of increasing interest in paganism—inside and outside Europe—by a Renaissance culture that was rediscovering classical antiquity, studying traditions and legends, examining the historical roots of language, and also considering the beliefs and rituals of the previously unknown indigenous peoples of the Americas.⁴³

While Christianity, with its claim to superiority and its drive towards universalism, was one of the major obstacles to writing a historical narrative that could be authentically interested in cultural diversity at the time, *Omnium gentium mores* was an equivocal work. Böhm's Christian faith seemed sincere, and near the end of his life he even became a Lutheran. But at the heart of his treatise on customs, there was a vision of religion that did not conform to the usual rejection of any other creed or belief. Once set in its historical context, it is hard to describe this treatise as a precursor of modern anthropology without misrepresenting its specific nature.⁴⁴ At the same time, it should not be presented as a work that reduced the differences in cultural expressions to a mere product of the corruption of humanity deriving from original sin.⁴⁵ What made *Omnium gentium mores* a model for the comparative approach that contributed to the writing of Renaissance histories of the world in Europe and beyond was rather its openness to diversity and, despite occasional references to myths and legends mostly of classical origin, its clear distancing from the blurred representation of the unusual that had been typical of medieval cosmographies.⁴⁶

⁴² This point escapes Anthony Grafton (with the collaboration of April Shelford and Nancy Siraisi), *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 99–100, where Böhm is dismissed as 'a widely read though not a deeply reflective scholar'.

⁴³ Arnaldo Momigliano, 'Historiography of Religion: Western Views', in his *On Pagans, Jews and Christians* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), p. 22. A 'milestone in the early days of the modern study of religion', Böhm 'showed no arrogance vis-à-vis exotic cultures, but rather approached them with sheer intellectual curiosity', according to Guy G. Stroumsa, *A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 1–2.

⁴⁴ This interpretation was maintained by Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), pp. 135–143.

⁴⁵ Thus Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'New Worlds and Renaissance Ethnology', in his *Travellers and Cosmographers: Studies in the History of Early Modern Travel and Ethnology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), essay no. 2, pp. 173–174.

⁴⁶ The odd and fabulous, of course, kept on having a fundamental role in the ways in which early modern Europeans made sense of the world. See Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

An Ambivalent Encyclopaedia

What made Böhm's book a novelty was not his sources, which were largely known to sixteenth-century readers, but the fact they were collected in a single volume and, still more, how they were presented. Divided in three parts, each on the peoples and regions of one of the three continents of the Old World, *Omnium gentium mores* drew mainly on classical writers, or from works that had been published before European culture had started reacting to the discovery of America. This meant this treatise could seem out-of-date even before it appeared. Yet its internal structure and the sub-divisions of each chapter, where a short description of a territory was followed by an account of local customs, institutions, and rites, provided an example that was to prove very popular in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. How to explain this success? And how to interpret the paradox of a work which, at first sight, appeared behind the times if not obsolete, yet whose circulation was to stimulate the writing of histories of the world?

Böhm's silence on the knowledge generated by recent exploration was anything but abnormal for its time and should not be set down to ignorance. German culture made an early contribution to reworking the new information derived from travels and encounters in the age of exploration.⁴⁷ A clear awareness of this also emerges from the author's dedication to Sigmund Grimm, who printed the first edition of *Omnium gentium mores*. Böhm proudly claimed that his treatise belonged to a publishing catalogue full of writings on subjects of topical interest, among which he cited the reprint of the German translation of the *Itinerario* in which the Bolognese Ludovico di Varthema recounted his recent travels across South Asia.⁴⁸ Yet Böhm never used that text in his work, even in the remarkable chapter on India. This is very suggestive: both dealt with peoples distant in space, but only Böhm considered them along with the Europeans, though without any sense of chronology. What really interested him was the possibility of comparison. After all, only by ignoring a time line heading towards the present could he attenuate the central place that Christianity necessarily occupied, as otherwise history was inevitably progressing towards its triumph. In this way Böhm blurred, without ever openly denying, the hierarchy among religions, as to do anything else risked reducing his comparative treatment of the customs of the peoples of the world to a list of condemnations.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Christine R. Johnson, *The German Discovery of the World: Renaissance Encounters with the Strange and Marvelous* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008).

⁴⁸ Ludovico di Varthema, *Die Ritterlich vnd lobwirdig raiß des gestrengen und über all ander weyt erfahrenen ritters und lantdfarers* (Augsburg: Sigmund Grimm and Marx Wirsung, 1518). The original edition in Italian language had been published in 1510.

⁴⁹ I develop here the interpretation proposed by Klaus A. Vogel, 'Cultural Variety in a Renaissance Perspective: Johannes Boemus on "The Manners, Laws and Customs of All People" (1520)', in *Shifting Cultures: Interaction and Discourse in the Expansion of Europe*, edited by Henriette Bugge and Joan-Pau Rubiés (Münster: Lit, 1995), pp. 17–34.

Though much less daring, Böhm's attitude shared something with that of a contemporary of his who, like him, never mentioned the New World, Niccolò Machiavelli. As Carlo Ginzburg has shown, the comparison between moderns and ancients—the Romans, above all—that was at the centre of Machiavelli's works was the origin of a specific trend in comparing customs and religions, particularly among some Renaissance antiquarians and authors writing on the inhabitants of the Americas.⁵⁰ Only published in 1531, Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy* was written more or less at the same time as *Omnium gentium mores*. It contained a famous comparison between Christianity, criticized as a contemplative faith that turns men's souls to otherworldly things, and the religion of the Romans, which was praised for inciting to earthly glory, encouraging civic cohesion and acts of valour in war. Following this line, Machiavelli even suggested a substantial continuity between the ancient Romans and the modern Turks. This might lead to the conclusion that the Turks too were superior to Christians, a position so scandalous it provoked sharp reactions from Iberian humanists such as the Spaniard Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda and the Portuguese Jerónimo Osório.⁵¹ Around 1520, then, from Florence to Ulm there was an embryonic trend of comparing the customs of peoples that concealed a somewhat equivocal relation with the glorification of Christianity, and by extension of the Europeans who exported it in the world.

Though not completely isolated, Böhm's position was still uncommon. In his treatise the element of variety of 'manners and useful arts' was introduced right away in the dedication, while the prologue first listed the classical and humanist authors, whose descriptions were summarized for the reader's use, and then turned to the subject: 'I have brought together ... the traditions and manners ancient and modern, both the good and the bad,' wrote Böhm, 'so that, contemplating impartially all these examples, you may, in ordering your life, imitate those that are praiseworthy and virtuous, and avoid those that are wicked and obscene.' There followed a long summary of human history until the present, 'so that you, my reader, may know and see how well and happily men live today and how brutally they lived from the first men to the Flood and many centuries after'. Indeed, Böhm explained, 'then people lived scattered on the Earth, knowing

⁵⁰ Carlo Ginzburg, 'Machiavelli and the Antiquarians', in *Machiavelli, Islam and the East: Reorienting the Foundations of the Modern Political Thought*, edited by Lucio Biasiori and Giuseppe Marcocci (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 61–75. See also Lucio Biasiori, 'Comparaison comme étrangeté: Machiavel, les anciens, les modernes, les sauvages', *Essais. Revue interdisciplinaire d'humanités*, hors série (2013): pp. 151–169.

⁵¹ For these reactions and some of their wider implications, see Giuseppe Marcocci, 'Machiavelli, the Iberian Explorations and the Islamic Empire: Tropical Readers from Brazil to India (Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries)', in *Machiavelli, Islam and the East: Reorienting the Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, edited by Lucio Biasiori and Giuseppe Marcocci (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 131–154.

neither money nor goods; they exchanged only what was necessary to live; there was no property, among them everything in the water and on the land was shared, like air and sky.’ It was the principle of utility, over the course of time, that drove men to improve their technical capacities and rid themselves of their ‘fierce, barbarous nature’. This is why they began to refrain ‘from killing each other, from eating human flesh, from stealing and coupling carnally and unthinkingly in public with their mothers and their daughters, and from many other such things’.⁵²

Of clear classical inspiration, these pages closely recalled the first descriptions of the indigenous peoples of the Americas that were then circulating in Europe, but were certainly not easily reduced to a Christian idea of history. Granted, the prologue suddenly announced the advent of the ‘true son of God omnipotent’, followed by the entry of the ‘epileptic Muhammad’, and the recognition of the work of Satan behind ‘the diversity of manners’ and ‘this pernicious and wicked superstition of sacrifices and ceremonies’. But these reference did not really change the nature of the prologue. Immediately after, in fact, Böhm went back to praising the variety of peoples until the conclusion, which dissolved any shadow of a moral or religious censure: ‘As knowledge of distinct nations and different manners is so pleasant and useful’, he argued in a veiled allusion to contemporary exploration, ‘enjoy, dear reader, reading and learning through this book of the most famous and notable manners of all men and the most famous places where they live.’ Rather like a sensory guide to reading, he suggested it would be as if ‘I took you by the hand and you saw with your own eyes, while I point them out to you with my finger, by what order and in what place each population lived and lives today.’⁵³

Böhm’s book offered a voyage through time and space, following a geographical, not chronological order. Only in appearance, however, was this geographical order based on the Ptolemaic vision of the world. It actually derived from a less familiar explanation of a historical nature. Book 1, on Africa, opened with two general chapters on a biblical theme par excellence, the origin of humanity. Oddly, however, ‘the true opinions of divines’ was in no way imposed on ‘the false opinion of ethnicks’. The account of the creation down to the Flood, with which chapter 1 began, continued according to the technique of the false genealogies of the Dominican friar Annius of Viterbo, openly citing his Berosus and presenting the separation and dissemination of the peoples generated by Noah’s offspring.⁵⁴ Böhm wrote that errors, differences of tongue, and crude customs were spread not by the work of Satan—as briefly claimed in the prologue—but was due to the progeny of Ham, who, after shaming Noah, fled to Arabia ‘where hee left no religious ceremonies to his posterity, as having received none from his father’.⁵⁵

⁵² Böhm, *Omnium gentium mores*, fols. IVr–v.

⁵³ Böhm, *Omnium gentium mores*, fols. Vr–VIv.

⁵⁴ See ‘The Renaissance archforger and his giants’ in chapter 1.

⁵⁵ As the translation is quite faithful to the original, I quote from Hans Böhm, *The Manners, Lawes, and Customes of All Nations: Collected Out of the Best Writers...* (London: George Eld, 1611), pp. 1–3.

Having presented this interpretation of cultural variety as decadence deriving from ignorance of religious rites, Böhm inserted a surprising chapter 2, in which he described the ideas of ‘the ancient philosophers’ on the origins of humanity, according to a theory of spontaneous generation, based on the distinction between dry and moist. Life was created from material that was warm and saturated with humours, and that had accumulated where the higher temperature had made the light parts rise upwards and the heavy parts condense downwards. He then returned to the utilitarian vision of the prologue to conclude that men, ‘making necessity the mistress of their labours... commended to their memories the knowledge of all things, to whom were given as helpers, hands, speech, and excellence of minde’.⁵⁶

A formal adhesion to Christian morality was opposed to a vision of human history founded on the laws of nature and on a pragmatism dictated by necessity. This approach was the basis of Böhm’s work. Chapter 2 made clear that ‘the ancient philosophers’ also believed ‘that the Æthiopians were the first of all mortall men’, because of the ‘vicinity and neerenesse of the heavens’ to their land.⁵⁷ The internal structure of the whole treatise depended on this idea, which clearly was in open contrast with the Christian idea of the creation. The first continent to be discussed was that in which, according to ‘the false opinion of ethnicks’, humanity originated—Africa—and the first people to be considered in the work were the Ethiopians, thus further confirming the position of ‘the ancient philosophers’: ‘They were thought to be the first people that lived, and that they being in that country naturally bred, continued free-men and were never subject to slavery.’ After citing various classical authors, Böhm got around to describing the Ethiopians ‘at this day’ following the Italian humanist Marco Antonio Sabellico. He also took from the latter the portrait of Prester John, the mythical Christian ruler identified with ‘the king of Aethiopia’.⁵⁸ But it was not the present that really interested Böhm. His main contribution concerned the most remote origins. His theory of ‘the first of all mortall men’ was the result of cross-referencing two classical authors and an Italian humanist: the Ethiopians had already been mentioned in the explanations of the origin of human life by Diodorus Siculus and, above all, by Pliny the Elder, but the idea that they were the primordial people had recently been relaunched by Raffaele Maffei, also known as Volaterranus, author (whom Böhm, incidentally, never mentioned by

⁵⁶ Böhm, *The Manners, Lawes, and Customes of All Nations*, pp. 5 and 7. This chapter has been considered ‘strange’ for its content was presented as ‘false’ but there was no real attempt to ‘prove its falsity with rational arguments’. See Giuliano Gliozzi, *Adamo e il Nuovo Mondo: La nascita dell’antropologia come ideologia coloniale: Dalle genealogie bibliche alle teorie razziali, 1500–1700* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1977), pp. 321–323.

⁵⁷ Böhm, *The Manners, Lawes, and Customes of All Nations*, p. 7.

⁵⁸ Böhm, *The Manners, Lawes, and Customes of All Nations*, pp. 11 and 14. The reference is to Marco Antonio Sabellico, *Secunda pars Enneadum...* (Venice: Bernardino Viani, 1504), fols. 170v–171r.

name) of one of the most successful humanist universal histories, published in the early sixteenth century.⁵⁹

The unusual centrality attributed to Africa in world history—actually making it the starting point for a review of the customs of all peoples—reflected the credit Böhmer gave to a materialist vision of the origin of humanity that radically challenged the biblical account of the creation. The ambivalent treatment of Christianity in *Omnium gentium mores* also emerged from the last two chapters of book 2 on Asia, in which the customs of the Turks and Christians were described one after the other. In the first case, Böhmer presented Muslim laws and institutions with relative detachment. He even showed some appreciation of cultural plurality that was all the more surprising if one recalls that the author was a member of an order rooted in the spirit of the crusades. This long section followed a short opening section condemning, as was inevitable, the doctrine of Islam and its expansion across the globe, which had extended to ‘the greatest part’ of Europe, ‘together with all Asia and Affricke’.⁶⁰ Such careful distinction between positive and negative customs was in line with other Renaissance works showing a Turkophile inclination.⁶¹

However evident Böhmer’s concessions were to the superiority of Christianity, they could not disguise the underlying approach of *Omnium gentium mores*, as one can see from the following chapter on ‘Christians’. To say the least, it was disconcerting to treat them as one people among others, even relegating them to a marginal position at the end of the catalogue of Asian customs. Nonetheless, strictly in line with the principle adopted in his exposition, Böhmer was just moving from his understanding of Christianity as a religion originating from ‘Iudaea’. Its content seems to have been influenced by the classical sources on early Christians, but the chapter did not stick to them. It was more of a dry narrative of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, followed by a review of the main stages of the history of the church as an institution, its hierarchy, its rituals, liturgies, and articles of faith, as well as the differences in customs between the primitive and the contemporary church. The absence of any real devotional enthusiasm suggested Böhmer was trying to remove the transcendent and universal character of Christianity in favour of its earthly dimension. Apart from recognizing that this was the true religion, there was nothing really distinctive in the way it was presented.⁶²

⁵⁹ Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, with an English translation by Charles H. Oldfather, 12 vols. (London: W. Heinemann, 1933–1967), vol. 2, pp. 89–93; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, with an English translation by Harris Rackham, 10 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938–1963), vol. 1, pp. 321–323; Raffaele Maffei, *Commentariorum urbanorum libri XXXVIII* (Rome: Johann Besicken, 1506), fol. 167r.

⁶⁰ Böhmer, *The Manners, Lawes, and Customes of All Nations*, p. 137.

⁶¹ Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

⁶² Böhmer, *The Manners, Lawes, and Customes of All Nations*, pp. 150–177.

If this original approach was the condition for an open comparison between the customs of the peoples of the world, it was this last element, and not the treatment of Christianity, that really attracted the attention of Böhm's large readership in Europe and the Americas. As a devout Catholic and harsh detractor of idolaters, Guaman Poma may have felt ill at ease seeing the space for Christians reduced as it was in *Omnium gentium mores*, but he would probably have shared the treatise's conclusion, at least in its original version. Cultural diversity was praised as the specific product of each 'country', with no further reference to Satan or religious condemnations of corrupt customs: 'it is no marvell that all men are not of one condition, nor of one nature, nor yet indued with like manners', explained Böhm with a parallel confirming the originality of his viewpoint, 'seeing that one country produceth white people, an other swarthy, an other tawny, and some cleane black, or like unto flowers which grow in Assyria'. The final clause summarized the overall message of the work: 'even so hath God appointed, that people should be of a variable minds and dispositions, as other things are, and that every one should rest contented with that course of life, that God hath appointed for him.'⁶³

The Effect of History

An unparalleled selection of information on customs, institutions, and rites taken from 'historiographers', Böhm's treatise was not, at any rate, a 'Yndiario'. There was no explicit reference to the New World, and, above all, *Omnium gentium mores* did not look like a 'chronicle', to cite Guaman Poma again. It could, however, still be classified among 'histories'—as the translator of the first complete edition in English (1611), Edward Aston, did in his introductory letter, thus reminding his readers how mobile and uncertain the confines of Renaissance historiography were. At the same time, though, Aston sensed the need to underline the existing distance between the customs of the present and those described in a treatise published almost ninety years before on the basis of 'auncient and famous writers', as 'it cannot bee denied, but that there hath beene such alteration of states since their daies, as there is almost no one country in the world that doth wholly retaine the selfe same customes & ceremonies by them described.'⁶⁴ This passage may be read as an indirect reference to a passionate controversy over the complex relation that *Omnium gentium mores* had with the passage of time. Such controversy dated back to the mid-sixteenth century, setting two Erasmian humanists against each other.

After the 1535 reprint, the success of Böhm's book often reflected his readers' increasing interest in regions outside Europe. The sophisticated Portuguese

⁶³ Böhm, *The Manners, Lawes, and Customes of All Nations*, p. 471.

⁶⁴ Böhm, *The Manners, Lawes, and Customes of All Nations*, fols. 3^r-v.

intellectual and diplomat Damião de Góis was a case in point. Having lived in Antwerp, Padua, and Louvain, in 1540 he published *Fides, religio moresque Æthiopum*, an original work whose title was clearly inspired by *Omnium gentium mores*.⁶⁵ During the previous decade Góis had become strongly interested in Ethiopia, with which the Portuguese crown had formed direct contacts in an attempt to consolidate its empire in the Indian Ocean. He had been particularly struck by the harsh condemnation of Ethiopian Christianity by court theologians in Portugal, who had dismissed its dogmas and liturgies as heretical. In *Fides* Góis openly defended Ethiopian orthodoxy and, in line with Erasmus' teaching, asserted that only the substance of their faith should be taken into account. His work also included a Latin translation of a memorandum seemingly written by the Ethiopian archpriest Šägga Zä'ab, who had long been imprisoned at the Portuguese court. Unsurprisingly, *Fides* immediately became a target of the Portuguese censors, who banned its reading in the kingdom, though its various editions circulated freely in Central and Northern Europe.⁶⁶

One of Góis's readers was certainly the German mathematician and Hebraist Sebastian Münster (1488–1552), a Lutheran professor at Basle University. In 1540 he had published *Geographia universalis, vetus et nova*, one of the many Renaissance rewritings of Ptolemy.⁶⁷ There was a hostile description of Iberia in the appendix, which he had actually taken from a 1535 Lyon edition of Ptolemy edited by the Aragonese antitrinitarian doctor Miguel Servet.⁶⁸ Góis had been one of the first to react to the attack. In his short treatise *Hispania* (1542), he had objected that if Münster wanted 'to write of the manners of peoples', he should do it only of those 'that he had seen with his own eyes'.⁶⁹ It was then that the dispute between these two Erasmian humanists became involved with the reception of *Omnium gentium mores* and *Fides*.

Münster gave particular attention to the question in his celebrated *Cosmographia*, which appeared in German in 1544 and in the definitive Latin

⁶⁵ Damião de Góis, *Fides, religio, moresque Æthiopum, sub imperio Pretiosi Ioannis (quem vulgo Presbyterum Ioannem vocant) degentium* (Leuven: Rutger Resch, 1540).

⁶⁶ Jeremy Lawrance, 'The Middle Indies: Damião de Góis on Prester John and the Ethiopians', *Renaissance Studies* 6, no. 3–4 (1992): pp. 306–324. For a discussion of *Fides* in the wider context of the Portuguese reactions to the sixteenth-century contacts with Ethiopia see Giuseppe Marcocci, 'Prism of Empire: The Shifting Image of Ethiopia in Renaissance Portugal (1500–1570)', in *Portuguese Humanism and the Republic of Letters*, edited by Maria Berbara and Karl A.E. Enenkel (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 447–465.

⁶⁷ *Geographia universalis, vetus et nova, complectens Claudii Ptolemæi Alexandrini enarrationis libros VIII* (Basel: Heinrich Petri, 1540).

⁶⁸ Claudius Ptolemy, *Geographicae enarrationis libri octo* (Lyon: Melchior and Gaspar Trechsel, 1535), p. unnumbered, to compare to *Geographia universalis, vetus et nova*, pp. 160–162.

⁶⁹ Damião de Góis, *Hispania* (Leuven: Rutger Resch, 1542), fol. Gijr. On this confrontation see Matthew McLean, *The Cosmographia of Sebastian Münster: Describing the World in Reformation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 178–180. On Góis' work also see Elisabeth Feist Hirsch, *Damião de Góis: The Life and Thought of a Portuguese Humanist, 1502–1574* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), pp. 130–139.

edition in 1550.⁷⁰ This monumental illustrated description of the world owed to Böhm's treatise the internal structure of the chapters, but also 'the pleasure of knowing the lands, their peoples, and their manners', which had led the author to include 'in this book' everything the reader would have seen if only he could travel. In the preface to the Emperor Charles V, Böhm was explicitly included among those who 'wrote of many things they did not see with their own eyes, but learnt from trustworthy men'. There was nothing wrong with this, Münster continued, recognizing that he too was writing of things he had not seen for himself. This point was made immediately after a caustic reply to Góis and to his polemical invitation to Münster to experience directly what he wrote about, especially as one of the things that made second-hand accounts unreliable was the fact that 'the cities, fortresses, manners, and habits of men change every day and now neither Germany nor Gaul are as Caesar describes them.' He was well aware of this, Münster replied after quoting Góis's exact words, but could it really be expected that any individual had visited the whole world before writing about it? And besides, he went on, had not Góis written about the 'manners of the Indians who live under Prester John, in a region where he had never been and to which he never will go'? Münster did not in any case follow Böhm's example to the full. Understanding that customs changed over time (like 'the lands and perhaps also the nature of the terrain') made him more cautious in how he dealt with ancient authors. There follows a general warning: although describing the variety of customs in space and time was very important, nevertheless deception was always possible, especially when dealing with ancient times. Inevitably, one had to base oneself 'on conjecture' and never claim something as certain 'unless the truth is manifest in all its evidence'.⁷¹ This conclusion helped make the *Cosmographia* a watershed in the reception of *Omnium gentium mores*, as it made evident that the work needed to be updated in the light of historical change and new geographical knowledge.

The debate between Góis and Münster triggered a process that was to bridge the gap still separating Böhm's treatise from the literature on Iberian exploration. There was indeed a gradual change in its reception. One early track leads us to Voltaggio, a small village on the Ligurian Apennines where Joseph ha-Kohen (1496–1578) had taken refuge after Jewish doctors were banished from the city of Genoa (1550). A descendant of the Sephardic Jews who had fled Spain after the expulsion decree of 1492, he was a major exponent of the Jewish Renaissance in Italy, famous for his work as a historian. In 1554 he published *Sefer divrey ha-*

⁷⁰ Sebastian Münster, *Cosmographiae universalis libri VI* (Basel: Heinrich Petri, 1550).

⁷¹ Münster, *Cosmographiae universalis*, fols. unnumbered. Góis' words are quoted from his *Hispania*, fols. Gijr–v. Böhm's importance for Münster is recalled both in Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts*, pp. 101–102, and Mc Lean, *The Cosmographia of Sebastian Münster*, pp. 250–252. Neither of the two, however, mentions Münster's reply to Góis, which is briefly commented on by Hirsch, *Damião de Góis*, pp. 132–133.

yamim le-malkhey Şarefat u-vet Oṭoman (Chronicles of the Kings of France and the Ottoman Dynasty), a universal history centred on the conflict between Christians and Muslims in Europe and Asia.⁷² Then, in 1558 he completed a first draft of *‘Emeq ha-Bakha* (The Vale of Tears), an annalistic chronicle of the suffering of the Jews over the centuries until they were banished from Iberia.⁷³

Böhm’s position on Christianity may have encouraged ha-Kohen’s interest in his treatise. But behind the Hebrew adaptation of *Omniium gentium mores*, titled *Sefer mašiv gevulot ‘ammim* (Book about the One Who Sets the Boundaries of Peoples), was above all an interest in the history and geography of new worlds, perhaps not unrelated to some messianic elements.⁷⁴ Ha-Kohen’s work was concluded in 1555. In the preface he declared his intention to use that treatise to ‘make known to the descendants of our people . . . things that until today they have not heard, so that they may know something of the works completed by God when they find themselves among the nations’. Two years later ha-Kohen appended a Hebrew version of the two parts of the *Historia general de las Indias* (1552) by Francisco López de Gómara to his translation, or rather, rewriting of Böhm’s work with additions (including a chapter on the Mediterranean islands). Somehow ha-Kohen had managed to gain access to an edition of the *Historia general* from Spain, despite the fact that a ban on its circulation was in force. Signs of this future endeavour could already be detected in the long poem added at the end of his Hebrew adaptation of Böhm, with information on the discovery of America and later conquests of lands that Columbus did not see, ‘like all the countries of Peru, where gold is found’. An open denunciation of Spanish greed was accompanied by a strikingly polemical description of the subjugation of the Indians (‘they waged war against those peoples and imposed tribute on them’) and, still more, of the work of the missionaries, who converted ‘idolaters’ from ‘darkness to the clouds and fog’ of Christianity.⁷⁵

⁷² Martin Jacobs, ‘Joseph ha-Kohen, Paolo Giovio, and Sixteenth-Century Historiography’, in *Cultural Intermediaries: Jewish Intellectuals in Early Modern Italy*, edited by David B. Ruderman and Giuseppe Veltri (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 67–85. See also Martin Jacobs, ‘Sephardic Migration and Cultural Transfer: The Ottoman and Spanish Expansion through a Cinquecento Jewish Lens’, *Journal of Early Modern History* 21, no. 6 (2017): pp. 522–526.

⁷³ On its place in the context of the sixteenth-century Jewish historiography, see Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), pp. 57–75.

⁷⁴ Noah J. Efron, ‘Knowledge of Newly Discovered Lands among Jewish Communities of Europe (from 1492 to the Thirty Years’ War)’, in *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450–1800*, edited by Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), pp. 47–72.

⁷⁵ In each extant manuscript, the section containing the Hebrew adaptation of Böhm is followed by that with Gómara. Excerpts from the copy now at Columbia University were published by Rafael Weinberg, ‘Yosef ben Yehoshua ha-Kohen we-sifro mašiv gevulot ‘ammim’, *Sinai* 72, no. 7 (1973): pp. 333–364. An edition of the version of Gómara, based on the manuscript kept at the Alliance Israélite Universelle, in Paris, is now available. See Francisco López de Gómara, *Sefer ha-Indi’ah ha-Ḥ adashah: Ye-Sefer Fernando Korteš, 1553: Nusah ‘Ivri shel Toldot Peru u-Mekšiko bi-yede Yosef ha-Kohen, 1568*, edited by Moshe Lazar (Lancaster, CA: Labirintos, 2002). For a useful study, see Jacobs, ‘Sephardic Migration and Cultural Transfer’, pp. 526–540.

Cultural Hierarchy

More than sixty years before the completion of the *Nueva corónica*, Böhm's work could already attract the attention of critics of the Spanish Empire, and all this despite the radical difference of perspective between the Sephardic Jew ha-Kohen and the Quechua Indian Guaman Poma. From Voltaggio to Cadiz, this risk must have been sensed by Francisco de Támara, a master of rhetoric and grammar with good contacts in Northern Europe. When he began to transpose *Omnium gentium mores* in Castilian in 1554, he had already published translations of Erasmus (1549), Polydore Vergil (1550), and Johann Carion (1553), all of them writers whom the Spanish Inquisition for various reasons regarded with suspicion.⁷⁶ Perhaps to prove his orthodoxy, Támara opted to overturn the message in Böhm's treatise, aligning the content with the language and obsessions of Counter-Reformation Spain. This decision confirms how much *Omnium gentium more* could be read as a highly problematic work from a moral and religious point of view. Aiming to reassert the unquestioned superiority of European culture and Christianity, *El libro de las costumbres de todas las gentes del mundo* came out in 1556 in Antwerp, printed by Martinus Nutius, a firm that had previously published translations by Támara.⁷⁷ It was such an extreme revision that even Böhm's name was omitted.⁷⁸

The change of tone was immediately clear in the new introduction. The text was severely, though not explicitly, polemical compared to the original prologue that it replaced. From the start, Támara railed against the 'diversity of peoples so different, not only in colour and appearance, in clothes, and ornaments, but also in manners and habits, in rituals, in ceremonies, in laws, in statutes, in legal systems, in sects, and in their forms of administration and government'. He went further, lamenting the small number of those who had 'civility and a reasonable way of life', to underline 'how full the world is of infidel barbarians, savage idolaters, and perverts.' Támara's target was the very comparison of customs that had made Böhm's work popular. While the latter had presented cultural variety with detachment and respect, Támara proudly proclaimed the primacy of Christianity as the only possible basis for an acceptable moral order. He went on to celebrate imperial Spain as embodying the highest values that a people might

⁷⁶ Victoria Pineda, 'El arte de traducir en el Renacimiento (la obra de Francisco de Támara)', *Criticón* 73 (1998): pp. 23–35.

⁷⁷ *El libro de las costumbres de todas las gentes del mundo y de las Indias* (Antwerp: Martinus Nutius, 1556).

⁷⁸ For a detailed analysis of Támara's rewriting of *Omnium gentium mores*, see Giuseppe Marcocci, 'L'ordine cristiano e il mondo: Francisco de Támara traduttore di Hans Böhm', in *Per Adriano Prosperi*, vol. 2, *L'Europa divisa e i nuovi mondi*, edited by Massimo Donattini, Giuseppe Marcocci, and Stefania Pastore (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2011), pp. 79–92. See also Carina L. Johnson, *Cultural Hierarchy in Sixteenth-Century Europe: The Ottomans and Mexicans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 150.

achieve. In consequence, he thanked providence for having wanted ‘us to be in his flock and herd, making us Christians and not infidels; civilized and not barbarous; Spanish and not Moors, or Turks, filthy idolaters’.⁷⁹

Támara not only dissociated himself from the approach of Böhm’s treatise, but overturned its internal structure. Accordingly, while maintaining the first two chapters of book 1 with their opinions on the origin of humanity, he gave no credit to ‘ethnicks’—who instead became ‘infidels’ in the Castilian version. On the basis of a reasoning that left no room for doubt, the Spaniards became the first people to be described. Támara explained that to start with the Ethiopians—as Böhm had—would have meant following ‘those ancient philosophers who had no true knowledge of God’. ‘So that it may not seem that we follow their false opinions’, he wrote explicitly, and considering that ‘Europe is now in first place in all the world for its way of living, order, and reason, and within it our Spain is the most excellent part . . . it seemed to us right to follow this order and treat it first.’⁸⁰ In the chapter on Spain he insisted that ‘all the good customs apportioned in all the world and every good administration and civility that is said to exist in the different parts of the world’, were brought together in that land, so much so ‘that it is the most happy and blessed region in the world and in which divine worship flourishes and shines particularly, the honour of God is respected, and its holy faith is more living and unstained’.⁸¹

It is possible that Támara had read Münster. In any case, the transformation of Böhm’s treatise from open-minded, Renaissance encyclopaedia of customs to stern defence of Catholic Spain rested on the introduction of a preponderant interest in historical change that was absent from the original. Támara did not simply translate, correct, and rewrite *Omnium gentium mores*, but also made it topical in some ways, thanks to the constant comparison between past and present, which was now made explicit. Thus, he opened the way for further adaptations in other languages, like Francesco Sansovino’s in his *Selva di varia lettione* (1560) and François de Belleforest’s in his *Histoire universelle du monde* (1570).⁸²

⁷⁹ *El libro de las costumbres*, fols. 2v–5v.

⁸⁰ *El libro de las costumbres*, fols. 8v and 10r–v.

⁸¹ *El libro de las costumbres*, fol. 19r. Támara’s flattering attitude in this chapter has already been noticed by Marcel Bataillon, *Érasme et l’Espagne*, edited by Charles Amiel, 3 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1991), vol. 1, p. 683.

⁸² For Sansovino see Paolo Cherchi, *Polimattia di riuso: Mezzo secolo di plagio, 1539–1589* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1998), pp. 222–223. Belleforest and the accusations of plagiarism made against him are discussed in Jean Céard, *La nature et les prodiges: L’insolite au XVI^e siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1996), pp. 279–282. A partial English translation of Támara’s adaptation, only including a section about Asia, was published on the initiative of John Frampton, a merchant from Bristol who had been imprisoned by the Spanish Inquisition. See John Frampton, ed., *A Discoverie of the Countries of Tartaria, Scithia, & Cataya, by the North-East: With the Maners, Fashions, and Orders Which Are Used in Those Vountries* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1580). The work was dedicated to Rowland Hawyard and George Barne, governors of the Company of Merchant Venturers for the Discovery of New Trades, who helped finance a voyage to discover a northeast passage that year. Only one copy of the book survives, in

The other great novelty of the *Libro de las costumbres* was also connected with its closer relation with history: the addition of a section on the Indies. The *Suma y breve relacion de todas las Indias* was included at the end of the third and last book, which was now on Africa—the second continued to deal with Asia, but had a new internal order that, suggestively, put the chapter on Christians first rather than last.⁸³ ‘Having spoken in this work so far on the manner of all peoples we know of and on whom authors have written from ancient times until today, it would have seemed unreasonable to me’, explained Támara, ‘if I had not also written something on the Indies and the lands recently found and discovered by our Spaniards, as there is no lack of authors or witnesses who have seen them and been there to speak of them.’ One notes in these words the culture of a humanist used to reading books on discoveries and conquests, but also the privileged view of Iberian exploration that one could have from a port city in Andalusia overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, such as Cadiz: ‘I will speak of and deal with all the Indies and lands that have been found, discovered, and conquered by the people of Spain in all the seas of the South, the North, and the Levant, starting with the Canary Islands and Santo Domingo, which was the point of entry from which this conquest began’, Támara announced, continuing ‘with the provinces and regions of Yucatan and New Spain, with the conquest of Mexico, the Castilla de Oro, the golden land of Peru, and the Magellan Strait, as far as the Molucca Islands, and along all the navigation routes of the Portuguese to the end of all that is known and that is discovered on all the rotundity of the earth.’⁸⁴

The extension in space brought with it no change in Támara’s moral judgment. His account was still essentially that of divine providence entrusting the Spanish Empire with the conquest of America and its native inhabitants. The latter were branded as ‘barbarians’, though he recognized they had gradually evolved since the arrival of the Spaniards. After all, Támara’s sources included the royal chroniclers, notably Oviedo—but perhaps not Cieza de León and Gómara, though they had been reprinted by Nutius in Antwerp, between 1553 and 1554. Written a few years after the famous Valladolid debate (1550–1) between Las Casas and the humanist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, the *Libro de las costumbres* essentially supported the exploitation of indigenous labour in the New World. The *Suma y breve relacion de todas las Indias* also contained a long section on the Portuguese in Asia, in which some admiration for regions far from Europe, particularly China

Lambeth Palace Library. See Donald Beecher, ‘The Legacy of John Frampton: Elizabethan Trader and Translator’, *Renaissance Studies* 20, no. 3 (2006): pp. 320–339.

⁸³ The full title of the section on the Indies is *Suma y breve relacion de todas las Indias y tierras nuevamente descubiertas por gente de España, assi por la parte de Poniente como de Levante, y de las costumbres y maneras de vivir de los Indios y moradores dellas*.

⁸⁴ *El libro de las costumbres*, fol. 249v.

and Japan, was shown. Yet the underlying theme was always the condemnation of the non-Christian world, which was ultimately dismissed as a 'Babylon'.⁸⁵

The significance of Támara's operation is further confirmed when it is contrasted with another Castilian version of *Omnium gentium mores*. Intriguingly titled *Libro llamado Espejo de Republicas* and explicitly attributed to Böhme, this version faithfully rendered the original work in Latin.⁸⁶ It survives in a single manuscript. Judging from its appearance, this copy looks as if it was ready to go to the printers—something that may have been prevented by the censors. This translation could date roughly to the same years as Támara's because it was dedicated to Juan de Lanuza y Espés when he was ombudsman of Aragon (*Justicia de Aragón*), a position he held from 1554, and was justified with the argument that 'this book has not been translated into our language until today', though one cannot rule out that the lack of reference to the problematic *Libro de las costumbres* was deliberate.⁸⁷ The 'interpreter' was a certain *maestro* Bernardino of whom almost nothing is known. If he can be identified with the author of the translation from Latin of the early medieval ascetic treatise, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, by John Climacus, which was published in Alcalá de Henares in 1553, he may have been Aragonese or Valencian.⁸⁸ More significantly, this identification would point to *maestro* Bernardino's affinities with lively and innovative spiritual currents, partly inspired by the reading of Erasmus' work.⁸⁹ This profile would be compatible with his involvement in the Spanish version of a work on the desirability of frequent communion, which was listed in the index of the Inquisition in 1559.⁹⁰ What is sure is that our *maestro* Bernardino approached Böhme's treatise in a rather different way from Támara.

The dedicatory epistle presented Lanuza with opinions and attitudes that were becoming increasingly rare in mid-sixteenth-century Spain. 'Civility', argued *maestro* Bernardino, was the basis for the 'congregation of people' and could be found everywhere: 'however barbarian there is no nation without any kind of civility or something similar.'⁹¹ Representing 'the diversity and multitude of mortals' and learning about the customs that existed around the world allowed

⁸⁵ *El libro de las costumbres*, c. 349v.

⁸⁶ Madrid, Real Biblioteca, II/2779. This manuscript, which scholars have not paid attention to so far, was part of the Castilian manuscripts of Library of the Count of Gondomar and was listed among the 'Histories of the Romans and the other kingdoms and things occurred in the world'.

⁸⁷ Madrid, Real Biblioteca, II/2779, fol. 6r.

⁸⁸ Armando Pego Puigbó, *El Renacimiento espiritual: Introducción a los tratados de oración españoles, 1520–1566* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2004), pp. 167–189.

⁸⁹ Bataillon, *Érasme et l'Espagne*, vol. 1, pp. 589–650.

⁹⁰ This writing was titled *Aviso breue para resebir la comunión amenudo, traducido de Toscano por el maestro Bernardino*. See J.M. De Bujanda, ed., *Index de l'Inquisition espagnole, 1551, 1554, 1559* (Sherbrooke: Centre d'Études de la Renaissance, 1984), p. 453, which considers the rather unlikely hypothesis that '*maestro* Bernardino' here would be the Italian Capuchin friar and heretic Bernardino Ochino.

⁹¹ Madrid, Real Biblioteca, II/2779, fols. 3v–4r.

readers to ‘consider the greatness, wisdom, and goodness of God who has created so many things, the admirable order with which he governs and rules this, and the continuous goodness with which he supports it’. However, *maestro* Bernardino was aware that his characterization of the variety of the world as a ‘theatre’ could be controversial. To those who would object that ‘the infidels infect with the trail of the stink they leave rather than with the scent they spread and that for this reason it would be better to bury with oblivion their customs and ways of living than use their examples to reform through them our lives’, *maestro* Bernardino replied: ‘we see laws and traditions in their republics that do not differ from the Christian ones and because their inventors were blind, there is no doubt that the one who through such dirty mouths as Balaam’s and Caiaphas’s provided us with all our remedy prescribed them in their hearths.’ Hence, the conclusion that there was something ‘valuable’ that could be taken from the ‘pagans’.⁹²

From Bavaria in the early days of the Reformation, to its initial success in the great humanist capitals of Renaissance Europe (Lyon, Freiburg, Antwerp, Louvain, Basle), via Paris, Venice, and London, where the first French, Italian, and English translations appeared, down to Joseph ha-Kohen’s obscure Hebrew rewriting in Voltaggio, *Omnium gentium mores* had proved extremely malleable over time, to the point of integrating the tradition of histories that collected information and materials from the new worlds with which the Europeans had recently come into contact. Contrary to *maestro* Bernardino, Támara felt the need to oppose what he perceived as an attack on the rigid religious and moral hierarchy on which the European sense of superiority rested. His fierce Catholic intransigence would probably have raised no problems for Guaman Poma. Given the restrictions on the circulation of printed works in the New World, the hypothesis that the most common version of Böhm’s treatise circulating in late sixteenth-century Peru was the *Libro de las costumbres* seems plausible.⁹³ Yet, the edition of *Omnium gentium mores* cited in the *Nueva corónica* was not Támara’s rewrite.⁹⁴

The ‘Yndiario’ by ‘Bantiotonio’ cannot be identified with the *Libro de las costumbres*, either in form or content. One need only note that, in his chapter on ‘the first wise historians of the earlier chronicles’, Guaman Poma explicitly mentioned Böhm, whose name was omitted in the Spanish edition by Támara.

⁹² Madrid, Real Biblioteca, II/2779, fols. 4v–5r.

⁹³ The lists of the books recorded in the inventories of the property of the deceased (*Autos de Bienes de Difuntos*) in Spanish America for the period 1558–1697 contain references to the *Libro de las costumbres*, according to Carlos Alberto González Sánchez, *New World Literacy: Writing and Culture Across the Atlantic, 1500–1700*, translated by Tristan Platt, revised by Bethany Aram (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2011), p. 185.

⁹⁴ Scholars have agreed on this identification since Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Nueva crónica y buen gobierno*, vol. 3, p. 1358: ‘It refers to *Libro de las costumbres de todas las gentes del mundo y de las Indias*, written by Johann Boemus; the Spanish version was published in 1556 in Antwerp.’

This was not a minor point, but an even greater challenge would be to reconcile the position of the *Nueva corónica*, which included supporting the project of an indigenous monarchy, with the exaltation of the Iberian imperial conquests and the harsh treatment of the Indians in the *Suma y breve relacion de todas las Indias*.

The Enigma of the ‘Yndiario’

Any attempt to identify the version of *Omnium gentium mores* that corresponded to the ‘Yndiario’ by ‘Bantiotonio’ should take into account the many metamorphoses Böhm’s treatise went through, but also its possible place in the late sixteenth-century Peruvian debates on the Indians and their prehispanic past. It is also important to acknowledge that the colonial Andes were a multilingual context in which there was space for written literacies other than Spanish. Despite the existence of the *Libro de las costumbres*, there is no reason to be surprised that Böhm’s work could circulate in other languages in Spanish America. As Guaman Poma openly evoked the comparison with the customs of ‘the native Indians of the New World’ in the chapter on the ‘earlier chronicles’, the Latin editions should be excluded for they were limited to Africa, Asia, and Europe. The same goes for the versions published in the meantime in French and English. Therefore, the only possible solution is that the *Nueva corónica* drew on the Italian edition of *Omnium gentium mores*, published in Venice in 1558 by the priest and printer Girolamo Giglio. Its main novelty consisted of the addition of a fourth book on the New World, written by Giglio himself, to Lucio Fauno’s translation of the original work.⁹⁵

Unlike the *Suma y breve relacion de todas las Indias*, Giglio’s fourth book did not include the East Indies, but it showed some knowledge of Támara’s supplement. Its main source, however, was the Italian translation of López de Gómara’s chronicle by the Basque writer Agustín de Cravaliz, published in Rome in 1555–6.⁹⁶ This choice may be understood as an attempt to make Giglio’s addition competitive on the Venetian book market, still influenced by the recent

⁹⁵ Hans Böhm, *Gli costumi, le leggi, et l’usanze di tutte le genti . . . aggiuntovi di nuovo gli costumi et l’usanze dell’Indie occidentali, overo Mondo Nuovo, da P. Gironimo Giglio* (Venice: Girolamo Giglio, 1558). Little is known about Giglio’s biography. Published posthumously, his *Nuova seconda selva di varia lettione che segue Pietro Messia* (Venice: Camillo and Francesco Franceschini, 1565) reworked part of the fourth book that he had added to Böhm’s translation, already plagiarised in Sansovino’s *Selva* (1560). See Cherchi, *Polimattia di riuso*, pp. 224–231; Lynn Lara Westwater, “La nuova seconda selva” of Girolamo Giglio: A Case of “Riscrittura” in Mid-Sixteenth Century Venice”, in *Ricerche sulle selve rinascimentali*, edited by Paolo Cherchi (Ravenna: Angelo Longo, 1999), pp. 43–81.

⁹⁶ Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia di Mexico, et quando si discoperse la Nuova Hispagna, conquistata per l’illustrissimo et valoroso principe don Ferdinando Cortes marchese del Valle . . .* (Rome: Valerio and Luigi Dorico, 1555), and Francisco López de Gómara, *La historia generale delle Indie occidentali, con tutti li discoprimenti & cose notabili, che in esse sono successe, da che si acquistorno fino a hora . . .* (Rome: Valerio and Luigi Dorico, 1556).

appearance of the third volume of *Navigazioni et viaggi* (1556) by Giovanni Battista Ramusio, which dealt with the Americas, but did not include Gómara.⁹⁷

Giglio's fourth book was much more suitable than the *Suma* to being read from a perspective favourable to the Indians, as it did not reproduce Támara's moral and religious condemnation of the indigenous customs and social organization. In any case, the person who read the Italian edition of *Omnium gentium mores* with the addition of Giglio in Peru was not Guaman Poma, but the author of a passage that he actually quoted almost word for word in his chapter on the 'earlier chronicles'. The way in which he did so illuminates a decisive aspect of his relationship to his sources: what counted was not so much a direct reading of them, but their significance in the limited literature he actually had access to. In this case we are put on the right road by Guaman Poma himself, who indicated Fray Luis Jerónimo de Oré as one of 'the first wise historians of the earlier chronicles'. A few years younger than Guaman Poma, Oré was creole—that is, a descendant of Spaniards but born in Peru. The son of one of the first colonists of Huamanga, he grew up in contact with the natives in the service of his family, spoke Quechua and Aymara, and became one of the most important Franciscan missionaries in the late sixteenth-century Andes, preaching to the Collagua Indians in the territory between Cuzco and Arequipa. One of the things Oré shared with Guaman Poma was an admiration for Luis de Granada, whose writings inspired him to compose a popular trilingual catechism, the *Symbolo catholico indiano* (1598).⁹⁸ It was the work of a man who felt a strong tie with his native land and had a deep interest in the past of the indigenous people who lived there.

Guaman Poma read the *Symbolo* carefully. He was inevitably attracted by the detailed chapter 'On the origins and the particular conditions of the Indians of Peru'. The opening paragraph plagiarized the first lines of the original prologue of *Omnium gentium mores*, removed from Támara's rewriting but not from Giglio's edition. They described the subject of the treatise ('the manners, rites, laws, the sites of places, where live all the nations of the world') and listed the sources, both classical (Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Berosus, Strabo, Solinus, Pompeius Trogus, Ptolemy, Pliny the Elder, Tacitus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Pomponius Mela, Julius Caesar, and Josephus) and modern (Vincent de Beauvais, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Marco Antonio Sabellico, Johannes Naucler, Ambrogio Calepio, and Niccolò Perotti).⁹⁹ Oré added three Spanish chroniclers of

⁹⁷ Massimo Donattini, *Spazio e modernità: Libri, carte e isolari nell'età delle scoperte* (Bologna: Clueb, 2000), pp. 161–162.

⁹⁸ For his biography see Noble David Cook, 'Viviendo en las márgenes del imperio: Luis Jerónimo de Oré y la exploración del Otro', *Historica* 32, no. 1 (2008), pp. 11–38. On his work see the studies by Luis Enrique Tord and Noble David Cook in Luis Jerónimo de Oré, *Symbolo catholico indiano*, facsimile edition, edited by Antonine Tibesar (Lima: Australis, 1992); Catalina Andrango-Walker, *El Símbolo católico indiano (1598) de Luis Jerónimo de Oré: Saberes coloniales y los problemas de la evangelización en la región andina* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2018).

⁹⁹ Oré, *Symbolo catholico indiano*, p. 151, to compare with Böhm, *Gli costumi, le leggi, et l'usanze*, fol. 1r.

his time to this list: Gonzalo de Illescas, Jerónimo Román, and Juan de Pineda. Finally, in a bluff designed to convince the reader that the earlier passage was really his, he specified that, at least among the older writers, 'Ioan Boemo, Aubano Teutonico, wrote a very learned compendium called *Indiario*.'¹⁰⁰

The passage that followed was later taken word for word from Guaman Poma, with all the distortions noted above. In the original version Oré mentioned without spelling mistakes the names of the authors Böhm had included in his '*Indiario*', which may have been the title by which Giglio's edition was known in Peru thanks to its fourth book on the New World. Oré then wrote further that the Spanish chroniclers Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, Agustín de Zárate, and Diego Fernández de Palencia were 'rumoured not to have verified some things they write, for which there are still eyewitnesses'.¹⁰¹ Finally, he cited the Jesuit Acosta and his books *De natura Novi Orbis* and *De procuranda Indorum salute*. Referring to these two works might seem natural, as both of them, despite appearing in Spain in 1588, had been written in Lima and were replete with references to the Indians of Peru. However, the presence of Acosta's name next to Böhm's suggests Oré had a special interest in comparing customs. Yet, if both Böhm and Acosta used this method, contributing decisively to its spread, in the *Symbolo* they were set one against the other.

Citing *De procuranda Indorum salute* entailed an implicit reference to the famous tripartition of the non-Christian populations of the world, which Acosta had presented in the prologue to this work. He had established a direct correspondence between cultural level and social organization on the one hand and receptiveness to the Gospel on the other, thus subdividing what he called 'barbarians' in three classes.¹⁰² He had included the Indians of Peru, that is, the Incas, in the second class with the Mexicas, and not in the first with the Chinese, Japanese, and most of the Asians. The reason was that, though they lived in cities and used *quipos*, they were said to have had no advanced political system nor the use of writing, and thus failed to reach the 'true reason and the civilized way-of-life of the rest of mankind'.¹⁰³ Oré, however, disagreed on this hierarchy. In doing so, he invoked the 'opinion of learned men' and recalled that he had often made the 'comparison' himself. All this allowed him to reply to Acosta with a 'verdict as the one that now I write in favour of the Indians which will appear so new to those who are not well versed in histories', going on to say that 'after the noble nations of Europe, that is the Spaniards, the French, the Italians, the Flemish, and the Germans, and others that with baptism received the civilized order of living', and that, 'after

¹⁰⁰ Oré, *Symbolo catholico indiano*, p. 151.

¹⁰¹ Oré, *Symbolo catholico indiano*, p. 152.

¹⁰² Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 146–197.

¹⁰³ José de Acosta, *De Procuranda Indorum Salute*, translated by G. Stewart McIntosh, 2 vols. (Tayport: Mac Research, 1996), vol. 1, p. 6. On this work, see Gregory J. Shepherd, *Jose de Acosta's De Procuranda Indorum Salute: A Call for Evangelical Reforms in Colonial Peru* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014).

the Greeks and some African nations, I may say that the nation of Peruvian Indians, of those of Chile, Tucuman, Paraguay, the new kingdom of Granada, and Mexico, is one of the most noble, honoured, and pure in all the world.¹⁰⁴

Oré's criticism of Acosta's tripartition was articulated through Böhm, as is evidenced by a long list of peoples of the world that immediately after followed and reproduced the exact order of the chapters of the three books of the original version of *Omnium gentium mores*—an order which had been overturned by Támara but respected by Giglio: 'anyone reading of their manners and life', commented Oré on the basis of this list, 'will see there are many peoples far superior to the Indians for intellect, civility, purity of manners, observance of the laws, colour and stature of bodies, and other things', but also 'as many nations that are equal and good as that of the Indians, and others that it exceeds and excels much more than the Spaniards do over the Indians'. These latter 'nations', he glossed eloquently, 'would have boasted having as princes and kings the Inca legislators of this kingdom, who for them and their disorder, roughness, and lack of civility would have been like Solon for the Athenians'. Oré then moved on to consider the difficulty of finding reliable information on the most remote times through indigenous memory and *quipos*. In particular, he summarized four 'fables' known 'in various provinces' that were said to have a seed of truth, although it had been lost with the passage of time.¹⁰⁵

Oré's exclusive admiration for the Incas must have perplexed Guaman Poma, but this did not prevent him from reusing the comparison of customs suggested by Böhm so as to redeem the most distant Andean past as well. However much it was derived from the *Symbolo*, the reference to the 'Yndiario' of 'Bantiotonio' enabled Guaman Poma to justify two claims that were at the heart of the *Nueva corónica*: on the one hand, he could not accept that evangelization legitimized the Spanish conquest of Peru, an idea underlying Acosta's tripartition; on the other hand, he accepted the oral accounts of the Indians as fully reliable—a position that was the basis for presenting a vision of the Andean past going back to the first inhabitants of the New World. Appealing to Böhm allowed Guaman Poma to claim that the natives of Peru had always expressed a culture worthy to stand alongside that of the other peoples of the globe. In his eyes, this was the best guarantee that what he was writing on the pre-Inca ages was true history.¹⁰⁶

Guaman Poma read about Böhm in the *Symbolo* and adapted what he understood to his own aims. Thus, he cited Oré's chapter 'On the origins and the particular conditions of the Indians of Peru' word for word up to including its

¹⁰⁴ Oré, *Symbolo catholico indiano*, p. 152.

¹⁰⁵ Oré, *Symbolo catholico indiano*, pp. 152–153.

¹⁰⁶ For specific cases in which Guaman Poma made use of indigenous sources see Jean-Philippe Husson, 'A Little Known but Essential Element of the Cultural Context of the *Nueva corónica*: Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's Native Sources', in *Unlocking the Doors to the Worlds of Guaman Poma and His Nueva corónica*, edited by Rolena Adorno and Ivan Boserup (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2015), pp. 163–187.

criticism of the Spanish chroniclers. Then, instead of following with the passage on Acosta, Guaman Poma listed directly the indigenous ‘eyewitnesses’ who had enabled him to correct the ‘earlier chronicles’ (see Figure 3.2). Those ‘lords, princes, and notables who lived for more than two hundred years’ were the most authoritative sources of the *Nueva corónica*. It was Böhm’s defence of cultural variety that allowed Guaman Poma to consider his local informants equal to the works by Spanish authors. Naturally, the first eyewitness to be recalled was ‘the prince and lord Don Martín de Ayala’, who ‘saw and ate with Topa Inca Yupanqui, Huayna Capac Inca, Topa Cuci Huascar Inca’. Displaying his familiarity with the last three Inca rulers, Guaman Poma aimed to show Philip III that the historical evidence supplied by Indians who were not Inca, as was the case of his father and others, was trustworthy. This was so in the case of his own father, who ‘died in the days of the Christians, after serving His Majesty in all battles, as lord and prince, for many years. Thereafter he served God in His holy house of the hospital for thirty years. And he died very old, at the age of 150, eyewitness to history.’ The same qualification was attributed to another seven old Indians from different parts of Peru, all of them chiefs of their respective communities.¹⁰⁷

As if to underline how credible they were, the memory of the men ‘who ate with the Incas’ preceded a list of the Spanish authors and their written works, which started with Acosta. Thanks to a historical reinterpretation of Böhm’s comparative model, from the heart of the Andes Guaman Poma gave voice to all the Indians of Peru and their ability to remember pre-Inca history. Thus, after launching a severe attack on Murúa precisely ‘because he does not explain the origin of the Inca, how and in which ways it was, or from where he came’, the chapter on the ‘earlier chronicles’ closed with praise of the prehispanic past, blessed by faith in Christ: ‘we, the Indians, are Christians because of the redemption of Jesus Christ and his blessed mother Holy Mary, patron of this kingdom, the apostles of Jesus Christ, Saint Bartholomew and Saint James the Great, and the holy cross of Jesus Christ, all of which reached this kingdom well before the Spaniards.’ Guaman Poma then resumed quoting Oré word for word again, starting from the very passage in which the latter distanced himself from Acosta. Guaman Poma altered the ending, though, writing that the ‘verdict’ he derived from the ‘comparison’ between the Indians and the other peoples of the world was ‘in favour and in the service of God, His Majesty, the good of the poor Indians, their growth, and conservation, as well as the very ancient infidel Indians since the waters of the Flood and the descent from Noah of the first Indian who God put in this New World of the Indies’.¹⁰⁸

At this point, as if to recall the unique blend of pasts and cultures on which his original history of the world rested, Guaman Poma rehearsed in Castilian the events of the five generations of Indians from the age of the Vari Viracocha Runa

¹⁰⁷ Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 2232, 4°, pp. 1088–1089.

¹⁰⁸ Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 2232, 4°, pp. 1090–1091.

down to the last Inca. Then he continued in Quechua with an annotated list of the Spanish monarchs and their representatives in Peru, in which Francisco Pizarro and Diego de Almagro, like the succession of judges, presidents, and viceroys under Charles V, Philip II, and Philip III, were presented as mere ‘emissaries and ambassadors’ of the crown, a way of repeating the idea that there had been no military conquest. Guaman Poma’s visionary reinterpretation of history led on to a sorrowful confession of ‘all the labour’ involved on his part. Though it centred on the parallel between Indians and Spaniards, which a Bavarian humanist’s treatise had made respectable—no matter if it was cited in an augmented Italian edition which Guaman Poma had not even read—the *Nueva corónica* was above all the result of long research into Andean oral memories. Guaman Poma had gathered that information through difficult journeys in conditions of extreme poverty, sometimes without even ‘a single corn kernel’ to eat, or even fleeing ‘bandits’. ‘This labour’, he concluded proudly, ‘is offered up to God and His Majesty for God’s remedy and service in this world.’ In this way, the chinks of light that comparison had opened could transform a Renaissance history of the world into a demand for justice and dignity for indigenous people.¹⁰⁹ That hope, however, was destined to remain buried for centuries beneath the dust that would accumulate on Guaman Poma’s manuscript.

¹⁰⁹ Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 2232, 4°, p. 1091.

4

Popular Accounts

Printing Histories of the World in Late Renaissance Venice

The need for a shared history of peoples and cultures across the globe was increasingly felt in the age of exploration. Certain ways of narrating that had developed in early modern Europe were considered particularly suitable for further readaptation to include fragments of information and materials relating to the most disparate regions and continents. Besides more experimental attempts, there was also room for what at first sight could seem a less sophisticated variant, one in which the real challenges posed by connecting previously distinct histories simply did not matter too much.

Often the more original Renaissance histories of the world were published in small print-runs of cheap editions—if they managed to get beyond the manuscript stage, that is. The success of the parallel approach analysed in this chapter was a very different story, however. Intended for the general public, this historical literature crowded the market of consumer books in the late sixteenth century. Its popularity confirms that this historiographical trend enjoyed an interest that was not just limited to a handful of scholars. A main centre of production was Venice, where bulky tomes of these histories of the world in the vernacular were often carefully planned beforehand by printers and publishers in synergy. The latter competed with each other to build up catalogues able to meet the ever-changing tastes of readers who were exposed to an increasing flow of information that reinvigorated and expanded interest in world history outside the more restricted circle of humanists, explorers, and missionaries.

Histories for Sale

Anyone entering a bookshop in a large European city in the late sixteenth century could choose from a vast selection of histories of the world written by authors now more or less forgotten. These works were based on second-hand information, generally extracted from vernacular translations of Greek and Latin texts, old universal histories, and chronicles of cities or kingdoms, but also from recent travel accounts and reports that were fresh off the press when not actually still in

manuscript. Initially, these narratives, whose quality was variable to say the least, embraced the entire duration of human history. Readers' hunger for novelty, however, led their authors more and more to pursue contemporary history by hastily including events that had taken place in different parts of the world in the years immediately preceding publication. It is difficult to regard these histories as carefully considered or fully reliable accounts. However, the speed with which they appeared on the market made them a product that, along with newsletters (*avvisi*), fly-sheets, and conversations in streets and back shops, helped support the expansion of a public opinion when it was still in embryonic form even in the major urban centres.¹

It is no surprise that a variant of histories of the world of this kind, linked to the book market but also to the growing spread of news, saw the light of day in Venice (see Figure 4.1), one of the great European publishing centres at the time and a place for collecting gossip and information, positioned as it was at the crossroads of the Mediterranean basin, the Germanic world and the Balkans.² While Venetian merchants were involved in long-distance trade, the city was not the



Figure 4.1 Jacopo de' Barbari, *View of Venice* (1500). Woodcut from six blocks on sheets of paper. Courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art.

¹ Brendan Dooley, ed., *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know about Itself* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

² Peter Burke, 'Early Modern Venice as a Center of Information and Communication', in *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797*, edited by John Jeffries Martin and Dennis Romano (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 389–419. On the interaction with politics, see Filippo De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). For an overview of the Italian book market and the prominent place of Venice in it, see Angela Nuovo, *The Book Trade in the Italian Renaissance*, translated by Lydia G. Cochrane (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

vassal of a power with overseas imperial possessions. Rather it guided a maritime republic that no longer had sufficient resources to project its expansionist ambitions beyond the Adriatic and the Eastern Mediterranean. This facilitated a wide circulation and publication of writings, maps, and information on distant lands.³

This familiarity that its inhabitants were constantly acquiring with the new contours of the globe was pictorially represented at an early date on the walls of the Scudo Room of the Doge's Palace. Due to deterioration, eighteenth-century copies have now replaced the original drawings, following a completely different style. However, if these visual sources are irremediably lost, we at least have detailed information on their content.⁴ In 1549, the Venetian Republic's powerful Council of Ten ordered maps to be created on large canvases for the reception room of the Doge's apartments. Split into 'four big pictures taking up the whole space between the backrest [of the benches] and the ceiling, in which one sees carefully depicted all the parts of the world', as a seventeenth-century source described them, they were of particular interest for the direct connection with contemporary long-distance exchanges, as much as for their creator.⁵ I do not refer to the well-known cartographer Giacomo Gastaldi, who made the drawings for the maps, but to the secretary of the Council of Ten, who wrote the contract for the work in person, the famous humanist Giovanni Battista Ramusio. His geographical and political interests were at the root of his monumental work *Navigazioni et Viaggi*, a collection of travel writings translated into Italian and published in Venice from 1550.⁶ The coincidence between the preparation of the first volume of the *Navigazioni* and that of the drawings commissioned from Gastaldi was not fortuitous. The instructions contained in the contract show that Ramusio explicitly asked Gastaldi to give special attention to the texts selected for the first volume of the *Navigazioni*, including Ḥasan al-Wazzan al-Gharnati al-Fāṣī, also known as Leo Africanus, for the map of Africa, alongside Alvise da Ca' da Mosto for the Atlantic coastline, with Francisco Álvares for the map of Ethiopia and Duarte Barbosa for the Portuguese routes.⁷

³ Scholars have mainly focused on the New World. See Elizabeth Horodowich, *The Venetian Discovery of America: Geographic Imagination and Print Culture in the Age of Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). Useful information can also be found in Federica Ambrosini, *Paesi e mari ignoti: America e colonialismo europeo nella cultura veneziana, secoli XVI–XVII* (Venice: Deputazione di storia patria per le Venezie, 1982); Angela Caracciolo Aricò, ed., *L'impatto della scoperta dell'America nella cultura veneziana* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1990); and Angela Caracciolo Aricò, ed., *Il letterato tra miti e realtà del Nuovo Mondo: Venezia, il mondo iberico e l'Italia* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1994).

⁴ Rodolfo Gallo, 'Le mappe geografiche del Palazzo Ducale di Venezia', *Archivio Veneto* s. 5, 32–33 (1943): pp. 47–113.

⁵ The passage comes from Giovanni Stringa's additions to the 1604 edition of Francesco Sansovino's *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare*. I quote from Gallo, 'Le mappe geografiche', p. 63.

⁶ On Ramusio's collection see 'The Chinese lesson of empire' in chapter 2.

⁷ The text of the contract is published in Gallo, 'Le mappe geografiche', p. 60.

If the original plan was to translate Ramusio's scholarly work into wall maps, a change soon occurred for one very practical reason: Gastaldi was not able to meet the deadline for the work. Trying to justify himself in early 1550, he argued that, in the map of Africa, 'it is necessary to add . . . to the part that would remain empty the world discovered by Spaniards fifty years ago, that is, Hispaniola, Cuba, New Spain, the land of Peru, and the Pacific Ocean.'⁸ A committee approved the proposal, praising the inclusion of 'this world and the newfound lands (*paesi nuovamente ritrovati*), so that not only the Spaniards, but also our own people will recognize them'—a telling remark considering that reproductions of the whole world, or the Americas, were still rare among the many maps printed on paper that Venetians displayed on the walls of their homes.⁹

Gastaldi also anticipated the interest in the New World on the part of Venetian publishers, particularly Andrea Arrivabene and Giordano Ziletti, who issued an increasing number of books on the Americas by Spanish and Italian authors from 1556 on.¹⁰ The reorientation of the Scudo Room's maps towards the whole world also paralleled the preparation of two further volumes of Ramusio's *Navigazioni*. This is confirmed by a second contract signed by Gastaldi with the Council of Ten in 1553 for the depiction of the New World and Asia as a single continental mass, in accordance with a belief that was still common at the time. As stated in the new agreement, Gastaldi had to 'check all the reports that he will be given of Castilian captains who travelled across the land and wrote about it, especially Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, the French Jacques Cartier for New France, João de Barros for the geography of China, and the nobleman Marco Polo for Cathay', that is, the main authors included in the *Navigazioni*'s second and third volumes, published in 1559 and 1556, respectively.¹¹

As the Scudo Room shows, the genesis of a wall map of the world could be complex and its background made up of a variety of cultural transfers, all of which overlapped in a publishing project with global reach. Ramusio's collection had already left its mark on the Venetian book market and contributed to increasing readers' interest in distant lands, when in 1562 the printer Michele Tramezzino launched a new series of historical works with *Historie del mondo*. The first two parts of this monumental, multi-volume compendium were conceived and written by Giovanni Tarcagnola, the son of Greeks from the Morea who had emigrated to Gaeta to escape the advance of the Ottoman Empire, and the nephew of the famous Renaissance scholar and poet Michael Marullus. His composite identity as a humanist with a passion for antiquities and as an active translator is made still

⁸ I quote again from Gallo, 'Le mappe geografiche', p. 61.

⁹ Gallo, 'Le mappe geografiche', p. 61. On maps in the Venetian houses, see Genevieve Carlton, *Worldly Consumers: The Demand for Maps in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 75–99.

¹⁰ Horodowich, *The Venetian Discovery of America*, p. 61.

¹¹ Gallo, 'Le mappe geografiche', pp. 62–63.

more intriguing by his frequent use of pseudonyms such as Lucio Fauno and Lucio Mauro, but also of the name of the great Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio.¹²

Tarcagnota's literary output mirrored that combination of interests in antiquarianism, historiography, and remote countries, that distinguished some of the main Venetian printers. The variety of printing houses for which he worked depended on the contacts and conflicts that shaped his life. He published all his early works with the Tramezzino brothers, who were also active in Rome and whose extensive catalogue in the mid-sixteenth century included many editions of literary, historical, and legal texts. Most of Tarcagnota's publications appeared under pseudonyms: these included the extremely popular topographical treatise *Delle antichità di Roma* (1548), and, more importantly, the vernacular versions of the main works by Flavio Biondo, from *Italia illustrata* (1542) to *Historie* (1543), Hans Böhm's treatise on the customs of the peoples of the world (1542), as well as writings by Plutarch, Suetonius, Galen, and Marsilio Ficino.¹³ Tarcagnota's later books were published by Giordano Ziletti. Among them were translations from Castilian of *Silva de varia lección* (1540) by Pedro Mexía in 1556, and, above all, the second part of *Historia general de las Indias* (1552) by Francisco López de Gómara in 1566, which appeared as the 'third part' of a series, as Ziletti's catalogue placed it next to two earlier volumes published in 1557, corresponding to the first part of the chronicles of Pedro de Cieza de León and López de Gómara respectively—other vernacular versions and editions of which had been circulating in Rome and Venice since the mid-1550s.¹⁴

Tarcagnota had broken with the Tramezzino brothers in the late 1540s, perhaps over disagreements and internal rivalry with other collaborators in the same printing house. This ended a relatively recent but very fertile partnership that dated back to 1542, when Tarcagnota had settled in Venice. He had immediately become part of the group of men of letters who haunted the Tramezzino printing house and were variously involved in their publishing work, from Paulus Manutius, son of the famous Aldus, to the dragoman Michele Membré, as well as Onofrio Panvinio, Antonio Massa, Donato Giannotti, and Francesco Venturi.

¹² For the information given in the following pages, see Gennaro Tallini, 'Nuove coordinate biografiche per Giovanni Tarcagnota da Gaeta', *Italianistica* 42, no. 1 (2013): pp. 105–125.

¹³ Gennaro Tallini, 'Tradizione familiare e politiche editoriali nella produzione a stampa dei Tramezzino editori a Venezia (1536–1592)', *Studi Veneziani* 60 (2010): pp. 53–78.

¹⁴ Agustín de Cravalzión produced the only existing translation of Cieza de León and the first complete version of López de Gómara, published in Rome by the Dorici brothers in 1555 and 1556, respectively. The attribution to Lucio Mauro of the first translation of Gómara's chronicle published by Arrivabene in 1557, and immediately republished by Ziletti, is not demonstrable, despite what is argued by Donatello Ferro, 'Traduzioni di opere spagnole sulla scoperta dell'America nell'editoria veneziana del Cinquecento', in *L'impatto della scoperta dell'America nella cultura veneziana*, edited by Angela Caracciolo Aricò (Rome: Bulzoni, 1990), p. 100. For an overview of the sources of information about the New World in sixteenth-century Italy see Rosario Romeo, *Le scoperte americane nella coscienza italiana del Cinquecento* (Milan: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1954), pp. 65–83. See also Elizabeth Horodowich and Lia Markey, eds., *The New World in Early Modern Italy, 1492–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Through this channel Tarcagnota gained access to the Venetian academies and, in particular, to Domenico Venier's soirées. There, music was performed and literary pieces were read aloud, with those taking part including Pietro Aretino, Pietro Bembo, Lodovico Dolce, and even the painter Titian.

Tarcagnota's move to Venice had been brought about by his previous relations with the literary, architectural, and antiquarian circles that, during Paul III's papacy (1535–49), met in Rome around the members of the Farnese family, with whom the Tramezzino brothers were connected. It had been Galeazzo Florimonte, future bishop of Aquino, who had introduced Tarcagnota to these groups after the latter had entered his service in 1538, at a time when, through the humanist Marcantonio Flaminio, Florimonte was still in contact with the Neapolitan heretical circles influenced by the spiritual teaching of Juan de Valdés.¹⁵ By 1548 Tarcagnota had already left Venice, returning to Rome, where once again he mixed in Farnese circles, particularly the Vitruvian Academy. In the early 1550s he spent his time in Rome, his native Gaeta, and Naples. He was living there when his *Historie del mondo* appeared. At the same time, he had close links with the secretary to the viceroy of Naples, Juan de Soto, who was probably behind Tarcagnota's translation of the works by the Spanish authors Mexía and Gómara.

Prolific and versatile men of letters like Tarcagnota were by no means unusual in mid-sixteenth-century Italy. He was typical of the variegated and fascinating world of the *poligrafi*—authors of vernacular works largely put together by reusing, rewriting, or translating passages and texts by others, and meant not just for the limited elite of learned scholars but to satisfy the demand of a broader readership consisting of public officials, lawyers, doctors, apothecaries, and merchants, and all those who read for pleasure, information, or personal edification.¹⁶ The constant reprints and new revised editions of volumes produced by the *poligrafi* testify to the great popularity of this wide-ranging literature, which could also include original compilations containing many different messages and meanings. A case in point was the *Alcorano di Macometto*, published in Venice by Arrivabene in 1547. As well as printing the first vernacular version of the Qur'an, most probably produced by Giovanni Battista Castrodardo on the basis of a previous Latin translation, this volume supported an anti-Habsburg alliance between France and the Ottoman Empire, an aspiration widely shared in Venice's heretical circles.¹⁷ The major *poligrafi* working in the city for the main

¹⁵ Franco Pignatti, 'Florimonte, Galeazzo', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 48 (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana fondato da Giovanni Treccani, 1997), pp. 354–356. See also Massimo Firpo, *Juan de Valdés and the Italian Reformation* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015).

¹⁶ Amedeo Quondam, 'La letteratura in tipografia', in *Letteratura italiana*, edited by Alberto Asor Rosa, 17 vols. (Turin: Einaudi, 1982–2000), vol. 2, pp. 555–686, and Claudia Di Filippo Bareggi, *Il mestiere di scrivere: Lavoro intellettuale e mercato librario a Venezia nel Cinquecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1988).

¹⁷ Pier Mattia Tommasino, *The Venetian Qur'an: A Renaissance Companion to Islam*, translated by Sylvia Notini (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

printers in the mid-sixteenth century were professional writers, including Anton Francesco Doni, Niccolò Franco, and Ortensio Lando, as well as the above-mentioned Aretino and Dolce. However, they were anything but unimaginative authors. As a growing number of studies has shown, their works enable us to explore more elusive features of the sensibility of the period, identifying specific ways in which consumer literature was produced and enjoyed.¹⁸

History books of all sorts were extremely important in the literature of the *poligrafi*.¹⁹ Thus, in a context affected by the appearance of Ramusio's *Navigazioni* and other similar translations, the Tramezzino printing house in Venice proved to be especially alert to how literary currents and the needs of the book market were developing, and started supplying the new creation of histories of the world. Michele Tramezzino's project was part of the marked experimentalism characteristic of the time. One example was the three volumes of *Lettere di principi*, published by Ziletti between 1562 and 1577. For the first time a collection of epistles became a work of history that went beyond the confines of Europe. The first volume was edited by the *poligrafo* Girolamo Ruscelli, who had already added unpublished geographical material to similar collections in the past.²⁰ The selection of letters on the basis of subject was no longer intended to provide models of good epistolary prose, but, as Ruscelli himself explained, documents useful for 'writing the history of these times'.²¹

Ruscelli's *Lettere di principi* covered the period from the late fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth century, with particular attention to the recent history of the Italian peninsula, vexed as it was by wars and invasions. But the collection also focused on the great changes that had recently taken place in the relations between Europe and the world. After all, they had 'some connection with Italian affairs', as Francesco Guicciardini had recalled in his *History of Italy*, the first edition of which had just appeared in 1561.²² In particular, the volume edited by Ruscelli gave space mainly to sources relating to Islamic powers that affected the

¹⁸ See the classic work by Paul Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World, 1530–1560: Anton Francesco Doni, Nicolò Franco & Ortensio Lando* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969). For an overview of recent studies, see Paolo Procaccioli, 'Nota introduttiva', in *Dissonanze concordi: Temi, questioni e personaggi intorno ad Anton Francesco Doni*, edited by Giovanna Rizzarelli (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2013), pp. 217–227.

¹⁹ Paolo Cherchi, *Polimattia di riuso: Mezzo secolo di plagio, 1539–1589* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1998), pp. 186–188.

²⁰ Lodovica Braidà, *Libri di lettere: Le raccolte epistolari del Cinquecento tra inquietudini religiose e 'buon volgare'* (Rome: Laterza, 2009), pp. 155–158. On this literary genre, see also Lodovica Braidà, 'Writing for Others: Renaissance Printed Epistolary Collections: From Models for "Good Writing" to Handbooks for Secretaries', *Quaerendo* 47, no. 1 (2017): pp. 1–22.

²¹ Lodovica Braidà, 'Ruscelli e le "Lettere di principi": Da libro di lettere a libro di storia', in *Girolamo Ruscelli: Dall'accademia alla corte alla tipografia*, edited by Paolo Marini and Paolo Procaccioli, 2 vols. (Manziana: Vecchiarelli, 2012), vol. 2, pp. 605–634.

²² Francesco Guicciardini, *The History of Italy*, translated and edited by Sidney Alexander (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 177. The quotation is from book 6, chapter 9, in which Guicciardini highlighted the importance of Portuguese and Spanish exploration.

Mediterranean balance of power, such as the North-African states, and the Ottoman and Safavid empires, but there were also letters on the Americas, for instance, the famous one sent in 1543 by the Spanish chronicler Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo to Bembo, a letter that Ramusio had already included in the third volume of the *Navigazioni*.²³

Ruscelli's publishing enterprise was affected by the increasing importance of letters as the basis for a new type of history. This was confirmed by a foreword written by Ziletti, in which he called readers' attention to 'the way followed' by the authors of the missives 'in writing to each other'. He was expressing the conviction that the epistles like those included in that book were a key source 'for the knowledge of histories contained in it that perhaps are truer and clearer than what is in Giovio, Guicciardino, and many other writers of our times'.²⁴ These last words were intended to make the volume more attractive, the strategy being to compete for a slice of the market from recent historical works. There were in any case many connections between these works and *Lettere di principi*. Ruscelli's collection, for example, appeared in the same year that Tramezzino published Tarcagnota's *Historie del mondo*. One of the main sources of inspiration of the latter was *Histories of His Own Times* (1550–2) by the humanist Paolo Giovio, which had been quickly translated into the vernacular (1551–3) by Ludovico Domenichi, as well as reprinted many times, including a recent Venetian edition of 1560 annotated by Ruscelli himself.²⁵

History of the World and Curiosity for the World

The publication of *Historie del mondo* was the last collaboration between Tarcagnota and the Tramezzino brothers.²⁶ The success of these volumes guaranteed the future of the printing house in the difficult years to come. In any case, the project had originally been devised long before 1562 and had certainly been discussed in detail with the printer. From the start the idea must have been to compile an extensive historical summary meant to free readers 'of the long and tedious effort and time that would be necessary if they had had to read the

²³ The letter was included in Ruscelli, Girolamo, ed., *Lettere di principi, le quali si scrivono da principi, o a principi, o ragionan di principi, libro primo* (Venice: Giordano Ziletti, 1562), fols. 149v–152r. See also Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, edited by Marica Milanese, 6 vols. (Turin: Einaudi, 1978–1988), vol. 6, p. 863.

²⁴ Ziletti's preface can be found in the 1564 reprint of *Lettere di principi*'s first volume. I quote from Braidà, 'Ruscelli e le "Lettere di principi"', p. 264.

²⁵ The publisher was Giovanni Maria Bonelli. Four years earlier Ziletti had also published Giovio's *Ragionamento . . . sopra i motti, et disegni d'arme, et d'amore, che communemente chiamano imprese*, with a commentary by Ruscelli.

²⁶ Giovanni Tarcagnota, *Delle historie del mondo . . . Lequali con tutta quella particolarità, che bisogna, contengono quanto dal principio del mondo fino a tempi nostri è successo . . .* 3 vols. (Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1562).

profusion of history books composed by so many writers'.²⁷ The final form of *Historie del mondo* mirrored the circumstances in which it was produced, but especially the parts dealing with more recent times were also influenced by new books of history that were appearing continually during the 1550s.

In 1554 Metello Tarcagnota wrote a letter to Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Florence, to remind him that his father Giovanni, who was then at Gaeta, 'had begun to write in our language a history of all the things that happened in the world and dedicates it, indeed writes it, to Your Excellency'. As well as informing him that the first part of the work was 'already with the printer in Venice', Metello Tarcagnota was writing to the duke above all to ask for financial support to continue with the second part, which his father was 'setting his hand to now'.²⁸ Any assistance may not have arrived as quickly as he hoped. At any rate, the length of time between that letter and the actual publication of *Historie del mondo*—about eight years—was certainly in part due to the difficulties faced by Tarcagnota in that period. Later, to any detractors who complained that the second part of the work was too short, he replied that if 'they knew the reasons for this second part being so hasty and how it was not possible to do otherwise, they might have praised me rather than blamed me'.²⁹ It seems that the writing was interrupted, to be completed at speed later, perhaps under pressure from the printer. Putting together the money for such a venture was not easy, even though in the end the dedicatee of the work, Cosimo I, was very probably one of its financiers. In the meantime, anxious for a return on his investment, Michele Tramezzino had the third part (which boasted the additional attraction of covering events until the present day) drafted by Mambrino Roseo (d. 1580), another *poligrafo* who had been working for his printing house for some time, mainly translating Spanish chivalric romances.³⁰

In the end, all three parts appeared in four volumes in a fine quarto edition, accompanied by a string of exclusive printing rights from the pope, the emperor, the king of France, the doge of Venice, and, of course, the duke of Florence. The latter described the work as a 'universal history from the origin of the world to the present day'. We should not let the expression mislead us, though. The very title, *Historie del mondo*, indicated the real novelty of this product, which was not simply a relaunching of the old model of universal histories as it had been

²⁷ Thus wrote the publisher in his presentation of Giovanni Tarcagnota, *Delle historie del mondo . . . lequali contengono quanto dal principio del mondo è successo sino all'anno della nostra Salute MDXIII . . . Con l'aggiunta della Quinta parte di Bartholomeo Dionigi da Fano, nuovamente posta in luce*, 4 vols. (Venice: Giorgio Varisco, 1610), vol. 1, fol. †2r–v.

²⁸ The letter is published in Tallini, 'Nuove coordinate biografiche', pp. 121–122.

²⁹ Tarcagnota, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 3, fol. 511r.

³⁰ Mambrino Roseo, *Delle historie del mondo . . . Parte terza, aggiunta alla notabile historia di m. Giovanni Tarchagnota* (Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1562). On the author see Anna Bognolo, 'Roseo, Mambrino', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 88 (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana fondato da Giovanni Treccani, 2017), pp. 465–468.

practised down to Marco Antonio Sabellico and Raffaele Maffei in the early sixteenth century. Tarcagnota too was a humanist and expert in classical languages, but he did not differ from them only in his choice of writing in the vernacular. He made this clear from the start. Addressing Cosimo I, he boasted that no one had yet offered a history like his, 'apart from a few moderns in the Latin tongue'.³¹

Tarcagnota may have agreed such a proud assertion with Tramezzino in order to promote the work. This seems to be an allusion to Giovio's *Histories*, which was also dedicated to Cosimo I. *Historie del mondo* was inevitably competing with that popular book, which covered the years 1494–1547, a view that seems confirmed by the decision to include—like Giovio—the present age, thanks to Mambrino Roseo's 'third part'. Attracted as he was by more ancient times, Tarcagnota may not have fully shared that decision. Though the writings of the *poligrafi* were often fairly lax about the paternity of texts, the title page of part three left no doubt that Roseo was wholly responsible for the content. So what else could have led Tarcagnota to regard Giovio as a model? Certainly not the invention of contemporary history, to which Giovio had made a decisive contribution. It was rather the geographical range of his *Histories*, which encompassed the whole of Europe and the Mediterranean as far as the lands then occupied by the Ottoman and Safavid empires. Someone who intended to write a history of the world in Italy shortly after the mid-sixteenth century could not fail to look to this example.³²

Yet, the difference between Tarcagnota and Giovio was no less a matter of geography than chronology. Far from being a 'world historian', Giovio's narrative included only those Islamic lands with which the Europeans had most frequent contact. It was an important novelty, of course, but the relationship between Giovio and Renaissance histories of the world was a missed opportunity.³³ All the more so as *Histories* opened with a proclamation of the globality of war in modern times. After the invasion of Italy by the French army of Charles VIII (r. 1483–98) in 1494, which had ended the peace the peninsula had enjoyed for half a century, Giovio wrote on the first page of his work that war 'in the course of a few years afflicted not only the whole of Europe, but also the distant regions of Asia and Africa, turning everything upside down everywhere or destroying the empires of celebrated nations'. It was such a 'fatal plague' that, almost as if it were

³¹ Tarcagnota, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 1, fols. aijr and 1v.

³² This was *Histories*' 'true and greater novelty', according to Federico Chabod, *Scritti sul Rinascimento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1967), p. 266, who maintained that in Giovio's pages on 'peoples and events that had been overlooked before him, or at least, considered less important... one can feel a different breath that arrives from distant shores which had not attracted the attention of our writers so far.'

³³ T.C. Price Zimmermann, *Paolo Giovio: The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 25–27. Conversely, Giovio was labelled as 'world historian' by Eric W. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 377.

the sole motor force of history, war crossed ‘what is washed by the ocean seas and led us to discover peoples hitherto unknown, whom neither the Roman values nor the literature of the ancients had reached’. This highly effective passage threaded together in a few lines various themes as well as continents. Giovio could thus conclude that in the ‘fifty years’ dealt with in *Histories*, ‘Mars and Fortune seem to have spared no part of the world, which was afflicted with so many misfortunes that every province, however remote, from east to west, as far as those that until recently were the fabled antipodes, was ravaged by war and bathed in its own blood and that of others.’³⁴

This tragic image reflected the pained gaze of a great humanist who, while serving the Medici in Florence and Rome, had personally experienced the culminating phase of the Italian wars (1494–1530) before seeking the protection of the Farnese family in the 1530s, when the young Tarcagnota may conceivably have met him. However, Giovio’s *Histories* followed a storyline almost entirely centred on Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Levant, apart from some circumscribed digressions. Sometimes these insertions of variable length dealt with events that had had a strong impact, such as the ‘mad navigation’ by which the Portuguese ‘obtained dominion of the Indian Sea’.³⁵ They show that Giovio was well versed in the worldscale processes that had marked the age he was dealing with. This was, above all, the result of the years he had spent in the Roman curia, where news and materials flowed in from all over the world. However, it is significant that Giovio did not go so far as to fully incorporate these events in his historical account of the main events of his time. He treated them more as ‘curiosities’, to the point that it was often the apparently accidental meeting with an unusual or bizarre object that opened an unexpected window in *Histories* onto the regions most distant from Europe.

For example, in a digression on China included in a section dealing with the clash between Turks and Persians at the outset of the sixteenth century, Giovio mentioned the accounts of the ‘Portuguese merchants’ on Cathay and the city of Canton, going on to claim that the Chinese emperor ‘is lord of infinite peoples by land and sea, and possesses such abundance of everything (as he maintains an enormous army) that all the kings of Europe put together cannot be his equal’. Identifying Giovio’s exact source is not easy. We know that, through direct intercession from Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, around 1549, he had come into possession of ‘a book written in Chinese’. It was one of the Asian works, which also included ‘another [text] in Persian, containing some information on the manners of the gentiles of those lands’. The papal nuncio in Portugal, Giovanni Ricci, had obtained them for Giovio directly from the Portuguese chronicler João

³⁴ Paolo Giovio, *Historiarum sui temporis*, 2 vols. (Florence: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1550–1552), vol. 1, p. 1.

³⁵ Giovio, *Historiarum sui temporis*, vol. 1, p. 166.

de Barros.³⁶ Very probably, this ‘book written in Chinese’ was the ‘cosmography of China’, a copy of which, twenty years later, the Dominican cosmographer Egnazio Danti asked the Florentine ambassador in Lisbon, Bernardo Neri, to procure for him.³⁷ In the early seventeenth century, the learned Portuguese priest Manuel Severim de Faria would accuse Giovio of ingratitude, ‘because writing at great length on things of Persia and the East, and citing Portuguese information concerning them, he never mentions João de Barros’.³⁸ What is certain is that the only Chinese source openly cited by Giovio was the ‘volume’ given by King Manuel I of Portugal (r. 1495–1521) to Pope Leo X, with ‘histories and descriptions of ceremonies of a holy nature . . . whose long folios fold inwards square-wise’. The consultation of this ‘volume’, however, did not induce Giovio to use it as a source—even through an interpreter. He regarded it simply as an object. He only referred to it in order to substantiate the Renaissance myth of a Chinese origin for printing in Europe: ‘from this I can easily believe that the examples of this art, before the Portuguese reached India, came to us through the Tartars and the Muscovites.’³⁹

We find the same approach in a longer passage on the New World. It is worth noting that an exceptional process like the discovery and conquest of America was not intrinsic to Giovio’s historical account. It was more of an excursus, set off by a comment on the importance of the Peruvian mines for the European wars, but once again centred on the sudden description of a rarity in the final pages of book 34, written in the late 1530s. This book was about the history of the controversial events around the conquest of Tunis (1535) and was therefore examined by the Emperor Charles V in person before publication.⁴⁰ The ‘Indians’ of Mexico, we read, ‘learn our letters, having put aside the hieroglyphics with which they previously wrote histories and, together with other pictures, preserved the memory of their kings.’ The example given was ‘a volume of these histories made of entire folios folded inwards and lined with spotted leather’. Giovio had been offered it by the imperial secretary Francisco de los Cobos. As in the case of the Chinese ‘volume’, this valuable Mexican codex was also treated as a mere curiosity. There were remarkable pages on the Americas in *Histories*, dealing in quick succession with Columbus’s journey, Cortés’s conquest (with China in the background), the feats of Vasco Núñez de Balboa, Diego de Almagro, and the Pizarro brothers, and also Ferdinand Magellan’s circumnavigation of the globe. However, they all derived from European chronicles and accounts, including the

³⁶ João de Barros, *Da Ásia*, 8 vols. (Lisbon: Livraria Sam Carlos, 1973), vol. 2, p. 305 (dec. 1, bk. 9, ch. 1). The Persian work may be the ‘Larigh’ often mentioned by Barros for which see ‘The Chinese lesson of empire’ in chapter 2.

³⁷ See ‘News from the East’ in chapter 2.

³⁸ Manuel Severim de Faria, *Discursos varios politicos* (Évora: Manuel Carvalho, 1624), fol. 37v.

³⁹ Giovio, *Historiarum sui temporis*, vol. 1, p. 226.

⁴⁰ T.C. Price Zimmermann, ‘The Publication of Paolo Giovio’s “Histories”: Charles V and the Revision of Book XXXIV’, *La bibliofilia* 74 (1972): pp. 49–90.

comparison of the indigenous eschatologies in Mexico with ‘the discipline and superstition of the Druids, who in times long past had great authority in France and England.’⁴¹ Giovio’s was only a notable excursus on a remote subject that was felt as incidental to the narrative of *Histories* but could increase its value in readers’ eyes. The sophisticated section on Ethiopia confirmed Giovio’s attitude. In this case he could also count on a rare manuscript version of the ‘commentaries’ by the Portuguese Francisco Álvares—the first eyewitness description by a European, which even included an account of his encounter with the local ruler, reputed to be the legendary Prester John.⁴²

References to the New World and, by extension, other regions further from Europe were no more than eccentric digressions from the general narrative. It is symptomatic that in the final lines of book 34—the same in which the Mexican codex received from Cobos was cited—Giovio acknowledged that the section on the Americas was a distraction from the ‘texture of history’.⁴³ Though they had very probably contributed to the international success of Giovio’s *Histories*, matters concerning Africa, Asia, and the New World were seen as a temporary deviation, even when Europeans played a direct role.⁴⁴ A similar vision also underlay the ‘museum’ that Giovio set up in his villa on Lake Como. The idea of collecting portraits of famous men on canvas or bronze medallions in a private residence open to the public marked a new stage in the history of European culture. The creation of this gallery in 1537–43 ran parallel to the drafting of the last ten books of *Histories*, the two projects being closely related.⁴⁵

Giovio’s complementary activities as historian and collector were recalled on the inscription that welcomed visitors to his villa. It also emerged from *Elogia*, a collection of short biographies of figures depicted in the museum, the two volumes of which were published in 1546 and 1551, respectively. Though all the learned men and most of the military leaders in the gallery at Como were European, the museum also included portraits of Tamerlane, Prince Vasili III of Moscow, Shah Ismā’īl and Shah Tahmāsp of Persia, the Emperor Dāwīt II of Ethiopia, many Mamluk and Ottoman sultans, three Turkish corsairs, and a Moroccan shereef.

⁴¹ Giovio, *Historiarum sui temporis*, vol. 2, p. 252.

⁴² Giovio, *Historiarum sui temporis*, vol. 1, pp. 304–308. The Portuguese ambassador in Rome, Martinho de Portugal, had entrusted Giovio with the Latin translation of one version of Álvares’s treatise in the early 1530s, which, however, he did not make. See Salvatore Tedeschi, ‘Paolo Giovio e la conoscenza dell’Etiopia nel Rinascimento’, in *Paolo Giovio: Il Rinascimento e la memoria* (Como: Società storica comense, 1985), pp. 93–116.

⁴³ Giovio, *Historiarum sui temporis*, vol. 2, p. 254.

⁴⁴ The two volumes of the French translation were printed in Lyon by Guillaume Rouillé in 1552–1555. A partial edition in Spanish was published in Valencia by Juan Felipe Mey in 1562. On the significant presence of Giovio’s *Historiae* in early modern Spanish libraries see Antonio Feros, ‘¿Conocer para poseer? Historia del mundo y sus regiones en las bibliotecas españolas de los siglos XVI y XVII’, in *Historia en fragmentos: Estudios en homenaje a Pablo Fernández Albaladejo*, edited by Julio A. Pardos Martínez, Julián Viejo Yharrassarry, José María Iñurritegui Rodríguez, José María Portillo Valdés, and Fernando André Robres (Madrid: UAM Ediciones, 2017), pp. 352 and 359–360.

⁴⁵ Zimmermann, *Paolo Giovio*, pp. 159–163.

They belonged to the regions of the world that *Histories* actually dealt with, so much so that one may be tempted to see *Elogia* as a transposition of the same subject into the form of biography. After all, Giovio himself linked his selection of military leaders, ‘whose valiant decisions and resolute hand achieved feats worthy of historical memory’, to the desire of the reading public to know ‘the faces’ of the protagonists described.⁴⁶ Given the geographical limits of *Histories*, it is no surprise that the museum had no portraits of Chinese, Aztec, or Inca emperors.

Giovio’s collection deserves a foremost place in the history of curiosity.⁴⁷ By his own admission, he spent many years bringing together credible portraits of famous men ‘from almost every part of the world, with a curiosity that bordered on the insane, as well as being costly’.⁴⁸ The museum also contained bizarre objects and rarities. Again, one can find a connection with his *Histories*, as we can see from the example of one of the main figures mentioned in book 34. As he recounted in the pages of *Elogia* on the life of Cortés, the Spanish conquistador had himself sent Giovio his portrait after taking part in Charles V’s disastrous expedition against Algiers (1541). He was depicted ‘with a gilded sword at his waist, a gold necklace round his neck, and wearing costly leather’.⁴⁹ One may wonder if the Mexican codex Cobos gave Giovio was also displayed nearby in his museum. What is certain is that in 1542 Giovio was insistently asking Giovanni Poggio, papal nuncio in Spain, for ‘a bizarre piece of an idol of Temistitán [Tenochtitlán]’ to be placed next to Cortés’s portrait, perhaps to celebrate with a relic his role in bringing down the Aztec Empire. If this request provides one of many examples of the growing interest in material evidence from the New World, it also gives us an idea of the context in which the painting was placed.⁵⁰

History as an Animal

Historical writing and museum collecting could be indistinguishably entangled in Renaissance culture. Historical curiosities and antiquarian objects overlapped, as they did, for example, in the ‘Historical series’ (*Collana historica*) launched in Venice in the 1560s by the printer Gabriele Giolito de’ Ferrari and entrusted to the *poligrafo* Tommaso Porcacchi. He was a disciple of Ludovico Domenichi, the translator of Giovio, whose historical work, like Guicciardini’s, Porcacchi greatly

⁴⁶ Paolo Giovio, *Elogia virorum bellica virtute illustrium*. . . (Florence: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1551), p. 209. The quotation is from the dedication of book 5 to Cosimo I de’ Medici.

⁴⁷ R.J.W. Evans and Alexander Marr, eds., *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

⁴⁸ Paolo Giovio, *Elogia doctorum virorum ab avorum memoria publicatis ingenii monumentis illustrium* (Antwerp: Johann Beller, 1557), p. 11.

⁴⁹ Giovio, *Elogia virorum bellica virtute*, p. 304.

⁵⁰ Paolo Giovio, *Lettere*, edited by Giuseppe Guido Ferrero, 2 vols. (Rome: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato, 1956–1958), vol. 1, p. 280.

admired.⁵¹ The project of the ‘Historical series’ aimed to offer a selection of ancient historians in good-quality vernacular versions, alternating with contemporary treatises on military subjects.⁵² Designed for a readership that wanted to understand the classics but was unable to read them in the original, this venture reflected the growing capacity of Venetian printing houses to target an ever broader circle of readers that was becoming culturally more voracious.

Curiosity was an important stimulus to building up knowledge about the new worlds. However, the characterization of these regions, the objects coming from them, and the events that had taken place there, as ‘curious’, frustrated the possibility of conceiving and writing histories of the world. This was the limitation of Giovio’s *Histories*, despite its opening paragraph on war as a global phenomenon and the parts on the Indian Ocean, Ethiopia, China, and the Americas. The point was not how much information on these or other distant lands was to be found in a history book, and still less the number of pages on them. What made medieval and humanist universal histories look inevitably old fashioned was their inability to integrate the traditional narrative of European history and other parts of the planet, with their multiplicity of pasts, into a single historical perspective. Of course, this meant much more than satisfying curiosity for what was distant and unusual. To do so, new choices had to be made in terms of the narrative’s internal structure and form.

In the context of Venetian publishing, this morphological change took place with Tarcagnota’s *Historie del mondo*. Particularly when compared with Giovio’s *Histories*, the account covered the whole history of humanity from its origin. Still more novel than the differing chronological approach to be found in the work by Tarcagnota and his continuers was the treatment of Africa, the Americas, and Asia, which were no longer mere digressions from the main line of the narrative. True, *Historie del mondo* derived much information from Giovio’s *Histories* on what had happened in the early sixteenth century, as well as the emphasis given to European and Mediterranean history. But though the other regions of the globe were not given much more space than before, *Historie del mondo* fully incorporated them in the historical account. This was made possible by a narrative technique that explored the simultaneity of historical processes. Thus, though the inclusion of Africa, the Americas, and Asia in the account only followed the first contacts with the Europeans, the history of these interactions and the

⁵¹ Franco Pignatti, ‘Porcacchi, Tommaso’, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 85 (Rome: Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana fondato da Giovanni Treccani, 2016), pp. 12–19.

⁵² Massimiliano Rossi, ‘Arte della memoria, antiquaria e collezioni fra Cinque e Seicento: La collana storica giolitina e la sua eredità’, in *Memoria e memorie: Convegno internazionale di studi*, edited by Lina Bolzoni, Vittorio Erlindo, and Marcello Morelli (Florence: Olschki, 1998), pp. 107–132; Angela Nuovo and Christian Coppens, *I Giolito e la stampa nell’Italia del XVI secolo* (Geneva: Droz, 2005), pp. 114–115 and 491–528. More specifically on Porcacchi, see also Sylvie Favaliier, ‘Penser un nouveau produit éditorial: Tommaso Porcacchi, Gabriel Giolito de’ Ferrari et leur “Collana historica”’, *Réforme, Humanisme, Renaissance* 74 (2012): pp. 161–184.

description of their political, social and cultural context were no longer an excursus as in Giovio, but part of the temporal flow of events occurring around the globe. This was essentially achieved through a sequence of synchronic juxtapositions. *Historie del mondo* proceeded by connections through space, thanks to the copious use of adverbial expressions of temporal coincidence, which allowed for an uninterrupted accumulation of facts.

The knowledge of the historical and geographical literature of the new worlds revealed by Tarcagnola and his continuers was selective but up-to-date. Moreover, unlike Giovio's *Histories*, *Historie del mondo* contained information that was presented as if it had actually been taken from local sources and materials, with the effect, however illusory, of greater openness and inclusiveness. One example was an alleged Chinese prophecy mentioned in a letter of 1558 regarding the Jesuit mission in China and the recent settlement of the Portuguese in Macau: 'They read in their ancient books, of uncertain authorship', wrote Roseo, 'that in a year with an eight in it (not necessarily an eighty or eight hundred) the king of China must lose his kingdoms which white men with long beards will take from him, and that is why they keep their cities well fortified.'⁵³ The belief was obviously invented and attributed to the Chinese to justify European penetration of the region, but the reference to the supposed content of Chinese materials turned what was just a bizarre object ('their ancient books') for Giovio into a source that could offer a seemingly more complex and multifaceted reconstruction.

The modern reader who is brave enough to tackle the thousands of pages of *Historie del mondo*, packed with names, dates, and historical facts, will inevitably find it wearisome. But this was not the case for early modern readers: copies of the work sold like hot cakes, and not just in Italy.⁵⁴ Tarcagnola's preface included a short theoretical reflection in which he took up a position on what was then a somewhat fiercely conducted discussion on 'historical truth'. The specific polemical target of the words that opened the first part of *Historie del mondo* might have been the critique of 'universal histories' made by the neo-Platonic humanist Francesco Patrizi in the sixth dialogue of his treatise *Della historia*, published in Venice by Andrea Arrivabene in 1560. Patrizi bluntly rejected any attempt to write 'general histories', which he contrasted with the 'particular [history], either of a single action or of many of one nation'. Universal histories raised 'many serious difficulties', especially if they dealt with distant times, because of 'the small number of writers extant in those centuries, their concise way of writing, and the diversity of nations that did things worthy of memory and set themselves to write their own and that of others'. But the question affected every age: given the 'enormous' difficulty encountered by an author 'in collecting the history of a single

⁵³ Roseo, *Delle historie del mondo*, fol. 335v.

⁵⁴ For its circulation in Spain, see Feros, '¿Conocer para poseer?', p. 360.

nation, what then will he do with that of many brought together? The toil required certainly exceeds the capacity to imagine it.⁵⁵

These doubts threatened the credibility of *Historie del mondo* even before its appearance. Tarcagnota countered Patrizi's pedantic arguments with the irony of an image with an Aristotelian flavour: 'between reading specific histories written by various historians and one that contains them all amply, following the order in which things happened and when', he wrote, 'it seems there is the same difference there would be if we were first shown, one by one separately, the limbs of an animal we do not know and then we were shown the whole animal.' Tarcagnota commented on the metaphor thus: 'as (if I am not deceived) this whole and perfect knowledge would make us laugh at the partial and confused one of the limbs, and would force us to admit we were deceived, so this common and ample history makes us content and satisfied in a way the specific ones cannot do.' The hierarchy deriving from this simile responded to a specific vision of historical writing: 'ample history' also 'causes us a greater feeling of pleasure when we then read what are its limbs, so to speak.'⁵⁶

'Pleasure' did not mean lack of involvement. Tarcagnota therefore expressed the hope that his work was 'in its texture such that, like gold polished by an expert hand, it may at the same time entertain us and incite us to virtuous action'.⁵⁷ Later on, he also made clear that, 'in reading the histories of past things', 'one learns and in a sense almost experiences through the actions of others the various ways of living, which one usually acquires through long practice as well as frequent mistakes.' Tarcagnota here seemed to be echoing what he had written two decades earlier under the pseudonym of Lucio Fauno, presenting Böhm's treatise on the customs of the peoples of the world. He even claimed that 'history is no more than a mirror, in which past things are represented to us, that may make us more judicious as to what we should embrace or avoid.'⁵⁸

Tarcagnota, however, immediately distanced himself from Böhm's work in that the latter had endorsed a materialist theory that identified the origin of humanity in Ethiopia. 'Some also said that the first man was made of clay, but they were wrong', we read in *Historie del mondo*.⁵⁹ In fact, what followed was an orthodox account of creation, although Tarcagnota's version did not align with that given in

⁵⁵ Francesco Patrizi, *Della historia dieci dialoghi . . . ne' quali si ragiona di tutte le cose appartenenti all'istoria & allo scriverla & osservarla* (Venice: Andrea Arrivabene, 1560), fols. 31r and 32r. For an overview of this work, see Anthony Grafton, *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 126–142.

⁵⁶ Tarcagnota, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 1, fol. 1v.

⁵⁷ Dedication to Cosimo I de' Medici, Naples, 1 January 1562, in Tarcagnota, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 1, fol. unnumbered.

⁵⁸ Tarcagnota, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 1, fol. 1r. See also Hans Böhm, *Gli costumi, le leggi, et l'usanze di tutte le genti, raccolte qui insieme da molti illustri scrittori . . .* (Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1542), fol. unnumbered.

⁵⁹ Tarcagnota, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 1, fol. 2r. See also 'An ambiguous encyclopaedia' in chapter 3.

the Vulgate, the Bible authorized by the Catholic church—something odd in that age of intense religious suspicion.⁶⁰ Thus, after the Flood, he followed up the genealogies of Noah's sons, developing etymological chains: 'Shem, from whom Abraham and then our Saviour descended, two years after the Flood generated Arpachshad... From Arpachshad', he continued, 'Salah was born with many other sons; and from Salah, who they say built Jerusalem, which was so called from his name, was born Eber, from which they say the Hebrews took their name.' He then turned to Japhet, 'who was Noah's other son and by some called Janus', from whom 'seven sons were born, who had a long progeny; and from each of them it is said many nations of the world took their origin and name, like the Galatians, the Scythians, the Paphlagonians, the Ionians, the Cappadocians, the Thracians, and others. Ham, who was cursed by his father', he concluded, 'generated four sons, the eldest of whom was Cush, from whom the Cushite people in Ethiopia originated', while the fourth was 'Canaan', 'from whom descended the Canaanites, and eleven of his sons inhabited Canaan; and each gave his name to a particular province, Sidon to the Sidonians, Heth to the Hittites, Jebus to the Jebusites, Amor to the Amorites', and so on.⁶¹ The technique was reminiscent of that of the Renaissance forger Annius of Viterbo.⁶² Yet Tarcagnota's source was actually the *Bible historiale*, a medieval translation of the Bible in French, which was still circulating in print editions in the early modern period. It mixed the Vulgate with extracts from the twelfth-century *Historia scholastica* by the French theologian Pierre le Manguer, better known as Petrus Comestor, who in turn drew on Josephus.⁶³

After this striking opening, the first part of *Historie del mondo* continued until the birth of Christ, with no mention at all of regions outside the inhabited world known by the Greeks and Romans. Only in the second part, which reached 1513, did Tarcagnota introduce West Africa and then the Americas, following the first contacts with the Europeans. Thus, after around two thousand pages of world history dealing only with Europe and the Christian and Muslim Mediterranean, on reaching 1455 Tarcagnota concluded his account of the pontificate of Nicholas V (r. 1447–55) and wrote: 'In this period the Portuguese caravels were constantly discovering new regions as they sailed the coasts of Africa beyond the Strait [of Gibraltar].' He then went on to a short but insightful reconstruction of Portuguese presence along the Atlantic coasts of Africa, based on the reworking of the Venetian merchant Ca' da Mosto's eyewitness account, which Ramusio had

⁶⁰ Gigliola Fragnito, *La Bibbia al rogo: La censura ecclesiastica e i volgarizzamenti della Scrittura, 1471–1605* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997).

⁶¹ Tarcagnota, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 1, fol. 4r–v.

⁶² See 'The Renaissance archforger and his giants' in chapter 1.

⁶³ Guy Lobrichon, 'The Story of a Success: The *Bible historiale* in French (1295–ca. 1500)', in *Form and Function in the Late Medieval Bible*, edited by Eyal Poleg and Laura Light (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 307–331.

included in his *Navigazioni*. Tarcagnota also described the slave trade in detail ('they quickly filled Spain with blacks') without any moral comment. However, he took his cue from this reference to introduce a short account of the variety of Africans and their skin colour, 'depending on whether the Sun strikes them directly or obliquely'. He indicated as his source the 'Portuguese who have been able to see them in their own homes' and 'have given a complete description of them', though the whole passage was actually taken from Giovio.⁶⁴ The only difference was that this section did not form a digression in *Historie del mondo*, but was made an essential part of its narrative by highlighting the simultaneity of processes.

The same technique was applied to the discovery of the New World, which was fully included in the historical account by virtue of its happening at the same time as other crucial events. 'While the siege of Granada continued', wrote Tarcagnota, 'Ferdinand and Isabella, who sought to expand their kingdoms and the Christian religion in any way, sent Christopher Columbus, who had volunteered for the task, to seek new lands in the western seas.' Tarcagnota's account contributed to constructing the myth of Columbus as a visionary explorer, 'worthy of immortal glory'—a myth that was supported by the complete omission of his erroneous belief that he could reach the eastern coasts of Asia by travelling westward. Columbus was presented as being in search of 'new lands' and not of the Indies from the first moment he had started serving the Catholic monarchs. The whole passage that followed, however, was striking. It revealed, among other things, a possible knowledge of the first part of López de Gómara's chronicle and an echo of Ramusio's introduction to the third volume of his *Navigazioni* (1556), where he famously defended Columbus's 'glory' from his detractors. Unlike Giovio, however, Tarcagnota did not use the reference to the discovery of America as an opportunity to introduce a general digression on the new continent, but kept to a strictly historical perspective, recounting Columbus's first two voyages and providing a short description of the islands he had reached. Tarcagnota then moved on abruptly to a completely different episode, linked only by time to the previous one: 'Now in December of the same year, in which Granada was taken and Columbus sailed and discovered these Indies, in Barcelona a crazy Catalan peasant approached the Catholic king, with a dagger concealed about him, and wounded him in the neck, putting his life in serious danger.'⁶⁵

Despite its evident mistakes and shortcomings, *Historie del mondo* quickly extended beyond Europe, the Mediterranean basin, and its eastern offshoots. The first two parts of the work, written by Tarcagnota, were strongly indebted,

⁶⁴ Tarcagnota, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 3, fols. 476r–v, to be contrasted with Giovio, *Historiarum sui temporis*, vol. 1, pp. 302–303.

⁶⁵ Tarcagnota, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 3, fols. 517v–518v; Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias y vida de Hernán Cortés*, edited by Jorge Gurría Lacroix (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1979), pp. 28–34; and Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, vol. 5, pp. 13–16.

as the author himself acknowledged, to classical literature: 'I cannot deny that I have a high opinion and admiration for the manner in which the ancients wrote history in their language.'⁶⁶ The humanist legacy was so strong that Tarcagnota could not entirely free himself of the tradition of universal histories in writing his history of the world. If compared with other more experimental attempts produced elsewhere in those decades, as analysed in the preceding chapters of this book, the technique of simultaneity at least made possible an integrated recent history of the continents reached by Europeans, yet Tarcagnota still completely ignored their precolonial past.

News and Fashion

Historie del mondo was published with the addition of a third part, written, as we have seen, by Roseo, a *poligrafo* who, like Tarcagnota, collaborated with the Tramezzino brothers. He had met them through the Farnese circles in Rome, after a long period in the service of the Baglioni family of Perugia, and before forming an attachment to powerful families in the Roman nobility in the 1550s and 1560s. In the third part of the work, Roseo took over the narrative model based on connecting simultaneous historical facts through expressions like 'almost at the same time or shortly before'. However, the laborious pursuit of a time sequence that included the present, in a dizzying accumulation of events, made his style more colloquial—journalistic *avant la lettre*, one might say, almost validating Patrizi's view when he warned of the risk of 'general histories' depending too much on facts 'as they are told as news (*novelle*) in the street'.⁶⁷ This was an existing trend, as was confirmed by the original volume by one of the leading *poligrafi* of mid-sixteenth-century Venice, the already mentioned Lodovico Dolce, whose *Giornale delle historie del mondo* edited by Guglielmo Rinaldi was published posthumously in 1572.⁶⁸ Organized by the days of the calendar, it registered for each of them 'things worth remembering' that had happened in various years 'since the world began', informing its readers of major historical events (births, deaths, wars, battles, peace treaties, and so on) in an abbreviated chronological outline. This showed, as Rinaldi noted in the dedicatory letter to Alvisé Michiel, 'there is no month, indeed almost no day of the year, that passes without history.'⁶⁹

Asked to provide a history of the world that was as up-to-date as possible, Roseo was forced quickly to consult a very wide range of sources, including letters

⁶⁶ Tarcagnota, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 3, fol. 511r.

⁶⁷ Patrizi, *Della historia*, fol. 31v.

⁶⁸ Lodovico Dolce, *Giornale delle historie del mondo, delle cose degne di memoria di giorno in giorno occorse dal principio del mondo sino a' suoi tempi* (Venice: Damiano Zenaro, 1572).

⁶⁹ Dolce, *Giornale delle historie del mondo*, fol. iijv.

from Jesuit missionaries in Asia, which began to be published in Italy in 1551 by Michele Tramezzino himself.⁷⁰ His business acumen ensured that these collections also soon became popular, being confused with the literature of the newsletters whose titles they often copied. Most likely, it was a hasty reading of one of these collections that led Roseo to commit one of the worst howlers in the third part of *Historie del mondo*, where, confusing Brazil and Japan, he claimed that in 1550 the Jesuits had colleges ‘in Bungo royal city in the East India of Brazil, in Piratininga, in São Vicente, in Salvador, in Bahia, in Espírito Santo, in Pernambuco, and in Porto Seguro, all of them islands in the East Indies’.⁷¹

With the printer at the door, the *poligrafo* needed to work fast, guessing the changing interests of readers who were more and more fascinated by the broadening perspective of the literature on new worlds, and this combined with a sensibility that was adapting to the new climate of the incipient Counter-Reformation. The Tramezzino brothers themselves were to change their catalogue in the following years. Despite a decline in the number of their publications, more and more attention was given to titles with a theological or generally religious subject.⁷² This may be why Roseo’s references to lands far from Europe and the Mediterranean usually derived from a source regarded as morally reliable, such as the letters of Jesuit missionaries. In any case, the third part of *Historie del mondo*, whose content was emblematically summarized by Roseo as a ‘history of our times up to the first year of the present pontificate’, was dedicated to Cardinal Cristoforo Madruzzo, prince-bishop of Trent, the city where the third and last phase of the Council (1561–3) was being held.⁷³ Roseo’s final words in the volume were also significant in this sense. He expressed the hope that Pope Pius IV (r. 1559–65) might be ‘that Angelic Pope so awaited in the world’, destined to restore unity to a Christendom that was afflicted by violent internal struggles.⁷⁴

The emphasis on the global expansion of the Catholic faith, with its inevitable value judgments regarding different cultures and societies, jeopardized the possibility of writing a balanced history of the world that could really integrate its multiple pasts. Not that this harmed Tarcagnota’s and Roseo’s sales. On the

⁷⁰ The first edition was the *Lettere del padre maestro Francesco et del padre Gasparro et altri della Compagnia di Giesù scritte dalla India ai fratelli del Collegio di Giesù de Coimbra: Tradotte di lingua spagnuola. Ricevute nel 1551*. The volume was printed in Venice by Michele Tramezzino in 1551.

⁷¹ Roseo, *Historie del mondo*, fol. 125v. The edition that Roseo consulted was almost certainly *Diversi avisi particolari dall’Indie di Portogallo ricevuti dall’anno 1551 sino al 1558 dalli reverendi padri della Compagnia di Giesu... Tradotti nuovamente dalla lingua spagnuola nella italiana* (Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1558). In his letter of dedication to Vittoria Farnese, Duchess of Urbino, Tramezzino explained that in those missionary reports she would find ‘wonderful and great things indeed, learn about the savage and horrible customs of those people, the qualities of that country, and the infinite goodness and patience of those reverend fathers’.

⁷² Tallini, ‘Tradizione familiare e politiche editoriali’, p. 60.

⁷³ I quote from the letter of dedication to Madruzzo, in Roseo, *Historie del mondo*, fol. unnumbered.

⁷⁴ Roseo, *Historie del mondo*, fol. 361r.

contrary. New updatings of the work continued to be added by Roseo and then by the cleric Bartolomeo Dionigi (c. 1544–1613).⁷⁵ This brought the new editions and reprints more and more up to date. And when the Tramezzino brothers closed down their print works in 1592 at the end of a serious economic crisis, other important Venetian printers such as the Giunta and Varisco families took their place. There was still a market for *Historie del mondo* in 1617.⁷⁶ That work long resisted competition from other quite similar writings, revealing both the far-sighted publishing acumen of Tarcagnota and Michele Tramezzino in the mid-sixteenth century as well as its own ability to stimulate imitation.

To keep up with a market for history writing that was constantly expanding, even Giovo's *Histories* received additions from the poet and humanist Natale Conti in order to bring it up to the present in a Latin edition with inserts on Peru, Ethiopia, and Japan. Its complete version was published in 1581 and then translated into the vernacular by Giovanni Carlo Saraceni in 1589.⁷⁷ This profitable publishing sector was becoming more and more crowded, partly because Venetian printers were constantly issuing works in the vernacular that actually were little more than a return to the old tradition of universal histories, as their titles indicate. I refer to *Historie universali* (1570) by the Dominican friar from Milan, Gasparo Bugati, which went from the creation of the world to 1559; *Sopplimento delle croniche universali del mondo* (1575), a late-fifteenth-century chronicle by the Augustinian friar Giacomo Filippo Foresti in an updated vernacular version by Francesco Sansovino; *Sommario ovvero età del mondo cronologiche* (1581) by the Camaldolese monk Girolamo Bardi; and *Compendio historico universale di tutte le cose notabili* (1594) by the notary and scholar Giovanni Nicolò Doglioni.⁷⁸

This trend was not only Italian. The French humanist Loys Le Roy (c. 1510–77) published his *De la Vicissitude ou varieté des choses en l'universe* in 1575.⁷⁹ Based on a compilation of other historians, including Giovo, the work also included the new worlds while giving special attention to Europe, the Mediterranean region, and the lands ruled by Ottomans and Safavids. Le Roy connected events of ancient and recent history while giving much more space to the former and to the comparison of ancient empires, in line with the recommendations of Jean Bodin in his treatise on historical method (1566).⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Michele Tagliabracci, 'Il contributo letterario di Bartolomeo Dionigi da Fano, volgarizzatore del Cinquecento', *Nuovi Studi Fanesi* 28 (2015–2016): pp. 67–102.

⁷⁶ The Varisco brothers still published a five-volume edition of the work that year.

⁷⁷ Natale Conti, *Universae historiae sui temporis libri triginta ab anno salutis nostrae 1545, usque ad annum 1581* (Venice: Damiano Zenaro, 1581). A previous version covering the period 1545–56 had been published in 1572. The Italian translation of the 1581 volume was also published by Zenaro.

⁷⁸ Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography*, p. 378.

⁷⁹ The work was translated into English by Robert Ashley as *Of the Interchangeable Course, or Variety of Things in the Whole World and the Concurrence of Armes and Learning, thorough the First and Famous Nations* (London: Charles Yetseweit, 1594).

⁸⁰ For a recent study of Le Roy's work see Emma Claussen, 'A Sixteenth-Century Modern? Ancients and Moderns in Loys Le Roy's *De la Vicissitude*', *Early Modern French Studies* 37, no. 2 (2015):

Works like Le Roy's or Tarcagnota's and Roseo's helped form a new taste for historical writings that would encompass the broader geography and the deeper past of a new age of global interaction. The world had become the latest fashion. The word 'fashion' perhaps describes better than any other the ongoing change, which was by no means limited to history books. The success of *Historie del mondo* also throws light on the trajectory of a work like the *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo*. The painter Cesare Vecellio, son of one of Titian's cousins, brought out its first edition in Venice in 1590.⁸¹ Though scholars often treat *Habiti antichi et moderni* as a work of ethnography—a genre of still uncertain status in the late sixteenth century—in its day Vecellio's volume seems to have enjoyed a special relationship with the historiographical literature produced in Venice.⁸² To mention one telling detail, it was published by Damiano Zenaro, whose catalogue included many other works of history.⁸³

The high point of a preexisting Renaissance tradition of costume books, Vecellio's *Habiti antichi e moderni* contained a valuable set of wood-cuts with portraits of men and women of various ages and places each dressed in their local costumes with a caption in Italian.⁸⁴ This catalogue of fashion, alert both to history and geography, was so successful that eight years later a second bilingual edition appeared, in Italian and Latin.⁸⁵ Designed to expand the commercial potential of the work, the new version increased the number of pictures and reduced the

pp. 76–92. See also the collected essays included in the volume by Danièle Duport, ed., *Loys Le Roy, Renaissance & vicissitude du monde* (Caen: Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2011). On Bodin and the ancient empires, see the introduction to Jean Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*, edited by Sara Miglietti (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2013), pp. 15–16.

⁸¹ A facsimile of the 1590 edition with an English translation can be read in Margaret F. Rosenthal and Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Clothing of the Renaissance World: Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas: Cesare Vecellio's Habiti Antichi et Moderni* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2008).

⁸² For an interpretation in 'ethnographic perspective' see Ann Rosalind Jones, 'Ethnographer's Sketch, Sensational Engraving, Full-Length Portrait: Print Genres for Spanish America in Girolamo Benzoni, the De Brys, and Cesare Vecellio', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 41, no. 1 (2011): pp. 137–171.

⁸³ Besides Dolce's *Giornale delle historie del mondo* and Conti's *Historiae* and its translation, Zenaro published, among other historical works, Johannes Scyltzes's *Historiarum compendium* (1570), Remigio Nannini's *Considerationi civili sopra l'Historie di m. Francesco Guicciardini, e d'altri storici* (1582), the Jesuit Giampietro Maffei's *Historiarum Indicarum libri XVI* (1589) and its translation (1589), and Giovanni Nicolò Doglioni's *Historia venetiana* (1598).

⁸⁴ On the Renaissance background of this volume, see Jo Anne Olian, 'Sixteenth-Century Costume Books', *Dress: The Journal of Costume Society of America* 3, no. 1 (1977): pp. 20–47. For the Venetian context, see Margaret F. Rosenthal, 'Clothing, Fashion, Dress, and Costume in Venice (c. 1450–1650)', in *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400–1797*, edited by Eric Dursteler (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 889–928. Vecellio's work has attracted significant scholarly attention. See Jeannine Guérin dalle Mese, *L'occhio di Cesare Vecellio: Abiti e costumi esotici nel '500* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1998); Giulia Calvi, 'Gender and the Body', in *Finding Europe: Discourses on Margins, Communities, Images, ca. 13th–18th Centuries*, edited by Anthony Molho and Diogo Ramada Curto (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), pp. 94–106; Eugenia Paulicelli, 'Mapping the World: The Political Geography of Dress in Cesare Vecellio's Costume Books', *The Italianist* 28, no. 1 (2008): pp. 24–53.

⁸⁵ Cesare Vecellio, *Habiti antichi et moderni di tutto il mondo . . . Di nuovo accresciuti di molte figure* (Venice: Sessa, 1598).

comments. What made the work particularly valuable, in Vecellio's view, was 'the age, diversity, and finery' of the costumes it contained.⁸⁶ In the manner of contemporary world historians, Vecellio's letter to the reader mentioned the 'effort' involved in tracing new information on costumes, 'many of which it was difficult to have certain knowledge of, as the countries were distant and unknown, and some of them almost without trade, which easily provides those relations necessary to have the kind of certainty the world will trust'. An eloquent change of title emphasized the inclusion of a greater number of models from outside Europe, particularly from the Americas (see Figure 4.2), thus emphasizing the completeness of a collection of costumes that were no longer 'from various parts of the world', but 'from the whole world'. This emphasis did not mean Vecellio was unaware of the partial nature of the new edition. Yet against any claim to perfection, he objected that 'anyone who waited for the end of something that has no end, would be considered a fool.' After all, it was to be borne in mind that not only were the costumes subject to constant changes, but 'many parts of the world being discovered only now are still far from our knowledge, and many that we and our fathers now know are known only by their name and not by the clothes and costumes, and this is so in all things in the world.'⁸⁷

In Defence of the History of the World

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, one could find on the tables of the bookshops displaying the most sought-after history books on sale—alongside *Historie del mondo* by Tarcagnota, Roseo, and others—works with the same title but produced by another tireless *poligrafo*, Cesare Campana. He was a nobleman of modest means from L'Aquila, a master of grammar, and preceptor in the Veneto region, particularly in Vicenza, where he was a member of the local cultural institution called the Olympic Academy. He supported the Counter-Reformation and had pro-Spanish feelings that he may have developed in youth, when he was still living in the viceroyalty of Naples, but that was rare in the Republic of Venice, which was politically and culturally hostile to the Catholic monarchy.⁸⁸ Among Campana's various historical works were several

⁸⁶ I quote from the letter of dedication to Pietro Montalbano, in Vecellio, *Habiti antichi et moderni*, fol. a2r.

⁸⁷ I quote from the letter to the reader, in Vecellio, *Habiti antichi et moderni*, fol. unnumbered. On the greater attention to the New World, see Ann Rosalind Jones, 'Cesare Vecellio's Floridians in the Venetian Book Market: Beautiful Imports', in *The New World in Early Modern Italy, 1492–1750*, edited by Elizabeth Horodowich and Lia Markey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 248–269.

⁸⁸ Gino Benzoni, 'Campana, Cesare', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 17 (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana fondato da Giovanni Treccani, 1974), pp. 331–334.



Figure 4.2 Native American women from Peru. Engraving from Cesare Vecellio's *Habiti antichi et moderni di tutto il mondo* (Venice: Sessa, 1598), fol. 491v. Providence, Rhode Island, John Carter Brown Library, H598 .V411h. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library.

volumes entitled *Historie del mondo*. First printed in Venice by Giorgio Angelieri, their debt to Tarcagnota and Roseo was evident.

Tarcagnota's work was a particular inspiration to Campana's two-volume history of the ancient world from the founding of Rome on, published in

1591.⁸⁹ He then interrupted work on this book to concentrate on more recent periods, producing another compilation that brought him great fame. In the first edition (1596), Campana's new *Historie del mondo* covered the period 1580–96 and developed Roseo's tendency to write almost in real time, turning the present into the past through the ability to make use of fresh evidence, such as instructions, private letters, and oral accounts, but also deftly to extract various pieces of information of distant lands from newsletters and manuscript reports and blend them together into a single narrative.⁹⁰ The initial print run exceeded 1,400 copies—high for the period—and sold out in a few months. Angelieri immediately reprinted the work in 1597 and, to exploit readers' expectations as much as possible, presented it as the second of two volumes covering the years from 1570—the first volume appeared in 1599—thus cutting out competition from a Turin edition that came out in 1598.⁹¹ In the same year the publisher and printer Lucantonio Giunta retaliated by issuing a five-volume edition of Tarcagnota's *Historie del mondo* with Roseo and Dionigi's additions up to 1582, and extended to the present on the basis of Campana's book.

In the short letter that accompanied the first reprint of Campana's work, 'almost a third longer, as well as revised and corrected with great diligence by its author', Angelieri explained to his readers that 'he hoped to bring out, with this volume, the previous one by the same author as well, which is also being printed', but as he was 'solicited from all sides to send to the bookshops this one which was printed last year, as it is much in request every day', he thought it best to satisfy the 'universal desire'.⁹² It was a brilliant commercial strategy. The work continued to sell well and went through at least four more editions in the first decade of the seventeenth century.⁹³

From close range, the thousands of pages of Campana's two volumes seemed less torrential than those of Roseo and Dionigi and had a precise structure in which each book corresponds to a year. Special attention was given to political and

⁸⁹ Cesare Campana, *Dell'histoire del mondo... libri quattro: Ne' quali si narra distintamente, & con diligenza, quanto è occorso d'anno in anno dall'edificazione di Roma, fin'à gli anni del mondo 3361*, 2 vols. (Venice: Giorgio Angelieri, 1591).

⁹⁰ Cesare Campana, *Delle historie del mondo... libri tredici, ne' quali si narrano le cose avvenute dall'anno 1580, fino al 1596: Con un discorso intorno allo scrivere historie...* (Venice: Giorgio Angelieri, 1596).

⁹¹ Cesare Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, 2 vols. (Venice: Giorgio Angelieri, 1597–1599). The sales figures of the first edition were given in the letter of dedication to Francesco Maria Secondo Della Rovere, Duke of Urbino, dated 30 August 1597, in Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 2, p. unnumbered. The competing edition of the volume covering the period 1580–1596 was published by Giovanni Domenico Tarino.

⁹² Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 2, p. unnumbered.

⁹³ One was published in Como by Girolamo Frova in 1601, other two in Pavia by Pietro Bartoli in 1601–2 and by Andrea Viani in 1602, and still another in Venice by Giunta in 1607, respectively. Meanwhile several editions of an anonymous *Aggiunta all'histoire del mondo del sig. Cesare Campana... ne la quale brevemente si narrano tutte le cose notabile avvenute dal anno 1595 fino al 1600* appeared in Brescia and Pavia in 1601.

military history. Of course, the vantage point of Campana's *Historie del mondo* was still European. Any non-European reader who came upon the work, would have found its highly detailed account of events hard going. In any case, perhaps in consequence of a changed perception of global connections, Campana supplied far more information on events that had occurred outside Europe than Tarcagnola and his continuers.⁹⁴

For example, alongside a detailed account of events linked to the Ottoman and Safavid empires, in his treatment of the period from 1570 to 1596 Campana included various references to the Americas, particularly concerning Francis Drake's expeditions, and to Africa, referring to its internal conflicts and religious movements.⁹⁵ Special attention was given to Asia, seemingly in response to increased demand from readers and also to the information spread by the Jesuit letters. This was certainly so for the episode of the revolt of Cuncolim, in Salcete, along the west coast of India, which led to the killing of five Jesuit fathers (1583). Campana added a description of the region, an account of how 'the king of Portugal obtained it, after a long war, from the king of Idalgan' (that is, Adil Khan, the title used by the sultans of Bijapur at the time of the Portuguese penetration), and a description of missionary work in the area.⁹⁶

In other cases, one can easily detect the influence of the style of the newsletters that flowed into Venice from every part of Europe. Writing about the year 1573, for example, Campana introduced the Jesuit mission in Japan in words evoking the combination of oral and written evidence that was the basis of the information that circulated at the time: 'It was said in these days that letters had arrived in Spain on the last day of November, sent from Japan by the Jesuit fathers (some of whom with Francis Xavier had penetrated those remote parts since 1548), that described how the Christian faith was making great progress there.' A detailed account followed of the archipelago, its inhabitants, and their customs and beliefs, but also of the political and military balance of power, which were presented on the basis of 'various letters of the Jesuit fathers'.⁹⁷ This sort of general introduction to Japan enabled Campana to refer elsewhere in the work to matters that had happened in the region without having to present their framework each time, but simply summarizing the facts as if it were a part of the world now familiar to readers. This was also confirmed by the detailed account of the legation of four young *daymiō* converts who had come from Japan to Rome in 1585 to meet Pope Gregory XIII (r. 1572–85). It was described in the long section opening book 4 of volume 2, where Campana also tried to render the first reaction to the arrival in Italy of this unusual delegation: 'it caused all the Italians such pleasure and

⁹⁴ This is also maintained by Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965–1993), vol. 2/2, pp. 232–234.

⁹⁵ Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 2, pp. 60, 244–245, 276–278, and 321.

⁹⁶ Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 2, p. 115.

⁹⁷ Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 1, pp. 273–276.

wonder together that the eyes and thoughts of each of them seemed fixed on them and their actions, while they reflected that from parts so distant from our land and from countries hitherto little known mighty kings sent envoys to pay homage and submit to the Vicar of Christ.⁹⁸

In the case of China, Campana made no use of the Jesuit letters, but rather of a 'book printed' by their Augustinian rivals, who had gone as missionaries to the Philippines and aimed to be recognized as having the most reliable information on East Asia.⁹⁹ Very probably the source in question was one of the available editions of the Italian translation of *Historia de las cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del gran reino de la China* (1585) by Juan González de Mendoza, published from 1586 on.¹⁰⁰ 'The country of China', wrote Campana, was 'for the most part unknown to Ptolemy and other ancients, as also to the Portuguese and Castilians, who were almost discoverers of new worlds' but 'who hardly managed to become familiar with its sea coasts and a few coastal towns from outside'. Campana went on to celebrate the Chinese primacy in military arts, as 'it is no small matter that they claim, with good reason, that the use of artillery spread among those peoples many hundreds of years before us.' Similar claims were made for printing, 'which was invented among us only in 1440 by Johannes Gutenberg and put into practice for the first time at Mainz, while in China, according to books, we find it was used hundreds of years before'. He even mentioned the conjecture already made by Giovio and others that, 'as that province bordered on Tartary, from there the invention reached the Germans.' Campana then continued with information on the political order of the Chinese Empire, the customs of the inhabitants, the geography of the territory, and the cities. He also depicted the vast range of goods to be found there. What most intrigued him were the 'porcelain vases, a most noble and valuable mixture', as he claimed, it would prevent anyone using them from 'being secretly poisoned', as it crumbled at the merest contact with noxious potions. This belief led Campana to supply a fanciful description of porcelain, which was supposedly made of 'shells of sea slugs, eggs, and other materials unknown to use, but of great strength, that, reduced to powder and made into a paste, is then preserved many years underground'.¹⁰¹

These and other pages were a digest of much of the knowledge of the world that circulated in the Veneto area in the late sixteenth century. Its importance also lay in the contribution to making images of remote regions widely available, one of the pleasures readers clearly derived from Campana's *Historie del mondo*. His rapid writing, which claimed to narrate the recent history of a world that was more

⁹⁸ Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 2, p. 154.

⁹⁹ See 'News from the East' in chapter 2.

¹⁰⁰ On the Italian translation of this work, see Antonella Romano, 'La prima storia della Cina: Juan Gonzales de Mendoza fra l'Impero spagnolo e Roma', *Quaderni storici* 48, no. 1 (2013): pp. 89–116.

¹⁰¹ Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 1, pp. 498–500.

and more connected while seated in comfort at his desk, risked meeting severe criticism, however, at least according to the remarkable *Discourse on the writing of histories*, addressed to Giovanni Carlo Scaramelli, secretary of the Senate and Republic of Venice, with which Campana opened his work.¹⁰² This reply to detractors confirmed that the Venetian *poligrafi* had soon started thinking about the serious questions raised by writing histories of the world. Early signs were already evident in Tarcagnota's defence of 'ample history', which may have been written in response to Patrizi, as well as in the arguments with which, in the closing pages of the second part of his *Historie del mondo*, he rebutted those who were 'in some way anatomizing' his work. In particular, he argued against the reliability of eyewitness accounts of historical facts, 'as we cannot have the same account of the same fact that has happened in the same city, let alone in a battle a hundred miles away, by the same people that were there at the time.' Tarcagnota also asserted his right to 'choose' the 'judicious' authors to follow, as, on the 'things that happened a long time ago', 'their writings are more credible than what others might want to claim about them from hearsay.'¹⁰³

Campana's *Discourse on the writing of histories* was more structured and developed than Tarcagnota's considerations. The first part was essentially intended to be a profession of impartiality, as was understandable for a work published 'while thousands of men are still alive who can openly reprimand me over it'. Campana shielded himself from the attack of 'some' who accused him of writing for the market (as a 'private person') and, above all, of having no direct experience 'of the civil or military actions to be discussed'. He then returned to the breadth of his 'universal histories of the world'. He claimed he wanted to complete them and promised to deal with the period from antiquity to 1570, which had remained uncovered in his volumes—but it never appeared.¹⁰⁴ Campana wrote a sort of apologia for the histories of the world published in Venice in the late sixteenth century. Even if one merely wanted to reconstruct 'a war waged by those faithful to the Turk', he explained, to rely on 'those who not only fully understood governments of peoples and the art of war, but also asserted what they wrote as they had seen it', was 'all very well in theory, but impossible to carry out for some and extremely difficult for others.' The same was true for those who claimed to 'penetrate the secrets of princes'—perhaps a wink at Venice's benevolence in tolerating the success of the volumes by a pro-Spanish writer like Campana, who himself later acknowledged the 'great privilege' of living 'under a free republic'. The historian, then, had to 'recount only what is generally regarded as true', proceeding with 'proper diligence in seeking out and discovering the nature

¹⁰² Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, fols. br–c4v. A brief mention of this text can be found in Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography*, pp. 365–366.

¹⁰³ Tarcagnota, *Delle historie del mondo*, vol. 2, fol. 501v.

¹⁰⁴ Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, fol. b2r–v.

of peoples, the characteristics of countries, the properties of places, and other similar aspects'. Thus, drawing information both from 'books' and 'people who may be eyewitnesses', it was possible for 'everyone with a little study and diligence', as he put it, 'even though he has not seen it with his own eyes, to describe not only striking events, but also the reasons and lessons deriving from them, in such a way that, with praise or at least without blame, makes the narrative worthy of the name of history'.¹⁰⁵

Converting the globe and its past into a historical account remained a complex operation, especially in an age that had seen a new image of the world emerge, at the expense of the authority of the ancients. That is why Campana felt the need to consider carefully the criticism of the reports of eyewitnesses or the protagonists of the facts narrated, who were often unreliable or contradicted each other. He openly rejected the arguments of theoreticians such as the Dominican theologian Melchor Cano, who had 'prudently' written 'that the historian should narrate the things he has seen or heard from those who were present at the facts'. 'History would be very short', objected Campana, 'if it narrated only what one has done or seen with one's own eyes', 'nor should the historian relate every detail', but 'it may be enough for him to narrate what he judges to be useful to posterity, because this account serves nothing else'.¹⁰⁶ In any case, noted Campana, 'there have been writers who have dealt better with the actions that took place in remote countries far from their memory than those who were born in the place and were present at the facts'.¹⁰⁷ Consequently, he opposed the judgment of the 'historiographer' to the primacy of what he called 'visual history', as the former could not 'depict as true anything other than what he regards as true'. Thus direct experience was put on the same plane as that mediated by things ('because he has seen them or because he claims to have done so'), writings ('because he derives them from books, marbles, and other probably reliable memories'), and 'common opinion' ('because universal and unchanging fame preaches them as such').¹⁰⁸

The *Discourse on the writing of histories* contained a defence of the central role of the historian and his right to select his materials so as to produce a history that made sense. Completeness was a mirage that should not be pursued. This was the conclusion of the first detailed defence of the kind of works that were meeting with great success among readers in the late sixteenth century. In this way Campana conferred theoretical dignity on the volumes by Venetian *poligrafi* like Tarcagnola, Roseo, and Dionigi, who had laboured in the previous decades to change the old universal histories into something new. If the globe and its history could be known through reading, then it was not necessary to have travelled across

¹⁰⁵ Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, fols. b3v–b5r.

¹⁰⁶ Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, fols. b5v–b6r.

¹⁰⁷ Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, fol. b6v.

¹⁰⁸ Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, fols. b7v–b8r.

continents and oceans or know the languages of the populations one was describing to deal with them either. 'On the basis of these arguments', concluded Campana, 'I began to write the actions that had taken place in various parts of the world, although I cannot certify them by having seen them apart from a very small number of cases.'¹⁰⁹ The confines of an expanding world could be encompassed in a book even by the most modest of scholarly observers.

¹⁰⁹ Campana, *Delle historie del mondo*, fol. b8v.

The Twilight of Histories of the World

Jesuit Missions and Imperial Rivalries

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the creative freedom which had encouraged experimentation in the writing of histories of the world during the age of exploration gradually dissolved. That is not to say that interest in works of this kind declined. Rather the growing importance to European powers of overseas possessions made the production of histories of the world an ever more delicate exercise. Once this type of historical writing started to receive official support from authorities anxious to regulate accounts of a past on which the legitimacy of the present depended, the boundless and variegated material of world history began to be more cautiously selected, with the result that Europe and Christianity were overwhelmingly returned to the centre.

The need to bend lively historical writing to the celebration of a specific empire or missionary endeavour, in a period marked by growing political and religious rivalry, led to the resurgence of tendencies that were already partly present in medieval and humanist historiography. This would lead to a twofold vice afflicting the so-called universal histories written in Europe in later centuries: on the one hand, there was a link between the unequal attention given to different parts of the globe and the position attributed to their respective cultures in a hierarchy that unfailingly placed Europe on the top; and, on the other, a decidedly political subtext, usually accompanied by a more or less flagrant desire to use history to legitimize a particular order of the world, in the present and in future.

Missionary Histories

In the late sixteenth century, the Catholic monarchy that had by then united the two global empires of Spain and Portugal under the aegis of Philip II of Habsburg (r. 1556–98) was increasingly portrayed as the culmination of all previous world history. Spanish galleons laden with men and goods directly united Asia and the Americas, just as solemn religious processions marked out life in the Iberian colonial cities. There were still internal tensions that darkened this apparent splendour, though. A case in point was the frequent contention between missionary orders, with the Jesuits, for example, opposed to the Franciscans in the

New World, and to the Augustinians and Dominicans in Asia, where the competition to evangelize China was particularly antagonistic.

What made the clash between religious groups still more delicate was the looming threat posed by the explorations of North-European powers. In just a few years, the dream of an Iberian (and Catholic) planet was doomed to be frustrated. Meanwhile, the danger that the Dutch and English fleets now sailing the high seas might not only challenge the Habsburg's global dominance but export the clash between Catholics and Protestants beyond Europe was also a cause of great concern. The alliance between the English and the Safavids, which led to the Portuguese being driven from Hormuz in 1622, would show how a common interest among the various enemies of the Iberian empires might even lead to an accord between Christians and Muslims. The seriousness of this new situation had already become clear in mid-1588, when the Spanish Armada, on entering the Channel to invade England, met with an unexpected reverse, shattering forever the myth of the invincibility of the Iberian empires on the high seas. This confirmed the fears that had already been instilled by the raids of the vice-admiral of the English fleet, Francis Drake: he had been commissioned by Elizabeth I to harry the Spanish possessions in America, at the same time as Walter Raleigh was making a first attempt to found an English colony in the New World. Despite these repeated blows, the composite Iberian empire long remained the principal European power across the globe.

The first edition of *Historiarum Indicarum libri XVI*, a missionary chronicle by the Jesuit Giampietro Maffei, saw the light of day in 1588.¹ Born in Bergamo, as a young man he had moved to Rome to join his uncle Basilio, who was then custodian of the Vatican Library, one of early modern Europe's richest stores of information about the wider world.² Meanwhile, he translated a history of the Jesuit mission in Asia by the Portuguese father Manuel da Costa, later published in 1571.³ Maffei's labours did not pass unnoticed. In 1579 he was called to Portugal by the last king of the dynasty of the Avis, the old cardinal Henry (r. 1578–80), whose death opened the way to the Iberian Union. Maffei's task was to work on *Historiarum Indicarum*. In Portugal he devoted himself to his chronicle, making particular use of Jesuit letters and other archive documents he consulted in Lisbon and Coimbra.⁴ His sources also included the Portuguese writer and traveller

¹ Giampietro Maffei, *Historiarum Indicarum libri XVI*... (Florence: Filippo Giunta, 1588). On the author, see Stefano Andretta, 'Maffei, Giampietro', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 67 (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana fondato da Giovanni Treccani, 2006), pp. 232–234.

² Anthony Grafton, ed., *Rome Reborn: The Vatican Library and Renaissance Culture* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1993).

³ Manuel da Costa, *Rerum a Societate Iesu in Oriente gestarum ad annum usque a Deipara Virgine MDLXVIII* (Dillingen: Sebald Mayer, 1571).

⁴ Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965–1993), pp. 501 and 803–805; Stefano Andretta, 'La realtà iberica nelle opera di Giovanni Pietro Maffei e Giovanni Botero', in *A Companhia de Jesus na Península Ibérica nos sécs. XVI*

Fernão Mendes Pinto. Maffei met him in October 1582, accompanied by two other Jesuits. A written note survives of their conversation, which revolved around China and Japan. Pinto just repeated almost literally what he had written in the *Peregrinação*, the account of Asia he had long been working on.⁵ Maffei was later able to consult the manuscript of the *Peregrinação*, which, after its author's death, had reached the House of Converted Women in Lisbon, a residence founded by the Jesuits in 1586. He drew on this work for the passages on the life of Francis Xavier included in his *Historiarum Indicarum*.⁶

Maffei's work appeared in Latin, but was soon translated into Italian and French, and was reprinted many times.⁷ It would be difficult to overstate its importance. It was not, however, a history of the world, but of one of the two Indies, an evocative name that included the lands beyond Europe, with the significant exception of Africa and Arabia. The lasting use of the term 'Indies' bears witness to how little European eyes distinguished between two such entirely separate continents as America and Asia for so long. What matters most, though, is that Maffei's chronicle did nothing to retrieve the history of Asia before the arrival of the Portuguese. It merely provided a well-informed and plain treatment, exclusively centred on the European presence, from the landing of Vasco da Gama (1498) until the death of King John III of Portugal (1557). Special attention was given to the achievements attributed to the Jesuit missionaries, who had reached India in 1542, headed by Xavier. Maffei moved a step forward compared to the Portuguese chronicles of the time, on which he had largely depended. Both those written in Portuguese by João de Barros, Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, and Damião de Góis, and the more recent work in Latin by Jerónimo Osório, which was then very popular in Europe, invariably terminated with the death of King Manuel I (1521), while Maffei continued the story, mingling the feats of the Portuguese with the action of the Jesuits, to the point of almost confusing the two. The effect was that of an amalgam between empire and mission, with the Society of Jesus emerging as its true interpreter.⁸ This chronicle was a response to the expectations of what was now a mature phase in the construction of the Iberian world. It was time for historiography to offer a reassuring expression of the superiority of the 'Christians' over the 'barbarians'—to use a recurrent dichotomy

e XVII: Espiritualidade e cultura, 2 vols. (Oporto: Instituto de Cultura Portuguesa da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, 2005), vol. 2, pp. 519–542.

⁵ The notes taken by the Jesuit father João Rebelo can be read in Rebecca Catz, ed., *Cartas de Fernão Mendes Pinto e outros documentos* (Lisbon: Presença, 1983), pp. 123–127.

⁶ I follow Catz, ed., *Cartas de Fernão Mendes Pinto*, p. 123.

⁷ The Italian translation (1589) was made by Francesco Serdonati, while the French version (1603) was produced by François Arnault de La Borie.

⁸ The importance of the Society of Jesus for the Portuguese Empire has been reaffirmed by Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540–1750* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

in *Historiarum Indicarum*. The purpose was to justify the global projection of the Jesuits and the imperial conquests that had paved the way for their mission.

Maffei's plan for his chronicle was for it to confirm the harmony between monarchy and church in the Portuguese world, but the dynastic crisis of 1580 forced him to adjust this aim. Instead he dedicated his work to the new king, Philip II, praised as the ruler under whose protection it was inevitable to place a 'sincere and accurate account of the oceanic explorations carried out by the devout and fortunate armadas of his ancestors, of the encounter with peoples who had never been heard of before, and of the propagation to the most remote parts of the Earth of the true faith in God and the empire'.⁹ In this way Maffei was trying to attenuate the tensions that still surrounded the king of Spain's accession to the Portuguese throne, underlining his blood ties with the very Portuguese rulers who had inaugurated conquests overseas. However, a certain embarrassment remained palpable in the opening of *Historiarum Indicarum*. Maffei described the Iberian feats, projected towards 'lands then unknown and still more unknown seas, both to east and west', as a unique movement willed by divine providence. He then clarified this by adding that, if 'honour and titles are rightly claimed for themselves partly by Portugal and partly by Spain', 'the glorious feats performed by the Spaniards in the western parts will be the work of other writers.'¹⁰

Maffei's history was accepted as a model for other writers. A few years later, when Castile's grip on the Iberian global empire was tightening, the time seemed ripe for a new history of the Jesuit missions in the East Indies that was less closely entwined with the Portuguese crown. Its author was Luis de Guzmán (1544–1605), a Spanish Jesuit who, like Maffei, had never left Europe. Specifically, Guzmán spent his whole life between Jesuit colleges and residences in Castile and Andalusia. But this did not prevent him from publishing in 1601 a two-volume chronicle providing a general account of the missionary achievements from the arrival of Xavier in Goa until 1565, which was continued until 1600 in the case of Japan.¹¹ Guzmán gave ample space to the lives of individual Jesuits and episodes of martyrdom, thus emphasizing the edifying nature of his work. He insisted on this point, for example, when he claimed that reading about the missionaries in Japan had instilled in him a desire to improve his life and imitate at least in part those whose service to God had been so admirable.¹² He constructed his history mainly on the basis of Jesuit sources, above all the letters sent from Asia, but, just like Maffei, he included letters from other territories within the Portuguese

⁹ Maffei, *Historiarum Indicarum libri XVI*, fol. not numbered.

¹⁰ Maffei, *Historiarum Indicarum libri XVI*, fols. 1v–2r.

¹¹ Luis de Guzmán, *Historia de las misiones que han hechos los religiosos de la Compañía de Jesus, para predicar el Sancto Evangelio en la India Oriental, y en los Reynos de la China y Iapon*, 2 vols. (Alcalá de Henares: Widow of Juan Gracián, 1601).

¹² See his letter of dedication to Dona Juana de Velasco y Aragón, Duchess of Gandía, in Guzmán, *Historia de las misiones*, vol. 2, fol. ¶ 4v.

Assistancy of the Society of Jesus, such as Brazil and East Africa.¹³ In the following years, collections of annual letters sent from these lands were regularly published thanks to the industry of the Portuguese Jesuit Fernão Guerreiro (c. 1550–1617).¹⁴ They enjoyed great popularity and provided an important documentary basis, for example, for *Histoire des choses plus memorables* (1608–14) by the French Jesuit Pierre Du Jarric (1566–1617).¹⁵

Maffei's chronicle and subsequent Jesuit accounts of their missionary activity inspired by *Historiarum Indicarum* formed a counterpart to all those narratives that were trying to undermine the rhetoric of Spain and Portugal's a shared triumph and, what is more, that of the Catholic faith in the world. This risk became particularly strong after 1590, when the Protestant Théodore de Bry's monumental collection of travel writings on the West and East Indies, famous for its magnificent engravings, began to be published in Frankfurt am Main.¹⁶ This publishing venture entailed distinct versions in Latin and German and was continued until 1634 by De Bry's sons. As in *Navigazioni et Viaggi* by Giovanni Battista Ramusio, historical and geographical writings alternated without distinction. The first volumes included authors who had denounced the alleged cruelty and tyranny of the Spaniards and Portuguese, thus helping the consolidation and diffusion of the Black Legend, as well as writers such as Girolamo Benzoni, whose *Historia del Mondo Nuovo* had appeared for the first time in Venice in 1565.¹⁷ The De Bry collection was so successful that its relaunch of Benzoni's work might even have contributed to an anonymous translation into the Spanish language.¹⁸ Above all, the De Bry collection republished the literature produced earlier by North-European explorers such as Hans Staden, a German sailor who had converted to

¹³ In the prologue Guzmán claimed that he had also confirmed the details of his history 'with some very worthy fathers who spent many years in those parts' (Guzmán, *Historia de las misiones*, vol. 1, fol. ¶ [6r]).

¹⁴ Guerreiro published five volumes of letters covering the years from 1600 to 1608, with different Portuguese publishers, between 1603 and 1611. Some of them were entirely or partially translated into Spanish and German. See Carlos Sommervogel, ed., *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*... 12 vols. (Brussels: O. Schepens, 1890–1932), vol. 3, cols. 1913–1915.

¹⁵ Pierre Du Jarric, *Histoire des choses plus mémorables advenues tant ez Indes orientales, que autres pays de la découverte des Portugais*, 3 vols. (Bordeaux: Simon Millanges, 1608–1614).

¹⁶ Michiel van Groesen, *The Representations of the Overseas World in the De Bry Collection of Voyages, 1590–1634* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), which I follow for the information provided hereafter.

¹⁷ Angela Enders, 'An Italian in the New World: Girolamo Benzoni's *Historia del Mondo Nuovo*', *Dispositio* 17, no. 42–43 (1992): pp. 21–35. A recent contribution that analyses some of the images accompanying Benzoni's work in the De Bry's edition is Molly Tun, 'Colonial Cruelty: The Expression and Perpetuation of Violence in Theodor de Bry's *America*', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 95, no. 2 (2018): pp. 148–162. On the Black Legend, see Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan, eds., *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

¹⁸ Providence, Rhodes Island, John Carter Brown Library, Codex Ital 10. The manuscript is not illustrated.

Protestantism after spending about two years as a prisoner of the Tupinambas in Brazil between 1552 and 1554, and the Huguenot Jean de Léry.¹⁹

In this way Théodore De Bry guaranteed a historical background to colonial projects that were prejudicial to Iberian claims. Part of his plan was conceived while he was in London in the late 1580s. One of the people he discussed it with was Richard Hakluyt, who was then involved in a partly similar enterprise in support of the English expeditions.²⁰ This explains why the volumes published immediately after De Bry's death by his sons included the writings of the explorers Raleigh and Drake, as well as Jan Huygen van Linschoten, a Dutchman who had lived for some years in Goa, the capital city of the Portuguese Empire in Asia, in the service of the local archbishop. In 1596, at the time when the Dutch incursions in Southeast Asia were beginning, he had published an account that had disclosed significant information about the routes and lands he had crossed.²¹ Although it must be admitted that the Latin version published by De Bry's sons included passages in which Linschoten described the activities of the Jesuits in terms that were not always unfavourable, nonetheless his work inevitably attracted the attention of the Iberian inquisitions, which ordered its expurgation in the early seventeenth century.²²

In the end, the space given to the missionaries confirmed the market's power in selecting the works included in the collection. De Bry and his sons clearly did not want to alienate their Catholic clientele entirely and so tried to attenuate the partisan nature of a grand publishing project in support of overseas expansion by the Protestant powers. This explains the exclusion of *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552) by Bartolomé de las Casas, while in 1602 a Latin translation appeared of *Natural and Moral History of the Indies* by the Spanish Jesuit José de Acosta, though with the author's name omitted. Already translated into Dutch by Linschoten himself, this treatise seemed less controversial as it reworked in more muted terms the arguments of *A Short Account*. Anyway, Las Casas' text was widely known throughout Northern Europe, where it was one of the most effective weapons available to the critics of the Iberian empires.²³

¹⁹ Eve M. Duffy and Alida C. Metcalf, *The Return of Hans Staden: A Go-Between in the Atlantic World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012). On Léry, see Frank Lestringant, *Jean de Léry, ou l'invention du sauvage: Essai sur l'Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999).

²⁰ See 'Northern obsessions with the Americas' in chapter 2.

²¹ Ernst van den Boogaart, *Civil and Corrupt Asia: Image and Text in the Itinerario and the Icones of Jan Huygen van Linschoten* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

²² See *Tertia Pars Indiae Orientalis...* (Frankfurt am Main: Matthaus Becker, 1601), pp. 2–3; English translation in Johann Huygen van Linschoten, *The Voyage... to the East Indies*, edited by Arthur Coke Burnell and Pieter Anton Tiele, 2 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1885), vol. 2, pp. 161–162. For the expurgation, see *Index librorum prohibitorum et expurgatorum...* (Madrid: Luis Sánchez, 1612), p. 592, and *Index auctorum damnatae memoriae, tum etiam librorum...* (Lisbon: Pedro Craesbeeck, 1624), p. 723.

²³ For the translations of *A Short Account*, see Roger Chartier, *The Author's Hand and the Printer's Mind*, translated by Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), pp. 113–115. On Acosta and

Nature and Culture

Acosta's *Natural and Moral History* was published for the first time in Seville in 1590. The exclusive printing rights conceded by Philip II protected this work from the suspicions that now greeted in Spain any writings on the New World, which since 1571 had required in theory at least the prior approval of the Council of the Indies.²⁴ Unlike Maffei, Guzmán, and Guerreiro, who had never left Europe, Acosta had been a missionary. He had lived with indigenous people in Peru and Mexico before returning to Spain in 1587, where he concluded his *Natural and Moral History*. There he offered his readers a systematic treatise on the vegetation, animals, and mineral resources of the West Indies, but also of the ceremonies and customs of their inhabitants before the conquest—in other words, the *mores*, from which the expression 'moral history' in the title derived. Acosta's work revealed extensive familiarity with the discussions in the historical and geographical literature on the New World, which by then was 'not new but old, for much has been said and written about it'.²⁵ At times, indeed, *Natural and Moral History* resembled a learned compilation, in which Acosta listed and discussed questions first raised by other authors. Though never betraying his background in scholastic theology, Acosta showed a clear tendency to trust his personal experience of the Americas.

In any case, *Natural and Moral History* remained dependent on the information collected by local scholars of the prehispanic past. For Peru this meant mainly the Spanish official Juan Polo de Ondegardo, an antiquarian and author of reports on Andean traditions. Like Acosta, he had collaborated in the general survey on native inhabitants championed by Viceroy Francisco de Toledo around the time when the last descendant of the Incas, Túpac Amaru, was beheaded (1572). The aim had been to remove any sense of legitimacy for the ancient empire that the Pizarro brothers had defeated.²⁶ For Mexico, the decisive input came from Juan de Tovar, a Jesuit brother who was born in Texcoco (or Mexico City) of a Spanish father and a *mestizo* mother. Between 1582 and 1587, he had compiled a finely illustrated codex, which remained unpublished for a long time and contained significant antiquarian information about the inhabitants of Central Mexico, their

the Black Legend of the Spanish conquest of America, with special reference to the English context, see Gregory Murry, "'Tears of the Indians" or Superficial Conversion? José de Acosta, the Black Legend, and Spanish Evangelization in the New World', *Catholic Historical Review* 99, no. 1 (2013): pp. 29–51.

²⁴ On the Spanish control over the writings about the New World, see Richard Kagan, *Clio & the Crown: The Politics of History in Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), pp. 151–162.

²⁵ José de Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, edited by Jane E. Mangan, translated by Frances López-Morillas (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 10.

²⁶ Gonzalo Lamana Ferrario, ed., *Pensamiento colonial crítico: Textos y actos de Polo Ondegardo* (Cuzco: Centro Bartolomé de las Casas, 2012).

rites, beliefs, and calendars.²⁷ The manuscript that Acosta called ‘Mexican History’ came into his hands during a brief stay in New Spain. In his correspondence with Tovar, he did not conceal his doubts on the ‘certainty or authority’ of this source. Nonetheless he ended up using it, concluding that it was a ‘diligent and lengthy study of that nation’s old histories’.²⁸ One of the aspects that initially confused Acosta was the oral nature of the information collected by Tovar: ‘How can we believe that the orations or speeches which are reported in this history were actually made by the ancient rhetoricians that are mentioned in it, since long and, after their fashion, elegant speeches could hardly be preserved in the absence of letters?’ Tovar’s answer gives us a glimpse of the methods of transmitting memories going back to precolonial Mexico, by which ‘many orations were preserved verbatim from generation to generation until the Spaniards came.’ He then added that, after the conquest, ‘the Spaniards transcribed in our letters many orations and songs that I saw, and thus they have been preserved’.²⁹

Tovar referred to the distant prehispanic past, because this was what Acosta was really interested in when he wrote about memory aids used by indigenous people (such as the system of knotted strings for registering information known as *quipos* in the Andes or the pictorial codices in Mexico) in book 6 of his *Natural and Moral History*. This section of the work was an advanced stage of study of the prehispanic past of the New World, which Acosta, nevertheless, hoped to surpass. Others had already given an account of ‘the new and strange things that have been discovered in the New World and the West Indies and the deeds and adventures of the Spaniards who conquered and settled those lands’. Therefore he would deal with ‘the causes and reasons for those new things and natural wonders’, as well as the ‘history of those same ancient Indians and natural inhabitants of the New World’.³⁰ Providing knowledge that was reliable (because it was both critical and empirical) benefitted Acosta’s image as a modern author, contributing to his work’s success in Northern Europe too.³¹ That success was partly helped by the fact that his *Natural and Moral History* did not insist on exalting the Spanish Empire—‘for many books have been written about that’—and still less on

²⁷ J.H. Parry, ‘Juan de Tovar and the History of the Indians’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 121, no. 4 (1977): pp. 316–319. Today the manuscript is kept in Providence, Rhode Island, John Carter Brown Library, Codex Ind 2.

²⁸ Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, p. 330.

²⁹ The correspondence between Acosta and Tovar can be read in Joaquín García Icazbalceta, *Don Fray Juan de Zumárraga, primer obispo y arzobispo de México*, edited by Rafael Aguayo Spencer and Antonio Castro Leal, 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1947), vol. 4, pp. 89–93. For a quick comment on this exchange, see Elizabeth Hill Boone, *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), pp. 28–29.

³⁰ Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, p. 8.

³¹ Anthony Grafton, ‘José de Acosta: Renaissance Historiography and New World Humanity’, in *The Renaissance World*, edited by John Jeffries Martin (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 166–188.

presenting the idea of an irreducible connection between conquest and conversion, as Maffei did.³²

Conversion was, in any case, Acosta's aim too. That was the purpose of studying the customs of indigenous people and their past. From this perspective, the advent of the Spaniards was central to the plan of universal salvation, which also explained the interest in the natural world of the Americas, the skies and the climate, the flora and fauna, and also in metals, such as the silver of the mines of Potosí.³³ The wonder of all this, however, did not strike the De Bry brothers, whose illustrations in their edition of *Natural and Moral History* confined themselves to the native inhabitants.³⁴ From Acosta onwards, the twin themes of nature and culture would intersect with each other whenever peoples and societies outside Europe were written about. Acosta had perfected a model of non-narrative description. Still called 'history', his treatise built on the missionary work among the 'barbarians'—as he had defined in the prologue of his *De procuranda Indorum salute* (1588) all those who were not Christians.³⁵

America was both an opportunity for the Christian faith and an unprecedented challenge, but who were its inhabitants really? And where did they come from? Acosta could not avoid wondering about it, 'because on the one hand we know for certain that there have been men in these parts for many centuries, and on the other hand we cannot deny what Holy Writ clearly teaches, that all men were preceded by a first man.'³⁶ The rather unconvincing accounts of the Indians did nothing to solve this tricky question. Rational speculation tended towards the probability that they had arrived from Asia overland, maintained Acosta, as the ancients were unable to navigate the oceans. In this way he took a stand in the debate over the origins of the Indians, which continued to remain matter for controversy throughout the seventeenth century.³⁷

The theory that the Indians may have come from Asia made the comparisons in the second part of the work, which was devoted to their customs and ceremonies, less abstract. This was particularly true for religion. The Indians were said to be already 'exhausted' by the idolatry they practised before the Spaniards arrived

³² Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, p. 251.

³³ Simon Ditchfield, 'What Did Natural History Have to Do with Salvation? José de Acosta SJ (1540–1600) in the Americas', in *God's Bounty? The Churches and the Natural World*, edited by Peter Clarke and Tony Claydon (Woodbridge: Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by Boydell Press, 2010), pp. 144–168.

³⁴ Fermín del Pino Díaz, 'Texto y dibujo: La "Historia indiana" del jesuita Acosta y sus versiones alemanas con dibujos', *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 41, no. 1 (2005): pp. 1–31.

³⁵ Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 146–197.

³⁶ Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, p. 51.

³⁷ Giuliano Gliozzi, *Adamo e il Nuovo Mondo: La nascita dell'antropologia come ideologia coloniale: Dalle genealogie bibliche alle teorie razziali, 1500–1700* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1977), pp. 371–381. See also David N. Livingstone, *Adam's Ancestors: Race, Religion & The Politics of Human Origins* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), pp. 20–22.

because they ‘could not endure the cruelties of their gods’.³⁸ Acosta suggested constant comparisons between their rites and Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and ancient pagan ones, as well as those of some Asiatic peoples, which he had learnt of in letters from Jesuit missionaries in China, Japan, and India. He followed the same approach for cultural manifestations. The lack of writing posed a particular problem. Right from the start of his work, Acosta wondered ‘how the ancient sayings and doings of the Indians have come to be known, since they had no writing like us, for it is no small part of their abilities to have been able to preserve records of ancient times even though they did not use or possess letters of any kind’.³⁹ The answer led him to develop a further comparison, this time between *quipos* and Chinese ‘letters’, which Acosta had recently found out about from two Jesuits, Michele Ruggieri and Matteo Ricci.⁴⁰

His *Natural and Moral History* concentrated on the Americas, but there was also constant comparison with the rest of the world beyond Europe. This was a predictable consequence of Acosta’s perception of his time as an age in which it was common to meet ‘many men who have sailed from Lisbon to Goa, from Seville to Mexico and Panama, and on that other Southern Sea as far as China and the Strait of Magellan; and they do this with as much ease as the farmer goes from his village to the town.’⁴¹ Comparisons on a global scale intensified when it came to the ‘moral history’. This part of the work was a singular experiment in providing a complete treatise on the customs of the inhabitants of the New World in the state in which they were when the Spaniards had arrived. Acosta’s was a timeless history. The only exception was the genealogy of the Inca and Aztec emperors in the final book of *Natural and Moral History*, which dealt entirely with the ‘Mexican nation’, as ‘the memory of their beginnings and lineages, and wars and other things worthy of remembrance, has been preserved.’⁴² These materials, presented as original but arranged following a European expository style, closed emblematically with the fall of Moctezuma II, the conquest of Hernán Cortés, and the miracles and conversions of natives that were said to have followed.

Apart from the fact of both being written by Jesuits, the religious aim of Acosta’s *Moral and Natural History* meant it was seen as a complement to Maffei’s *Historiarum Indicarum*, although it was radically different. The two works ended up side by side on the shelves of an ideal Catholic library, as if they were a single history of the Indies, creating the impression of a world

³⁸ Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, p. 298. On Acosta and the beginnings of the study of religions, see Guy G. Stroumsa, *A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 17.

³⁹ Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, pp. 11–12.

⁴⁰ Ana Carolina Hosne, ‘Assessing Indigenous Forms of Writing: José de Acosta’s View of Andean Quipus in Contrast with Chinese “Letters”’, *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1, no. 2 (2014): pp. 177–191.

⁴¹ Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, p. 55.

⁴² Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, p. 250.

dominated by the ubiquitous presence of the Society of Jesus.⁴³ At the same time, a clear split was emerging in the European perception of Asia and the Americas, with long-term effects on the history of knowledge.⁴⁴

The Jesuits helped redraw the confines and characteristics of histories of the world in the late sixteenth century. The historical account had to conform to a Catholic culture that was ever more accustomed to censorship, without casting a shadow over the full legitimacy and inevitability of the propagation of the Christian faith. Celebrating the political powers that supported the missionaries was perfectly acceptable in this regard. Men like Maffei and Acosta were well aware of this. Yet, no real history of the world ever came from a Jesuit's pen. This is surprising, given the mass of knowledge on remote peoples and societies that the fathers of the Society of Jesus brought to Europe and spread throughout the Iberian empires.⁴⁵ All the more so as the second half of the sixteenth century saw a decided relaunching of sacred and ecclesiastical history.⁴⁶ Since the 1560s the Oratorian father Cesare Baronio (1538–1607) had been working on a universal history of the Catholic church, in response to the accusations of corruption and betrayal of the apostolic mandate launched by Protestant historiography. Between 1588 and 1607 he published twelve volumes of his *Annales ecclesiastici*, taking the story up to the first centuries of the Early Middle Ages.⁴⁷

This monument of erudition, which had delved into papal diplomas and other official documents, was strikingly popular in Europe. Though he belonged to the same generation as Maffei and Acosta, Baronio did not see the new global projection of Catholicism as a priority. In this he was a genuine interpreter of the spirit that had led the papacy to refrain from any active role in evangelizing

⁴³ Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁴⁴ For the New World, see classic works like John H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New, 1492–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Fredi Chiappelli (with Michael J.B. Allen and Robert L. Benson) ed., *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Anthony Grafton, (with the collaboration of April Shelford and Nancy Siraisi), *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992); Karen Ordahl Kupperman, ed., *America in European Consciousness, 1493–1750*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995). For Asia, besides Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, see now Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Europe's India: Words, People, Empires, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

⁴⁵ Charlotte de Castelneau-l'Estoile, Marie-Lucie Copete, Aliocha Maldavsky, and Ines G. Županov, eds., *Missions d'évangélisation et circulation des savoirs, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2011).

⁴⁶ Katherine Van Liere, Simon Ditchfield, and Howard Louthan, eds., *Sacred History: Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁴⁷ Giuseppe Antonio Guazzelli, 'Cesare Baronio and the Roman Catholic Vision of the Early Church', in *Sacred History: Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World*, edited by Katherine Van Liere, Simon Ditchfield, and Howard Louthan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 52–71; Stefania Tutino, "'For the Sake of the Truth of History and of the Catholic Doctrines": History, Documents, and Dogma in Cesare Baronio's *Annales Ecclesiastici*', *Journal of Early Modern History* 17, no. 2 (2013): pp. 125–159.

outside Europe, as was confirmed by the lack of substantial debate on the subject at the Council of Trent (1545–63).⁴⁸ The spiritual administration of overseas lands was delegated to the crowns of Spain and Portugal, while the Roman hierarchy concentrated on the clash with Protestantism.

The Birth of World Geopolitics

To understand why no Jesuit wrote a history of the world, one should consider the case of Giovanni Botero. A contemporary of Baronio, Botero was, like him, linked to the powerful Borromeo family.⁴⁹ When he left the Jesuits in 1580, after having been denied several times the profession of his solemn vows, he moved into the service of Cardinal Carlo Borromeo, the powerful archbishop of Milan who embodied the most austere spirit of the Counter-Reformation. For a while Botero shared Borromeo's project to reform the religious life of the archdiocese of Milan. It was in this period that he published the work of ascetic meditation *Del dispregio del mondo* (1584), a remarkable choice of title for someone who only a few years earlier had dreamt of leaving for the Indies as a missionary. The work opened on the four meanings of the term 'world': first, 'the whole of this machine that we see, created from nothing by our Lord God'—the universe; second, 'the place we live in'—the Earth; then, 'worldly men who care for nothing but this world'; and finally, 'the earthly things and contents contained in the world'.⁵⁰ The good Christian, Botero explained, could raise himself spiritually by scorning the second and fourth aspects in particular.

Life had a very different path in store for Botero. Rather than despising the world, he contemplated its variety through historical and geographical writings and the diplomatic reports that piled up on his desk and formed the basis of a work that was to be quite extraordinarily popular, *Relationi universali*. By 1591, when the first volume appeared in Rome with the blessing of Cardinal Federico Borromeo, Carlo's cousin, Botero was a leading author in Catholic culture. He moved between Milan, Paris, and Rome, and his treatise *The Reason of State* (1589) had established itself as one of the most influential political texts in late sixteenth-century Europe.

The publishing trajectory of *Relationi universali* was complex as a result of the additions and corrections that Botero continued to make to its four parts until

⁴⁸ For the silence on this matter at Trent, see John W. O'Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 87–89.

⁴⁹ The best introduction to Botero is still Federico Chabod, *Scritti sul Rinascimento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1967), pp. 269–458, to which I refer for the biographical details given in the following pages.

⁵⁰ Giovanni Botero, *Del dispregio del mondo libri cinque . . . et due prediche appartenenti all'istessa materia* (Milan: Francesco and Simone Tini, 1584), p. 1.

1611.⁵¹ But one thing is certain. This work was not a history of the world, nor was it conceived as such. It was placed in the geography, not the history, section of the libraries of the day. Botero certainly had no problems with space, as he systematically extended his treatise to all the regions of the world. Reassembling the elusive multiplicity of their pasts was quite another question. A focus on the many changes that had taken place over the centuries would have highlighted the background of violence on which the global spread of Christianity rested. Botero's declared aim was exactly the opposite.⁵² He wanted to describe the 'state of the Christian religion today across the world'.⁵³ In this way he performed a valuable service for the Catholic church, then intent on counting the number of its adherents, while it pitted itself against the other religions in a competition for souls that had now become worldwide.⁵⁴

The result was an impressive second-hand compilation, which owed much to Botero's Jesuit past—witness his extensive use of writings by members of the Society. His main source for Spanish America, for example, was Acosta, while for Brazil it was Maffei, on whom Botero also depended significantly for Asia.⁵⁵ *Relationi universali* drew on many historical works, though not always the most up-to-date. This led to some ambiguity and incoherence, as it was difficult to hold together such vast materials derived from a great variety of writings, which Botero frequently copied almost word for word. The final outcome was a sort of geopolitics of religions that was regarded as more useful and certainly more reassuring than a history of the world. After all, at stake was the primacy of the church and the Catholic powers. They had already been weakened in Europe by the Reformation and now risked losing any credible claim to universality.⁵⁶

Botero offered his readers a richly informative introduction to the present 'state' of the world, not an exposition of the complex changes that had made it such. Thus, this original compilation, whose first two parts concentrated on geography and political systems, ended up seeming like an exercise in apologetics. The spectacle of the globe was introduced starting from Europe and the Catholic bulwark of Spain, then moved on to the other continents. There was no need for

⁵¹ A modern edition of the work, based on the version published in Venice by Alessandro de' Vecchi in 1618, is now available. See Giovanni Botero, *Le relazioni universali*, edited by Blythe Alice Raviola, 2 vols. (Rome: Aragno, 2015).

⁵² John M. Headley, 'Geography and Empire in the Late Renaissance: Botero's Assignment, Western Universalism, and the Civilizing Process', *Renaissance Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2000): pp. 1119–1153.

⁵³ I quote from the letter of dedication to Cardinal Charles of Lorraine, in Giovanni Botero, *Delle relazioni universali... Prima parte* (Rome: Giorgio Ferrari, 1591), fol. 2v.

⁵⁴ Adriano Prosperi, 'Lo stato della religione tra l'Italia e il mondo: Variazioni cinquecentesche sul tema', *Studi storici* 56, no. 1 (2015): pp. 29–48.

⁵⁵ For Botero's sources, see Chabod, *Scritti sul Rinascimento*, pp. 396–404 and 417–424; Aldo Albónico, *Il mondo americano di Giovanni Botero: Con una selezione dalle Epistolae e dalle Relationi universali* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1990), pp. 94–95 and 113–118.

⁵⁶ Romain Descendre, *L'état du monde: Giovanni Botero entre raison d'État et géopolitique* (Geneva: Droz, 2009).

a historical analysis which would display the plurality of the world of the past, or which would save from oblivion the great variety of customs and beliefs that had existed, and which would dare to show how recently Christianity had tended to spread in Africa, the Americas, and Asia.

In the foreword to the third part of *Relationi universali*, Botero actually argued with 'modern historians' for dealing only with 'affairs of state or feats of war designed to feed curiosity more than regulate the affections', instead of 'events that helped or hindered our holy faith'. Yet, 'if writers ever decided to use their work to give an account of the successes of the Christian religion, in our times they have the greatest opportunities to do so.'⁵⁷ This was the viewpoint from which Botero surveyed religions in Europe, Africa, and Asia, and then, in the fourth part of his work, the beliefs and ceremonies of the Indians of the New World and their conversion.

Overall, *Relationi universali* was based on a static vision of the globe. This explains why this title had no prominent place in the bibliographical guide for writing the history of all the world's peoples, published by the Jesuit Antonio Possevino in 1597, when a first version of all four parts of Botero's work had already been published. Possevino's volume was a continuation of the militant enterprise of indicating the most suitable reading for Catholics that he had begun four years earlier with *Bibliotheca selecta*.⁵⁸ That he focused specifically on history simply confirms the importance of this discipline and the risks that could be associated with it. Possevino meant weighing, as on a scale, 'Greek, Latin, and other historians' to indicate 'how they should be read in chronological sequence', teaching how to distinguish between 'truthful and the supposed such, mendacious or stained by some defect or heresy'.⁵⁹ The now habitual condemnation of the fifteenth-century forger Annius of Viterbo was even sterner for his being associated in the *Apparatus* with the authors that Catholic culture was most hostile to, from Niccolò Machiavelli to Martin Luther and John Calvin. Understandably, it was the Protestant historians above all who troubled Possevino. But recent histories of the world were also under special observation. As the printer Giovanni Battista Ciotti acknowledged, many had already dealt with historians and history, but, as far as he knew, there had never been a work like Possevino's that 'brought together the precautions and other things thanks to which one could browse without fear the safest and most truthful historians'.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ I quote from Botero, *Le relazioni universali*, vol. 2, p. 823.

⁵⁸ Albano Biondi, 'La *Bibliotheca selecta* di Antonio Possevino: Un progetto di egemonia culturale', in *La ratio studiorum: Modelli culturali e pratiche educative dei gesuiti tra Cinque e Seicento*, edited by Gian Paolo Brizzi (Rome: Bulzoni, 1981), pp. 43–75.

⁵⁹ Antonio Possevino, *Apparatus ad omnium gentium historiam*... (Venice: Giovanni Battista Ciotti, 1597). The quotations are from the subtitle.

⁶⁰ Possevino, *Apparatus*, fol. A2v.

Many historians had dealt with ‘the navigations of Christopher Columbus, Magellan, and the Castilians and Portuguese’, and, more generally, with the various parts of Africa, the Americas, and Asia. Judging each case on its merits, Possevino gave his approval to Leo Africanus (Ḥasan al-Wazzan al-Gharnati al-Fāṣī), the French André Thevet and Pierre Belon, the Italians Lorenzo Gambara, Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi, and Pietro Bizzarri—a surprising inclusion considering this author was suspected of heresy—the Portuguese Francisco Álvares, João de Barros, Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, Damião de Góis, and Jerónimo Osório, and the Spanish Francisco López de Gómara, Pedro de Cieza de León, and Agustín de Zárate, as well, of course, as the Jesuits José de Acosta and Giampietro Maffei, the latter being given the tribute of a long eulogy.⁶¹

One very luxuriant forest whose branches were in need of lopping was that of authors ‘who have included the events of our own time in an almost universal history’. The list of recommended writers who had written in Latin included Pope Pius II (Enea Silvio Piccolomini), who was constantly invoked by Possevino, along with Hans Böhme (Johannes Boemus), who was regarded as an authority on many regions of the world, and Paolo Giovio. Prominent among those who had written ‘in the Italian tongue’ was Giovanni Tarcagnola, an author who was more than welcome to the Italian Catholic hierarchies and whose *Historie del mondo* (1562) was then enjoying great popular success. Possevino mentioned him alongside Giovanni Nicolò Dogliani’s *Compendio historico universale di tutte le cose notabili* (1594) and Botero’s ‘short *Relationi*—as they are known in Italian—on almost all the provinces or nations’.⁶²

The explicit reference to Botero is not as confusing as it may seem at first sight. Possevino immediately made clear the pragmatic reasons for the inclusion of *Relationi universali*. Botero’s work contained useful information for historical knowledge of the world, ‘suitable for all this endeavour’, just like other geographers mentioned in the *Apparatus* for the same reason.⁶³ The genesis of *Relationi universali*, in any case, is difficult to understand without bearing in mind that European readers were then becoming used to the illusion of having access to the various parts of the globe simply through a book. It was the effect of the success of ‘theatres of the world’, magnificent volumes illustrated by highly detailed maps, such as that printed by the Flemish Abraham Ortelius in 1570, at the prompting of Gerardus Mercator, another Fleming who had taken refuge in Germany as a Protestant. In 1595 he too published a similar work, which used for the first time the word ‘atlas’ in the title.⁶⁴

⁶¹ I quote from Possevino, *Apparatus*, fol. 3r; the praise of Maffei can be read on fols. 134v–135r. Bizzarri was mentioned for his *Rerum Persicarum historia* (1583). He also wrote a history of the world, whose manuscript he gave to Justus Lipsius in 1581 in the hope that he would help him find a publisher, which did not happen.

⁶² Possevino, *Apparatus*, fols. 19v–20v.

⁶³ Possevino, *Apparatus*, fol. 20r.

⁶⁴ For an overview see Numa Broc, *La géographie de la Renaissance* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1980), pp. 160–164.

Botero's approach to the historical dimension of the world was more closely argued in the fifth part of *Relationi universali*, revised up to 1611 but published only in 1895. This section described the 'alterations' the world had undergone in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. There he demonstrated indirectly that, after all, the current 'state' of things presented in the four preceding parts was not as immutable as might seem. Botero's interest, however, was still concentrated on the political and religious present. One can see this from his balance sheet of the 'number of Christians and other nations, as regards religion, in the world', placed at the end of the fifth part, which established that 'most men remain buried in the shadows of unbelief.'⁶⁵ Botero was not interested in the past in itself. It was 'much more advisable', he noted, 'to illustrate present times than the past, as the events of our age are much more entertaining, for their novelty, than those of past times, which have already been written many times and expressed in various tongues'. Further, only the 'experience of modern things' enabled people to act with the necessary awareness, given that 'a judgment founded on what you see and touch will be much more certain.'⁶⁶ Yet Botero's reconstruction kept its promises only in the sections on the parts of Europe he was most familiar with. When he tackled the other regions, especially those outside Europe, the treatise quickly became weaker and more uncertain. It was based on hasty, superficial knowledge, and at times recounted events dating back to ages long before the last thirty years, as in the case of Ethiopia. Nor did Botero have any recent information to hand on China, 'where there has been no change of state that we know of', but gave a general account he had received from some 'Portuguese gentlemen', so as 'not to remain silent on the noblest part of Asia'.⁶⁷

In a world held in precarious balance by empires and new rising global powers, producing reliable knowledge was not easy. Botero mentioned this problem explicitly regarding his relations with 'the ambassadors of the king of Persia who have come both to Italy and Spain', with whom 'more than once' he had been in contact 'through friends'. In the unpublished pages of *Relationi universali* Botero set down a somewhat unflattering judgment on these two English adventurers who had attracted much attention in early seventeenth-century Europe, the brothers Anthony and Robert Sherley.⁶⁸ At the end of the sixteenth century, Anthony had led a voyage of pillage in the Caribbean and against the islands of

⁶⁵ I quote from the edition of the manuscript published by Carlo Gioda, *La vita e le opere di Giovanni Botero*, 3 vols. (Milan: Hoepli, 1894–1895), vol. 3, p. 325.

⁶⁶ Gioda, *La vita e le opere di Giovanni Botero*, vol. 3, pp. 36–37.

⁶⁷ Gioda, *La vita e le opere di Giovanni Botero*, vol. 3, p. 232.

⁶⁸ There is a considerable literature on the Sherley brothers. See E. Denison Ross, *Sir Anthony Sherley and His Persian Adventure, Including Some Contemporary Narratives Relating Thereto* (London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1933), and David W. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant: The Strange Fortunes of Sir Thomas Sherley and His Three Sons, as well in the Dutch Wars as in Muscovy, Morocco, Persia, Spain, and the Indies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), provide a useful starting point. For Anthony Sherley, see also Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to Be Alien: Travails & Encounters in the Early Modern World* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2011), pp. 79–132.

Cape Verde, his account of which was later included by Richard Hakluyt in the second edition of his famous collection of travel writings, *The Principal Navigations* (1598–1600). Meanwhile, he and his brother Robert had reached the Safavid court in Persia, with the declared aim of promoting trade with England and encouraging renewed hostilities against the Ottoman Empire. Having found favour with Shah ‘Abbās I (r. 1588–1629), the Sherley brothers returned to Europe separately as his diplomatic representatives, wearing oriental garments and attracting attention, comment, and suspicion in the cities and courts they passed through. Their luck varied, but many took them seriously, as, initially, did Botero, who ‘to understand the truth of things in Persia and its circumstances’, sent to Robert in Milan and Anthony in Madrid a ‘note of the questions he wanted to ask them’. But ‘of the many replies they made’ Botero regarded ‘as true’ only ‘those in which their accounts agreed’, without concealing that ‘for the scant information they showed of those states as well as of what happened there, they fell short of my expectations.’⁶⁹

The overall impression was that of two charlatans, thus confirming the description of Anthony Sherley as a ‘man of no religion’, always ready to ‘arrange his conscience like a water-mill in keeping with the material to be ground’, in the words of his secretary Giovanni Tommaso Pagliarini.⁷⁰ Botero’s disappointment with the Sherley brothers highlights the profound difference that existed, despite a superficial similarity, between *Relationi universali*, compiled in support of the triumph of the Catholic faith in the world, and the more slender *Peso político de todo el mundo*, completed by Anthony Sherley in 1622, when he had long been settled in Spain.⁷¹

This treatise on geopolitics was intended to offer the Spanish king’s favourite, Gaspar de Guzmán y Pimentel, Count-Duke of Olivares, a synthesis of world geopolitics that would allow the Hispanic monarchy’s global empire to face the challenges posed by an ever-changing present. *Peso político* remained in manuscript, but circulated quite widely, confirming a more general trend in the forms of cultural communication in early modern Spain.⁷² After inviting Olivares to ‘open his hand and feel with it the weight of the whole world, and in

⁶⁹ Gioda, *La vita e le opere di Giovanni Botero*, vol. 3, pp. 37–38. Later on, however, Anthony Sherley published a report of his journey to Persia in the English language. See Julia Schleck and Kaya Şahin, ‘Courtly Connections: Anthony Sherley’s “Relation of His Travels into Persia” (1613) in a Global Context’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (2016): pp. 80–115.

⁷⁰ I quote from Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to Be Alien*, p. 111.

⁷¹ A recent edition is Anthony Sherley, *Peso de todo el mundo (1622): Discurso sobre el aumento de esta monarquía (1625)*, edited by Ángel Alloza, Miguel Ángel de Bunes, and José Anonio Martínez Torres (Madrid: Polifemo, 2010). The difference between Sherley’s work and Botero’s *Relationi universali* has also been highlighted by Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to Be Alien*, p. 127.

⁷² Fernando Bouza Álvarez, *Corre manuscrito: Una historia cultural del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2001).

weighing it... observe with the light of his great intelligence the essence of this monarchy', Sherley surveyed the political situation of the major powers of the time.⁷³ He had no religious inspiration and, unlike Botero, he depicted the pope as 'a very limited prince'.⁷⁴ A realistic comparison between different powers across the globe, however, led him to describe China as 'a very great empire, extended over vast distances and with such abundance of everything that is needed' as to be able 'with a most liberal hand to share it among the whole world'. Nor did Sherley fail to underline that 'in ancient times the empire of the Chinese extended across the whole of Eastern India as far as Madagascar', until they got tired 'of the waste of treasures and the consumption of men to defend and protect such an extension'.⁷⁵ But early seventeenth-century China, in Sherley's view, lacked an army like that which made the Hispanic monarchy and the Ottoman Empire 'the two major powers there are today in the world'. They were like the sun and the moon, but the former had to 'dispose all things in such a way as not to have an eclipse with the moon in opposition, because many ugly, dangerous, and damaging consequences would follow'.⁷⁶ A man of shifting political loyalties who had begun his career as a diplomatic mediator seeking a trade agreement between England and Persia for anti-Ottoman purposes, Sherley used *Peso politico* to support the idea of a peace between the Spaniards and the Turks. This suggestion was also repeated in the final pages, where he presented a list of the main localities on the coasts of the Pacific Ocean and on the Atlantic shores of the Americas, in which English and Dutch could settle, thus threatening the Iberian imperial power.

If Botero was not Sherley's model, it is no surprise that he was for *Relazione delle quattro parti del mondo*, written in 1631 to 'mend lost faith, reinvigorate languishing faith, and restore infinite losses'.⁷⁷ The author was Francesco Ingoli, secretary of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, founded in 1622 to restore control of evangelization to the papacy, in the face of the autonomous activities of the royal patronages of Spain and Portugal and the advance of the Protestant powers in the world. It was a prospect diametrically opposed to what Sherley had suggested to Olivares. What his treatise had in common with Botero and Ingoli, however, was a substantial indifference to history.

⁷³ Sherley, *Peso de todo el mundo*, p. 87.

⁷⁴ Sherley, *Peso de todo el mundo*, p. 101. The importance of Botero's thinking on the universal jurisdiction of the pope has been recalled by Maria Antonietta Visceglia, 'The International Policy of the Papacy: Critical Approaches to the Concepts of Universalism and Italianità, Peace and War', in *Papato e politica internazionale nella prima età moderna*, edited by Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Rome: Viella, 2013), pp. 18–19.

⁷⁵ Sherley, *Peso de todo el mundo*, pp. 181–182.

⁷⁶ Sherley, *Peso de todo el mundo*, pp. 153–154.

⁷⁷ Francesco Ingoli, *Relazione delle quattro parti del mondo*, edited by Francesco Tosi (Rome: Urbaniana University Press, 1999), p. 12. On its author, see Giovanni Pizzorusso, 'Ingoli, Francesco', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 62 (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana fondato da Giovanni Treccani, 2004), pp. 338–391.

Histories of the World as Official History

Relationi universali enjoyed great success. After all, the work drew on the illusion that it was possible to freeze historical change. By contrast, a man like Anthony Sherley provided an extreme symbol of the fluidity of power across the early modern globe. He had been in prison several times and was even the subject, with his brothers Robert and Thomas, of a stage play that was performed at the gates of London in 1607.⁷⁸ England and Spain, the two European poles of the political intrigue that Sherley found himself at the centre of, were also the two countries that published adaptations and translations of Botero's work in the early seventeenth century.⁷⁹ The Spanish edition, published in Valladolid in 1603, opened with a dedication to Francisco Gómez de Sandoval y Rojas, Duke of Lerma and favourite of King Philip III. The main promoter of the translation, Antonio López de Calatayud, a member of the entourage of the influential future Count of Gondomar, Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, noted that *Relationi universali* was a 'treasure' full of valuable information, particularly for 'those who deal with questions of state and war'.⁸⁰ It was the exact opposite of what Botero had hoped for in the opening of the third part of *Relationi universali*, where, as we have seen, he was highly critical of 'modern historians'. In turn, in his epistle to the reader, the *licenciado* Diego de Aguiar, who had translated the work, interpreted Botero as complementing our 'knowledge of history', which was the 'messenger of antiquity and principal part of political science', without which 'those who hold the empire of the world' could not act rightly.⁸¹ There was nothing random about

⁷⁸ For a recent study, see Mark Hutchings, 'Staging the Sherleys' Travails', *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 87, no. 1 (2015): pp. 43–62.

⁷⁹ A remarkable abridged version in English was published anonymously, perhaps to avoid giving a Catholic writer publicity. See *The Worlde, or An Historical Description of the Most Famous Kingdomes and Common-weales Therein* (London: John Jaggard, 1601).

⁸⁰ Letter of dedication, 4 November 1600, in Giovanni Botero, *Relaciones universales del mundo... Primera y segunda parte...* (Valladolid: Diego Fernández de Córdoba, 1603), fol. unnumbered. The edition did not include a long prologue by López de Calatayud, whose preparatory draft, personally amended by Gondomar and presumably dated to 1597–8, is kept in Madrid, Real Biblioteca, II/2163, carta 282. See María-Luisa López-Vidriero, 'Asiento de coronas y distinción de reinos: Librerías y aprendizaje nobiliario', in *Poder y saber: Bibliotecas y bibliofilia en la época del conde-duque de Olivares*, edited by Oliver Noble Wood, Jeremy Roe, and Jeremy Lawrance (Madrid: Centro de Estudios de Europa Hispánica, 2011), pp. 234–242. A polished copy of the prologue, followed by a letter without dedicatee that is very close to the text published in 1603, is kept in Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MSS/18190, fols. 229r–231v.

⁸¹ Botero, *Relaciones universales del mundo*, fol. unnumbered. Another Spanish translation by the Dominican friar Jaime Rebullosa was published in the same year under the *Descripción de todas las provincias y reynos del mundo... en que se trata de las costumbres industria, trato y riquezas de cada una de las naciones de Europa, Asia, Africa America o Nuevo Mundo...* (Barcelona: Gabriel Graells and Giraldo Dotil, 1603). See Montserrat Casas Nadal, 'Recepción e influencia de las "Relaciones Universales" de Giovanni Botero en España', in *La traduzione della letteratura italiana in Spagna (1300–1939): Traduzione e tradizione del testo: Dalla filologia all'informatica*, edited by María de las Nieves Muñiz Muñiz in collaboration with Ursula Bedogni and Laura Calvo Valdivielso (Florence: Franco Cesati, 2007), pp. 405–428.

his words. In the same period the political clash between the crowns of Spain and England encouraged the temptation to employ histories of the world, not as a means to give back a voice to the multiple pasts of the globe, but as an official instrument of propaganda. Nonetheless, the risks for those using their pen to that end were serious, as the connected histories of Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas and Walter Raleigh showed.

In mid-1608 both were under arrest, the former in his home in Madrid and the latter in the Tower of London, which was used as a prison for high-ranking figures. Both were victims of intrigue, accused of conspiring against the crown. But, while Raleigh had been condemned in 1603 for supposedly plotting against the new king James I (r. 1603–25), whose rise to the throne marked a sharp discontinuity with the balance of power in the Elizabethan court, the fall of Herrera was much more recent. He was brought down when his protector, Francisco López de Mendoza y Mendoza, admiral of Aragon, was imprisoned for conspiring to overthrow the Duke of Lerma. For some time the king's favourite had been working to thwart Herrera, who dominated early seventeenth-century Spanish historiography, after he had assumed, one after the other, the positions of chief chronicler of the Indies (1596), royal chronicler (1598), and royal secretary (1605).⁸²

In his activity as a chronicler Herrera strictly followed Botero's lesson as expressed in *The Reason of State*: 'history' contributed to the 'knowledge suitable to sharpen prudence' and, through it, one could embrace 'the whole life of the world'. This held not only for European rulers. 'Not to cite only our examples', wrote Botero, 'Muhammad II, king of the Turks, who was the first to have been called the Great Turk, continually had some ancient history at hand' and 'Selim I took great delight in reading of the deeds of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, and he had them translated into Turkish.'⁸³ Herrera knew that passage well, as Philip II had given him the task of writing the Spanish translation of *The Reason of State*, published in 1593.⁸⁴ He had to keep this well in mind when, shortly after, he found himself writing a chronicle of Philip II in the form of a history of the world.

It should be no surprise that this model of historiography was receiving more and more attention in Spain, then at the centre of a vast global empire in consequence of the recent Iberian Union. Herrera found an important precedent in *Historia Pontifical y Cathólica*, begun in 1553 in the quiet of the north-western

⁸² Kagan, *Clio & the Crown*, pp. 135–149. For an overview of Herrera's life and work, see Mariano Cuesta Domingo, *Antonio de Herrera y su obra* (Segovia: Colegio Universitario de Segovia, 1998).

⁸³ Giovanni Botero, *The Reason of State*, edited by Robert Birely (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 37.

⁸⁴ For a study of this work and its impact in Spain, see Xavier Gil, 'The Forces of the King: The Generation that Read Botero in Spain', in *The Early Modern Hispanic World: Transnational and Interdisciplinary Approaches*, edited by Kimberly Lynn and Erin Kathleen Rowe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 268–290.

Castilian town of Dueñas by Gonzalo de Illescas (1521–74), a learned abbot with vast experience of politics and international diplomacy.⁸⁵ Originally published in two parts between 1565 and 1566, the chronicle had various problems with the censors before a final edition was authorized in 1573.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, it scored an immediate success with the reading public and was later continued by other authors during the seventeenth century.⁸⁷ *Historia Pontifical* was in the first place a complete history of the popes from the origins of the church until the death of Pius V (1572)—the first to be published in Castilian—but it also dealt with the main events of each historical period. Its narrative model was that of the annals, but the account became more and more detailed the closer it came to the present, the last hundred years of history taking up the same space as that given to all the previous centuries. The history of Iberia and its kingdoms was the subject of much attention, but long sections also dealt both with the discovery and conquest of America—elaborating a radical contrast between Cortés and Luther—and with Asia—drawing on oral information received by the Augustinians.⁸⁸ Thus a collection of biographies—in this case, a series of lives of the popes—became the basis for a history of global scope.

In the 1590s it was increasingly clear that the insistent railing of Philip II's many detractors might result in his history being written only by his critics. A traditional biography would have looked an inadequate response. The geography of the king's enemies needed to be turned to his advantage, with a reversal of perspective that made him emerge as the real lord of the world. Thus, writing the chronicle of Philip II became entangled with the now global projections of the Catholic monarchy. It is worth noting that, when he started writing his work, Herrera also made use of an outline written by his predecessor, Esteban de Garibay y Zamalloa, who, significantly, had already been thinking of moving in that direction.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Emilio García Lozano, 'Gonzalo de Illescas, historiador y cronista de Indias', in *Actas del II Congreso de Historia de Palencia, 27, 28 y 29 de abril de 1989*, edited by María Valentina Calleja González, 5 vols. (Palencia: Diputación Provincial de Palencia, 1990), vol. 4, pp. 453–474, and Nejma Kermele, 'Théorie et pratique de l'histoire du monde dans la *Historia Pontifical* y *Católica* de Gonzalo de Illescas', *e-Spania* 30 (2018).

⁸⁶ Enrique Gacto Fernández, 'Censura política e Inquisición: La *Historia Pontifical* de Gonzalo de Illescas', *Revista de la Inquisición* 2 (1992): pp. 23–40. The only known copy of the 1565 edition is kept in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Parker Library, D.7.6. I have been unable to locate a copy of the first edition of the second part, published in Valladolid in 1566. It was probably the target of an order of impounding issued by the Inquisition in 1568. See Virgilio Pinto Crespo, *Inquisición y control ideológico en la España del siglo XVI* (Madrid: Taurus, 1983), p. 183.

⁸⁷ Luis de Bavía wrote parts 3 and 4, published in 1608 and 1613, respectively. Meanwhile, a different version of part 4 by Fray Marcos de Guadalajara appeared in 1612, and he also authored part 5 (1630). Finally, Juan Baños de Velasco composed part 6 (1678).

⁸⁸ Winston A. Reynolds, 'Gonzalo de Illescas and the Cortés-Luther Confrontation', *Hispania* 45, no. 3 (1962): pp. 402–404.

⁸⁹ Kagan, *Clio & the Crown*, p. 134.

The first two parts of Herrera's *Historia general del mundo* were published in Madrid in 1601.⁹⁰ The work began in 1554, when, by marrying the Queen of England, Mary Tudor (r. 1553–8), Philip had assumed the title of king, but the real narrative started when he took direct control over Spain. Philip II was not at the centre of *Historia general del mundo*, though. The chronicle concentrated more on an account of the main political and military events in the late sixteenth century, selected for their importance in the perspective of a European power that claimed world lordship. The work can thus be seen more like a view of the events that the Spanish court wanted the general public to remember about Philip II's long reign. Herrera often acknowledged the stylistic limitations of repeatedly juxtaposing historical facts in the same way, 'distinguishing the books in years, with each book containing what happened in a year'.⁹¹ There were shifts forward or, more often, back in time to give a clearer idea of an episode or a phenomenon, but overall the text did not develop genuine narrative connections.

Under the weight of official historiography, histories of the world lost their creative thrust. Herrera maintained a taste for the complexity and diversity of historical causes, but the geographical order that he followed inevitably had Europe as its head. Particular importance, of course, was given to crucial events, such as the Battle of Lepanto (1571), the union of Portugal and Spain (1580), and the defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588), as well as the naval campaigns to oppose the English expeditions in the Elizabethan Age or the first Dutch navigations in the East Indies in the late sixteenth century. There were recurrent references to the various regions of the Iberian world, North Africa, the Ottoman and Safavid empires—in the last case on the basis of *Historia della guerra fra Turchi et Persiani* (1587) by the Ferrarese doctor Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi, a book Herrera himself had translated into Spanish (1598). Based on the experience he had gathered during the years he had spent in Aleppo, Minadoi's work was one of the sources Herrera mentioned in a table of the 'authors who have been followed in this history, as well as many writings and authentic documents'. This table preceded the first two parts of *Historia general del mundo*, and one immediately notices among the titles Botero's *Relationi universali* and, besides a series of works on specific regions, some of the most widely published histories of the world of the period: Cesare Campana's, Natale Conti's continuation of Giovio, the last section of *Historie del mondo* by Tarcagnota and Mambrino Roseo, and Doglioni's *Compendio historico universale*.⁹²

⁹⁰ An anastatic reprint of the original edition, introduced by a preliminary study, can be found in Mariano Cuesta Domingo, ed., *Antonio de Herrera y su Historia general del mundo*, 4 vols. (Madrid: Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado 2016).

⁹¹ Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, *Segunda parte de la historia general del mundo...* (Madrid: Pedro Madrugal, 1601) fol. unnumbered.

⁹² On these authors and their works, see chapter 4.

The works of some of these Italian authors often appeared on the shelves of Spanish libraries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁹³ Taken together, they had helped consolidate a tradition to which Herrera claimed to belong in the dedication of the second edition of the second part of his work, published in 1606. Here he also insisted that his prime motive was the ‘glory’ of his ‘nation’ and proudly underlined that he was ‘the first Spaniard to have written a general history of the world’. He had been working on his chronicle from 1593 at least, and had put off publishing it to avoid possible problems. In any case, ‘as this nation was dominant, it was right that it should know about external matters, the qualities, and customs of other nations.’ As if it had not been explicitly designed to celebrate Philip II, Herrera also justified his work’s concentration on contemporary history, ‘as it is more pleasure to learn of the deeds of those we know and have heard mentioned than those we have never seen and who lived long before us.’⁹⁴

The growing emphasis on the present in histories of the world went hand in hand with their increasingly blatant political connotations. This was particularly evident in the third part of *Historia general del mundo*. It opened with an account of Drake’s Atlantic expedition in 1585–6, which had attacked Galicia and the archipelago of Cape Verde, before descending on Central America, with widespread pillaging and the temporary capture of Cartagena de Indias. This volume, whose title page proudly displayed Herrera’s position as ‘His Majesty’s chief chronicler of the Indies and his chronicler of Castile’, had been published in 1612 after being written far from Madrid. Herrera hoped that the completion of the work would relaunch his professional prestige after 1608, when he had been arrested, condemned, and banished from court. He assured his readers that in reconstructing the events covered in the third part of *Historia general del mundo* he had followed only ‘the reports, letters, and documents of viceroys and governors of the kingdoms and states of this most happy monarchy, of the ambassadors and ministers of His Majesty, and of his secretaries of state’, as well as of ‘the major and most ancient captains of various nations, subjects of Our Lord the King’.⁹⁵ These words were a clear attempt to escape the accusation of manipulating historical truth or of damning with faint praise important figures such as the Duke of Lerma, who had been the target of veiled criticism in the second part of the chronicle—something that had probably hastened Herrera’s downfall.⁹⁶

⁹³ For a recent survey, see Antonio Feros, ‘¿Conocer para poseer? Historia del mundo y sus regiones en las bibliotecas españolas de los siglos XVI y XVII’, in *Historia en fragmentos: Estudios en homenaje a Pablo Fernández Albaladejo*, edited by Julio A. Pardos Martínez, Julián Viejo Yharrassarry, José María Iñurrítegui Rodríguez, José María Portillo Valdés, and Fernando André Robres (Madrid: UAM Ediciones, 2017), p. 360.

⁹⁴ Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, *Segunda parte de la Historia general del mundo...* (Valladolid: Juan Godínez de Millis, 1606), fol. unnumbered.

⁹⁵ Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, *Tercera parte de la Historia general del mundo...* (Madrid: Alonso Martín de Balboa, 1612), fol. unnumbered.

⁹⁶ Kagan, *Clio & the Crown*, p. 187.

References to the most distant regions of the globe were recurrent in the work's three volumes, as one can see from the many pages on Japan, the Philippines, Arabia, Ethiopia, the islands of the Pacific Ocean, or the Magellan Strait. However, all the information had been taken from European texts, such as *Moscovia* (1586) by Possevino or the manuscript report on China by the Augustinian missionary Martín de Rada.⁹⁷ Though Herrera professed 'neutrality', he usually depicted the English and Dutch as 'heretics', desecrators, and persecutors of Catholics; and his language sounded somewhat ethnocentric when he contrasted foreign customs with 'ours', as in the case of the Japanese. 'In Europe we remove our hats out of courtesy, they remove their shoes, and entering the home of an honoured person still shod is discourteous', we read in one passage which closely resembled the original treatise on the contrasting customs of Europeans and Japanese, written in 1585 by the Portuguese Jesuit Luís Frois.⁹⁸ While other Renaissance histories of the world had experimented with materials originating from outside Europe, recovering its multiple pasts, Herrera's aim was rather that of providing a linear and indisputable celebration of the Catholic monarchy and its global empire.⁹⁹

Herrera had been asked to follow this line ever since he had been entrusted with writing an official chronicle of Spanish America, a subject that had become more and more sensitive in the years when the Black Legend was emerging. A consideration of the monumental *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en la islas i tierra firme del mar océano* (1601–15) helps us have a clearer idea of the form and content of *Historia general del mundo*, including its limited interest in the New World.¹⁰⁰ The two works were composed and published in parallel. Herrera obeyed the royal mandate to relaunch the image of the Spanish Empire, rejecting accusations of violence and injustice. Remaining silent on the customs and social organization of the Indians before the Spaniards arrived would have contributed to this purpose, but Herrera was unable completely to resist the sources preserved unpublished in the Council of the Indies, which his role as chief chronicler gave him free access to. There were invaluable descriptions to be found in the historical works of the Franciscan friars Toribio de Motolinía and Bernardino de Sahagún, in the manuscript treatises by Las Casas, or in the parts of the chronicle on Peru by Cieza de León which had been refused publication.

⁹⁷ On Rada see 'News from the East' in chapter 2.

⁹⁸ Written in Portuguese, its manuscript was only published in the twentieth century. See Richard K. Danford, Robin D. Gill, and Daniel T. Reff, eds., *The First European Description of Japan, 1585: A Critical English-language Edition of 'Striking Contrasts in the Customs of Europe and Japan' by Luis Frois, S.J.* (London: Routledge, 2014). The quotation is from Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, *Primera parte de la Historia general del mundo...* (Madrid: Luis Sánchez, 1601), p. 245.

⁹⁹ Alternative examples of Renaissance histories of the world are analysed in chapters 1 and 3 of this book.

¹⁰⁰ For a detailed discussion of Herrera's chronicle of Spanish America, see Kagan, *Clio & the Crown*, pp. 171–185. See also the special issue by Louise Bénat-Tachot, ed., *Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas ¿Historia global, historia universal, historia general?, e-Spania* 18 (2014).

They disclosed the universe of the antiquities of the New World, with the beliefs and local ceremonies that the Spaniards had tried to extirpate. Herrera made use of part of this information, while he levelled out the accounts that could be read in the authorized chronicles.

His chronicle on the Americas covered the period from 1492 to 1554 and was organized by decades. Episodes of cruelty and brutal mistreatment were acknowledged, but their significance was downplayed. A positive image of the Spanish administration was provided, corroborated by the use of terms like ‘pacify’ and ‘settle’ instead of ‘conquer’, in line with the royal decree (1573) banning the use of the word ‘conquest’ and its derivatives.¹⁰¹ Thus, Herrera’s decades quickly circulated in Mexico and Peru. The work was completed in 1613, a year before its author was readmitted to the royal court by intercession of Sarmiento de Acuña, the very man who in 1607 had asked the Duke of Lerma to nominate a ‘general chronicler’. The appointment of Pedro de Valencia to the role had reduced Herrera to such despair that he had burnt some of his papers with his notes and comments.¹⁰²

At the End of Histories of the World

In May 1613, Sarmiento de Acuña became Spanish ambassador at the English court.¹⁰³ The following year saw the publication of the first volume of *The History of the World* by Walter Raleigh, Elizabeth’s erstwhile favourite, who had been one of the founders of the colony of Virginia and had led an expedition to Guiana in search of the mythical El Dorado (1594), an obsession that never left him and brought about his tragic end.¹⁰⁴ There had been a change of air with the advent of James I. In 1603 Raleigh was incarcerated in the Tower of London after his death penalty for treason had been commuted to imprisonment. Alternating experiments in alchemy carried out in an open-air chicken coop with writing, he wrote his *History of the World* surrounded by maps and a library of more than five hundred volumes, which were his main contact with the world. His shelves boasted books in English, Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish, recent works of geography and cosmology sitting alongside the first volumes of the De Bry collection, *Historia de las cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del gran reino de la China* (1585) by Fray Juan González de Mendoza, writings by the Portuguese

¹⁰¹ Kagan, *Clio & the Crown*, p. 170.

¹⁰² Kagan, *Clio & the Crown*, pp. 194–195.

¹⁰³ José García Oro, *Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, conde de Gondomar y embajador de España (1567–1626): Estudio biográfico* (La Coruña: Xunta de Galicia, 1997). More specifically on his embassy, see Charles H. Carter, ‘Gondomar: Ambassador to James I’, *Historical Journal* 7, no. 2 (1964): pp. 189–208.

¹⁰⁴ The bibliography on Raleigh is endless. For an introduction, see Mark Nicholls and Penny Williams, *Sir Walter Raleigh: In Life and Legend* (London: Continuum, 2011).

Góis and the Spanish López de Gómara, as well as Acosta's *Natural and Moral History*.¹⁰⁵

The result was a history of the world completely different from the previous ones in its erudition and systematic treatment.¹⁰⁶ Raleigh's ambition was to scrupulously solve, chapter after chapter, all the doubts on the main events since creation. The structure of the work was ordered according to a chronology that had been diligently verified, in a more general attempt to demonstrate the guidance of divine providence in human affairs. The first volume of *History of the World* was completed in 1611. An engraving on the title page represented a late Renaissance Englishman's vision of world history. Dominating the centre is the powerful image of a woman, History, flanked by two female figures, Truth and Experience. She raises, under the divine eye, a terrestrial globe that is being fought over by two other young women, Good Fame and Ill Fame, redeeming it from Death and Oblivion, whom she crushes beneath her feet (see Figure 5.1). The long preface insisted on an organic notion of the world, which 'had life and beginning', as well as on a celebration of history, which 'hath made us acquainted with our dead ancestors and, out of the depth and darknesse of the earth, delivered us their memory and fame'.¹⁰⁷

Subdivided into five books and illustrated by splendid maps, the first volume of Raleigh's work concentrated on the four universal monarchies of antiquity—those of the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Persians, and the Romans, down to the Battle of Pydna (168 BCE), the event that had marked the collapse of the Kingdom of Macedonia, which the rise of Alexander the Great had made powerful one and a half centuries before. Though the narrative did not reach the present and was limited to Europe and the Mediterranean, Raleigh's was a history of the world written by an English Protestant who had long cultivated the dream of an empire across the Atlantic for his monarch. The signs of this could already be seen in book 1, which subjected the biblical account to historical criticism so as to identify the modern equivalents of the places cited there, in line with the studies of sacred geography that were then much in vogue. Raleigh possessed a copy of the polyglot Bible (1572) by the Spanish Hebraist Benito Arias Montano and discussed, for example, its conclusions as to the exact locality of Ophir, the region from which King Solomon was said to have received ships laden with gold.¹⁰⁸ To identify that

¹⁰⁵ Walter Oakeshott, 'Sir Walter Raleigh's Library', *The Library* s. 5, 23, no. 4 (1968): pp. 285–327. On Raleigh's interest in alchemy and its influence on his historical writing, see P.M. Rattansi, 'Alchemy and Natural Magic in Raleigh's "History of the World"', *Ambix* 13, no. 3 (1966): pp. 122–138.

¹⁰⁶ The best introduction to the work is Nicholas Popper, *Walter Raleigh's History of the World and the Historical Culture of the Late Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012).

¹⁰⁷ Walter Raleigh, *The History of the World in Five Bookes...* (London: Walter Burre, 1614), fol. A2r–v.

¹⁰⁸ Zur Shalev, 'Sacred Geography, Antiquarianism and Visual Erudition: Benito Arias Montano and the Maps in the Antwerp Polyglot Bible', *Imago Mundi* 55 (2003): pp. 56–80. For its context see James Romm, 'Biblical History and the Americas: The Legend of Solomon's Ophir, 1492–1591', in *The*



Figure 5.1 Title page of Walter Raleigh's *History of the World* (London: Walter Burre, 1614). Image in the public domain.

land with Peru, as Arias Montano had done, was a 'fancy' due to a misunderstanding that dated back to the arrival of the first Spaniards, Raleigh noted, 'as divers Spaniards in the Indies assured me, which also Acosta the Iesuite in his naturall and morall Historie of the Indies confirmeth'. Ophir must have been 'among the Moluccas' instead.¹⁰⁹ This had already been suggested in a short work published in 1561 by the Portuguese humanist and scholar Gaspar Barreiros, the author of the first confutation of Anniius of Viterbo to be published in Iberia.¹¹⁰ Raleigh himself several times attacked Anniius' 'falshood', dismissing it as 'fabulous'.¹¹¹

At times, the learned disquisitions, which make reading *History of the World* hard going today, were interrupted by a sudden reference to the new global perspective of his time. Often the target was the Spanish Empire, as when, in a discussion of the animals on board Noah's ark, Raleigh referred to 'those dogges which are become wilde in Hispagniola, with which the Spaniards used to deuoure the naked Indians', a crude image attributed to Acosta but actually taken from the visual repertoire of atrocities circulated by the De Bry collection (see Figure 5.2).¹¹² In another case Raleigh moved from a biblical passage on the excessive fragmentation of power to attack the Spaniards in the Americas, 'every one emulating and disdayining the greatnesse of other', so suggesting a possibility for the English: 'they are thereby to this day subiect to invasion, expulsion, and destruction, so as (Nova Hispania and Peru excepted, because those countries are inaccessible to strangers) an easie force will cast them out of all the rest.'¹¹³ There was even a polemical reference to Vasco da Gama's voyage. The ancient Phoenicians had already circumnavigated Africa along a route 'which after was forgotten' and which Gama had merely rediscovered. This argument had been recently relaunched in Hugo Grotius' pamphlet *Mare liberum* (1609), in which he had denied the Portuguese monopoly of the navigations in Asia by virtue of their supposed right of discovery.¹¹⁴

Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450–1800, edited by Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), pp. 27–46.

¹⁰⁹ Raleigh, *The History of the World*, p. 175.

¹¹⁰ Gaspar Barreiros, *Commentarius de Ophyra regione apud divinam scripturam comemorata...* (Coimbra: João Álvares, 1561). On Barreiros and Anniius see 'Inventing genealogies from the New World to China' in chapter 1.

¹¹¹ Raleigh, *The History of the World*, pp. 156 and 237.

¹¹² Raleigh, *The History of the World*, p. 111. See Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, pp. 66 and 231. However, the story of the dogs eating Indians is probably taken from an engraving by Théodore De Bry first used to illustrate his German edition of Benzoni's *Historia del Mondo Nuovo* (1594). On De Bry's source, see Henry Keazor, 'Theodore De Bry's Images for America', *Print Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (1998): pp. 143–144.

¹¹³ Raleigh, *The History of the World*, p. 172.

¹¹⁴ Raleigh, *The History of the World*, p. 632. On the debate caused by Grotius see Anthony Pagden, 'Commerce and Conquest: Hugo Grotius and Serafim de Freitas on the Freedom of the Seas', *Mare Liberum* 20 (2000): pp. 33–55.



Figure 5.2 Spanish soldiers watching as dogs tear apart naked Indians. Engraving from *Das vierdte Buch von der neuwen Welt. oder Neuwe und gründtliche dem Nidergängischen Indien . . .* (Frankfurt am Main: Johann Feyerabend for Théodore de Bry, 1594), plate 22. Providence, Rhode Island, John Carter Brown Library, J590 B915v GVG 4 / 2-SIZE. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library.

At other times Raleigh's history was interrupted by the recollection of exceptional cases. Speaking of the longevity of the biblical patriarchs, for example, he recounted the tale of an Indian 300 years old, who had been presented to the general of the Ottoman army in 1570.¹¹⁵ He also insisted on the superiority of 'Easterne people', based on the fact that Noah's ark had landed in Armenia. The 'sunne-rising nations were the most ancient', it was argued, as was also shown by 'the use of printing and artillerie'. Raleigh was thus repeating the Renaissance myth of their importation to Europe from China, whose inhabitants 'had letters long before either the Ægyptians or Phœnicians, and also the art of printing, when as the Greekes had neither any civill knowledge, or any letters among them'. 'Both the Portugals and Spaniards have witnessed' all that, concluded Raleigh, observing that 'the Chinaos account all other nations but salvages in respect of themselves.'

¹¹⁵ Raleigh, *The History of the World*, p. 61.

Paradoxically, the history of that oriental grandeur, which was also confirmed by the ‘antiquitie, magnificence, civilitie, riches, sumptuous buildings, and policie in government’ of Japan, had no real place in his *History of the World*.¹¹⁶

Despite the extreme erudition of his work—a monument of late Renaissance knowledge with a very limited focus on the world outside Europe—a man like Raleigh was unable to disregard completely the reaction to the new global interaction of his age when thinking of antiquity. ‘I might have been more pleasing to the reader, if I had written the story of mine owne times’, he acknowledged, but ‘who-so ever in writing a modern historie shall follow truth too neare the heeles, it may happily strike out his teeth. There is no mistresse or guide, that hath led her followers and servants into greater miseries.’ ‘It is enough for me (being in that state I am)’, he concluded, ‘to write of the eldest times.’ But then, ‘why may it not be said that in speaking of the past I point at the present and taxe the vices of those that are yet lyving? If anyone recognizes himself ‘spotted like the tigers of old time’, Raleigh said in his defence, ‘they shall therein accuse themselves iustly and me falsely.’¹¹⁷ Prophetic words: though his *History of the World* was a publishing success, its content did nothing to help Raleigh’s cause; King James I was irritated by the long preface criticizing tyrants in history, suspecting an allusion to himself.¹¹⁸

Significantly, Raleigh’s *History of the World* ended with the early seventeenth-century transformation of the world’s balance of power. Ottomans and Spaniards were celebrated as ‘the most eminent and to be regarded’, the latter in particular ‘by the treasures of both Indies and by the many kingdoms which they possesse in Europe’ being held as ‘at this day the most powerfull’. Nevertheless, the lesson of the empires of the past, all of which had been inexorably destroyed, loomed over them too. In a comparison where once again political and religious rivalry were intertwined, Raleigh suggested that ‘as the Turke is now counterpoised by the Persian’, so a determined joint effort by the Dutch, English, and French would be enough to restrict Spain to its natural confines.¹¹⁹

It is not clear how far the conclusion of Raleigh’s history of the world was conceived as a response to Herrera’s chronicle, from which it differed in every other respect, but it is certain that *Historia general del mundo* had an unexpected role in Raleigh’s tragic end. In March 1616 he managed to obtain a royal pardon by telling James I, who was yet again short of money, that he would lead an expedition to the River Orinoco in Guiana, in search of El Dorado. According to Raleigh, this mythical place lay in a region under no jurisdiction, as even the Spaniards had not explored it. Raleigh’s venture was seen by Spain as a challenge, as there was acute concern over the English settlement created in 1607 at

¹¹⁶ Raleigh, *The History of the World*, pp. 115–116.

¹¹⁷ Raleigh, *The History of the World*, fol. E4r.

¹¹⁸ Anna R. Beer, *Sir Walter Raleigh and His Readers in the Seventeenth Century: Speaking to the People* (London: Macmillan 1997).

¹¹⁹ Raleigh, *The History of the World*, p. 775.

Jamestown in Virginia. When he learnt of this expedition, Sarmiento de Acuña, who was still Spanish ambassador in England, informed James I that Raleigh was lying. The Spaniards actually had settlements in the area and there was no trace of gold. To prove that the English explorer knew this very well, Sarmiento de Acuña produced an unexpected proof that confirmed how delicate the subject matter of histories of the world had become. In the third part of Herrera's history there was an account of the voyage Raleigh had made to Guiana twenty years before and of how he had met subjects of the Spanish crown, who had told him that all that fabled gold was no more than a 'trick'.¹²⁰ In the end Raleigh set off anyway, with orders not to harm the Spaniards in any way or misappropriate any gold. Meanwhile, in Spain talk of this expedition led the Council of State to pick Anthony Sherley's brains on the subject. Ready as always to exploit any opportunity, he not only presented an action plan to oppose Raleigh, but swore he was ready to risk his life carrying it out. This time, however, he was not listened to.¹²¹

And so the threads of the lives of these men who had helped make the world more global were being drawn in, but in the end it was Raleigh who was caught in the net. He found no gold in America; nor did he regain his freedom at home. On his return from the voyage, in which many of the crew lost their lives, including his only son, he was again arrested. Shortly after, James I confirmed the death penalty of fifteen years before. Raleigh was to break off his history of the world at the first of the three volumes he had envisaged. The sentence was carried out and he was beheaded outside the Palace of Westminster. It was 29 October 1618.

¹²⁰ The episode is recalled in Kagan, *Clio & the Crown*, pp. 1–3. See also Lois Tobío, *Gondomar y su triunfo sobre Raleigh* (Santiago de Compostela: Editorial de los Bibliófilos Gallegos, 1974).

¹²¹ Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to Be Alien*, p. 115.

Conclusions

After the voyages and conquests of the age of exploration, the world was now too big for the Bible and the works of classical authors to explain. For a little less than a century, between the first half of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century, there was a brief window when history established itself as a form of knowledge well able to deal with the broadening of global horizons. Scholars have generally been keenly aware of the significance of geography and ethnography in those decades. Nonetheless they have tended to overlook the importance of the reaction to the shock caused by the sudden discovery of the multiplicity and polyphony of the past in the early modern period. The shapes of unknown lands started to appear relatively quickly on cartographers' maps and heated debates between jurists and theologians swiftly broke out on the nature and rights of their native inhabitants. What has too often been forgotten is that—at the same time—long-accepted narratives of world history were also called into question, with their profound implications on both the political and religious level. Attempts to produce alternative historical accounts that might make sense of the transformation produced by an age of exploration and empires, which include an increase in encounters, asymmetrical exchanges, and the violence which colonialism generated, occurred in numerous cultures across the globe. Some of these works were original and innovative experiments in historical writing, while others remained but superficial additions or adaptations, if perhaps no less significant for that.

This book has concentrated on the histories of the world which authors of different origins penned in response to the challenge of growing contacts and interactions all across the globe. By analysing a number of case studies, I have sought to bring to light a repertoire of options that were available to those who ventured into rewriting the history of the world. This possibility derived from access to a huge mass of new sources—regardless of whether the authors of these works were personally present in the places they studied, came into contact with their material dimension and local accounts, or simply benefitted from the increasing flow of information that marked a new age of communication across the globe. From Mexico to Peru, taking in the Molucca Islands, Lisbon, and Venice, a new perspective emerged in historiography. This literature marked a sharp break with the old medieval and humanist universal histories, and the condescending distinction they made between the Judeo-Christian and Graeco-Roman trajectory on the one hand and the rest of the world on the other. Heedless of possible contradictions with its simultaneous celebration of classical antiquity,

Renaissance culture went global when it became commonplace to speak of Mexican or Chinese antiquities. The new ways of writing histories of the world were the outcome of the encounter between Renaissance texts and collections of objects enjoying significant popularity on the one hand and, on the other, historians who were now conceiving of the globe as a single entity and trying to narrate its history from a specific locality or personal condition.

Without reading volumes published in many European countries, both in Latin and the vernacular, Renaissance world historians would not have been able to organize their variegated and elusive material into accounts that tied up the many threads of a global past. A case in point was the invented genealogies in the Dominican forger Annius of Viterbo's *Antiquities* (1498). They allowed the Franciscan missionary Toribio de Benavente, better known as Motolinía, to conjure up the origins of prehispanic Mexico, imitating a technique first used to describe the ages preceding the time of the Greeks and Romans. A second example was provided by *Navigazioni et viaggi* (1550–9), the collection that had been put together by the Venetian statesman and learned librarian Giovanni Battista Ramusio. The Portuguese captain António Galvão drew on its vision of history as a constant mobility of men and goods to overthrow the official rhetoric of the Iberian empires in his own history of the world, surveying the long series of powers that had already colonized the world before either Portugal or Spain, and ever since ancient China. *Omnium gentium mores, leges, et ritus* (1520) had a more equivocal fate. This treatise by the Bavarian humanist Häs Böhm presented the customs of peoples of the world without mentioning the Americas, but it was widely read as an endorsement that all cultural traditions had their own dignity and were worthy of full comparison. However, this exercise led to two opposite conclusions. The master of rhetoric and grammar Francisco de Támara suggested Böhm's position be completely overturned: he triumphantly reaffirmed that the central position in history was occupied by Christianity and indeed by the Spaniards, who were helping to propagate the true faith in the world. On the other hand, Böhm's approach was taken over by the Quechua Indian Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala to defend the significance of the Andean past which had been cancelled by violent Spaniards who claimed to act in Christ's name. Meanwhile, the humanist Paolo Giovio's *Histories of His Own Times* (1550–2) recounted the events of the previous half century at the same time as he was creating a museum with portraits of some of the main protagonists of his chronicle. His *Histories* served as the inspiration for a successful initiative planned in the Venetian printing shops. There the series of *Historie del mondo* was put together by a *poligrafo* of Greek origin, Giovanni Tarcagnota, and his continuers, in a frenetic attempt instantly to transform the news that was coming in from all over the globe into history on the basis of bringing together simultaneous events happening in different places.

With all their limitations and inaccuracies, each of these histories, imbued with their author's experience of life, revolved around a precise vision of human

history. These works circulated across different languages and cultures, revealing just how far they were the expression of a widespread need to reconsider world history. They might respond to various objectives: deciphering for European readers traces and records of lost societies; redefining the picture of the longterm balance of power in the world, in an effort in which individual experiences and disappointments might combine with the suffering inflicted on colonized peoples; in yet other cases, it was doubtless the taste of an expanding book market that determined the structure and outlooks of these narratives. This season did not last long, but histories of the world proved to be remarkably creative before religious conflict hardened into strict intellectual borders set up between Catholics and Protestants, and when the competing European imperial powers exercised ever stricter control over the narrative of the past in an attempt to turn history into an instrument to serve their own ends. Whether or not these histories of the world did originate a new historiographical genre, their study reveals the global side of Renaissance culture.

The death on the scaffold of Walter Raleigh (1618) brought down the curtain on this scene of great intellectual vitality. If the short period of Renaissance histories of the world really came to an end at that point, it still makes little sense to try to mark out clear divisions. The context had changed since the time of Motolinía and Galvão, but this did not mean history had lost any of its attraction, as was shown by the monumental chronicle of the reign of Philip II of Spain published by Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas in 1600–12 in the form of a general history of the world. Nevertheless, ambitious general accounts such as Giovanni Botero's *Relationi universali* (1591) had made their mark and showed that useful knowledge of the globe now required a geopolitics of the present, rather than the retrieval of the polyphony of the past in one sweeping historical account. From this point of view, what this book offers is not a narrative of decline, but of replacement. This means that the histories of the world produced in the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries did not suddenly stop being read, nor did the need to write these works cease to be felt from one day to the next.

For example, at the time of the English civil wars, during the brief republican interregnum that preceded the protectorship of Oliver Cromwell, Raleigh's *History of the World* was completed, though poorly, by one its detractors, the Scottish controversialist Alexander Ross (1591–1654), ex-chaplain to Charles I (r. 1625–49) and, according to a disputed scholarly interpretation, the first translator of the Qur'ān published in English (1649). After bringing out a short compilation from Raleigh's original work (1650), preceded by a book criticizing its main errors (1648), in 1652 Ross published a second volume of the *History of the World* that continued the narrative down to 1640.¹

¹ See Alexander Ross, *Som Animadversions and Observations upon Sr. Walter Raleigh's Historie of the World Wherein His Mistakes Are Noted and Som Doubtful Passages Cleared* (London: William

A few decades later, the French theologian and bishop Jacques-Bénédict Bossuet (1627–1704) published his famous *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* (1681). This work was to enjoy great popularity in the eighteenth century, when *philosophes* of the calibre of Voltaire saw it as a genuine novelty, despite its strongly providential conception of history as destined to culminate in the triumph of the Catholic church.² In the same period, a case of notable interest was that of Ilyās ibn al-Qassīs Ḥannā al-Mawṣili, also known as Elias of Babylon, an Eastern Christian priest from Mosul, who started working around 1680 on the first history of America in Arabic.³ He composed this text in Magdalena del Mar, a small coastal village near Lima, in Peru, which he had reached after leaving Baghdad and undertaking long journeys through Europe before crossing the Atlantic. Though exceptional, Ilyās ibn Ḥannā was an example of how extensive the mobility of people could be at that time. While he concentrated on the New World and particularly Peru, thanks to the Spanish chronicles he used as sources, his work opened with a chapter on China and gave ample space to the age of the Incas. The cultural horizons of Ilyās ibn Ḥannā had extended from the Levant to materials that would have allowed him to write an original history of the world—but he did not.

The drive to ponder a global past in all its plurality and unity, and bring together a bewildering variety of evidence and information of all sorts that challenged received wisdom, had vanished. This is one explanation why the universal histories written in Europe in the Enlightenment cannot be interpreted as just a continuation of the Renaissance histories of the world. If, as I have tried to show in this book, the globe as a whole had a much greater impact on European culture in the age of exploration than has hitherto been acknowledged, then the retreat from creating that sort of history means that it is hard to pinpoint direct

Dugard for Richard Royston, 1648); Alexander Ross, *The Marrow of Historie, or An Epitome of All Historical Passages from the Creation to the End of the Last Macedonian War: First Sent Out at Large by Sir Walter Raleigh* (London: William Dugard for John Stephenson, 1650); and Alexander Ross, *The History of the World: The second Part in Six Books, Being a Continuation of Famous History of Sir Walter Raleigh* (London: John Saywell, 1652). On his identification with the English translator of the Qurʾān, see Nabil Matar, 'Alexander Ross and the First English Translation of the Qurʾān', *Muslim World* 88, no. 1 (1998): pp. 81–92; Nabil Matar, 'A Note on Alexander Ross and the English Translation of the Qurʾān', *Journal of Islamic Studies* 23, no. 1 (2012): pp. 76–84. The attribution has been rejected by Noel Malcolm, 'The 1649 English Translation of the Koran: Its Origin and Significance', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 75 (2012): pp. 261–295. See also Mordechai Feingold, '“The Turkish Alcoran”: New Light on the 1649 English Translation of the Koran', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 75, no. 4 (2012): pp. 475–501.

² For a modern English edition with an introductory study, see Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, *Discourse on Universal History*, translated by Elborg Forster, edited by Orest Ranum (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976). On Voltaire's high opinion of this, see Pierre Force, 'Voltaire and the Necessity of Modern History', *Modern Intellectual History* 6, no. 3 (2009): pp. 477–481.

³ John-Paul A. Ghobrial, 'Stories Never Told: The First Arabic History of the New World', *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 40 (2012): pp. 259–282. On the author of this *History*, see John-Paul A. Ghobrial, 'The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory', *Past and Present* 222, no. 1 (2014): pp. 51–93.

legacies in the cultural manifestations of the following centuries.⁴ This leads us to a final reflection. Global historians today who are most interested in reconstructing in detail the connections between places and cultures in the past may not find their precursors in the world historians of the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. Nonetheless they may realize that those remote attempts maintain a surprising relationship to the questions they pose to the past today.

⁴ This is my main point of disagreement with the otherwise remarkable interpretation suggested by Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Travel Writing and Humanistic Culture: A Blunted Impact?', *Journal of Early Modern History* 10, no. 1–2 (2006): pp. 131–168.

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