Finding Aid for the Ordenanzas del baratillo de Mexico Compuestas por don Pedro Anselmo Chreslos Jache LSC.170/513

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Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: UCLA Library Special Collections
Title: Ordenanzas del baratillo de Mexico Compuestas por don Pedro Anselmo Chreslos Jache
Creator: Chreslos Jache, Don Pedro Anselmo
Identifier/Call Number: LSC.170/513
Physical Description: 155 Leaves: paper ; 235 x 165 mm. bound to 240 x 180 mm.
Date (inclusive): 1734
Abstract: This humorous and sarcastic mid-eighteenth century treatise attributes a heavily anti-Spaniard perspective to Mexico City's multiracial lower-class population, particularly in relation to themes such as peninsular privilege and racial discrimination. Taking the form of traditional Spanish legal codes, the text describes the nature, attitudes and material conditions prevalent in creole society, while ridiculizing peninsular or "Gachupin" tendencies through a collection of mock ordinances.

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Provenance/Source of Acquisition
Formerly Phillipps Manuscript no. 21332.

Processing Note
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Ordenanzas del baratillo de Mexico Compuestas por don Pedro Anselmo Chreslos Jache. (Collection Number 170/513). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Biography
Almost nothing is known about the text's purported author, Don Pedro Anselmo Chreslos Jache. Given the manuscript's extremely critical nature, Chreslos Jache was surely a pen name for a highly educated individual that was undoubtedly very familiar with the particularities of urban life in New Spain. Although the text takes on creole tendencies, several passages throughout the narrative (and the introductory letter) suggest that its author may have in fact been a Peninsular Spaniard. At one point, the "Ordenanzas" slip into first person in order for the narrator to admit his lower-class origins, when he declares "fui zapatero" (I was a shoemaker). Nothing else is known in relation to Chreslos Jachme, with exception of what can be gleaned from the manuscript.

According to a nineteenth century catalogue entitled "Bibliotheca Mexicana," a copy of the "Ordenanzas" was put up for auction in 1869 by the London-based rare book traders Messrs. Puttick & Simpson. Listed as item #1958, the book was described as "an anonymous work full of humour and satire on the respective customs and relations between Spaniards and the native born Mexicans." At 310 pages long, the copy described in the catalogue coincides exactly in length with the current extant version.

Scope and Content
The "Ordenanzas del Baratillo", which has been described as Mexico's earliest major satire, is divided into three sections: an introductory letter, a prologue and a collection of ordinances. While the largest number of pages concern the latter section, a lengthy introductory letter and a shorter prologue provide dubious (albeit humorous) background information on its anonymous author. The letter, addressed from a Spaniard living in the Indies to one living in Madrid, makes several fascinating references not just to travels through Mexico and Spain, but to Peru as well (thereby explaining the multiple references to "peruleros"). The brief prologue contextualizes the introductory letter in relation to the ensuing collection of ordinances, while setting the tone as a sarcastic anti-Spaniard treatise.
The bulk of the narrative consists of 377 decrees which enumerate the norms regulating the behavior of the lower-class brotherhood, "la Hermandad". Often quite vulgar, the "ordenanzas" nonetheless follow the formulaic and ostentatiously elegant format so prevalent in Spanish notarial documentation and personal correspondences of the colonial period. The text is thematically restricted to the general poverty, material culture, and political reality encountered by the kind of people that would frequent the “baratillo” (the notorious secondhand black markets of Mexico City and Puebla). As a result, those traditionally rejected by elite society (mulatto, black, and indigenous people) feature prominently throughout the development of the narrative. Underlying the entire text is a generalized sentiment of creole dissatisfaction with the status quo and in particular with the privileged Peninsular elite. In the words of Ilona Katzew, the text "describes and demythologizes the colony's social situation by inverting its commonly acknowledged power dynamic... and provides a fascinating glimpse into the mentality of the period regarding mixed-bloods and their purported negative effects on the Spanish body politic."

Text in Spanish.

Related Material

Bound Manuscripts Collection (Collection 170) . Available at the Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

UCLA Catalog Record ID

UCLA Catalog Record ID: 4230403

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Manuscripts.

Ordenanzas del Baratillo de Mexico dada per via de exortazion o consejo a sus doctores.

Compuestas por Don Pedro Anselmo Chreslos Jache.

Introductory statement describes the particularities of life in New Spain and Peru, written from perspective of a Peninsular Spaniard, "gachupin". 1r-28v 1734/03/15

Prologue to the "ordenanzas", sarcastic explanation of the organization, authorship, and inclusion of the introductory letter in the manuscript. 29r-34r n.d.

Collection of ordinances, authored by "doctors" of Mexico City's university of cheating and addressed to the low-life brotherhood, “la Hermandad.” 34r-155v n.d.