

Polemics, literature, and knowledge in eighteenth-century Mexico

A New World for the Republic of Letters

JOSÉ FRANCISCO ROBLES



OXFORD UNIVERSITY
STUDIES IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Contents

List of figures	xi
Acknowledgments	xiii
Note	xv
Introduction: a Republic of Letters beyond Europe	1
I. Networks, projects, and learned communities in eighteenth-century Mexico	
Chapter 1: Collecting news to make communities	23
The art of connecting	28
Public opinion in action	37
The library of the common reader	40
Spaces of literary sociability	44
The periodical as archive	51
Chapter 2: Building a library without walls: the emergence of a collective project	61
Two unwelcome letters from Spain	64
Preparing a response: a work in progress	71
The library of viceregal scholars on display	74

A collective mapping of Mexico's scholarly sphere	79
Academic fictions: placing <i>Bibliotheca Mexicana</i> on stage	87
II. Constructing past and present Republics of Letters	
Chapter 3: The search for ancient Mexico: making a Republic of Letters without letters	97
Documents and objects of knowledge in ancient Mexico	104
An <i>Indio</i> and an <i>Español</i> meet in Michoacán	117
Historical artifices	123
Nezahualcoyotl's reflections	129
The death of an ancient scholarly republic	135
Chapter 4: A <i>criollo</i> tree of knowledge	145
A <i>casta</i> painting of <i>criollos</i>	149
Defending <i>criollo</i> academic culture	159
Political defenses of <i>criollos</i> and the arms of letters	173
Giants and the tree of knowledge	190
A surreptitious Republic of Letters	195
III. Redefining Mexico's Republic of Letters	
Chapter 5: The scholarly city of God	207
A letter from a sugarcane crusher: championing scholasticism with modern ideas	213
Rousseau in Mexico?	222
Heresies against the (Catholic) Republic of Letters	230
The solitude of the cell: a scholar in transition	236
The progress of faith and knowledge	241
The exile of God	247
Against <i>hirco-servus</i> and <i>ens rationis</i>	251

Chapter 6: Escaping scholasticism	263
New spaces of knowledge	270
Reading Voltaire's flying fish	280
Criticism as restitution	290
Reaching a new public	302
Aristotle expelled from the republic	310
From fictional guerrillas to revolution	317
Epilogue: unexpected encounters	327
Bibliography	339
Index	373