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**“Utopia and Reality of Masonic Liberalism: From the Parliament
of Cadiz to the Independence of Mexico (1810–1821)”**

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Abstract

This article distinguishes between the history of Freemasonry and the myths surrounding it. It shows the contradictions that for a long time were considered the history of the fraternity in Spain during the period of the Courts of Cadiz. The paper also contests the putative Masonic impulse for the independence of New Spain (later Mexico). The author shows that—despite what was said in several publications from the time—the liberals, the revolutionaries and the Freemasons were not a unified group conspiring against the altar and the throne.

Resumen

Este artículo muestra la diferencia entre la historia de la masonería y los mitos que la rodean. Muestra las contradicciones que por largo tiempo fueron consideradas la historia de la fraternidad en España durante el periodo de las Cortes de Cádiz. El artículo también discute el supuesto impulso masónico para la independencia de Nueva España (México). El autor muestra que los liberales, los revolucionarios y los masones no fueron un grupo unificado que conspiraba contra el altar y el trono, pese a que eso se afirmaba en numerosas publicaciones de la época.

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“Utopia and Reality of Masonic Liberalism: From the Parliament of Cadiz to the Independence of Mexico (1810–1821)”¹

José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli

Introduction

Since the Parliament of Cadiz convened in 1810 to the independence of Mexico in 1821 we are confronted with historical events that affected and caused parallelisms on both sides of the Atlantic. The preliminary to political change was what in Spain is called the War of Independence, the Peninsular War for the English. When Ferdinand VII and the royal family were forcibly removed to Bayonne, a political void was left unattended and Napoleon appropriated Spain's sovereignty.

The popular reaction to this invasion and the creation of popular councils, called *Juntas*, united as *Juntas Provinciales y Nacionales*, strengthened the will of freedom and political change which the Parliament of Cadiz reflected in the Constitution of 1812. But when Ferdinand VII returned to power in 1814 he once again imposed absolutism and what followed was, in Josep Fontana's words, a “controlled revolutionary process².” This was done under the guise of a *pronunciamiento*; a military *coup d'état*, mutiny, or uprising, led by minorities of political and military liberals with scarce or no popular participation, thus proving that absolutism could be overthrown and replaced by a constitutional regime without the social upheaval that had occurred in France during the 1789 revolution.

The most renowned *pronunciamiento* was that led by Riego³ and had immediate effect in Europe: Naples, Portugal, and the Russian Decembrists. In the viceroyalty of New Spain this could be comparable to Iturbide's actions and his “peaceful” conquest of one city after another, without much bloodshed⁴.

As soon as people became aware of the existence of this right to independence and freedom, their main objective in Spain and in its American colonies was to obtain freedom and independence. And from the distant lands of Spanish America to Central Europe the process of liberation resonated from New Spain to Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, and from Portugal and Belgium to Greece, Poland, and Russia via Italy. The example of Cadiz (1810) and of Riego's 1820 uprising took on mythical proportions in the struggle for liberation from foreign occupation, in a quest for independence and national unity, which in most cases meant the substitution of absolutist forms of government for a liberal one, such as constitutional and

¹ I want to thank Sylvia Hottinger for translating this paper and Laura Normand for revising it.

² Josep Fontana, “Prólogo”, in: Irene Casteells, *La Utopía insurreccional del liberalismo* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1989).

³ Some previous ones led by Porlier, Lacy and Mina, among others, were less successful and were of less consequence inside and outside the peninsula.

⁴ There are some very expressive speeches, proclamations and proceedings in a series of leaflets entitled *Documentos relativos a las últimas ocurrencias de Nueva España*, printed in Madrid, by Ibarra, impresor de Cámara de S.M., 1821.

republican ones. Freedom of speech, civil rights, and the right to partake in government through representation were some of the liberals' objectives⁵.

It was from this time that the term *pronunciamiento* was coined as a typical Spanish uprising and, although the 1819⁶ constitutional conspiracy failed, Riego's so-called 1820 *pronunciamiento* did have an ephemeral success at first, imitated in subsequent insurrections in Spain. In a certain sense it inspired the "liberal revolution" model that would feature in the first thirty years of the American as well as European nineteenth-century history. The liberal revolution had to cohabitate with other types of revolutionary conspiracies of extreme absolutists or royalists, depending on the terminology used by the history written at the time. Benedetto Croce said it was ironic that this quest for freedom began where one least expected it to: "a country which, more than any other in Europe, was closed to philosophy and to modern cultures. A country that by excellence was scholastic and medieval, clerical and absolutist: Spain has coined the adjective *liberal* with its counterpoint royalists⁷."

This struggle for freedom that began in the old as well as in New Spain had taken on mythical proportions—Joseph Hemingway reported so from London as early as 1823—and was considered to be the biggest battle in the struggle for freedom,⁸ in spite of the fact that the anti-liberal reaction in Spain and America was a very harsh and lasting reality that complicated—even more so in Spain—a liberal revolution. But the myth persevered and became stronger; a myth that was already celebrated in 1808 from Bristol as "the dawn of freedom in Europe" and as a "new political phenomenon taking place in the South of Europe⁹."

Once the parliament had convened, first in Seville and later in Cadiz, the debate on freedom was presented in Spain as well as abroad as a plausible political solution for the two countries, both called Spain, the new and the old, and as a panacea for all ills. The English government officially stated to the government seat in Seville on July 18, 1810, that "His Majesty" hoped that "the collective wisdom of the States of the Kingdoms of Spain and the [American] Indies" reunited in Parliament would finish off their common enemy of Independence and honour of the Crown of Spain¹⁰," a clear reference to the French.

The parliament held on the island of Leo on September 24, 1810 was considered the dawn of freedom. The English press referred to it—and specifically, to the Freedom of Press—as a great event¹¹.

⁵ Manuel Moreno Alonso, *La forja del liberalismo en España. Los amigos españoles de Lord Holland, 1793-1840* (Madrid: Congreso de los Diputados, 1997), 239.

⁶ Claude Morange, *Una conspiración fallida y una Constitución nonnata (1819)* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2006). Francisco Varo Montilla, "La causa del Palmar: Conspiración y levantamiento en 1819" (Ph. D. Thesis in History, UNED, 2010).

⁷ Benedetto Croce, *Historia de Europa en el siglo XIX* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1996), 9-10.

⁸ Joseph Hemingway, *History of the Spanish Revolution commencing with the establishment of the constitutional government of the Cortes, in the year 1812 and brought down to its overthrow by French arms* (London, 1823).

⁹ Moreno Alonso, *La forja del liberalismo en España*, 240.

¹⁰ Moreno Alonso, *La forja del liberalismo en España*, 241.

¹¹ *The Times*, 23 November, 1810.

Myth and reality

And when in 1812 the Constitution of Cadiz was proclaimed, it was considered key for the political future of Spain and its colonies. The myth was consummated, yet among those who had embraced the liberal cause since the beginning, some were also fully aware that the myth differed from reality. This reality had already been detected by some of the privileged who had witnessed and others who had partaken in the event, the likes of Lord Holland, Blanco White, Jovellanos, Muñoz Torrero, Quintana, Garay, and so many others studied by professor Moreno Alonso¹². And among the obstacles that rendered this myth unobtainable, they mention first of all the artificial debate created in Cadiz, the “least aristocratic, the least devoted”¹³ city of Spain and very different from the rest of the country. On the other hand, they also mentioned that the “popular orators” confused the applause of Cadiz with the opinion of the rest of the nation. The rest of the nation and its people were somewhat distant from the people of Cadiz and mostly, didn’t understand “the mistakes of an extravagant democracy and their anti-monarchist gadgets” as they were described in the English diplomatic correspondence. This is why the people of Spain remained quite indifferent to the second French invasion of Spain, in 1824 called “ *cien mil hijos de San Luis* ”, the thousand sons of Saint Louis, sent by the Congress of Verona¹⁴.

Thus traditional minted literature was abundant and radical in its search to find the culprits of Spain’s new situation. Those culprits were associated with French revolutionaries and Freemasons, but also with the liberals, equally revolutionaries and Freemasons, thus creating easy identifications and stunning the population. So, with a great deal of guilty ignorance, a myth was cunningly created in the popular imagination in which politics and religion, or the throne and altar, served as a counterpoint to create supporters or enemies of what, for some, was the cause of freedom; for others, the defense of the tradition of monarchy and religion. In this transition from the ancient regime to the new; from absolutism to liberalism; from tradition to reforms or modernity; the Masonic space gained an unusual significance on both sides of the Atlantic. The relevance of this Masonic significance has yet to be proven.

It is sometimes true in history that what happens in fact is not as important as what was believed, and still is believed, to have happened at the time. Nowadays we are aware of how a good proportion of the history of nineteenth-century Spain was prefabricated, and that was especially the case of Masonic liberalism or the presumed leading role of Freemasonry or, if you wish, of the importance granted to those who were thought to be Freemasons who in many cases, we are still not certain were.

As Ramon Solís very accurately said: “the claim, continuously repeated, that the representatives of 1812, those who were in the Parliament of Cadiz and, in general, all liberal

¹² See footnote 5.

¹³ Moreno Alonso, *La forja del liberalismo en España*, 243.

¹⁴ F. A Chateaurbrind, *Congreso de Verona. Guerra de España. Negociaciones. Colonias españolas* (Madrid: Gaspar y Roig ed., 1870).

thought, was directed, if not governed, by lodges is completely mistaken¹⁵.” Nevertheless, since this belief has so much prestige, it is maintained by certain historians with such assurance that, as sometimes happens, an unsubstantiated claim has come to be considered the fruit of in-depth research. It is curious that there is a certain tendency to grant influence and power of Freemasonry to the liberals in Cadiz, while in fact Freemasons were on the opposite side, that of Joseph Bonaparte, who was supported by lodges in Madrid, thus also supporting the French invasion.

The bibliography of those in favour and those against Freemasonry at the end of the nineteenth century is renowned—although from diametrically opposed views, both show an archaic Masonic megalomania, and contributed to a myth of what was unknown or ignored by the majority of the people¹⁶. But when referring to Freemasonry in the first years of the nineteenth century one can only refer to the ephemeral Freemasonry of Bonaparte in its respective French and Spanish sides¹⁷, which we now know of in some depth thanks to the archives deposited in the Manuscripts Section of the *Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris*, on *rue Richelieu*. This Freemasonry was introduced into Spain by Napoleon’s troops and was favoured from Madrid by Joseph Bonaparte and his supporters as an ideological entrapment.

On the subject of liberalism: the revolution, and its consequences for the Spanish clergy and for the ancient regime, was not only political heresy but also religious—so much so that Spanish Freemasons (or French ones living in Spain) saw Freemasonry as the liberating liberal formula that the country needed.

Thus the Inquisition was used as a sort of political police by some, and was considered by the Freemasons as the most harmful institution in Spain. This also explains the origins of ecclesiastical hierarchies and its press—as well as certain “historians”¹⁸ later—in conferring an air of leading a crusade against “the revolutionaries.” But curiously enough, they considered these revolutionaries and liberals to also be Freemasons, not only subverted against religious order but also against the political order. One only has to read a typical newspaper of that time, such as *El Sol de Cádiz* or *El Procurador General de la Nación y el Rey*, both published in Cadiz from 1812 to 1814, or leaflets like the one entitled “*Los serviles cuerdos y los liberales locos transformados en maniqueos antiguos, mixturados con los modernos*” (“*Sane royalists and insane liberals transformed into former Manichean, mingling with moderns*”), also published in Cadiz in 1812, by don Felipe Sanclemente y Romeu, a refugee from Saragossa.

¹⁵ Ramón Solís, *El Cádiz de las Cortes* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1958), 316.

¹⁶ José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli, On this subject see, “Las Cortes de Cádiz, América y la Masonería”, in: *La Guerra de conciencias. Monarquía o independencia en el mundo hispánico y lusitano*, ed. Cristina Torales Pacheco and others (Tlaxcala: Instituto Tlaxcalteca de Cultura, 2010), 201-244.

¹⁷ Ferrer Benimeli, “La Masonería bonapartista en España”, in: *Les Espagnols et Napoléon, Aix-en-Provence* (Université de Provence, 1984), 335-386. Ferrer Benimeli, “Masonería e Iglesia en la primera mitad del siglo XIX”, in: *Liberalisme chrétien et catholicisme libéral en Espagne, France et Italie dans la première moitié du XIXème siècle* (Aix-en-Provence : Université de Provence, 1989), 63-94.

¹⁸ Ricardo de la Cierva, *Historia de las sociedades secretas antiguas y modernas en España, y especialmente de la francmasonería* (Madrid, Impr. Infante, 1874); and as a similar type but this time belonging to the 20th century “El día que se alzaron las columnas”, ABC [Madrid] (June 11th, 1981), 3; “Freemasonry was a very remarkable support for the spreading of liberal ideology”, *Ya* [Madrid] (October 30th, 1981).

One of the *Sol de Cadiz* objectives since its second issue on October 17, 1812 was to attack and unmask Freemasons:

Somehow a caste of pernicious men have spread all of over Spain wanting nothing else than to subvert the State, and annihilate Religion if possible. We believe we are doing a great service to God, the Homeland and to our Holy Religion, by openly declaring and warning of the dangers that surround our nation due to the introduction of the damned society of freemasons, who like sly vixens have swept all over the land of Spain...¹⁹.

Soon after, in issue number 5 on November 1, 1812, an article entitled “Freemason hypocrisy” was printed:

My desire to serve God, my homeland and my beloved Monarch, urgently encourages me to unveil Freemasonry, as it is observed in Spain and warn of the harm this caste of beasts can cause to Religion and the State...Doubtlessly these pernicious men try to upset the whole world, by making a muffled and systematic war against all thrones and all Religion...

The titles of some of these works published by *El Sol de Cadiz* are sufficiently expressive: “Interesting documents to learn of freemasons and other revolutionaries machinations,” “Discourse on the damn origin of the freemason sect attempts to destroy all Religion and all Monarchies,” “Discourse on the progress made by the infernal freemason sect since 1720²⁰.”

For the author of the previously quoted leaflet “Sane royalists and insane liberals...,” liberals, or *Liberi Murotaris* [sic], presented Manichean, Albigenses, Waldensians, Wycliffites, Iconoclasts, Calvinists, Huguenots, Freethinkers, Deists, Materialists, Volterrians, etc. as fashionable, “coming from the nefarious, unclean and sacrilegious France²¹.” And further on he has no qualms in associating *heretics* with *liberal Freemasons*, “profane and libertines in their ideas²².” For the author of this leaflet—who makes quite a good synthesis of the thoughts that could be found in certain sectors of the society he moved in—the master and head of all Freemasons was “the son of adultery and of the concubine of Catuja Leticia Fech of Córcega, and the Count of Manveuff or Pantufto, Brutus-Ali-Napoleon-Bonaparte the

¹⁹ Agustín Martínez de la Hera, “La Masonería en la prensa española entre 1808 y 1815”, After promising news about lodges in Spain, about which we get the impression they don’t know much, they copy and sarcastically comment on “las Constituciones y Ritos con que se reciben los Masones de La Habana” (“*The Constitutions and Rites of welcome of the Freemasons in Havana*”). Also see *Cuadernos de Ilustración y Romanticismo* 16 (2010): 1-27. Beatriz Sanchez Hita, “Los periódicos del Cádiz de la Guerra de la Independencia (1808-1814)”, in: *Catálogo comentado* (2008).

²⁰ *El Sol de Cádiz* 9 (December 3th, 1812), 65 y ss.; n. 10 (Diciembre 4th, 1812), 73 y ss.; n. 12 (Diciembre 17th, 1812), 89.

²¹ Felipe Sanclemente y Romeu, *Los serviles cuerdos y los liberales locos, transformados en maniqueos antiguos mixturados con los modernos* (Cádiz, don Nicolás Gómez, impresor del Gobierno por S.M., 1812) 10.

²² Sanclemente y Romeu, *Los serviles*, 12.

executioner of Europe and the scourge of Gods wrath, as destructive Attila, king of the Humns [sic] self-proclaimed; the one who devastated France²³.”

In the popular imagination, Napoleon became an evil and treacherous monster, a “new Satan”; a son and promoter of the regicide and deicide revolution; a persecutor of the church and of the pope; responsible for imprisoning the latter in Valençay, where he would die in his eighties in 1799.

If we go from the boss of that “*liberi muratori*, Egyptian and Manichean Freemasonry” to his subjects, called “miserable liberals,” we should not be surprised if they were identified as Manichean heretics and accused of “in Councils or Lodges giving themselves over to all sort of wickedness, excesses and evil, horrors and abominations...of such diabolic and odious sect²⁴.”

He repeats these ideas in a curious “*Depreciacion y protesta de un filosofo de ideas liberales*” (“*Depreciation and protest of a liberal philosopher*”), in which he describes with great joy the conversion of a liberal he describes as “heretic, unclean, free thinker and devilish freemason” and “philosophical devil with liberal ideas²⁵.” And we find these ideas again in a manuscript entitled *Napoleón visto en su propia figura delineada por Daniel desde el versículo 14 hasta el 45 del Capítulo 11 de su sagrada profecía o Desengaño de Francmasones y judíos y consuelo de buenos españoles* (“*Napoleon as outlined by Daniel in verse 14 to 45 of Chapter 11 of his sacred prophecy or the Disappointment of Freemasons and Jews and the consolation of good people of Spain*”), in which Napoleon is “the Grand Orient of Freemasons” and represents the “Shining Sun” that presides all Freemason lodges. Napoleon is also the “great Architect” who tries to build the temple that the prophet Zechariah spoke about. And in order to do so he asks his Masons or Freemasons to help, ornamenting them with “pantometer, a set square, compas, hammers, chisels, aprons, etc.”

In reality these publications are only following the steps of what had already started at the end of the eighteenth century in Spain, during which there was an efficient interconnection between the religious and political aspects of repression of Freemasonry as consequence of the existing concern over the spread of revolutionary ideas in this country. This happened especially since 1789, as there was confusion in the documents that referred to Freemasonry, caused by the impact of the *Illuminati*. In alarmist literature, there was not always a clear distinction between the *Illuminati* and Freemasonry. This was useful for the European monarchs who, impressed by the ideological progress of the French Revolution, took severe steps against these societies.

Thus we find among the papers of the Inquisition of that time different documents and leaflets that are a reflection of the conspiracy literature of the time, in which Freemasons, *Illuminati*, and Jacobins are confused and in which once more the fear created by a more or less secret society²⁶ is manifest.

²³ In other works and sermons, Napoleon is described as an atheist, monster, red beast with seven crowned heads, the new Tamerlan, etc. Ludolf Pelizaeus, “Modelos para la insurgencia en Europa y México: diferencias y paralelos, 1808-1813”, in: *La Guerra de conciencias*, 75-91.

²⁴ Sanclemente y Romeu, *Los serviles*, 18 and 21.

²⁵ Sanclemente y Romeu, *Los serviles*, 40-41.

On the other hand, Freemasons during the first thirty years of the nineteenth century belonged to those who demanded total freedom of expression and the suppression of the Inquisition as a symbol of oppression against freedom. One only has to read Masonic speeches of the time to not only know what Freemasons thought of the Inquisition, but that they also considered themselves liberals.

Among these, perhaps the most explanatory speech is the one compiled in the architecture book of Santa Julia Lodge in Madrid. This speech won the lodge's gold medal for answering the question asked on May 28, 1810: "What will be Freemasonry's influence on Spain's happiness?" In this long speech, read on June 10, 1812, the preamble read:

...if with the help of history we show fast and simply the generous efforts the freemasons have made to extract superstition from every corner of the earth and render the freedom of worship to Man; if we can prove that freemasonry were to be spread and generalised in Spain it would improve our character, soften our customs, inspire love for wisdom and hatred towards superstitious practices, will apologise to our venerable institutions for its antiquity, for the calumnies and persecutions it has suffered, and for its philosophical doctrine²⁷.

The following is a curious example of what different ideas some had of Freemasonry. This Freemason Ode was published in that same Francophile lodge in Madrid in 1812²⁸, and has kept its timelessness:

Pensaba quando era niño
Que eran los Franc-masones
Malvados ciudadanos
Y asesinos feroces.
(When I was a child I thought Freemasons were evil citizens, fierce murderers)
Así me los pintaban
Nuestros predicadores,
Con ideas absurdas
En imágenes torpes.
(Thus they were described to me by our preachers, with absurd ideas and clumsy images)
¿Es posible, decía,
Se junten estos hombres,
A maquinan infamias,
Y fraguar traiciones?
(Was it possible, I wondered, that these men gathered to plot all this evil and forge betrayals?)
¿Que renieguen del cielo,

²⁶ Ferree Benimeli, "Inquisición y Masonería", in *Historia de la Inquisición en España y América* (Madrid: BAC, 1984), 1286-1304. Ferree Benimeli, "La Inquisición frente a Masonería e ilustración", in *Inquisición española y mentalidad inquisitorial* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1984), 463-495.

²⁷ Manuel Alonso de Viado, *Colección de piezas de Arquitectura trabajadas en el Taller de Santa Julia* (Madrid, 1812), 135-136. This paper was dated May 29, 1812.

²⁸ De Viado, *Colección de piezas de Arquitectura*, 135-136.

Que los Cristos azoten,
Que escarnezcan los Santos,
Que los niños devoren?
(Did they abjure heaven, whip Christ's images, mock the Saints and devour children?)
No se cómo la tierra
Sufre su peso enorme
Sin que se abra y absorba
Los tales Franc-masones.
(I don't know how the earth bears their huge weight without opening and swallowing up those Freemasons).
Llegó mi edad adulta,
Vinieron los albores
De una aurora serena,
Que disipó la noche.
(I became an adult, came a new dawn, of serene light that dissipated the night)
Estudí, y admireme,
Abjuré mis errores,
Conseguí la divisa
De nuestra libre orden.
(I studied and, amazed, I apologised for my mistakes; I obtained the emblem of our free order)
Y hallé desengañado,
Que si desea el hombre
Mejorar las costumbres,
Que estragado corrompe;
(And disillusioned, I found that if Man were to improve his customs that spoil and corrupt)
Acelerarse debe
A tomar las lecciones
De virtud, en el seno
De los Francos Masones²⁹.
(He must hasten to learn the lessons of virtue among the Freemasons)

This kind of literature, apologetic on one hand and slanderous on the other, was a very efficient way to create a solid image in favour of and against Freemasonry. And among other works, one has to quote Simon Lopez's *Despertador Cristiano-Político: Se manifiesta que los autores del trastorno de la Iglesia y de la Monarquía son los Filósofos Francomasones; se descubren las artes diabólicas de que se valen, y se apuntan los medios de atajar sus progresos* ("Political Christian Alarm: States that the authors of the disruptions in the Church and the Monarchy are the freemason philosophers: their diabolic arts are unveiled and strategies to contain their progress are presented"), published in Valencia in 1809 and also printed and distributed that same year in Mexico.

²⁹ On my preamble to *La Masonería en la región de Murcia*, by José Antonio Ayala, I remembered how in 1986 in some countries like Spain the mere mention of Freemasonry still evoked black mass, profanation of the Eucharist, children being murdered, cult to Devil, bloody revenges...

That same “discovery” of presumed Masonic secrets can be found in the book written and published by a priest from Malaga in 1812 called *Origen de los Francmasones: Sus ridículas ceremonias y declaración de las cifras, señales y tocamientos que usan para conocerse, ilustrado con oportunas notas para utilidad de los fieles* (“The origins of Freemasonry: Their ridiculous ceremonies and declaration of the ciphers, signals and touching they use to recognise each other, illustrated with opportune notes for the use of the faithful”) and the anonymous work that seems to be its sequel, also published in Malaga in 1812, *Reflexiones sobre la conducta de los francmasones: Notas sobre el origen de los francmasones; notas de las ceremonias francmasónicas y explicación de láminas* (“Reflections on freemasons’ behaviour: Notes on the origin of freemasons; notes on masonic ceremonies and the explanation of their prints”). Also from that same year, anonymous as well, is *¿Hay o no hay francmasones?* (“Do freemasons really exist?”), published in Cadiz.

To complement these works one has to mention the first abbreviated edition in Spanish of the famous anti-Masonic publication by the former Jesuit, Father Barruel, *Historia del Jacobinismo: Compendio de las Memorias para servir a dicha historia. Al final, Cuadro Geográfico y Político de las logias alemanas iluminadas* (*Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism*) (*Abrégé des Mémoires pour Servir à l’Histoire du Jacobinisme*, 2 vol., Londres, P. Le Boussonnier, 1798, 1799; Luxembourg, 1800; Hambourg, P. Fauche, 1800, 1801; Paris: A. Le Clère, 1817. *Compendium*), published in Spanish in 1812³⁰. The complete works in four volumes were published in London in 1797 in English and French³¹.

That same year, 1812, Agustin de Macedo published in the Imprenta Real of Lisbon *El secreto revelado o manifestado del sistema de los francmasones e iluminados, y su influencia en la fatal revolución francesa* (“Freemasons and illuminati’s secrets revealed or stated and their fatal influence on the French Revolution”), which, as mentioned in its subtitle, is a work “extracted from the memoirs that Barruel composed for the *History of Jacobinism*³²,”

On those same lines of denouncing revolutionary and Napoleonic France, we find Fray Rafael de Vélez’s book—synod examiner of the bishopric of Sigüenza, lecturer of sacred theology in his convent of Capuchins monks of the same town—entitled *Preservativo contra*

³⁰ The Spanish edition of 1812 was published by M.S. Sr. D. Simón de Rentería in Villafranca del Bierzo and it has 209 pages.

³¹ Barruel, *Memoirs illustrating the History of Jacobinism* [A translation of the French] (London, 1797-1998), 4 vol. Barruel, *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire du Jacobinisme* (London: Le Boussonnier, 1797), 4 vol. On the different editions of this work see José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli and Susana Cuartero Escobés, *Bibliografía de la Masonería* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 2004), 3 vol., particularly vol. I, 33-35 and 146. Clear and outstanding disciples of Barruel in his anti-Masonic obsession were the also former Jesuits exiled in Italy PP. Luengo, Bonola, Gustá and most of all, Hervás y Panduro in his *Causas de la Revolución Francesa en el año 1789, y medios de que se han valido para efectuarla los enemigos de la Religión y del Estado*. Piece written by this priest, the librarian of Pope Pius VIII, in a letter addressed to a Respectable Minister of the council of Castilla, his friend. Rome, March 25th, 1794. Madrid, 1807, 2 vols. on pages 571 and 539. In this work, as well as those written by other former Jesuits, they expose a conspiracy theory of “the execrable sects of Jansenism, philosophy and Freemasonry.” On this subject see the preamble by Enrique Gimenez López and Inmaculada Fernández Arrillaga, to the work of Manuel Luengo., *Diario de 1808. El año de la conspiración* (Alicante, Universidad, 2010), 9-38. Antonio Astorgano Abajo, *Lorenzo Hervás y Panduro (1735-1809)* (Madrid, Almad ed. 2010); “La Biblioteca Jesuítico-española de Hervás y su liderazgo sobre el resto de los ex-jesuitas”, *Hispania Sacra* LVI, n. 113 (2004): 171-268.

³² Imprenta Real (Lisboa, 1812). Imprenta de Agustín Muñoz (Sevilla, 1813).

la irreligión o los planes de la filosofía contra la Religión y el Estado, realizados por la Francia para subyugar la Europa, seguidos por Napoleón en la conquista de España, y dados a luz por algunos de nuestros sabios en perjuicio de nuestra patria (“Preservative against anti-religion or the philosophy’s plans against Religion and State, designed by France to subdue Europe, that are followed by Napoleon in his attempt to conquer Spain and damage our homeland brought to light by some of our wise masters”), printed in Madrid by Ibarra in 1812. A second edition “increased with some important observations and documents by doctor D. Matias Vinuesa López de Alfaro, priest of Tamajon.” Here they say that the liberals are well known in the whole of Europe as “illuminated, materialists, atheists, disbelievers, freethinkers, Freemasons, unclean³³.” During six long chapters the author tries to prove that the plans of the French philosophers were directed by Napoleon and his agents “against Jesus Christ’s religion and the State” and thus “destroy the thrones of his kings and extinguish from his lands the faith of our Crucified Lord.” And even though “their cruel war is soon going to be on its fifth year” the author hopes that with this contribution and “preservative against anti-religion” can counterattack the maxims that are being spread to damage “religion and homeland,” and cooperate in the defense of “our adored religion, our beloved country and our imprisoned king³⁴.”

One of the documents added by Dr. D. Martin Vinuesa Lopex de Alfaro to this second edition is symptomatic, as it is entitled *Representación que los generales y oficiales del ejército contenidos en ella han hecho y presentado al augusto congreso de Cortes manifestando la urgente necesidad de que continúe en el ejercicio de sus funciones el supremo tribunal de la inquisición* (“Representation of what the generals and officials of the army have done and have presented to the most august congressional Parliament expressing the urgent need for the Supreme Court of the Inquisition follow in the exercise of their functions”), dated April 30, 1812 in Cadiz³⁵.

This type of publication had a corresponding political satire that became a formidable instrument of attack and a long-lasting tradition of clandestine literature in the cities of Spain and overseas³⁶, in which the French weren’t always depicted favourably, as can be seen in this curious “Recipe to make Frenchmen”

³³ Imprenta Real, (Lisboa, 1812). Imprenta de Agustín Muñoz (Sevilla, 1813), 214.

³⁴ Fray Rafael Velez’s work was reprinted in Mexico by doña María Fernández de Jáuregui office, in 1813 under a slightly different title: *Preservativo contra la irreligión o los planes de la falsa filosofía contra la religión y el estado* (Preservative against anti-Religion or the plans of the false philosophy of religion and the state). The adjective “false” philosophy doesn’t exist in the original.

³⁵ Jose Bonaparte, *The Inquisition was abolished in 1803240-242, and was abolished again by the Courts in Cadiz* (February 22, 1813). By 90 votes in favour and 60 against, after a long and controversial discussion that ended up with a decree that declared the Inquisition “incompatible with the Constitution.” Emilio La Parra López, *El primer liberalismo y la Iglesia* (Alicante: Instituto de Estudios Juan Gil-Albert, 1985), 171-224. Leandro Higuera del Pino, “Actitud del episcopado español ante los decretos de supresión de la Inquisición: 1813 y 1820”, en: *La Inquisición española. Nueva visión. Nuevos horizontes* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1980), 939-977.

³⁶ Teófonos Egigo, “*Sátiras políticas en la España Moderna*” (Madrid, 1975). This author situates political satire at the origins and prehistory of political journalism as in fact it is little more than occasionally combative informal press.

*En Alambique echarás
a Lutero y a Calvino
un judío y un asesino
y todo lo mezclarás
la sangre de Barrabás
y de Judas inhumano;
y en hornilla de Vulcano
destila la quinta esencia
y sacarás sin violencia
un francés, el más humano*³⁷.

*(Put Luther and Calvin, /a Jew and a murderer /in an Alembic still/And mix everything
/with the blood of Barabas and Judas the inhuman; /in Vulcan's stove distil this
essence /and with no violence you'll obtain /a most human Frenchman.)*

-and in which it is usual to find Freemasonry identified with the French:

*España de la guerra
Tremola su pendón,
Contra el poder infame
De todo francmasón*

*(Spain at war /Waving its banner /Against the despicable power /Of every
Freemason.)*³⁸

This first bulk of works published between 1809 and 1812 that correspond to the period of the peninsular war was also followed up in America. Some variations that are fundamental for political satire and social protest—as Iris Zavala highlights—added a thicker layer in America. So the press and literature, whether clandestine or not, established a sort of dialogue on each side of the ocean.

Same topic in America

In Peru, Quintana's "odes against Napoleon" were used by the rebels against Spain.³⁹ Nevertheless, in Mexico, Hidalgo was attacked by being compared to famous thieves; while in Spain, Clararrosa, former chaplain of Axuchitlan, exhorted the Americans to become independent⁴⁰. And in Cuba clandestine literature was characteristically anti-Masonic. Even more so, since they were preceded by a conspiracy that failed a coup in 1819 which was called Masonic⁴¹.

³⁷ Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia. Madrid. Ms. 9/4985.

³⁸ Appendix of *Zurriago* 4, February 7th, 1821.

³⁹ Iris M Zavala, "Literatura clandestina y Masonería en América", in: *Iner-America Review of Bibliography* XX (1970): 427-439.

⁴⁰ Anonymus, *El militar cristiano contra el Padre Hidalgo y el capitán Allende. Diálogo entre Mariquita y un soldado raso* (México, 1810).

⁴¹ This court case lasted 10 years and the role played by Freemasonry was left unclarified, for some presumably Masonic documents used by the prosecutor were never shown nor were handed in to the attorney even though he had demanded to see them on several occasions. On this subject Ferrer Benimeli, "Révolution française et littérature clandestine à Cuba. La Francmaçonnerie comme élément conspirateur", in: *La période révolutionnaire aux Antilles*, coord. Roger Roumson et Charles Porset (Martinique : Université des Antilles et de la Guyane, 1988), 29-48.

When European Spain fought for its independence, the Spanish in America were fighting for their own independence at the same time. They had similar features, for they too identified the Freemasons with the French, the revolutionary partisans, and liberals.

On these lines we find the “*Contestación de Fray José Ximeno, del Colegio de Crucíferos de Querétaro, al manifiesto del Señor Hidalgo*” (“*Answer of Brother Jose Ximeno of the School of Crucifers of Querétaro, to Mr. Hidalgo’s manifesto*”) of 1811⁴², in which he accuses the priest Hidalgo of having received from his “Freemason brethren” the “pernicious” idea of equality—dissolving the differences that maintain society’s order and generating anarchy—therefore concluding that Hidalgo was either a libertine, a materialist, an apostate of religion, or everything put together and therefore a Freemason like his master Napoleon⁴³.

Setting aside the polemics over Napoleon’s belonging to the Freemason’s order—which no one was ever able to prove⁴⁴—or even that Hidalgo himself ever belonged—which Rogelio Aragón also questions⁴⁵—curiously, Father Ximeno acknowledges that the works which had inspired him were “*Centinela Contra Francmasones*” (“*Centinela Against Freemasons*”) by Father Torrubia (Madrid, 1752), “*Compendio de la Vida y hechos de Joseph Balsamo, llamado el Conde de Cagliostro... que puede servir de regla para conocer la índole de la secta de los francmasones*” (“*Compendium of the life and deeds of Joseph Balsamo, called Conde de Cagliostro...that may be used as a measure to know the nature of the freemason sect*”), Sevilla, 1791⁴⁶, and “*Despertador Cristiano politico*” (“*The Christian political alarm*”) in which as the subtitle reads: “Shows that the authors of the Church and the Monarchies’ troubles are the Freemason philosophers; discovers their diabolic arts they use and shows the way to shortcut their progress” (Valencia, 1809)⁴⁷.

⁴² Juan E. Hernández Dávalos, *Colección de documentos para la historia de la guerra de independencia de México (doc. n° 219)*, CD’s Edición directed by Virginia Guedea and Alfredo Ávila (México: UNAM, 2006).

⁴³ María Eugenia Vázquez Semadeni, *La interacción entre el debate público sobre la Masonería y la cultura política, 1761-1830* (México D.F.: UNAM y El Colegio de Michoacan, 2010), 90.

⁴⁴ Ferrer Benimeli, “La Masonería bonapartista en España”, 335-386. François Collaveri, *La Franc-maçonnerie des Bonaparte* (Paris : Payot, 1982). Collaveri, *Napoléon empereur franc-maçon* (Paris, Tallandier, 1986).

⁴⁵ Rogelio Aragón Juárez, “Contra la Iglesia y el Estado: Masonería e Inquisición en Nueva España, 1760-1820” (Tesis de Licenciatura en Historia, Universidad del Instituto Helénico en México, 2006). Aragón Juárez, “La Masonería en las revoluciones decimonónicas de México”, in: *Historia Nova* 8 (2008): 252-319. Seemingly José M^a Mateos in 1884 was the first to claim- without providing any documentary proof whatsoever -that Hidalgo had been initiated in 1806 in the first established lodge in Mexico. Since then other historians have just repeated the same solely basing themselves on Mateo’s text. José María Mateos, *Historia de la Masonería en México, México* (Rito Nacional Mexicano, 1884, 8-9). Richard E. Chism, *Una contribución a la Historia Masónica de México* (México D.F.: Minero Mexicano, 1899), 7. Manuel Esteban Ramírez, *Apuntes sintéticos sobre la Masonería en México* (México D.F.: Rito Nacional Mexicano, s.f.), 5. Félix Navarrete, *La Masonería en la Historia y las leyes de Méjico* (México D.F.: JUS, 1962), 29-30. Ramón Martínez Saldúa, *Historia de la Masonería en Hispanoamérica* (México D.F.: Costa-Amic, 1867), 55-56.

⁴⁶ There are at least 32 editions of this book, in Spanish, Italian, French, German, and English. Agostino Lattanzi in his *Bibliografia della Massoneria e di Cagliostro* (Firenze, 1974), attributes this work to monsenior Francesco Barber. For the *Centinela contra francs-masones* by P. Joseph Torrubia seemingly used the 1793 edition, published by Ramón Ruiz in Madrid.

⁴⁷ On this and the other authors and their work, see Ferrer Benimeli and Cuartero Escobés, *Bibliografía de la Masonería*. Simon Lopez’s work was reprinted in Mexico by Juan López de Cancelada that same year 1809.

This, we find, is the typical anti-Masonic literature printed in Spain a few years earlier and used again in New Spain in the aftermath of the events in Cadiz by those who wanted to preserve the established order of that absolute monarchy back in Spain.

Another characteristic example was Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador in his book of 162 pages *Desengaños que a los insurgentes de Nueva España, seducidos por los fracmazonos agentes de Napoleón, dirige la verdad de la religión católica y la experiencia* (“Disappointments suffered by the insurgents of New Spain, seduced by Freemasons, agents of Napoleon, advises of the truth of the catholic religion and his experiences”) (México, 1812).

As María Eugenia Vázquez Semadeni very precisely and succinctly said, the author systematically summarizes the ideas found in anti-Masonic literature, associating it with Hidalgo’s insurrection, just as the former presented it as a mere feature of a Masonic conspiracy to put an end to the altar and the throne, and ultimately wanted to consecrate everything in the world to the Napoleonic empire by destroying the Catholic Church and grabbing Ferdinand’s throne for Napoleon. Pretty much in the same way as the contemporary literature in Cadiz, the author tried to show that the insurgents had been fooled into believing they were fighting for king and religion, but that in reality they were being used as instruments for Napoleon’s machinations and his “evil envoys,” the Freemasons. This idea can also be found in Simon Lopez’s works.

Deep down inside, he was trying to prove the illegitimacy of the rebel movement, since the fact that Ferdinand VII was in prison did not give them the right to rebel, for in his absence “the Spanish and American nation, reunited in the Parliament of Cadiz due to the monarch’s imprisonment, is who has sovereignty and who is our legitimate governor.”⁴⁸

A year later in 1813, Fernández de San Salvador promoted the printing of *Preservative against anti-religion* by Rafael de Vélez in which—as we have previously seen⁴⁹—he developed the conspiracy theory in the exact same way as Father Barruel had.⁵⁰ Thus

⁴⁸ Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador, *Desengaños que a los insurgentes de Nueva España seducidos por los fracmazonos agentes de Napoleón, dirige la verdad de la religión católica y la experiencia*, México, En la Oficina de D. Mariano de Zúñiga y Ontiveros (1812), 19-20. In reality the work continues with *Desengaño 2 tomado de las instrucciones de Napoleón y de la confesión espontánea de la Junta de Zitacuaro. Desengaño 3 tomado del arrepentimiento de Hidalgo y Costilla a la hora de la muerte, parecida a la de Antioco con quien él mismo se comparó. Desengaño 4 tomado de las falsedades con que José Napoleón, para engañar al mundo, se supone reinante en América, y de las imposturas y más idénticas a las de los franceses de allá, que esparcen aquí los ocultos agentes de Napoleón. Desengaño 5 tomado de la aniquilación del poder y orgullo de Morelos en Cuatla de Amilpas* (Disillusionment 2 based on Napoleon’s instructions and the spontaneous confession of Zitacuaro Junta. Disillusionment 3 taken from the repenting of Hidalgo y Costilla on his deathbed, similar to that of Antioch with whom he compared himself. Disillusionment 4 taken from the lies with which Joseph Napoleon, in order to fool the world, supposedly to be reigning in America and the impostures and more identified to those of the French overseas, that spread over here the hidden agents of napoLeo. Disillusionment 5 taken from the annihilation of the power and pride of Morelos in Cuatla de Amilpas) Cfr. At Archivo General de la Nación (México), *Colección de documentos para la Historia de la Guerra de Independencia de México*, 1808-1821, t. IV. Documento 138.

⁴⁹ See footnote 34.

⁵⁰ On father Barruel and his multiple editions of *Memoirs illustrating the History of Jacobinism*, printed for the first time in French in London in 1797, see footnote 32.

Fernández de San Salvador insisted yet again on the idea that the insurgence derived from the French Revolution, and therefore was part of the complot.

And that same year the already mentioned José Ximeno published, among other works, “*La verdadera felicidad, libertad e independencia de las naciones*” (Mexico, 1813)⁵¹, in which he once again accused the insurgency of being promoted by false philosophers, that is to say, the Freemasons.

But what is most curious is that in the first independent publications we also find the same anti-Masonry; in this case, to justify the uprising and to delegitimize the monarchists accused, in turn, of being Freemasons. Thus in the *Ilustrador Nacional*, the viceroy Francisco Xavier Venegas is signalled as an atheist, materialist, and Freemason for having opposed the true struggle in favour of Ferdinand VII in the hands of the French, the latter having brought heresy to Spain, as was shown by the Francophiles who supported Napoleon and their henchmen. Meanwhile the “true Americans” were struggling to rid themselves of the yoke and maintain their faith untouched, which they claimed was under attack in Europe by the “multitude of Freemason lodges” that had corrupted it⁵².

Furthermore, the *Semanario Patriótico Americano* considered the viceroy’s government as illegitimate as the government in Cadiz, since—it says—the former was composed solely by business interests and was trying to obtain financial support from the “Freemason clubs” to send troops against Mexicans, instead of looking for reconciliation with the American insurgents⁵³.

And before the end of 1813, when the cause for independence was expanding among the insurgents, the idea began to gather strength of staying away from the peninsula because it was dominated by Freemasonry⁵⁴.

During this last phase of the Parliament of Cadiz and when the French troops were withdrawing from Spain, anti-Masonic discourse was still in force in New Spain, where the rebel press, and more specifically the *Correo Americano del Sur*, identified the Spanish, or *gachupines* (Mexican nickname for Spanish from Spain), as those who had introduced the “deism” and “polytheism” of Freemasonry among the people, in the words of Carlos M^a Bustamante⁵⁵. Months later, Carlos M^a Bustamante himself would reuse this same idea in a

⁵¹ Printed in Casa Arizpe.

⁵² Vázquez Semadeni, *La interacción entre el debate público*, 98-99. Rafael Rojas, “*La escritura de la independencia. El surgimiento de la opinión pública en México*” (México: Taurus, 2003). Before that, there was a previous viceroy of Mexico, the count of Revillagigedo, who had been accused of Freemasonry by his sucesor, the marquis of Branciforte, Godoy’s brother-in law who had predisposed him against Revillagigedo. This accusation that was logically ratified by his sister Viceroy’s wife, Luis Antonio García Navarro, “La situación prerrevolucionaria en México (1788-1808)”, in: *Les Révolutions Ibériques et Ibéro-Américaines à l’aube du XIXe siècle* (Paris : Ed. du CNRS, 1991), 215-233. On the Second count of Revillagigedo and the Inquisitions trials against some of his servants: Fabris, painter; Burdales, hiardresser; and Laussel, cook, see Ferrer Benimeli, *Masonería, Iglesia e Ilustración. Un conflicto ideológico-político-religioso* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1977), 320-326; 351-361; 616; 651-664. Ferrer Benimeli, *Masonería e Inquisición en Latinoamérica durante el siglo XVIII* (Caracas: Universidad Católica “Andrés Bello”, 1973).

⁵³ *Semanario Patriótico Americano*, 27 septiembre 1812, n° 11, 106, y 10 enero 1813, n° 26, 231.

⁵⁴ Vázquez Semadeni, *La interacción entre el debate público*, 99. She in turn quotes the work of Alfredo Ávila, “Cuando se canonizó la rebelión. Conservadores y serviles en Nueva España”, in *Historia, conservadurismos y derechas en México*, coord. Erika Pani (México D.F.: FCE, 2009).

⁵⁵ *Correo Americano del Sur*, 1 de abril de 1813, n° VI, 46.

speech that he wrote for Morelos to present in the Congress of Chilpancingo on September 14, 1813. This congress had assembled to “preserve religion,” to take revenge for the “outrage and excesses” suffered by the people, and to be liberated from the tyranny of the Freemasons who were attempting to “absorb them forever”⁵⁶.

It’s striking that the strength of this idea of Spain being dominated by Freemasons was more widespread in America. It was repeated in anti-Masonic and anti-liberal literature on both sides of the Atlantic, but was nevertheless very far from the truth, on the continent as well as in Mexico. For in Spain, Freemasonry’s presence was very punctual and in the minority; it was reduced to some regiments of the Napoleonic invasion and to the few lodges of French supporters established in Madrid between 1809 and 1813, in the brief period of implementation of Bonaparte’s government, first Murat and then Jose II, later⁵⁷.

From the courts of Cadiz without Freemasonry to the Inquisition

Not even in Cadiz or within its Parliament is there record of a Masonic presence. Nevertheless what is recorded—like in New Spain—is a violent and deeply rooted anti-Masonic feeling. This is proven by the press in Cadiz at that time. In a controversial atmosphere—due to the freedom of press—there was a mixture of insults with satire and invective with slander, which collected everything, even the slightest suspicion, yet we find no specific complaint against Cadiz’s Freemasonry. Neither Father Vélez, nor the Filósofo Rancio (Bitter Philosopher), nor the crudest and fearless Filósofo de antaño (Philosopher of yesteryear) show the least hint or suspicion that give credence to the presence of efficient secret societies. And this is not because the subject was put aside, for the anti-Masonic feeling in Cadiz was very strong. That was seen mostly in the press against liberal reforms: *El Sol de Cadiz*, *El Censor General*, *El diario de la Tarde*, etc. Among these, we should emphasize especially *El Sol de Cadiz*, which, as we have seen, started in October 1812 with the sole purpose of attacking Freemasonry⁵⁸. Yet, in spite of its many articles against Freemasonry, it was unable to make any accusation against Cadiz’s secrets societies. Curiously enough, “the Representation to the General and Extraordinary Parliament of the Nation of the undersigned Spanish Catholics,” in number 13 of *El Sol de Cadiz*, shows that the writers of this newspaper were neither naïve nor liberals, and considered the Parliament to be an efficient ally in their fight against the lodges.

In this sense, this attitude toward the Parliament of Cadiz proves that the proceedings had no Freemason influence, but also had a thoroughly ant-Masonic orientation, which could be seen in the royal document dated on January 19, 1812, including the confirmation of the royal decree of July 2, 1751 forbidding Freemasonry in the dominions of the Indies and the Philippine Islands.

⁵⁶ Speech of Mr. Morelos at the September 14th 1813 congress session, in Hernandez y Davalos, op. cit., doc. 242.

⁵⁷ See footnote 47.

⁵⁸ See footnote 19.

In this royal decree, written during the absence and imprisonment of King Ferdinand VII, the Regency Council authorized by the General and Extraordinary Parliament convened in Cadiz and presented an initiative to shortcut “one of the most serious evils that afflicted the Church and the states,” i.e., “the propagation of Masonic sect, so many times proscribed by the High Pontiffs and by the Catholic Sovereigns in the whole of Europe⁵⁹.”

From what can be deduced from this document, “some of these perverse groupings” had been discovered in the Indies, and in order to impede its propagation and prevent it from being introduced into places where luckily this “crime” was yet unknown, the Regent Council, having heard the prosecutor and the Council of Indies, ordered the judges to abrogate specific regional laws—including military laws—and proceed against Freemasons, arresting them and confiscating their papers. Stripped of their work, their titles, religious habits, and any other distinction, they were to be sent back to Spain. And if they were foreigners, even if they had been naturalised and had lived in America for many years in good conduct, they were to be exiled from those lands, and if they had no children, all their goods were to be confiscated.

Paradoxically, this behaviour of the Regency Council, authorized by the parliament in Cadiz, coincides with an anonymous manuscript called “*Noticias de las sociedades secretas*” (“News on Secret Societies”), preserved in the Archives of the Royal palace in Madrid among Ferdinand VII’s papers, in which it is vowed that the history of Freemasonry is of very little relevance, because it was not allowed to influence political affairs. This reaction, on the other hand, was logical for Freemasonry as it had been used by Bonaparte and France’s Spanish supporters and the occupying French army as a means of ideological recruitment, thus making Freemasonry a common enemy to both the parliament and royalists. In other words, there was a short period of Masonic “power” among the Spanish supporters of the French invasion and the French occupying army, and since Cadiz was the symbol of freedom against the occupying forces, in the city of liberals the alleged “Masonic power” was, in fact, nonexistent and irrelevant.

Among the measures adopted by the Royal Decree of Cadiz, monsignor bishops and archbishops were to procure a “while exercising their pastoral duties, if among the preachers and confessors they could stop the spreading and influence of a sect forbidden by the High Pontiffs, and that was even prejudicial the more secret it was.”

The union between the throne and the altar in their anti-Masonic struggle⁶⁰, so typical of the Ancien regime, was reinforced by the Constitutional Parliament in Cadiz. This was a significant preamble of what was to be a constant feature for the whole duration of Ferdinand VII’s reign, who used the most powerful weapons he had at hand against the Freemasons: his police and the Inquisition.

When Ferdinand VII came back in 1814, a new bibliographic and historiographical period began which was distinctively separate from the former. It ended in 1820 with Riego’s mutiny. This period was one of Ferdinand’s most violent absolutism, during which those who

⁵⁹Archivo Nacional de Colombia. Bogotá. Tomo XXXVIII. Reales Cédulas y Órdenes. Archivo anexo, folio 313.

⁶⁰ Ferrer Benimeli, *La Masonería actual* (Barcelona: AHR, 1977), 36-41.

followed certain ideologies, especially the fundamentalists and clergy, increased their campaign against Freemasonry.

As the Constitution and the work done by the parliament was derogated on May 1, 1814, a few weeks later, on May 24, a Royal Decree was published in Madrid forbidding clandestine association due to the harm they caused the Church and State.⁶¹

Thus Ferdinand VII clearly established an alliance between the throne and the altar in a mutual defense, since “the happiness of the Kingdom depended on this harmonious union and mutual help.” On one hand, clandestineness, or if you prefer, secrecy, associated them once more with the presumed power in the shadows; this power, although not openly mentioned, had a name: it was Freemasonry, which this Royal Decree was against.

On July 21, 1814 the Holy Tribunal of the Inquisition was re-established due to “these anti Catholic sects introduced into the nation during the Peninsular War⁶².” Once again we are confronted with phantasmagorical Masonic “power.” The General Inquisitor Francisco Xavier Mier y Campillo published an edict forbidding and condemning Masonry on January 2, 1815, and a copy was given by Cardinal Consalvi on August 15, 1814, to the Pontificate States.

In this document we find what is usual in these types of ecclesiastical prohibitions of Freemasonry: the union of interest between the Church and the State; i.e. that of political interests with the religious ones. On this point the Spanish Inquisitor was in complete agreement with Ferdinand II, who, as we have already seen, on May 24 had forbid any association that harmed “the Church and the State.”

In this edict the general inquisitor hints at the French origins of Spanish Freemasonry supporting Bonaparte.

A few months later, further steps were taken with the “Edicts of Faith,” published at Lent. Those edicts were “against Heresy, Scarcity and Apostasy” and made it known to the neighbouring residents, inhabitants and recent arrivals in Madrid that the juntas, congregations, or brotherhood of Freemasonry or *Liberi Muratori* were “associations of men of all cults, estates and nation secretly created without any authority be it public or legitimate wanting to establish deism, pantheism, Spinoza deism, materialism and atheism.”

It is notable that, in comparison to the few lines mentioning Freemasonry in the second half of the eighteenth century, the space given to Freemasons is much bigger than the one given to the “law of Moses, Mahomet sects, Lutheran and *Illumnati*.” It was equally symptomatic that the evil of Freemasonry was insisted upon as it “is composed by a mixture and adoption of men from all nations, cults and mistakes,” as well as on its “inviolable secret” and “perfidious oath” with which they committed themselves. All this was against civil and canon laws, incurring in the note “evil, perverts and dangerous to Religion and the State.” And if this were not enough, they identified Freemasons with those who spent their time “with the modern unclean philosophy of these times, tightly united and associated with Freemasonry, whose professors would distinguish themselves with the titles of indifferentists,

⁶¹ *Decreto de Fernando VII, ordenando sea desconocida la constitución formada por las cortes generales y extraordinarias, dado en Valencia el 14 de mayo de 1814*, Cádiz, 1814, 6 h., *Gaceta de Madrid* 81 (4 junio 1814).

⁶² Omar Marqués de Valdel, *El partido fernandino y la Masonería* (Madrid: Prensa Española, 1974), 202-203.

Deists, Materialists, Pantheists, Egoists, Tolerants, Humanists, etc.” Philosophy that enclosed “the poison of the doctrine that spoke of freedom, independence, equality, tolerance, despotism, fanaticism, superstition, etc.”; these ideas that in such a tight association with Freemasonry had flooded Europe “with perverse doctrines to harm public and religious order, to proceed fearlessly against piety and justice of the Sovereigns of Europe, and the sanctity of the only true Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Religion⁶³.”

This edict is a clear illustration of the mental confusion that the Spanish Inquisitors had regarding Freemasonry, as they considered it to be an authentic power that they somehow identified with all the ideologies of the enlightened of their times.

Logically, following these last decrees and edicts of the inquisition, there were no few spontaneous declarations to the inquisition, as well denunciations, reports, indictments, etc. that are in the archives of the inquisition—no fewer than eighty.

As a result of the Inquisition persecution, the Holy Office in Spain managed to gain possession of the minutes and the members’ lists of some lodges, such as *La Benificiencia de Josefina* in Madrid, which had 106 names of its members, and ten were ecclesiastics, among them, one was brother Muriel King Charles IV’s biographer.

Among the members of the *Santa Julia* and *San Juan de Escocia de la Estrella de Napoleon* lodges, we find another ten ecclesiastics. In any case these were the lodges belonging to the Napoleonic Freemasonry introduced into Spain by the Bonaparte dynasty.

Among all these official reports, perhaps the most curious among them was the one preserved in the Archives of the Inquisition of the Court and those in Cuenca, dated 1816, in which “the Bishop of Havana, don Juan José Diaz de la Espada, el Capitan General don Juan Ruiz de Apodaca and the religious legate to Santo Domingo, brother Jose Uber, of German nationality” were accused of Freemasonry.

This important number of clergy present among Freemasons at that time distances us even further from the Masonic anti-clericalism which featured so decisively in Spanish Freemasonry at the end of the nineteenth century.

During Ferdinand VII’s reign, Freemasonry was identified and confused within the epigraphs of “secret societies” where the military and politicians conspired all over Europe during the era of Romanticism.

Secret societies, as a team of conspirators, would require a study not only of Freemasonry but also of the *Carbonari* in Italy, *the comuneria*, patriotic societies, student

⁶³ What is striking in this same edict is the lightness with which the Freemasons are accused of denying “the immortality of our soul, hell, purgatory and the Beatitudes and all that is revealed to us by our religion; regarding the Holy gospel like a story for youngsters; the church’s ministers as greedy hypocrites, the martyrs as reckless, seditious; the Holy Fathers as superstitious, naïve and idiotic old men, with no criteria or philosophy; even calling the Catholic Religion as political invention of Prince to feed their despotism and greed, depicting those who practice it are a herd of barbarian slaves; Mass, the sacraments and suffrages are the artifices of the Clergy and Friars to swindlers the living and the dead; that miracles are stories and novelist fables.....”. “Edicto de la Fe, del 19 febrero 1815.” There are 35 different epithets in total which are used to name Freemasons and liberal in these documents: Albigensis, anti-romans, apostates, atheists, Calvinists, Calvin, deists, egoists, possessed, heretics, Huguenots, humanists, iconoclasts, *Illuminati*, unclean, incredulous, indifferentists, Jacobines, jansenites, free thinkers, Lutherans, malevolent, Manichean, materialists, *miserables*, pantheists, dangerous, perfidious, perverts, polytheists, tolerants, volterians y *wiciefistas*.

groupings, the rational knights or *lutaros*, *guadalupes*, Illuminati and Saint Johnist, the Black Eagle, etc. And one would have to analyse whether these secret societies could be considered the cause or, rather, instruments of that same revolution. It is obvious that many of those who prepared revolutionary coups only joined societies in order to plot with greater ease.

In this sense one can notice a foreign influence that distorted the spirit of many secret societies and separated them from their authentic and primitive end. The former vague theist ideology and the philanthropic ends specific to the eighteenth-century secret societies in quite a few cases—especially in Latin countries—were overcome or demolished in the nineteenth century by the eruption of romantic revolutionary intruders, who used secret societies, and especially Freemasonry, as a platform to prepare romantic revolts.

The characteristics of these secret organizations contributed indirectly, especially being out of sight, which allowed them to organize clandestinely. Freemasonry's links and hierarchical system; the network of lodges that allowed for contacts in different urban settings; and, most of all, the mystery, the rite, symbolism and oaths are specific to the Latino temperament. This is why Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France showed the most revolutionary activity in secret societies at that time.

On the other hand, the press and anti-reformist literature, when attacking the liberals, often hinted at or categorically stated that the latter were addicted to Freemasonry. For quite a few conservative clerics, liberalism was nothing less than a permanent Masonic plot.⁶⁴

The fact that the 1814 copy of Barruel's *History of the persecution of the Clergy in France during the Time of the Revolution*, printed in Madrid, was subtitled "continuation of the Memories for the history of Jacobinism or the conspiracy of the sophists of impiety"⁶⁵ is significant. Along those same lines is the anonymous work signed under the pen name of "A True Friend" called *Los conspiradores revolucionarios del día o Túmulo de Molay* ("Today's revolutionary conspirators or Molay's tumulus") [Madrid, 1815].

These publications are contemporary to the report by D. Manuel Abad y Queipo, Bishop of Michoacán to Ferdinand VII on July 20, 1815, denouncing the deeds of some insurgent movement. In this text there is a moment of clarity as he makes a precise distinction between "lodges of the Rational Knights" or "Lautaro Lodges" and Freemasons:

I have proven, among other things, the existence of a secret coalition and its powerful effects. I can qualify their way of operating as similar to that of the freemasons, yet I had no news that this coalition was part of or had adapted the same formula of freemason sect; but in this city I obtained the documents that are the second part of this number, these credit the existence of a society entitled "rational gentlemen" that bracing themselves to the formulas and ways of the freemasons and establishing lodges in different provinces of Europe and America, work relentlessly for the independence of America⁶⁶.

⁶⁴ See footnote 21.

⁶⁵ Printed in Madrid by Collado press, 1814, 383.

⁶⁶ Cited, among others by Alfonso Fernandes Cabrelli. *Masonería y sociedades secretas en las luchas emancipadoras de la Patria grande*, La Paz, 1975, 273-274, and by Rosa María Martínez Codes, "El impacto de

Another curious example of this anti-Masonic literature is the book written by the priest Luis Ducos, entitled *Historia cierta de la secta de la Francmasonería, su origen y máximas, con la descripción de algunas logias, y lo que pasa en ellas al recibirse uno de Francmasón... cotejando las máximas de éstos con las de los templarios... y con otras varias notas, todas relativas al trastorno que se ve hoy día en Europa* (“True history of the sect of Freemasonry, its origins and principles, with description of some lodges and what happens inside them when becoming a Freemason... comparing the Masonic principles with those from the Temple order... and with other notes, all regarding the disorder seen in Europe nowadays.”) [Madrid, 1815]. This same book would be used later on by another priest, don Vicente de la Fuente, in his previously mentioned work *The History of Secret Societies and especially the one of Freemasonry*.

The liberal triennium

A third bibliographical period was the “*Trienio Liberal*,” or Liberal Triennium, three years of liberal government (1820–25). It started with Riego’s Mutiny in Cabezas de San Juan. He re-implemented the 1812 Constitution, put a stop—for a short time only—to Ferdinand VII’s Absolutism, and, also for a short time only, reinstated liberalism and a constitutional monarchy. Some historical events took place in Mexico during this same period: the Plan of Iguala (July 24, 1821), which established the basis for Independence⁶⁷; the Treaty of Cordoba (August 24, 1821)⁶⁸; and the liberator Iturbide proclaimed himself Emperor of Mexico (May 19, 1822)⁶⁹. At this time Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana signed the Plan of Veracruz (December 6, 1822) and joined Guadalupe Victoria, the symbol of republicanism, against Iturbide. They both adhered to Echavarrri’s *Plan de Casa Mata* in February 1823 demanding a new Congress.

During those years of increased political freedom and tolerance the literature was richer and introduced some lodges that gathered in Spain, such as *Los Amigos Reunidos de la*

la Masonería en la Legislación reformista de la primera generación de liberales en México”, in: *Masonería española y América*, coord. Ferrer Benimeli (Zaragoza: CEHME, 1993), Tomo I, 130. Ferrer Benimeli, “Cádiz y las llamadas ‘Logias’ Lautaro o Caballeros Racionales”, in: *De la Ilustración al Romanticismo. Ideas y movimientos clandestinos* (Cádiz, Universidad, 1988), 149-176. Ferrer Benimeli, “Aproximación a las llamadas logias Lautaro”, in: *Los Canarios en el estuario de la Plata* (Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Caja General de Ahorros, 1990), 175-194. Ferrer Benimeli, “Les Caballeros Racionales, les loges lotariennes et les formes déviées de la francmaçonnerie dans le monde hispanique”, in: *La Pensée et les Hommes. Sous le masque de la Francmaçonnerie* (1990): 11-30. Virginia Guedea. “Las sociedades secretas durante el movimiento de independencia”, in: *The Independence of Mexico and the Creation of the New Nation*, ed. Jaime Rodríguez (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 45-62. Guedea, *En busca de un gobierno alterno. Los Guadalupes de México* (México D.F.: UNAM, 1992). Melchor Campos García, *Sociabilidades políticas en Yucatán. Un estudio sobre los espacios públicos, 1780-1834* (Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 2003). Ruth Solis Vicarte, *Las sociedades secretas en el primer gobierno republicano, 1824-1828. Según el Diario Histórico de Carlos María Bustamante* (México D.F.: ASBE, 1997).

⁶⁷ Independence was carried out by the army of the Three Guarantees.

⁶⁸ That recognised the Mexican Empire as a sovereign entity and independent with a constitutional monarch which would be that of Ferdinand VII if he were to settle himself and his court in Mexico or with some other member of his sovereign family.

⁶⁹ When Ferdinand did not accept to be moved to Mexico.

Virtud in 1820 and *Los Verdaderos Amigos Reunidos* in Cadiz in 1822. Both lodges asked the Grand Orient of France for recognition, for in those years there was no Spanish Grand Lodge or Spanish Grand Orient⁷⁰. A rare *Catecismo de los tres grados simbólicos de la Masonería Rito escocés* (“*Catechism of the Scottish Rite Freemasonry’s three symbolic degrees*”) dates from 1821, published in Valencia.⁷¹ A year later, in Repulles’ office in Madrid, several *Catecismos masónicos para la instrucción de los masones españoles de ambos hemisferios* (“*Masonic catechism for the instruction of Spanish Freemasons of both hemispheres*”) were printed; at present they are preserved in the Biblioteca Ernesto de la Torre Villar del Instituto de Investigación Dr. José María Luis Mora (México DF).

As a counterpart Zurriago’s Appendix of February 7, 1821 was published, which began with the verses I have already quoted in which the “vile power”⁷² of everything Masonic was under attack.

Also in 1820 the anonymous *Examen crítico de las causas de la persecución que han experimentado los Francmasones* (“*Critical examination on the causes of persecution that the Freemasons have experienced*”) was published in Madrid, obviously referring to the previous period of absolutism. In this strain of attempting to understand the Masonic phenomenon, a voluminous book of nearly 300 pages was published. Its author declared himself to be “a lover of the Order” and identified himself as F.B.L.T.R. *La sociedad de los Francos-Masones sostenida contra las falsas preocupaciones por el solo aspecto de la verdad* (“*In support of the Freemason society against false worries and solely concerned with the truth*”) was dedicated to “judicious people” and printed at the Censor’s press in 1821. A year later another anonymous book, “*La Antorcha del Franc-mason*” (“*The Torch of the Freemason*”), was divided into two parts and published as a Spanish language edition in Bordeaux in 1822. One could say the same thing of *Sueño Masónico (Masonic Dream)* edited in La Habana in Diaz Astro’s Press and reprinted in Madrid by Indicado Press in 1822.

On the other side of the Atlantic in 1820 *Religión sin fanatismo o sea análisis de los masones. Diálogo entre un tío y su sobrino* (“*Religion without fanaticism or analysis on the Freemasons. Dialogue between an uncle and his nephew*”), was published and the following year Joseph Cerneau printed *Senda de las luces masónicas* (“*Path of masonic lights*”) in New York. As Vázquez Semadeni incisively says “for the first time in Mexico there was a real public debate on Freemasonry” questioning its prohibitions and asking whether it was really as harmful as it had been considered to date. Although there are some publications reminding us of the pontifical prohibitions of the eighteenth century,⁷³ these are generally written in defense of Freemasonry. Among several examples one could mention the book called *Ilustración sobre la sociedad de los francmasones*⁷⁴ (“*Illustration on the Freemasonic*

⁷⁰ Ferrer Benimeli, *Masonería española contemporánea* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1987), 140-146.

⁷¹ A copy of this catechism can be found in the Archivo-Biblioteca del Gremio Lusitano (Gran Oriente Lusitano) in Lisbon, Portugal.

⁷² See footnote 39.

⁷³ *Bula del soberano pontífice (Benedicto XIV) contra los francmasones* (México, Imprenta de Betancourt, 1822), 8. It is curious that they printed in 1822 this papal bull from 1751, when Pius VII had much more recently published *Ecclesiam Christi*, on September 13, 1821. See Ferrer Benemeli, *La Masonería después del Concilio* (Barcelona: AHR, 1968), 34-37. Vázquez Samadeni, *La formación de una cultura política republicana*, 18.

⁷⁴ Z.J. editor. México, Reimpreso en la oficina de D. Mariano Ontiveros, 1822, 81.

society”), which is a reprint of the texts published in Seville in 1820. The author, hiding under the initials Z.J. makes a distinction between a true Freemasonry and a false one; the first, made up with “men of good will” is a philanthropic society and “school of solid virtue” and Christian morality cemented on the principles of the Gospel. His main duty is to teach enlightened thoughts. The fake one, although his objectives were noble and elevated, is used as a political tool to harm the State with philosophers like Voltaire, Rousseau, and D’Alembert, who, incidentally were not Freemasons⁷⁵.

*Examen crítico de las causas de la persecución que han experimentado los Francmasones y la explicación de las Bulas de los sumos Pontífices Clemente XII y Benedicto XIV*⁷⁶ was another edition of what had already been printed in Spain and mentioned above. It identified Freemasonry with freedom and equality. Among other attributes it mentioned Freemasonry’s links to modern philosophy and *ius naturalism*, and quoted the right to rise against tyranny⁷⁷. But it’s striking that, according to this anonymous author, Freemasonry was persecuted out of ignorance, for neither of the two popes that condemned it knew what it was—and present-day historians agree with him⁷⁸. As the author claimed, Freemasons put to practice freedoms and principles so fundamental as that of equality⁷⁹ among men, lawfulness, and freedom.

“The Mexican Thinker” Jose Joaquin Fernández de Lizardi’s (1776–1827) pseudonym when writing *Defensa de los francmasones* (“*Defense of Freemasons*”) and its second part *Segunda defensa de los francmasones* (“*Second defense of Freemasons*”), published in 1822⁸⁰, also questioned the papal bulls of Clement XII and Benedict XIV against Freemasonry, not only for not knowing the principles of fraternity, benevolence, hospitality, tolerance, and love toward humanity, but also because the pope’s argument was based on the secret nature of the group, which made no sense—for secrecy was common in other organizations and corporations. In his second defense he added that Clement XII’s and Benedict XIV’s bulls condemned Freemasons to the highest penalty within the Church without even knowing them and based only on suspicion without having proven any crime. This idea seemed to have been taken from the already mentioned *Examen*...published in Madrid in 1820 and reprinted in Mexico in 1822 (printed by D. Jose de Betancourt). These

⁷⁵ Ferrer Benimeli, “Voltaire y la Masonería”, in: *Cuadernos de Investigación* (1975): 65-89. Ferrer Benimeli, “Diderot entre jesuitas y Masones”, in: *Diderot XVIII* (1987): 227-247. Charles Porset, “Rousseauisme”, in: *Encyclopédie de la Franc-Maçonnerie*, dir. Eric Saunier (Paris: La Pochothèque, 2000), 763-765.

⁷⁶ México, Reimpreso en la Oficina de D. José Betancourt, 1822, 34.

⁷⁷ In reality this theory is attributed to the Jesuits (especially Suarez and Mariana) and was one of the reasons for their expulsion from the kingdoms of Spain by Charles III in 1768. Ferrer Benemeli, *La expulsión y extinción de los jesuitas según la correspondencia diplomática francesa, San Cristóbal* (Venezuela: Universidad Católica del Táchira, 1993-1998), 3 vols. Ferrer Benemeli, “Franc-maçonnerie et jésuites: le secret du mythe ou le mythe du secret”, in: *Le Pavé mosaïque, revue d’études maçonniques*, in: *Secret et transparence dans la Franc-maçonnerie* (2003), 89-116. Miguel Batllori, *El abate Vizcardo. Historia y mito de la intervención de los jesuitas en la independencia de Hispanoamérica* (Caracas: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 1953), 147. Marcelin Defornius, “Complot maçonnique et complot jésuitique”, in: *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* 2 (1965) : 170-186.

⁷⁸ Ferrer Benemeli, *Masonería, Iglesia e Ilustración*, 77.

⁷⁹ Equality because inside the lodges class and birth distinctions disappeared, although a system of inside degrees was established according to the values and Masonic knowledge acquired by its members.

⁸⁰ At the Betancourt printing house.

publications and others⁸¹ by Lizardi created a polemic. Other writers—also under pen names—answered him, such as “The Papist,” who published at least three letters addressed to “The Mexican Thinker,” printed by don Mariano Ontiveros. In turn Lizardi answered with four letters, “From the Thinker to the Papist⁸².” The first three were printed by Betancourt’s press and the fourth was printed in the author’s print. This polemic was caused by Lizardi’s ex-communication sentenced by the Censorship Council of the Archbishop. This the reason why Lizardi made public his “*Demostración de la justicia del Pensador Mexicano en el discurso tercero que dirigió al Soberano Congreso el 23 de marzo del año de 1822 alegando una reciente ejecutoria sobre que el conocimiento del delito de Masonería no pertenece a la jurisdicción eclesiástica, sino exclusivamente a la civil*” (“*Demonstration of justice by the Mexican Thinker in his third discourse addressed to the Sovereign Congress on March 23, 1822, citing a recent execution regarding the knowledge on the crime of Freemasonry does not belong to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction but only to the civil one*”). This was followed by the “*Exposición del C.D. José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi leída en el Supremo congreso de Cortes el día 7 de marzo del presente año, en la reclama de su protección contra la pública censura fulminada por el Sr. provisor de este arzobispado Dr. F. Félix Flores Alatorre, por su papel titulado: Defensa de los francmasones*” (“*Exposé by the citizen José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi read to the Supreme Congress on March 7 of this year, in which he demanded protection against the public censorship directed at him by Dr F. Felix Flores Alatorre for his paper entitled: “Defense of Freemasons”*)⁸³. Other authors like Pablo de Villavicencio, Rafael Dávila and Eligio de Ulloa y Rendon also took part in the controversy, arguing that it was Lizardi’s right to express his opinion in accordance with the law⁸⁴. Then there was more anonymous literature such as “*Observaciones sobre la excomunión del Pensador Mexicano*” (“*Comments on the excommunication of the Mexican Thinker*”) and “*Ya no puede tolerarse tanta infamia*” (“*So much infamy cannot be tolerated any more*”), both printed at the shop (against the despotism) of J. M. Benavente y Socios, and at the Americana de D. José de Betancourt. In turn “*El Pensador Mexicano se declaró por hereje*” (“*The Mexican Thinker declares he is an heretic*”) and “*Si el gato saca las uñas se desprende el cascabel*” (“*If the cat shows his claws its collar bell will fall*”) were printed at Doña Herculana del Villar y Socios press.

⁸¹ Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi, *Ideas políticas y liberales* (México: Imprenta Imperial, 1821), 8. *El francmasón descubierto o sea el diálogo entre un Payo y un estudiante* (México: Imprenta de D. Herculano del Villar y socios, 1822), 4. F.V.Y., *Manifestación de los francmasones, dedicada para su conversión al Pensador Mexicano* (México: Imprenta Imperial de D. Alejandro Valdés, 1822), 8.

⁸² El Papista, *Carta primera del Papista al Pensador Mexicano* (México: Imprenta de don Mariano Ontiveros, 1822). Also see *Carta segunda...* y *Carta tercera...* José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi, *Carta primera del Pensador al Papista* (México: Oficina de Betancourt, 1822). Also see *Carta segunda*, *Carta tercera* and *Carta cuarta*.

⁸³ This Demonstration was printed in Betancourt’s shop and the Expose in the office (opposed despotism) of D.J.M. Benavente y Socios. In Betancourt shop *Defensa del Pensador Mexicano dirigida al señor Provisor* was also printed. Moisés Guzmán Pérez, *Impresores y editores de la Independencia de México, 1808-1821: Diccionario* (México: Ed. Porrúa, 2010).

⁸⁴ Pablo Villavicencio, *Defensa del Pensador Mexicano o sea reflexión sobre su causa y estado* (México: Imprenta de Betancourt, 1822), 2. Rafael Davila. *Justo castigo y destierro del Pensador Mexicano* (México: Oficina de D. José María Ramos Palomera, 1822), 2. Eligio Ulloa y Rendon, *Tumulto de las viejas contra el Pensador Mexicano* (México: Imprenta Americana de D. José M^a Betancourt, 1822), 8.

In these polemics, a variety of publishing houses of different ideologies took part with positive and negative readings of Freemasonry; Betancourt with his *“Discurso masónico en que se da una idea sucinta del origen, progresos y estado actual de la Masonería en Europa”* (*“Masonic discourse in which a brief idea about the origins, progress and current state of Freemasonry in Europe is given”*) confronted Doña Herculana del Villar, who answered with *“Triunfo de los francmasones”* (*“Victory of Freemasons”*) and *“El francmasón descubierto o sea diálogo entre un payo y un estudiante”* (*“The Freemason uncovered, or dialogue between an ignorant peasant and a student”*). Printers were used to expose different interpretations of Freemasonry. In the self-proclaimed Imperial print belonging to Don Alejandro Valdes, in that same year of 1822, the *“Manifestación de los francmasones, dedicada para su conversión al Pensador Mexicano”* (*“Manifestation of the Freemasons, dedicated to the Mexican Thinker for his conversion”*) was printed. Then in turn, the printing press that The Papist used in his polemic against Lizardi made a reprint of *“Ilustración sobre la sociedad de los francmasones”* (*“Illustration of the Freemasonic society”*), an 18 page long text attacking Freemasons, which was responded to by the publication *“Defensa de los llamados francmasones”* (*“Defense of the so-called Freemasons”*) by M.S., printed by Jose M^a Benavente. Meanwhile, the print of M. Ontiveros press brought out *“No tenemos de quien fiar o sea diálogo entre masón y Juan”* (*“We don’t have anyone to trust or the dialogue between a Freemason and Juan”*).

As María Eugenia Vázquez Semadeni⁸⁵ so accurately observed, in truth it was a polemic between liberals and royalists in the upcoming elections for representatives in the new Mexican Congress. The royalists used the identification of their political enemies with the Freemasons as a smear campaign⁸⁶, which could be seen in the well-known anti-Masonic verses that appeared on wall posters in Mexico’s Cathedral:

Ya lo vísteis mexicanos
 como en vuestras elecciones
 ganaron los francmasones
 indignos antiromanos,
 liberales, volterianos,
 jansenistas, libertinos;
 los Luteros, los Calvinos
 vuestro gobierno han tomado,
 ¡ay del altar y el estado,
 en poder de Jacobinos!⁸⁷

(Now you’ve seen Mexicans /How your elections /Were won by
 Freemasons/unworthy anti-romans /liberals, voltarians, /jansenists, free
 thinkers;/Lutherans, Calvinists /Your government they’ve taken /Woe altar and state
 /In power of the Jacobins!)

⁸⁵ Vázquez Semadeni, *La interacción entre el debate público*, 63-67.

⁸⁶ The same formula with slight variations was also applied in Europe during the nineteenth-century.

⁸⁷ *Defensa de los llamados francmasones: pasquin que anunció en las paredes de la Catedral el día 30 de enero de este año, glosado por una señora patriota en breves momentos y con un numen natural*, Editado en México: año de 1822. Segundo de nuestra Independencia. Imprenta (contraria al despotismo) de D. J.M. Benavente y Socios. 1 hoja.

However, no matter how often Freemasons were the protagonists in leaflets, books and wall posters, it does not mean that Freemasons were involved in politics for all those years in Spain as well as in Mexico. But this didn't seem to matter much, as in the popular imagination it was already created, be it with prestige or a lack of it for political adversaries. In Spain's case, it has yet to be proven that Mina's uprising in 1814, the so-called triangle conspiracy in 1816, the failed constitutional conspiracy of 1819, and even Riego uprising in 1820 were the work of Freemasons or supposed/alleged Freemasons. All this is still being rumoured without any trustworthy documents to prove it since the sole bibliographic evidence used by one side and the other was corrupt in its origins, since they were self-justifying memoirs written after the events they say they describe, which is the case of the Conde de Toreno and most of all, Alcalá Galiano⁸⁸. In this sense all the bibliography used—among other authors—by Luis J. Zalce y Rodríguez in his *Apuntes para la Historia de la Masonería en México*⁸⁹ has been disappointing. When in the 1950s he covered the post-independence period he only used the *History of Secret Societies* by D. Vicente de la Fuente, published in Madrid in 1874, completed for Mexico with the work of Francisco de Paula Anagoiz's, *México desde 1808 a 1867*⁹⁰.

And it is at this point that the myth of Masonic liberalism or liberal Freemasons began. Each faction repeated the same deeds, with no documentary proof, reaching conclusions and statements that were in many cases gratuitous and bore no historical rigor.

In this instance, what happened in Portugal was very revealing. Here we have a testimony also written in 1820, and by one of its protagonists, Xavier de Araujo. His memoirs, contemporary of the events he described, were of value because they are limited to a very specific chronological period: the revolution, or the uprising, of August 24, 1820, which had many parallels with the one in Cadiz that took place that same year. As Professor Antonio Ventura from the University of Lisbon⁹¹ signalled in the introduction of its 2006 edition, it was a determining moment in the building of liberal Portugal.

The author and protagonist of these events in Porto and Lisbon wrote in his note "To the reader" a section on secret societies and Freemasonry specifically, which I believe to be important as it was a direct and fresh testimony:

Some words about the secret societies. It is impossible to hide the part they played in the revolution of August 24, because they were totally alien to it, and the Sanhedrin that provoked the revolution was not a masonic body nor was it in communication with the lodges. Nevertheless, after that time and until 1823 their influence is

⁸⁸ José Luis Comellas, *Los primeros pronunciamientos en España* (Madrid: C.S.I., 1958). María del Pilar Ramos Dodríguez, *La conspiración del triángulo* (Sevilla: Universidad, 1970). Morange *Una conspiración fallida y una Constitución nonnata*. Varo Montilla, "La causa del Palmar". José L Comellas, *El Trienio Constitucional* (Madrid: Rialp, 1963). Raymond Carr, *Spain 1808-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 124. Alfredo Ávila, *Para la Libertad. Los Republicanos en tiempos del Imperio 1821-1823* (México: UNAM, 2004), 41-42.

⁸⁹ Luis José Zalce y Rodríguez, *Apuntes para la Historia de la Masonería en México* (México, 1950), 2.

⁹⁰ This work was reprinted by Porrúa 1968 with an introduction by Martín de Quirarte

⁹¹ Xavier Araujo A., *Revolução de 1820. Memórias* (Lisboa: Centro de Historia da Universidade, 2006), 7-9.

undeniable. But then again a Freemasonry paid cruelly for it in 1823 and 1828! At present I think it childish to hide or deny their existence, Whatever for?...

This is regarding politics... But concerning religion I will not dwell on it, for everyone knows that in Freemasonry there is no religious symbolism, nor imposed belief, each one enters with their own religion and no one is inconvenienced because of it, and no one is dogmatic...⁹²

And further on he added:

The revolution of August 24, 1820 was made by the Sanhedrin, a political body with no communication whatsoever with secret societies; quite the opposite, they were not even aware of their existence...

After Spain proclaimed the Constitution and the King his adhesion to it in March 1820, the revolution in Portugal was inevitable; we could no longer be Brazil's colony⁹³, nor be governed by other foreigners...

I think the same could be said of the military coups made by the “first Chief of the Imperial Mexican Army of Three Guarantees,” Augustin de Iturbide. In different proclamations and agreements made during 1821 in the name⁹⁴ of “religion, independence and united America and Europe,” there was never the least mention or hint of secret societies or Freemasonry; these were strictly military actions directed at consolidating Mexico's Independence—proclaimed in Iguala on March 1, 1821⁹⁵—and thus, avoiding bloodshed.

Also in the case of Mexico the political discourse of the press, leaflets and wall posters, were mostly imported from Spain. The discourse was adapted to the differing and variable political situations in the new country, as events derived from independence and its organization into a new state started taking prominence. But being a Freemason was a label used as a feature of prestige or a smear in the Mexican national political debate. So during the 1820–23 period, in some cases, the appellation of Freemason would be attributed to Iturbide's followers and federalists, and, in other cases to the centralists, Bourbon followers or *gachupines* and even Ferdinand VII himself, an adjudication in this case even more anachronistic and unreal for if the Bourbons had any feature in common, especially Charles II and Ferdinand VII, it was that they were virulently and radically anti-Masonic.

⁹² Araujo A., *Revolução de 1820*, 13-14.

⁹³ The King of Portugal had fled to Brazil when the French invaded Portugal. In Brazil he proclaimed himself emperor. Antonio Ventura, “La transferencia de la corte portuguesa a América”, in: *La Guerra de conciencias*, 163-180. Miguel Correo Monterio, “A corte portuguesa no Brasil e a su posterior independencia”, 181-200.

⁹⁴ *Documentos Relativos a las últimas ocurrencias de Nueva España* (Madrid: Impresor de Cámara de S.M., 1821. There are different issues of 26 or 28.

⁹⁵ The oath which Augustin Iturbide, First chief and the other chiefs and officials of the Three Guarantees Army, made in front of a Christ on the crucifix and the books of the Gospel was the following: “Do you swear before God and promise under your sword to observe the Holy Catholic Roman Apostolic religion? Yes, I do. Do you swear to make this empire independent, in doing so keeping its peace and unity between Europeans and Americans? Yes, I do.

Do you swear obedience to Mr Ferdinand VII, if he adopts and swears the Constitution that still has to be drafted for North America? Yes, I do. If you do so, God Lord of the Army and of Peace helps you. And if not, he will demand it to you.

A slow critical and serene analysis of all that was published during those years in Spain as well as in Mexico makes us doubt nowadays not only of the power of a presumed and authentic Freemasonry, but even of its existence, for all that we have is documental news, merely testimonial and very far from the political protagonists' leaflets and wall posters and mostly ecclesiastic books attributed to Freemasons.

In this sense it is significant that, in 1822, there were so few books for "instructions" of Freemasons and for the recruitment of members written and published in Madrid, such as the already mentioned *Catecismos masónicos para la instrucción de los masones españoles de ambos hemisferios*, or in Philadelphia like the posthumous translation of *The Freemason's Monitor or Illustrations of Freemasonry*, the works of the former grand master of the Rhode Island lodge, Tomás Smith Webb (1771–1819). These works were originally published in Massachusetts in 1818. There was another Spanish version printed in New York entitled *Monitor o Guía de los Franc-Masones. Utilísimo para la Instrucción de sus miembros e información de los que desean imponerse en sus principios (Monitor or Guide for Freemasons. It was very useful for the instruction of its members and information for those who wish to submit to their principles)*. Both have been recently studied by Guillermo de los Reyes Heredia.⁹⁶ To these we could add *Jachin et Boaz o una llave auténtica para la puerta de la Francmasonería tanto antigua como moderna, calculada no solamente para la instrucción de todo masón nuevamente hecho, pero también para la información de todos los que quisieren entrar en la hermandad (Jachin et Boaz or the authentic key to modern as well as ancient Freemasonry, written not only for the instruction of a newly initiated Freemason but it also has information for all those who wish to become part of the brethren)*, also printed by H.C. Carey, a knight of the Lodge of Jerusalem and translated into Spanish by Eduardo Barry.

1823–33: Anti-Masonic obsession on a fictitious leadership

Thus we arrive at our fourth historical bibliographical period, 1823–33, which in Spain is known as the "Absolutist or Ominous Decade," while in Mexico it was the period of consolidation of its Independence, the call for the Constitutional Parliament, and the triumph of the Federal Republican Constitution. Beginning with the presidency of Guadalupe Victoria in October 10, 1824, the legislative reforms began. Here we have to mention two events: the Law of Expulsion of Spanish from Mexico as of December 20, 1827⁹⁷, and the October 1828 debate in the Chamber of Representatives on secret societies.

⁹⁶ Guillermo de los Reyes Heredia, *Herencias secretas. Masonería, política y sociedad en México* (Puebla Universidad Autónoma, 2010).

⁹⁷ María Martínez Codes, "El impacto de la Masonería en la Legislación", 129-145. The expulsion of Spaniards produced a lot of literature. As an example see: Pablo Villavicencio de (Seud: El Payo del Rosario). *Día de gloria o de luto para los enemigos de la patria o defensa de la segunda parte de: váyanse los gachupines sino les cuesta el pescuezo* (México: Oficina de Ontiveros, 1826), 12. Anonymus, *Los pueblos toman las armas. La ley de expulsión espera* (Puebla: Impreso del Patriota, 1827), 2. *Decreto de 4 de diciembre de 1827, sobre expulsión de españoles* (Puebla: Impreso del Patriota, 1827).

In Spain the restoration of Ferdinand VII's absolutism with the help of the Holy Allegiance's army was a harsh period of repression against all "enemies" of Ferdinand VII, i. e. liberals, and members of secret societies. It was the *Gaceta de Madrid* of May 1824 who explained who these members were: "News of secret societies in Spain until 1823 and that took the names of Freemasons, Knights of rebellion, Council of *Comuneros* (medieval local council), *Anilleros* (the knights of the Rings), *Carbonari*, Europeos, *Club Italiano*, and *Asociación Francesa*⁹⁸."

The interminable lists of persecuted and repressed in "Ferdinand VII's reserved papers" in the *Archivo del Palacio Real* and in the *Archivo del Ministerio de Justicia* witness Ferdinand's obvious persecutory obsession against those who held his reign in no esteem⁹⁹. Suffice it to read some royal decrees, circulars, and edicts dated in August and September 1824¹⁰⁰ followed by others in the next few years¹⁰¹. An example of this is the Royal Decree of October 9, 1825, in which subjects were warned that "Freemasons, *Comuneros* and other sectarians should be considered enemies of the Throne and the Altar, and will be penalised with death and confiscation of all their properties."

At this point in New Spain, Mexico was fully independent, after the fall of Iturbide's empire and the beginning of republican government, and 1824 started off with a variety of Masonic-related publications such as the "Decree of January 10, 1824 that forbids gathering of the councils that have not been previously authorised by law"¹⁰² and a new anonymous author whose penname was "*El Católico*": "who calls this law legitimate due to Freemasonry's behaviour¹⁰³." Although the Masonic subject is not as prominently featured as it had been in previous years, nevertheless the press still published news about them especially in *El Aguila Mexicana* in 1824, an echo of those coming from Spain, its prohibitions from an anti-Masonic Europe. These snippets of news, María Eugenia Vázquez

⁹⁸ *Gaceta de Madrid*, nº 67 (25 mayo 1824) 271-272; nº 68 (27 mayo 1824) 276; nº 69 (29 mayo 1824) 279-280.

⁹⁹ Diego Honojal Aguado, "La policía de Fernando VII y la persecución de la Masonería", in: *La Masonería española. Represión y exilios*, coord. Ferrer Benimeli (Zaragoza: Gobierno de Aragón, 2010), 1467-1488.

¹⁰⁰ *Real Cédula de S.M. y señores del Consejo por la que se prohíbe de nuevo y absolutamente en lo sucesivo, en los dominios de España e Indias, todas las Congregaciones de Francmasones, Comuneros y otras Sociedades secretas, cualquiera que sea su denominación y objeto; y se declara que los que hayan pertenecido a ellas hasta ahora gocen del indulto concedido en Real Decreto de 1º de mayo de este año en los términos y con las excepciones que se expresan, Año de 1824, en Sevilla, en la Imprenta Real; Circular referente a una Real Cédula prohibiendo todas las Congregaciones de Franc-Masones, Comuneros y demás Sociedades secretas, Sevilla, 25 de agosto de 1824; Edicto por el que se hace público lo dispuesto para que en lo sucesivo queden prohibidas, en todos los Reynos y Dominios de España e Indias, todas las Congregaciones de Francmasones y otras sociedades secretas*, Sevilla, 2 septiembre 1824. (His Majesty's and members of the Council Decree that it once again and absolutely as of today, forbids in the dominions of Spain and the Indies, all congregation of Freemasons, *Comuneros*, and other secret societies, no matter what their name and object; and declares that those who have belonged to them until now will have an indulgence conceded by Royal Decree on May 1 of this year in accordance with the terms and exceptions that are printed in this year 1824, in Seville, at the Royal print, then there is a circular and an edict signed Seville, August 25, 1824.)

¹⁰¹ See the 31 documents that compile the anti-masonic legislation under Ferdinand VII's reign en Hinojaql, 1480-1484.

¹⁰² México (s.p.), 1824, 2.

¹⁰³ Guadalajara, reimpresso en la Oficina de D. Mariano Rodríguez, 1824, 4.

Semadeni¹⁰⁴ comments, were probably directed at the editors of their rival paper *El Sol*, whose writers were renowned Freemasons with strong ties to the Lancaster school, although it is also true that the editors of *El Sol* were also written off as loyal to the throne of Spain and monarchists in favour of the Bourbons. These accusations made little sense within Ferdinand VII and his supporters' paranoid anti-Masonic obsession. But within political rivalries and smearing political adversaries, all was allowed, no matter how contradictory.

On March 13, 1825 Pope Leo XII proclaimed his *Constitution Apostólica Quo graviora*¹⁰⁵ in which he reproduced his predecessors' apostolic bulls and constitutions of Clement XII, Benedict XIV, and Pius VII¹⁰⁶ against Freemasons, *carbonari* and other secret societies. There was also a special section directed to "the Catholic princes" reminding them that the royal power had been granted to not only govern in this world, but also and "most of all help the Church." Thus he was warning Catholics that those who belonged to sects were "equally enemies of the Church and of your power," for they attacked both. If it were left to them, it added, "there would not leave a trace of Religion or Royal power." Nevertheless Ferdinand VII did not make this bull known in Spain¹⁰⁷ until 1827 in a royal decree dated in El Pardo, on February 13 of that year and was published in *La Gaceta de Madrid*, a month later, on March 17¹⁰⁸. This papal document was very widely spread in Spain and America. On August 5, 1827 the cardinal archbishop of Seville remembered in his pastoral instruction to convey the contents of Leo XII's bull against sects, as well as other pontifical decisions¹⁰⁹.

In America it was published under a blatantly false and manipulated title: *Encíclica del Papa León XII. En auxilio del tirano de España Fernando VII. Con una disertación en sentido opuesto* ("Encyclical of Pope Leo XII. In help of the Tyrant of Spain Ferdinand VII. With a dissertation with the opposite meaning") by Felix Mejía (Philadelphia, 1826). It is striking that since the publication of *Quo graviora*, on March 13, 1825 till April 16, 1816 that the cardinal secretary of the Vatican sent 80 copies of the bull to the apostolic nuncio in Spain, Monsenor Giustiniani, so he could distribute them among the Spanish bishops. Over a year went by¹¹⁰ then Monsenor Giustinimi sent a copy to the minister of state, the Duke of Infantado, on May 27, 1826 with an official note so it could be published with all solemnity and be in vigour in the whole country. At the same time, the apostolic nuncio, aware of such

¹⁰⁴ Vázquez Semadeni, *La interacción entre el debate público*, 107. Also see *Colección de artículos selectos sobre política, sacados de Aguila Mexicana del año 1828* [por Un Amante de su patria] (México, 1828).

¹⁰⁵ Ferrer Benemeli. *La Masonería después del Concilio*, 175-189.

¹⁰⁶ A few years before, on September 13, 1821, Pius VII in *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo*, although it is specially directed against the *carbonari*, it also refers to *Liberi Muratori* or Freemasons. 157-173. See footnote 74.

¹⁰⁷ Probably making use of his exequatur.

¹⁰⁸ *Real Cédula por la que se manda guardar y cumplir la Bula inserta de nuestro Santísimo Padre León XII, en que se prohíbe y condena de nuevo toda secta o sociedad clandestina, cualquiera que sea su denominación*, El Pardo, 13 febrero 1827 (Gaceta de Madrid, 17 marzo 1827).

¹⁰⁹ Given in Encinasola, Santa Visita, on August 5th, 1827, Sevilla, Imprenta Real, 1827, 56. A year before that, León XII had once again condemned secret societies in his *Litterae Appstolicae quibus sectae occultae et clandestinae damnatur*.

¹¹⁰ Pedro Olea, "Iglesia y Masonería. El Archivo de la Nunciatura de Madrid. 1800-1850", in: *Masonería, política y sociedad*, coord. Ferrer Benimeli (Zaragoza: CEHME, 1989), Tomo II, 571-598. This paper also compiles the different reactions of Spain's bishops to the Bull.

red-tape delays¹¹¹, had asked the *Gaceta de Madrid* to insert it in its pages like the French newspaper had done in France, specifically *La Estrella*. Yet the minister, the Duque del Infantado, said he already read the bull and that it was so good that the king had sent for it to be translated¹¹². But until August 31, 1826 he did not inform Monsenior Giustiniani that the king had decided to exercise his *exequatur* and that the bull would henceforth take on the strength of a law in Spain. Nevertheless, it still took several months, until March 31, 1827, until he was able to finally send a copy of the published bull¹¹³.

Meanwhile, in Mexico, under the fictitious name of Filadelfia, *Quo Graviora* was published illegally a year before it was authorized in Spain by Ferdinand VII. That was done by falsifying the text, for it stated that the Church and faith were being affected by the rebellions in America by the dissemination of texts that were attacking civil ecclesiastic powers, and by the increase of their lugubrious meetings. It even claimed that the pope was asking American prelates to proclaim Ferdinand VII's qualities so that peace and unity could return and true religion could once again blossom¹¹⁴.

This manipulated version of the bull *Quo graviora...* by Leo XII made the people identify the high clergy as even bigger enemies of independence. And it was precisely Father Servando Teresa de Mier—the same who had suffered a long court case, charged by the Inquisition—who contradicted the supposed statement that independence had been forged by the Masons, assuring the public that they had not intervened but that it had been Ferdinand VII's tyranny who had motivated it¹¹⁵. Anyway, that statement was not in the real *Constitution quo graviora*, for it bears no mention of Latin America's independence, nor, of course, of Ferdinand VII¹¹⁶.

This fraudulent publication of Leo XII received an answer from Luis Espino—who used the pseudonym “*Spes in vivo*”—entitled “From Rome came the most scandalous and null Bull,”¹¹⁷ and it created a polemic in the press. Contradictory statements such as those expressed in *El Aguila Mexicana* of August 2, 1825 claimed that the bull against Freemasons was the result of Ferdinand VII's manipulations, adding later—in clear contradiction—that the books and leaflets mentioned in the pope's letter as attacking civil and ecclesiastic power came from “deists, materialists and French and Spanish atheists issued of sanguine meetings and from the tainted bourbons”—expressions that aren't in the authentic papal document but that in the Mexican context would be used to slander the enemies of Independence, that is to

¹¹¹ Reference to, no doubt, the *exequatur* or royal approval that pontifical documents needed in Spain and other countries.

¹¹² Olea, “Iglesia y Masonería”, 581-582.

¹¹³ Olea, “Iglesia y Masonería”, 581-582.

¹¹⁴ Vázquez Semadeni, *La interacción entre el debate público*, 114-115. At the beginning of July *Quo graviora* was published in *El Filántropo*, a newspaper from Tampico, by J. M. Espíndola. Mariano Cuevas in his *Historia de la nación Mexicana* (Madrid: Talleres tipográficos modelo, 1940), 525-526, says that this document was false regarding the presumed mentions of the Pope and Ferdinand VII.

¹¹⁵ *El Sol* 3, n. 767 (20 julio 1825). Zalce speaking on another matter says of Father Mier that he was “a true insurgent and rebel, who always spoke the truth very clearly and with very brave decisiveness.” And he also adds: “he doesn't attribute Mexico's Freemasonry influence whatsoever in these political manipulations.” Luis Joaquín Zalce Rodríguez. *Apuntes para la Historia de la Masonería en México* (México, 1950), 15.

¹¹⁶ See a complete Spanish reproduction in Ferrer Benimeli, *La Masonería después del Concilio*, 175-189.

¹¹⁷ Guadalajara, reimpresso en la oficina del C. Urbano Sanroman, 1826, 8.

say the partisans of the Spanish Bourbon, whom they claimed were members of the same Freemasonry Ferdinand VII was persecuting and making the pope condemn.

In the political arena of 1825 to 1826 we found that the most prolific and polemic fight of York and Scottish rites (Yorkinos vs. Escoceses) was already public and the subject of secret societies¹¹⁸ had already been discussed in the senate. It began with a report and a ruling closely linked to each other; the report by Juan José Espinosa de los Monteros, secretary of state: *Informe que presentó a la Cámara de Senadores para informarle de las logias masónicas existentes en la Federación Mexicana* (“Report that was presented to the Senate to inform them on the existing lodges in the Mexican Federation”)¹¹⁹, and *Dictamen de la comisión para examinar el informe del gobierno sobre sociedades secretas* (“Ruling from a commission to examine the government’s report on secret societies”) written by José Antonio Medina y Quintero¹²⁰. The polemic started in the senate when Juan de Dios Cañedo made a speech pronounced at the session of April 24, against the project of a law presented by the citizen Cevallos to make secret gatherings extinct¹²¹.

A disparity of opinions was out in the streets under the guise of anonymous publications with titles such as:

- “*Ni escoceses ni yorkinos deben ser los electores mexicanos*” (“Mexican voters should be neither Scottish or York freemasons”)¹²²
- “*En nuestras instituciones no caben los francmasones*” (“There is no room for freemasons in our institutions”)¹²³
- “*Se denuncian al buen juicio las sociedades secretas y los caballeros masones*” (“It makes sense to complain about secret societies and Freemasons knights”)¹²⁴
- “*Acábense los yorkinos y salvemos a la patria*” (“Lets finish the Yorkinos off and save our country”)¹²⁵
- “*¿Quién ha causado más daños, los frailes o los masones?*” (“Who has done more harm, the monks or the masons?”)¹²⁶

¹¹⁸ On the subject of rivalry among supporters of York and the Scottish rites, called by Zalce a “Freemasonry outside of its specific function”, I refer to among others, ZALCE, op. cit. chapters V al IX , 55 a 129. Vázquez Semadeni, “La Masonería mexicana en el debate público, 1808-1830”, in: *La Masonería española en la época de Sagasta*, coord. Ferrer Benimeli (Zaragoza: Gobierno de Aragón, 2007), Tomo II, 861-882. León Zeldis Mandel, “Joel Poinsett. Masón, diplomático y revolucionario”, in: *La Masonería en Madrid y en España del siglo XVIII al XXI*, coord. Ferrer Benimeli (Zaragoza: Gobierno de Aragón, 2004), Tomo I, 479-488. Joel Poinsett, *Notas sobre México (1822)* (México: Ed. Jus, 1950), 510. *Exposición de la conducta política de los EE.UU. para con las nuevas repúblicas de América* (México: Imprenta de la Ex-Inquisición, 1827), 16. Lorenzo Zavala, *Terribles cargos contra el ministro Poinsett* (México: Impr. Martín Rivera, 1827), 8. Ramón Gamboa, *Representación del C. síndico Lic. al ayuntamiento de esta capital. Suplicándole pida al gobierno despida de la república al Mr. Joel Poinsett, enviado de los Estados Unidos del Norte* (México: Imprenta de Alejandro Valdés, 1829), 15.

¹¹⁹ México, Imprenta del Supremo Gobierno, 1826, 25.

¹²⁰ México, 27 diciembre 1826.

¹²¹ México, Imprenta del Aguila, dirigida por José Ximeno, 1826.

¹²² México, Imprenta de la Oficina del Aguila, dirigida por José Ximeno, 1826.

¹²³ México, Impreso en la Oficina del Aguila, dirigida por José Ximeno, 1826.

¹²⁴ México, Imprenta del ciudadano Alejandro Valdés, 1826, 11.

¹²⁵ Its author declares himself to be “enemy of Freemasons and defender of the homeland” (México: Oficina de la testamentaría de Ontiveros, 1827), 12.

- *“Infamias de los yorkinos presentadas a la patria”* (“Harm done by the Yorkinos presented to the country”)¹²⁷
- *“Infamias de los escoceses que conspiraron en la patria, o sea, respuesta al impreso titulado infamias de los yorkinos”* (“Harm done by the Scottish [Escoceses] that conspire in our country or, better said, an answer to the harm done by the Yorkinos”)¹²⁸
- *“Lista de los escoceses y apunte de sus maldades”* (“Lists of Scots [Escoceses] and a note on their wickedness”)¹²⁹
- *“Plan de los yorkinos para centralizar el gobierno”* (“Yorkinos’ plan to centralise government”)¹³⁰
- *“Hoy truenan los escoceses como Judas en la gloria”* (“Today the Scots [Escoceses] will blast as Judas on Glory day”), and
- *“Quedaron los escoceses como el que chifló en la loma”* (“All Scots [Escoceses] were dumped”)¹³¹

To these we can also add the press and these very popular little dialogues:

- *“El primo de D^a Tecla de pascuas a los masones. Diálogo entre D. Celedonio y D. Eustaquio”* (“Doña Tecla’s cousin on freemasons. Dialogue between don Celedonio and Don Eustaquio”)¹³²
- *“Algo de masones, o sea diálogo entre un filósofo y una maestra, primera parte”* (“On freemasons or a dialogue between a philosopher and a teacher, first part”)¹³³
- *“Algo de masones o sea segunda parte del diálogo entre doña Tecla y D. Canuto”* (“On freemasons or the second part of the dialogue between doña Tecla and D. Canuto”)¹³⁴
- *“Algo más de masones o sea diálogos entre un filósofo y una maestra de amiga”* (“Some more on freemasons or a dialogue between a philosopher and a teacher friend”)¹³⁵
- *“Religión sin fanatismo o sea análisis de los masones. Diálogo entre un tío y su sobrino”* (“Religion without fanaticism or analysis of Freemasonry. Dialogue between an uncle and his nephew”)¹³⁶

Other than dialogues and confrontations between York and Scottish rites in 1827, an *“Extracto de la discusión del dictamen de la Comisión especial del Senado reunida para examinar el Expediente formado sobre logias masónicas”* (“Extract of discussion on the results of the special commission of the Senate gathered to examine the Report on masonic

¹²⁶ Guadalajara, reimpresso en la Oficina de Sanromán, 1826.

¹²⁷ México, Imprenta de Galván, 1827.

¹²⁸ México, Imprenta de la Ex-Inquisición, a cargo de Manuel Ximeno, 1827.

¹²⁹ Puebla, reimpresso en La Liberal, 1827.

¹³⁰ México, Imprenta a cargo de Martín Rivera, 1826.

¹³¹ México, Oficina de la testamentaría de Ontiveros, 1826, by Simón el Trompetero.

¹³² México, Imprenta de Mariano Galván, 1826, 8.

¹³³ México, Imprenta del Aguila, dirigida por José Ximeno, 1826, 8.

¹³⁴ México, Imprenta del Aguila, dirigida por José Ximeno, 1827, 8.

¹³⁵ Puebla, reimpresso en la Oficina del C. Pedro de la Rosa, 1827, 8.

¹³⁶ México, Imprenta de Palacio, 1826, 6.

lodges”)¹³⁷ was published prior to “*Proposiciones sobre asociaciones secretas*” (“*Proposals on secret societies*”) by Edpigenio de la Piedra¹³⁸ and a “*Decreto sobre reuniones clandestinas*” (“*Decree on clandestine meetings*”) by Juan de Dios Cañedo¹³⁹.

Similar measures were taken in other parts of Mexico, like “*Iniciativa de la legislatura de Veracruz sobre extinción de sociedades masónicas*” (“*The Legislative initiative of Veracruz on the extinction of masonic societies*”) presented in Jalapa on March 7, 1828, eight months prior to the one convened in Mexico City.

Indeed, due to the pressure of publications and even of the executive itself, Mexico’s members of Parliament, on October 25, 1828, approved the ban of “all clandestine meetings forming body or corporation that were secret¹⁴⁰.” With this prohibition, the Mexican Congress was a few days ahead of Bolivar, himself a Freemason, who announced his ban in Bogota on November 8, after which for several years all secret societies—and, more specifically, Freemasonry—disappeared from Gran Colombia. Simon Bolivar’s decree included “all secret societies or fraternities, no matter their name¹⁴¹,” a decree that can only remind us of a previous one, dated and published in Granada in 1827. It bore the following title: “Edict of the most Reverend Mr Archbishop of Granada in which it is communicated to all neighbours of this dioceses that they are ordered to observe this Royal Order of HM and of the council, in which they must adhere and obey the Bull, that is hereby included by our Holy Father Leo XII, in which it is forbidden and condemned once again all clandestine sect or society, no matter what their name¹⁴².” And it resembled the one adopted by the Congress of Mexico which significantly also forbade “all clandestine meetings forming body or corporation and that were secret.”

But perhaps what is of most interest is the ideological foundations that Bolivar himself has made in his decree, especially if we take into account that, of all liberators or leaders of Latin America independence, the only one whom we have documentary proof of his being a Freemason was Bolivar. He justifies thus his ban on secret societies:

Having accredited experience, in Colombia as well as in other nations, that secret societies are created specially to make political trouble, to disturb public peace and order, that hiding their actions behind a veil of mystery that makes them fundamentally suspect, useless to society and cause suspicion and alarm among all those who ignore their business; hereby is the ruling of the Cabinet of Ministers...¹⁴³

¹³⁷ México, 3 a 5 de abril de 1827.

¹³⁸ México, Imprenta del Gobierno a cargo de Juan Matute y González, 1828.

¹³⁹ México, Imprenta del Supremo Gobierno, 1828.

¹⁴⁰ On the vicissitudes of this decision made by Mexican representatives and more detail on this matter’s impact on the contemporary press, especially in *El Sol*, see Vázquez Semadeni, *La interacción entre el debate público*, 303-314.

¹⁴¹ Ferrer Benemeli, “Simón Bolívar y la Masonería”, in: *Revista de Indias* XLIII, n. 172 (julio-diciembre 1983): 631-687.

¹⁴² See Footnote 109.

¹⁴³ See Footnote 141.

They all just followed the example of what was first adopted in Parliament of Cadiz in 1812¹⁴⁴ and later by Ferdinand VII in 1814, 1823, and in later years¹⁴⁵. In any case, with the decrees in Colombia and Mexico the cycle was closed, one that was more fictitious than real: the key role of Freemasonry within the insurgent movement, Latin American independence in general and in Mexico, more specifically.

Conclusion

To conclude, and setting aside the influence that the liberalism of the Parliament of Cadiz might have had in Spain as well as in Mexico, a still unresolved matter is what was Freemasonry's role first in the insurgence and in the Independence of Latin America later on.

Frankly speaking, this is a point historiography still has to resolve without any emotional baggage, allegiances, or phobias. But most of all it must resolve this point without transposing ideologies that started later on—that, more than illustrate, tend to, in quite a few occasions, prejudice and qualify with a criteria of kindness or malevolence events that should be exposed with true objectivity—leaving all tendency to create myths aside, and especially away from a Manichean concept of history.

What is certain is the importance of a magnificent Masonic image believed by the Latin American insurgency and independence, which was more anti-Masonic than in favour of them, like it was in Spain. This was due in great measure to the ecclesiastic publications and political edicts and the anti-Masonic sentences—including the papal ones—that historiography at a later date has proven to be built on an incredible lack of information and knowledge about that same Freemasonry they were attacking. We are in front of what Professor Marco Antonio Flores Zavala, from the University of Zacatecas, defines as paradoxical acts that announce the possible presence of a secret association, not knowing what it is or what it is for, but suspected of conspiracy against the thrones and most of all against religion. These bans come from Rome and Spain to prevent a problem that didn't exist in Mexico, thus starting “a persecution of an absence¹⁴⁶.”

This image of Freemasonry was transmitted mostly at the beginning of the freedom of press granted by the parliament in Cadiz in 1812. It started with an abundance of leaflets, pasquinades, newspapers, and books that made an inexistent Freemasonry the protagonist of historic events that, during this bicentenary, we are revising on both sides of the Atlantic within a geographic framework that has so many things in common while also differing. Freemasonry in abstract was used as a weapon to be thrown at each other depending on the events and the historical moment, by liberals and royalists, Bonaparte partisans, revolutionaries and monarchist, *independentistas* and Bourbon followers, constitutionalist and republicans... and so it was in Spain and New Spain, in Europe and in America, in which,

¹⁴⁴ See Footnote 60.

¹⁴⁵ Still, on July 12th, 1828 Ferdinand VII's Royal Edict by which every member of a secret society lost academic degrees, honors or public offices was published. *Gaceta de Madrid* 91 (July 19th, 1828).

¹⁴⁶ Marco Antonio Flores Zavala, “Los ciclos de la Masonería mexicana. Siglos XVIII-XIX”, in: *La Masonería en Madrid y en España del siglo XVIII al XXI*, coord. Ferrer Benimeli (Zaragoza: Gobierno de Aragón, 2004), 489-501.

curiously enough, there was no Freemasonry but there was a deeply rooted anti-Masonic feeling.

And, like we do with so many other historical events, we wonder if Freemasonry created Latin American independence—one of the most deeply rooted myths—or did it simply benefit from the independence and was then able to settle and develop organically in Mexico¹⁴⁷.

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¹⁴⁷ Lorenzo Frau Abrines y Rosendo Arus Arderiu, *Diccionario Enciclopédico de la Masonería* (México: Ed. del Valle de México, 1977), specially volume IV. As indispensable complement for this work, I refer to the excelent book *La Independencia de México, temas e interpretaciones recientes*, coord. Ávila y Guedea (México D.F.: UNAM, 2007).

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