

The future critical work of Dr. Remos would be greatly improved by acceptance of these suggestions, because they call attention to the only present obstacles to be surmounted before this well-known and productive author finally becomes the first great historian of Cuban literature in his generation.

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*El paraíso en el Nuevo Mundo. Comentario apologético, historia natural y peregrina de las Indias Occidentales de Tierra Firme del Mar Océano.* Por el Lic. DON ANTONIO DE LEÓN PINELO. Publícalo RAÚL PORRAS BARRENECHEA. (Lima: Comité del IV Centenario del Descubrimiento del Amazonas, 1943. 2 vols. Vol. I. Pp. xlv, 396. Vol. II. Pp. 532. 5 illus.)

The term *baroque* is usually associated with the art, architecture and creative literature of the seventeenth century, and in the popular mind its chief characteristics are an exaggerated preoccupation with form and an extravagance of detail sometimes bordering on absurdity which practically converted the word into a synonym of "bad taste." It is not widely realized that this rococo tendency was not limited to the various forms of artistic expression but extended also to contemporary scholarship. The plethora of citations, the ponderous Latin and Greek quotations, and the pompous, turgid prose with which most of the learned treatises of the period were afflicted were all manifestations of the same intellectual disease; the extraordinary elaboration of detail and ostentatious display of pedantry likewise associated with these vices further betray the current esthetic influences of the time from which no one was wholly free. A classic example of this spectacular and hollow erudition is the enormous, two-volume compilation under review by the celebrated bibliographer of Portuguese Jewish extraction, Antonio de León Pinelo (1596-1660), who spent some eighteen years of his life in various parts of the Spanish Indies.

The works that he left in print stand as monuments to the zeal of a tireless bibliophile and to the meticulous research to which he devoted so much of his life, but they do not tell the whole story of his herculean efforts in these activities. Those writings of his which have remained in manuscript offer even more amazing indications of his inexhaustible patience and remarkable familiarity with the learning of his age, but they are scarcely flattering as examples of the discrimination and judgment that he exercised in the selection of important themes. None, perhaps, reveals more eloquently the misdirection of energies and the futility of contemporary scholastic learn-

ing uncontaminated by the experimentalist approach to truth than this encyclopedic effort to prove that the Earthly Paradise existed in the New World. This vast aggregation of citations from ancient, medieval, and contemporary writings, which León Pinelo organized during the years 1645-1650, is so marshaled as to point unerringly to the location of the Biblical Eden in, perhaps, one of the most unsuitable sites in the whole world for a land of delight—the region of the headwaters of the Amazon River which more recent commentators have unkindly designated as “the Devil’s Paradise.” To attempt to follow the proof of the author’s thesis through the bewildering maze of “evidence” which he so carefully produces would be tedious in the extreme. It exemplifies too well, as Sr. Porrás Barrenechea states in his prologue, “the sterile erudition of the seventeenth century—erudition for erudition’s sake without a single spark of creative inspiration.” The exposition is, in fact, a colossal heaping up of data extracted from “authorities” and presented in the naïve belief that truth is irrefutably established by the sheer weight of citations. In five books totaling ninety-three chapters a formidable array of “facts” from every conceivable written source is presented in dull, ponderous style to demonstrate beyond cavil that the Earthly Paradise described in the Bible was not in Asia as so long believed but in South America and within the area broadly comprehended under the name of Peru.

The first volume is a curious hodge-podge of patristic and medieval learning whose only value today is the evidence it offers of the basically uncritical scholarship of its time. If the credulity of learned men was so great in the seventeenth century, the naïve faith of the earlier conquistadores in the factual content of the fantastic romances of chivalry is more easily understood. One can only read this part of León Pinelo’s vast work, as Sr. Porrás Barrenechea aptly remarks, in the same sort of spirit that he would attempt to wade through a sixteenth-century *libro de caballerías*. The second volume, however, has considerably more to offer the modern reader since there he deals more closely with the natural history of the New World, drawing upon a wealth of contemporary information, sometimes from manuscripts subsequently lost. These sources include available geographical descriptions, travelers’ accounts, ethnographical notes, royal decrees, official reports, and miscellaneous documents, and from them León Pinelo assembled an enormous encyclopedia of myths, fables and facts on the flora, fauna, and mineral resources of the New World. Though the seventeenth-century bibliophile is obviously partial to the marvelous and miraculous which his authorities supply so

generously, some sound observations, nevertheless, creep in, and now and then a glimmer of real understanding shines through the dense foliage of medieval lore. Occasionally, and probably by accident, the compiler anticipates a later scientific theory, but these are mere stabs in the dark and definitely subordinate to the absurd thesis that he strives to establish. Personal observation and first-hand information unfailingly yield place to opinions and judgments of remote and exotic "authorities." In the handling of sources the bibliographer invariably triumphs over the historian.

This first printing of León Pinelo's monumental work is made from a copy of the original manuscript prepared in 1779 and preserved in the Royal Library of the late Alphonso XIII at Madrid. León Pinelo's closely written manuscript apparently came into the hands of the eighteenth-century Peruvian scholar, José Eusebio de Llano Zapata, who loaned it to the Spanish government for the copy made in 1779, and this original was known to be in existence as late as 1893, but it has since disappeared. Sr. Porras Barrenechea came across the copy at the Royal Library in 1935 and five years later received authorization from the Peruvian government to prepare an edition of *El paraíso en el Nuevo Mundo* as part of the commemoration of the fourth centenary of the discovery of the Amazon River. In an excellent forty-three page prologue the editor has admirably set forth the essential facts of León Pinelo's life and literary activities, and has made a skillful analysis of *El paraíso* and an evaluation of its contents. If this voluminous publication possesses more interest as a curious manifestation of the baroque in scholarship than as a contribution to knowledge, there is, perhaps, a certain appropriateness, now that the hidden possibilities of the Amazon basin for mankind are receiving more attention, in bringing to light at this time a work which reveals an earlier and less practical concern for this same vast region.

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*El Obispo Martínez Dalmau y la reacción anticubana.* (Habana: Sociedad Cubana de Estudios Históricos e Internacionales, 1943. Pp. 117.)

On the evening of May 28, 1943, Monsignor Eduardo Martínez Dalmau, bishop of Cienfuegos, Cuba, read his *Discurso de Ingreso* before the Cuban Academy of History. The address was entitled *La política colonial y extranjera de los reyes españoles de las Casas de Austria y de Borbón y la toma de la Habana por los ingleses*, its