

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SECTION

ALCEDO'S BIBLIOTHECA AMERICANA

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One of the most interesting and valuable documents in the Rich Collection of the New York Public Library is D. Antonio de Alcedo y Bexarano's manuscript *Bibliotheca Americana*,¹ a catalogue of authors who have written about the western hemisphere in different languages, with information concerning their lives and bibliographies. This monumental work of 936 pages of neat, compact script is of interest to us, aside from its intrinsic value, because, in various ways, it is related to many of the outstanding men in the field of Spanish-American studies during the later part of the eighteenth and greater part of the nineteenth centuries. Closely associated with it are, to mention only some of the most prominent, the naturalists Molina, Clavijero, Castro, Velasco, Iturri; the historians Irving, Prescott, and Ticknor; the bibliographers and collectors Ternaux, Kingsborough, Claverie, Brown, Lenox, Sparks, Cornell, and above all Obadiah Rich, the great bibliographer of early American history, who listed it for many years as item number one in his collection of manuscripts. In fact, it may be said without fear of exaggeration that the *Bibliotheca Americana* is the corner-stone upon which were built some of the best known bibliographies and library collections that go by this same name in the United States.

Antonio de Alcedo y Bexarano was born in Quito in 1735,² of a distinguished creole family. When he started to compile the *Biblioteca* he was a captain in the Spanish army. His father before him had been an historian of merit. He was generally known as the "oráculo de América," and his opinion on American affairs was respected and sought after by the Spanish court. Antonio made use of many of his father's manuscripts and materials, to the extent that it is at times difficult to distinguish between the work of the two men. There are scholars, among them Bernard Moses, who say that he availed himself of the materials assembled by his father and compiled the well known *Dic-*

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¹ *Bibliotheca Americana*. Catálogo de los Autores que han escrito de la América en diferentes Idiomas, y Noticia de su Vida y Patria, años en que vivieron, I Obras que escribieron, compuesta por El Mariscal de Campo D. Antonio de Alcedo, Gobernador de la Plaza de la Coruña. Año de 1807. Along with it are six autograph letters to the author. Alcedo generally refers to this work as: *Biblioteca Americana*, the title he gave his first manuscript (1791).

² José Toribio Medina, *Biblioteca hispano-americana (1493-1810)* (7 vols., Santiago de Chile, 1898-1907), V, 221.

cionario which goes under the son's name.³ Others mention them together.⁴ And one recent writer unwittingly combines the names of the two and calls our author Antonio de Alcedo y Herrera.⁵ Herrera is the name of his paternal grandmother. His mother's name, which would have been the proper one to use according to Spanish custom, was doña María Lucía Bexarano (or Bejarano). This error is understandable when one considers that the work of both men has a common central theme. In all fairness it must be said that Antonio gives his writings a tone quite different from that of his father. The *Bibliotheca Americana*, the last and most original of his two works, has the spirit of a new epoch. It also contains considerable material that appeared after his progenitor's death, as, for example, the abundant and important literature written about America by the exiled Jesuits.

Dionisio de Alcedo y Herrera, the father, was born in 1690, in Madrid, and died in 1776, after a long, stormy life embracing two epochs quite different in character, the latter part of the Counter Reformation and the beginning of what is commonly known as the period of Enlightenment. Don Dionisio was a peculiar blend of the two, characterized on the one side by complete adherence to Spanish traditional values, on the other by an indefatigable interest in determining the natural character of America. In this latter respect he was a precursor of the great historians and naturalists who came during the following generation: Buffon, De Pauw, Raynal, Marmontel, Robertson, Muñoz, La Condamine, Humboldt, Darwin and many others, among whom would be included his son Antonio.

In the *Bibliotheca Americana* Antonio gives a meticulous account of his father's adventurous existence. The history of America, passes before our eyes, a colorful pageant of pirates, bishops and mestizos.⁶

Alcedo y Bexarano's account of his own life is less spectacular than that of his father. It follows the conventional pattern of the Spanish eighteenth century, but its calm is broken now and then by voyages between Spain and America. While he was still an infant, his family moved from Quito to Madrid, but returned seven years later, in 1742,

³ Bernard Moses, *Spanish Colonial Literature in South America* (New York, 1922), p. 515.

⁴ J. Fred Rippy, *Historical Evolution of Hispanic America* (New York, 1943), p. 113.

⁵ In "Research in Progress, 1949," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, LXIV (No. 2), 225, the late professor from Syracuse, Ernest R. Moore announced the preparation, with members of the Ecuadoran Academy of History, of "an annotated edition of Antonio Alcedo y Herrera's manuscript, *Biblioteca Americana* (1800)." Professor Moore must have gotten the name of the author from *Espasa-Calpe's Enciclopedia universal ilustrada europea-americana* (70 vols., Barcelona, 1907-1930), IV, 266, which makes the same mistake. Where he got the date 1800 would be difficult to tell.

⁶ *Bibliotheca Americana*, pp. 30-36.

when the king appointed his father president of the Royal Court of Panama and commanding general of the Kingdom of Tierra Firme. Most of Antonio's childhood was spent in Quito. Here he attended the Colegio de Jesuitas. When he was seventeen the family moved to Madrid, where he became a cadet in the Spanish Royal Guards and studied at the Colegio Imperial, the most fashionable institution of its kind in that city. In the year 1760 he became a second lieutenant in the Royal Guards. Seven years later, he made a trip to France to study medicine at the College of Montpellier. In 1774, he married doña María Ignacia Codallos of Madrid, lady-in-waiting to the Infante, Prince Carlos. During the siege of Gibraltar we find him a first lieutenant of grenadiers, then a captain. At the end of this campaign he was promoted to colonel. The outbreak of the French Revolution caught him on the Spanish-French frontier. At that time the king named him brigadier general and subsequently military governor of the town of Alciza in the province of Valencia. He then became marshal and, in 1802, governor of the Plaza de la Coruña in Galicia. In 1784, the Royal Academy of History elected him honorary member.⁷

Alcedo's claim to fame is based upon his *Diccionario geográfico-histórico de las Indias Occidentales ó América*, published in 1786-1789, a work destined to be for many years afterwards the best informed encyclopedia on Spanish-American matters. It was also to have the distinction of being the first work ever written by a Spanish American in which the new-born republic, the United States of America, was seriously studied. The part that deals with this subject is unusually accurate. Besides minute geographic information, it gives a long account of how the British colonies came to establish themselves as an independent nation. It also includes the proclamation of 1774 to the inhabitants of Boston exhorting them to take arms against the British.⁸

After the return of Fernando VII to the Spanish throne in 1814 and the reestablishment of absolute monarchy, Alcedo's work was destined to have very small circulation in Spain. The true and accurate information it contained made the authorities look upon it with suspicion. Eventually, the entire edition was suppressed. The copies which escaped were few. In 1815, G. A. Thompson, the editor of the English edition of the *Diccionario*, says that after many inquiries he found that a very small number, not exceeding five or six, were in existence in the

⁷ "Se halla siendo Primer Ten^o de Granaderos en el Bloqueo y Sitio de la Plaza de Gibraltar desde el principio hasta el fin q^o se hizo la paz y fue premiado con el grado de Coronel; ascendio a Capitan el año de 1784, en aquel lo nombro la R^a Academia de la Historia por uno de sus Individuos, . ." *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

⁸ Antonio de Alcedo y Bexarano, *Diccionario geográfico-histórico de las Indias Occidentales ó América* (Madrid, 1788-1789), II, 104-105.

United Kingdom. Later attempts on his part to procure any from the continent were always unsuccessful, even when carried on under official auspices and at unlimited expense.⁹ In the Spanish-American colonies, on the other hand, the *Diccionario* was to enjoy great popularity and influence. For years after its publication Alcedo continued to receive letters from all parts of Spanish America from persons who considered his encyclopedia to be a patriotic work. The Mexican patriot José Servando Teresa de Mier saw the book during his exile in Spain and spoke of it with admiration in his memoirs.¹⁰ Francisco Iturri, one of the exiled Spanish-American Jesuits who had taken refuge in Rome, in one of his letters tells of the favorable effect the book had on other fellow Americans to whom he had spoken.¹¹ Miranda also used the *Diccionario* as a source of information for his numerous political activities.¹²

As it is, Alcedo's work is not complete. It was to include a bibliography of authors who had written on America in different languages, including Alcedo's father, Dionisio, who had written about Ecuador and Peru.¹³ This part of the *Diccionario*, which is mentioned in the introduction but does not appear anywhere, is the *Bibliotheca Americana*, the manuscript we are concerned with in this article.

The history of the *Bibliotheca Americana* is one that could well be compared to that of a living personality. It had its beginnings during the first half of the eighteenth century (1726-1740), when Dionisio de Alcedo y Herrera was compiling materials for his numerous books on America. As in the case of the *Diccionario*, this second work of Antonio is a compilation of his father's papers and contemporary materials both of primary and secondary nature. Alcedo y Bexarano probably first conceived the idea of making this book about 1786, just before the publication of the *Diccionario*. He mentions it for the first time in the introduction to the latter. "I have omitted at the end of every article," says Alcedo, "reference to the authors from whom I have obtained my materials, because I believed it to be an unnecessary and annoying repetition. It is more fitting to include them in a last volume, a sort of bibliotheca of authors who have written on subjects related

⁹ G. A. Thompson, *The Geographical and Historical Dictionary of America and the West Indies* (5 vols., London, 1812-1815), V, vii.

¹⁰ José Servando Teresa de Mier, quoted in Felipe Teixidor, *Viajeros mexicanos* (Mexico, 1939), p. 27.

¹¹ Francisco Iturri to Antonio de Alcedo, Rome, March 11, 1789, Rich Collection, New York Public Library.

¹² V. Davila, ed., *Archivo del General Miranda* (15 vols., Caracas, 1929-1938), XV, 187-194, 404.

¹³ In the *Bibliotheca Americana*, pp. 32-36, Alcedo gives his father's bibliography.

to the Indies, with a brief resume of their lives, following the example of the famous Don Nicolás Antonio. . . ."¹⁴ The *Bibliotheca*, however, was never published. It is doubtful that it was even organized at such an early date.

The earliest manuscript we have is of 1791. This is the one which in 1861 was in possession of Claveri de Cassoni of Paris¹⁵ and at present is part of the Angrad Collection in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*.¹⁶ The Ecuadoran critic, Gonzalo Zaldumbide, saw it during his trip to Paris in 1920 and wrote a short article, "El diccionario inédito de Alcedo," giving us an excellent description of it. "The specimen which rests in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*," says Zaldumbide, "seems to be the original, neatly copied by Alcedo himself when his work was almost finished, but when he still was waiting for more data with which to fill the blank spaces he was leaving in his copy for this purpose. Thus there are names followed by little or no biographical or bibliographical notes, for which a more or less sizeable space had been reserved, according to whether he expected to find relatively little or much about the particular author. He also left eight blank pages for a prologue that perhaps he never wrote. In places where he has not left blanks and where he has had something to add, he has inserted loose sheets."

Zaldumbide was of the opinion that this first manuscript was holograph. The expedient of leaving blanks, as in a scrap book, to be filled in as information was obtained could hardly be explained if this is the work of a later copyist. Besides, Zaldumbide tells us that the handwriting of the interlineal and marginal corrections and additions is the same as that of the text, "a writing that had become more and more voluble as time passed, a process that probably continued until his final hour. This can be deduced from the different shades of ink and from the shakiness of the strokes, in places those of an aged hand. Alcedo may well have continued this slow, gradual work during his governor-

¹⁴ ". . . he suprimido al fin de cada artículo la cita del autor de donde he sacado lo principal de él, por parecerme una repetición inútil y molesta, y más propio darlos por último tomo en una biblioteca de autores que han escrito sobre todas las materias de indias, con un breve resumen de sus vidas, siguiendo el método del célebre Don Nicolás Antonio; y por vía de apéndice al fin de la obra, otro diccionario o lista alfabética de los nombres principales y voces extrañas de frutas, arboles, animales, & c." *Diccionario . . .*, I, vii-ix.

¹⁵ "En el catálogo Claveri de Cassoni, Paris, 1861, figura un manuscrito muy curioso de nuestro autor; Biblioteca Americana: catalogo de los autores que han escrito en diferentes idiomas y noticia de su vida, patria y años que florecieron, y obras que dejaron escritas. 1791. 2 vols." (Antonio Palau Dulcet, *Manual del librero hispanoamericano* [7 vols., Barcelona, 1923-1927], I, 37-38.)

¹⁶ Waldo G. Leland, *Guide to Materials for American History in the Archives of Paris* (2 vols., Washington, 1932), I, 220.

ship of the Province of Coruña and even during his retirement up to the time of his death."¹⁷ Then 1791 could hardly be considered the time when the manuscript was completed, but rather an intermediary date in the process of its composition. Let us not forget that much of this material he already had from his father.

The Rich manuscript, which is the one we are primarily concerned with here, dates from 1807. The fact that it is more recent in no way makes it inferior to the first copy. On the contrary, it has the advantage of being more complete. During the interim (1791-1807), Alcedo read the works that were being published by the exiled Jesuits and held correspondence with persons all over the globe. According to his own statement, he received information from numerous sources. Among his collaborators he mentions some of the most accredited authorities of that day on America: Molina, Castro, Clavijero, Velasco, Iturri, Coleti, Morse and others.¹⁸ The new additions are among the most interesting and valuable materials found in the Bibliotheca.

The first copy is a rough draft. The second is the final one, written when Alcedo knew that he had nothing more to give and was getting ready to die. By now he had completed the introduction¹⁹ and had filled most of the blanks. In the few cases where he had not been able to obtain any information on a given author he has taken him out altogether. His style has not improved. He changes the order of the clauses and adds words, hoping to improve the text. Some of the factual details are changed. In speaking, for instance, of the time when his father was captured by pirates, in the first manuscript he tells us he received two wounds, but in the second he received three. In the first his father dies at the age of eighty-five, in the second at eighty-six. The Rich manuscript seldom has corrections and very few interlineal insertions. Only three pages have marginal additions of any consequence.²⁰ Here again we find the trembling strokes, in a neat, compact script, that reveal the advanced age of the author.²¹

¹⁷ Zaldumbide in his article quotes in full those sections of the Bibliotheca that refer to Ecuadoran authors, including Alcedo and his father. He seems not to have been acquainted with the background of the manuscript. In one place he asks: "Este ejemplar, que reputo por autógrafo, ¿es el tenido por original, que perteneció al librero Rich, erudito inglés, autor de una bibliografía del siglo XVIII?" (Gonzalo Zaldumbide, "Diccionario inédito de Alcedo," *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de Historia* [Quito], II [1921], 71-93.

¹⁸ Bibliotheca Americana, p. 6.

¹⁹ Seven pages.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 78, 79.

²¹ The coat of arms of James Lenox, dated 1870, is on the outside covers. There is also an attached note, signed by Victor Palsits and dated August 7, 1942, stating that this is the original manuscript of Alcedo, acquired by Mr. James Lenox with the Obadiah Rich Collection, item number 1.

Obadiah Rich was of the opinion that the manuscript in his possession was the original. He made the most of this in his catalogues. If he actually knew that another manuscript existed he at least never mentioned it. Along with it were, and still are, six letters addressed to Alcedo, which would naturally strengthen Rich's statement. From all indications it was the final draft ready for publication. The letters, dealing with related subjects, were to be included as an appendix. All this, of course, does not invalidate the fact that there is, as we have seen, an earlier manuscript, also an original.

It would be interesting to know why the Bibliotheca was not published. In the introduction Alcedo speaks of the work as if its publication were already an accomplished fact. One can never be sure, of course, what is in another person's mind, even with the benefit of historical documents, but it seems that the publication of the manuscript was uppermost in the author's mind. If we accept this premise, we can assume then that the reason why it was never published was beyond his control. For one thing, the printing of a manuscript of such length was an expensive undertaking. The *Diccionario* had been published by popular subscription.²² Besides, from 1807 on, for the next five years that Alcedo's life lasted, Spain was in the throes of the Napoleonic invasion, and publication was difficult. The appearance of other important manuscripts shortly before this date on parallel subjects could also have been a serious obstacle.²³ Futhermore, Alcedo had enemies, as the later suppression of his *Diccionario* would indicate. To be sure, it had been well received in some circles, but this could well have been one reason for its condemnation. The heated polemic which took place between his friend Francisco Iturri and Juan Bautista Muñoz, Spain's official historian, concerning the inherent character of America, left no doubt as to where every one concerned stood on the question. According to Carbia, it was owing to this controversy that Muñoz discontinued the publication of his *Historia del nuevo mundo*.²⁴ It might even have contributed to his untimely death.²⁵

It was about this time that Antonio de Uguina of Madrid was mak-

²² Thompson, *op. cit.*, I, viii.

²³ Rafael Altamira y Crevea, *Historia de España y de la civilización española* (5 vols., Barcelona, 1900-1930), IV, 374-376.

²⁴ Muñoz only published the first volume. What there was completed of the second at the time of his death is now part of the Rich Collection in the New York Public Library. "Muñoz (Juan Bautista). *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*. Tomo 2. Es cuanto dexa escrito de esta obra. Transcript. (1800?) 67 pp., and 27 supplementary notes, corrections, and illustrated Documents. F. Half morroco." There is also in this collection an index of the manuscripts being used by Muñoz at the time of his death.

²⁵ V. Carbia, *La crónica oficial de las Indias Occidentales* (La Plata, 1934), p. 264. Muñoz died of apoplexy about this time.

ing his famous collection of manuscripts. It comprised practically everything of interest collected by his friend Juan Bautista Muñoz for the *Historia del nuevo mundo*.²⁶ This eminent scholar employed most of his life gathering materials for a history of the discovery and conquest of America. Since he acted under the authority of the government, every facility was afforded him. Prescott, who knew Muñoz well, tells that private and public depositories throughout the empire were freely opened to his inspection. "The result was a magnificent collection of manuscripts, many of which he patiently transcribed with his own hand."²⁷ It was from Uguina's collection that Navarrete obtained most of his materials for his *Colección de viajes*. After the collector's death, the greater part of the manuscripts were purchased by M. Ternaux Compans²⁸ of Paris, a well-known collector who was eventually to play an important role in the history of the Bibliotheca.

Alcedo died in 1812 at the ripe age of seventy-seven. We do not know when his wife passed away, but since he was married at the age of thirty-nine and Spanish women generally marry early, it is not unreasonable to surmise that she outlived him, perhaps for seventeen years, and during this time kept together the Alcedo archives. This could account for the whereabouts of the manuscript up to 1830, the date when Rich discovered it on a bookstand in Madrid. Thompson, the editor of the English edition of the *Diccionario* published in 1815, does not mention the Bibliotheca.

In the meantime, in the United States a revival of interest in the history of early America was taking place. A group of talented authors selected this field of literary endeavor. Some of them believed that the western hemisphere, north and South, had a common trend of development and they were interested in reconstructing the origins of western civilization in America. Their intention was to study the society that had produced the discovery, the process of the discovery itself, and the early phases of the colonial era. In keeping with the spirit of the times, they also believed that the key to these studies was to be found not in this continent but in the archives of Spain. Washington Irving, Prescott, Ticknor, Everett, Lowell, Motley, Bryant, and Longfellow became profound students of Spanish matters. It is with this group that the Bibliotheca Americana was to be closely associated.

The American ambassador to Madrid at the time was Alexander Everett of Boston. Everett was a cultured gentleman and an historian who had shown a sincere friendship for the Spanish Americans during

²⁶ "Manuscript Collections in the New York Public Library," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, V (1901), 306-307.

²⁷ William H. Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Peru* (New York, 1847), p. iii.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. iv-v.

their struggle for independence.²⁹ An important part of the grand tour, which every young Bostonian of means felt himself under the obligation to make, and which consisted in a year's residence in Europe, was the visit of Everett to Madrid.

Closely associated with the American Ambassador was Obadiah Rich, the bibliographer. Rich is one of those individuals whom history has largely forgotten. There is no biography of him, and little is known of his personality and character, although he is the forerunner of Sabin, Maggs and the other great bibliographers on America. Washington Irving describes him in his letters as honest Rich, "a most obliging and good-hearted man."³⁰ He was born in Massachusetts of a known family. At home he had already attained a reputation as a local bibliographer, but it was not until he went to Valencia that his lifetime vocation was definitely determined. Rich was moved by a consuming passion for books and manuscripts pertaining to the early history of America. When he was sent to Madrid as consul and later as secretary to the legation, he spent most of his free time scouring the bookshops and finding many of the books and manuscripts that later on were to make up the "Rich Collection of Manuscripts on America," one of the finest of its kind in the world. Travelers who visited his house describe it as being more like a museum than a home. No one writing on early American history came to Madrid without seeing his famous collection.³¹

In 1828, Rich moved to London where he established his famous rare-bookshop.³² The demand for Spanish documents was increasing, and he returned periodically to the peninsula in search of items his clients requested. It was in 1830, during one of these trips, that he obtained Alcedo's *Bibliotheca Americana*. He found it on a bookstall during the fair at Madrid.³³ He paid twenty *reales* and a *vellón*, an insignificant amount when one considers the fabulous prices some of the copies of the manuscript brought in later years.³⁴

By this time Rich's reputation as a bibliographer had grown. According to Claude Bowers, ambassador to Madrid in 1933, among Rich's

²⁹ He is the author of *America, or a general survey of the political situation of the several powers of the western continent, with conjectures on their future prospects*. By a citizen of the United States, (1828.) A Spanish translation of this same work appears to have been printed at Northampton, Mass., that same year.

³⁰ Stanly T. Williams, *The Life of Washington Irving* (2 vols., New York, 1935), I, 304.

³¹ When Irving came to Spain he went to live in Obadiah Rich's house, and it was while browsing through Rich's manuscripts that he made up his mind to write the life of Columbus. Williams, *op. cit.*, I, 304.

³² José de Onís, "Valentín de Foronda's Memoir on the United States of North America, 1804," *The Americas*, IV (1948), 351-352.

³³ From a note on the last page of the *Bibliotheca*, signed: "15 John Street, Gravesend, May 7, 1848, O.R."

³⁴ Irving spent the following year in London and consulted the *Bibliotheca*.

papers long hidden away in a store-house in New York City, one finds letters of some of the most famous figures of his day.³⁵ His two best clients were Prescott and Ticknor, who often praised his disinterested coöperation. In most cases the selection of the books purchased was left entirely up to him. Among other tasks, he was entrusted with purchasing the Spanish books for the Boston Athenaeum.³⁶ The *Bibliotheca Americana*, one of the most complete bibliographies of its kind, must have been an important factor in determining his choice.³⁷

There were other rival collectors. The best known are Lord Kingsborough, Ternaux, Bartlett, and Gayangos.³⁸ In 1841, four years after Kingsborough's death, his books and manuscripts were sold at public auction. Rich was present on this occasion and bought numerous items, among them an important section of manuscripts dealing with Peru. These he sent to Prescott who prized them as being among his most valuable documents.³⁹ The Kingsborough copy of the *Bibliotheca Americana*, now in the John Carter Brown Library and mentioned equivocally in Sabin's bibliography,⁴⁰ was probably also disposed of at this time or shortly afterwards.⁴¹ If this is so, through this sale at least,

³⁵ Claude G. Bowers, *The Spanish Adventure of Washington Irving* (Boston, 1940), pp. 9-10.

³⁶ Edith F. Helman, "Early Interest in Spain in New England (1815-1835)," *Hispania*, August, 1946, p. 341.

³⁷ When Rich received an order for a book that was unknown to him, he would check it with the *Bibliotheca*. In the case where he was entrusted with the task of obtaining materials on a given topic, he would do likewise. On page 273 there is a note in Rich's own handwriting about a Padre Juan Tobar, who wrote about Mexico, that bears this out.

³⁸ Don Pascual de Gayangos, well-known Spanish historian and literary critic, bought many of the books now in the Ticknor Collection, Boston Public Library. He also translated Ticknor's history of Spanish literature, *Historia de la literatura española, traducida al castellano, con adiciones y notas críticas, por D. Pascual de Gayangos y D. Enrique de Vedia* (Madrid, 1851-1856). His collection of manuscripts, now housed in the *Biblioteca Nacional*, Madrid, represents one of the most complete examples of Spanish culture we have. See: *Catálogo de los manuscritos que pertenecieron a D. Pascual de Gayangos* Pedro Roca ed. (Madrid, 1904). Gayangos was in London about this time and he, too, bought items of Spanish interest.

³⁹ Prescott, *op. cit.*, p. v.

⁴⁰ Joseph Sabin, *Bibliotheca americana. A dictionary of books relating to America, from its discovery to the present time. Begun by Joseph Sabin, continued by Wilberforce Eames and completed by R. W. G. Vail for the Bibliographical society of America . . .* (29 vols., New York, 1868-1936), I, 83.

⁴¹ The John Carter Brown manuscript, written in a fine, early-nineteenth-century hand, was in all probability made from the example in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. The copy was bound for Lord Kingsborough by Hering and has the Kingsborough arms on the front and back covers of each of its two volumes. There is no record of the purchase by John Carter Brown, but it must have occurred at some time between 1841, the date of the Kingsborough sale, and 1868, when Sabin first mentions it: John Carter Brown never owned the Rich copy of the *Alcedo*. The Sabin entry (No. 684) is misleading.

Rich must have known of the 1791 manuscript.

It was not a mere coincidence that in 1843, only two years after the Kingsborough sale, Rich had his copy of the *Bibliotheca* reproduced and sold it to Jared Sparks.⁴² Mrs. Mary C. Sparks tells that it was procured at an expense "hardly exceeded by that incurred for any of those now placed in the Harvard Library."⁴³ This fourth manuscript is the one that was included in the purchase of the library of Sparks by Ezra Cornell and given to the library of Cornell University, where it is at present.

Fortunately for us, Rich published numerous catalogues advertising his books and manuscripts. Through these we are able to know how his different items fluctuated. In 1844 he published the *Bibliotheca Americana Nova*. In this catalogue the Alcedo is item number 42. Only one year later, he gave the *Bibliotheca* in exchange for other books to M. Ternaux Compans of Paris, a collector well known for his excellent French version of the Muñoz manuscripts.⁴⁴

That same year Henry Stevens, Jr. arrived in London. This young graduate of Harvard was sent there to search the market for rare Americana by some of the wealthiest patrons in the United States: John Carter Brown of Providence, Governor Slade of Vermont, and J. R. Broadhead of New York. In *The Middle Group of American Historians* John Spencer Bassett states that before this time Obadiah Rich had sold most books ordered by Americans, but after Stevens' arrival things were quite different. "He [Stevens] examined the London shops thoroughly, visited the out-of-town booksellers, and finally met Panizzi, the head of the British Museum, who was so impressed with him that he gave him an order to purchase books on America for that great library. It was an unlimited order, and carried with it admission to every part of the museum. Rich was completely overshadowed by the young American, and other booksellers were in despair."⁴⁵ Bartlett, of New York, wrote to Peter Force, the collector, that Stevens was the great monopolist of American books in London. He not only bought everything valuable, but also prevented all the respectable dealers from selling to others.⁴⁶

Stimulated by Stevens' success, Rich ventured into the biggest deal of his career. He bought back from M. Ternaux Compans the *Bibliotheca Americana* and along with it all his Spanish manuscripts. The Ternaux collection, as we have already mentioned, included most of the manuscripts amassed by Juan Bautista Muñoz and Antonio de Uguina.

⁴² *Catalogue of the Library of Jared Sparks* (Cambridge, 1871), p. 111, item 1635.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁴ Note by Rich on the last page of the *Bibliotheca*.

⁴⁵ p. 287.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

To these Rich added the manuscripts he still had left from Lord Kingsborough's sale and a few articles procured by himself in Spain. Thus we have for the first time the Rich Collection as we know it today. That same year, 1848, the 142 volumes it comprised were sold in block to Mr. Lenox, who presented them to the New York Public Library, where they are now preserved under the title: "Rich Collection of Manuscripts on America."

Thus concludes the history of the odyssey of a great work, which is not that of one manuscript but of four. Apparently, the first two, the 1791 and 1807 copies, are holographs. The others are copies. The Kingsborough manuscript, now in the John Carter Brown Collection, is in all probability a copy of the first draft. The Sparks manuscript, part of the Cornell Library, was taken from the second draft, the Rich copy.

Alcedo's *Bibliotheca Americana* and Obadiah Rich, the bibliographer, are inseparable. It is impossible to speak of the one without mentioning the other. This great American collector, during his lifetime, accumulated from different sources a large body of manuscripts of the most varied and important character. His collection—made up mostly of letters, royal grants, municipal records, instructions to the courts, personal diaries and memoranda, copies and original manuscripts of well known books—is comparable to any of its kind in the world. Its item number one—Alcedo's great work, a manuscript that has not been superseded by later publications—is in itself a whole world of American thought and knowledge, one that we may rightfully call a *Bibliotheca Americana*.