The urban model

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw an intensification of nationalist processes that helped consolidate the capitals of the European realms. Madrid began to play a leading role when Felipe II located his Court there in 1561. Increasing bureaucracy put an end to the practice of moving the court from city to city and made it necessary to establish permanent spaces for the archives, offices, and courts that stored the memories and managed the lives of the subjects. There was nothing unusual about this, as the same thing was happening in the other European kingdoms. In establishing the Court in a given city, that city grew and became the capital, a new concept associated with the creation of the modern national State, which in the case of Spain was also the center of an enormous empire. That capital city embraced the role of representing the State and supplied its image. Thus, the capital arises from the need to possess the political instruments necessary to manage the State’s territories. Additionally, it is the reflection and image of the kingdom, its embodiment. At the time when these processes took place, the model followed by the courts to display themselves as courts was the “great Baroque city,” which revealed the importance and glory of the kingdom. Thus, the city itself became a political element, since the program and the message that were sent from the image of the city were political.

That great city was the result of both the increase in population, given the concentration of military and religious institutions as well as institutions of power, and the concentration of nobles who settled there, building their palaces in the city. The Court then attracted elements of other classes and origins, who came in search of new opportunities. As Max Weber reminds us (1983, 956), the city offered an air of freedom, so people came there to leave behind their old life, in the hope of finding something different and having a better life. This desire, however, very often led to living a life on the fringes of society. Spanish literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries gives ample evidence of this social and cultural reality, which characterized Madrid as well as other European capitals.

The concept of the great city also resulted from its being understood as ornate and as representing the kingdom, as previously noted, which was why it was adorned and transformed. But this transformation was made on top of its medieval reality, using the earlier structure
and image while changing facades and altering aesthetic and institutional appearances, since the modern State had new needs and new institutions. Those alterations included transient architectures, formats of cultural commemoration that gave new functions to urban spaces. All these changes were reflected in urbanism, which projected a new, up-to-date model over an outdated one. But changes were also happening in the realm of ideas, such that new ways of thinking were growing over the old ones. Those variations were perceived in the definitions of what constitutes a city, and hence, it is no accident that in the eighteenth century the social aspect, or the sociability, of the city was frequently emphasized. And of course, in the new designs and reforms, the plaza, or town square, was considered a space for meetings and commerce, such as was already occurring in the so-called “classical city.” The novelty of the plaza in this period is that another representative element was added to that social aspect: the setting becomes the frame for a statue of the monarch, something that was happening on the European continent as well as in the new American territories. The plaza highlighted the active political condition of the city, also apparent in its tertulias, social gatherings that took place not only in the private salons of the upper classes, but also in the doorways of homes, on patios, in cafés, and even among the clusters of people that gathered in the plazas. Plazas were the physical manifestation of a symbolic space because they housed the town hall, the church, the court; in short, they became the center that ordered all urban space.

This orderliness displays streamlined standards compared to the medieval city. The trend throughout the eighteenth century, and even later, was for straight lines, standardizing spaces, aligning facades, opening up avenues and wide streets, landscaping. This beautified the city, making it a work of art able to adequately represent the monarchy, something that was scarcely done in the Madrid of the prior Habsburg dynasty. Theater and city were connected: the theater house often occupied a privileged space (something that also did not exist in Hapsburg Madrid); the use of perspective to create broad panoramas, and the idea of the capital as a stage on which the comedy of life unfolded, updated the old theme of theatrum mundi. The city was also becoming a business, also thanks to the consumer economy of the Court. Thus, the modern capital was constructed through its physical and emotional reworking: the customs, rites, and traditions that were consolidated in it (Chueca Goitia 2016, 43). It was also constructed not as a rejection of the countryside per se—something that only began happening well into the twentieth century—but more as a moving away from the values and ways of rural life. However, still in the eighteenth century, the difference between country and city is unclear, just as there was also little distance between the common and the cultured. Although this is the period when those distinctions would be forged, in Madrid many signs of that mixture of rural and urban are still found, manifested in the way of life, in the lack of borders between territories, and even in the city’s patron saint, Saint Isidore the Laborer. The urban periphery blurs the boundaries between urban and rural.

Urban centers are history, which is why they are gifted with elements that express that condition: street names that allude to important people and events, commemorative plaques, statues. We are facing the start of the phenomenon of celebrity. Cities become important in individuals’ horizon of expectations, since if one wants to triumph, that is where she or he must go. And those who live outside of it are precisely those who define the concept of urban center, of the capital as an imaginary that concentrates both the aspirations and the fears that the city represents.

In this framework, Madrid underwent a series of changes over the course of this century that, in many cases, continued into the nineteenth—political, institutional, urban, and cultural changes aimed at showing what it already was: the capital of the Spanish empire. For this, it was necessary to give it buildings that showed that status, together with corresponding institutions.
Those changes shaped a model of city and of culture sponsored by the Crown, certain aspects of which they tried to export to other places, or else it was copied, since it represented contemporary modernity.

Following the fire in the Alcázar of Madrid in 1734, a change was initiated in the urban aesthetic, which accompanied the criticisms being bandied about regarding the city's hygienic standards and even its structure as the capital. Since its aesthetic ultimately was to follow the classical model which would display the monarchy's greatness, then to address urban cleanliness—one of the symbols of modernity—solutions were proposed for collecting garbage, prohibitions were made against throwing out waste into the streets, plans were made for indoor plumbing and underground sewers. Important people like José Alonso Arce, Teodoro de Ardemans, Francisco Mariano Niño, Francisco Sabatini, Ventura Rodríguez, and Juan de Villanueva were involved in turning the Court into a clean, orderly city—and they achieved it, judging by the testimonials given by numerous travelers, from Norberto Caimo in 1755 to William Dalrymple in the 1770s and Christian August Fischer in 1802, who denounced those who repeated outdated opinions, interested only in giving a negative view of the capital along the lines of the Black Legend: “Stop speaking ill of Madrid’s cleanliness! How many times do they still talk about, for example, the dirty streets of Madame d’Aulnoy’s day! They do so without realizing that for the last twenty-five years, Madrid has been one of the cleanest cities in Europe,” in which garbage is collected daily, and sidewalks are swept and washed down. “Nobody can throw away anything in the street, and bodily needs are taken care of only at home” (Fischer 2013, 185–186). It is worth remembering the possible falseness of the Countess’s oft-cited trip, as Raymond Foulché-Delbosc (1926) has already noted, and also that many travelers were merely copying ideas from earlier travelers.

Worrying about hiding the filth reveals a sense of public versus private that forced a policy for altering the urban landscape: for example, by replacing the medieval era round paving stones with square flagstones that eliminated spaces where filth and excrement could collect. We have many examples of the latter, but it is worth remembering Juan de Iriarte’s unfinished poem (1774), titled “Merdidium matritense,” in which, at midcentury, he takes note of bad smells, rotting garbage, dead animals floating in the river, and even pigs escaping from the pens of the San Antón Abad monks and running loose in the streets, as happened in Venice (Sarti 1999). In short, a reality that is no different from the descriptions of Paris offered by Denis Diderot in Rameau’s Nephew (1761–1762) and Mercier in his texts about the French capital, nor from other European cities, including London, which was one of the dirtiest of the period.

These are changes in the urban structure and in the mentality of the citizens that point to the incorporation of a modern discourse in regard to hygienic civilization, an urban culture that gives value to the street and the public space in which daily life takes place. Thus, they had a special importance, together with those hygienic changes of an aesthetic nature which were implemented in places around the city where the new tastes were allowed to flourish. Then they moved into peripheral spaces, or close to them, which today form part of the central core of the city: Alcalá Street and Atocha Street and the Paseo del Prado, the elegant boulevard leading to the Prado Museum, as well as the area around the Royal Palace, which was the emblem of the new classical aesthetic that represented the king’s grandeur. In these areas, new buildings were raised according to the aesthetic supported by the King, who, to change the “facade of the realm,” created the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts, and within that, the Architecture Commission that monitored architectural projects, to ensure that they met the requirements of representation and image of the new Spain.

In the spaces mentioned, they built the New Customs House, the Academy itself, the Hydrographic Archives, which ultimately became the Prado Museum but was originally supposed to be the Cabinet of Natural History and Science Laboratory. These were all buildings
that housed cultural centers and projected the institutional image of that culture, a process explained in treatises like that of Forns y Gurrea (1982), although there are other earlier ones. It is a model of urban culture that is exported and developed in the nineteenth century following the Ionic style, and later the historicist style. Academies, libraries, and museums are all built with their representational value in mind, so they must be well-decorated, monumental, and if possible, at the center of their respective towns (Capel 2005, 412–419). The alteration of the Paseo del Prado, begun in 1768 to create a pleasant space to spend one’s leisure time in an area of the city that housed those cultural centers, was extrapolated to other locales, and so there appeared promenades and boulevards in Málaga, Granada, Cádiz, Burgos, and Barcelona (Quirós Linares 2009), as well as museums and libraries open to the public, as examples of an enlightened cultural policy that later went liberal. The same happened with secondary schools. The first was founded in Madrid in 1838, and then others followed in Barcelona, Granada, Málaga, Segovia, and Toledo.

The city, therefore, benefited from the old medieval class system, upon which was erected the new capital, and which was given appropriate infrastructure and buildings to display the importance of the realm and of Madrid as representative of the empire. There are two institutions, among others created at that time, that are important in this respect: the Royal Botanical Garden and the Cabinet of Natural History. The first is on the Paseo del Prado, although it came from a former location outside of Madrid; the second is on Alcalá Street. Both shared an important characteristic, highlighted by different visitors: the American aspect of their backgrounds. Both had species that were only displayed there, to show off the glory of the empire. Their political and educational function was undeniable. They were places not to be missed if one wanted to stay abreast of advances in their respective fields, according to Fischer, the German visitor quoted previously, but also according to the naturalist Juan Mieg, who wrote a guide to the Cabinet. Both centers also projected the notion of royal support for the sciences (Álvarez Barrientos 2017a, 155).

The impression that Madrid was to give was one of moral nobility and grandeur. For this purpose, Martín Sarmiento in his *Sistema de adornos del Palacio Real* (System of Decorations of the Royal Palace), Antonio Ponz in his *Viaje de España* (Journey from Spain), and others such as José Cadalso in his *Cartas marruecas* (Moroccan Letters), argued that the streets and plazas should be named after those who had contributed to the making of the nation. They felt that in those public spaces there should be statues and memorials to commemorate the founding fathers, to serve as an example for pedestrians and reinforce the national identity that was even then already developing, from the culture itself and from the conversion of the past into reified History. The names of streets and plazas, the presence of great personages immortalized in busts and statues, should inspire a feeling of unity and belonging, of awareness of history itself, of national pride and education in common values, that would mold the new citizen educated in a classical aesthetic, an ordered way of life, and political values shared by everyone.

Summarizing these ideas, Ponz commented, “All our cities are ugly, and the oldest ones are the ugliest.” He thought almost all of them should be rebuilt because of their poor construction, which came from the Middle Ages. He proposes a number of ideas: creating spacious entryways, adding a number of doors sufficient to reflect the greatness of the city, using “ample architectural adornment; building many roads that connect to each other; making the main roads straight and wide, so that they are more comfortable and shorter for those who traverse them; but they should not all be exactly the same width and straightness,” because uniformity is annoying.

Ponz follows the Renaissance principle of hierarchy of routes, and the notion that harmony is achieved if the most important roads lead to the center of town, where the main plaza can be found. “More plazas need to be built, to open up the neighborhoods and make them more spacious. Their various shapes will give everything a new beauty: some rectangular, others round,
still others oval, some with three, six or eight angles would always be a source of pleasure and novelty [...]. Porticos make plazas more comfortable.” Nor does he forget fountains, nor the previously indicated symbolic and didactic elements that create a sense of belonging and continuity: “a goodly number of statues mounted on magnificent pedestals, located at entrances, in plazas, in open spaces, representing guardian angels, philanthropic princes, distinguished citizens; they would serve as models of piety, recognition, reward, and finally, to educate the public. […] Many inscriptions located in various places [would explain] the foundation of the city, some of its municipal laws, the glories of its sovereigns, those of its illustrious citizens worthy of remembrance under different titles, with other things that may have made them famous. It would be an open book from which everyone would learn.” These inscriptions should be clear, brief, well written, and “in the common language of the nation” (Ponz 1789, 16–21).

Not everything suggested by these authors was completed at that time, and it was necessary to wait until the early decades of the nineteenth century to develop them, both in José I’s brief reign during the Peninsular War (1808–1813) and Fernando VII’s (1814–1833) upon his return from exile.

As previously noted, to the extent possible, the capital was modified to give it this new image based, above all, on straight lines and perspective, a unique viewpoint that symbolically reinforced the power of the king and highlighted the process of centralization over which he presided. It offered an image of a harmonious capital, which was based on the Renaissance profile of the ideal city, but which in reality clashed with the crowded houses and tortuous structure of the old city. Those constructions complemented the work of building palaces, hostels, promenades, boulevards, gardens, factories, cultural institutions, canals and highways, all ways of linking the realm through culture, imagery, the economy and communications. This trend continued after the Peninsular War. Thus, for example, in 1818, this reflection was written about the wharf project of the Manzanares canal: “Navigation and woodlands are works worthy of the great Fernando. Roads and canals facilitate domestic commerce, promote industry and create abundance for the realms” (Terán 1999, 31), in a formulation that echoed the past and demonstrated continuity.

Canals united the center with the periphery; they were an investment, in different parts of Europe, in creating a commercial, economic, and cultural circuit—an investment that ended with the arrival of the railroads. Sometimes, as a result of the successes achieved in controlling Nature, they toyed with utopian visions, such as in France, where they wanted to link the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. In Spain different canals were begun, such as the ones in Castile, Aragon, and others that were never completed, like the plan to join Madrid to the sea. Aragón’s canal, however, did give maritime access to commerce in the region (Sambricio 1991; Pérez Sarrión 1984, 2005). The politics of canal construction reflects the importance of commerce and the economy as engines of change and as referential values of the monarchy—a change that also had to do with the method of representing the nation through representations of arsenals, ports, and cities, which today tend to have great documentary value because of their interest in showing the improvements implemented in industry and in those cities with public services. Artists and writers proposed projects for reshaping the coast between 1783 and 1788 and the plans that were drawn up to give some idea of the peripheral regions of Spain and its border, collected in the Atlas marítimo de España (Maritime Atlas of Spain 1789). Luis Paret, Pedro Grolliez, Antonio Carnicero, Alexandre-Jean Noël, Mariano Sánchez, Manuel de la Cruz, and Alexandre de Laborde were some of those who reported on these port scenes, saying that they weren’t mere whims but a reflection of and publicity for the change that the Crown was promoting, the image that was being managed on behalf of the people, in contrast to the Habsburg model (Navascués Palacio 2014; Crespo Delgado 2014).
These works are examples of the two-pronged approach of the plans for altering the city: on the one hand, reshaping what already existed; on the other, creating a new urban space under the concept of a growing city (Sambricio 1991). The construction of the Nuevas Poblaciones in the Sierra Morena and other places in Andalusia are important examples of the latter category. These were new towns built and populated in previously uninhabited regions of Andalusia along the Andalusian Camino Real, constructed in a classical grid formation upon which perspectives were created to connect plazas. Also important in this latter category were the Royal Sites (e.g., palaces, royal gardens, etc.), many of which were being built or developed during this period, in the tradition of the so-called “follies,” both in urban spaces destined for those who worked at Court, and in the gardens and palaces.

Such projects were not always completed, but what we know of them gives us an idea of their ideal city, and also of the type of citizen that they had in mind for it. But this difference between the projected and the completed was characteristic of the epoch (Chueca Goitia 2016, 186–189). The Bourbon tendency to reshape cities, adapting them to a new model, was continued by José I during his few years in Madrid. His alterations were based on widening streets and plazas by following the prior trend, as can be seen in Barcelona, Granada, Madrid, Seville, and Valencia, and to a lesser degree in Málaga, Valladolid, Santander, and Zaragoza (Quirós Linares 2009; Sazatornil Ruiz 1996). After the Peninsular War, and because of all the destruction, a reconstruction effort was undertaken that at times also involved new planning in the form of expansion. Jovellanos had already tried it, unsuccessfully, in Madrid in 1787, but the war made it possible in cities like San Sebastian. Expansions are characteristic of the nineteenth century (Sambricio 1991).

We have already mentioned the importance for the monarchy of the construction of the Royal Palace, to configure a new model, both urban and figurative. However, it was never possible to furnish the vicinity of the building with an equally magnificent and monumental image, neither in the time of the Bourbons, nor during José I’s brief reign, nor in that of Fernando VII. The projects and programs proposed by different architects (Silvestre Pérez, Isidro González Velázquez) to create a space that would represent the Crown were never realized, and so there remained an empty space around the Palace that cast an image of isolation and separation from the urban surroundings, immortalized in the miniature model that León Gil de Palacio created of Madrid in 1830 (Álvarez Barrientos 2017b).

In any case, the reforms that were proposed, and in some cases completed, were aimed at configuring a pleasing, orderly, clean image of the capital. A good part of it was achieved, and the urban model, which was the same across Europe, was taken as a referent that could be exported to other Spanish cities and localities, both in the Peninsula and in America, where foundational projects based on standardization of the space could be carried out.

The model citizen

Furthermore, these reforms that moved towards the rational ordering of space were accompanied by others related to morality and customs. The authorities projected a model of the individual that would embody the virtues of a citizen: educated, diplomatic, hard-working, patriotic, virtuous. Women also had their place in this model, since they had the responsibility of bringing up new generations of citizens with these values, as Jovellanos indicated in his Elégio de Carlos III (Praise of Carlos III 1789). The literature of the time also presented an active feminine model contrasted to the more sensitive masculine model, as is shown not only in comedias and sentimental novels: other literary texts and even legal ordinances modeled a well-brought-up citizen, of impeccable habits, with speech and tone appropriate to the urban image that was taking shape. There was a balance and unity of objectives between the type of literature and art that should
be consumed, the space where life was lived, and the behavior and appearance of the individuals who consumed that art and made use of that urban space.

More than a few of those rules were collected in the *Newest Code of the Laws of Spain (Novísima Recopilación de las leyes de España)*, published in 1805. For example, in Book III, tone of voice was regulated, insults were prohibited, and rules were established regarding the “Policy to avoid indecent or rude words and actions, gatherings, and amusements harmful to traditions and public safety.” This rule for using language in inoffensive ways, without swearing, blaspheming or verbal aggression, was added to other rules regarding the healthfulness of foods, the use of clothing, and the cleanliness of taverns, inns, eating establishments and cafés. At the same time, the authorities showed a desire to control the language of daily use, in similar fashion to the way the Royal Spanish Academy codified the language through their *Diccionario de Autoridades* (Dictionary of Authorities). The use of this dictionary, published between 1726 and 1739, was obligatory in all administrative activities of the Empire, which served to unify the language, its use, and its communicative levels. Later, the campaign continued with the orthography and grammar of the Academy, in one more example of centralizing, unifying processes that the governments of the era developed in Europe to establish modern States.

The model citizen exportable from the Court to the rest of the realm is likewise documented in regulations that attempt to control his or her urban conduct by adapting it to new proposals for civilized leisure time: for example, the one published by the Count of Aranda to establish the rules of conduct during the carnival dance in 1767. After carnivals were prohibited, Enlightenment men appropriated this popular festival to domesticate it and make it theirs, which involved eliminating any critical element it had and changing it into a simple masquerade ball, which is how it was announced, and how it appears in the picture that Luis Paret painted on the subject. In these rules are detailed how one should be disguised; which fabrics are acceptable—or not—for making the outfit; the quality of the decorations; the kinds of rhythms one might dance; as well as the conversations that should take place and the degree of cordiality that one should show throughout the party so that nobody feels uncomfortable.

The same happens with the rules offered for attending concerts or for entering the gardens of the Retiro. This was partially opened to the public that same year (1767), in an attempt to change the image of State power after the so-called Esquilache Riots the previous year, in which the populace protested the lack of basic necessities like bread. In this respect, it should be remembered that in Paris the Tuileries Royal Gardens were not available to the subjects (Mercier 1999). That said, however, the public, the common citizen, according to the *Diccionario de Autoridades*, should become accustomed to the current civilizing principles. The rules for being able to stroll through the Retiro and enjoy what it had to offer outline certain behaviors and modes of dress, rules of good manners that define the desired new citizen. In the *Aviso al público para el paseo a pie en los jardines del Real Retiro (Notice to the Public for Strolling among the Gardens of the Royal Retiro)*, it was requested that men be well-groomed, and not wear certain types of headgear such as gorros, redes, monteras (caps, nets, bullfighters’ hats), nor any other element contrary to decent standards of dress. Therefore, they should wear a dress coat (casaca) and undercoat (chupa), but not a cape or greatcoat.

Women could wear a cloak or lace shawl up to the entryway, but they had to remove them once they entered. There were straw chairs that you had to pay to use, and refreshments were served; their printed prices were publicly available. The *Notice to the Public* describes the types of sociability, ultimately bourgeois, that were used in several parts of the Paseo del Prado and ends by noting “to the attendees” the advantages of maintaining “composure and regularity” in their behavior, given the respect that a Royal Site like that one deserves. The symbolic presence of the
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king and queen was thought to be enough to influence everyone to behave decorously (Álvarez Barrientos 2017a, 186–189).

Indeed, decorum is the foundation of all these cultural reforms, a decorum that reaches both the animate realm of the actors in this play of life, and the more inanimate one of architecture, hygiene, and conduct. Thus, some measures, like those indicated above, were aimed at regulating the behavior of individuals, who just a year before had taken to the streets to demand the lowering of prices of specific foods, as well as other demands influenced by the Spanish nobility confronted with the power of the Court. The riot led to the expulsion of the Marquis of Esquilache, but also left an image of men and women running through the streets. The women in particular were more visible and more important in the city in their taking over of public space for festivities and demonstrations, and also because they sold goods in the streets, no longer the politically passive subjects that they had traditionally been, as shown by their participation in the riots. When the mutiny ended, groups of rioters circulated through the city singing all night, and the women, who had played an important part, went from defiling the bodies of dead soldiers to becoming “gentlewomen” who celebrated the king’s decision to expel the Marquis and abolish the Council of Provisions. The whistles and flares used by these urban guerrillas to find each other and meet up were replaced by tambourines and guitars to sing their happiness over their victory (López García 2006).

But this was not the desired behavior, and hence the plays that praised the indecorous practices of lower-class individuals were constantly criticized, but those with hard-working artisans, collaborators in the purposes of the kingdom, were not. These latter were praised and encouraged by the authorities, decriminalizing manual labor and writing in favor of it, as did the Count of Campomanes in 1775 in his *Discourse on the Popular Education of Artisans and Its Promotion*.

Cultural institutions

Together with this urban framework, marked by the aesthetic correctness of classicism and the sociability of individuals, whose codes of conduct were updated through different agencies, the Court, to keep up appearances and because of being who (or what) it was, had to house the institutions necessary for governing the State. But in addition, it had to house those others in the cultural sphere that lent prestige and served to educate the citizens and create discourses about the nation. The process was happening all across Europe, with the creation of museums, academies, and centers to support and guide education and research, but also so that people could see in them the importance of the national past. Culture and that past had become elements of identity and prestige that governments employed to achieve greater power relative to other kingdoms. This is the time when, as part of the cultural politics carried out by the institutions sponsored by the monarchy, histories of the nation began to be written, and debates were held to determine the national poets. Every country, some before others, chose those writers who represented it, those who would be its “princes”: Shakespeare, Molière, Cervantes, Camões, and so on.

In this context, the Royal Spanish Academy published the *Don Quijote de la Mancha* in 1780 in an impeccable edition, with illustrations by prestigious artists and an introductory essay by Vicente de los Ríos. The Marquis de la Ensenada had attempted this project at mid-century, but his fall from grace cut it short. The work of the Academy, like that of the Royal Library and the other academies, constituted part of the cultural interventions of the Court aimed at consolidating an image of Spain’s past and present, a national identity based on a common language, history, and culture, similar to what was happening in other European countries. These centers,
The urban cultural model

which appeared in France and England in the seventeenth century, were copied by the rest of the Continent, and even beyond it, because it was thought that they were the best instruments for managing culture and politics. Thus, when Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798, besides his troops, he was accompanied by scientists, artists, and men of letters who carried out their activity there, including creating a parallel of the Institute of France—the Egyptian Scientific Institute—and introducing European principles for urban planning, hygiene, and so on, to the point of reproducing the European urban cultural model—the Republic of Letters—and its organization of knowledge. This expansion of Gallic dominion across the Mediterranean was another way of colonizing (through culture) the conquered territories and imprinting Continental values and cultural traditions.

Conquering Egypt had been a goal of French politics for some time, but when the Republic was founded, they added a cultural reference to the Roman republic. Ancient Rome's history of colonization in Egypt added a mythic element to the French Republic’s “urgency” to also dominate this territory, which held great strategic value for controlling English expansion through the Mediterranean. It was also important as a passageway to India, which provided a supplementary source of grain for the West Indian colonies.

Napoleon had already traveled with teams of artists and scientists who studied the conquered territories and seized artworks that ended up in French museums. The Institute, with its printing press, was established near Cairo in an opulent neighborhood abandoned by the Mamelukes. It established statutes and regulations for developing sessions and naming members, all French. These academics and this institution, established in the center of the Egyptian capital, nevertheless felt marginalized, forgotten by their French colleagues, from whom they requested information, etc. so as not to lose the lines of communication or be considered second-class citizens (Álvarez Barrientos 2003).

In a similar way, in Spanish America, where cities and universities had already been founded, the same cultural institutions and models that were useful in the metropole were reproduced. Academies were created, as well as botanical gardens, schools, centers of astronomy, and economic societies, duplicating models of management and motivation that transferred the current concept of knowledge, but also its limits, as had happened in Egypt. One of the most important academies created in Spanish America was the San Carlos Academy of the Three Noble Arts in New Spain, founded in 1783. This institution was the recipient of originals and copies of archaeological finds taken from the classical antiquities found in the excavations at Mount Vesuvius, as well as reproductions of other works held by the Spanish Crown. The New World colonies learned of the Vesuvius antiquities just a few years after their discovery. The function of the San Carlos Academy was similar to that of the San Fernando Academy: disseminate the classical style, evaluate archaeological projects, and train artists. The Academy’s influence, as in Spain, influenced the order of production, artistic tastes, and the structure of the artisans’ guilds, as well as introducing European architectural and artistic models found in treatises by Mengs, Winckelmann, and Milizia, among others (Báez Macías 2008).

For their part, after the creation of the Royal Academies in Madrid, Spanish cities like Barcelona, Seville, Cádiz, and València, followed by others, reproduced the courtly cultural model and had their own institutions, as happened in Barcelona and Seville. Both capitals had their respective Academies of Fine Arts. Cádiz also had the Literary Assembly, a manifestation of the scientific meetings of the period that were proposed to the Bourbon rulers by different intellectuals. In regard to the Academies of Belles Lettres, after Madrid’s Academy of San Fernando, Cádiz received its own academy in 1783, since these institutions were “what the government has always recommended to act as models for the nation” (Cruz y Bahamonde 1997, 218). Later José I tried to organize the knowledge under the non nata National Academy (Álvarez Barrientos
The academy format was exported to the periphery because it was seen as the best way to develop science and research in the provinces. But it was done without taking into account the difficulties of finding research material in those areas, or the prejudice that often existed among the intellectuals from the capital, who benefited from the Bourbon centralizing plan (as did those who lived in the provinces).

As we have seen, the French intelligentsia sent to Egypt felt left out. The same happened to the American intellectuals, as well as more than a few of those who lived in marginalized areas of the kingdom and were members of the Republic of Letters. The most notorious of these cases are those of Gregorio Mayans of Valencia and the Mohedano brothers of Granada, although there are others. The general reality is that one had to go to the capital of the realm if one wanted to hold an important position in the Republic of Letters. There were exceptions, but these always involved support from important people who had achieved success in the center, the capital. Benito Jerónimo Feijoo, a Galician who lived in Oviedo, is paradigmatic of this kind of exception. He would undoubtedly not have become an intellectual without the support of his religious order, the king, the press in Madrid, and Martín Sarmiento, who organized the publication of Feijoo’s works from the Court.

This state of affairs is confirmed for us when we study the case of Gregorio Mayans, who, although he went to the capital to gain the favor of those in power, never managed to be accepted in the Republic of Letters, although he was more than qualified. His case is, in part, the story of an intellectual who does not kowtow to the interests of the cultural leaders at Court; nor is he able to insinuate himself into the structure of cultural administration there. His project to create a Valencian Academy in 1742 was unsuccessful because he did not submit to the Academy of History’s criteria, unlike the intellectuals from Barcelona and Seville, who did. Mayans returned to his home and continued to work from there, marginalized and confronted with important people like Feijoo, the personification of success in the courtly cultural framework.

An interesting case of confrontation between intellectuals of the Court and those from the periphery is that of the previously mentioned brothers, Pedro and Rafael Rodríguez Mohedano of Granada, authors of the unfinished Historia literaria de España (Literary History of Spain), which they began in 1766. Aware of their situation, and because they were writing from the provinces, they tried to weave a web of relationships to receive favorable consideration at Court. They gained the support of the Count of Aranda, the President of the Council of Castile; of Carlos III; of Múquiz, the Minister of Finance; and of Roda, the Minister of Justice, as well as recommendations from intellectuals of such stature as the Portuguese Manuel do Cenáculo Vilas Boas, a friend and collaborator of the Marquis of Pombal; from Mayans; and from the royal librarian, Martínez Pingarrón.

But their strategy began to fail in the face of a critical campaign launched by members of several Madrid tertulias and by intellectuals from the Royal Academy of History like Enrique Flórez, Juan de Aravaca, and others. Writing the history of Spain was one of the (ultimately incomplete) goals of the Academy of History, which was, in part, why they attacked the work of the Mohedano brothers, who—individually and without corporate support—achieved a goal that the Academy couldn’t. The brothers wrote to Flórez in 1770 in an attempt to counter his objections while also making clear that the official intellectuals were overly cautious with regard to productions that came from the provinces, which they did not consider to have equal value to those written at Court. The debate raged on, and in 1779 the brothers reiterated the prejudices that the Court intellectuals seemed to hold in general: “We are aware of the attitude and thinking that is often seen in the Courts regarding literary works, especially [those] from provincial writers”9 (Rodríguez Mohedano 1779, 8).
However, other provincial men of letters, like José Antonio Pellicer, Juan Sempere y Guarinos, Francisco Pérez Bayer, Antonio Ponz, and the Iriarte family, gained the favor of the Court and held important positions in the cultural and administrative structure. Sempere y Guarinos, born in València, should not be forgotten in this respect because nearly all of his literary works are the result of a government mandate, and he was paid by the ministers. Leaving aside his other works, his *Ensayo de una biblioteca española de los mejores escritores del reinado de Carlos III* (*Essay on a Spanish Library of the Best Writers of the Reign of Carlos III 1785–1789*) is a propagandistic report on the state of affairs in the literature and the cultural institutions promoted by the Crown at the end of the 1780s. Sempere carried out a detailed analysis of Spain’s culture at that time, which was widely disseminated in Europe, as attested by the reviews it received in different newspapers. His work was in dialogue with other historical, general, and local investigations which were written at that time in imitation of his.

Likewise, newspapers were one of the cultural institutions that were also proposed within the orbit of center and periphery, to create and develop public opinion in cities like Murcia, València, Barcelona, Seville, Cádiz, and others. They also created a connection between readers from different locales, and between the actions and actors in the news, creating the impression of not being left out of events or on the fringes of culture and society. Writing letters to newspapers served to construct networks of communication for the national culture. This focus on national center and periphery was, in fact, the transposition of a prior administrative phenomenon that occurred in Europe and implied the beginning of an effort to unite territories. But the articulating sensibility that valued the center over the periphery is the same one that comes into play for punishments like exile and banishment.

At the same time, the model had a Eurocentric slant with respect to other cultures and civilizations, which was also applied within Europe itself, in that a more or less vague but recognizable center radiated its light out towards the rest, a viewpoint that is still held today. That blueprint for producing knowledge that placed the center mainly in France and Germany was questioned by Juan Andrés in his history of world knowledge, in which he presented the contributions of different nations to the construction of culture: “Can we not properly call enlightened that century in which the lights of the sciences have been spread universally throughout Europe, penetrating the dark, remote provinces that until now were wrapped in the deepest ignorance? [In previous centuries, intelligence] could not banish ignorance from the schools, nor was it able to enlighten the two ends of Europe, the North and the South.” It is only in this century that a universal culture has been created. “Only in this century has tastefulness in literature and the sciences come to rule in all the provinces of civilized Europe” 11 (1784, 358–360). The abundance of books was the cause of spread of culture, that had reached “even women and common people of the masses” 11 (365).

Juan Andrés, even while recognizing that hierarchy of relations, wrote a cultural history of Europe that paid attention to the contributions to its construction made from the periphery. But despite his achievement, the historiography of culture moved along nationalistic paths, coinciding with the political current of history. In any case, his was an example of how to offer a portrait of Europe and its Republic of Letters without privileging some regions over others. He himself was from the geographic and civil periphery, as an exiled Jesuit living on the Italian peninsula. That status made him feel, as it had others, marginalized on the fringes of the structure of European knowledge. But at the same time, maintaining relations with those centers and persons that generated culture made him feel like he himself created it. His ex-centric situation rattled the stability of the framework that privileged the center over the periphery.

The urban cultural model made itself at home in a center–periphery arrangement, initially as a unifying structure, although over time it became more of a divisive element. On the symbolic
plane, this structure can be read two ways, which fit with enlightened theories of benefit and social and cultural control. On one hand, the center, the capital, can be understood as the place from which to see all around and from whose higher perspective the beneficial light of the Enlightenment is spread. It is an image that has a certain relationship with Christian iconography and with many of the images that show Parnassus, arts, and sciences, such as the one at the beginning of the Encyclopédie. The second symbolic reading has to do with controlling society and its culture, since that scheme of center and periphery was the one that was considered best for monitoring things, as Jeremy Bentham showed with his panopticon. By using that scheme, the urban cultural model was able to unify, control, and authorize intellectual production and standardize territorial relations. It was a model that was exported and developed in the eighteenth century, using the classical image for those cultural institutions that created the nation.

By contrast, the support for cities reveals the Crown’s effort to use them to create an image of Spain, which also explains the interest in port scenes, for which purpose, in time, the Royal Topographic Cabinet was founded. In this museum would be kept all the miniature models of the Spanish capitals, which would offer a three-dimensional urban representation of the nation. Unfortunately, only the model of Madrid remains, but the idea was to have the kingdom symbolized through its cities, through the center—the capital—and through a prestigious building like the Casón del Buen Retiro, an annex of the Prado that now houses the museum’s study center and library, and which presents a majestic national urban cultural model that constructed the nation by converting the past into History (Álvarez Barrientos 2017b).

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Notes

1 “¡Que se deje de hablar mal de la policía [limpieza] de Madrid! ¡Cuántas veces se citan aún, por ejemplo, las sucias calles de los tiempos de Madame d’Aulnoy! Se hace sin tener en cuenta que Madrid es, desde hace veinticinco años, una de las ciudades más limpias de Europa.” [...]. Nadie puede tirar nada por la calle, y las necesidades solo se hacen en las casas.”

2 “Todas nuestras ciudades son feas, y más lo son las mayores” … “suficiente adorno de arquitectura; que sean muchas sus calles con comunicación entre ellas; que las principales sean rectas y anchas, con lo cual son más cómodas y más breves para quien las anda, pero no deben ser todas iguales en anchura y rectitud.”

3 “Las plazas se han de multiplicar para desahogo de los barrios. Su varia forma dará al todo una nueva belleza: unas rectangulares, otras esféricas, elípticas otras, algunas de tres, seis u ocho ángulos causarían siempre deleite y novedad [...]. Los pórticos dan a las plazas comodidad”. [...].”un competente número de estatuas sobre magníficos pedestales, situadas en las entradas, en las plazas, en los parajes espaciosos, que representen santos tutelares, príncipes benéficos, ciudadanos beneméritos, formarían una escuela de piedad, de reconocimiento, de recompensa y, al cabo, de enseñanza al pueblo [...]. Muchas inscripciones colocadas en varios sitios [explicarán] la fundación de la ciudad, algunas de sus leyes municipales, las glorias de sus soberanos, las de sus ciudadanos ilustres y dignos de memoria por diversos títulos, con otras cosas que la hayan hecho célebre, sería un libro abierto en que aprenderían todos”. Estas inscripciones deben ser claras, breves, estar escritas con toda propiedad y “en el común lenguaje de la nación.”

4 “Navegación y arbolado son obras dignas del gran Fernando. Caminos y canales facilitan el comercio interior, promueven la industria y causan la abundancia de los reinos.”

5 Architectural features in eighteenth-century gardens, often depicting Greek or Roman ruins.

6 “Policía para evitar palabras y acciones indecentes y groseras, concurrencias y diversiones perjudiciales a las costumbres y seguridad pública”

7 “a los concurrentes” la conveniencia de observar en su conducta “compostura y regularidad”

8 “las que siempre ha recomendado el gobierno para que sirvan de modelo en la nación”

9 “No se nos oculta la disposición de ánimo y modo de pensar que frecuentemente se observa en las cortes acerca de los trabajos literarios, especialmente de las gentes de provincia.”

10 “¡No podrá llamarse propiamente iluminado aquel siglo en que las luces de las ciencias se han espacido universalmente por toda Europa, penetrando las oscuras y remotas provincias que hasta ahora se hallaban
envueltas en las más densas tinieblas? [En los siglos anteriores las Luces] no pudieron desterrar de las escuelas las tinieblas ni bastaron a iluminar las dos extremidades de Europa, esto es, el Septentrión y el Mediodía [...] Sólo en este siglo ha llegado a dominar en todas las provincias de la civilizada Europa el buen gusto en las letras humanas y en las ciencias.”

“aun a las mujeres y a las personas de la ínfima plebe.”

**Works cited**


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