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Editorial
Memory from Below*

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Abstract

The editorial provides an overview of this issue of the *Journal of Early Modern Studies*. First it lays out the research questions that were at the origin of the project. Then it sketches out its conceptual and historiographical armature, pointing to some classical and recent arguments about memory, the history of literacy, and popular writing. Finally, this essay surveys the structure of the special issue and summarizes the object and argument of each one of the fifteen contributions.

Keywords: Early Modern Period, Literacy, Memory, Subalternity, Writing

The present issue of the *Journal of Early Modern Studies* interrogates how common men and women used different modes of writing to keep, shape, and contest social memory in the early modern world. Mapping a wide-ranging geography that expands from Lyon to Cuzco, and from the Atlantic island of Annobón to Palermo, the works included in this volume explore the relation between often – though not always – individual 'acts of assertive literacy' (Justice 1994, 24) and collective modes of remembrance among social groups who were not, in principle, expected to write.

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What role did writing and reading play in common sense notions of living historically? How did common men and women in different parts of the world use writing to defend, reinterpret, or dispute custom? How did writing and reading contribute to the creation or resignification of local *sites of memory* – 'any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community' (Nora 1996, xvii)? Did the interplay between orality and writing have a significant role in the ways historical events were remembered, commemorated, or forgotten? In this issue of *JEMS*, scholars working in different geographical areas and disciplinary traditions address these and other questions in order to think broadly about the relationship between subaltern writing and popular memory in the early modern world.

The reader will find essays on a wide variety of topics: the memory of popular revolt in early modern Europe, the autobiographies of Mediterranean captives, and forms of colonial literacy. There are interventions on the African vernacularization of European chivalric stories and on letter writing by women and same-sex lovers; on the textual transmission of a lost orality of conquest and on the role of indigenous memory in colonial historical writing and legal practice. Other contributions discuss letters of manumission, riddles, graffiti, pamphlets, and Inquisitorial depositions. As we will see, the relationship between subaltern writing and the social memory of the popular classes is a capacious avenue of research, and one that the editors hope this volume will contribute to spark and encourage in the years to come.

The idea behind the volume, as well as the essays themselves, build on previous scholarly endeavors. On the one hand, this project connects to the long tradition of studies on subaltern writing, as explained at greater length in the Introduction. In this field, the contribution of Italian historiography since the late 1970s (Bartoli Langeli and Petrucci 1978) and, in particular, after the opening in the 1980s of the first 'archivi della scrittura popolare'[1] (Pieve Santo Stefano, this with nuances, Trento and Genoa) is remarkable. Although most of this research focuses on modern history, it should be noted that, already in the 1960s, Armando Petrucci explored the writing of the subaltern classes in earlier periods, such as Ancient Rome. After the Perugia congress of 1977, 'Alfabetismo e cultura scritta nella storia della società italiana',[2] and together with Attilio Bartoli Langeli, Petrucci published some theoretical and methodological reflections on the history of literacy and written culture, noting that 'the study of the graphic testimonies produced by the subaltern classes or oriented to them was of particular interest'. They also pointed out some documentary repositories where these sources could be traced (Petrucci 1978, 454; 454-456).[3]

Studies on popular senses of the past, moreover, have brought to light the complex interrelation between custom, collective memory, and social struggle. In early modern Europe, Andy Wood has argued that a usable past was key in conflicts over economic and political resources in the present. Local memory was the foundation of custom and legitimacy, and it was key in shaping 'vernacular landscapes'. No doubt, 'oral tradition was a political resource', but Wood has shown how orality interacted with other textual and written ways of remembrance (2013, 285; 247-286). Guy Beiner analyzed in depth the reasons for the calculated and systematic oblivion surrounding a popular insurrection in Northern Ireland led by Protestants in the context of the Great Irish Rebellion of 1798. In contrast with 'social memory', Beiner explores the workings and relevance of 'social forgetting', which should not be confused with collective

[1] (Archives of popular writing).
[2] (Literacy and written culture in the history of Italian society).
[3] For an overall evaluation of Petrucci's approach to subaltern writing and reading, see Castillo Gómez (2022).

amnesia. The involvement of protestants in an anti-British uprising complicated the division of Northern Irish society along religious and political lines, and thus gave way to concerted attempts at forgetfulness. By studying 'the troubled afterlife of the rebellion' in a wealth of written documentary evidence, Beiner offers 'an archaeology of social forgetting … an excavation of a monument to amnesia' (2018, 42). In the early modern period and beyond, some events become 'sites of oblivion' rather than sites of memory.

In line with Benedict Anderson's (1983) classic argument, Leith Davis has recently explored the role of the expanded availability of print in consolidating national collective memories in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (2022). In turn, the status of print in the changing media landscape of the late seventeenth century would rise, Davis argues, thanks to its association with the cultural memory of important national events. Jasper van der Steen, on his part, explored the two opposing narratives around the Dutch Revolt and argued that public memory around those events became the arena of fierce contestation in the Low Countries from the very outset of the hostilities. Against the modernist assumption that only nationalism explains the rise of popular national conscience, van der Steen argues that strong ideas around shared collective history can be found in previous generations. The present issue aims at contributing to this growing body of scholarship on 'popular modes of engagement with the past' (2015, 18) by placing them in direct conversation with classic and emerging arguments on subaltern writing and literacies.

Understood as the 'systematic regulation of reading and writing' (Guillory 1993, 18; 3-82), literacy allowed for relatively rigid forms of exclusion in the early modern period – particularly when gender and racial regimes of inequality intersected with class. But literacy was also a site of contestation. Armando Petrucci suggested that 'in a society that is only partially literate the ability to write represents a privilege in social, economic and, of course, cultural terms; and those who are excluded suffer from it and, whenever they are aware of it, will tend to fight to conquer it, individually or in a group' (Petrucci and Castillo Gómez 2002, 25). Subalternity, as will be more thoroughly explored in the Introduction, did not entail a complete deprivation of access to the written word, and scholarship on partial literacies, collective reading, or informal schooling, among other topics, increasingly emphasizes the centrality of the letter in the daily lives of the popular classes. The Reformation and the so-called 'educational revolutions' (Stone 1964; Kagan 1974) contributed significantly to the rise in literacy rates during the early modern period, although institutional contexts and learning experiences varied widely – and hierarchically – throughout the period. Memory and writing played a crucial role in litigation, local political culture, and the everyday economies of the poor and the middling sort. The present volume builds on this scholarship by focusing on the role of subaltern writing and popular literacies in the production, transmission, and dispute of the historical in local communities throughout the early modern world.

Some characteristically early modern historical processes brought about radical transformations in the relationship between memory, writing, and class. First and foremost, perhaps, the printing revolution. When evaluating the impact of the new technology, scholars have tended to adhere to a more *revolutionary* or a more *gradualist* approach to the historical phenomena associated with the movable type. While Elizabeth Eisenstein famously considered 'the advent of printing as inaugurating a new cultural era in the history of Western man' (1979, 33), other scholars, in contrast, argued that 'print needs to be seen less in terms of a radical break than in those of an environment combining speech, manuscript, and print in mutual interaction' (Johns 2002, 120, n. 34, 1998; see also Petrucci 1990). Regardless of our position, there is little doubt that the printing press gave way in early modern Europe to new ways of thinking about the

relationship between memory and the written word. The relative graphic closure of the printed text allowed for a more durable and stable relation between writing and memory (Bouza 1998, 38). Mary Carruthers, moreover, maintained that, while the value of memory persisted beyond the transformations brought about by the mechanical reproduction of written texts, the new technology entailed a clear divide between the 'fundamentally memorial' character of medieval culture and the modern age, which would bring about a 'documentary' culture (1994, 8).

While apparently less consequential for the history of literacy, the military revolution gave way to large-scale modes of socialization that relied, to a certain extent, on writing and reading (Amelang 1994; Martínez 2016). Moreover, the massive mobilization associated with the first globalization prompted or accelerated the emergence of a number of popular genres of writing, from *relaciones* and *cartas de Indias*, to *avvisi*, newssheets, broadside prints, etc. At the same time, European imperial aggression and expansion destroyed or radically transformed very disparate literate cultures, writing ecologies, and cultures of memory. To what extent did these large-scale historical developments affect the role of writing in the spatial and material plotting of popular memory at the local or regional levels?

The present volume, in fact, contains a sizeable number of contributions on colonial Latin America that pay attention to the vexed relationship between orality and writing, textual transmission, and indigenous memory. As Ángel Rama argued in his influential *La ciudad letrada* (*The Lettered City*) (1984), imperial bureaucracy in the colonial Americas was not only an instrumental conglomerate of administrative practices, people, and institutions to conduct government, but also a perfect exclusionary machine to build and maintain colonial power through the unequal distribution of literacy and cultural capital. Scholarship on colonial Latin American textual production, however, has substantially qualified Rama's claims in the last two decades: mestizos, indios, and people of African descent challenged this exclusionary system and used writing, translation, and interpretation in strategic and creative ways to build a place for themselves in colonial society, as well as to contest the memory of conquest and colonization (Jouve Martín 2005; Rappaport and Cummins 2012; McDonough 2014; Ramos and Yannakakis 2014; Dyck 2015; Brewer-García 2020; Gruzinski 2023). Specialists in urban history, visual culture, Mesoamerican codices or Andean quipus have argued, moreover, for an extension of our notions of literacy (León Llerena 2023). Rappaport and Cummins, for instance, suggested that scholars should pay attention to the interaction between different forms of literacy, whether verbal, visual, legal, or even urban: 'to understand indigenous literacy, we need to go beyond the written word. It is precisely in the learning of perspective by walking the streets of a reducción, the observation of a corregidor kissing a royal decree, the recounting of a dream sequence that mirrors a painting, the introduction of Spanish tilework in a wattle-and-daub Andean village, that we can begin to perceive the process through which such cognitive transformation [undergone by native people] occurred' (2012, 254).

While specific uses and traditions of popular writing are often too fragile or invisible, several strands of scholarship have striven to retrieve and interrogate them. Scholars have studied the different historical regimes of preservation and destruction and the kinds of policies and institutions have allowed for the storage or disappearance of subaltern written memory. As we will discuss more in depth in the Introduction, Marxist historians such as E. P. Thompson or Eric Hobsbawm, or cultural historians such as Arlette Farge and Natalie Zemon Davis, among many others, have insistently reminded us of the importance of recovering the written traces of the popular classes' cultural and political agency. The intrinsic difficulties of working on popular writing in the early modern period is also related to the relative scarcity of studies of memory for the same period. The boom of memory studies (Hutton 2016) in the last few decades, on

its part, has tended to focus on the twentieth century. This issue attempts to recenter early modernity as a period of consequential transformations in the relationship between writing, memory, and forms of subordination and exclusion based on race, gender, and class.

After an Introduction that dwells on the conceptual articulation – subalternity, writing, memory – that prompted the project in the first place, the volume opens with a section that focuses on life writing and social memory. In 'Tracing Lives: Writing, Memory and Popular Autobiography' we have collected several essays that dig out the biographical fragments and life traces left by the common people of the early modern period. While relatively wide-ranging in terms of geography, all of the case studies included essays which can be mapped onto a vaguely Mediterranean landscape.

'During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for enslaved and freed men and women living in the Iberian region it was unusual, although still possible, to obtain direct access to writing'. This statement from his conclusion sums up the purpose of Fernando Bouza's contribution, 'Forged Letters: Counterfeit Manumission Certificates and Subaltern Writing Practices as Used by Enslaved Individuals in Early Modern Iberia'. Through meticulous archival research that pays attention to different documentary types (*cartas de horro* and *horro por maravedíes*), Bouza reveals the uses of literacy by enslaved and freed people in early modern Spain. Importantly, some of these documents contained traces of life stories. While occasionally these forms of writing get us close to a kind of minimal autobiographical subjectivity and bear witness to forms of solidarity among the enslaved, others point to the cancellation of the past, to the erasure of personal and social memory. The article also retraces the existence of a market for forged manumission letters, to the point of requiring the intervention of Castile's Cortes in 1551 and 1570. In this context, the case of Juan Rodríguez Prieto is particularly telling: an enslaved Afro-descendant who forged a letter of freedom for a fellow enslaved person. The exceptionality of Juan Rodríguez's case is complemented in Bouza's contribution by his attention to documents written by notaries on behalf of enslaved and freed people.

José Luis Loriente Torres moves on to explore yet another instance in which traces of life writing are thoroughly shaped by the coercive power of legal institutions – in this case, the Inquisition – which paradoxically allowed some room for creative freedom. In 'The "Discursos de la Vida" in Inquisitorial Documentation: Autobiography between Orality and Memory', Loriente Torres takes as his point of departure General Inquisitor Fernando Valdés' 1561 instructions for inquisitorial legal procedure, which required defendants to produce oral accounts of their lives known as 'trazas' or 'discursos de la vida'. Based on a corpus of over one thousand texts, the article devotes some attention to establishing their specificity as a documentary type and as a peculiar form of micro-autobiography or 'oral autobiography', as Amelang (2011) called them. While mediated by the lettered practices of notaries and scribes, these texts often bear the mark of the defendants' predominantly oral culture – they are additive, redundant, illative texts that abound in direct speech and display what Walter Ong (2012) referred to as materiality, a closeness to the human lifeworld of the defendant, or to what Franco Franceschi (1991) called 'the language of memory'. Loriente Torres' contribution to the study of this form of 'collaborative life writing' closes with a more in-depth look at one particular case study, that of Francisco de la Bastida, a young defendant prosecuted for having tried to pass for an official of the Inquisition.

The Holy Office, now in Sicily, is also the context for Anna Clara Basilicò's contribution to this section and the volume. In ' "Becoming" Subalterns: Writing and Scribbling in Early Modern Prison', Basilicò focuses on the graffiti of the inquisitorial prison of Palermo, a corpus of writing that has recently attracted the attention of other scholars (Fiume and García

Arenal 2018a and 2018b; Fiume 2021; Foti 2023). A large part of the article is devoted to the discussion of established theories of the subaltern – Gramsci, Spivak, Ginzburg – which sets the background for her proposal of imprisonment as a form of temporary subalternity – for many of the prisoners of the Holy Office belonged to the ruling classes. Basilicò, moreover, dwells on the paradoxes of a form of writing that, despite being exposed, could hardly be said to be public, for it allowed only for a limited number of conversations between the different prisoners subsequently occupying a particular cell or quarter of the prison. In critical dialogue with Giovanna Fiume and Giuseppe Pitré, some of the main experts on this corpus of graffiti, Basilicò warns against the idealization of the victims. The same that can be said, she argues, of traditional readings of a poem by Michele Moraschino in one of the cells, where the mention of blood as ink should not be interpreted literally, but in relation to the Petrarchan tradition of poets such as Sicilian Antonio Veneziano. Additionally, this contribution considers the weight of those proper names we know, which would turn signed graffiti into a form of self-fashioning and assertion of individuality.

The section closes with a piece on popular autobiography. If the documents studied in the previous essays provided enticing yet always fragmentary glimpses of subaltern life stories and writing, the last one focuses on rich, full-fledged first-person narratives. In 'Describing Otherness in Captives' Autobiographies in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries', Teresa Peláez surveys three autobiographies written by early modern soldiers of commoner origin who experienced and narrated captivity: the Aragonese Jerónimo Pasamonte, the Castilian Diego Galán, and the Portuguese João Mascarenhas. In her essay, Peláez explores the representation of Islamic societies, people, and states in different Mediterranean locales, from Algiers to Istanbul. Liminal figures such as renegades and old captives, whose identities and allegiances are more in flux, take center stage. Part of the othering cultural work done by these autobiographies is due, Peláez argues, to the captive's need to be reintegrated to Christian society: there was little room for sympathetic or neutral representations of the religious and political enemy, who was also the enslaver of the writers. Despite this, and the pressures of political conflict between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs, Peláez argues that, as a genre, autobiography allowed a limited space for narrating inter-faith forms of sociability and more neutral depictions of Islamic life.

The title of the next section, 'Writing and Rebellion', is an homage to Steven Justice's (1994) foundational book on the relation between popular literacy, the material text and premodern social protest, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*. As one of the contributors to this rubric puts it, the focus on writing, and its concealment in official historiography, 'shows the extent to which the memory of insurrections and their obscuring play a part in the formation of social and political identities' (Béroujon). Or as Justice himself said it, in reference to the Great Rebellion of 1381, 'The story of how the rising was remembered is the story of how it was forgotten, of the cultural and psychic machinery that engaged to keep it in the preterite' (Justice 1994, 193; see also Petrucci 2002).

In ' "Unions et germanies": Armed Mobilization, Plebeian Politicisation and Historical Memory in the Kingdom of Valencia (Fourteenth-Seventeenth Centuries)', Mariana V. Parma offers a thorough review of the Valencian *agermanats*, who in 1519-1522 frontally challenged the authority of King Charles V and managed to carry on for a few years and partially institutionalize a successful revolt. A thoroughly anti-seigneurial uprising, some of its leaders explicitly aspired to 'leave no memory of the nobility'. And in fact, as in other popular rebellions of early modern Europe, the burning of manorial and state records was a common occurrence during the fighting. 'Let there be no memory left of the viscount our enemy', said the commoners according to chronicler Martí de Viciana. On its part, the viceregal court of the Duke of

Calabria rushed to sponsor written accounts of the events as they happened. The dispute over the memory of the rebellion started even before the armed and political conflict was settled. Parma's contribution usefully integrates the uprising of the first Germania (1519-1522) within a larger historical cycle of social conflict. First, the article looks back to previous revolts. Then, it moves on to considering the role the first Germania and its memory had in the popular rebellion that exploded in 1693. In lack of a usable writing record from the earlier rebels, and despite officially imposed oblivion, the uprising was kept alive through collective memory and oral tradition among the popular classes. The explicit reference made by the rebels of the late seventeenth century to those of the early sixteenth turned the memory of 1519-1522 into a 'cultural repertoire of struggle', according to Parma.

Anne Béroujon's 'The Memory of Rebellion (Lyon, 1529)' is a detailed close reading and a thorough contextualization of one rebellious placard published during the Great Rebeyne of Lyon in 1529. In this riot, *le povre* (the poor) – the collective signatories of the placard – raised against the city councilors and their mismanagement of grain during a time of scarcity. This food riot, as Béroujon shows, was in fact only one in a series of popular uprisings during the previous and following years. Anonymous and defiant public writing had a role in all of them; in fact, it is possible to establish specific textual links between the letters, placards, and rebellious words of social conflicts that erupted in 1517, 1518, 1529, 1530, and 1543, Béroujon shows. Ephemeral writing paradoxically carried along the memory of the poor people of Lyon. The article explores issues such as the semantics, visual grammar, authorship, circulation, and seizure of the placard. Béroujon pays attention, moreover, to how place – Place des Cordeliers – and socio-professional milieus – the world of printers – conspired to ground and pass down a long-lasting popular memory, a usable past that proved essential in reactivating political identities and prompting political action in times of need. In fact, in exploring alternative memories of the Great Rebeyne of Lyon, Béroujon shows that 'writing nourish[ed] a local culture of revolt'.

Jesús Gascón Pérez's 'People, Pamphlets and Popular Mobilization in the Aragonese Rebellion of 1591' deals with the production, circulation, and consumption of subversive literature during times of social upheaval. In particular, this essay focuses on the Aragonese rebellion of 1591, which pitched King Philip II against his Aragonese subjects in a short-lived but intense constitutional conflict around the liberties of the kingdom against absolute power. Arguing against the 'aristocratic view of 1591', Gascón Pérez stresses the participation of almost all orders of society in the rebellion: nobles, knights, *infanzones*, and priests, but also craftsmen, farmers, jurists, or merchants. He centers the role of written verbal violence in the social and political conflict, which amounted to a veritable 'literary campaign' of pasquinades and Lucianesque satires, sometimes attributed to Antonio Pérez himself. Pamphlets prompted riots – at least they did in Teruel in November 1591 – and kept up the mobilization of the people for the Aragonese cause. Rebellious placards took over the public space defying the authority of the king and its officials. Royal edicts, in contrast, were torn down from the church doors. Rebellious writing, Gascón Pérez argues, was at the core of this early modern political conflict. Regardless of authorship, pasquinades combined elements from lettered and popular culture. They all circulated in manuscript form, from hand to hand. Sometimes they were dropped in the public squares, to be picked up by the people, and were of course read aloud. Students, professional scribes, priests, and even nuns contributed to their diffusion by producing multiple copies of the libelous texts.

In the next section we have grouped a coherent body of work on popular writing, indigenous literacy, and ethnic memory in the Americas during the colonial period. 'Contested Memories in Colonial Latin America' opens with Lisl Schoepflin's ' "De los famossos hechos de los yndios

cañares y de sus privilegios": Don Pedro Purqui and the Early Modern Andean Chronicle by Martín de Murua'. By analyzing legal records and historiographical texts, Schoepflin explores the relation between social memory and ethnic identity in the colonial Andes. The article focuses on the role of Don Pedro Purqui, a community leader and intellectual in colonial Cuzco, in the rearticulation of the history, myth, and memory of the Cañari people through his intervention in legal processes and historical writing. The Cañari were a non-Incan Andean people that, thanks to a kind of 'structural amnesia' provoked by the Spanish conquest, and through Purqui's crucial mediation, reappropriated Incan genealogy as a source of legitimacy in the colonial present. This ethnogenetical response was also a way of defending the privileged status of Cañari nobility within the Spanish colonial order. It seems that Purqui was not literate in alphabetic writing but, as Schoepflin shows by comparing the Gavin Murua and the Getty Murua – two different manuscript versions of Murúa's chronicle – , he did intervene and mediate in the process of historiographical elaboration during the 1590s, motivating changes and erasures. Through this infiltration, Purqui crucially contributed to reshaping the collective memory and ethnic identity of the Cañari people.

Without leaving the Andes, Aude Argouse and María Eugenia Albornoz Vásquez's contribution, titled 'Protecting and Protesting: Notarial Exclamations and Declarations (Peru, Chile Seventeenth-Eighteenth Centuries)', focuses on a legal documentary type that has not yet received proper attention: the *exclamaciones* are documents written before a notary to retract or rectify previous legal declarations. This contribution focuses on those kept in the notarial archives of Cuzco, Lima (Peru), and Santiago (Chile) from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Exclamations allowed for the visibilization of illegitimate use of force and constraint (Sternberg 2023). As legal instruments, they carried the legal memory of previous offences and allowed room for protest and complaint. Argouse and Albornoz Vásquez are in favor of centering and revising the figure of the notary, whose mediating legal role should not be seen 'solely as a tool of European hegemony'. Among other documentary types, *exclamaciones* show that women (half of whom were illiterate), the poor, Indians, and prisoners all made recourse to the legal power of notaries. Victims of gender violence, coerced widows and children, or abused indigenous subjects all made recourse to *exclamaciones*. When *exclamaciones* were produced at the behest of a subaltern, they argue, this kind of legal and documentary practice 'liberates dominated voices'. This tracking of the voice of the subalterns is done by paying heed to the language of the documents themselves, the turns of phrase, corrections, interventions that could contain traces of a subaltern orality and provide insight about the relationship between this and notarial practice.

In 'Recovering the Written Traces of Hernando de Soto's Voyage to La Florida', Catalina Andrango-Walker retraces the steps of the Spanish conquistador in a number of colonial sources, mainly focusing on Inca Garcilaso's *La Florida del Inca* and the *Relaçām verdadeira*. Andrango-Walker shows how high-brow humanistic historical writing relied on the oral testimony and the amateur writing of common soldiers. The article explores the roles of the eyewitness, the oral storyteller, the scribe, and the translator in the collective and contested process of building the memory and posterity of a colonial expedition. The primary accounts of soldiers, based on eyewitnessing, were key to the regime of truth created by their interlocutors and compilers, but at the same time they were deemed unworthy of serious historical writing, and thus the memory they carried needed to be refigured. The study of textual transmission and translation also serves, in Andrango-Walker's contribution, to trace the reverberations of indigenous memory – particularly of colonial violence – in European traditions of historical writing, such as in the case of Garcilaso's depiction of cacique Hirrihigua.

In line with his book on indigenous literacy and memory in Paraguay's *reducciones* (Neumann 2015), Eduardo Neumann's '*Kurusu Kuatia* (Inscribed Cross): Written Culture and Indigenous

Memory in the Reductions of Paraguay (Eighteenth Century)' studies the somewhat exceptional written culture of the Guarani in the colonial period. From the eighteenth century onwards, the indigenous people of Paraguay maintained a strong and fluid relationship with writing, especially after the crisis provoked by the redrawing of the boundaries between Spain's and Portugal's imperial reach in the area by the Treaty of Madrid in 1750. Indigenous subjects used writing to frequently correspond with the Jesuits and with their Spanish overlords. We know, through indirect mentions, of different forms of exposed writing in the *reducciones*, although no extant example has survived. One of these, in fact, is the use of crosses inscribed with texts used to mark the territory. In addition to crosses, they used wooden boards in churches to publicize announcements and write prayers, or for funerary inscriptions. The article also uncovers the council minutes of the indigenous communities, which from 1758 included a sort of 'summaries of events' (mostly military) which can be understood as a way of articulating the memory of the community. This is also the case for the inscribed cross (*kurusu kuati*) that was erected in the summer of 1756 to memorialize the battle of Caiboaté, in which 1500 Guarani were killed, together with their captain, a truly dramatic event that left a long-lasting impact in the history of the community.

The last two sections, while shorter, explore aspects that the editors consider pivotal in the overall design of the volume. In 'Gendered Letters', we have grouped two pieces on not so visible letter writing by women and by men accused of sodomy. In 'Women Building the Colonial Archive: Legal Authority, Female Knowledge and Affective Mobility in the Sixteenth-Century Iberian Atlantic World', Juan Manuel Ramírez Velázquez examines how Spanish criolla women from different walks of life used writing to increase their mobility and to profitably navigate the legal, economic, and political systems of a mobile male-dominated world. The essay focuses on the letters by Catalina de Ávila, a propertied yet commoner widow from Almodóvar del Campo in La Mancha to her son in Mexico, who had spent almost twenty years in the New World; and on the petitions of three conquistadors' widows, Isabel de Cavallos, Ana Segura, and María de Victoria. The writing of these women opens to a connected world, shaped by the large-scale transatlantic and transpacific exchanges of the sixteenth century, and particularly by the movement of their own husbands, sons, and other absent male relatives. Their letters become the mobile carriers of news, both written and oral, local memory, and biographical trajectories. Ramírez Velázquez's conceptualization of 'affective mobilities' attempts to bring together geographical displacement and the rhetorical strategies of persuasion (*movere*) that shaped their writing as a vehicle for self-fashioning and empowerment.

Juan Pedro Navarro Martínez's 'Letters from Sodom: "Emotional" Agency and Evidence of Sexual Crime in Early Modern Courts of Italy and Spain', on its part, zooms in on the letters of same-sex lovers in late sixteenth-century Italy and eighteenth-century Spain. Before delving into the kind of affect embodied by this epistolary discourse, Navarro Martínez offers a reflection on the relation between early modern judicial institutions, the documentary types they produced, and the historiography of gender and dissident sexuality. In contrast with other kinds of documentation gathered or generated by the bodies in charge of disciplining sexual practice, Navarro Martínez argues, letters are a privileged place to look for what he calls the 'emotional agency' of the defendants. The two case studies are Domenico Pelliccia, a monk of the monastery of Subiaco (Rome) who was accused of sodomy in 1595, and Sebastián Leirado, an amateur actor processed for the same crime in Madrid in 1769. The chronological arch, and the transnational scope, allow for a comparative framework that has proven productive before for the study of other subaltern lettered practices in early modern Europe.

The two essays that make up the last section, 'Memory in Print and Performance', open new ways of looking at the memory of the people in relation to the materiality of writing, oral

tradition, and communal performance. In 'Printed Riddles in Early Modern Italy: Traditional Perspectives and New Approaches', Marco Francalanci starts by offering a complete historiographical overview of the work of Italian ethnographers, bibliographers, and folklorists on riddles. From one of the earliest extant vernacular texts, to the Renaissance collections of printed riddles, Francalanci gives weight to the written traditions of this compact, playful, and ingenious form that we may mistakenly associate mainly with its oral iterations. Some of the most important writers and collectors of riddles of the sixteenth century, Francalanci shows, were workingmen. Before becoming a *cantastorie*, Giulio Cesare Croce was a blacksmith, as was Angelo Cenni, also known as Resoluto. Sonnet and *ottava rima* gradually became the main poetic forms for the production of riddles and enigmas, and they often involved obscenity and vulgarity. They tended to be published, according to Francalanci, in very small, portable, and cheap formats, and occasionally by idiosyncratic travelling printers such as Damon Fido Pastore. This, combined with the pervasive anonymity of the genre, has historically compromised their survival and retrieval.

In his contribution ('The Saga of Lohodann: Making Sense of an Annobonese Folktale Rooted in Carolingian Drama'), Jeroen Dewulf studies the intricate story of Lohodann, a Luso-African creole version of the medieval European paladin Roland that is recited during the Holy Week in Annobón, an Atlantic island off the coast of West Africa that is today part of Equatorial Guinea. As it survived in the late twentieth century, the performance of the legend was the responsibility of one family, and it obeyed gendered rules of transmission and inheritance. The essay begins by providing a rich historical survey of Annobón, from the Portuguese settlement to its handing over to the authority of the Spanish empire. The peculiar forms of autonomy and self-government that developed in this small island are placed in the context of the triangular slave trade that shaped the early societies of the Black Atlantic, tracing connections between Brazil and continental Africa. Dewulf offers a thorough historical excavation of a twentieth-century oral practice that harks back to medieval and early modern textual traditions in French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. The long durée of popular memory, carried along by a mostly illiterate community, is inextricably linked to the entangled history of colonialism in this area of the Atlantic. The institutional arrangements and the traditions of vernacular African Christianity, from confraternities to *sacristãos*, proved essential for the refashioning and transmission of the cultural memory around Roldán/Lohodann. In Annobón, Dewulf argues, the uses of this European legend are indissociable from the traditions of the de facto autonomous government of the people of the island and from African forms of syncretic Christianity.

In sum, the essays gathered in this volume call attention to the different uses of written culture by the subaltern classes in the early modern period. They also explore the mediations of the professionals of the pen in those circumstances in which the subaltern – often illiterate – needed their services. By focusing on topics such as indigenous literacies, writing and rebellion, oral tradition and performance, local history, life writing, or contested historiographies, these essays, considered together, offer road to the memory of the people in the enlarged world of early modernity. A 'topography of remembrance' (Wood 2013) that, linking the writing practices of the common people to the memory of their communities, shows that the fight over the past was also, necessarily, a dispute about the present and the future.

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