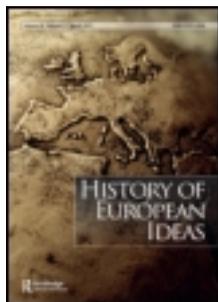


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Introduction: Liberalism in the Early Nineteenth-century Iberian World

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Summary

This essay is an introduction to a special issue on 'Liberalism in the Early Nineteenth-century Iberian World'. The essay reviews why Iberian intellectual history, particularly liberal political thought, has been neglected in English-language scholarship. It offers suggestions for the incorporation of Portuguese and Spanish language texts into the broader canon. The essay then outlines persistent debates common to the study of liberalism in both Iberian and other national contexts, in an effort to instigate a dialogue between intellectual historians of Spain and Portugal and their counterparts elsewhere. It concludes with a consideration of the geopolitical forces, cultural trends, and social conditions that encouraged the forging of transnational liberalism in the early nineteenth century.

Keywords: Liberalism; Spain; Portugal; Age of Revolutions; history of political thought.

For chronological reasons, the decisive chapters in the history of liberalism overlap with, and are inextricable from, the 'Age of Revolutions' (c. 1760–1850). This coincidence has produced pernicious consequences both for the study of liberalism and for Iberian and Latin American intellectual history's place within the liberal tradition. The comparatively late occurrence of the Ibero-Atlantic revolutions prodded Anglophone and Francophone historians to depict them as the last in a decades-long sequence of revolutions imbued with a stable, coherent set of ideas that demolished the Old Regime in Western Europe and its ultramarine appendages.¹ Such assumptions perpetuated and enlivened a long-standing stereotype of the feeble, backward and derivative character of Iberian and Ibero-Atlantic intellectual life. Broadly speaking, historians deemed Spanish American republicanism unoriginal, disparaged Ibero-Atlantic liberalism as a meek imitator of Anglo-French antecedents, and declared that the transition to political modernity in both

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¹ On this 'Age of Democratic Revolution(s)', see R. R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800: The Challenge* (Princeton, NJ, 1959). For reappraisals of the epoch, see Jeremy Adelman, 'The Age of Imperial Revolutions', *American Historical Review*, 113 (2008), 319–40; *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, 1760–1840*, edited by David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (London, 2010). For an assessment of the utility of this framework for Iberian Atlantic intellectual history, see Gabriel Paquette, 'The Study of Political Thought in the Ibero-Atlantic World during the Age of Revolutions', *Modern Intellectual History*, 10 (2013), 437–48.

nascent independent Spanish America as well and the Iberian Peninsula was incomplete or failed.

Spanish and Portuguese intellectual history, in this view, could never be anything but an arcane subject, of interest solely to specialists or else students of the diffusion and reception of British, French, German and Anglo-North American revolutionary doctrines and ideologies. This approach to the subject prevailed, by and large, until recently: there is no shortage of work concerning, for example, the ‘reception’ of Rousseau and Montesquieu in Spain; the respective fates of William Robertson’s and the Abbé Raynal’s monumental histories of the Americas in the Iberian World; and Bentham’s acolytes and Adam Smith’s admirers in the Río de la Plata or Brazil.² Both the assumptions underpinning these studies and the conclusions they affirmed as a consequence of their proliferation were deeply problematic. If the Iberian World had experienced an enlightenment and partook in the liberal tradition, and many contested even such modest claims, the origins of its enlightenment and liberalism must be exogenous—consisting in large measure of translated ideas and texts—and thoroughly unoriginal and derivative.³

The recent deluge of scholarship testifying to the robust intellectual culture that flourished in the Ibero-Atlantic World c. 1750–1850 should have swept away such assumptions. But this burgeoning literature has reverberated only weakly beyond the small community of specialists.⁴ This special issue aims to bring the work of several of the most dynamic intellectual historians working on these themes to the attention of a broader audience. It seeks to challenge the still deeply-entrenched prejudice against Hispanic intellectual history, and the role of Portuguese- and Spanish-language texts in the intellectual history of Europe and the wider Atlantic World, particularly among the English-, French-, and German-speaking historians. ‘Prescott’s Paradigm’, a set of ideas coalescing in the nineteenth century alleging that Spain’s early modern ‘decline’ and subsequent ‘torpor’ was attributable to the twin forces of religious bigotry and political despotism, remains dominant, if tacitly held.⁵ Modernised versions of the antiquated *Leyenda Negra*, or Black Legend, percolate widely within academic discourse: the legacy of Spanish colonialism, for example, is blamed for Latin American underdevelopment or

² Among many other examples, see Jefferson Rea Spell, *Rousseau in the Spanish World before 1833: A Study in Franco-Spanish Literary Relations* (Austin, TX, 1938); Gabriel Paquette, ‘Enlightened Narratives and Imperial Rivalry in Bourbon Spain: The Case of Almodóvar’s *Historia Política de los Establecimientos Ultramarinos de las Naciones Europeas* (1784–1790)’, *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, 48 (2007), 61–80; Klaus Gallo, *The Struggle for an Enlightened Republic: Buenos Aires and Rivadavia* (London, 2006).

³ This logic forms part of a broader pattern: an older tendency to ignore global circulation, processes of translation, and transnational forms of production. For a discussion, see Sebastian Conrad, ‘Enlightenment in Global History: A Historiographical Critique’, *American Historical Review*, 117 (2012), 999–1027.

⁴ The intellectual history of the Iberian-Atlantic World is not an isolated case, of course. Dominic Sachsenmaier has drawn attention to ‘significant hierarchies in the global landscape of knowledge, hierarchies that determine who needs to be familiar with whom, and who can continue to be monoculture in his or her intellectual scope of awareness’. His further observation, that the ‘geographical frame of intellectual history has stayed largely intact’, applies as much to Europe’s peripheries as it does to the extra-European world; see Dominic Sachsenmaier, ‘Global Challenges to Intellectual History: Regional Focus of Intellectual History in the West’, *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 6 (2013), 131, 134.

⁵ Richard L. Kagan, ‘Prescott’s Paradigm: American Historical Scholarship and the Decline of Spain’, *American Historical Review*, 101 (1996), 423–46. On the eighteenth-century antecedents of these views, see Ana Hontilla, ‘Images of Barbaric Spain in Eighteenth-century British Travel Writing’, *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 37 (2008), 119–43. For slightly more favourable depictions, see Gabriel Paquette, ‘Visiones Británicas del Mundo Atlántico Español, c. 1740–1830’, *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna*, 36 (2011), 145–54.

the ‘imperfect’ implantation of the liberal ideas and institutions there.⁶ To these older antipathies are added other frameworks that serve to denigrate further Iberian Intellectual History. These include notions of ‘leader’ and ‘follower’ nations, of the outward diffusion of ideas from a northern and western (primarily Protestant) European ‘core’ to a southern and Atlantic rim (primarily ‘Latin’ and Catholic) ‘periphery’, and of the emergence of political ‘modernity’ from a single source, a model by which all other paths ‘deviating’ from that model would be judged.⁷

The cumulative impact of these tropes, leitmotifs, and biases may be detected in the grand narrative histories of liberalism. Whether one examines the early twentieth-century accounts written by Harold Laski and Guido Ruggiero or the more recent treatment by Pierre Manent, among others, Iberian liberalism is glaringly absent, with nary a mention even of the probable lexical-semantic debt owed by the English language to the Cádiz *liberales*!⁸ If Iberian liberalism’s contribution to the wider currents of European (and Euroamerican) liberalism were acknowledged and appreciated, how might those grand histories be rewritten or reframed? If multiple, overlapping and sometimes competing traditions were recognised to have existed, what are the implications for historical accounts that presume liberalism’s unitary trajectory and make normative claims on the basis of an alleged monolithic liberalism? This task is undertaken collectively, in a necessarily preliminary and partial way, by the contributors to this special issue of *History of European Ideas*. It builds on recent efforts to globalise intellectual history and to cast off older, disparaging accounts of the deficits (and sometimes debts) of intellectual life beyond Western and Central Europe.

Yet a mere act of counter-hegemony, which would merely shift the gaze to the ‘influence’ of the purported ‘backward’ on the ‘vanguard’, would be a fruitless exercise, however amusing.⁹ Rather, a more productive approach to the history of liberalism might commence with the following chain of enquiry. Are there ‘hidden’ or ‘parallel’ histories of liberalism which merit reconstruction? Are there strands of liberal political thought in the Iberian World (as well as other ‘peripheries’, both within and beyond Europe) that defy the conventional, dismissive epithets, including ‘outlier’, ‘derivative’, and

⁶ For example, Daron Acemoglu, with Simon Johnson and James Robinson, ‘The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation’, *American Economic Review*, 91 (2001), 1369–1401; Ileana Rodríguez, *Liberalism at its Limits: Crime and Terror in the Latin American Cultural Context* (Pittsburgh, PA, 2009), 8–9. For an overview of literature on the *leyenda negra*, see Ricardo García Carcel, *La Leyenda Negra: Historia y Opinión* (Madrid, 1992).

⁷ For English-language efforts to cast off such prejudices from a range of perspectives, see Charles Hale, ‘The Reconstruction of Nineteenth-century Politics in Spanish America: A Case for the History of Ideas’, *Latin American Research Review*, 8 (1973), 53–73; John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples 1680–1760* (Cambridge, 2005); Carla Hesse, ‘Towards a New Topography of the Enlightenment’, *European Review of History*, 13 (2006), 499–508; *Enlightened Reform in Southern Europe and its Atlantic Colonies, c. 1750–1830*, edited by Gabriel Paquette (Burlington, VT, 2009); even if implicit, older views still animate recent influential works. See, for example, Jonathan Israel, *A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy* (Princeton, NJ, 2010).

⁸ Harold Laski, *The Rise of European Liberalism: An Essay in Interpretation* (London, 1936); Guido de Ruggiero, *The History of European Liberalism* (Boston, MA, 1959); Pierre Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism* (Princeton, NJ, 1996).

⁹ Nevertheless, such an exercise has proven fruitful in the early modern context. See, for example, Jean-Frédéric Schaub, *La France espagnole: les racines hispaniques de l’absolutisme français* (Paris, 2003). Interestingly, along similar lines, a literary scholar has demonstrated the debt of early modern English drama to Spanish models, concluding that ‘early modern English writers looked to Spain for inspiration and relied heavily on Spanish originals [...] yet our own Academy, marked by the Black Legend and sustained anti-Spanish prejudice, is unable to recognise those early debts’; see Barbara Fuchs, ‘Beyond the Missing Cardenio: Anglo-Spanish Relations in Early Modern Drama’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 39 (2009), 143–59 (151).

'imitative'? Might the reconstruction of such alternative histories of liberalism contribute to the enrichment of the broader history of liberalism and serve to revise it in substantive ways?

In the collaborative *IberConceptos* project he has coordinated and also in his own scholarship, Javier Fernández Sebastián has argued for the necessity of recognising 'multiple [political] modernities', alternate as well as alternative paths to a recognisably modern form of politics and political thought, neither exclusively 'derivative' of British, Anglo-North American, French and German models, nor belated, frustrated and incomplete.¹⁰ The *Diccionarios* compiled by Fernández Sebastián as part of the *IberConceptos* project are a defiant assertion of richness, depth, scope, sophistication, and originality of Iberian and Ibero-American intellectual life in the period generally known as the 'Age of Revolutions'.¹¹ Projects such as this one represent polemical attempts to redress the imbalance of unflattering depictions of Southern European and Latin American political thought. In the revised portrait, the Ibero-Atlantic world becomes a producer and exporter, not just an importer and consumer, of the political (and economic) ideas constitutive of liberalism. Historians who work on non-Iberian subjects and places have begun to arrive at similar conclusions. Christopher A. Bayly, in his recent *Recovering Liberties*, demonstrated the tremendous impact of Iberian political-constitutional thought on the development of Indian liberalism in the early nineteenth century. Maurizio Isabella documented the influence that Mexican federalism exerted on Italian liberal exiles, which underpinned their conviction that the New World might furnish the Old with useful models of political organisation. Juan Luis Simal examined the notably wide reception of Iberian liberal thought in France and Germany, aided by the peripatetic itineraries across Western Europe of political exiles in the first third of the nineteenth century.¹² If we re-examine, then, the history of liberalism in light of this new scholarship, a different, more complicated picture emerges, one that is multi-faceted, heterogeneous, palimpsestic, and polycentric.¹³ The general history of liberalism, as a result, would have to be revised in order to account for these previously neglected and maligned discourses.¹⁴

Any revision of liberalism, however, must grapple with several long-standing, unresolved debates in the existing scholarly literature concerning liberalism. Four of these debates are considered briefly in this introductory essay in order to provide context for the four essays in this special issue: first, liberalism's contested genealogy, specifically the link between enlightenment and liberalism; second, liberalism's connection to competing political philosophies and ideologies, specifically the relationship between republicanism and liberalism; third, whether liberalism should be studied as a singular, unitary phenomenon or as a plural, heterogeneous one; and, fourth, the disputed utility of transnational and trans-regional (i.e. 'Atlantic') approaches for the study of liberalism in a

¹⁰ On 'multiple modernities', see *Multiple Modernities*, edited by S. N. Eisenstadt (New Brunswick, NJ, 2002).

¹¹ *Diccionario político y social del mundo Iberoamericano. La era de las revoluciones, 1750–1850 (Iberconceptos-I)*, edited by Javier Fernández Sebastián (Madrid, 2009).

¹² Christopher A. Bayly, *Recovering Liberties. Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire* (Cambridge, 2012), 43–46; Maurizio Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile: Italian Émigrés and the Liberal International in the Post-Napoleonic Era* (Oxford, 2009); Juan Luis Simal, *Emigrados: España y el exilio internacional (1814–1834)* (Madrid, 2012).

¹³ For an extensive discussion, see Gabriel Paquette, 'Romantic Liberalism in Spain and Portugal, c. 1825–1850', *Historical Journal*, forthcoming.

¹⁴ Though for an important contribution toward that effort, see Roberto Breña, *El primer liberalismo español y los procesos de emancipación de América, 1808–1824: una revisión historiográfica del liberalismo hispánico* (Mexico City, 2006).

single linguistic-national context. It is hoped that consideration of the Iberian case will contribute to the effort to settle these debates and to place the essays contained in this special issue in a broader historiographical context, thus fomenting a dialogue between intellectual historians working in the Spanish and Portuguese languages and their Anglophone counterparts.

There is disagreement about the connection and relationship between enlightenment political thought and liberalism. Some have argued that the two are distinct phenomena while others have asserted their shared lineage and essential continuity. This problem bedevils Anglophone, and Francophone, scholarship. On the one hand, the continuities between enlightenment and liberalism are unmistakable, specifically the common features of political language, concepts, and policy prescriptions. Confining the examination to the Spanish liberals at the Cortes of Cádiz, it is clear that they unambiguously shared goals with their *ilustrado* forebears, including the abolition of the Inquisition, the extinction of seigneurial jurisdiction, the abolition of guilds (*gremios*) and certain practices of entail (*mayorazgo*), among other economic policies, to say nothing of their advocacy of freedom of expression.¹⁵ On the other hand, however, as several scholars have pointed out, the enlightenment, at least in its Spanish guise, exerted a less robust influence on liberalism's core theories, doctrines, and principles, including those related to sovereignty, constitutionalism, and economy than is sometimes assumed. As the historian Roberto Breña has argued,

the principle of national sovereignty raised the most notable gap between liberalism and enlightenment political thought, for enlightenment thinkers conceived of the royal power of the monarch as the center and origin of all political decision-making whereas liberals saw political decision-making as emanating from the Cortes.¹⁶

A key figure who embodies the intersections and divergences of *ilustración* and *liberalismo* is the late eighteenth-century polymath Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos (1744–1811). His writings on historical constitutionalism indelibly informed the Cortes of Cádiz debates on the origins and nature of sovereignty and representation, but he firmly rejected popular sovereignty, genuinely mixed government, and written constitutionalism.¹⁷ Whether thematically or chronologically entwined, therefore, no simple line of descent between enlightenment and liberalism exists. Nor is there much stock in the hazy, if ubiquitous, pronouncement that enlightenment begat liberalism, a notion redolent of a 'domino theory' of intellectual modernisation.

Also crucial is an awareness of the origins of the debate over the connections between enlightenment and liberalism. The effort to connect the two formed part of an elaborate project, often deliberately obfuscatory, embarked on by several early nineteenth-century intellectual and political factions throughout Europe. The idea of enlightenment as 'pre-liberal' or 'proto-liberal' was purposefully distorted, but it proved useful to many self-proclaimed liberals. The alleged connection was defended by many self-described 'moderate' nineteenth-century liberals to identify prudent precedents of, and noble precursors to, their own political ideas. It was also deployed by these same self-anointed

¹⁵ There are several outstanding studies of the political and constitutional ideas animating the Cortes of Cádiz, including: Joaquín Varela Suances-Carpegna, *La teoría del estado en los orígenes del constitucionalismo hispanico (Las Cortes de Cádiz)* (Madrid, 1983); José María Portillo Valdés, *Revolución de nación. Orígenes de la cultura constitucional en España* (Madrid, 2000).

¹⁶ Breña, *El primer liberalismo*, 181. All translations are my own.

¹⁷ On Jovellanos, among others, see Javier Varela, *Jovellanos* (Madrid, 1988).

moderates to discredit their more radical opponents, asserting their adversaries' dangerous deviation from a tradition that stressed reformism, pragmatism, the *juste milieu*, and was imbued hostility to democracy in all of its forms.¹⁸ The effort to link enlightenment and liberalism also derived from a second source: the broader European counter-revolutionary tradition, often associated with the French Abbé Barruel, and his acolytes writing in other European languages, which tarred all deviations from divine-right absolutism with the same brush.¹⁹ Not only were republicans and all shades of liberals lumped together without nuance or discrimination, but the dastardly origins of liberal thought were supposedly found in the anti-clericalism/atheism and political subversion attributed to 'the Enlightenment', monolithically conceived. Both champions of liberalism (at least in its 'moderate' guise) and its avowed enemies, therefore, profited from connecting eighteenth-century enlightenment with nineteenth-century liberalism, which has complicated the task of contemporary historians, who seek to disentangle them, or at least problematise that relationship. The alleged link was not entirely a figment of the febrile historiographical imagination of early nineteenth-century publicists, of course. But the recognition of similarities, overlaps, and resemblances is distinct from uncovering origins and tracing an unbroken continuity between enlightenment and liberalism.

A second scholarly quarrel demanding resolution before the history of liberalism can be revised satisfactorily concerns the contentious relationship between republicanism and liberalism. In the Iberian World, there remains great disagreement concerning whether these are synonymous, antonymous, homologous, or else compatible doctrines with distinct genealogies. This dispute is the analogue of a debate in the Anglophone world. Quentin Skinner and Philip Pettit, most notably, maintain that there was a paradigmatic rupture between republicanism and liberalism. They depict liberalism as defeating and replacing an older republicanism. As Skinner has elucidated, 'what neo-roman writers repudiate *avant la lettre* is the key assumption of classical liberalism to the effect that force, or the coercive threat of it, constitute the only forms of constraint that interfere with individual liberty'.²⁰ Instead, he argues for the absence of dependence as the defining feature of republican liberty. This republican ideal, Skinner contends, was sacrificed to liberalism's thinner, weaker version of human freedom, defined as the absence from interference. Summarising the Pettit-Skinner position, Alan Ryan usefully suggests that those historians favouring the classical republican tradition disparage 'the liberal view of the individual [as] someone cut off from public life, concerned with affairs that are private in the sense of being jealously protected from everyone else'.²¹ By rejecting these accounts of human freedom and the individual in public life, and asserting a break between republicanism and liberalism, Skinner, Pettit and others in effect strip liberalism of its republican lineage and portray it as departure from republicanism.

Recently, scholars such as Andreas Kalyvas and Ira Katznelson, working primarily on British and French political thought at the turn of the nineteenth century, have disputed this characterisation. They contend that 'liberalism is not external to the history of

¹⁸ Claude Morange, 'Sobre la filiación ilustración-liberalismo: preguntas para un debate', in *Orígenes del liberalismo: universidad, política, economía*, edited by Ricardo Robledo, Irene Castells, and María Cruz Romeo (Salamanca, 2003), 250–53; Javier Fernández Sebastián, 'Introducción: en busca de los primeros liberalismos Iberoamericanos', in *La aurora de la libertad: los primeros liberalismos en el mundo Iberoamericano* (Madrid, 2012), 9–136 (16).

¹⁹ Darrin McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford, 2001).

²⁰ See Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge, 2012, first published in 1998), 84.

²¹ Alan Ryan, *The Making of Modern Liberalism* (Princeton, NJ, 2012), 41.

republicanism [... but] was born from the spirit of republicanism, from attempts to adapt republicanism to the political, economic and social revolution' of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. They further argue that 'liberalism in fact was constituted as a cultural hybrid both against and within republican terminology, ideas, and aspirations [...] republican discourse, concepts and motivations were not abandoned but were adapted [...] political liberalism burst from the shell of a republican chrysalis'.²² Like earlier scholars of the history of liberal political thought, unfortunately, Kalyvas and Katznelson fail to reference texts and writers from the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking worlds. But their characterisation of the link between liberalism and republicanism coincides with several of the most influential recent historians working on early nineteenth-century Iberian and Ibero-Atlantic liberalism. Breña, for example, has claimed that the adoption of appellation republican, instead of liberal, in Spanish America during the independence era was chiefly a pragmatic decision to distinguish the ideology of the separatists from partisans of metropolitan monarchism (or 'mixed monarchy' or 'liberal monarchism'). Such a distinction contributed to a strategy to justify the break from the Spanish monarchy and to legitimate local claims to sovereignty in the Americas. More important than nomenclature, Breña argued, were the rights (*derechos*) that revolutionaries sought, which for pragmatic reasons they situated within a republican framework. Breña maintained, therefore, that republicanism and liberalism overlapped significantly, and often were impossible to counterpose before 1830.²³ Each could be galvanised to support claims for popular sovereignty, political equality, individual liberties, the division of powers, and the legitimacy of representative-constitutional government. The difference between liberalism and republicanism, then, was a matter of degree.

Surely, there were differences in emphasis, tone and style (notably, republicanism's celebration of patriotism and civic virtue). But, institutionally and constitutionally, they were not especially distinct in the Iberian World except on the crucial matter of monarchy (though not, it should be stressed, on the principle of administrative centralisation and related precepts surrounding political organisation). There were other divergences, to be sure, between republicanism and liberalism, chiefly regarding the respective juridical statuses of Europe and America, one of the fatal flaws of Cádiz constitutionalism. The Cádiz Constitution stood in stark contrast, for example, to the Napoleonic Bayonne Constitution that preceded it by four years, which had recognised the juridical equality of American territories with peninsular Spain.²⁴ Unsurprisingly, then, Cádiz-style liberalism was rejected—and it had to be rejected—because it withheld true political equality from America, its rhetoric and even the content of some of its articles notwithstanding. Furthermore, Iberian liberalism was clearly compatible with neo-imperial political arrangements (i.e., transatlantic confederation) whereas republicanism carried connotations of self- as well as limited government and thus attracted those desirous of a clean break from all transoceanic forms of political organisation.

²² Andreas Kalyvas and Ira Katznelson, *Liberal Beginnings: Making a Republic for the Moderns* (Cambridge, 2008), 4–5.

²³ Roberto Breña, *El imperio de las circunstancias. Las independencias hispanoamericanas y la revolución liberal española* (Madrid, 2012), 163, 165, 167–68.

²⁴ As Franco Pérez has argued, though the Bayonne Constitution had little direct influence (and was never implemented), it was the first Iberian constitutional document to recognise 'the complexity and polycentric nature of the so-called "American problem"'; see Antonio-Filiu Franco Pérez, *Cuba en los orígenes del constitucionalismo español: la alternativa descentralizadora (1808–1837)* (Zaragoza, 2011), 64.

The fissures distinguishing early nineteenth-century republicanism from liberalism widened into an unbridgeable chasm in subsequent decades as Peninsular liberalism lurched to the 'right'. But in the first decades of the nineteenth century, liberalism, as an idiom as much as an ideology or set of immutable principles, was embraced in the Peninsula as well as Spanish America to distinguish its political claims from the regicidal and sanguinary French republican regime. Indeed, self-proclaimed republicans fared badly in Spanish America until the advent of the European Restoration. Part of this preference, too, resulted from the massive propaganda campaigns launched by the Iberian monarchies against French republicanism in the 1790s, which equated republicanism with political disorder, if not outright chaos. Liberalism, by shedding the rhetoric of revolutionary republicanism and its nefarious associations, could present itself as both an indigenous and an endogenous doctrine, consistent with venerable Iberian intellectual traditions and contemporary political predilections. Nevertheless, from about 1812 until 1830, republican and liberal political languages coexisted, overlapped, and often cross-pollinated. Part of the confusion, and the failure to recognise their concentricity, may result from recent scholarly discussion concerning what republicanism was, or should have been. As Fernández Sebastián has observed, the bifurcation of liberalism and republicanism is fairly recent whereas liberalism was a language employed by even self-styled republicans in the early nineteenth century and it could not be disassociated fully from republicanism until much later.²⁵

The third scholarly debate surrounding liberalism in need of some resolution before the Iberian World's contribution may be incorporated into liberalism's more general history concerns whether nineteenth-century liberalism was homogeneous or unitary. Is liberalism (singular) or liberalisms (plural) a more useful approach to the subject? The heterogeneity of liberalism has been recognised in the historiography. The meanings of 'liberal' and 'liberalism' were multiple, and in constant flux in the early nineteenth century. There were, nevertheless, several common traits shared by most self-styled liberals, including the avoidance and suspicion of arbitrary power.²⁶ In the early nineteenth century, liberalism could be generally conceived (chiefly with reference to the French experience) as occupying a middle ground between 'royalism' and 'Jacobinism'. It was characterised by support for written constitutions to enshrine, and protect against violations of, individual rights (sometimes described as 'liberties'), to prevent the concentration of political authority in a single entity, and to define many spheres of human action as personal or private, thus removing them from politics. In general, some modicum of popular, or national, sovereignty was also defended by liberals, though this varied enormously by country and individual political writer. In short, early nineteenth-century European liberalism gave an account of freedom characterised by the absence of interference, normally from an arbitrary power, and advocacy of the rule of law, embodied in a written constitution, to guard against such interference.

Yet, even operating within these broad confines, many different groups laid claim to the 'liberal banner'. This resulted in various iterations of liberalism or variations on a liberal theme. As Fernández Sebastián has suggested for the Iberian world in period before 1830, 'far from a well-defined and stable liberalism, it was a changing constellation of vague concepts [...] a disputed concept, constructed and reconstructed

²⁵ Fernández Sebastián, 'Introducción', in *La aurora de la libertad*, 13.

²⁶ Ryan, *The Making of Modern Liberalism*, 29.

through its agents and their actions, and their discursive practices, expectations, and experiences'.²⁷

For contemporaries in many countries, the significance of the term 'liberal' was varied, constantly evolving, and frequently ambiguous.²⁸ It has been a frustratingly fissiparous concept for historians of the early nineteenth century in other linguistic and national contexts. In France, liberalism was used to describe a 'disparate section of the Restoration political elite, which was loosely united in criticism of most Bourbon governments [...] [it was] a flag of negotiation, compromise, and convenience'.²⁹ In Italian exile circles, it was similarly vague, coming to embody constitutionalism, a revised international order, a defence of civil-political freedoms, gradual progress, and social reform.³⁰ Some scholars have put a more positive gloss on the apparent variety of early nineteenth-century French (and British) liberalism, describing how it was produced slowly through the 'grappling with predicaments', from an 'active dialogue', which resulted in a liberalism that was 'not sealed, but open; not uniform, but confidently heterogeneous'.³¹

There is some danger, then, in any attempt to distil this morass of competing conceptions into a single doctrine or, alternatively, to overemphasise those overlapping zones and assert that those minimum characteristics must be in evidence for a particular political writer to be considered 'liberal'. The latter generates a further temptation to focus disproportionately on divergences and inconsistencies from those purportedly 'core' characteristics. As Fernández Sebastián has noted, to study Iberian liberalism from the viewpoint of this 'presumed canonical liberalism' leads inexorably to a focus on the 'errors, imperfections, and [erroneous] departures from that model'.³² In short, any attempt to define liberalism afresh must strenuously avoid perpetuating old canards that breath new life into old prejudices by contrasting a normative, or unitary, liberalism with purportedly anomalous variations.

Beyond the three unresolved debates described in the preceding paragraphs, any effort to recast the history of liberalism must grapple with the utility of transnational perspectives, the subject of a fourth debate. As noted previously, the ubiquity of the notion of an 'Age of Revolutions', together with the Atlantic perspective underpinning it, has resulted in distortions and disparagements of Iberian and Latin American intellectual history. This situation had instigated some scholars to resist, reconfigure, or outright reject 'Atlantic History' and other such transnational or trans-regional frameworks as epistemologically rickety since they are prone to perpetuating notions of Iberian and Ibero-Latin American inferiority.³³ Breña, for example, has attacked the Atlantic

²⁷ Fernández Sebastián, 'Introducción', in *La aurora de la libertad*, 14. From the vantage point of Spanish social and political history, Isabel Burdiel has argued along similar lines: 'the "open ideology" of liberalism, combined with its intense local character, implied a deep social and political heterogeneity'; see Isabel Burdiel, 'Myths of Failure, Myths of Success: New Perspectives on Nineteenth-century Spanish Liberalism', *Journal of Modern History*, 70 (1998), 892–912 (895).

²⁸ As Eduardo Posada-Carbó and Iván Jaksic judiciously pointed out, 'it would be a mistake to speak of a liberal tradition in the singular, or to refer to "liberals" in a generic way, as if they were adherents of a uniform and well-defined school of thought'; see Eduardo Posada-Carbó and Iván Jaksic, 'Introducción: naufragios y sobrevivencias del liberalismo latinoamericano', in *Liberalismo y poder. Latinoamérica en el siglo XIX*, edited by Eduardo Posada-Carbó and Iván Jaksic (Santiago, 2011), 21–42 (41).

²⁹ Pamela Pilbeam, *The 1830 Revolution in France* (Basingstoke, 1991), 80, 98.

³⁰ Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile*, 25.

³¹ See Kalyvas and Katznelson, *Liberal Beginnings*, 11–12, 17.

³² Fernández Sebastián, 'Introducción', in *La aurora de la libertad*, 27.

³³ A useful discussion of these issues may be found in Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic 1550–1700* (Stanford, CA, 2006), chapter 6 ('Toward a "Pan-American" Atlantic').

perspective, claiming that emphasis on similarities and continuities often masks crucial differences.³⁴ This is a fair point, to be sure, but the proposed solution—a retreat from broader frameworks—is suboptimal. How can the Atlantic perspective be discarded when the history of liberalism cannot be studied apart from the indisputably transatlantic processes which resulted in Latin American independence and the creation of constitutional monarchies in Spain and Portugal?³⁵ Nevertheless, the potential perils associated with deploying trans-regional and pan-linguistic frameworks, in which geopolitical asymmetries are surreptitiously implanted, like an intellectual Trojan Horse, is a serious concern for scholars working on the intellectual history of the Iberian World.

There are two further dangers, beyond the four debates touched on previously, which the contributors to this special issue seek to avoid: linguistic-cultural self-ghettoisation and national essentialism. Liberalism was not only transatlantic, but also pan-European. Any effort to rewrite aspects of the history of liberalism, or even small fragments of that history, cannot ignore the vital role of transnational interconnections *within* Europe in the forging of liberalism in the first half of the nineteenth century. The 1812 Spanish Constitution was translated across Southern Europe.³⁶ Beginning with the allure of, and solidarity felt with, Portuguese and Spanish patriots struggling, with British assistance, to throw off the Napoleonic yoke, contemporary British conceptions of liberty were influenced by (and certainly reshaped in dialogue with) observations of, and elaborate fantasies concerning, the political events convulsing the Iberian Peninsula.³⁷ Not only were the fervent political imaginaries of romantic poets such as Byron, Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge enkindled, but also political writers including Bentham, Bowring, and James Mill (and many lesser lights) were continuously fascinated. During the Peninsular War, for example, Coleridge remarked that it ‘was not until the Spanish insurrection that Englishmen of all parties recurred, in toto, to the old English principles, and spoke of their Hampdens, Sidneys, and Miltons with the old enthusiasm’.³⁸

After the Congress of Vienna, many exiles from Restoration Southern Europe, ‘the martyrs of truth and freedom’ (in John Bowring’s phrase), converged on London to plot and scheme, where they enjoyed the hospitality of the staunchly Whig Holland House.³⁹ Their conspiratorial efforts culminated in the wave of Southern European revolutions beginning in 1820—in Naples, Piedmont, Spain, and Portugal—which established (or, in the case of Spain, re-established) constitutional monarchies to be governed in accordance with the Constitution of Cádiz. Constitutionalism was identified with civilisation, as well

³⁴ Breña, *El imperio de las circunstancias*, 186.

³⁵ A key work is *Revoluciones hispánicas: independencias americanas y liberalismo español*, edited by François-Xavier Guerra (Madrid, 1995).

³⁶ According to Manuel Moreno Alonso, the first translation was an 1813 Italian one, in Messina, with further Italian translations published in Milan, Piacenza, and Rome in 1814; see Moreno Alonso, *El miedo de la libertad en España. Ensayos sobre liberalismo y nacionalismo* (Seville, 2006), 40.

³⁷ As Henry Kamen argued, ‘military intervention, together with sympathy for Spanish exiles [...] stimulated appreciation for Peninsular civilization and gave a push to English creativity’; see Henry Kamen, *The Disinherited: Exile and the Making of Spanish Culture, 1492–1975* (New York, NY, 2007), 197.

³⁸ Quoted in David Howarth, *The Invention of Spain: Cultural Relations between Britain and Spain, 1770–1870* (Manchester, 2007), 32. More generally, see Diego Saglia, *Poetic Castles in Spain: British Romanticism and Figurations of Iberia* (Amsterdam, 2000).

³⁹ John Bowring, *Observations on the State of Religion and Literature in Spain, made During a Journey through the Peninsula in 1819* (London, 1819), 13. Bowring eventually published a translated collection of Spanish romances in 1824 (*Ancient Poetry and Romances of Spain*). On Spanish exiles in London and the connection to liberalism, see *Londres y el liberalismo hispánico*, edited by Gregorio Alonso García and Daniel Muñoz Sempere (Madrid, 2011).

as moral and political regeneration.⁴⁰ Southern European liberalism in the early 1820s was unified by its adherence to the 1812 Constitution, which Portuguese poet and politician Almeida Garrett described as the foundation of ‘*o sistema da liberdade meridional*’, a system of southern liberty.⁴¹ Indeed, the 1812 Constitution was the recognisable base of the Neapolitan and Portuguese Constitutions of the 1820s, to say nothing of several Spanish-American constitutions of the 1820s that incorporated many of its articles with scant or mere cosmetic revision, though the anxiety of influence in the former empire led to the suppression of explicit references to the Peninsular constitutional text.⁴²

Largely forgotten now beyond the borders of the countries in which they transpired, the 1820 to 1823 revolutions which swept across Southern Europe inspired those elsewhere who drew dismal contrasts with their own nation’s circumstances.⁴³ At the outset of the *Trienio Liberal*, Bentham wrote

Magnanimous Spaniards! For years to come, not to say ages, in you is our best, if not our only hope! To you, who have been the most oppressed of slaves, to you it belongs to give liberty to Europe [...]. As to our liberties – our so much vaunted liberties – inadequate as they always were, they are gone: corruption has completely rotted them.⁴⁴

Countless plays depicting revolutions, conspiracies and regime changes in Southern European locales graced the London stage in the early 1820s.⁴⁵ Such anecdotes, and the episodes and personages to which they gesture, are often absent from the existing Anglophone historiography, or at least neglected, in stark contrast to Philhellenism, which has never lacked for historians, perhaps because of the ostensible success of the Greek cause, in establishing a sovereign state.⁴⁶ Yet it should be remembered that political Philhellenism was subsumed in the general cause of Mediterranean anti-absolutist liberalism until the overthrow of the ephemeral liberal Iberian and Italian regimes.⁴⁷

With the demise of the *Trienio Liberal*, the remnants of the leadership that managed to escape persecution were forced, again, to retreat into exile. It is estimated that between 12,000 and 20,000 émigrés left Spain in 1823, most of whom returned only after the

⁴⁰ Maurizio Isabella, ‘Mazzini’s Internationalism in Context: From Cosmopolitan Patriotism of the Italian Carbonari to Mazzini’s Europe of Nations’, in *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism, 1830–1920*, edited by Christopher A. Bayly and Eugenio F. Biagini (Oxford, 2008), 44, 47.

⁴¹ João Baptista da Silva Leitão de Almeida Garrett, *Portugal na balança de Europa* (Lisbon, 2005, first published in 1830), 41.

⁴² For Naples, see John Davis, *Naples and Napoleon: Southern Italy and the European Revolutions (1780–1860)* (Oxford, 2006), 297–304. For Portugal, see Isabel Nobre Vargues, *A aprendizagem da cidadania em Portugal (1820–23)* (Coimbra, 1997); Gabriel Paquette, *Imperial Portugal in the Age of Atlantic Revolutions: The Luso-Brazilian World, c. 1770–1850* (Cambridge, 2013), especially chapter 2. On Spanish American appropriations, see *Connections after Colonialism: Europe and Latin America in the 1820s*, edited by Matthew Brown and Gabriel Paquette (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2013).

⁴³ See, for example, Richard Stites, *The Four Horsemen: Riding to Liberty in Post-Napoleonic Europe* (Oxford, 2014).

⁴⁴ Jeremy Bentham, ‘Letter to the Spanish Nation on a Proposed House of Lords’ (1820), in *Three Tracts Relative to Spanish and Portuguese Affairs with a Continual Eye on English Ones* (London, 1821), 16.

⁴⁵ Saglia, *Poetic Castles in Spain*, 30–32 and passim.

⁴⁶ For example, see F. Rosen, *Bentham, Byron and Greece: Constitutionalism, Nationalism and Early Liberal Political Thought* (Oxford, 1992).

⁴⁷ The connection among these various Mediterranean struggles for Lord Byron, who also maintained that it was exigent to turn the Greek cause into a European one, is made plain in Roderick Beaton, *Byron’s War: Romantic Rebellion, Greek Revolution* (Cambridge, 2013), 60–65, 227.

'ominous decade' had passed, with death of the unrepentantly absolutist Ferdinand VII in 1833.⁴⁸ London and Paris again became the chief destinations and, following the July Revolution, Paris emerged as the epicentre of political refugee activity.⁴⁹ In London and Paris, they formed what historian Maurizio Isabella has felicitously christened 'the Liberal International'.⁵⁰ This internationalist tendency of liberals revealed itself when, following the defeats of the Piedmontese and Neapolitan revolutionary governments in 1821, the exiles from those ephemeral regimes decamped for Spain and Portugal, where many joined the 'European Constitutional Brotherhood', founded by Neapolitan General Guglielmo Pepe in Madrid.⁵¹ Not only did exiles congregate in the same cities, but they socialised in the same circles and participated in common, transnational conspiracies to restore constitutionalism to their respective countries, including the plot planned by the unfortunate General Torrijos, whose execution on the beaches of Málaga in 1830 symbolised the dashed dreams of an entire generation.⁵² In the mid-1820s, Spanish political exiles watched the consolidation of nation-states in former Spanish America with approval, believing (in vain, as it turned out) that material assistance from one of the fledgling republican regimes might be forthcoming. One Spanish exile newspaper editorialist's expectations of transatlantic solidarity's benefits were so great that he went so far as to assert that were Spanish America's independence consolidated then 'European despotism would disappear forever and Spain would become again the great nation it was before the conquest of America'.⁵³ Even as late as 1833, the presentiment that the outcomes of political struggles in the Mediterranean and the Ibero-Atlantic might resonate more broadly was widespread. The Duke of Wellington, for example, chagrined by the victory of the constitutionalists in the Portuguese Civil War, feared that the new government would 'collect round it a band of revolutionists who will from thence plot and intrigue in safety [...] and] will shake to their foundations every government in Europe including that of France'.⁵⁴ Southern European liberalism's impact on Northern Europe, then, was vast even if it proved ephemeral.

It was not only Northern Europe that gazed upon Southern Europe, of course. Iberian intellectuals modified their views and self-perceptions as well during exile. In general terms, the process was characterised by sophisticated processes of adaptation and assimilation. Such influence may be detected among those Iberian exiles in Restoration

⁴⁸ Kamen, *The Disinherited*, 189. J. F. Fuentes argued that the 20,000 figure is high, but conceded that there were at least 12,000 Spanish political exiles in the 1823–1833 period, of whom 6,000 can be identified by name; see J. F. Fuentes, 'Afrancesados y liberales', in *Exilios. Los éxodos políticos en la historia de España, siglos XV–XX*, edited by Jordi Canal (Madrid, 2008), 156–57. On Spanish History after the overthrow of the *Trienio Liberal*, see Josep Fontana, *De en medio del tiempo: la segunda restauración española, 1823–34* (Barcelona, 2006).

⁴⁹ On Paris as a place of political refuge on the eve of the July Revolution, see Lloyd S. Kramer, *Threshold of a New World: Intellectuals and the Exile Experience in Paris, 1830–1848* (Ithaca, NY, 1988). On the revolutionary tumult of 1830 in broader European perspective, see Clive Church, *Europe in 1830: Revolution and Political Change* (London, 1983).

⁵⁰ Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile*.

⁵¹ Guy Thompson, 'Mazzini and Spain', in *Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism*, edited by Bayly and Biagini, 246.

⁵² On Torrijos and the '*pronunciamiento insurreccional*' in the 1820s, see Irene Castells, *La utopía insurreccional del liberalismo: Torrijos y las conspiraciones liberales de la década ominosa* (Barcelona, 1989).

⁵³ 'Reflexiones sobre el Estado Actual Político de Hispanoamérica', *Ocios de españoles emigrados* [London], October 1825, 305. On this theme, see Monica Ricketts, 'Together or Separate in the Fight Against Oppression? Liberals in Peru and Spain in the 1820s', *European History Quarterly*, 41 (2011), 413–27.

⁵⁴ Duke of Wellington to John Wilson Croker, 30 September 1833, in *Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts: The Prime Ministers' Papers. Wellington. Political Correspondence I: 1833–1834*, edited by John Brooke and Julia Gandy (London, 1975), I, 321.

France (and subsequently during the July Monarchy) and in Britain, many of whom softened their radical stances and embraced something akin to the *juste milieu*.

The point here is that bilateral traffic and intellectual cross-fertilisation was ubiquitous and constituted the crucible in which liberalism was forged. Whatever unstable amalgam of political ideas historians ultimately choose to designate as ‘European liberalism’, there is little doubt that it emerged from fruitful interactions between different regions, intellectual traditions, and languages. Diffusionist models, long recognised by historians as perversely inadequate, deserve a final *coup de grâce*. South-south interactions and exchanges, as well as north-south and east-west (at least in Atlantic terms) linkages, exerted great influence on the development of liberalism, as recent studies have demonstrated. The four essays in this special issue of *History of European Ideas* reveal the richness of Iberian liberal political thought in the early nineteenth century, particularly its fecund intersection with other European intellectual currents, from romanticism to national historiography to political economy. The essays also provide ample evidence for Iberian liberalism’s connections—intellectual debts as well as contributions—to the broader phenomenon of liberalism as it developed in other national and linguistic contexts in the first half of the nineteenth century.

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