

The Texts of Peter Martyr's *De orbe novo decades* (1504-1628): A Response to Andrew Hadfield*

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In his informative reading of Richard Eden's English translation of Peter Martyr's *De orbe novo decades*, Andrew Hadfield rightly takes as his starting point the view that "the question of how to read" a colonial text must be firmly placed at "the centre of any investigation into attempts at reconstructing a history of the Americas" (1). In this reply, I wish to develop Hadfield's argument by considering some of the problems of interpretation faced by a modern reader in relating Eden's English translation of 1555 to the original Latin volumes written between about 1500 and 1526 by Peter Martyr (an Italian working in Spain); and then to consider how subsequent English and Latin editions published between 1577 and 1628 variously repackaged Martyr's and/or Eden's work for their own historical moment and readership. In this way, I hope to demonstrate how Hadfield's post-colonial awareness of the complexities of the language(s) of early-colonial discourse may also be informed by a sensitivity towards the historical and bibliographical evidence offered by these individual volumes as, variously, examples of early-humanist historiography, politically motivated English reinterpretations of Spanish imperialism, Protestant colonialist propaganda, and even as opportunist money-making ventures by astute stationers. Above all, the various editions, translations, and adaptations of *De orbe novo decades* published between 1504 and 1628 reflect a series of key intellectual redefinitions of the inherently unstable and continually evolving perspectives of European writers on the political, spiritual, and commercial significance of New World discoveries.

*Reference: Andrew Hadfield, "Peter Martyr, Richard Eden and the New World: Reading, Experience and Translation," *Connotations* 5.1 (1995/96): 1-22.

I. The Publication of Martyr's Works: 1504-1530

A consideration of the intellectual environment within which the original drafts of Martyr's *De orbe novo decades* were composed—in terms of prevalent attitudes to the compilation of historical and geographical works—is essential for an informed study of their significance to early-colonial discourse. During the first half of the sixteenth century, Hispanic historiography of Latin America lay almost exclusively in the hands of a socially dominant Catholic minority, frequently drawn from members of the mendicant orders or the Society of Jesus. Their primary concern, both spiritual and temporal, was to utilize the interpretation of the past as a means of informing present and future action. A new literary form developed, commonly known as the "History of the Indies," in which chroniclers produced, to modern eyes, a strangely eclectic blend of chronological narrative, descriptions of landscapes, justifications of military actions, political interpretations, and anthropological curiosity over the customs, beliefs, and social practices of the native population. The years between 1504 and 1530—encompassed by the earliest publication of a fragment of Martyr's *Decades* (Venice, 1504) and the posthumous Alcalá edition of 1530 containing all eight decades—spanned one of the most crucial periods in the intellectual and stylistic development of New World historiography.

At the heart of this new form of historical writing lay an autobiographical and epistolary style of narration (self-consciously reminiscent of the classical ideology of Caesar's letters) in which the explorers, and later *conquistadores*, sought to convey to those at home (and, implicitly, to preserve for posterity) their remarkable experiences.¹ But another distinct level of (re-)interpretation and control over early-colonial discourse needs to be defined when we consider that some of the earliest chroniclers of New World discoveries, including Peter Martyr (and, incidentally, Richard Eden), never themselves set foot in these new territories. Instead, their stated purpose (evolving from their combined roles as public servants and intellectually curious humanists) was to provide a discriminating, but often heavily "official," channel through which the increasing volume of first-hand accounts of exploration and conquest from the New World could be carefully sifted, presented, and even rewritten or censored. It is, I believe, through this pivotal role—in

blending the immediacy of personal experience with the demands of state control—that Martyr offered his most important lessons to later historiographers.

The reign of Ferdinand and Isabella provided Spain with its first real sense of a national union, through their own persons, of Castile and Aragon. In one of his earliest letters Peter Martyr explained how he had chosen to leave his native Italy in 1587 because it was a divided country in favour of Spain, now fruitfully unified. Several other reasons doubtless played a part in Martyr's decision to remove himself from Italy to this new European world, almost certainly including a desire to involve himself in the Spanish war against the Moors, along with a direct offer of lucrative employment from Inigo López de Mendoza, Conde de Tendilla and younger son of the Marqués de Santillana. But, most importantly, Spain offered to Martyr an opportunity to test and define himself as a court and church servant in a new and increasingly expansionist environment. This personal experience of an apparently still infinite world of exploration and self-definition, so eloquently expressed in the 1530 Alcalá edition of the *Opus epistolarum* (his collected correspondence), also stimulated Martyr's literary concern in the *De orbe novo decades* to validate personal experience as a means of informing national and religious policy in New World exploration.² In the words of Colin M. MacLachlan, the broadening of the Spanish world to encompass a new continent required "an intellectual reordering of reality"; and it was to this great literary enterprise that the early drafts of Martyr's *De orbe novo decades* were dedicated.³

Turning now to Martyr's own published works, it is important to note that he never professes to write as a professional historian or chronicler but prefers to present himself as adopting the epistolary form of telling a simple story through letters ("I never tooke penne in hande to wryte lyke an historiographer, but only by epistels scribeled in haste, to satisfie theym, from whose commaundementes I myght not drawe backe my foote").⁴ In the tenth book of the first decade, Martyr details how he came to write the earliest parts of *De orbe novo decades*. In particular he emphasises that the first two decades were penned as private correspondence in response to requests for information from Italian friends and patrons about the strange and exciting Spanish discoveries

undertaken during the first ten years of the new century. These epistles, through their (presumed) circulation in manuscript and later in print, would have been read as a kind of precursor to the periodical press. But for the modern reader, any attempt to relate these manuscript letters and their subsequent printed versions to the *De orbe novo decades* as translated by Richard Eden requires several progressive levels of bibliographical interpretation.⁵

The bulk of Martyr's personal manuscript letters to friends and patrons, survive now only in the *Opus epistolarum* (Alcalá, 1530; reprinted by the Elzevir publishing house at Amsterdam in 1670), which includes some 813 Latin letters dating from 1488 to 1525, a period covering almost the entirety of Martyr's working life in Spain. As with so many other printed letters of the period, there can be no certainty over their proximity to the original holograph correspondence which they profess to record. Even the evidence offered by the preliminaries of the *Opus epistolarum* is confusing. Here it is claimed that the letters were gathered together by the Marqués de Mondejar and Antonio de Lebrija but, as Henry R. Wagner has persuasively argued, there is good reason to believe that the volume may have been printed, at least in part, from Martyr's own copy letter-book. Regardless of the actual means of their compilation, we cannot know how extensively they were edited, reordered, or even rewritten by those friends, stationers, and patrons who were involved in the compilation of the 1530 Alcalá edition. Furthermore, even though over 50 of these letters deal specifically with New World exploration and discovery, they have only rarely been collated against the narratives printed in *De orbe novo decades*.⁶ Hence, perhaps the most authoritative and immediate of Martyr's personal responses to Spanish exploration remain largely inaccessible to the modern English reader.⁷

The publishing history of *De orbe novo decades* up to the 1516 edition is no less complicated. The first published section was printed in Italian at Venice in 1504 as *Libretto de tutta la navigatione de Re de Spagna de le isole et terreni nuovamente trovati*, a chronicle-like abstract of only the *First Decade*.⁸ As with the letters, the level of textual intervention by other hands in this publication remains an intriguing issue, with some historians dismissing it as merely a piratical printing.⁹ But Anzalo Tevisan (also known as Trurgiano), a secretary of the Venetian embassy

to Spain, recorded in a letter to Domenico Malipiero at Venice how he had come across an interesting account of the voyages of Columbus and Pinzón by Martyr. Tevisan claimed to have copied it and then translated it himself into Italian before sending his manuscript version to Venice for publication. Both Tevisan's manuscript and his letter to Malipiero have survived, and it seems feasible to surmise that Martyr may have been aware of this project, even if he played no direct part in its fruition.

Three years later at Vicenza was published *Paesi novamente ritrovati: Et novo mondo de Alberico Vesputio florentino intitulado* (1507), an account of various Portuguese voyages, with as its fourth book, an exact reprint of the *Libretto*.¹⁰ This 1507 volume formed the foundation of a broader European dissemination of Martyr's work, with later editions printed at Milan in 1508 (Italian and Latin) and 1512 (Italian), at Nuremberg in 1508 (German), and at Paris in 1515 (French). However, it is important to note that this text of the *First Decade*, divided into 30 brief chapters, rarely concerned itself with much beyond a basic narrative of Colón's and Pinzón's voyages up to 1501. Significantly for the sections of the *De orbe novo decades* discussed in Hadfield's article, virtually all of Martyr's later material on the natives, their customs, and the landscape of the New World was either omitted or not available to Trevisan (or perhaps not as yet written by Martyr).

It is only with the folio volume, *P. Martyris Angli Mediolanensis Opera* (Seville, 1511), that we come to an edition of the *First Decade* almost certainly printed with the direct involvement of Martyr himself. But even this version of the text needs to be viewed within the overall context of its publication as merely one section of the "collected works" of an increasingly renowned scholar. For the first time, the *First Decade* is endowed in this volume with some of the trappings of what we would now expect from "travel writing." For example, it is preceded by an informative account of Martyr's famous 1501/2 embassy to Egypt, *Legatio babylonica*; and a leaf placed in some copies between signatures f and g of the *First Decade* contains on its recto a map of the West Indies and on its verso an epistle explaining the map to Cardinal Ximénez.¹¹ Rounding off what was essentially a humanist miscellany celebrating Martyr's diverse talents was a collection of Latin verses either by or on Martyr (reprinted at Valencia in 1520), celebrating his erudition and role

in Spanish public life. Up to 1511, then, the somewhat erratic publication of Martyr's writings seems to have served two distinct purposes: firstly, the feeding of natural public curiosity over strange and unknown lands; and, secondly, the celebration of Peter Martyr himself as a man of eclectic intellectual interests.

The first authoritative edition, from a modern perspective, of the first three decades was published by the stationer Antonio de Lebrija, with Martyr's collaboration, as *De orbe novo decades* (Alcáala, 1516).¹² It is primarily upon this edition that Martyr's subsequent reputation as an historian rests. The second and third decades, clearly attractive in purely commercial terms in offering their readers exciting, up-to-date news from the New World (the last letter was dated 13 October 1516), were endowed with the added prestige of an address to Pope Leo X. Furthermore, the overall dedication of the whole volume "To the moste noble Prince and Catholike Kynge, Charles" emphasized Martyr's desire (as well as those of his patrons and stationer) to collect together "these marveyulous and newe thynges" as a means of confirming to the rest of Europe the might of the Spanish monarchy and the extent of its still-growing colonial aspirations. In his eloquent dedication, Martyr triumphantly utilizes the gift of his book as a public assertion of Spanish claims over New World territories:

We offer unto yowe the Equinoctiall line hetherto unknowen and burnte by the furious heate of the soonne and unhabitable after the opinion of the owlde wryters a fewe excepted: But nowe founde to bee most replenished with people, faire, frutefull, and most fortunate, with a thowsande llandes crowned with golde and bewtiful perles, besyde that greate portion of earth supposed to bee parte of the firme land, excedynge in quantitie three Europes. Come therfore and embrace this newe worlde.¹³

The contrast pointedly made here between the speculative accounts of "the owlde wryters" and Martyr's more empirically based "modern" decades is a crucial one, deliberately seeking to place the 1516 Alcáala edition of *De orbe novo decades* at the very turning point of "old" and "new" perspectives on geography and travel. Furthermore, this edition's function was unmistakably expansionist in intent, promulgating several key concerns of the inquisitive and acquisitive role of Spanish exploration. At the centre of its narratives lay an awareness of the

pressing need to define, in spiritual, moral, and political terms, the essential nature of the indigenous population. The tenth book of the first decade, for example, opens with a powerful evocation of the New World as a kind of pre-lapsarian Eden ("there were many newe landes founde, and nations which lived naked and after the lawe of nature," Arber 103), but one flawed only by the presence of "savage man," who is characterized by that most potent and colonially defining of human horrors, cannibalism ("For all the beastes of the Ilandes, are meeke and withowte hurte, except men which (as we have sayde) are in many Ilandes devourers of mans fleshe," 103). Pointedly linked with "the beastes of the Ilandes," the natives provide at this point a mirror to European (and specifically Spanish) men only in their violence and warlike accomplishments

It is clear that the publication of the 1516 Alcáala edition of *De orbe novo decades* formed part of an eloquent international expression of Spanish commitment to a programme of colonial evangelization.¹⁴ Martyr's heavy references to the royal concern for the establishment of groups of settlers in urbanized colonies ("It was the kynges pleasure that they shulde remayne in these landes, and buylde townes and fortresses," Arber, p. 104), recast Spanish acquisitive, gold-driven imperialism as a manifestation of Christian missionary zeal:

Oh God: howe large and farre shal owre posteritie see the Christian Religion extended? Howe large a campe have they nowe to wander in, whiche by the trewe nobilitie that is in theym, or mooved by vertue, wyll attempte eyther to deserve lyke prayse amonge men, or reputacion of well doinge before god. (Arber 105)

At the same time, as Hadfield delineates (12) in his discussion of the incident (from the third book of the *Second Decade*) involving Vasco Núñez de Balboa and the son of the local king, Comogrus, Martyr's 1516 narratives may also be interpreted as simultaneously urging Charles V to be cautious in his colonial policies, implicitly linking the processes of imperial expansion with the inherent, and perhaps unavoidable, dangers of national fragmentation. Such concerns are also apparent in the *Fourth Decade*, probably written in May 1520 and printed at Basle in 1521 as *De Nuper sub D. Carolo Repertis Insulis, simulatque incolarum*

moribus, R. Petri Martyris.¹⁵ Prefaced with a dedication by its printer to Margaret, the daughter of Maximilian, (and lavishly packaged with an ornamental title-page border reputedly designed by Holbein), the *Fourth Decade* was specially written to describe "the new country." It details, for example, the kinds of objects brought back by the *procuradores* of Cortés and gives a well informed description of the country so far as was known on 10 July 1519, when Cortés and his followers departed.¹⁶ In effect, the *Fourth Decade* marks a self-conscious shift in Martyr's narratives from a concern with the intellectually inquisitive aspects of Spanish exploration to its essentially acquisitive nature as a tool of colonial exploitation.

If the historical significance of the publication of the 1521 edition of Martyr's *Fourth Decade* is heightened by its coincidence with the ruthless military suppression of Mexico in the same year, then the 1530 Alcalá edition of all eight decades, *De orbe novo Petri Martyris ab Angleria Mediolanensis Protonotarii Cesaris senatoris decades*, may be regarded as the harbinger of the culmination of Spanish imperial policy in the New World. Published three years before the conquest of Peru, the 1530 edition would have suggested to many of its European readers that it was really only a matter of time before the might of the Habsburg empire seized control of quite literally the whole world.¹⁷

This posthumous 1530 volume, probably put together by Antonio de Lebrija, offered conclusive evidence of Martyr's international reputation as an interpreter, rather than merely as a chronicler, of the growth of Spanish colonialism during the first quarter of the sixteenth century.¹⁸ Of paramount importance, in purely geographical terms, was Martyr's well-founded scepticism towards the claim that Columbus had discovered a new route to Asia. His widely adopted coinage of the phrase "*Novi Orbis*," denoting a land unknown to Ptolemy and the ancient writers (rather than necessarily a separate, undiscovered continent), made an indelible contribution to the language and geographical concepts of New World narratives. Other chroniclers and historians, including de las Casas, Galvano, Grynaeus, Montalboddo, Münster, Oviedo, and Ramusio, used him directly (and sometimes without acknowledgement) as a source for their own narrative accounts. Martyr's original works continued to be published throughout the 1530s,

although his popularity seems to have been on the wane by 1540 and his accounts of the New World were eventually superseded by the more widely circulated ones of Oviedo and Gómara.¹⁹

II. The English and Latin Editions of Martyr's Works: 1555-1628

The first of Richard Eden's translations about the New World to be published in England was not Martyr's *Decades* but part of Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia*, published under the title, *A treatyse of the newe India* (1553) and described by Boise Penrose as the "first really serious geographical work to be printed in England."²⁰ Eden was doubtless encouraged to turn to Martyr by the success of this clearly written translation of Münster's work, but his motives were also specifically linked to the opportunities for patronage and influence offered by the royal marriage of Mary and Philip in July 1554. Appointed as William Cecil's private secretary in 1552, as Hadfield notes (pp. 12-13), Eden appears to have already been closely associated during the Protectorate of Northumberland with several individuals active in exploring the opportunities for the commercial exploitation of colonial ventures. After gaining "through the favour of certain Spanish nobles" a position in Philip's English treasury, Eden's most public means of overtly committing himself to the new Catholic regime was his translation of Martyr's *Decades*.²¹ Hadfield rightly emphasises how Eden strove in the preliminaries to his translation to harness England with the imperial achievements of Spain as a means of boosting the then flagging domestic economy. ("But if I shuld here particularly and at large declare howe Englande is in fewe yeares decayed and impoverysshed, and howe on the contrary parte Spayne is inryched . . .," Arber 54).²²

The contrast in tone between the preliminaries of Eden's 1553 translation of Münster's *A treatyse of the newe India* and Martyr's *Decades* of 1555 is stark. In the earlier work, Eden predictably emphasised the riches that had been derived by Spain from the New World but he neither adopted the word "colony" nor advocated direct English involvement in overseas colonization. However, only two years later Eden's preface sought to recast Martyr's text as conclusive proof of the

efficacy of colonization.²³ Even his marginal glosses now stridently trumpeted the spurious material and spiritual gains brought to the native Indians by colonization (e.g., "The benefites that the Indians have receaved by the Spanyardes," Arber 50; and "The Indians subdued to the fayth," 52). Eden's twenty-nine pages of laborious introduction (in comparison with Martyr's three) blatantly sought to refashion the intellectual framework of the original *Decades*, primarily as a means of countering Protestant anti-Spanish sentiment. In Eden's edition, the *conquistadores* are praised, as Hadfield notes (14), "in a manner that is alien to both Peter Martyr's preface and his actual text." Furthermore, the idea of "exchange" is keenly adopted by Eden to imply that this process of voracious colonial conquest had been engendered largely through the beneficent workings of trade and commerce. As Hadfield rightly concludes (15): "The propagandist implications of Eden's words are obvious: the conquest of the Americas will be easy, will bring untold benefits and involves no moral dilemmas . . . the English have every reason to copy their great European rivals."²⁴

Eden's recasting of the messages to be drawn from Martyr's narratives, as might be expected from such a determined (if newly converted) propagandist for Anglo-Spanish relations, is distinctive for its partiality and apparent indifference to the intellectual integrity of its source materials. Nor did Eden's translation even seek to convey the culmination of Martyr's careful revisions and additions to his own work since Eden apparently did not know of the 1530 Alcalá complete edition of the *Decades*. Otherwise, he would have recognized the *Fourth Decade* as the one first printed in Basle, which he called the third decade in his translation. Instead, working probably exclusively from the 1533 Basle edition, Eden was using a text of the first three decades itself based, in the main, upon the 1516 Alcála edition.²⁵

For Eden, working in 1554/55 from a narrative source that was by then almost forty years out of date, Martyr's *Decades* provided perhaps little more than a convenient basis for the theory ("assertion" is probably a more accurate word) that the actions of colonizers could provide a model for social unity; and that imperial expansion, cloaked in the guise of missionary zeal, could stimulate both internal and external cohesion. As Hadfield's eloquent reading of the encounter between Balboa and

Comogrus's son so powerfully illustrates, the native in Eden's translation becomes a figure of multiple and contradictory identities: an alien form of human life, embroiled in self-destructive violence and ripe for salvation through forced conversion; a "noble savage" capable of holding up a mirror to European colonialist excesses; or even a passively willing convert to Spanish domination (symbolized by Comogrus's own act of self-negation and reverence in changing his name to Charles). In Eden's hands, Martyr's subtle exposition of humanist concepts of historical narration and his sense of an ongoing geographical (re-)definition of the known world are subverted into the mercenary service of a partisan view of Anglo-Spanish relations in the mid-1550s. Just as Comogrus's submissive name-change symbolised his total acceptance of European rule, so Eden invites his own readers to embrace without further question the example of Spanish imperialism—and, it might be argued, to betray (at least from an early-Elizabethan perspective) their own sense of an English Protestant national identity.

While Eden's 1555 volume surrounded the *Decades* with its own specifically pro-Spanish definitions of colonial expansionism, printed translations into other languages of Martyr's work—most notably into Italian (Venice, 1563, a reprint of a 1534 text) and Dutch (Antwerp, 1563, from the 1534 German edition)—continued to foster Martyr's reviving reputation throughout both Catholic and Protestant Europe as a reliable interpreter of early New World discoveries.²⁶ His authority was further bolstered by the influential 1574 Cologne edition of *De rebus oceanicis et novo orbe, decades tres [i.e., four] Petri Martyris ab Angleria Mediolanensis*.²⁷ Perhaps stimulated by the positive reception of this Latin edition, in 1576-7 Richard Willes undertook what appears to have been a shrewdly calculated conversion of Eden's 1555 Marian, pro-Spanish translation into a more acceptable volume for an early-Elizabethan, Protestant readership.²⁸ Willes was Eden's literary executor and, if the account of his career by E. Irving Carlyle in the *Dictionary of National Biography* is to be accepted, Willes's shifts in religious and political loyalties—an Oxford educated Jesuit who renounced his Catholicism to make a profession of Protestant conformity—were as complex as Eden's had been during the Protectorate of Northumberland and the reign of Mary.

Willes's dedication of the 1577 edition to Bridget, Countess of Bedford, makes abundantly clear his two major objectives in republishing Eden's 1555 text. Firstly, it seems reasonable to assume that he wished to associate Martyr's *Decades* with the current popular interest occasioned by the publication of Humphrey Gilbert's *A discourse of a discoverie for a new passage to Cataia* (1576), STC 11881, and Martin Frobisher's first two voyages in search of this route (1576, 1577). But above all, Willes also sought to confirm the academic status of geography as an intellectual discipline worthy of the attention of university scholars and court patrons. He strongly emphasised, therefore, his desire to provide a reliably updated and corrected reference manual of New World matters for Elizabethan Protestant readers of the 1570s.²⁹ Concluding with an overt plea for personal preferment, Willes hoped that when he died, "some other professor of Cosmography" would do the same for his writings (sig. [***]3^r).

Following a minor 1582 Basle edition in German (based on the 1521 Basle text in Latin and the 1534 Strasbourg text in German of the *Fourth Decade*), what might be regarded as the culmination, in terms of geographical worth and editorial care, of the publishing history of Martyr's works was reached in the 1587 Paris edition, *De orbe novo Petri Martyris Anglerii Mediolanensis, protonoarij, & Caroli Quinti senatoris decades octo, diligenti temporum observatione, & utilissimis annotationibus illustratae*, edited by Richard Hakluyt with a Latin dedicatory epistle to Sir Walter Raleigh.³⁰ In this address, dated 22 February 1587, Hakluyt casts a sharp eye over both the contradictions inherent in Spanish imperialism and the scholarly achievements of Peter Martyr. The following passage illustrates Hakluyt's judicious tone:

For he [Martyr] has published to the whole Christian world in his learned commentaries all that the Spaniards have achieved, whether praise- or blame-worthy, in a space of four and thirty years, on land and on sea, partly in the discovery of the vast regions of the New World, partly in subjecting them to the power of Castile, starting his account from the very first beginnings, and diligently preserving both the careful description of places, and the succession of events . . . he depicts with a distinguished and skilful pen and with lively colours in a most gifted manner the head, neck, breast, arms, in brief the whole body of that tremendous entity America, and clothes it decently in the Latin dress familiar to scholars. And so often as the events themselves demand he

examines the hidden causes of things, inquires into the hidden effects of nature, and from the innermost shrines of his erudite philosophy he draws comments which he frequently introduces like brilliant ornaments of his style the fairest of gems.(363)³¹

Hakluyt's carefully crafted words of commendation take the reader back in time, past the transitory and partisan manipulations of Eden's 1555 English translation, to appreciate once more Martyr's importance as a recorder of first-hand accounts of exploration and conquest. Nor does Hakluyt hesitate to raise the complexities inherent in interpreting what we would now call (and what he also appears to recognize as) a "colonial text":

If turning aside from the plants of the earth and the brutes of the field, we consider what he says of mankind and our own species, what Cicero, what Sallust, what Caesar or Tacitus has written with greater elegance, brevity, lucidity or more weightily or with greater fidelity of the manners of peoples, the positions of cities, the foundations of colonies, the cults of idols, the rites of sacrifice, the passions of war, the kinds of armaments, the feuds of neighbours, the jealousies of families, the results of battles, the states and the changes of kingdoms? . . . In many passages he praises the constancy of the Spaniards and their stubborn spirit, and with the warmest approbation he recounts their endurance in thirst, hunger, dangers, toils, watches, and in their frequent troubles. But, at the same time, he also records their avarice, ambition, butchery, rapine, debauchery, their cruelty towards defenceless and harmless peoples, and occasionally the disasters suffered by their warriors and the slaughter of their armies at the hands of uncivilised races, and those too unarmed, and, so far is he from the suspicion of adulation, that he hunts out with the utmost perseverance crimes committed by them. (363-64)

While, of course, Hakluyt's dedication to Raleigh is very much in keeping with English attitudes towards Spain in the year before the attempted Armada invasion, it also deftly reshapes Eden's original intention in translating the *Decades* into English. Hakluyt explains that he put together this edition:

. . . partly that other maritime races, and in particular our own island race, perceiving how the Spaniards began and how they progressed, might be inspired to a like emulation of courage. For he who proclaims the praises of foreigners, rouses his own countrymen, if they be not dolts. (365)

But unlike Eden who could offer his English readers only a collaborative and subordinate association with the might of the Spanish empire,

Hakluyt holds up Martyr's *Decades* as an inspiration for an independent and vigorous English imperialism.³² And at the very centre of this nationalistic spirit is placed the presiding figure of Raleigh, who in 1584 had been granted a patent to take possession of unknown lands in America in Queen Elizabeth's name, leading to the ill-fated Virginia settlement of Sir Richard Grenville of 1585:

There yet remain for you new lands, ample realms, unknown peoples; they wait yet, I say, to be discovered and subdued, quickly and easily, under the happy auspices of your arms and enterprise, and the sceptre of our most serene Elizabeth, Empress—as even the Spaniard himself admits—of the Ocean. (367)

Hakluyt's address coincided with a second but no more successful attempt to colonize Virginia in 1587, under the governorship of John White at Roanoke. It also may be interpreted as providing, albeit indirectly, an authoritative support to Thomas Hariot's *A brief and true report of the new found land of Virginia* (1588), STC 12785, widely regarded as one of the most determinedly propagandist colonial texts of the mid-Elizabethan period.

Hakluyt's 1587 Latin edition of Martyr's *Decades* also played a major part in the Jacobean resurrection of Martyr's reputation, when in 1612 Michael Lok, a former Governor of the ill-fated Cathay Company (1577) and Consul for the Levant Company at Aleppo (1592-94), assembled a new English translation, based in part upon Eden's 1555 edition, with the last five books translated from Hakluyt's 1587 text.³³ Jacobean interest in American colonialism had been strong since James's refusal in 1604 to recognize Spanish claims to a monopoly of trade and territory in most of the New World; and Michael Lok's personal associations with Hakluyt dated back well into the reign of Elizabeth.³⁴ An English settlement had been made at Jamestown in Virginia in 1607, recorded in Captain John Smith's *A true relation of Virginia* (1608); and it is clear from Lok's Latin dedication to Sir Julius Caesar (A3^r-4^v) and his preface "To the Reader" (B1^r) that Lok sought to republish Martyr's *Decades* as timely propaganda for this project. Detailing how Martyr's book "containeth the first discovery of the west Indies, together with the subjection, and conquest therof," Lok proposes:

All whiche, may bee exemplary unto us, to performe the like in our *Virginea*, whiche beeing once throughly planted, and inhabited with our people, may returne as greate benefitte to our Nation in another kinde, as the Indies doe unto the Spanyard. (sig B1^v)

Alongside these colonial concerns, we should also note that the 1612 edition probably only came about because of some specific commercial considerations within the Stationers' Company. In 1611 Thomas Adams, then a Junior Warden of the Company, had acquired the copyrights of the late George Bishop, including shares in Hakluyt's *Voyages*, Camden's *Britannia*, and the *Chronicles* of Holinshed and Stow. A compact quarto volume of Martyr's *Decades* would have fitted well with these and other of Adams's own copyrights at this period, which included Richard Knolles's, *A historie of the Turkes* (1611), a Latin edition of Castiglione's *The Courtier* (1612), and Philemon Holland's translation of Pliny's *History of the World* (1611).

This 1612 text was reissued, probably in about 1625, in the first instance as a means of using up unsold stock.³⁵ In 1625 Andrew Hebb succeeded to Thomas Adams's shop, the Bell in St Paul's Churchyard, to whom he had formerly been apprenticed. In subsequent years, Hebb either owned or had shares in several major works once possessed by Thomas Adams, including Camden's *Britannia* (1637), Spenser's *The shepherdes calender* (1631), and the *Works* (1632) of Josephus. But it also seems probable that Hebb's commercial instincts in publishing Martyr's *Decades* were fuelled by the taking over in 1624 of the Virginia settlement (then about 1,200 people) by the Crown as England's first royal colony.

Similarly, this same version of Martyr's *Decades* was again reissued in 1628, this time by the stationer Michael Sparke (notorious in 1633 as the publisher of William Prynne's *Histrio-mastix*), at a time of considerable English colonial activity in the region of the West Indies and the mainland of South America.³⁶ Following Raleigh's final voyage to the Orinoco in 1617-18, Roger North had succeeded in planting a small colony on the Amazon in 1619; and in 1627 he founded an incorporated Guiana Company. Within the traditional geographical realms of Spanish imperialism, the English made claims on Barbados and St. Christopher (1624-25), and Nevis, Antigua and Montserrat (1627-32), culminating

in 1627 with King Charles I's grant to the Earl of Carlisle of a proprietary patent for the colonization of all the Caribees.³⁷ Following this 1628 reissue, Martyr's *Decades* were not reprinted in English until the 1812 edition of Hakluyt's *Voyages*.

To conclude this bibliographical survey of Martyr's *Decades*, we may return briefly to the opening (1) of Andrew Hadfield's article, where he quotes David Read's advice: "we should be extremely cautious about hypostatizing a single, stable version of colonialism out of the flux that surrounds the early English activity in North America." By adding to Hadfield's informative critical perspectives a bibliographical context for the English (and more broadly European) access to Peter Martyr's *Decades*, this reply seeks to emphasise how an awareness of the specific circumstances of the publication of each individual edition or reissue of the *Decades* may inform our understanding of Spanish, Elizabethan, and Jacobean attitudes towards New World geography and colonialism.³⁸ The complex publishing history of Martyr's *Decades* between 1504 and 1628 clearly illustrates how a critical decoding of the language(s) of colonialism may also be complemented by a bibliographical awareness of the often divergent ways in which a text was made available in print to successive generations of readers.

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NOTES

¹Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500-c.1800* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1995) 11, traces how Rome provided "the ideologues of the colonial systems of Spain, Britain and France with the language and political models they required."

²In his discussion of the preface to the 1516 edition of *De orbe novo decades*, Hadfield (10) provides a useful list of geographical and intellectual oppositions inherent to Martyr's presentation of his subject matter ("Spain / Italy, Unity / Fragmentation, Expansion / Contraction, Christianity / Paganism, Knowledge / Ignorance," etc.). Lorenzo Riber, *El Humanista Pedro Martir de Angleria* (Barcelona, 1964) provides a concise survey of Martyr's career and writings.

³Colin M. MacLachlan, *Spain's Empire in the New World: The Role of Ideas in Institutional and Social Change* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988) ix. MacLachlan (5) traces this impulse in historiography to "reorder reality" in part to the establishment of the University of Alcalá de Henares in 1498, which provided Erasmian humanism with a Castilian institutional base.

⁴The *First Three English books on America [?1511]-1555 A.D. Being chiefly Translations, Compilations, &c., by Richard Eden, From the Writings . . . of Pietro Martire . . . Sebastian Münster . . . Sebastian Cabot . . .*, ed. Edward Arber (Birmingham, 1885) 104 (henceforth Arber). I have modernizing Arber's text, to the standards detailed in note 2 of Hadfield's article.

⁵A bibliographical survey of Martyr's published works is provided in Pedro Mártir de Anglería, *Décadas del Nuevo Mundo: Vertidas del latin a la lengua castellana por el Dr. D. Joaquín Torres Asensio* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Bajel, 1944) xxiii-lii, henceforth *Décadas* (1944). Henry R. Wagner, "Peter Martyr and His Works," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 56 (1946): 239-88, should also be consulted, along with the relevant entries in vol. 17 of the *National Union Catalogue, Pre-1956 Imprints* (henceforth *NUC*) and vol. 5 of the *Catalogue of the British Library, Pre-1956 Imprints* (henceforth *BL Cat.*).

⁶See *Décadas* (1944) xxx-xxxi; *BL Cat.* 5. 531-2; *NUC* 17. 18; and Wagner 286-87. The most accessible modern edition of the letters is the *Epistolario, Estudio y traducción por José López de Toro*, 4 vols, Documentos inéditos para la Historia de España (Madrid, 1955-57). *Lettres de Pierre Martyr Anghiera relatives aux decouvertes maritimes des espagnols et des portugais*, tr. P. Gaffarel and F. Louvet (Paris, 1884-85) includes 43 letters on maritime discoveries translated from the 1670 edition of *Opus epistolarum*.

⁷Three letters in the Spanish edition of Martyr's letters (vol. 3, no. 540, pp. 159-60; no. 547, pp. 175-76; and no. 560, p. 203), for example, refer to Vasco Núñez de Balboa, whose exploits form a central part of Hadfield's article (2-12).

⁸Only two surviving copies of this 1504 edition are known: in the Library of San Marco at Venice (lacking title-page), and in the John Carter Brown Library, Providence, RI (Brown University), from which copy Lawrence C. Wroth edited a facsimile edition with introduction (Paris, 1929/30). See *Décadas* (1944) xxiv.

⁹See, for example, Samuel Eliot Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Southern Voyages A.D. 1492-1616* (New York: OUP, 1974) 19.

¹⁰Martyr later claimed that this printing was taken without his consent from a draft owned by a Venetian ambassador (presumably Trevisan) but, strangely, he made no mention of the 1504 printing of his *First Decade*. See Wagner 278-79, and *Décadas* (1944) xxv. Hadfield (19n2) states that the first three decades were published separately in Venice (1504), Seville (1511), and Alcalá (1511) [in fact, 1516] but he does not mention this 1507 Vicenza edition and its various reprints at Milan, Nuremberg, and Paris.

¹¹See *Décadas* (1944) xxvi; *NUC* 17. 18; and Wagner 243-44.

¹²See *Décadas* (1944) xxvii. These three decades were translated into French and published at Paris in 1532 (see *NUC* 17. 16); and then reprinted in the original Latin at Basle in 1533. Some extracts were also printed in Italian in 1534 (see *NUC* 17. 17).

¹³Arber 63-64, prints a translation of this dedication.

¹⁴See Anthony Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination. Studies in European and Spanish-American Social and Political Theory 1513-1830* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1990), chapter 1, "Dispossessing the Barbarian" 13-36.

¹⁵See *Décadas* (1944) xxix. The *Fourth Decade* was reprinted in the Basle 1532 edition of the *Novus orbis*; and was appended to the Antwerp edition (1536) of Brocard's

Descriptio Terrae Sanctae; and to the Rotterdam 1596 edition of the *Novus orbis*. See NUC 14. It was also included, with only minor changes, in the 1530 edition.

¹⁶See Wagner 252-55, for Martyr's sources for the *Fourth Decade*.

¹⁷See Pagden, *Lords of all the World* 44, for evidence of this image of the globally voracious Spanish.

¹⁸See *Décadas* (1944) xxx; and Wagner 256-58, for the contents of all eight decades. There is also an English translation of this edition by Francis Augustus McNutt, *De Orbe Novo: The Eight Decades of Peter Martyr D'Anghera*, 2 vols (1912; rpt. New York: B. Franklin, 1970).

¹⁹See Wagner 270; and Kirkpatrick Sale, *The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990) 222. Morison, *Southern Voyages* 20, notes other borrowings from Martyr. *Décadas* (1944) xxxiii-xxxvi, details major editions of Martyr's works published between 1532-37.

²⁰Sebastian Münster, *A treatyse of the new India . . . after the description of S. Munster* (1553, S. Mierdman f. E. Sutton), STC 18244. Boies Penrose, *Travel and Discovery in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1952) 314. See also Sale, *The Conquest of Paradise* 253-54.

²¹*The decades of the new worlde or west India. Written in Latine and tr. by R. Eden* (1555), STC 645. The potential commercial returns (and high production costs) for this 1555 edition are indicated by the number of stationers involved in its distribution: STC 645 (G. Powell for R. Jug), STC 646 (variant, with colophon, for W. Seres), STC 647 (for E. Sutton), and STC 648 (for R. Toy). See *Décadas* (1944) xxxvii; and Wagner 282.

²²See also David Gwyn, "Richard Eden Cosmographer and Alchemist," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 15.1 (1984): 13-34.

²³David B. Quinn, *Explorers and Colonies: America, 1500-1625* (London: The Hambleton Press, 1990) 102, notes how Eden made "the first clear call since [John] Rastell for English colonization in North America."

²⁴Eden may have also been prompted to plead for the commercial exploitation of South America by a concomitant English interest in northern trade expansion, as indicated by the granting in 1555, in the name of Philip and Mary, of the charter of the Muscovy Company.

²⁵A miscellany of other pro-Spanish material was also published with Eden's 1555 translation, including (Arber 201-04) Pope Alexander's Bull of Donation; (208-42) a translation of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés's *The Natural history of the West Indies* (1526); (214-32) Antonio Pigafetta's *A briefe Declaration of the Vyage [sic] or Navigation made aboute the Worlde* [1519-22]. See Arber ix.

²⁶See *Décadas* (1944) xxxviii-xl.

²⁷See Hadfield 19n2; NUC 17. 15; and *BL Cat.* 5. 528.

²⁸*The history of travayle in the West and East Indies . . . Done into Englyshe by R. Eden. Newly set in order, augmented, and finished by R. Willes* (1577), STC 649. See *Décadas* (1944) xl; and *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company 1576 to 1602—from Register B*, ed. W. W. Greg and E. Boswell (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1930) 2.

²⁹Willes corrected Eden's error over the *Fourth Decade*, added an accessible abridgement of the last four decades, and provided in his "Preface to the Reader" (sig. Ooo3' ff) an extensive list of corrections to the 1555 text. He also sought to reassess the geographical accuracy of Martyr's observations ("My profession enforced

me to cut of some superfluous translations, and to fill up the rest of his doings with P. Martyr's other writings [along with Eden's translation of Ludovico Bartheima's *Travels in the East in 1503*], and finally to furnishe his want with my owne store," sig. [**]1^v).

³⁰See *Décadas* (1944) xli for the 1582 Basle edition. See *ibid.* xli and NUC 17. 15, for the 1587 Paris edition. Hakluyt's edition has been reprinted (New York, 1869).

³¹*The Original Writings & Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluyts*, vol. 2, with an introduction and notes by E. G. R. Taylor, The Hakluyt Society, 2nd ser., vol. 77 (London, 1935) 356-69. See also *The Hakluyt Handbook*, vol. 1, ed. D. B. Quinn, The Hakluyt Society, 2nd ser., vol. 144 (London, 1974) 293.

³²James A. Williamson, *The Tudor Age* (London: Longman, 1953; rpt. 1979) 351-55 provides concise analysis of the economic background to mid-Elizabethan colonial tracts. He notes (353) how in 1584 Hakluyt addressed to the Queen, at Raleigh's instigation, his *Discourse of Western Planting*, advocating English exploitation of the New World as an answer to poverty and over-population. In 1585 Adrian Gilbert had also been granted a patent for the North West Passage.

³³*De novo orbe, or the historie of the west Indies. Comprised in eight decadas. Three, tr. into English by R. Eden, the other five, newly added by M. Lok* (1612), STC 650. See *Décadas* (1944) xlii.

³⁴In 1582, for example, Lok had contributed a map detailing the possibilities for a North-West Passage to Hakluyt's *Divers Voyages*, which recounted John Cabot's original explorations and the potential of the New World for colonizing. See Williamson, *Tudor Age* 351.

³⁵*The historie of the West-Indies. Published in Latin by Mr Hakluyt, tr. into English by M. Lok, Gent* (1625?), STC 651, reissued the pages of the 1612 edition, with the first quire cancelled and a new title-page, omitting entirely Richard Eden's name. Lok's preface "To the Reader" was retained. There has been considerable confusion over the date of this reissue: *Décadas* (1944) xliii, describes this edition, without explanation, as both "1626" and "1628"; and NUC 16-17, lists it as both "1605" and "1612."

³⁶*The famous historie of the Indies: Published by L.M. Gent [i.e. M. Lok]. Second edition* (1628), STC 652, another reissue of the pages of the 1612 edition, with a new title-page. *Décadas* (1944) xliiii, misdates this reissue as "1620." See also Wagner 283. Michael Sparke evinced a prolonged interest in colonial texts, publishing John Smith's *History of Virginia* (1624), Luke Foxe's *North West Fox* (1635), and Mercator's *Atlas* (1635).

³⁷J. A. Williamson, *A Short History of British Expansion*, vol. 1: *The Old Colonial Empire* (London: Macmillan, 1922; rpt. 1930) 156, 211.

³⁸This reply also seeks to clarify a persistent vagueness (or indifference) towards the publishing history of English translations of Martyr's *Decades*. To cite only two examples from well-respected authorities on the subject: Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Southern Voyages* 207, while examining Balboa's discovery of the Pacific, casually states that he has used "Richard Eden's translation of 1612" (in fact, Michael Lok's translation of Hakluyt and adaptation of Eden); and Boucher, *Cannibal Encounters* 25, states that the *Decades* were "translated by Richard Willes in 1577 and more completely by Michael Lok in 1612," without any mention of Richard Eden.