

Enthusiasmus by the Jesuit Missionary Marcus Antonius Kappus, A. D. 1708: Re- discovery of a Lost Poem and its Cultur- al-Historical Significance

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Abstract

Jesuit Marcus Antonius Kappus (1657–1717), born in Kamna Gorica (north-western Slovenia), set sail for the New World in 1687. He spent the next thirty years as a missionary among the indigenous Ópata people in the far northwest of Mexico, then part of the Spanish colony of New Spain. In 1708, he wrote a poem entitled *Enthusiasmus sive, soLeMnes LVDI PoëtICI MetriIs, pro DVrante anno 1708 ChronographICI sVb PyroMaChIa DepICtI*, which was published in Mexico City. The poem consisting of 276 hexameters in Latin, each printed as a chronogram, was devoted to Louis Philip of Bourbon, the newly-born Prince of Spain (1707–1724). For a long time, only the title of the poem was known, and it was even thought to be lost, as no exemplar could be found in either American or European libraries or archives. Janez Stanonik devoted a special study to the poem, published in *Acta Neophilologica* in 1995. The author of this article, prompted by Stanonik's research on Kappus, then came across a copy of the poem in 2021 during an online search in the Biblioteca Foral de Bizkaia in Bilbao. *Enthusiasmus* is of great significance for understanding Kappus' missionary and political activities, as well as his literary and artistic capabilities. The article in this issue of the journal discusses the fate of the long-hidden poem, the historical circumstances of its creation, and provides an overview of its content, message and cultural-historical significance within the political and social context of contemporary New Spain and more broadly of the Spanish empire during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714). Envisaged for the forthcoming

issue is a transcription of the poem together with its English translation accompanied by a linguistic and literary-historical study, as well as a synthesis of the current knowledge on this extraordinary work by Kappus.

Keywords: Marcus Antonius Kappus, Jesuit, missionary, poem in Latin, chronograms, prince Louis Philip of Bourbon, celebrations of 1708, Mexico City, New Spain, printing house of the Rodríguez Lupercio family

INTRODUCTION: JESUIT KAPPUS IN NEW SPAIN AND THE REDISCOVERY OF HIS LOST POEM

Jesuit Marcus Antonius Kappus (1657–1717) was born in Kamna Gorica near Radovljica (north-western Slovenia). In 1687, he set sail from Cádiz for the New World and spent the second half of his life as a missionary in the far north-west of Mexico, then part of the Spanish colony of New Spain. In the remote, partly mountainous, but mostly arid or semi-arid regions of Sonora, he worked among the indigenous Ópata people, directing missions in Cucurpe, Mátape and Arivechi. His work was part of the global evangelising project of the Society of Jesus. It was also an integral part of the colonisation processes in present-day Mexico, which the Spanish Crown pursued after having conquered the Aztec state in the 16th century and subjugated the native peoples.¹

As a collaborator of Eusebius Franciscus Kino, the renowned Tyrolean missionary, cartographer and explorer (1645–1711), Kappus assisted in the exploration of new areas in the little-known Pimería Alta (northern Sonora and southern Arizona), on the frontier with resistant peoples such as the Pima and the Apache. He also played an important role in exploratory expeditions and the transmission of new geographical knowledge on California. This arid and inhospitable land on the Pacific was of great strategic significance to the Spanish Crown as a base for maritime routes to Asia, both to China and especially to the Spanish Philippines. At that time, California was erroneously regarded as an island (although cartographers in the 16th century had already correctly depicted California as a peninsula, but this knowledge was then lost). The Spanish conquerors, and particularly Jesuit missionaries, in the 16th and 17th centuries were eager to explore the coasts and interior of California, and to establish outposts, settlements and missions there. In his role as royal cartographer, Kino explored California between 1683 and

¹ The bibliography on this period of Spanish colonial or Mexican history, as shaped by the Jesuits, is extensive; here is a selection of recent monographs that discuss Sonora and are related to Kappus: Hausberger 1995; *idem* 2000; Clossey 2010 [2008]; Navajas Josa 2009; Yetman 2012; Classen 2013.

1685.² His expeditions to the Gulf of California resulted in a new map depicting Baja California as a peninsula, entitled *Passo por tierra a la California*. In 1701, Kappus sent it to an acquaintance in Vienna. The map was published in 1707 in the German journal *Nova litteraria Germaniae aliorumque Europae regnorum anni MDCCVII collecta* as a significant contribution to new geographical knowledge in Central Europe.³

Kappus assumed various responsibilities alongside his missionary work, but mainly served as rector of a mission district or collegium at the seat of a mission. From 1715 until his death, he also served as *visitador* of all the Sonoran missions, which was the highest office within the Jesuit mission system in Sonora. In his work and legacy, he ranks among the most prominent missionaries from Slovene lands, alongside Ferdinand Augustin Hallerstein (1703–1774) in China, Frederic Baraga (1797–1868) in the Great Lakes region of North America and Ignatius Knoblehar (1819–1858) in Central Africa.⁴

The life and work of Kappus have so far been most extensively examined by the Germanist and literary historian Janez Stanonik (1922–2014). Between 1986 and 2007, he published seven articles in the journal *Acta Neophilologica* that presented and exhaustively commented on hitherto largely unpublished letters that Kappus had sent to Carniola or to the then German lands.⁵ He devoted a special study to the poem *Enthusiasmus*.⁶ This work, with the longer title *IHS Enthusiasmus sive, soLeMnes LVDI PoëtICI MetrIs, pro DVrante anno 1708 ChronographICI sVb PyroMaChIa DepICtI ...* is of great significance for understanding Kappus' missionary and political activities in their historical and geographical contexts. Its title page relates it was written by Marcus Antonius Kappus, priest of the Society of Jesus, in praise of the new Spanish prince on the frontiers of the American Indies and the terrestrial globe, and published in Mexico City by the heirs of the widow of Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio in 1708. Apart from the title, the poem was long unknown and could not be found in the American or European libraries or archives despite intensive searching. It was therefore inaccessible to researchers, and even Stanonik only knew it from the published title page and a few bibliographic references. In his excellent study, he carefully examined these data and

2 On the exploration and cartography of California see, e.g. León-Portilla 2001 [1989]). The most recent synthesis, which includes Jesuit explorations of the north-western frontiers of New Spain and also mentions Kappus, is the monograph by Altic 2022.

3 The fundamental study on this subject is by Stanonik 1986, especially pp. 45–48. Also see Altic 2022, 103. See further Maver 2016, especially pp. 62–67. Cf. also Prenz Kopušar 2021, especially pp. 271–284, and Maver 2023b, especially pp. 70–76.

4 For Kappus's life and work, see the most recent bibliography in the monograph by Šabec et al., 2021, 369–387. Also see Maver 2023a, and Šabec 2021a and 2021b.

5 Stanonik 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1997.

6 Stanonik 1995.

was able to arrive at “important and sufficiently reliable conclusions regarding the general orientation and significance of Kappus’ work”.⁷ Having said that, he acknowledged the difficulty in drawing conclusions on the true literary value of the poem without knowing a single verse.⁸

Maja Šabec, Igor Maver, Ana Cecilia Prenz Kopušar and I published the monograph *Marko Anton Kappus – slovenski jezuit na koncu Novega sveta* in the spring of 2022 (with the date 2021) in *Razprave FF* in Ljubljana. It was while gathering material for this monograph in January 2021 that I made the fortuitous discovery – I came across a copy of this poem during an online search in the *Biblioteca Foral de Bizkaia* in Bilbao. It was included in a small publication, bound together with other texts in a larger book and therefore hidden, and had only become accessible following the digitisation of the library material in 2018. It allowed us to include in the monograph a chapter on the poem together with a transcription of the text, reproductions of the pages and a commentary. With the exception of two inaccessible documents, we collected and commented on everything Kappus is known to have written, but had mostly been unpublished and scattered across archives and libraries in Mexico and the United States, as well as Europe (Rome and Ljubljana). This comprises forty-five documents of diverse content, from personal letters, a solemn Jesuit vow, reports, lists, accounts, orders and so forth (also entries in baptismal registers for twenty-three children), as well as the poem itself. Thirty-five documents were written in Spanish, six in Latin and three in German, while the poem is also in Latin. The preserved sources confirm what the evaluator at the Jesuit headquarters in Rome recorded in the list of missionaries by individual provinces: Kappus’ literacy (*Profectus in litteris*) was marked with a superlative – *optimus*.⁹ This archival material has now been integrally translated into Slovene for the first time. In doing so, we also fulfilled Professor Stanonik’s wish for further study and monographic publication of Kappus’ written legacy, when he concluded his research on Kappus and summarised the state of knowledge in 2007.¹⁰ The poem *Enthusiasmus* completes this legacy and, as an exceptional work, also enriches it. The present contribution in this excellent journal, founded in 1968 by Professor Stanonik, is dedicated to him as the initiator of new research and a prolific researcher of the life and work of Marcus Antonius Kappus.

This article is in part a shortened and in part a supplemented version of the relevant chapter from the recent monograph. It discusses the fate of the long-hidden poem, the historical circumstances of its creation, an overview of its content

7 Stanonik 1995, 59.

8 Stanonik 1995, 67.

9 Document kept in the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Rome, MEX. VI, f. 34r, No. 216, and f. 22r under the name *Marcus Capus*.

10 Stanonik 2007.

and message, and its cultural-historical significance within the political and social events of contemporary New Spain and broader of the Spanish empire. Envisaged for the forthcoming issue of the journal is a transcription of the poem together with its English translation, an accompanying study with a linguistic and literary-historical commentary, as well as a synthesis of the knowledge on this work by Kappus as an echo of the historical events surrounding the birth of the Spanish heir to the throne, Louis Philip, in 1707.¹¹

HISTORY OF SEARCH AND STUDY

As mentioned above, no surviving copy of the poem was known to the researchers of Kappus' legacy until our rediscovery, and it was even considered lost. The few known details came from bibliographic overviews of the Mexican printed publications of the colonial period, and these were based solely on the title page. The first to study Kappus' poem in detail was Janez Stanonik, who found its earliest mention in the *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, a work that Augustin and Aloys de Backer together with Carlos Sommervogel published in several editions in Brussels and Paris in the second half of the 19th century.¹² Based on this work, José Toribio Medina compiled a considerably more precise Mexican bibliography in eight volumes, *La imprenta en México 1539–1821*, issued in Santiago de Chile between 1908 and 1911; he also mentioned several important details concerning Kappus' poem.¹³ Medina's vast bibliography, comprising as many as 69 682 titles of printed works from the Spanish colonies in the Americas and the Philippines, was reprinted in two volumes in Santiago de Chile in 1958, but it is still not available in the digital form.¹⁴ His information on Kappus' poem is thus not included in the virtual library *Biblioteca virtual Miguel de Cervantes*, maintained by the University of Alicante,¹⁵ nor in the *Biblioteca Digital de Humanidades* at the University of Veracruz. The latter has issued a special catalogue of prints from New Spain, including works from the press of Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio and his successors – but Kappus' work is not among them.¹⁶

11 See Nabergoj 2021. I would like to thank Dr Maja Šabec for her help and advice in preparing the article, Andreja Maver for translating the Slovene text into English and Dr Oliver Currie for amending the English translation.

12 Stanonik 1995, 64. He drew the information on Kappus' poem from the 1893 edition, Vol. IV, p. 916.

13 Medina published the text on Kappus in Vol. III, No. 2174 (cited by Stanonik 1995, 64; also Stanonik 2007, 70). We could not access the publication.

14 Medina 1958.

15 Biblioteca Digital Miguel de Cervantes brings together databases from 58 institutions and foundations from Spain and 26 from the Americas. See www.cervantesvirtual.com.

16 Rodríguez Domínguez 2012.

The information of the first three writers concerning the poem (information absent from Mexican bibliographies) that “the work comprises 276 verses, each of them a chronogram” led Stanonik to infer they must have had access to a copy of Kappus’ poem from a European library, of which nothing further is known.¹⁷ Bernd Hausberger, who likewise cited Sommervogel, recorded the same information on the 276 chronograms, in addition to the title page, in his bio-bibliographical overview of Jesuit missionaries in Mexico.¹⁸ In her 1982 anthology of Slovene literature in North America *Nasi na tujih tleh*, Jerneja Petrič wrote that the only known copy was in private ownership in the United States (without offering more precise information on the source).¹⁹

Medina reported that, after a lengthy search in Europe and America, he succeeded in finding one copy of Kappus’ work in the Biblioteca Palafoxiana in Puebla, Mexico. This library, founded in 1646, was used as a repository for books confiscated from Jesuit missions after the expulsion of the Jesuits from Mexico in 1767. It is therefore conceivable that a copy of Kappus’ poem may have found its way there. On the basis of Medina’s report, Stanonik endeavoured to obtain Kappus’ work from the library in Puebla, but discovered that there too it was lost or at best mislaid.²⁰

According to Medina (cited by Stanonik), the work was a booklet with a title page and four unpaginated sheets, measuring 30 cm or more in height, with borders and typographic ornamentation or vignettes. The text comprised 276 verses, each printed as a chronogram, meaning that the letters of the text that also represented Roman numerals were printed larger than the others.²¹ The sum of the Roman numerals in each verse was 1708, the year in which the poem was composed or printed.

Medina stated that there was a dedication from the Jesuit missionaries in America to the Spanish prince Louis Philip on the verso of the title page. In his article presenting the historical background to the poem, Stanonik nevertheless argued that Kappus dedicated the work to Philip of Anjou as the new Spanish King Philip V. He presumed that Kappus had published it on the occasion of the festivities held in Mexico City celebrating the enthronement of the new Spanish ruler from the House of Bourbon, as a politically opportune act given that he himself came from Habsburg territory. This presumption is particularly striking and based on the opinion that the festivities with fireworks on the accession of the first Bourbon to the Spanish throne only took place in 1708, and that Kappus’

17 ‘*Cette pièce renferme 276 vers, dont chacun est un chronogramme.*’; Stanonik 1995, 64.

18 Hausberger 1995, 196, Note 382.

19 Petrič 1982, 412. A recent additional verification with the author has yielded no new information.

20 Stanonik 2007, 70–71.

21 The letters/numerals are: M = 1000, D = 500, C = 100, L = 50, X = 10, V = 5 and I = 1.

poem appeared shortly afterwards, when news of the political change had reached Mexico City. Although Philip, Duke of Anjou, had been the lawful ruler of Spain since 1700 and his accession had sparked the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714), it was according to Stanonik only with the Battle of Almansa on 25 April 1707 that the pro-Habsburg side in Spain was decisively defeated and numerous Habsburg sympathisers severely punished. He proposed that this may have prompted Kappus to publish the poem as an expression of his loyalty to the new monarch and – given the dedication on the title page – also on behalf of the Jesuit missionaries in Mexico in general.²² We should note that Stanonik was not the first to propose that Kappus dedicated the poem to Philip V; Janez L. Zaplotnik voiced this opinion in the manuscript of his book published posthumously in 2016.²³ Zmago Šmitek, for his part, wrote that Kappus' work represented an early attempt in America to link poetry, history and ethnology.²⁴

A COPY IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY!

In February 1991, almost thirty-five years ago, I inquired in vain after Kappus' poem in several institutions in Mexico City and in Hermosillo, Sonora. Nothing was known of it either in the *Archivo General de la Nación* or in the *Biblioteca Nacional* and its associated *Anexo de la Biblioteca Nacional*, which housed a considerable amount of unclassified archival material. My enthusiasm was therefore all the greater when, in January 2021 while searching the internet, I chanced upon the poem in one of the Spanish libraries! The small publication is kept in the *Bizkaiko Foru Liburutegia/Biblioteca Foral de Bizkaia* in Bilbao. Since 2018, the booklet has been accessible in digitised form on the library's website and thus available to all. Yet, as far as we know, its existence was previously unknown among the researchers of Jesuit missions in Mexico and of Mexican colonial history more generally, and evidently remained unnoticed even after its online publication. This article in English, therefore – following the Slovene monograph on Marcus Antonius Kappus of 2022 – brings the long-missing and long-sought poem by Kappus to the international scholarly public for the first time and thus fills an important gap in the knowledge of his legacy.

A copy of the poem, available in the digital repository of the regional library in Bilbao, is kept under shelfmark R-2033 (1) in its Fondo de reserva that holds

22 Stanonik 1995, 65–66, and 2007, 71–72.

23 Zaplotnik 2016, 58. Such an opinion was also deemed correct in the English translation of Zaplotnik's Slovene text by Peter Rožič, editor of Zaplotnik's book, also in view of the fact that Kappus' contemporary and friend Eusebius Franciscus Kino dedicated his celebrated work *Favores Celestiales*, from 1708, to Philip V (Zaplotnik 2016, 137, Note 115).

24 Šmitek 1986, 126, Note 84.

incunabula, early prints and manuscripts. It is bound in leather, with impressed gilded decoration, together with other works under the collective title *Diversas ordenanzas, reglamentos, estatutos, instrucciones, providencias, alegación jurídica, informe y representaciones* ... It is not known how the booklet came into the possession of the Basque library, as it forms part of its oldest collection for which there are no reliable records concerning provenance or acquisition.²⁵

The surviving copy comprises seven sheets or fourteen unpaginated quarto pages (c. 30 cm in height) on paper,²⁶ including the library's data on the first page, archival notes on the third page and two blank pages (second and fourth). Kappus' poem itself extends over five printed sheets or ten pages decorated in the Baroque style. The third page holds the title of the 18th-century document collection to which Kappus' poem was originally assigned, written twice and in italics: *Ordenanzas de Mexico* ... and *Ordenanzas de esta Novilissima Ciudad y Fiel-Executoria de Mexico*.

The poem consists of the title page (previously the only known part and published in transcription), the page with the dedication to the addressee and four sheets, that is eight pages, of verse. Three of the four recto pages (second, third and fourth) are marked at the foot of the text with the letters B, C and D, while the verso pages are unmarked (as is the first recto page, which would therefore have been A). The text is framed by a printed border decorated in the same style as the title page and dedication. Next to the text is alternately on the left or right a column framed with an identical border, in which the line numbers are given in tens (from 10 to 270), enabling the reader to count all 276 lines.²⁷ From the third to the seventh page of the poem, these columns also contain short annotations in Spanish with content clarification.

The text on the final page only occupies the upper third of the space, below which is a border interrupted in the centre by the symbol of the Maltese cross above and the monogram IHS below. Below the border is a Baroque-style woodcut depiction of three figures on a heraldic background. The central figure is an angel with outspread wings and a headdress resembling a plume. It is flanked on

25 Kappus 1708. The original work, here partially reproduced in photograph, belongs to the bibliographic collections of the Bizkaiko Foru Liburutegia/Biblioteca Foral de Bizkaia and is the property of the library. I am most grateful to the library staff for permitting its publication and for the information on the publication partly available on the library's website (written communication 25 January 2021).

26 Quarto is the most common format for 'Mexican Baroque books', i.e. publications printed in New Spain in the 17th century with the aesthetic and stylistic, but also formal and literary characteristics of the Baroque style. According to Manzano Valenzuela's study, as many as 85.5% of the 497 works examined were in this format (Manzano Valenzuela 2021, 96).

27 The verse numbers 60, 70, 80, 180, 190, 200, 220, 230, 240, 250 and 260 do not correspond to the actual sequential numbering of the verses, but deviate by a verse or even two.

either side by a figure with a youthful face, extended wings and hair bound with a ribbon, the naked body merging into the ornament with vegetal or fruit motifs in the lower part of the depiction. Below the central figure is a heraldic frame and at the bottom of the woodcut an animal head, possibly of a wild cat (perhaps a jaguar?).

The black-and-white printing is of average quality. It is not particularly sharp in the details, with indistinct rendering of certain small letters of similar forms (such as c, i, r, t), punctuation marks and borders, especially in the left border of the final page where the ink is smudged. Nevertheless, the text is sufficiently legible and the large letters forming the chronograms are predominantly easily identifiable.²⁸ Individual letters *I* written in italics are also clearly marked.

Some letters or words could not be read with certainty, particularly where the print is poor. The printer (or perhaps Kappus himself) also evidently overlooked several letters that should have been capitalised to be read as Roman numerals and thus make the correct sum of the chronogram; we counted fifteen such chronograms.²⁹ Nine other chronograms deviate from the rule formulated by James Hilton, namely that it is essential for a good chronogram that every numerical letter be taken into account for the sum; instead, a letter that would otherwise be included in the chronogram is superfluous and is therefore given in lowercase rather than capitalised.³⁰ In Kappus' poem this is always one superfluous letter *i*.³¹ Interestingly, in three chronograms the total is 1707 (each time a missing *I* or 1),³² in one line it is 1608 (one missing *C* or *LL*, i.e. 100),³³ in another it is 1808 (one superfluous *C*, i.e. 100)³⁴ and in one case it is even 1763³⁵ – six errors apparently made by Kappus himself. With all admiration for his mastery in constructing chronograms, we may borrow the indulgent remark of the Roman poet Horace: *Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus*.

28 Kappus used the letter *U* instead of *V* in four instances, although *U* has the same numerical value as *V*, namely 5: these are Verses 114 (*Lustret*; correctly *L^Ustret*); 115 (*faU^Ces*); 224 (*ConCent^Ib^Us*) and 258 (*DegL^Utlat*).

29 Verses 10, 14, 22, 24, 48, 64, 69, 71, 114, 118, 123, 127, 129, 132 and 210. In Verse 31, the third letter *s* is superfluous in the word *eXaCtI^sIMsVs*.

30 Hilton 1882, VIII.

31 Verses 13 (*InsoMnia*); 22 (*Barbita*); 25 (*patria*); 47 (*reDire*); 54 (*fiDas*); 119 (*sIliat*); 184 (*Isti*); 243 (*soLeMnia*) and 270 (*agitant*).

32 Verses 115 (*speLæI faU^Ces, & teLa arDent^Ia proMat*), 141 (*fLagrange oppressI fLeCtantVr pon-Dere raMI*) and 163 (*hIC reCto astra petat noVa syrMate TorrIDa zona*).

33 Verse 48 (*oMInor, & grandes terrIs post nVbILa soLes*). The letter *d* should be written as *D*.

34 Verse 270 (*hIC agitant CIrCo taVros, ferItate treMenDos*).

35 Verse 272 (*trVX, aVDaX! pVnCto In CVIVs Mors VertItVr Vno*).

TITLE PAGE

The title page is printed in the woodcut technique. It features an ornamental typographic border along the edges and between individual lines of the centred text. The upper border is interrupted in the centre by the Maltese cross at the top and the monogram IHS below it. The title is located in the upper half of the page and separated from the lower part by a thinner decorative band. The lower part holds the emblem of the Society of Jesus. Below this is another thin decorative band and still further down the printing licence, place of publication, printer and year of publication (see **Figure 1**):

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 IHS

 Enthusiasmus

 five,

 JoLeMnes LVDI PoëtICI

 MetrIs, pro DVrante anno 1708 ChronographICIs

 sVb PyroMaChIa DepICtI

 &

 In gratIaM neo-PrInCIpIs HIspanIe DeCantatI,

Et sCrIptI à MarCo AntonIo De KappVs

SaCerDote SoCIetatIs IesV, GerMano,

 In AMerICanæ InDIæ, & orbIs Terræ ConfInII.

De PraELatorVM LICentII.

 Mexici: apud Hæredes Viduæ Francisci Rodriguez Lupercio.

 Anno Domini 1708.

English translation: IHS.³⁶ “Enthusiasm, or, Slemn poetic plays, represented in the current year 1708 under the fireworks in chronographic verses and recited in honour of the new emperor of Spain, and written by Marcus Antonius De Kappus, A priest of the Society of Jesus, from the German state, On the Boundaries of American Indies and of the earthly globe. With the licence of superiors. Mexico: At the Heirs of the Widow of Franciscus Rodriguez Lupercio. Anno Domini 1708”.³⁷

The title of the poem, which is characteristically Baroque and is introduced by the cross and the IHS monogram, is written in letters of varying sizes and styles, both roman and italic. The same applies to the publication information and the date at the foot of the title page. Three lines are italicised, apparently for aesthetic

36 IHS is a Christian monogram of the name of Jesus Christ, which was adopted for his seal by Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order, as General of the Society of Jesus (in 1541). It derives from the Greek word for Jesus, ΙΗΣΟΥΣ, but was later interpreted in Latin in various ways, most commonly as *Iesus Hominum Salvator* (Jesus, Saviour of Mankind).

37 Cf. a slightly different Slovène (Zaplotnik 2016, 58) and English translations (Stanonik 1995, 65).

rather than content-driven purpose – in keeping with the Baroque style of title page typography. There are eight chronograms with capitalised bold letters. The top three and the bottom two lines are written in ordinary letters; these were not suited for chronograms either because there were too few words available or because the publication details in the penultimate line did not fit the required sum. Two different forms of the letter S stand out, used without obvious rules. The same applies to punctuation, especially commas; the mark in the sixth line, following the word *DepICHI*, is apparently not a comma but a small printing blot, of which there are a few more on the title and other pages.

Kappus' poem is a challenge to translate, even for Latinists. Leaving aside the artfully constructed chronograms, this challenge lies in its concise yet varied vocabulary and the use of a specific verse form (hexameters), as well as in the meaning of individual words. Literally translating words into Slovene or English three centuries later can lead to misinterpretation and anachronistic understanding.³⁸ In addition, the text is highly specific with regard to the historical period, subject matter and cultural-historical context. Difficulties begin with translating the title text. *Solemnes ludi poëtici* literally means 'solemn poetic games' or 'solemn poetic plays'; Classical poets used the word *ludi* in the sense of 'playful activities'. When combined with the word *metris* in the following line, separated from the other words by a comma, it conveys 'solemn poetic plays with metre', or, as Zaplotnik translated into Slovene, *slavesne igre pesniške mere* – in free translation this would be *slavesne igre v verzih* or *slavesne verzificirane igre*, even *slavesna igriva poezija*. Stanonik translated it into English as 'solemn poetic plays' without including the (poetic) metres (*MetrIs*), which he rather linked to the adjective *ChronographICIs* in the same line despite the comma, that is, 'in chronographic verses' or chronograms (Zaplotnik: *s kronografi*).³⁹

The original is composed in dactylic hexameter, the set meter of epic Graeco-Roman poetry (Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, etc.). In the translation of the verses included in this article, Nada Grošelj replaced it with blank verse, i.e. unrhymed iambic pentameter, because the latter is the normal meter for narrative verse in English and thus a functional equivalent of the Classical dactylic hexameter. This adaptation, however, required some shortenings and omissions.

38 I wish to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr Nada Grošelj for the English translations of the verses and for explaining the types of verses, Assoc. Prof. Dr Matej Hriberšek for the initial translations into Slovene and for his valuable advice and corrections of my translations, classical philologist Mag. Jelena Isak Kres for her help in translating the title page and dedication, and Assoc. Prof. Dr David Movrin for corrections of the transcription of the poem and for his helpful comments on the accompanying text – all of them from the Department of Classics, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

39 The term '*chronograph*', which today differs in meaning to '*chronogram*', was for early writers of chronograms merely one of the synonymously, albeit uncritically, employed words for this type of composition – Hilton 1882, V, lists the terms *Chronograph*, *Chronicon*, *Chronostichon*, *Eteostichon* and *Eteomenehemerodistichon*.

Translating the designation *Germano*, which Kappus used to describe his origin, is also difficult. As Stanonik emphasised, the question of national identity in the 18th century is a complex one, as it could refer to the language a person spoke or the land in which they lived, while the meaning of the terms used to describe this identity varied across regions and periods.⁴⁰ Translating *Germano* as 'German' or 'of German origin' could be seen as anachronistic from the present perspective. In fact, it would even be incorrect, as Kappus considered himself a Carniolan, not a German. This is confirmed, among other sources, by the list of missionaries for the 'Indian missions' held in the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu* in Rome, which notes Kappus as 'Carniolan, born in Kamna Gorica' (*Carniolus, Steinpüchlensis*), and his language skills as 'Carniolan, German and Latin' (*Carniolice, Germanice et Latine*), with Carniolan (Slovene) listed first.⁴¹

Zaplotnik's translation identifying Kappus as 'Austrian' could also be problematic, as it neither follows the original nor reflects the historical context, again being anachronistic; *Germano* refers to a political entity (state) of Kappus rather than his ethnic identity. Kappus himself used such designations to indicate affiliation with Jesuit superiors from Austrian lands (*Austriacae ditionis operarios*), as he wrote in a letter of application (*indipeta*) to Charles de Noyelle, general of the Society of Jesus in 1685, or from territories under the Austrian Crown (*Ex Austriacae coronae ditionibus*), as noted in the regest of the said *indipeta* held in the Jesuit archive in Rome.⁴² The same meaning is employed in the list of candidates for the Mexican mission in 1685, which Austrian provincial Joannes Aboeth recorded as 'from the territories of the Austrian house' (*ex ditionibus domus Austriacae*).⁴³

An observation similar to the identification as 'Austrian' also applies to Kappus' designation *Germano* and to the term *Germania* (or *Germanien* in German), which 'refer to the whole Holy Roman Empire, to something with which the Carniolans also identified' in written sources for Carniola from the 17th and 18th centuries, and which had primarily a political-territorial connotation. The German word *Teutschland* ('Germany'), at least in Valvasor, usually denoted 'foreign' lands and, according to Vanja Kočevar, roughly meant 'the German lands of the Empire without the Habsburg hereditary lands', bearing a more ethno-linguistic connotation.⁴⁴ In our case, therefore, even the translation 'from Germany' would be problematic. Historically more appropriate would be the descriptive expression 'from the German state', which we have used despite its deviation from the original wording. We could even use 'from the Austrian lands', though this is an

40 Stanonik 2007, 62.

41 Maver 2016, 68–69; also see Maver 2021, 20.

42 Maver 2021, 21–22 and Note 14; also see Maver 2016.

43 Maver 2016, 72–73 and 75; Maver 2021, 25; cf. Nabergoj 1998, 67.

44 Kočevar 2019, 137–140; cf. Južnič 2018, 262.

expression which Kappus, in Latin, would very likely not have used given its negative political connotation, at least not in a poem in honour of the Bourbons who had replaced the Austrian Habsburgs on the Spanish throne. On the other hand, designations such as 'Mexico' and 'Germany' were indeed used by contemporary Jesuits, though naturally not in reference to independent political entities such as emerged later in the 19th century.⁴⁵

Despite the mistrust on the part of the Spanish authorities and even rejection of Jesuit missionaries from non-Spanish lands (also of 'German' merchants and other 'non-missionary immigrants' marked as 'Lutheran' and hence persecuted as heretics), Spain repeatedly permitted a limited number of foreigners to serve in its colonial missions owing to the shortage of Spanish missionaries. After 1616, candidates for missions were classified into three categories: those from territories under the Spanish Crown (subjects of Castile, Navarre and Aragon, including Sardinia) held a privileged position; 'reliable foreigners' were Spanish subjects from Portugal (during the Iberian Union), Naples, Sicily, Milan, Flanders and Franche-Comté, as well as subjects of the Austrian house, subjects of princes allied to Spain, and subjects of the Papal State; 'suspicious foreigners' who included the French, English and Dutch, after 1640 also the Portuguese. A royal *cédula* of Philip IV in 1654 forbade sending foreign missionaries to the colonies, though the constant need for mission workers led to the permission being restored in 1664 for subjects of the Spanish and Austrian branches of the Habsburgs. However, the king limited the number of non-Iberian candidates to one quarter of all missionaries in the colonies, though raising the proportion to one third with a new decree a decade later. The number of applications from Central European Jesuits was thus highest in the period 1678–1693, as is evident from the surviving *indipetae* in the Jesuit archives in Rome – Kappus being among the successful petitioners.⁴⁶

The title page bears another feature of interest, namely the particle *De* before the surname *Kappus*, which is unusual given that Antonius was not of noble birth. In the Kappus family, it was his brother Joannes who was conferred a title of nobility, in 1693. However, the title could only be used by Joannes and his descendants, not by Marcus Antonius⁴⁷ – as far as is known, the missionary never claimed nobility on account of his family. Stanonik mistakenly concluded otherwise, precisely on the basis of the *De* nobiliary particle, which he believed Marcus Antonius had begun to use after his brother's ennoblement, "obviously pleased with the new status of the family Kappus in the feudal society of Austria".⁴⁸ Yet

45 Closey 2010, 10, Note 29.

46 Closey 2010, 149–153.

47 Stanonik 1986, 34 and Note 2.

48 Stanonik 1995, 66.

this particle appears in none of Kappus' other writings, in either Latin or German form. Before Stanonik, Anton Huonder had already erroneously marked him as noble ('von').⁴⁹ The reason for the addition of *De* should rather be sought in the author's intention to compose every verse of the poem, even the title lines, as a chronogram; both *GerMano* and *De KappVs* can be seen as workable solutions in this literary arithmetic. The same likely holds for *In AMerICanæ InDIæ ... ConfInIIs*, which should be translated as 'on the borders of the American India' in the singular form. This differs from the historically accurate, though not consistently established, plural form 'on the borders of the American Indies', which is the expression that the Spanish at that time traditionally used when referring to their territories across the Atlantic, most often as the West Indies (in contrast to the East Indies on the more distant shores of Asia). Indeed, so did Kappus, for example in the above-mentioned letter of 1685 to General Charles de Noyelle, in which he asked to be sent on missions *in Indias Occidentales*.⁵⁰

The word *pyromachia* also requires some explanation. Zaplotnik translated it literally, from the ancient Greek words *πῦρ* and *μάχη* for fire and battle or fight, as 'ognjena bitka' (fiery battle), while Stanonik opted for 'fireworks', which is more accurate and makes more sense, though the notion is considerably broader. The word is of Greek origin (though not ancient, and not included, for example, in the Latin version of the authoritative dictionary of Du Cange), but it also occurs in the work of the Renaissance humanist Cornelius Agrippa from 1526 on fire and war machines *Pyromachia, Traité des feux et des machines de guerre*.⁵¹ In the 17th century and later, the term was in use as a clearly early modern coinage, for example in the work of Melchior Tetta *Pyromachia, sive Ignivm Caelestis, Elementaris, & Vitalis* etc., published in Venice.⁵² A term that also became established was *pyrotechnia*, for example in the famous work *De La Pyrotechnia* of Vannoccio Biringuccio on the art of casting and metallurgy in general, also published in Venice, in 1540.⁵³

It is unclear where Kappus came across the term *pyromachia*. Leaving aside his excellent Jesuit education, one may assume that his origins in the Kappus family, which were involved in ironworking, and in the ironworking village of Kamna Gorica gave him some practical experience and technical knowledge at least of ironworking and iron, as well as other metals. In fact, there are certain references to this effect in his letters. In a letter he wrote to his brother Joannes on 20 June 1699, for instance, he mentioned 'two large mountains of magnetic ore which is

49 Huonder 1899, 110, entry Kapp.

50 Cf. Maver 2016, 72 and 73, who translates the expression in Slovene as *Zahodna Indija*; see Note 3.

51 Brasme 2020, 10.

52 Tetta 1660.

53 Cf. Castelle 2016, 54, who cites the French edition from 1572.

as little valued as the iron and copper ore because the Spaniards pay attention to the silver mines only'.⁵⁴ He would certainly have been well aware of the rich gold and above all silver mines in north-western Mexico and particularly in Sonora; Stanonik even believes his colleagues regarded him as an expert on metallic ores.⁵⁵ In the title of the poem, however, he did not use the term *pyromachia* in the broader sense of metallurgy or metal processing, naturally with the help of fire, but rather in the sense of 'artificial fire', as certain verses further down in the poem confirm. If that is so, why did he not use *pyrotechnia*, a term established in the Spanish territories at the time? Again, we may speculate that he chose the word *PyroMaChia* with the deliberate intention of composing the chronogram, as it would have been impossible to arrive at the date of 1708 using the word *PyroteChnIa* when combined with other words in the verse.

Diccionario de Autoridades, which the Royal Spanish Academy in Madrid published in six volumes between 1726 and 1739, explains the term *pirotecnia* as 'the art concerned with all kinds of fire inventions, both in military machines and in other curious artifices for amusement and celebration'.⁵⁶ This mastery and display of fire, which spread to Mexico from Spain and are generally thought to derive from Arab knowledge (in turn originating in the Chinese invention of gunpowder), became an integral part of all manner of festivities in Mexico (we should also bear in mind the great ritual importance of fire in pre-Columbian religions). 'Artificial fires' or fireworks (*fuegos de artificio*) and 'rockets for merriment' (*cohetes de regocijo*) would have been well known to Kappus, both in a positive and a negative sense. In a letter he wrote to brother Joannes on 20 June 1699, he recounts a sad story with a moral lesson about a gambler from Mexico City who cursed God and was punished for it, as a rocket from a firework flew straight into his throat and blew his head to pieces.⁵⁷

DEDICATION TO THE HEIR TO THE THRONE

Following the title page is the dedication to the addressee framed with an ornamental border very similar to that of the title page. The ornament resembles the links of the chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece. This is a distinguished order of chivalry divided into two branches, Spanish and Austrian, after the death of its grand master and Spanish king, the Habsburg Charles II, and the subsequent War

54 Stanonik 1989, 48. The term 'magnetic ore' refers to magnetite (iron oxide).

55 Stanonik 2007, 62; cf. Nabergoj 1998, 75–76.

56 Vázquez Mantecón (2017, 51) cites the explanation of the word *pyrotechnia* from *Diccionario de Autoridades*, Vol. V, Madrid 1737.

57 Stanonik 1989, 47 and 49–50.

of the Spanish Succession. Within the border stands a coat of arms flanked by two vignettes in the upper quarter above a narrower decorative band, while the lower three quarters below the band hold the text. The coat of arms is, interestingly, the royal arms of Spain such as was in use from the 1580 union of Spain with Portugal to 1668 even though Spain had already lost Portugal and its dominions in 1640. It is therefore the coat of arms predating the reign of Charles II (ruled 1668–1700), as it still bears the escutcheon of Portugal unlike Charles' coat of arms that is without it. The depicted coat of arms, encircled by the chain of the then Habsburg Order of the Golden Fleece, is of course also different from that of the first Bourbon ruler on the Spanish throne, Philip V (ruled 1700–1724 and 1724–1746), which has the added chain of the Order of the Holy Ghost around that of the (by then Spanish) branch of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Following the dedication to Louis Philip (*Luis Felipe* in Spanish),⁵⁸ the newly-born Prince of Spain (1707–1724), the text is not composed in chronograms and begins with the initial Q on a decorated field (see **Figure 2**):

Ad Serenissimum
 LUDOVICUM PHILIPPUM
 neo--natum
 HISPANIÆ PRINCIPEM.
 QVOS ab vltimo Novi Orbis limite, tibi dedicatos offert
 Ludos Poëticos Societas Iesu, nunc non capis; capies;
 olim Serenissime Princeps. Interea pro te Maximus Pa-
 ter tuus, Gemini Orbis Monarcha gaudebit, devotos Societatis
 affectus Clemens excipiet, & ut solet, amabit. Vive, Princeps Se-
 renissime, Patris, & Matris, Avi, & Abavi, Sæculi nostri, ac
 vtriusque Orbis gaudium; atque affusam Regalibus tuis Cunis Mi-
 nimam Iesu Societatem vultu, quo Orbem vtrumque serenâsti, be-
 nignus aspice, & ut nos ames diutissimè vive & vale.
 Ita voent
 PP^s. Societatis IESU, à Misionibus
 Americae

In free translation: “*To the Most Serene Louis Philip, newly-born Prince of Spain. The poetic games, dedicated to you and offered by the Society of Jesus from the furthest bounds of the New World, you cannot yet understand; one day, Most Serene Prince, you will. Meanwhile, your great father, Monarch of both Worlds, will rejoice on your behalf, graciously receive the devoted sentiments of the Society, and, as is his custom, regard*

⁵⁸ The sources and literature also give his name (according to the baptismal record) as Luis Fernando, Luis Felipe (Phelipe) Fernando and Luis Phelipe Fernando Joseph. The name Luis was chosen after his great-grandfather, Louis XIV of France, the name Felipe after his father, Philip V of Spain, and Fernando after Ferdinand II of Aragon (Ferdinand the Catholic).

them with affection. Live, Most Serene Prince, joy of your father and mother, of your grandfather and great-grandfather, delight of our age and of both Worlds! And therefore look with favour upon the lowly Society of Jesus, kneeling by your royal cradle, with the same countenance with which you have brightened each of the two Worlds. That you may love us, that you may live long and in good health! Such is the wish of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus from the missions of America.”

It is no coincidence that in his dedication to the heir to the throne, Louis Philip, Kappus placed particular emphasis on the joy of his father Philip, then ‘monarch of both worlds’, that is, ruler of the Spanish dominions both in the Old and in the New World, at the birth of the prince. This was of exceptional importance for securing the legitimacy of the new dynasty, especially during the War of the Spanish Succession. Alongside the joy of the parents at the birth of their child, Kappus also mentioned the joy of the grandfather and great-grandfather – again not without reason. The grandfather was Louis, le Grand Dauphin, son and (never reigning) heir of the French King Louis XIV, who was thus the prince’s great-grandfather. The Sun King had played a decisive role in the political manoeuvrings of the European powers over who should succeed the childless Spanish King Charles II. He supported Charles’ last will to name as successor Philip of Anjou, grandson of Louis XIV, and his first wife, Maria Theresa of Spain, Charles’ half-sister, rather than the other principal claimant to the Spanish Crown, the Austrian archduke Charles, son of the Emperor Leopold I. A French prince on the Spanish throne threatened the balance of power on the European continent – and this led to war. Despite the geographical distance, Kappus was aware of the political situation in Europe and considered it in this dedication and in his poem, both from his own perspective and from that of the Jesuit order. What is interesting is that he dedicated the poem to the prince in the name of the Jesuits ‘from the missions of America’, rather than from New Spain or indeed from Pimería or Sonora, where he was active.

THE CONTENT OF THE POEM

The content revolves around the festivities that took place in Mexico City after the birth of the heir to the throne, as already indicated by the expression *sub pyromachia* in the title. The poem is undoubtedly a demanding, masterfully composed work, not only from the linguistic and versological perspectives and, of course, on account of the chronograms, but also because of its numerous references to Classical mythology and literature, in some instances also to biblical texts. Kappus employed these references meaningfully in his description of the festivities with fireworks, dances and performances, which apparently unfolded over several days in 1708. The poem gives no precise indication of when and where they took

place, nor have we found reports of them in the published sources and literature available to us. Kappus' poem can nevertheless indirectly serve as a good historical source for understanding the celebrations in honour of the newborn prince. They must surely have followed quite soon after the news of the birth of Louis Philip, probably after a few weeks, when the city authorities, together with all the key actors from the viceroy and the church institutions to the guilds and confraternities had organised everything required for the festivities. Preparations may even have begun earlier, since the pregnancy had been officially announced and numerous celebratory publications had appeared across the Spanish empire in its honour. Considering that the rector of the college in Guatemala, the Jesuit Antonio Xardón, delivered a sermon in honour of the newborn prince at the cathedral in Guatemala on 10 April, festivities in Mexico City could also have taken place in the spring of 1708, perhaps in April.⁵⁹ We may presume that the venue was not the palace of the Viceroy of New Spain in Chapultepec, as depicted by an anonymous 18th-century artist in his portrayal of a viceregal reception,⁶⁰ but rather the Plaza Mayor, the main square in Mexico City. The appearance of the city centre, with its picturesque architecture and bustling activities, can be gleamed from the famous painting by Manuel de Arellano of 1721, which portrays the square on Christmas Eve.⁶¹

A difficulty for understanding the poem and for its historical interpretation is that Kappus does not describe events as if they had already taken place, i.e. using the past tense, but speaks in the present and in several instances employs the subjunctive of exhortation – urging that the celebration in the Classical spirit be as solemn as possible. Nor does he mention concrete locations in Mexico City, or indeed concrete personalities of New Spain or its capital, such as the then viceroy Duke of Alburquerque. There are certain passages or verses that make *Enthusiasmus* resemble a scenario or announcement rather than an actual description or report. Yet if it is an announcement (which would be unusual given other known accounts of the celebrations marking the prince's birth), Kappus would have been involved in some way in preparing the festivities. Considering his engagement in missionary work in Sonora and the great distance from the capital, this would hardly have been possible. Having said that, the poem contains many features characteristic of such celebratory texts and a wealth of details that strengthen the conviction that Kappus' poem is not merely a poetic invention or fiction, but rooted in prior familiarity with the (announced) real historical event that it documents

59 Xardón 1708.

60 *Recepción de un virrey en las Casas Reales de Chapultepec (Alegoría de la Nueva España)*. See Berndt León Mariscal 2000, 94.

61 *Celebridad de nochebuena en México* or *Vista de la Plaza Mayor de México en Nochebuena*. See Fernández Castro 2023.

in a poetic way. It seems that Kappus deliberately used the present tense and the subjunctive precisely in order to create a joyful, festive atmosphere and a sense of enthusiasm at the birth of the heir to the throne, which he wished to convey to the reader even *post festum*.

The poem opens with two questions: 'My error? Or does fame spread certain news?'⁶² The opening part speaks of the happy news that had recently crossed the ocean "and fame, resounding, hastens swift through towns", of the birth of the prince and the fact that "America enjoys Hesperia's king" (king of the West; Verses 9 and 10); "kings proffering glad olive twigs of peace" and "the realms of Europe launching feasts of peace" (Verses 18 and 19). In this and several other places, the political context of the poem as relating to events in Europe is presented in a poetic and certainly idealised manner: "after war's waste and horrid lightning strokes / appears God's link to our destiny; / there's hope of peace, with our new-born prince" (Verses 34–36). The news of the birth, which all welcome so joyfully and which brings hope, stirs the poet: "So let my lyre sound with a sweet plectrum" (Verse 22). To glorify the historical event, Kappus employs a biblical example and associates the birth of Louis Philip with the birth of Jesus himself, if we may judge from Verses 23 and 24: "A prince is born to us: Hurray! come, Muses! / And sing new songs to our new-born king."⁶³

A very important role in the poem is played by the Greek Muses of poetry, called the Camenae, sisters of Helicon or the Castalides,⁶⁴ and especially their leader Apollo, the Greek god of music and poetry, who later became the sun god with the epithet Phoebus. As Kappus calls to them: "Hurray! Glad sisters, open Helicon! / Come, Father Phoebus! Don't delay to strum / guitar strings! Now my vein is dancing, hot" (Verses 27–29).⁶⁵ The poet appeals to Apollo for inspiration in writing – for both composing the chronograms and versifying: "Yourself, hurray, breathe songs into my words! / From any verse let flow the very year / now passing, worthy of a deep remembrance, / noteworthy for its number and for art" (Verses 30–33).

In addition to Apollo and the Muses, who are to play and sing birthday songs and hymns at the royal infant's (*RegaLI pVppo*) cradle (Verses 71–75), Kappus then introduces other deities from the Graeco-Roman pantheon, always in their

62 Throughout this article, Kappus' verses are given in free translation.

63 Cf. Iz 9,5: *Puer natus est nobis ...* and Psalm 98 (97), 1: *Cantate Domino canticum novum ...*

64 *Camoenae* – Camenae, Latin name for the Greek Muses (Verse 23); *Helicona sorores* – after Mount Helicon in Boeotia, sacred to Apollo and the Muses (Verse 27); *Castalides* – after the Castalian spring of the Muses at Delphi (Verses 71 and 276).

65 Cf. the invocation of the Muses and Apollo in the short play or *loa* performed in the procession of the 1709 triumphal carriage at the celebration of the prince's birth in Manila: *Llegad Musas, llegad; y sepa Apolo ...* – 'Come, Muses, come, and let Apollo know...' (Leales demostraciones 1709, p. 77r; cf. Ruiz Jiménez 2019).

Latin version – Mars, Ceres, Mercury, Jupiter, Vulcan, Bacchus. He also includes heroes such as Hercules (or ALCIDES, as required by the chronogram), as well as various more or less fearsome creatures of the Classical world and underworld, as the narrative of the 1708 celebrations unfolds. Cyclopes, satyrs, harpies and Corybantes, as well as the dragons of Acheron and Charon's monsters, Lapiths and centaurs, all figure in the programme of the festive spectacles. The central part of the poem (roughly from Verses 77 to 226) is devoted to the celebrations in Mexico City in honour of the prince: in the margins of the text, annotations in Spanish list 'artificial fires', a stage, an eagle that ignites fire, the dance of the satyrs, flying dragons and harpies, Cyclopes, 'fiery towers', black bullfighters (*Ethyopes*), Cacus' cave, Hercules seizing Cacus and killing him, the battle between the Lapiths and centaurs, a 'fiery tree', firecrackers, 'wheels', rockets, two laurels bearing in their leaves the name of the newborn prince Louis Philip written in fiery letters, and bagpipes.⁶⁶

Kappus annotated the text to facilitate understanding the less evident, poetically veiled passages in the verses (see **Figure 3**). One example is the 'artificial fires' (*Fuegos artificiales*), which clarify the expression *Merces* (wares) in Verse 79, at the beginning of the description of the festivities: "So quickly, Steropes, lay out your wares, / displaying on this day your artful efforts ..." – namely the manufacture of thunderbolts or fire (Verses 79 and 80). Steropes (Lightning) is in Hesiod one of the three Cyclopes, sons of Uranus and Gaia, who made thunderbolts for Zeus in Hephaestus' forge; the other two are Arges (Shining) and Brontes (Thunderer), the latter of whom Kappus mentions in Verse 126. Interestingly, he used the unusual plural form *steropes* (likewise in Verses 108, 171 and 182), clearly in the sense of 'Cyclopes' – we may again suspect the requirements of the chronogram. Probably for the same reason, he uses the name of yet another Cyclops from later cosmogonic tradition in Verse 108, namely *PyraCMon* (etymologically 'fiery anvil'), who was also Vulcan's (Hephaestus') servant according to Virgil.

Scenes involving fire are an essential component of the celebration. The spectacle is to begin with an eagle, which should swiftly fly down from a high rooftop and ignite the fire. This is not the Aztec eagle with a snake in its beak as the emblem of the 'place of the prickly pear cactus' (the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan, upon whose ruins colonial Mexico City was built), but Jupiter's winged warrior – the eagle that accompanies the supreme god of Classical Antiquity as a sign of power and serves as his attribute, like the bundles of lightning bolts that *steropes* forged for him: "From th' august roof let speed Jove's armèd [i.e. with talons] bird. / And bear concealed devices holding tinder, / and light the early fires at the back" (Verses 85–87).

66 Interestingly, Kappus names the firecrackers in the plural form (*Buscapiéses*), which was quite uncommon compared with the singular *buscapié*.

This is followed first by the dance of Bacchus' companions, the satyrs (Verse 88), and then by other scenes populated with Classical figures and stories, with light and fire. It also mentions such a highly appealing theme as the abduction of Helen, the lamentation for and burning of Troy (Verse 196). There are numerous references to music with a variety of instruments (for example zithers, lyres, cymbals, bagpipes) and to dancing: thus the 'Hesperian' (Western) Corybantes, sons of Apollo and the Muse Thalia, should beat their colourful drums, while all the people are to take part in a nocturnal feast (Verses 191 and 192), and the site of merry games (*hILares LVDos*) be illuminated with fire: "Let folk prepare at cross-roads merry games: / let lamps, gold-bearing, burn with thousand flames / in the deep night: let aether glow with fires" (Verses 187–189).

Kappus scarcely ever refers to the missionary activity of the Jesuits – the sole exception being the note *Digressio à los PP. Missioneros* towards the end of the poem, when in Verses 231–235 he turns to his 'missionary fathers':

"You too, my fellow brethren, worthy offspring
of Reverend Loyola, shall be sung.
Intent on staying, sent to farthest borders.
Brave, holy cohort, born to weighty deeds
and used to helping hapless Indians."

The Indians are mentioned again in Verses 241–243, where it is said that one must play for them day and night on the helis, the lyre and the horn (CheLys, Lyra, bVCCIIna), since they delight in the music of these instruments and enjoy solemn festivities.

In the final part of the poem (Verses 236–273), Kappus calls 'our people' (*gens nostra* or *gens patria*) to a feast, for which horned bulls and cows are to be slaughtered in the towns – the descriptions are quite graphic (Verses 236–240):

"Hurray! Now slaughter hornèd bulls in towns,
and draw your reins in with a generous mind:
let our people feast on delicacies.
Let trumpets boom for cows which are to die,
with their hocks cut, and struggling, tied with ropes."

And further on (Verses 246–249):

"Now slaughter massive bulls, o native people!
and celebrate the feast with happy days.
Step on their heads and plunge in your long knives:
then let the herdsman clean out fat entrails ..."

Kappus again encourages when describing a scene ideally suited to turmoil (Verses 252–260):

“let some cut up a thousand bones and spines,
let others offer flanks of fatty meat,
still others paint their scrawny cheeks with blood,
still others form long fragrant sausages:
now some would eat the garlands, fast produced,
of fragrant beef and cram them down the throat:
let some observe decrees by singing all day,
repeating wonted dances for three days.”

These are certainly ethnologically interesting descriptions, to which we may add naturalistic detail unexpected in the context of the poem, namely the kinds of wood for Vulcan’s fire. Alongside goldenrods and pearwood, Kappus mentions green shoots or shrubs that glow and belong to the genus *botrytes* (Verse 143) – clearly meaning the shrub *artemisia*, i.e. wormwood.

Kappus wonders why his poetry has been spent and wishes to stop playing the strings. He begs the goddess (*DIa*) to ‘take away the spurs’ of the heated poet (Verses 261–263) – clearly in the sense that he should cease spurring on his poetic vein.⁶⁷

“Where stray you, poetry, by song distracted?
Cease firing merriment by babbling strings;
do, goddess! take away the poet’s spurs.”

He further notes how the celebrations of the prince’s birth resound through the city, with joyful spectacles (*Læta speCtaCVLa*) in the circus (*CirCo*) and repeated festivities in the theatres (*CoMæDVs theatrIs*; Verses 264–266). He specifically mentions an acrobat performing on a roof and flying on a rope (Verses 267–269):

“Behold a juggler flit across the roof,
gambolling, one foot raised, upon the rope,
and challenging his fate a thousand times.”

It is as though Kappus were describing an ancient Mesoamerican ritual or ‘dance’ – the *Danza de los Voladores*, still known today in parts of Mexico! This should not surprise us if we consider the pictorial sources from that era, for

⁶⁷ Kappus does not specify the goddess, but it is evidently one of the Muses – either Euterpe, the Muse of music (and later of lyric poetry), or Calliope, the Muse of epic poetry.

example a painting by an anonymous author titled *Indian Wedding and Flying Pole* from 1690, which depicts just such a performance.⁶⁸

And the final festive scene – the bullfight (Verses 270–273):

“They goad the bulls in circus, fierce and feared,
of dreadful look and form; a grim arena!
Savage and bold! At one point Death turns out;
but for Hesperians the feast is triple.”

The poem concludes with three verses (274–276) in which the poet ends his song and instructs Apollo and his Muses to cease inspiring him:

“The end: I break my strings.
Lay down your lyre, Phoebus! Muses, close
the founts! The poet’s leas have drunk their fill.”

This poet (*vates*) is Kappus himself; his meadows have drunk enough. He borrowed this allegory from Virgil, who writes thus at the end of Eclogue III, when the arbiter Palaemon says to Menalcas and Damoetas after the end of their poetic contest: “Shut off the springs now, lads; the meadows have drunk enough” – meaning: ‘End the song, we have heard enough’.⁶⁹

This brief and partial presentation, as well as preliminary observations in the absence of a precise and complete translation of the poem have revealed a few features that are particular to Kappus’ work when compared with similar texts. These are the use of chronograms, the use of Classical figures, motifs and similes, as well as the association of individual parts of the poem to the celebrations in Mexico City.

CHRONOGRAMS AS A POETIC INTERPLAY OF LETTERS AND NUMBERS

In the 17th and 18th centuries, chronograms were a fairly common manner of marking the date of an important event, indeed a literary genre in its own right that was popular among those with a Classical education and high academic standing. They usually commemorated the birth, coronation, career or death of rulers and dignitaries, wars, battles, sieges, peace treaties and alliances formed at the

68 The painting (oil on canvas) is kept in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (<https://collections.lacma.org/node/209529>). A similar painting titled *El Palo Volador* from the second half of the 17th century is kept in the Museo de America in Madrid (<https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/el-palo-volador/9QGrTAt-UIfkQ?hl=es>).

69 *Claudite iam rivos pueri, sat prata biberunt* (Virgil, *Eclogae*, 3, 111). For translation see Virgil 1916. Cf. Lorichius 1545, 12: *Claudite nunc rivos pueri, sat prata bibere.*

establishment of peace, but also less momentous social and local events, founding of universities and so forth. In Europe, they were in use from the late 14th century, mostly in Latin but also in other languages. They had already appeared earlier in Arabic and Hebrew. 'Chronography' as a characteristic early modern European epigraphic practice grew markedly in the 16th century, partly thanks to the role of printing. It reached its peak in the first quarter of the 18th century and then declined sharply towards the century's end. Almost three quarters of all chronograms so far identified or published come from the German-speaking lands and the Netherlands, many also from England, considerably less from France, especially south of Paris, and very few from other Mediterranean countries, notably Spain and Italy. Chronograms from the territories of present-day Hungary, Bohemia and Austria are mostly from the 17th and 18th centuries.⁷⁰

Numerous chronograms have also survived in the Slovene lands, chiefly on the façades and walls of churches and manor houses, on monuments, tombstones and foundation stones, but only a few are preserved in written documents, such as registers of births, deaths and marriages. An outstanding legacy is that of the priest Sebastijan Pogačar from Gorje near Bled (1693–1762), who, like Kappus, studied at the Jesuit university in Graz and "developed into an outstanding Latinist, a knowledgeable pastoralist and an astute moral theologian".⁷¹ He recorded his own chronograms in the registers of some of the parishes where he served (Bohinj, Ig, Sora and Ljubno); 1 287 of them have survived, mainly with theological and pastoral content.⁷²

The largest collection of chronograms was compiled by James Hilton (1816–1907), an Englishman who studied the tradition of the Roman numeral chronogram in the late 19th century. In three volumes, he published almost 15 000 chronograms from various parts of Europe, while a huge number of further examples that he also collected but did not publish survive in the archives of the British Library in London.⁷³ Despite several shortcomings (such as unsystematic and incomplete collecting over several decades, the pursuit of rarities and curiosities, and an imbalanced choice of countries and languages), Hilton's corpus allows for a careful quantitative analysis that complements (though not replaces) the close philological and epigraphic study of individual texts. Such a re-examination of the topic from modern perspectives of literariness and numeracy, and of the distribution of examples across time and space – thereby opening new insights into early modern textual practices in general – is advocated by the American linguistic

70 Chrisomalis 2021, 138–141; Hilton 1882, VI–X.

71 Dolinar 2013, 298.

72 See Jelenc 2013.

73 Cf. Chrisomalis, 2021, 138–139, who notes more than 20 000 chronograms; Hilton (1895, X) wrote that he recorded 38 411 chronograms in three books, but published only 14 712.

anthropologist Stephen Chrisomalis. He studies chronograms within the intellectual traditions dealing with 'language play' or 'playful language', which the English linguist David Crystal calls 'ludic linguistics'.⁷⁴

With the help of two collaborators, Chrisomalis compiled 10 342 chronograms from 2 681 individual texts and classified them according to various criteria such as region, community (where known), language, date and medium or context. Three quarters of the texts (2 104) contained a single chronogram, while 160 texts, predominantly books, contained ten or more. Interestingly, he knows of only one chronogram composed in the Americas, though published in England and in English. In 1628, Robert Hayman, governor of Newfoundland, composed this chronogram to mark the accession of James I in 1603: *we MaDe a happIe Change thIs Yeere*.⁷⁵

Kappus' 276 chronograms in a single work, with every verse simultaneously functioning as a chronogram, thus constitute an exceptional and evidently very rare 'contribution' to the genre in the territory of present-day Mexico, as well as broader in the Americas – this contribution can be further evaluated through future research and the newly published material. Among the sources for festive events of 1707 and 1708 published online, we were able to find some parallels in celebratory texts dedicated to the birth of Louis Philip, though these are from Spain.

Two such parallels come from the undated work *Fabula heroyca*, published for a festivity that took place in Seville very probably in 1707, as also indicated by the chronograms.⁷⁶ The *Elogium chronicum*, immediately following the title page of this extensive work of 48 unnumbered pages, written in Spanish but with numerous verses, maxims and a final poem in Latin, contains a dedication 'To Louis the First, Prince of Asturias and Spain, born on 25 August', with the chronogram date of 1707:

LVDoVICo prIMo astVrIæ, atqVe hIspanIæ
InfantI, nato qVI into aVgVstI
sVpra VlgIntI.

This is followed by a *Distichon chronicum*, in which the sum of the capital letters in the two lines likewise yields 1707:

LILia CrVX CIngIt Latere eX VtroqVe LeoneM,
O prInCeps, patrIa haeC sVnt; Leo & Iste tVVs.

74 Chrisomalis 2021, 126–129 and 138–139.

75 Where Y and I both represent 1; Chrisomalis 2021, 139 and 141.

76 Ramos [1707?], 2.

“The lily and the cross flank the lion on both sides, prince! This is now your homeland; and this lion is yours.” According to the accompanying description and the explanatory quatrain in Spanish, the distich refers to a depiction from the festivity showing the lion as the symbol of Spain, flanked on one side by three lilies as the symbol of the Bourbons and on the other by the Jerusalem cross as the symbol of Savoy, that is, the two ruling houses from which the prince was descended through his parents.⁷⁷

CLASSICAL REFERENCES AS METAPHOR AND MESSAGE

The use of Classical figures, motifs and metaphors is characteristic of the early modern period and the world of Baroque literature, in which Kappus’ *Enthusiasmus* was also created. From the Slovene lands we may cite the play *Haeresis fulminata*, written in 1651 by Joannes Ludovicus Schönleben, but only discovered in 2018 in the Auersperg family archive and recently also published.⁷⁸ Another interesting source are the placards for the knightly tournament games held in Ljubljana in 1652, attended mainly by members of Carniolan noble families. In these games, the knights of ‘Europe’, who challenged the representatives of the other three continents – Asia, Africa and America – bore the names of Classical commanders such as Pompey and Scipio Africanus.⁷⁹

Classical figures are very frequently used as associations for rulers, and not only those of Spain. An example with such an association is the extensive work *Augustales Cunae* of 1716, which celebrates the long-awaited birth of the Austrian archduke and Asturian duke Leopold of Habsburg, first-born son of the Emperor Charles VI and his wife Elisabeth. The text contains 592 chronograms according to Hilton, it was composed by Jesuits of the College of St Clement at the Charles and Ferdinand University in Prague and issued by Georgius Jacobus Köberle. It was written on the occasion of the celebrations with ‘festive fires’ (*festivis ignibus*) held in May 1716, three weeks after the prince’s birth, at several sites in all three parts of Prague. This work exhibits several commonalities with *Fabvla heroyca* from 1707, a work dedicated to the birth of Louis Philip of Bourbon, in terms of structure and content, its numerous Classical references and, of course, its Baroque style; several of its passages and verses are also comparable with Kappus’ poem. For instance, the inclusion of Classical quotes such as *Post nubila Soles* and

77 Description: *Pintase vn Leon, cercado por vna parte de tres Lises, y por otra, de la Cruz Jerosolymitana.*
Line: *De Saboya, y de Borbon / Te rodean Cruz, y Lis: / Pero, Gran Principe LVIS, / Es tuyo solo el Leon.*
See Ramos, [1707?], 2.

78 Deželak Trojar 2020a.

79 Reisp 1996.

other similarities in praise of the newborn prince and his parents.⁸⁰ Common for the most important European rulers of the period is the association of the father, Charles VI, termed *Augustissimus Imperator*, with the sun, and of the mother, Elisabeth, likewise *Augustissima*, with the moon, whose rays illuminate their firstborn son, elsewhere described as *Serenissimus Austriae Phoebus*. A less felicitous choice for the newly born Leopold is the epithet *Cunctator* and hence the connection with the ancient Roman politician and commander Quintus Fabius Maximus Cunctator ('Delayer') – as Leopold had 'delayed' seven years before being born⁸¹ However, he lived less than seven months and died in the same year, 1716, thereby ending the male Habsburg line. After his father's immense efforts through the Pragmatic Sanction, the throne destined for Leopold was secured instead by the girl born the following year, Maria Theresa, though she first needed to fight for her succession in the War of Austrian Succession in 1740.

Classical references abound in Kappus' poem from beginning to end. Of course, Kappus was merely describing the events of the celebration, yet as a man of excellent humanist education he would be well acquainted with the themes and narratives represented and may have chosen to emphasise some more than others, but above all he interwove and integrated them artistically in his verses. Vivid Classical metaphors, used as parallels for the figure and deeds of the newborn prince, albeit in advance, were ideally suited to such a panegyrical text as *Enthusiasmus*. A good example are the stories of Hercules and the hero's twelve labours employed as a metaphor for a ruler and his heroic deeds. Other writers, too, included them in their works, for example the Jesuit Antonio Xardón, who in his festive sermon called the prince 'the second Hercules of Spains' and also 'the fair Adonis of the two Crowns', namely Spain and France.⁸²

Hercules, also the mythical founder of Seville, has a special significance in this context, as emphasised already in the title of the Jesuit panegyric *Fabula heroyca* written for the Seville celebrations of 1707. In Spain's 'Golden Age' and even later, he was considered the *monarca ibero*, as also Pedro de Peralta Barnuevo named him in the *loa* (festive prologue) of 1725 written in honour of the coronation of Louis Philip as the King of Spain.⁸³

It is characteristic that viceroys, the rulers' deputies, were often identified with Classical figures, both gods and heroes as well as sovereigns. This was especially common upon taking office, when they first entered the viceregal capital. Records for Mexico City show that triumphal arches (*arcos triunfales*) were erected for them and that they were celebrated with figures such as Mars, Apollo, Perseus,

80 *Augustales Cunae* 1716, p. T.a; Verse 48 in Kappus.

81 *Augustales Cunae* 1716, 56.

82 Xardón 1708, fol. 2 and 3.

83 Rodríguez Garrido 2017, 337, Verse 159.

Neptune, Cadmus the founder of Thebes and also Hercules, Aeneas, the Roman Emperors Maximinus Thrax and Constantine, even the family of Vespasian (*la estirpe Vespasiana*).⁸⁴ A new ruler was thus legitimised not only by association or symbolic identification with the gods and heroes of Classical Antiquity, but also with historical figures, particularly rulers and commanders, or with the states they led. In their characters, deeds and achievements lay the roots of the authority that birth and coronation conferred on the chosen dynast.

Don Francisco Perea y Porras, author of the festive sermon delivered in Salamanca Cathedral on 13 November 1707 in honour of the birth of the heir, thus compared King Philip V with Philip of Macedon, and Prince Louis Philip, consequently, with his son Alexander.⁸⁵

Perhaps the best example of Classical figures, motifs and metaphors being used in this kind of panegyrical literature is the celebration in Seville, very probably in 1707, which is described in the above-mentioned *Fabula heroyca*. It was dedicated to the happy birth of the prince by the representatives (*diputados*) of the Jesuit school of the College of St Hermenegild in Seville, and it was written by the Jesuit Juan Vicente Ramos in the name of the city's administrator, don Jerónimo Ortiz de Sandoval y Zúñiga. The text abounds in quotations and references from Classical literature and also the Bible, while the scenario of the celebration is peopled – often in a humorous, burlesque manner – with figures of Graeco-Roman Antiquity, personifications of the sciences and arts, and historical personages with their famous deeds. In keeping with the mythical foundation of the city, the principal hero is Hercules, *el Victorioso Presagio heroyco* or herald of the new ruler. He is accompanied by other protagonists in his labours, among them the giant Cacus, who also appears in Kappus' poem.⁸⁶

CELEBRATIONS IN MEXICO CITY IN HONOUR OF THE NEWBORN PRINCE

Kappus' poem suggests an extensive use of Classical figures and motifs in the festive programme, which is intriguing given the varied audience. Apart from the élite of colonial society (the viceroy and his officials, wealthy landowners, merchants, soldiers and others), as well as the secular and regular clergy, this audience also comprised more modestly educated people or even wholly unacquainted with Graeco-Roman literature and antique culture in general, some of them illiterate, ranging from Spanish colonists to mestizos and even the indigenous population.

84 Solano 1994, LII.

85 Perea y Porras 1720–1733, [11].

86 Ramos [1707?], [8, 15 and 23].

In general, festivities were a defining feature of life in the Mexican capital. For most of the colonial period, inhabitants could attend as many as a hundred religious and secular celebrations annually. The greatest of these, funded by the viceregal authorities, were intended to glorify the Spanish empire and to convey political and social concepts, in particular the principles of government and duty both of rulers (or viceroys) and of subjects. At the same time, they served as an instrument of colonisation. As the population became increasingly diverse, the organisation of festivities assumed ever greater importance, seeking to promote a shared past and common values among the various and potentially restive groups of the population.⁸⁷

As already noted, no direct sources are known for the celebrations that took place in honour of the birth of Louis Philip; we can only infer on them from Kappus' poem and from the available knowledge on the similar festivities elsewhere in the Spanish empire. Some of these are documented in great detail as to content and execution, for example in Manila and especially in Seville. The latter is known through detailed descriptions of the activities, as well as the integrally preserved inscriptions and texts in Latin and Spanish used in the ceremonial procession of floats through the streets of the 'Herculean' city.⁸⁸

Such processions were one of the central elements of festivities in honour of rulers. They consisted of carefully planned scenes involving *máquinas*, i.e. compositions with a select theme and stage-setting, a precisely determined sequence and above all elaborately designed 'artificial fires'. In the words of the French author Perrinet d'Orval, fireworks in the 18th century were undoubtedly 'an art that could not be regarded as insignificant', serving to demonstrate ardour and love for the king as much as to celebrate his victories. A good example is the spectacle with elements of water and fire prepared for the French King Louis XIV at Versailles, in July 1688. In its final act, rockets were launched in the air to trace the king's *cifra* (the letter L) 'with a very strong and clear light'.⁸⁹

Fiery letters also appear in Kappus' poem. In a note, he mentions two laurels with the names of the newborn prince *Lvys Phelippe* written in fiery letters in the leaves, while the names in the poem are, of course, in Latin: *LVDoVICVs PhIL-LIPPVs* (Verses 180–182). In them, Kappus suggests that 'burning fires brightly paint the prince's names and fill people's hearts with fervour'.

The celebrations in Mexico City took place *sub pyromachia*, that is, with an extensive use of fireworks or *fuegos artificiales* and 'rockets' (*pyroboLIs* in Verse 158, or *Coetes* in the notes to Verses 79–82 and 158–169). There were also *buscapiés* and

87 Cf. Linda Ann Curcio-Nagy, *The Great Festivals of Colonial Mexico City. Performing Power and Identity*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque 2004 (not available to the author).

88 Ramos [1707?].

89 Vázquez Mantecón 2017, 52 and 122.

ruedas, as well as an *árbol de fuego*. *Buscapiés* were small firecrackers that crackled and jumped along the ground between people's feet; the Spanish term for them is also *carretilla* (wheelbarrow, handcart). A *rueda* was a pyrotechnic wheel, packed with rockets, that spun as it discharged them. An *árbol de fuego* was a wooden framework of beams and crossbars that held fireworks. In Verse 103, Kappus also mentions *torres de fuego*, which probably refers to tall metal or wooden frames hung with fireworks (today in Mexico known as *castillos de torre*). Some of Kappus' descriptions of pyrotechnic events, of the various images and plays of light in the Mexican sky, are highly poetic, for example in Verse 164, where he describes how 'the glowing belt of earth, like a new dress with a train, rises toward the stars'.

The various constructions or scenic displays at such festivities formed part of the 'ephemeral architecture' characteristic of the Baroque age, made of perishable and unstable materials such as wood, wicker, yarn, cloth, cardboard, paper, lime and plaster. It gave the appearance of durability and solidity, but was intended to last only a few days, until their purpose had been fulfilled. This light and temporary architecture for public festivities, religious ceremonies and solemn celebrations, which developed at the beginning of the Renaissance and in Spain reached its peak in the Baroque, had an artistic, social and political function. It served to glorify the ruler, but also symbolise the triumphant power of absolute monarchy and convey the victorious resplendence of the Catholic Church.

Such architecture was erected by artists and artisans – often the finest of their time – on the occasion of royal proclamations and receptions, when kings entered into cities during their travels, at royal weddings, births, funerals and periods of mourning in the royal family, as well as at celebrations of military victories, canonisations, consecrations of churches or chapels, processions and other religious ceremonies and festivities. Alongside triumphal arches, colonnades, pavilions, tabernacles, street altars and so forth, there were various floats (for scenic displays) and buildings on wheels, as well as temporary structures such as stages, seating and other removable constructions, for example arenas and stables for equestrian games and exercises or for bullfights.⁹⁰

Kappus explicitly mentions some of these scenic elements, for example a stage (*El tablado*, in an annotation on the margin), various theatrical contraptions and stages (*ariIfICes pegMate sCenas*, Verse 109, and *aMphIteatralI sCenà*, Verse 213), gigantic triumphal arches (*ingentes arCes*, Verse 214) and Cacus' cave (*La Cueva de Caco*) as the setting for an episode in which 'Hercules seizes Cacus and kills him'.⁹¹

90 Bonet Correa 1993, 23.

91 Both in the note to Verses 110–121.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE POEM

Enthusiasmus, translated as *Enthusiasm* or *Solemn Poetic Plays*, is a remarkable discovery that enables a new and valuable insight into the personality of Marcus Antonius Kappus, particularly his poetic talent, Classical education and intellectual prowess. The future missionary acquired excellent knowledge of Latin in Jesuit schools, along with the knowledge of Greek and a general familiarity with Greek and Latin cultures. Between 1679 and 1683 he also taught Latin, in the Jesuit colleges of Ljubljana (basics), Leoben (grammar, syntax and poetry) and Zagreb (rhetoric).⁹² As a teacher of rhetoric, he must have been thoroughly familiar with Jesuit theatrical performances, as they formed part of the curriculum, and writing such texts was a necessary component of preparing for the vocation of a Jesuit father.⁹³ He put this knowledge to good use in composing the poem, although it is true that he artistically described primarily what he saw and what was prepared by the authors of the festive programme, who remain unknown to us.

Considering he was an experienced and above all learned Jesuit, Kappus could quite easily have been involved in authoring or at least co-authoring the festivities in Mexico City. There is, however, no evidence to that effect, or that he wrote a prompt book of the sort that members of the Society of Jesus often prepared and published for such festivities. If that were the case, the poem would almost certainly be accompanied by the texts carried, spoken, sung or read by participants in the course of the ceremonial procession. The best example of such a prompt book is *Fabula heroyca*, written by the Jesuits of the College of St Hermenegild for the celebration in Seville (probably) in 1707. The question of who wrote the scenario and directed the event in Mexico City therefore remains open, at least until some other discovery in a 'Basque' library or archive, whether on bookshelves or – thanks to the digitisation of cultural heritage – online comes to light.

Kappus learned in time that King Philip V and his consort Maria Luisa Gabriella of Savoy were expecting a child. This child was also eagerly expected by many in the lands of the Spanish Crown, according to sources also in Mexico City, as it was the king's firstborn child who would ensure the continuation and legitimisation of the dynasty which had laid claim to the Spanish throne after the death of Charles II and the extinction of the Spanish branch of the Habsburgs. By officially announcing the queen's pregnancy in the spring of 1707 (despite the uncertainty of a safe birth and of the child's sex), Philip V seized a twofold opportunity to consolidate his rule. One was to employ the ritual by which both civic and religious festivities were directed towards glorifying the royal majesty,

92 Stanonik 2007, 65, and Zaplotnik 2016, 12. The source of this information is the Jesuit archive of the 'Indian missionaries' in the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu in Rome (cf. Maver 2016, 68).

93 Cf. Deželak Trojar 2020b, esp. 145–146.

and thus to display the splendour of his own dynasty. The other was to use the announcement to bring about a favourable outcome in the War of the Spanish Succession. Barely two months later, the royal army triumphed at Almansa, thereby gaining clear ascendancy over its opponents. Such symbolic use of the queen's pregnancy as divine providence and prophecy became a powerful propaganda tool in shaping public opinion in favour of the Bourbons, of Philip V, and in support of the royal legitimacy both of his person and of his dynasty. The Catholic Church distinguished itself particularly in this respect, strongly emphasising the defence of Catholicism against the 'heretics' of the opposing bloc, especially England and the Netherlands. The queen's pregnancy was thus understood as an important interpretative key to the course of the war and was at the same time interpreted as a sign of God favouring Philip as the chosen one. Such an interpretation underpinned the messianic discourse that sustained Bourbon propaganda, while at the same time denying the Habsburg the legitimacy of his claim to the Spanish Crown and therefore also to waging war.⁹⁴

Perhaps even more significant than the literary importance of *Enthusiasmus* is the realisation of how actively Kappus, a missionary at the far end of New Spain and thus the outer boundaries of the colonial superpower of the then-known and governable world, engaged with the major events in Europe. The birth of the heir to the throne at the Spanish Bourbon court was certainly such an event, resonating across Europe and throughout the world, at least in the territories under Spanish rule, which had seen no heir to the throne for the previous 46 years. It was of immense political importance also in view of the balance of power among the leading European dynasties and states, closely interwoven by kinship, which were then embroiled in the War of the Spanish Succession. There were Spain and France, supported by Bavaria, on one side, and Austria and its German allies, the Dutch Republic and England (which in the end changed sides), on the other. It was one of the bloodiest wars of its time, and in Spain quickly escalated into a civil war. The Bourbon Philip V was only recognised as ruler of Spain and its colonies after the decisive victory at Villaviciosa in 1710 and with the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, followed by the Treaties of Rastatt and Baden in 1714. But as the grandson of the French King Louis XIV, he was obliged to renounce any claim to the French throne, while Spain lost considerable territories.⁹⁵

The impact of the civil war, or more broadly the War of the Spanish Succession, was less pronounced in the Spanish colonies, though commercial activities did help spread it beyond Europe, above all to North America. There, the War of Queen Anne was fought between 1702 and 1713 among the colonial powers of Great

94 Franco Rubio 2008, 287–288, 300–303 and 307.

95 On the historical background to the creation of Kappus' poem cf. Stanonik 1995, 60–62. On the events in New Spain during the War of Succession, cf. e.g. Escamilla González 2004.

Britain, France and Spain, with the participation of indigenous tribes. Its consequences included the destruction of the Spanish Franciscan missions in Florida. As Stanonik noted, citing Bolton, the Catholic Church early on lent its support to the Bourbons. Thus Kino, Tyrolean by birth and supporter of Bavaria, an ally of France, proposed as early as 1702 that Upper California, which he was only then beginning to explore, be named after King Philip V as *Novae Philipinae* (as he had earlier proposed that Lower California be named *Novae Carolinae* after the Habsburg Charles II). This was not adopted. In 1704, he dedicated the introductory part of his chronicle *Favores Celestiales* to Philip V and again suggested the name *Novae Philipinae* to be used, now for Pimería. He voiced a similar proposition in a new dedication of his chronicle to the king in 1708 (and again in 1710), where he suggested the name *Las Nuevas Filipinas de la América* be used for the provinces of Sonora and Pimería (as the Philippines in the East Indies were named after King Philip III).

Missionaries such as Kino, Kappus and Adam Gilg, who came from the lands of Habsburg Austria, probably observed with unease the political shifts following the change of dynasty in Madrid. With the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession, all foreign missionaries, particularly those from Austria, Bohemia and other lands of the Holy Roman Empire, were prohibited from travelling to the colonies. The royal *cédula* of 8 February 1707 did increase the quota of non-Iberian missionaries to two-thirds, though not for all – the subjects of the states hostile to the new Spanish dynasty (Austria, Aragon, Catalonia and Valencia) were still not granted permission to come. It was only after the war, in 1715, that the restrictions were eased, by decree, while later still the national restrictions were abolished altogether. The missionaries from German-speaking lands nevertheless had to contend with prejudice, but they usually remained loyal to the Spanish Crown.⁹⁶ Kappus was also affected by these changes, as indicated by his correspondence with relatives and acquaintances in Carniola that had previously been fairly intensive and now appears to have ceased; there are no known letters post-dating the year 1700 that would confirm continued contacts. Stanonik believed that Kappus published the poem in response to the altered political situation, and that he had written it for the celebration of the enthronement of the new Bourbon king, planned to have taken place in Mexico City in 1708.⁹⁷

The poem is therefore of interest to scholars of Kappus' life and work with regard to both its addressee and its subject matter. Kappus dedicated *Enthusiasmus* to the new Spanish prince Louis Philip, and not to the then Spanish King Philip V, as Jan-ez Stanonik concluded in his study. Although he wrote the poem himself, as is noted on the title page, he dedicated it to the newborn *princeps* in the name of his fellow Jesuits of the missions of America (that is, New Spain or present-day Mexico).

96 Clossey 2008, 152–153.

97 Stanonik 1995, 62 and 66.

THE PUBLICATION OF *ENTHUSIASMUS* AND SIMILAR WORKS IN MEXICO

Certain scenographic elements of the celebration that Kappus mentioned in his poem suggest that he personally attended the festivities and that in 1708 he thus travelled from his mission at Arivechi in Sonora to the capital of the viceroyalty. He would need to come to the capital for the purpose of publishing the poem given that there are numerous matters concerning the publication that could hardly have been arranged from Arivechi. As stated on the title page, he had to obtain permission from his superiors to have the booklet printed, most likely from the Jesuit provincial.⁹⁸ He further needed to organise the printing and also make sure the publication was properly distributed if it was to reach its audience and achieve its purpose.⁹⁹ We can only guess at the print run; it was probably not very large, as the booklet was not intended for just any reader or buyer, but rather for a specific and sufficiently educated audience. Kappus' reason for choosing Rodríguez Lupercio family to print the poem is also unknown. Perhaps it was on the recommendation of Kino, who had commissioned Rodríguez Lupercio in 1681 to print a 56-page quarto volume – the famous treatise on the great comet visible across the world at the end of 1680 and beginning of 1681.¹⁰⁰ We should also note that there is no information that the Jesuits active in New Spain in the 17th century had their own print that Kappus could have chosen to print his work.¹⁰¹

Kappus' poem would certainly have been sent to different recipients. Apart from the copy that found its way into a Basque library, there may be other copies that have survived. During his 35 years of research, Medina combed numerous libraries and archives, and 'temporarily' found a copy in the library at Puebla, as mentioned above. At least one copy should have ended up on the desk of a conscientious high royal official (if not the king himself) in Madrid, where it would have been carefully stored in the royal archive or library. The poem might also have found its way into one of the Jesuit libraries, which in New Spain were considered the richest and were also excellently bibliographically organised and catalogued.

98 Cf. the *Licencia* that Francisco Calderón de la Barca, Bishop of Salamanca, granted to Doctor Don Francisco Perea y Porras, canon and preacher to His Majesty, for the publication of the ceremonial sermon delivered in Seville Cathedral on 13 November 1707, in honour of the happy birth of Prince Louis I (Perea y Porras 1720–1733, [p. 13]).

99 Stanonik believed that Kappus had the booklet printed at his own expense, though we have found no evidence of this. It is true, however, that no Jesuit institution, such as a college, is mentioned in this connection. See Stanonik 2007, 70.

100 Kino 1681. Kino observed the comet when in Cadiz, Spain. After arriving to Mexico in the middle of 1681, he chose Rodríguez Lupercio to print the treatise (Altic 2022, 98).

101 García Aguilar 2014, 210.

After the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spanish territories, however, part of their book collections passed into other institutions, while much was lost.¹⁰²

Kappus was certainly obligated to send a printed copy of the poem to the provincial at the Jesuit headquarters in Mexico City.¹⁰³ Besides (or perhaps instead of) King Philip V, for whom *Enthusiasmus* was essentially intended (albeit dedicated to the newborn prince), a likely recipient would also be the viceroy (*virrey*) of New Spain, Francisco Fernández de la Cueva y de la Cueva, 10th Duke of Alburquerque. In ceremonies relating to the royal household, he was charged with representing or even replacing the absent monarch, who was symbolically present through his image (statue or painting) and the royal emblems, especially coat of arms.

The extensive catalogue of publications compiled by Francisco de Solano, which vividly illustrate many aspects of the city's life including festivities in honour of the monarch and the kingdom, suggest that the municipal authorities of Mexico City, which had organised the celebrations, should likewise have received a 'deposit copy' of the poem. Confirming this is the 'archival' note on page 3 of the copy held in the Basque library, stating the name of the document collection into which Kappus' poem was originally entered as *Ordenanzas de esta Novilissima Ciudad y Fiel-Executoria de Mexico*.

Ordenanza is a general term for a decree as a type of legal norm by which authorities, both in Spain and in the colonies, regulated different aspects of life. They were also issued by the *visitadores* and provincials of the Society of Jesus in New Spain to regulate relations between various social groups, namely missionaries, the indigenous population and others, for example soldiers and landowners.¹⁰⁴ Municipal ordinances (*ordenanzas municipales*) are in fact an essential source for understanding the governance of Mexico City, alongside official acts (*actas municipales*) and municipal council decrees (*cartas de los Cabildos*), which deal with economic, religious and ceremonial matters, public works, appointments to public office and so forth.¹⁰⁵

The arrival of the Bourbons brought changes in the administration and regulation of urban life, which during the colonial and into the early postcolonial period was overseen by municipal councils known as *cabildo* or *ayuntamiento*. These included various officials, among them the *fiel ejecutor*, inspector of weights, measures and markets. As Mercedes Galán Lorda has shown in her study of the

102 García Aguilar 2014, 226 and 232.

103 In 1708, there were two Jesuit provincials in New Spain: Juan de Estrada (served from 4 November 1707 to 16 April 1708) and Antonio Xardón (Jardón) (17 April 1708 to April 1711). See https://muse.jhu.edu/chapter/2858180#id_271 – Project Muse: Northern New Spain: A Research Guide: Lists of Colonial Officials: Jesuit Provincials of Nueva España).

104 Cf. Cabranes 2020.

105 Galán Lorda 1997, 1314–1315.

ordinances concerning the supply of bread and meat to Mexico City, the city in 1712 and at the order of the viceroy, Duke de Linares, undertook a review of all documents of earlier legislation then in its possession.¹⁰⁶ The viceroy ordered the preservation of all that was 'enforceable for due compliance'.¹⁰⁷ The legal adviser of the municipal council (*asesor*), José de Soria, completed this within just two weeks. The new viceroy, Marquis de Valero, confirmed part of the documents in 1718, and his successor, Marquis de Casa Fuerte, confirmed the rest in 1724.¹⁰⁸ Was Kappus' poem discarded at that time, in 1712, as an unnecessary document and at some later time, by unknown means, ended up in the library at Bilbao where it was bound into a large volume of various prints labelled *Ordenanzas*?

Or was the precious copy of *Enthusiasmus* rather part of a vast and very rich cultural legacy of the Societas Iesu? After the expulsion of its *padres* from New Spain in 1767 and following the instructions of the Spanish government *Colección general de las providencias hasta aqui tomadas por el gobierno*, this legacy (prints, manuscripts and 'archival papers') came partly into the possession of libraries of other congregations and institutions such as the Real Universidad de México, while many works were sadly lost. A *Collección* of these instructions was also printed in México, in the printing house of the heirs of Doña María de Ribera in 1768. It mentions the existence of fictitious volumes (*volúmenes facticios*), which should be examined individually, as 'it often happens that different works are bound together in the same *volumen*'.¹⁰⁹ Could such a volume have been brought to the Basque Country by one of the many Basque missionaries active in New Spain, both among the Jesuits and the Franciscans?

The anticipated birth of the heir to the throne and then the joyful event itself were the topic of several publications issued in Mexico in 1707 and 1708. They were mostly ceremonial sermons and thanksgiving prayers, but also a drama by the renowned Mexican Baroque composer Manuel de Zumaya (Sumaya), *El Rodrigo*, which was performed in the royal palace (*Palacio Real*) in Mexico City in honour of the birth of Louis Philip. Solano's list of printed works published in the city throughout the colonial period (from 1539 to 1821), comprising some 2 700 items, records eight works on the birth of Louis Philip from the two years – Kappus' poem is not among these, even though one would expect it to be!¹¹⁰ This fact is significant, as it confirms the extreme rarity of surviving copies of Kappus'

106 In addition to *ordenanzas* primarily *cedulas*, *autos acordados*, *determinaciones de la Audiencia y mandamientos de superior gobierno*, *relativos a la fiel ejecutoría* (Galán Lorda 1997, 1316).

107 As cited in Galán Lorda 1997, 1316: *lo practicable para su debida observancia*.

108 Galán Lorda 1997, 1316.

109 García Aguilar 2014, 224.

110 Solano 1994, 168–169, Nos. 1517–1522, 1524 and 1525; interestingly, none of these works describes the course of the celebrations with fireworks, which Kappus mentions in his poem.

poem. Solano carried out research in the archives and libraries in Mexico, Spain and Chile and collected references for 66 printers active in Mexico City during the period, including the Rodríguez Lupercio family. Their publications, of very diverse character and content, document many aspects of everyday life, as well as festivities and celebrations. We should note that publications marking the birth of the heir continued to appear in 1709; for Mexico City, for example, two sermons have survived, one a thanksgiving and the other eucharistic.¹¹¹

In the chapter on *Fiestas nacionales*, Solano mentions a sermon given in 1707 for a solemn novena ‘in thanksgiving for the joyful news of the pregnancy of Her Majesty María Luisa Gabriela of Savoy, Queen of Spain’. It was prepared by the great convent of the royal Order of Our Lady of Grace in Mexico City and written by Brother José de las Heras y Alcocer, lecturer in theology at the convent. Interestingly, its print is still attributed to ‘the widow of Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio’ even though she had by then already been dead for a decade.¹¹² Her heirs, who are the printers named on the title page of Kappus’ poem, issued another surviving work in 1708, a sermon by Father Antonio Mancilla dedicated to Santiago (the Apostle James), the patron saint of Spain, ‘for the fortunate exaltation of the kingdom, the king and the crown’.¹¹³

THE PRINTING HOUSE OF THE RODRÍGUEZ LUPERCIO FAMILY

The operation of this printing house is not precisely documented, though we know it was one of the most important ones in the 17th-century New Spain alongside those of the Ribera and Calderón families. Thirty-eight printers (including widows, in one case a daughter, who took over the press) are documented for Mexico City alone. Altogether, they issued 1 587 works, 356 of them without the printer’s name. The Rodríguez Lupercio family published a total of 188 titles in the 17th century and 444 titles in all eight decades of operation, until 1736.¹¹⁴ According to the *Seminario de Genealogía Mexicana*, the founder of the press, Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio, married Jerónima (or Gerónima) Delgado Cervantes in 1655 and they had seven children. He was active as a printer from 1658 until his death in 1683. From that time until 1696 (shortly before her death the following year),

111 Solano 1994, 169, Nos. 1526 and 1527.

112 Solano, 1994, 168, No. 1519. Cf. Stanonik, 1995, p. 68. Also see <https://gw.geneanet.org/sanchiz?lang=en&n=rodriguez+lupercio&oc=0&p=francisco>.

113 Solano 1994, 169, No. 1523.

114 Manzano Valenzuela 2021, 51–52 and Tab. 2; Martínez Leal 2002, [p. 6].

the business was run by his widow, and then until 1736 by their children.¹¹⁵ They lived in the Portal de las Flores district of Mexico City, while the printing house was located on Puente de Palacio street, where they also engraved or illustrated and sold the books.¹¹⁶ Based on the number of editions, Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio was a highly successful printer and bookseller, who began his professional career in collaboration with the bookseller Agustín de Santisteban.¹¹⁷ Santisteban was active from 1658 to 1661, and together they published an important book on St Francis Xavier, *El apostol de las Indias*, in 1661. By 1683, Rodríguez Lupercio had issued a total of 91 titles, most frequently reprints, and also traded books that included works from the printing houses in Madrid.¹¹⁸

His repertoire was diverse. In 1668, he reprinted Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza's poem on the Virgin Mary, *La vida de Nuestra Señora*. In 1674, he published a highly popular medicinal handbook, *Tesoro de Medicinas* by Gregorio López, a hermit from the 16th century, while in 1677 he printed *Sumarios de la recopilación general de las leyes*, originally published in Madrid in 1628 by Rodrigo de Aguiar y Acuña, one of the most important works for the legal history of colonial Mexico.¹¹⁹ In 1669, Rodríguez Lupercio published a guide on administering the sacraments to indigenous people, authored by the Dominican Martín de León (a reprint of his 1614 work) with additions by the Dominican Diego Cortezer.¹²⁰ After his death, in 1688, his widow issued the work of the prominent New Spanish Franciscan Baltasar de Medina, *Vida de fray Bernardo Rodríguez Lupercio, fraile de la misma provincia de San Diego*, a biography of the Franciscan Bernardo Rodríguez Lupercio, who was Francisco's brother.¹²¹ Two years later and under the name of Francisco's widow, the press published a reprint of the popular

¹¹⁵ Martínez Leal 2002, [p. 6]. Stanonik (1995, 68) writes that Jerónima is said to have managed the business until 1694; he drew this information from Medina (1908–1911, Vol. I, pp. CXXXV–CLV), whose work was not accessible to us. Rodríguez Domínguez (2012, 30), however, states that the widow is thought to have died in 1693, as the prints from that year onward bear the heirs' names as printers; this is not confirmed by the list of prints compiled by Manzano Valenzuela (see p. 261).

¹¹⁶ Tenorio 2007, 59, and Martínez Leal 2002, [p. 6].

¹¹⁷ Also: Santiesteban or Santiesteban y Vértiz. See Rodríguez Domínguez 2012, 13, and Martínez Leal 2002, [p. 6].

¹¹⁸ Martínez Leal 2002, [p. 6].

¹¹⁹ Torre Villar 2015, 145.

¹²⁰ *Manual Breve, y forma de administrar los Santos Sacramentos à los Yndios*. Title cited by Pilling 1885, 439, No. 2256; cf. Zempoalteca Chávez 2013.

¹²¹ The book was 'commissioned for printing and dedicated to Don Iván de Porras' by Francisco's relative Antonio Rodríguez Lupercio. See Manzano Valenzuela 2021, 90 and Fig. 3, and Calvo Portela, Corvera Poiré 2021, 79.

Spanish–Nahuatl dictionary by Pedro de Arenas (first published before 1611).¹²² The press also issued several other dictionaries and grammars. In 1673, Francisco published *Arte de lengua Mexicana* by the Franciscan Augustín de Vetancurt, and in 1692 his widow issued *Arte de la lengua Mexicana*, also by the Franciscan Juan Guerra. Under Jerónima's management, the press published over 80 works, while more than 270 works, including Kappus' *Enthusiasmus*, followed under her heirs or successors (always listed collectively on the title pages as *Herederos de la Viuda de Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio*). It is not known who owned the printing house at that time, but the similarity of the surnames and references in the introductions to some of the works from this printing house suggest it could have been Antonio, Fray Bernardo or Rodrigo Alfonso Rodríguez Lupercio.¹²³ Toward the very end of its operation, the press produced two extremely rare works: a study on the religious doctrine of the Chinanteco people, by Nicolás de Barreda, and a Spanish–Cora dictionary by the Jesuit José de Ortega.¹²⁴ After 1736, the Rodríguez Lupercio name no longer appeared on the title pages of Mexican prints.¹²⁵

The graphic design of Kappus' publication is the work of an unnamed author, as the name is noted neither on the title page nor at the two illustrations. In general, names of engravers from the colonial period only rarely survive. Even in the 17th century, books mostly lacked illustrations, or had only one engraving, either woodcut or copperplate, usually for the title page. An exception is Baltasar de Medina's *Chronica de la Santa Provincia de San Diego de México* printed in 1682 in the press of Juan de Ribera and decorated with three engravings: an architectural motif, a coat of arms and a map on the title page. The signatures or monograms reveal the authors: Antonio Ysarti (or Isarti) drew the title page and map, and Andrés Antonio made the coat of arms, as his monograms *ADR. ANT.* confirm.¹²⁶ Judging by his name, which he signed in abbreviated form, Andrés Antonio was probably Indian.¹²⁷ He also worked for the Rodríguez Lupercio press, for example on José López de Avilés'

122 *Vocabulario Manual de las Lenguas Castellana, y Mexicana*. See <https://archive.org/details/vocabulariomanua08aren/page/n5/mode/2up> (accessed 28 August 2025).

123 See https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/historia-de-la-imprenta-en-los-antiguos-dominios-espanoles-de-america-y-oceania-tomo-i--0/html/ff290d1e-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_94.html, p. 175; accessed 28 August 2025).

124 *Doctrina cristiana en Lengua Chinanteca* (1730) and *Vocabulario castellano-cora* (1732). See https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/historia-de-la-imprenta-en-los-antiguos-dominios-espanoles-de-america-y-oceania-tomo-i--0/html/ff290d1e-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_94.html, p. 176; accessed 28 August 2025).

125 Martínez Leal 2002, [p. 6].

126 The coat of arms of Captain Don José de Retes Largacha, Knight of the Order of St James, is depicted on page 11. See https://catalogo.iib.unam.mx/exlibris/aleph/a23_1/apache_media/DFT94BD1TA4A65ATMP5A2TXVUMYAXD.pdf (accessed 1 September 2025).

127 Romero de Terreros y Vinent 1917, 10.

book *Debido recuerdo de agradecimiento leal* from 1684, dedicated to Don Payo Enríquez de Ribera.¹²⁸ The title page of Kappus' poem does not bear an architectural motif, but does feature the Spanish coat of arms above the dedication to Louis Philip, as well as an illustration of three angels at the end of the poem (see **Figure 4**). The same angel design appears in a sermon that Jesuit Gaspar de Los Reyes delivered at the cathedral in Antequera (Oaxaca) in 1684, commemorating 'the most excellent, most famous and most respected maestro Don Fray Payo Enríquez de Ribera', Augustinian, bishop of Guatemala and then Michoacán, archbishop of México and also viceroy of New Spain.¹²⁹ The depiction of the angels on page 15 of this sermon, printed by Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio's widow, bears the monogram ADR beneath the animal head. This confirms that the author of the angel illustration in Kappus' poem, though without a monogram, is the same, namely Andrés Antonio.

Individual typographic elements or ornaments are identical or very similar to those in other works from the Rodríguez Lupercio press. For instance, the Jesuit Juan de Oviedo's *Vida exemplar, heroicas virtudes y apostólicos ministerios de el V.P. Antonio Núñez de Miranda de la Compañía de Jesús*, printed by this press in 1702, features a Jesuit emblem with the IHS monogram very similar to that on the title page of *Enthusiasmus*.¹³⁰ The same applies to Antonio de Nebrija's 1713 work *Quantidad de las syllabas explicada conforme al libro quinto del arte de Antonio de Nebrija*, which also has the Jesuit emblem and the same series of vignettes framing the monogram above and below. The vignettes framing this title page from 1713 are the same as those above and below the Kappus' dedication to Louis Philip. The same is true of the triangular vignettes flanking the Jesuit emblem both on the title page and in the dedication of *Enthusiasmus*.¹³¹ Specific elements, such as the double vignettes in the second quarter of the page or in the lower centre of Kappus' title page, are identical to those on the title page of the famous 1681 comet treatise by Kino, made in the same press.¹³²

128 His monogram is in the bottom right corner of the full-page illustration on page 5. See https://catarina.udlap.mx/xmlib/projects/biblioteca_franciscana/xml/myPage.jsp?key=book_26e341.xml&id=libro_antiguo_sace&cobjects=/ximg&cdb=/db/xmlbris/system/metadata/&level=1§ion=1&number=5 (accessed 1 September 2025). Cf. Calvo Portela, Corvera Poiré 2021, 80 and 91.

129 *Sermon que predicó El P. Gaspar de los Reyes de la Compañía de Jesus, En las honrras, que la Santa Iglesia Cathedral de Antequera hizo al Exmo. Illmo. y Rmo. Señor Maestro D. Payo Enríquez de Ribera.* See <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra/sermon-que-predico-el-p-gaspar-de-los-reyes-de-la-compania-de-jesus-en-las-honrras-que-la-santa-iglesia-cathedral-de-antequera-hizo-al-exmo-illmo-y-rmo-señor-maestro-d-payo-1197255/> (accessed 1 September 2025).

130 See <http://simurg.csic.es/view/990002313230204201> (accessed 1 September 2025).

131 See <https://repositorio.unam.mx/4354> (accessed 25 August 2025).

132 See <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra/exposicion-astronomica-del-cometa-que-el-ano-de-1680-por-los-meses-de-noviembre-y-diciembre-y-este-ano-de-1681-por-los-meses-de-enero-y-febrero-se-ha-visto-en-todo-el-mundo-y-se-ha-observado-en-la-ciudad-de-cadiz--0/> (accessed 28 August 2025).

The reuse of typographic elements from much earlier works (and thus of the original matrices) was evidently not unusual. The Rodríguez Lupercio press, for example, used the vignette decoration that Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio had already printed in 1679 on the title page of Juan de Mendoza Ayala's sermon, intended for the dedication of a chapel, for the typographic border of eight pages of verses in Kappus' poem.¹³³ An identical decorative 'bouquet' with plant motifs and a decorative band on the left and right edge as printed in the dedication to Louis Philip (actually two bouquets, oriented with the upper part toward the Spanish coat of arms), appears in numerous other publications of the printing house. For example, it can be found three times in the extensive work of Augustinian Gonzalo del Valle *Espejo de varios colores*, printed as early as 1676.¹³⁴ Twice it was used in Augustín de Vetancurt's manual for administering sacrament in 1682.¹³⁵ The following year it was used to embellish the eulogy of Franciscan Antonio Correa for Diego del Castillo, benefactor of St Elizabeth's monastery in Mexico City.¹³⁶ The same decoration, again in a pair and similarly oriented, is found in Father Diego Diaz's sermon for a ceremonial procession in Antequera (Oaxaca) in 1694; it was printed by Francisco's widow.¹³⁷ The earliest use of this decoration is in the Alonso Ortíz's laudatory sermon from 1674, dedicated to the martyr San Pedro Pasqual from Valencia, as many as 34 years before the publication of *Enthusiasmus*.¹³⁸ It is clear that the press used old matrices from Francisco's time for the typographic and decorative elements in Kappus' poem; Francisco may even have been their designer.

In its formal layout, decoration and typography, *Enthusiasmus* is an excellent example of Baroque printing as developed in New Spain and exemplified by the Rodríguez Lupercio family press. It displays numerous characteristics of

133 *Sermón en la dedicación de la capilla, que se hizo en la iglesia de Santa María la Redonda de México*. See https://catarina.udlap.mx/xmlib/projects/biblioteca_franciscana/book?key=book_jbc093.xml (accessed 25 August 2025).

134 The decoration is on pp. 90 r, 162 r and 224 v, always at the end of a chapter or book. See <https://dn790006.ca.archive.org/0/items/A091023/A091023.pdf> (accessed 25 August 2025).

135 *Manual de administrar los Santos Sacramentos, conforme a la reforma de Paulo V y Urbano VIII*; decoration on pp. 9 and 16. See https://catalogo.iib.unam.mx/exlibris/aleph/a23_1/apache_media/KQ7LQMHIllH7EJLQ63QRRMQLG9GFII.pdf (accessed 27 August 2025).

136 *Funebre panegyris, que a las honras del muy piadoso y nobilissimo republicano Diego del Castillo* etc. See https://catarina.udlap.mx/xmlib/projects/biblioteca_franciscana/book?key=book_a9d1e5.xml (accessed 28 August 2025).

137 *Sermon que En la Solemne Profession de la Madre María Magdalena de la Soledad* etc.; decoration on p. 7. See <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra/sermon-que-en-la-solemne-profession-de-la-madre-maria-magdalena-de-la-soledad-1197278/> (accessed 27 August 2025).

138 *Sermon panegyrico, del inclito martyr S. Pedro Pasqual de Valencia* etc., [p. 10]. See [https://digibug.ugr.es/flexpaper/handle/10481/3885/A-031-209%20\(12\).pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://digibug.ugr.es/flexpaper/handle/10481/3885/A-031-209%20(12).pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) (accessed 27 August 2025).

contemporary printing, particularly in the design of the title page and dedication. These are the accumulation or extension of text through typographic enlargement of titles and dedications, especially those addressed to the highest representatives of the Kingdom and the Church; decorative quality expressed in the multiplication of vignettes and typographic symbols to emphasize and accompany texts and fill empty spaces; use of light and design contrasts evident in excessive use of ornaments to highlight individual text elements; the contrast between roman and italic script, and compositional forms on the title page and dedication.¹³⁹ *Enthusiasmus* is also remarkable for its interplay of uppercase and lowercase letters in the chronograms. This design or graphic aspect of Kappus' poem is superbly integrated with the literary style, serving as an outstanding example of the creativity, sensibility and spirit of the Baroque period, or contemporary art and culture of the modern era.

CELEBRATIONS ACROSS THE EMPIRE

Kappus' description of the 1708 festivities in Mexico City forms part of a more extensive body of works devoted to such celebrations throughout the Spanish empire and created in 1707 and 1708. Some of these works are of a lighter nature, often satirical, in verse (such as *romance*, *romancillo* and *letrilla*). For Madrid, twelve such texts in twenty editions from 1707 survive, dealing with events connected with the royal family and life at court. No fewer than ten of them are dedicated to the birth of Louis Philip, including congratulatory and well-wishing texts, as well as an astrologically supported prediction of the expected child's sex, naturally a boy.¹⁴⁰ The position of the stars at the time of birth was also regarded as significant. As already mentioned, the Jesuit Antonio Xardón, who became provincial of the missions of New Spain and thus Kappus' superior on 17 April 1708, delivered a sermon in honour of the happy birth of Louis Philip in the cathedral of Guatemala on 10 April of that year. It was published on twenty-six pages under the title 'The new solstice between Leo and Virgo for the elevation of Spain in Sagittarius' with the subtitle 'Astrono-mystical horoscope'. The child, expected at the beginning of August, was overdue and 'miraculously' (*milagrosamente*) born on 25 August at precisely ten hours and sixteen minutes, on the feast day of Saint Louis of France.¹⁴¹ At that time the Sun passed from Leo into Virgo, and according to

139 Cf. primarily Manzano Valenzuela 2021, esp. pp. 167–168. Cf. also Garone Gravier 2025.

140 Fernández Valladares 1988, 59–60 and 255–264, Nos. 127, 128, 130–137.

141 The mayors of both Carabanchel Alto and Bajo (near Madrid), who were astrologers, stated in a letter to the king offering congratulations on the prince's birth that the time of birth was at ten hours and fifteen minutes, which could not have influenced their prediction that, given the favourable position of Jupiter, the newborn 'Leo would appease the wild with the prudent'. See <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000250813&page=1>, pp. 2 and 3 (Biblioteca Digital Hispánica).

calculations and ‘the most reliable news’, conception had taken place in November when the Sun entered Sagittarius, ‘the proper sign of New Spain’.¹⁴²

The birth of Prince Louis Philip, the first son of Philip V, became a symbol of the confirmation of the new dynasty. Already on 3 September 1707, the *Consejo de Indias* issued a royal decree (*real cédula*) prescribing that celebrations of giving thanks to God for the happy event be organised throughout the Spanish empire.¹⁴³ Such festivities, which formed part of the ‘ceremonial of monarchy’, were intended to exalt the power of the ruler, the kingdom and the dynasty. At the same time, the temporary architecture and symbolism of the imagery used in these celebrations shaped a political discourse which most of society could understand and accept through iconography, sculptures, emblems and inscriptions.¹⁴⁴

The celebrations were also a token of the close connection between Spain and France, which the authors of the festivities and speakers sought in the history of both countries, as well as in contemporary events, thereby giving the prince’s birth a symbolic and even magical significance. Francisco Perea y Porras sought the magical nature (*hechizo*) of the prince’s birth already in the will of King Alfonso X of Castile (‘the Wise’, 1221–1284), who is believed to have advised his successors to maintain ‘the closest possible friendship with France’, and also in the will of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V of Habsburg (also King Charles I of Spain, 1500–1558), who recommended a ‘permanent alliance of the two crowns’. Particularly telling was the connection with King Louis IX of France, canonised as Saint Louis, who was born on 25 April 1215 and died on 25 August 1270; the two dates correspond with Spain having won its famous victory at Almansa on 25 April 1707 and Louis Philip being born precisely on 25 August of that year.¹⁴⁵ The renowned Mexican priest Juan Ignacio de Castorena identified another significant connection. He attributed the timely and happy birth of the prince on 25 August, the feast of Saint Louis and also the name day (*onomástico*) of the prince’s grandfather the Dauphin and of his ‘invincible’ great-grandfather Louis XIV, to the intercession of Saint Bernard, patron of fertility or abundance (*fecundidad*) of the French royal house; he based this on the queen’s labour pains having begun on 20 August, the feast of Saint Bernard.¹⁴⁶

The greatest celebrations, of course, took place in Spain itself. Secular and ecclesiastical authorities, often also institutions such as the University of Salamanca, organised festivities in major cities and monasteries.¹⁴⁷ These were also held

142 Xardón 1708, fol. 3.

143 Navarro García 1986, 119.

144 Franco Rubio 2008, 285.

145 Perea y Porras 1720–1733, [16–17].

146 Escamilla González 2004, 195.

147 *Relación* 1707.

in smaller towns and villages, and even in the countryside, as sources reveal for Sangüesa in Navarre, a settlement of some 2000 inhabitants. The prior of the Dominican monastery there, Antonio Pérez de Aguilar y Ederra, wrote a report on them entitled *Hibleo laberíntico lírico y músico sacro*, now described as a ‘purely Baroque play’.¹⁴⁸

The prince’s birth was celebrated and in one way or another commemorated in writing also in many other lands and cities of the Spanish empire, for example in 1708 in the largest city of the Viceroyalty of Nuevo Reino, Bogotá, as well as in Lima, Potosí, Cuzco, Quito and Manila.¹⁴⁹

The records are particularly detailed for Manila in the Spanish Philippines, where in 1709 Gaspar Aquino de Belén published an extensive report on the festivities under the title *Leales demostraciones, amantes finezas, y festivas aclamaciones de la novilissima Ciudad de Manila ... en accion de gracias por el dichoso, y feliz nacimiento de nuestro principe, y señor natural D. Luis Phelipe Fernando Ioseph ...*, printed by the Jesuit Press.¹⁵⁰

In New Spain, public festivities in honour of the same members of the royal family were in many respects very similar to those in the Philippines, as can also be seen from a comparison between Kappus’ poetic descriptions and Belén’s detailed and entirely documentary account. They observed a range of social norms and etiquettes of the age in order to renew the formalities established and employed by society in Spain, thereby enhancing the authority of the monarchy in the colonies of the New World. On the one hand, these festivities reveal the features of European early modern culture in Baroque guise with its heritage of the ancient cultures of the Old World and its all-pervading Catholic ethos, that is, festive elements imported from the metropolis that the municipal authorities adapted in a colonial manner. Having said that, a strong local, indigenous influence is also apparent: popular piety, mass participation, often the anonymity of *mestizos* and even the involvement of *indios naturales*, although these were marked as different and attributed not only ‘particular ideas’ (*sus particulares ideas*) but also ‘intellectual limitation’ (*cortedad*).¹⁵¹

The Spanish Crown in its theological and political programme accorded *fiestas* an important place in the life of colonial societies in America. Various aspects of these festivities were regulated by laws and ordinances (such as the *Leyes de Indias*) that had to be observed at all times and everywhere. The rites of the Catholic

148 Torres Olleta 2013, 276.

149 Navarro García 1986, 199–201.

150 Ruiz Jiménez 2019a. The report is available in digitised form based on the original held in the Biblioteca Nacional de España, accessible via the Biblioteca Digital Hispánica portal, <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000112258>.

151 Ruiz Jiménez 2019a, 3; Pita Pico 2017.

Church helped to create a sense of civic identity that strengthened virtue and civic loyalty. In certain circumstances, they did not overlook 'local colour', which fostered a sense of belonging to the state. This is how the Catholic Church regulated religious worship (*ejercicio de culto*) connected with numerous civic festivities, in Latin America particularly with the solemn mass and the hymn of thanksgiving *Te Deum*, ever since the establishment of the Sacred Congregation of Rites in 1588.¹⁵² It was rightly said that 'to call upon God was a way of collaborating with the ruler in a profound identification of prosperity and well-being with religious practice and respect for his exalted person'.¹⁵³

Fiesta – a feast, celebration and at the same time entertainment – was an important factor of social cohesion in Spanish America thanks to the mass participation of different social groups, including *mestizos* and *indios*, as well as people of different races in general and American Spaniards.¹⁵⁴ Its purpose was not solely or primarily amusement or play. Its true aim was 'to strengthen by exhibition and persuasion those values of the old order (*Antiguo Régimen*) that were immutable and believed: loyalty to the Crown, acceptance of the social order and exaltation of Catholic orthodoxy'.¹⁵⁵ The Baroque *fiesta* thus amounted to the exercise of authority.¹⁵⁶ Such were the *fiestas* held in Mexico in 1708 in honour of the birth of the heir to the throne.

History shows, however, that Louis Philip was not born under a fortunate star and could not secure for his father the firm succession of the Bourbon dynasty. Philip V, whose wife María Luisa died in 1714 and two of whose four sons died in childhood, abdicated on 14 January 1724. Louis Philip succeeded him as King Louis I of Spain. As was customary, festivities were organised in many parts of the empire and oaths of loyalty sworn to the new 'King and Lord of the Spains', also in Mexico City.¹⁵⁷ Yet his reign, the shortest in the history of Spain, lasted only seven months. He died in Madrid on 31 August 1724 of smallpox. All the good wishes at his birth and all the congratulations, including those of Marcus Antonius Kappus and his fellow Jesuits from the Mexican missions, were in vain. Ineffectual were the precautionary measures, such as the staged performance of the three Fates at the festivities in Seville in 1707: the

¹⁵² Aguerre Core 2016, 23.

¹⁵³ Aguerre Core (2016, 23–24) cites this statement by Ana María Martínez de Sánchez.

¹⁵⁴ It should be added that during the celebrations everyone was assigned a place corresponding to their position in the social hierarchy; the privileged enjoyed the best view, seating and service, whereas ordinary people observed the events from a distance, standing and without assistance, as shown by the example of the festivities for the accession of Charles IV in Asunción, Paraguay, in 1790 (Aguerre Core 2016, 33).

¹⁵⁵ Aguerre Core 2016, 24.

¹⁵⁶ 'La fiesta barroca como práctica del poder' (Antonio Bonet Correa).

¹⁵⁷ Tlaczani Segura 2020, 58–70.

third, the Inevitable, who cuts the thread of life, was symbolically placed with her shears far from the strands of golden thread borne on the spindle by the second Fate, and supplications were voiced: 'Depart hence, o Fates, and take your thread with you'.¹⁵⁸

News of the sudden death of the seventeen-year-old monarch reached New Spain and other parts of the empire only several months later. A cruel irony of history is that in the Viceroyalty of Peru, in the capital Lima, the coronation of the new king was proclaimed as late as 3 December 1724 and on 9 February 1725 a splendid show was staged in the viceregal palace to celebrate the first year of his reign.¹⁵⁹ In Potosí, the centre of silver mining in the Andes, the oath of loyalty to Louis Philip, by then already deceased, was still celebrated in 1725. The preserved titles of reports reveal the same occurred in Oaxaca and Durango in New Spain.¹⁶⁰ The news of the king's death only reached Lima on 8 June 1725, and the funeral ceremonies in the cathedral took place on 22 August, almost a year after the death of Louis Philip. His father Philip V returned to the throne and ruled the Spanish realms until 1746.

CONCLUSION: *ENTHUSIASMUS* AS THE EXPRESSION OF THE GLOBAL ACTIVITIES OF THE JESUITS

Kappus' *Enthusiasmus* as a literary-historical source must be considered within the contexts of the space, time and spirit in which it was created, that is, within the specific political circumstances, cultural setting, as well as social and spiritual climate both in New Spain and in Europe at the beginning of the 18th century. More than any of his other writings, it also presents the missionary as a man who found intellectual challenge and satisfaction in *ludi poetici*, the play of words and numbers made possible by chronograms. Should we therefore regard Kappus, on the basis of this unique poem – perhaps the only one he ever wrote, or at least the only one preserved – as a poet and indeed as the first poet of Slovenian birth in America (the Americas)? At the end of the poem, in a characteristically Baroque manner, he does exactly that – declares himself a poet. Janez Stanonik, who introduced Kappus as 'the first Slovenian-born poet in the Americas', concluded from the information then available on the title page that the work was 'above all an intellectual game rather than an expression of genuine poetic sentiment'. Now that the poem is before us, we can only partly agree with that conclusion. The kind of poetic sentiment the poem of Marcus Antonius Kappus reveals may

158 Ramos [1707?], 44: *Hinc procul, o Parcae, vestro cum stamine abite.*

159 Rodríguez Garrido 2017, 313.

160 Tlaczani Segura 2020, 70.

only be disclosed by a meticulous literary-historical analysis, yet his poetic talent is undeniable and its fruit, though singular, is exceptional.

This, however, is only one aspect of the text, one dealing with its literary or artistic value. Another aspect is more important for understanding Kappus' missionary work and for situating his poem historically. *Enthusiasmus*, in view of the author's intention and message, can be understood as a celebratory, politically motivated text which, also in comparison with similar writings in honour of Prince Louis Philip from 1707 and 1708, belongs to the global campaign of the Spanish Crown to secure the position of the new Bourbon dynasty on the throne and to reinforce ties across all the territories of the empire. It also presents Kappus as a loyal representative of the Jesuit order in the viceroyalty of New Spain, seeking to gain support and favour for the Society during the change of dynasty and in the uncertain years of the War of the Spanish Succession. At its core, the poem is thus an expression of Kappus' continuous missionary efforts to achieve the aim he pursued within the framework of the Jesuit 'holy experiment': the further Christianisation of the indigenous peoples of north-western Mexico and their subjugation to the Spanish Crown, all to the greater glory of God – and of the king.

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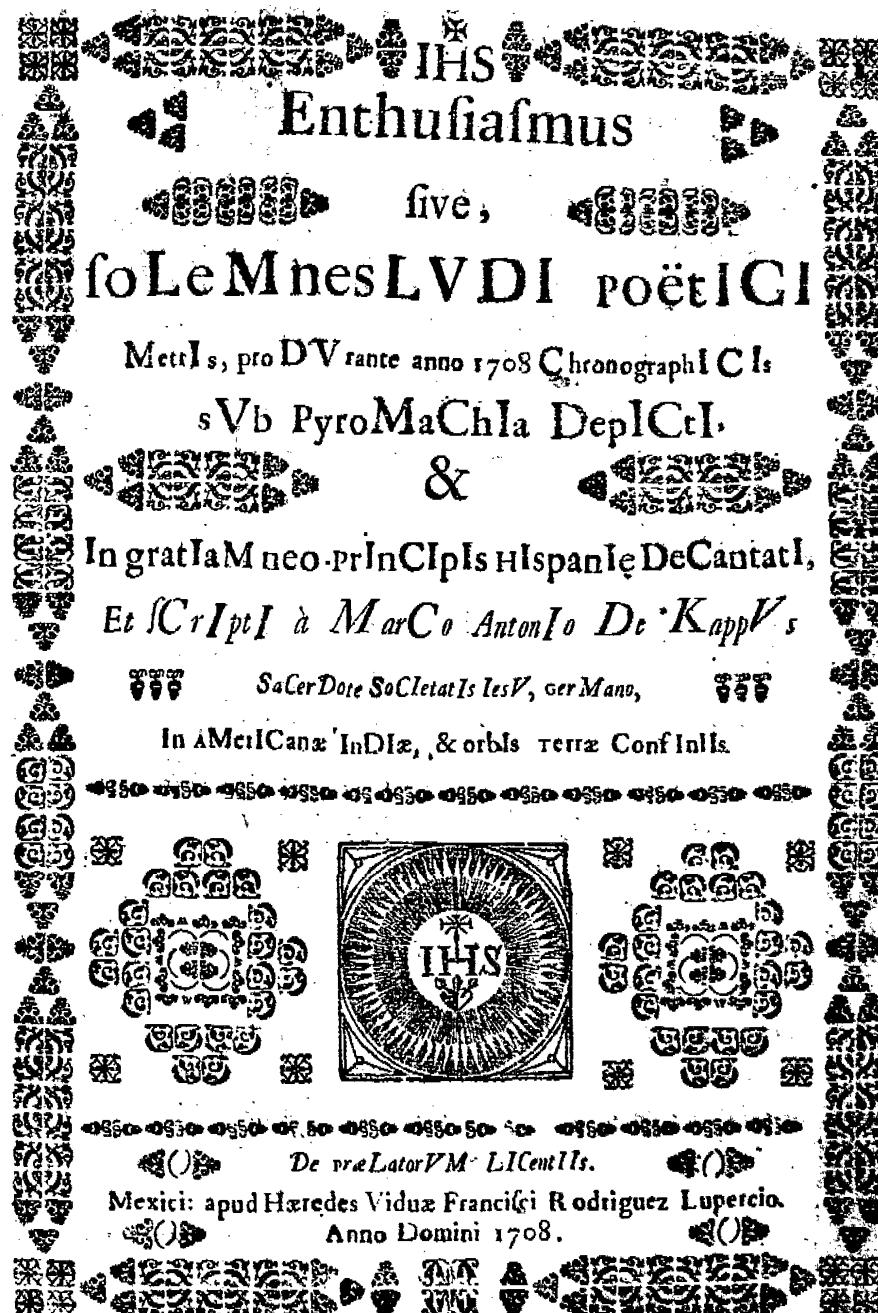


Figure 1: Title page of the poem *Enthusiasmus*



Figure 2: Dedication to Louis Philip, the heir to the throne

nam pLaCet Ignifabros CantV. ConC/te CyCLopes;
 & Læta Insul/fo spLeMnla pangere LVDo.
 ergo CItò, stropes, Vestras Displopste, Merces, *
 artificesqVe hoDle, taLes Mostrate Labores;
 Ut s/nt hæC Magnæ benè Consona festa D/ct;
 aVc VIX qVID MaIVs VVLCanla fInXetic Ignl.
 sVrgas In horrendo prInCeps fera MaChlna brato.
 seCretos, Latlante DoLo, benè sVppilMat Ignes:
 alto Dc tel/ro properé loVls atM/ger aLes
 alVoLet. & pyro Latlantes foM/te teChnas
 Deferat, aC priMus à tergore sVsCltet Ignes:
 Des/llant satyri In Censls Lepido orDine tyrik,
 pLaVIDentes saLtent, aCtI Igne & ab arté Maglstr,
 & festIVa Inter Chbreas CestaMlna proDant:
 ast Insperatos eCce oMnes, DentVt In Ignes
 hoC Latere horrenDa InsVrgant In præLLa Monstra,
 tetra per ora Ignel VoMlent aCheronta DraCones:
 proDeat & Creptans aLls fLagrantibVs agMen;
 In strepero rapt/M VoLet aère Dlra CaLeno,
 harp/eqVe aLlæ, Lathes fcdiss/Ma speCtra:
 ILL/Co prorVpto CLaMore In beLLa CyCLopes
 atria Certantes repeatant CanDentibVs arMls,
 InfestasqVe stryges aC horrida Monstra Charontis
 Conflogant oMnes spLenDentibVs aere telLs
 aDsint Cornpetz, CVrant, Mlra arte, theatro,
 & Magnos efflent aLls De CornibVs Ignes,
 terribILs, phLegetonta ferant Ventre, IMpere CoDes;
 Cornpetz horrenDI, portenta, neCesqVe Mlntantes:
 oCtoni ethyopes, aplls aD MVnera Concls
 Corolpetas sternans, MoDó pars sternantVt ab ILLs.
 r/DebVnr stropes, vInCeps & In arte pyraCMon:
 stelflCes, aDcò IVbistere pegMat eCens.
 ILLaC. elCta aMoLo CaCt fglVnCa theatro
 horrendo ore Cspans, fabrICato fVMiger Ignes,
 affLICta Ingentes gLoMerando per oslla nVbes:
 hæC In parte fVrens arDent Corpore & arMls
 proDeat aLcides & frenDent Lustret blantls
 speLct faUCes, & reLa arDentia proMlat

80	* Fuegos artificiales
85	El tablado
90	El Agila que preponde fuego.
95	Danza de Satyros.
100	Dragones rolanes, y Harpas.
105	Los Cy-clopes.
110	Torres de fuego.
115	Negros Torcedores.
120	La Cueva de Caco.
125	Herencia que coje a Caco, y le mata.

Figure 3: Third page of the poem: Verses 77–105, with annotations in Spanish

270

en MoDō restipotens aLto VoLat nistro teCto;
hIC LVDeus aLtrā, peDe penDet In aere, resti,
& probat la DVbla MILLeNia Cannabe sortes:
hIC agltant ClrCo taVros, feritate treMenDos,
terribIles speCte, forMqVe; horreosVa paLastra!
uVX, aVDzX! pVnCro In CVIVs Mors VeritVe Vno;
at genti Hesperiæ ter DeLeCtabIle frtVM.
hIC rVMpo ChorDas In fne:
pone LyraM, satIs est, rhoebet Ite, & CLaVD/te fontes
ALMæ CastaL/Dæs! VatIs sat prata b7berè.



Figure 4: Eighth page of the poem with illustration at the end

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***Enthusiasmus* jezuitskega misijonarja Marka Antona Kappusa, 1708: ponovno odkritje izgubljene pesmi in njen kulturnozgodovinski pomen**

Jezuit Marko Anton Kappus (1657–1717), rojen v Kamni Gorici (severozahodna Slovenija), se je leta 1687 odpravil v Novi svet. Naslednjih trideset let je preživel kot misijonar med domorodnim prebivalstvom Ópata na skrajnem severozahodu Mehike, ki je bila takrat del španske kolonije Nova Španija. Leta 1708 je napisal pesem z naslovom *Enthusiasmus sive, soLeMnes LVDI PoëtICI MetrIs, pro DVrante anno 1708 ChronographICIs sVb PyroMaChIa DepICtI*, ki je bila objavljena v Ciudad de Mexicu. Pesem, sestavljena iz 276 heksametrov v latinščini, vsak natisnjen kot kronogram, je bila posvečena Ludviku Filipu Burbonu, novorojenemu princu Španije (1707–1724). Dolgo časa je bil znan le naslov pesmi, celo mislili so, da je izgubljena, saj je ni bilo mogoče najti niti v ameriških niti v evropskih knjižnicah ali arhivih. Janez Stanonik je pesmi posvetil posebno študijo, objavljeno v reviji *Acta neophilologica* leta 1995. Avtor tega članka, spodbujen s Stanonikovim raziskovanjem Kappusa, je leta 2021 med spletnim iskanjem v Biblioteca Foral de Bizkaia v Bilbau naletel na izvod pesmi. *Enthusiasmus* je zelo pomemben za razumevanje Kappusovih misijonskih in političnih dejavnosti ter njegovih literarnih in umetniških sposobnosti. Članek v tej številki revije obravnava usodo te dolgo izgubljene pesmi, zgodovinske okoliščine njenega nastanka in ponuja pregled njenе vsebine, sporočila in kulturno-zgodovinskega pomena v političnem in družbenem kontekstu sodobne Nove Španije in širše španskega imperija med špansko nasledstveno vojno (1701–1714). V prihodnji številki je predvidena transkripcija pesmi skupaj z njenim angleškim prevodom, ki ga bodo spremljale jezikoslovna in literarnozgodovinska študija ter sinteza trenutnega vedenja o tem izjemnem Kappusovem delu.

Ključne besede: Marko Anton Kappus, jezuit, misijonar, pesem v latinščini, kronogrami, princ Ludvik Filip iz rodbine Burbonov, praznovanja leta 1708, Ciudad de México, Nova Španija, tiskarna družine Rodríguez Lupercio