

ROBERT H. BARLOW
THROUGH THE ARCHIVE:
TO REVEAL, RECONSTRUCT AND REIFY
THE HISTORICAL TRACES
OF A SILENCED LIFE

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Abstract: During the last years, Mexican academics and institutions focused their activities in preserving and studying the valuable sources of the history of the Country, kept mainly in its archives. Scholars from different places got interested in organize and catalogue all these heterogeneous sources. This article raises the possibility of reconstructing the figure of Robert H. Barlow from the documents contained in five institutional archives in Mexico: the Historical Archive “José Raúl Hellmer Pickman” of the National School of Anthropology and History, the Historical Archive of the Institute of Historical Research of UNAM, the archive of the Mexican Society of Anthropology, the General Archive of the Nation and the National Newspaper Archive of Mexico. Such a task implies considerable challenges since the archive, understood as a privileged instrument of historical memory, confronts us with intricate dynamics of selection, transmission or omission of information, problems that have already been raised by Jacques Derrida, and others, in his book *Archive fever*. In this sense, the study of Barlow’s figure through documentary repositories allows us to glimpse two vital dimensions of the American-born researcher: the “academic Barlow” and the “human Barlow”.

Keywords: America, history, anthropology, archive, Barlow.

ISSN 2283-7949
GLOCALISM: JOURNAL OF CULTURE, POLITICS AND INNOVATION
2021, 2, DOI: 10.12893/gjcpi.2021.2.3
Published online by “Globus et Locus” at <https://glocalismjournal.org>



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... y luego el dicho capitán les dio una su carta para que los dichos caciques vinieran seguros. Y así se fueron con ella dándoles el capitán término de cinco días para volver...

Hernán Cortés, *Primera carta-relación*.

INTRODUCTION

Sixteenth century Mesoamerican people gave “credibility” to Hernán Cortés’ letters even if they still did not know, by the time of the Conquest, ink and paper, Latin alphabet nor Castilian vocabulary. Native messengers, while receiving physical manifestations of the western words, at the same time were, to the eyes of the conquerors, subjects of an act of validation, addressees of an official and authoritative performance that in itself constituted a categorical evidence of subjugation. The conquerors showed to the native people a document, an official one signed by Cortés, and by that they pretended to give legal foundation to their military expedition, and to the violent thievery of land and rights. Cortés, on the other hand, knew that natives did not understand his writings, and that they could not understand the legal and theological act of authority that was ritualized and reified by his written words. Nevertheless, he found useful to officialize his deeds through documents, and desirable to fix into “real proofs” what he was doing producing a legal and official framework in order to justify his actions in front of the emperor Charles V Habsburg (Cortés 2004).

Mesoamerican cultures, however, inherited a rich and deep written tradition, which physical media were codices, mural paintings and steles. All these documents contained the words of their governors, of their gods and goddesses, and recorded their past. Mesoamerican people did recognize the importance and the authority of written words, of the document and of the official document. We are, as historians, a bit like that: we entrust great value, someone would say a sacred value, to the source and to the archive¹.

Now, we must notice that the concept of archives as privileged places and instruments of the historical memory is intimately related with the idea of authority and its origins. Authors like Jacques

ISSN 2283-7949

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2021, 2, DOI: 10.12893/gjcp.2021.2.3

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Derrida (1997) and, more recently, Mario Rufer (2016), tried to trace back the root of this idea starting from the very etymology of the word “authority”. In this sense the Greek term *arkhḗ*, through its subsequent historical modifications, can be connected also to all those strategies that seek to construct and articulate a homogeneous historical, often nationalistic, discourse or, alternatively, linked to complex psychoanalytical processes.

The individual who fathoms the deeps of the archive can think that, in front of him, lay a mass of lifeless information, completely indifferent to what he will find and will not find, unsympathetic to the conclusions of the historian who works out the source into a final, academic synthesis. Yet, the repository has a strong institutional soul: it must follow strict access rules, cataloguing norms and storage standards. We can say that the archive is, in itself, a reification of the will of its founders and maintainers: most of the times State-sponsored institutions². In its norms, in its laws and drive, there is the specific intention to preserve what generates a sense of confidence and authenticity. However, the archive embodies another process, perhaps less evident: a process which involves oblivion and destruction (Derrida 1997: 18-20; Certeau 1993: 84), organized and planned by its utmost custodians. Oblivion can be actively performed in different ways: restricting the access to specific archives, collections or areas, denying to preserve certain type of documents, basing the policy of preservation strictly on an economical basis, or impeding the complete communication and diffusion of the material. Moreover, the legislation that regulates how, when and why a document can be preserved and catalogued, or destroyed, plays an important role in the process of remembering and forgetting. That is why the scholar, while analyzing and producing historical and ethnographical accounts through archival documents, must analyze as well why, how, by whom, those sources are preserved and classified. According to Rufer, the scholar must do something more, that is, reconstruct the history of the secrets of the archive itself, the “silences” of its records (Rufer 2016).

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2021, 2, DOI: 10.12893/gjcp.2021.2.3

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The repository, considered as a whole, implies several problems for the historian, some more self-evident than others. Moreover, every document stored in it, in its singularity, represents by itself a complex world of issues. We are familiarized with these issues, since they are the recurring issues of our work: who created the document? Why? How it was composed and when? These questions are directly connected to the preservation of the source: why the document is stored in this archive? Why it belongs to this collection? These are not trivial questions, since they are the only way in order to understand that what we can find in the archive is not the result of a neutral and impartial activity. Questions like those help us to avoid the conception, perhaps unconscious one, of the documental/archival source as a sort of “historical totality”. By that, I mean a source that relate an absolute, positive, conclusive historical fact; a document that, next to of other of its kind, will help to reconstruct a complete and total historical truth (Rufer 2020: 163).

On the other hand, archival sources can be approached in the way suggested by Walter Benjamin (Benjamin 2008: 54-55) in one on his latest writings *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* (*Theses on the Philosophy of History*). Adapting his thesis to our purposes we can maintain that the access to the document is a deeply complex process, the interaction between source and historian is carried out in a specific historical moment and, it that very instant, the document is transformed into a tool to discern the past, a unique and unrepeatable spark of knowledge. Then, the contact between source and historian produces the interpretation and the writing of History (Benjamin 2008: 54-55), and this happens because the very archival configuration stems from a social dynamic that legitimates it. This legitimation transforms the archive in a repository of “truth”, a vestige, a reference to the past always connected to specific political and cultural interests, originating a specific record that, while preserving the source, produce a peculiar regime of conventionality at the disposal of human collectivity; this means, a construct is generated, as we can appreciate in Cortes’ writing process, that must



be analyzed by the historian in order to problematize the emergence of the archive, especially when the scholar wants to investigate the historical sources. So, considering as well the previous knowledge and expectations of the scholar, we can see how historiography entails a cognitive fabric resulting from the conjunction of several subjectivities, interests and perspectives about the very process of historical interpretation (Valacchi 2020: 77-96).

To reflect about sources and archives, both Western and Mesoamerican ones, is not a useless activity and it is closely linked to the main theme of this article: the life and works of Robert Hayward Barlow.

ROBERT H. BARLOW, AN EXAMPLE OF THE COMPLEXITY OF THE MEMORY

There is a moment when the flesh-and-bones scholar (historian, anthropologist, archaeologist), is turned into a biographical character, and his legacy as well turns into an object of study, analysis and critics: that mean, they are both transformed into part of the archive. We can say then that Mesoamerican studies can be summarized into several personalities that were of utmost importance for the consolidation of this research field. This is the case for Robert H. Barlow, even if his complex and heterogenic works are poorly known and scarcely available as a consequence of storage and classification processes carried out by the institutions.

We have to take into account this, when we investigate Barlow's life starting from archival material and basing our inquiry on institutional archival sources. The researcher, starting from her peculiar interest (history, anthropology, archaeology, literature), could only reconstruct a fractional biography and outline something inherently partial, that cannot grasp the profundity and the complexity of a single human figure.

It is very easy to get lost among the articulations of Barlow's works and their analysis, among the systematic debates that

ISSN 2283-7949

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underline the extraordinary features of this ink-and-paper subject, a *corpus* that emphasize Barlow's life as running between literature and anthropology and must then be investigated through a dialogical methodology involving the two of them.

BARLOW, THE BIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Robert Hayward Barlow was born on May 18th 1918 in Leavenworth, Kansas. His father was a U.S. Army captain and, between the two World Wars, his family was registered in a population census in San Francisco, California. During the Twenties, Barlow's family also lived in Georgia and Florida. Barlow wrote to the famous author Howard P. Lovecraft since he was 13, as he felt attracted by the visionary horror tales of the writer from Providence. Later on, Barlow published his first fantastic tale, *Annals of Jinns*, on a fanzine named *Fantasy Fan*. Barlow and Lovecraft shared a passion in common and years later, after living together for a few months, Barlow published the journals *Dragon Fly* and *Leaves* and then, co-authored by Lovecraft, the tale *The Night Ocean*. The very Lovecraft, before his death occurred in 1937, named Barlow only heir of his books and manuscripts, a choice that created some problems inside the literary community where they were both affiliated.

After a few years, Barlow will grow an anthropological interest about Mesoamerica pre-Hispanic past, that brought him first inside the universities of Berkeley and Brown, California, and later in México, where he could participate, as a student, to the activities of the new Escuela Nacional de Antropología, just instituted in 1940. He wanted to learn Náhuatl, above all the nahua linguistic tradition, and carry out an investigation in the Tlatelolco archaeological site. Two years later, Barlow returned in California in order to obtain his academic degree in Arts, and to request a microfilm version of a *Huebuetlahtolli* manuscript preserved in the Brown University library. Then, he left the United States one last and final time in order to return to México, in 1943.

ISSN 2283-7949

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He refashioned himself into a full-time scholar, active member of the Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología and professor of the Escuela Nacional de Antropología, colleague of prof. Wigberto Jiménez Moreno since 1945. He was grant holder of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, a first time in 1946 and later in 1947, in order to study the urban enclaves of the ancient Mexico basin and their political structure. Helped by the aforementioned Jiménez Moreno, Barlow further developed his knowledge of náhuatl in order to begin a colossal task as it was the linguistic study of several nahua documents: *Aesop's Fables* (contained in the *Cantares Mexicanos* manuscripts), the *Binding of Isaac* (an *Auto* in mexican language), the *Huei Tlamahuicoltica* (a *Huehuetlatolli*) and the massive *Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España* by Bernardino de Sahagún. During those years, with the help of José Raúl Hellmer, Barlow recorded traditional náhuatl and totonaco chants in Milpa Alta, Coatepec (Veracruz), Tpalacoyan (Puebla) and Buenavista de Cuéllar (Guerrero). Already by the year 1948, Barlow signed his first contract in the Instituto de Historia (UNAM), being his plan to study pre-Hispanic Mexican cultures under different points of view, and then renewing this official and institutional task a second time in 1949 and a third one in 1950 thanks to Rafael García Granados. In the same period, he was appointed as chief of the Department of Anthropology of the México City College.

Robert H. Barlow committed suicide, under unclear circumstances, in his Azcapotzalco house during the night between December 31st, 1950 and January 1st, 1951. At that time, he was 32 years old. According to someone of his acquaintances, his ashes were scattered in the Desierto de los Leones by his friends, Ignacio Bernal y Pablo Martínez del Río, the latter also received a letter by Barlow containing his last wills and rattling off his unfinished academic works (Monjarás-Ruiz y Ríos 2005: 3-35; Quirarte 2014: 37-41; Battcock, Bravo 2021).

Barlow's life was rather short, and still very prolific. It is a paradox that it can be resumed in few short paragraphs. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that no biography could ever catch the



totality of the life of a single human being, and this simple fact leaves us with a question: how can we study in detail Barlow's life and works? How can we make partially disappear the barrier of otherness between us and the past? The solution can be found in the archive, not because it is a repository of positive knowledge that permits us to reconstruct the past in its totality, but because it is an instrument useful to appreciate, in a glimpse, instants of past times, those "benjaminans sparkles", those "silenced voices" mentioned by Rufer, that permit the historian to do, ultimately, History. Following this path, getting close to Barlow's life through the archival sources can offer us multiple fragments about his activity, both human and academic, and its traces in the *arkbé*.

SPARKLES OF A FIGURE. BARLOW'S LIFE THROUGH A WORK-IN-PROGRESS ARCHIVE

During the last years, Mexican academies and institutions focused their activities in preserving and studying the valuable sources of the history of the Country, kept mainly in its archives. Scholars from different places got interested in organize and catalogue all these heterogeneous sources, these traces of a "past-not-past", trying to show how all of them materialize, ultimately, Derrida's main thought about the function of the archive: the archive is not an objective sanctuary of Truth, it is not an "objective repository of history" in which proofs are stored. On the contrary it is a deposit created by a precise particular agency (or agencies), it is the result of a subjective exercise of power.

Derrida's proposal, which can be found in the article *Archive Fever* from *Refiguring the archive*, devised firstly in Johannesburg and later published in the Low Countries in 2002, pushed me to examine our own historiographic activity about the U.S. anthropologist Robert H. Barlow through the documentation stored in the archives (figure 1). This Barlow we are able to reconstruct can be reached following and connecting a sort of thin, dotted line, made

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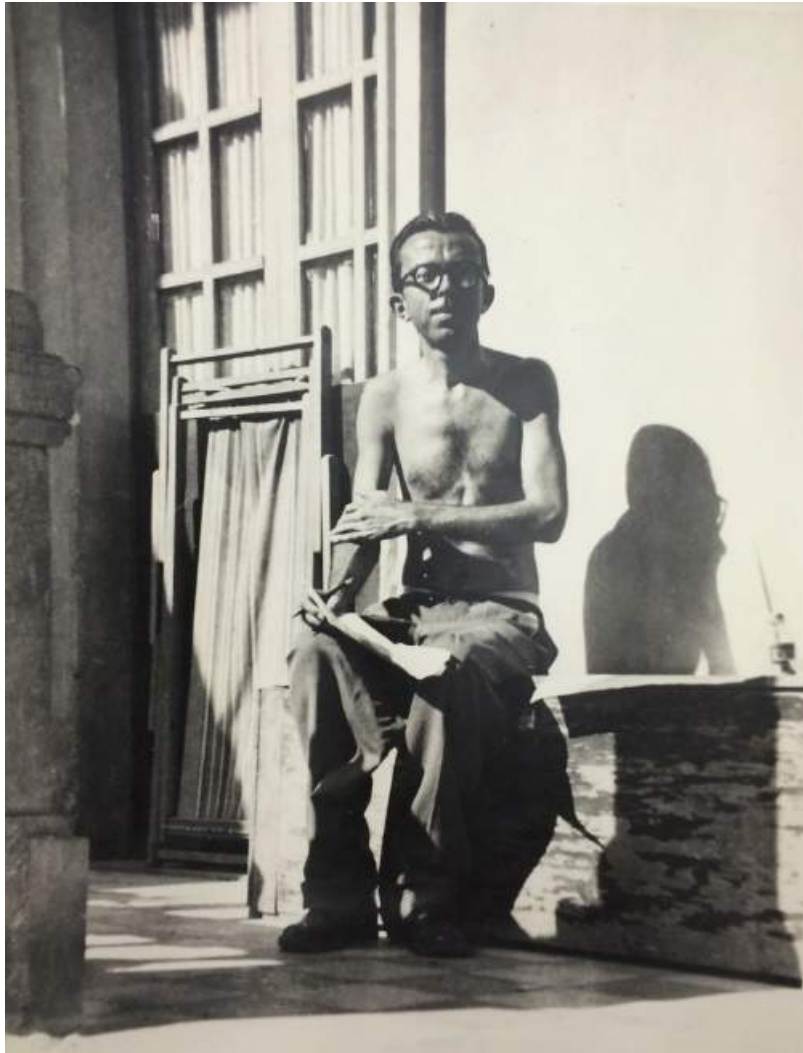


Fig. 1. *Robert H. Barlow in his house. Picture by James Raymond Forster, Azcapotzalco, 1950.*

out of single scattered documents. This reconstruction is a problematic one, since the documents just reflect partially what his life has been. The Barlow reconstructed through the documentation in but the academic one, the institutional one. That means, the historical biography of Robert H. Barlow is a matter of limitation and, if possible, imagination. The “real” Barlow, the “human” Barlow, is somewhat unreachable, a reconstruction of the complexity of a human being only through documents and archival sources is not possible. Our trajectory, then, will attain only the biography of what I would like to call the “institutional” Barlow.

Starting from the recent reorganization of the “José Raúl Hellmer Pickman” Historical Archive (Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, figure 2), I begun to investigate anthropology as a pedagogical project that, in México involved, since the Twenties, the study of the past through letters, class lists, syllabuses, and fieldwork and saw, for a fleeting time, the participation of Robert H. Barlow. I took into account also the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas Historical Archive (UNAM), where one can experience the intellectual and humanistic preoccupations of two decades of the Mexican academy 1940-1950. I studied articles, drawings, contracts, letters and official dossiers made available only by a new and valuable systematization of material sources that, still, is not reflected in the institution catalogue.

The third archive I took into account in this survey about belongs to the Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología (Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas UNAM, Picture 3). This repository is somehow special, since the sources are mostly unorganized and uncatalogued, stored in a metal shelf inside of what has been an old radio cabin. That is, an archive that has not being re-organized by scientific (and institutional) agencies through an act of power. Some few labeled folders which contain scattered documents only reflects a partial and incomplete effort in order to organize the archive, and echoes a semi-total unawareness of the material, of the temporality and information stored there.





Fig. 2. *Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Historical Archive. Picture by Adolfo Yunuen Reyes Rodríguez, Mexico City, 2020.*

The two last, mandatory, archives that I studied in order to reflect about the “institutional” Barlow are the mexican Archivo General de la Nación and the Hemeroteca Nacional de México, where I found important documentation about Barlow’s arrival in Mexico and about his death. Barlow’s arrival is registered on a migratory document that describes his physiognomy, his death on several Mexico City newspapers.

We begin by organize these clues: the documents states that the “institutional” Barlow, by that time 22 years old, subscribed his major in anthropology on February 14th 1940, and started to follow classes of náhuatl and technical drawing in the Escuela Nacional de Ciencias Biológicas of the Instituto Politécnico Nacional (AHENA 1937-1956) (figure 4).



Fig. 3. *Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología Historical Archive*. Picture by Aldo Sauza, Mexico City, 2020.

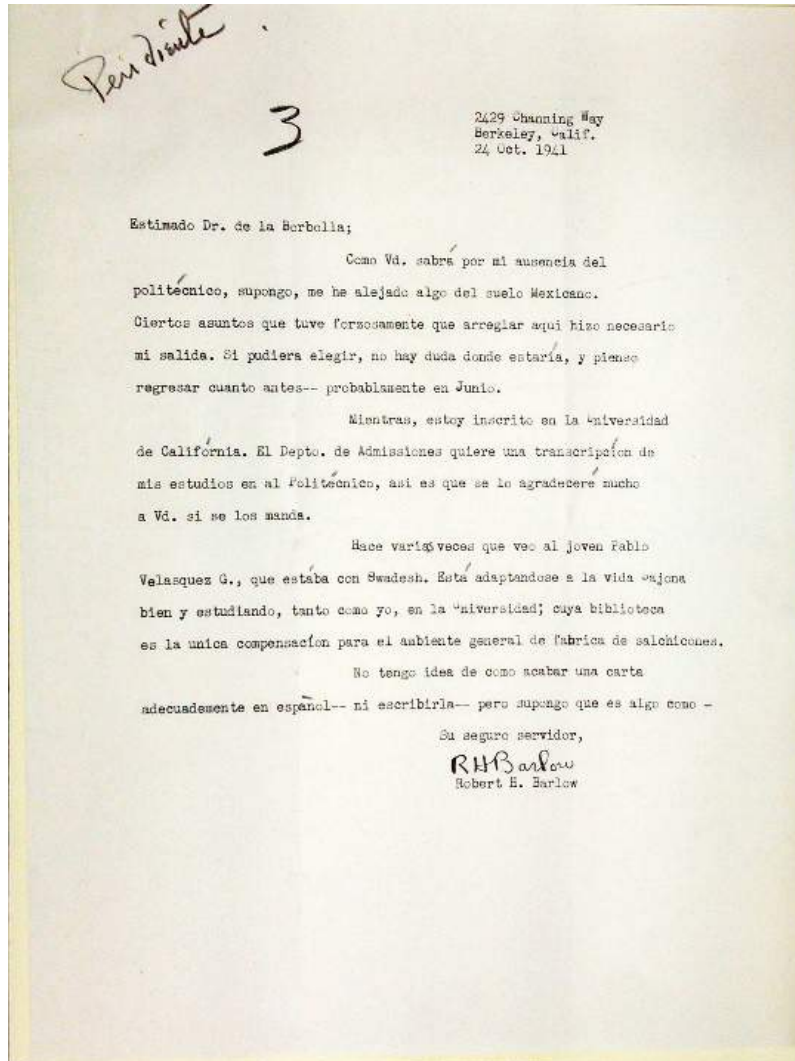


Fig. 5. Letter sent to Daniel F. Rubí de la Borbolla. AHENAH, Caja 81, exp. 13. Picture by Adolfo Yunuen Reyes Rodríguez, Mexico City, 2020.

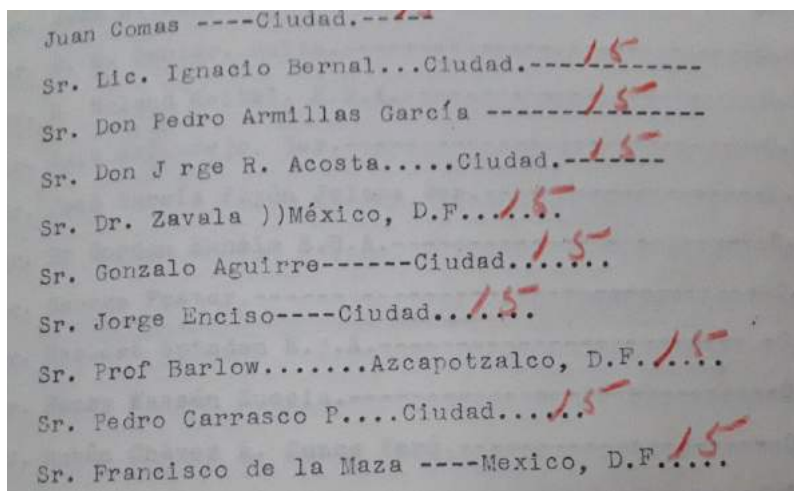


Fig. 6. *Relación de cartas de la Sociedad de Antropología, Archivo SMA, IIA, UNAM. Picture by Aldo Sauza, Mexico City, 2020.*

archaeology site and presented a brief writing about Mexica northern provinces titled “Imperio Mexica” (Barlow 1943: 119-121).

The “institutional” Barlow built on the documentation belonging to the archives formed active part of the Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología and, yet, we do not know precisely when he joined this institution (ASMA, IIA, UNAM n/d). His academic activity was abundant, and he could weave relationships with scholars like Pedro Bosch Gimpera, Paul Kirchhoff, Miguel Acosta, Alberto Ruz Lhuillier, Juan Comas, Ignacio Bernal, Pedro Armillas García, Jorge R. Acosta, Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, Jorge Enciso, Pedro Carrasco, and more. This framework put Barlow in the middle of a valuable interchange of ideas, and he permitted him to have access to material useful for his investigations, as himself tells us in one of his letters sent to Pedro Enciso (figure 6)³.

Barlow began his professorship in his *alma mater* in Mexico in 1945, joining the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (figure 7).

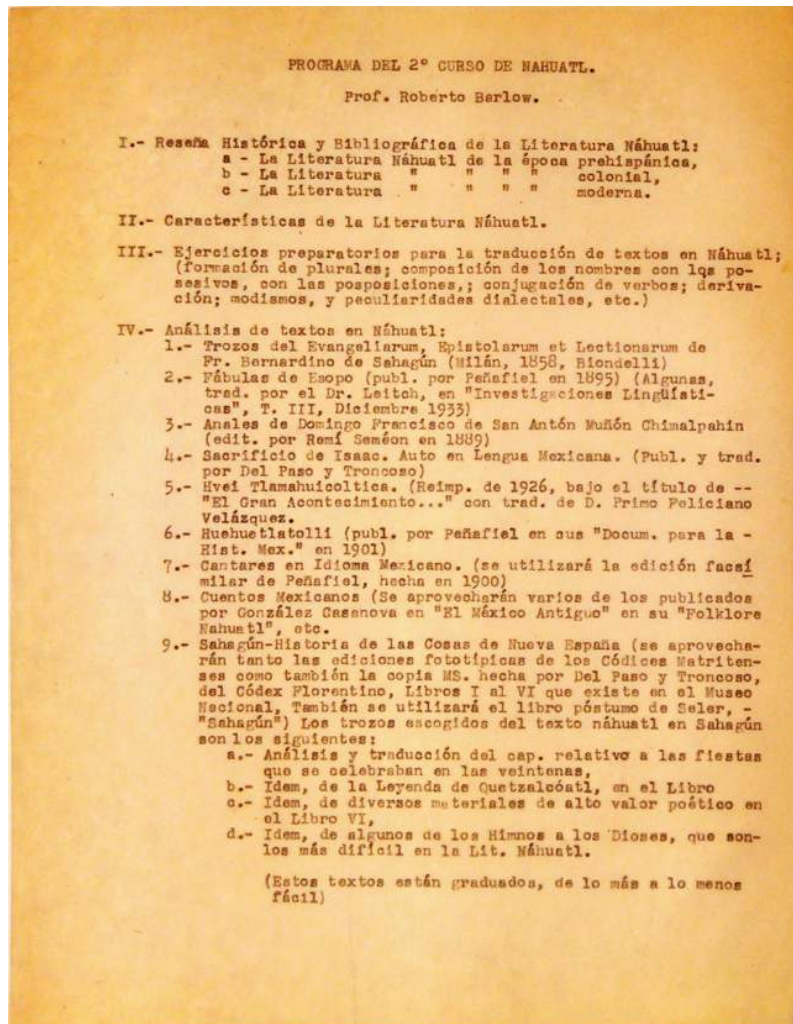


Fig. 8. Robert H. Barlow náhuatl class syllabus. AHENAH, caja 47, exp. 49, f. 3. Picture by Adolfo Yunuen Reyes Rodríguez, Mexico City, 2020.

Antonieta Espejo, who will be the first archaeologist working on Tlatelolco site, participated Barlow's náhuatl class in 1946 (AHENAH 1946) (figure 9). She met Barlow two years before, when she was appointed to Tlatelolco as chief archaeologist and invited him to participate the study of the site. The first phase, which included the digging of several stratigraphic pits, was partially carried out by Barlow who direct the excavation of the I and the II pits (Barlow 1944: 268-270) (figure 10).

Barlow was very interested in these activities: like his works shows, Tlatelolco became one of his major investigation themes, archaeologically, historically and linguistically, and brought him to build an interdisciplinary group of study that involved Barlow himself and other renowned scholars like the aforementioned Antonieta Espejo, Eusebio Dávalos and Pablo Martínez del Río.

In January 1948, being 30 years old, Barlow is finally appointed professor in the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas (UNAM), gaining 100 pesos monthly. His main task, as recorded in this document preserved in the institutional archive, was studying hieroglyphical documents coming from the eastern lands of Morelos, among them the *Códice Moctezuma*, the *Relación de Mazatepec* and the *Códice Xochitepec*. At the same time, he was in charge of interpreting four *codices* of the Cuauhtinchan group (FHIIIH 1949a) (figure 11).

Barlow though in a long-term plan in order to keep working in the UNAM, as we can observe in a letter wrote on September 28th, 1949. The anthropologist wrote to Juan B. Iguíniz in order to propose him a massive project that is, editing and publishing the *Memorias de la Academia Mexicana de la Historia*. Barlow stated that one of the reasons to carry out this important task is to correct the information available at that time concerning Cuauhtémoc's tomb since he thought that every document about that site was no less than a crime novel, far from being a serious, authoritative, scientific and academic work (figure 12).

The same year, Barlow's contract clauses changed: from now on, he was in charge of the paleography and transcription of Francisco

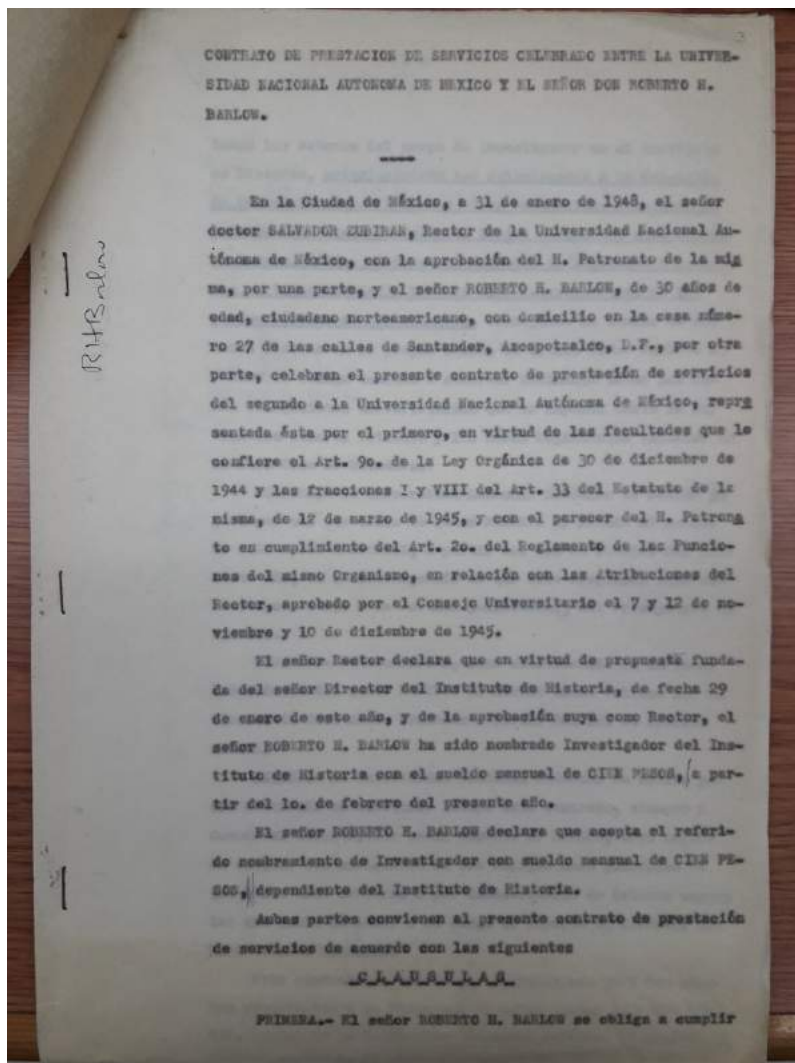


Fig. 9. Robert H. Barlow working contract, Instituto de Historia UNAM. FHHH.23.323.3. Picture by Aldo Sauza, Mexico City, 2020.

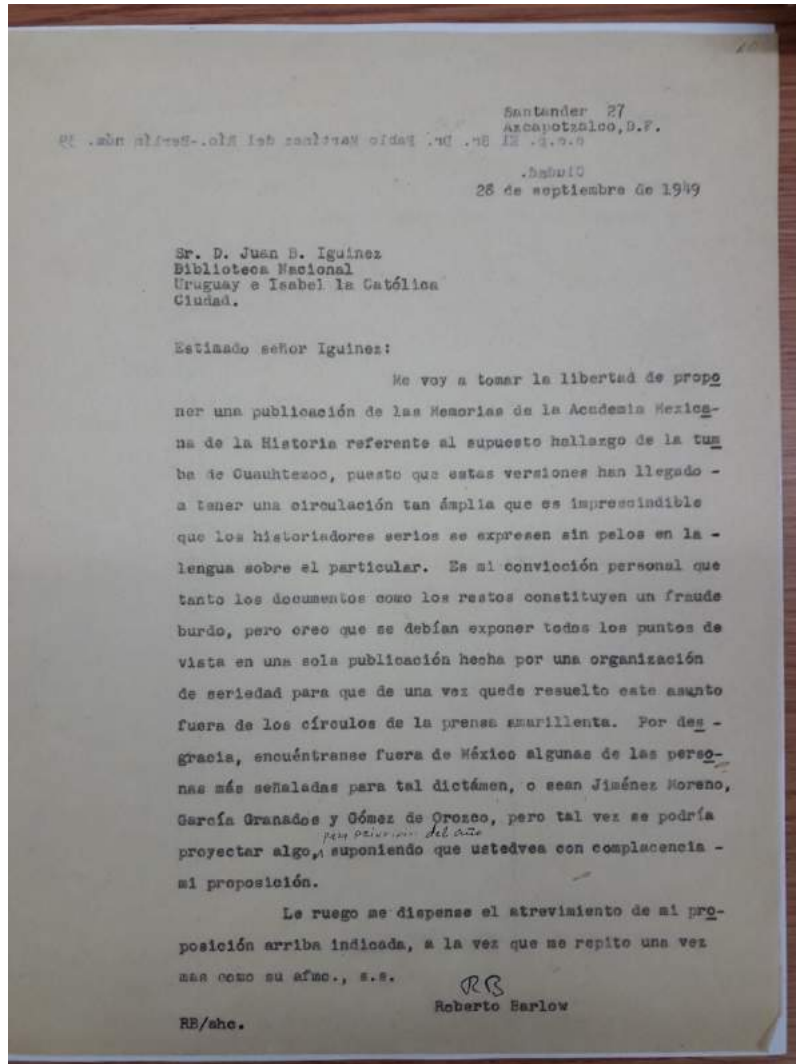


Fig. 10. Letter by Robert H. Barlow to Mr. D. Juan B. Iguínez, Biblioteca Nacional. FHHH.23.323.60. Picture by Aldo Sauza, Mexico City, 2020.

Santander 27
Azcapotzalco, D.F.

25 de octubre de 1949.

Sr. D. Pablo Martínez del Río
Instituto de Historia
Biblioteca Nacional
Uruguay e Isabel la Católica.
Ciudad.

Muy señor mío:

Por la presente quiero informar a usted sobre el estado actual de las investigaciones que he venido realizando a cuenta de dicho Instituto, durante el año actual, y que consiste en la transcripción y preparación para la prensa de los notables apuntes del señor Don Francisco del Paso y Troncoso.

Como consta en el libro del Dr. Zavala, Troncoso dedicó un cuarto de siglo de su vida activa a la investigación de los archivos europeos, donde buscaba documentación sobre la historia mexicana. Empezó la publicación de muchas obras que quedaron en gran parte trunca y su obra diaria quedó consignada en varios libritos de apuntes sin haberse elaborado finalmente. Esos libritos se encuentran repartidos entre varios dueños, debido a las circunstancias de su muerte, y he tenido la suerte de conseguir el libre acceso al acervo principal de éstos.

Hasta la fecha se han copiado más de 200 cuartillas de los apuntes sacados de su amplísima lectura en inglés, francés, castellano, alemán, náhuatl y otros idiomas y que abarcan temas de lingüística, de teatro indígena (seguramente apuntes destinados a su "Biblioteca Náhuatl" trunca), historia colonial de Veracruz y Oaxaca, fichas bibliográficas y otros asuntos no de menor interés. Consultó Troncoso impresos únicos existen -

Fig. 11. Robert H. Barlow investigation report. FHHH.23.323.61. Picture by Aldo Sauza, Mexico City, 2020.



Fig. 12. Former Barlow's house. Picture by Julio Arellano, Azcapotzalco, 2019.

del Paso y Troncoso's notes results of his investigations around Europe across several archives and museums (FHIIIH 1950). Barlow would realize also the commentary notes to this body of documentation. His work is registered and described in detail in a summary sent by him to Pablo Martínez del Río, director of the Instituto de Historia (UNAM), where Barlow underlined the importance of his job and asked for keeping his contract unmodified (FHIIIH 1951a, 1951b).

Unfortunately, despite his vast production and the recognition obtain from his fellow colleagues (archaeologists, historians, linguist and philologist of his time), Robert H. Barlow committed suicide ingesting a massive dose of barbituric on January 4th, 1951.

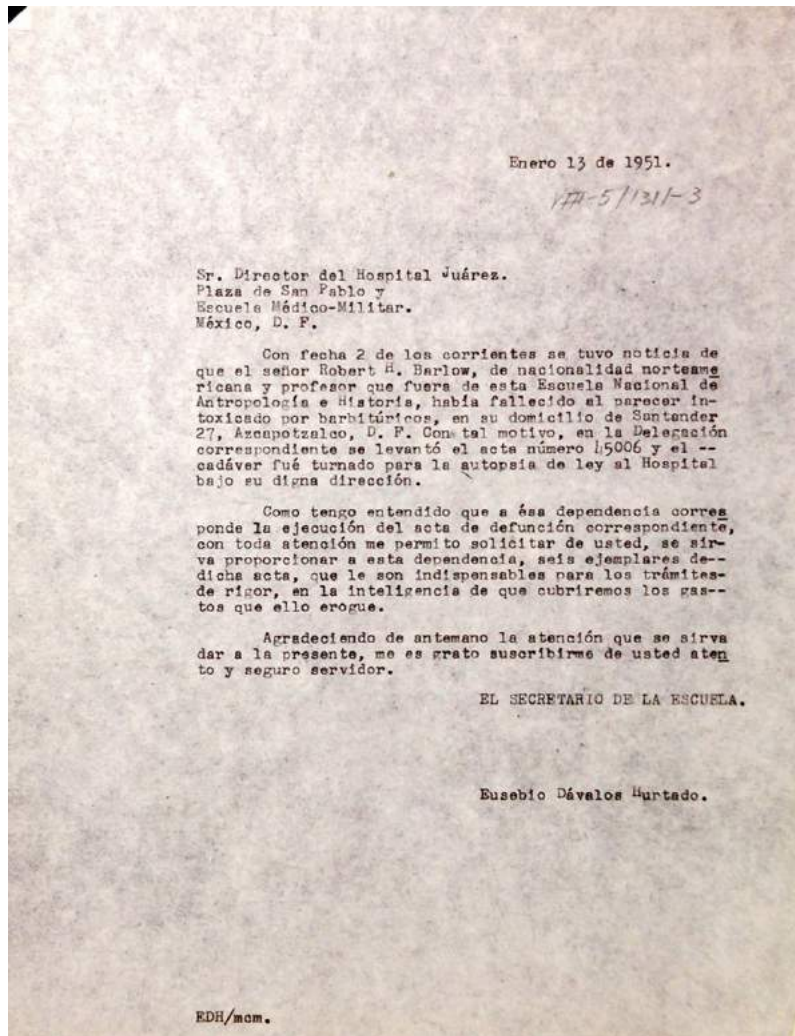


Fig. 13. Eusebio Dávalos Hurtado's letter in order to obtain copies of Barlow's death certificate. AHENAH, caja 3, exp. 2. Picture by Yunuen Reyes Rodríguez, Mexico City, 2020.

According to the daily news “El Universal” and “Excélsior” his death occurred in his home, in calle de Santander no. 27, nowadays part of the Alcaldía de Azcapotzalco, Mexico City. Reporters talked about it as a “mysterious death”, stating that it was not clear if it was an accident or something intentional. On the other hand, another newspaper, “El Nacional”, was more critic since its reporter discovered that Barlow was suffering a severe condition that cause him critical and ongoing fatigue. That was possible thanks to the revelations of Barlow’s particular secretary, lieutenant Antonio Hernández Castañeda of the Mexican army, same who checked the anthropologist’s corpse after “other Barlow’s employee” found him dead firstly (“El Nacional” 1951).

After several days Eusebio Dávalos Hurtado, Barlow’s friend and by that time secretary of the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, wrote a letter, dated January 13th, 1951, in order to obtain six copies of Barlow’s death certificate (AHENAH 1951). Moreover, in its traditional work report, the Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología mentions the departure of six of its members in the period that runs from 1948 to 1954 including, as can be expected, Robert H. Barlow (ASMA, IIA, UNAM 1954).

Barlow’s corpse has been cremated and his ashes scattered over the Desierto de los Leones by Pablo Martínez del Rio and Ignacio Bernal. According to Jesús Monjarás, Barlow wrote a letter to Pablo Martínez del Rio where he told his friend his personal problems and asking him help in order to conclude some unattended issues. This letter has been destroyed and, however, it seems that Martínez del Rio transcribed those unattended issues and recorded them in 16 points (Monjarás-Ruiz 2005: 4).

As now, several issues remain unsolved about Barlow, for instance: who was really lieutenant Hernández Castañeda, working as Barlow’s particular secretary? Which issues were left unattended by Barlow at the time of his death?

These are but two questions that we need to ask ourselves in order to return to our former inquiry about the historicity of this illustrious United States anthropologist. Which are the possibilities

and the limits that the archives offer in order to reconstruct the past? How the subjective institutional interests intertwine with the possibility of compose precise biographies, incomplete yet coherent, and how much these interests make them possible and spread them?

In the end, without any doubt, we have the massive task of *en-visage* the emotions of this ephemeral, reconstructed, Barlow, since it is only the result of the academy's fixations. There are his notes, under the spotlight of his human mistrust: which are those details that stand still in the inkwell of his humanity and shaped it out of ink and paper?

The knowledge of, or the possibility of knowing, the past always has a political side. Our generation can reflect about it, contrasting the silence that past generations kept about how capital issues have been historically investigated and, at the same time, politically located. Maybe, through this, we will recognize what for decades has been negated, or considered untrue: the personal, emotive, side of science.

NOTES

¹ During the last years, epistemological and material discussion about the archive obtained great attention. The newest revolves around the repository as a privileged place to keep, enounce, extract and even eliminate knowledge and about historians' predilection concerning the "archival material". A good starting point about these discussions can be found in the section "Debates" in the tenth volume of the journal "Corpus. Archivos virtuales de la alteridad americana" (Rufer, et. al. 2020).

² In the same fashion, state institutions are responsible for the promotion (or for the impediment of it) the diffusion on national and international levels of certain cultural elements that are considered appropriate in order to reach political, commercial or diplomatically ends. A present example of this mechanism is shown through Ana Garduño perspective, published in the digital edition of the journal "El Heraldo de México", concerning a Maya exhibition promoted in Venice in 1999. Ernesto Zedillo, in that year president of Mexico, used that exhibition in order to define and sign commercial agreements and, by the way, create the image of a Mexico like a "bigger brother" in Latin America (Garduño 2021). Garduño engaged also the important theme of national heritage management and cultural diplomacy in a journal article titled "Antecedentes para la profesionalización de la conservación en México: diplomacia cultural y políticas patrimoniales" (Garduño 2020).

³ Jorge Enciso, UNAM scholar, provided Barlow several *codices* (FHHH 1949b).

⁴ According to Jesús Monjarás-Ruiz, Barlow learnt náhuatl thanks to Wigberto Jiménez Moreno, teacher and friend of the north American anthropologist (Monjarás-Ruiz 2005: 8).

ISSN 2283-7949

GLOCALISM: JOURNAL OF CULTURE, POLITICS AND INNOVATION

2021, 2, DOI: 10.12893/gjcp.2021.2.3

Published online by "Globus et Locus" at <https://glocalismjournal.org>



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ABBREVIATIONS

- AHENAH Archivo Histórico de la Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia.
 ASMA, IIA, UNAM Archivo de la Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología, Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
 FHIIIH Fondo Histórico del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas.

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ISSN 2283-7949

GLOCALISM: JOURNAL OF CULTURE, POLITICS AND INNOVATION

2021, 2, DOI: 10.12893/gjcp.2021.2.3

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