

# Letters from Balmis to Gutiérrez: fracture of the friendship between two vaccine expeditionary personages

José Tuells\*

Department of Community Nursing, Preventive Medicine and Public Health and History of Science, Universidad de Alicante, Alicante, Spain

## Abstract

The Royal Philanthropic Vaccine Expedition (1803-1813) becomes relevant in these pandemic times due to the breadth of its geographical dimension and its nature of a health expedition inspired by a pioneering public health objective of its time: to spread the newly discovered vaccine against smallpox. Undertaken by a small number of participants, the expedition was directed by Francisco Xavier Balmis, who was accompanied, among others, by Antonio Gutiérrez Robredo, his favorite disciple. This research, carried out using primary sources, explores the relationship between both, which went from mutual trust to enmity due to a trivial conflict. The study of previous correspondence and late resolution of the lawsuit filed by Balmis against Gutiérrez allows us to delve into their biographical profiles. As a direct consequence of that litigation, Gutiérrez never went back to Spain, although he became a professor in Mexico; in contrast, Balmis enjoyed honors and recognition in Madrid.

**KEYWORDS:** Archivo General de Indias. Archivo General de la Nación de México. Antonio Gutiérrez Robredo. Vaccine Expedition. Francisco Xavier Balmis. Litigation.

## Cartas de Balmis a Gutiérrez: la fractura de la amistad entre dos expedicionarios de la vacuna

### Resumen

En estos tiempos de pandemia, la Real Expedición Filantrópica de la Vacuna (1803-1813) cobra vigencia por la amplitud de su dimensión geográfica y por su carácter de expedición sanitaria inspirada en un objetivo de salud pública pionero en su época: propagar la recién descubierta vacuna contra la viruela. Acometida por un reducido número de expedicionarios, fue dirigida por Francisco Xavier Balmis, a quien acompañaba, entre otros, Antonio Gutiérrez Robredo, su discípulo predilecto. Esta investigación, realizada con fuentes primarias, explora la relación entre ambos, la cual pasó de la mutua confianza a la enemistad debido a un conflicto nimio. El estudio de la correspondencia previa y la tardía resolución del pleito interpuesto por Balmis contra Gutiérrez permite ahondar en sus perfiles biográficos. Como consecuencia directa de aquel litigio, Gutiérrez nunca retornó a España, aunque llegó a ser catedrático en México; por el contrario, Balmis disfrutó honores y reconocimientos en Madrid.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Archivo General de Indias. Archivo General de la Nación de México. Antonio Gutiérrez Robredo. Expedición de la Vacuna. Francisco Xavier Balmis. Litigio.

#### \*Correspondence:

José Tuells

E-mail: tuells@ua.es

Date of reception: 14-05-2022

Date of acceptance: 06-07-2022

DOI: 10.24875/GMM.M22000724

Gac Med Mex. 2022;158:435-441

Contents available at PubMed

www.gacetamedicademexico.com

0016-3813/© 2022 Academia Nacional de Medicina de México, A.C.. Published by Permanyer. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

## Introduction

Barely one month and a half after the marriage of convenience between Francisco Xavier Balmis Berenguer and Josefa Mataix (Alicante, March 30, 1773),<sup>1</sup> Antonino Antonio Joaquín Gutiérrez Robredo was being born in Madrid (May 10, 1773), who with the passage of years would become his favorite disciple, until a disagreement truncated that affective relationship.

Gutiérrez was christened in the Church of San Martín (May 14, 1773); his baptismal record shows that his parents lived at 9 Valverde Street.<sup>2</sup> Balmis died on February 12, 1819 and the novena mass was celebrated in the Church of San Martín.<sup>3</sup> A random coincidence, since in the same parish where Gutiérrez received the baptism was the mass for the death of Balmis performed, who had died in the house in front of where Gutiérrez was born. The invisible thread that connected both lives was broken on September 9, 1819. That day, Gutiérrez received in Mexico the favorable sentence of a court that took his side on the litigation initiated by Balmis, who would not know the court's ruling since he had been buried for seven months. Gutiérrez never returned to Spain. They had shared a vital trajectory associated with the first massive vaccination campaign in the history of public health, the Royal Philanthropic Vaccine Expedition (1803-1813), of which Balmis was director, and Gutiérrez, assistant.<sup>4-8</sup>

This work analyzes the vicissitudes of the relationship through different unpublished letters that show the evolution of their friendship until the detachment between both.

### Gutiérrez Robredo academic training

Antonino Antonio Gutiérrez, son of Vicente Gutiérrez, court embroiderer, and Ana Robredo,<sup>9</sup> took three philosophy courses at Royal Studies of San Isidro, for which he obtained the Bachelor of Arts degree (September 18, 1793). Antonio Varas Portillo, Mathematics director at the Royal Academy of Noble Arts and of the same faculty at Royal Studies of San Isidro, issued a report on July 22, 1792 in which he highlighted Gutiérrez Robredo's punctuality, effort, academic performance and dedication,<sup>9</sup> who later went to the Royal College of Surgery of San Carlos, where he was admitted at 20 years of age.

In 1797, Gutiérrez submitted his academic achievements at the University of Toledo, with the purpose to

obtain the Bachelor of Medicine degree. A report from the College vice-director pointed out his good reputation and habits, in addition to the fulfillment of his obligations (October 13, 1797).<sup>10</sup> The certificates stated that he had accredited four surgical courses at the Royal College of San Carlos (October 20, 1797).<sup>10</sup>

Ready to take the exam, Gutiérrez suffered a minor setback since he was lacking two subjects; therefore, he moved to Cádiz to enter the Royal College of Medicine and Surgery, where he obtained the Medical Surgery degree in 1802.<sup>11</sup> After finishing his academic training, he joined the army for a few months as a surgical assistant, and headed to Extremadura to join the forces that were getting ready to invade Portugal.

### Gutiérrez with Balmis

Balmis and Gutiérrez had coincided on their desire to obtain the Bachelor of Medicine degree at the University of Toledo around the same time. Balmis (1753-1819), twenty years older, had already developed a career as a military surgeon in Mexico, where he became senior surgeon at *Hospital del Amor de Dios* (1786) and director of the syphilitics' ward at *Hospital de San Andrés* (1790). In Mexico, he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University of Mexico (1786). Eager to become a doctor, he went to Toledo in 1798 and obtained the Bachelor of Medicine degree on July 20. In order to be able to take the exam, he presented a Royal Provision that enabled him to receive said degree at any university, for having served as a surgeon in the army for 28 years.<sup>12,13</sup> He did not, however, obtain the degree of licentiate or doctor of Medicine.

That same year, on June 21, 1798, English surgeon Edward Jenner (1749-1823) published his work<sup>14</sup> in which he described how to combat smallpox through vaccination and started a science that was to revolutionize public health.<sup>15</sup>

Jenner's method, which spread worldwide with unusual rapidness, attracted the interest of Balmis and Gutiérrez. Thus was recognized by Balmis himself when he indicated that Gutiérrez "has the advantage of having devoted himself to the practice of vaccination by my side."<sup>16</sup> An ad inserted in *Diario de Madrid* in June 1803 encouraged people to attend Balmis's practice where he had Gutiérrez as assistant.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to advertising himself as a vaccinator, he attended various sessions at the Royal Medical Academy of Madrid throughout 1801, which was an institution he had belonged to for the last fifteen years.<sup>18</sup> He

also began the translation of Moreau de la Sarthe's vaccine treatise, which was published in 1803.<sup>19,20</sup> After these strategic steps, Balmis was able to run for director of the expedition that was conceived at the initiative of members of the Council of the Indies. His proposal was evaluated and accepted by the Royal Board of Surgeons.

When organizing the expedition, Balmis proposed people he trusted to accompany him, such as his nephews or Gutiérrez himself.<sup>21</sup> This was confirmed by Balmis to Gutiérrez in a personal letter dated July 29, 1803<sup>22</sup> (Table 1).

The expedition set off from A Coruña port on November 30, 1803; Gutiérrez was part of the team closest to Balmis at all stages. All the expedition members traveled together to the first destinations (Canary Islands, Puerto Rico and Venezuela). In Caracas, Balmis decided to divide the expedition in two groups, one led by Salvany, who would travel south, and another led by himself, which included Gutiérrez, Isabel Zandal, Balmis's nephews, and the vacciner children.<sup>4-8</sup> After passing through Havana and Veracruz, they arrived in Mexico City on August 9, 1804. Balmis decided to spread the vaccine and search for cowpox; he commissioned Gutiérrez to go to Campeche to check if the vaccines, which had arrived by other means, were being carried out correctly. Gutiérrez approved the status of the vaccines and moved to Mérida. In November 1804, Gutiérrez traveled to Valladolid, where he found a cow with cowpox and enrolled children for the trip to the Philippines. He continued on his way and passed through Guadalajara, San Luis de Potosí and Querétaro. Balmis, who had previously arrived in Mexico City, wrote him an endearing letter dated January 5, 1805, in which he congratulated him on his work (Table 1).<sup>23</sup>

Balmis and Gutiérrez got together on January 17, 1805 and began the procedures to travel to the Philippines from Acapulco, where they left from on February 8. There they remained until September 3, when Balmis traveled to Macao, Canton, and then to Spain; he left the expeditionary crew in charge of Gutiérrez. In a letter with instructions, dated August 3, 1805, he commissioned him to continue with the vaccinations and ensure the return of the vacciner children to Mexico (Table 1).<sup>24</sup>

During the time Gutiérrez was in charge of the expedition in the Philippines, more than 20,000 children were vaccinated; the expedition returned to Acapulco on August 14, 1807. By then, Balmis had already arrived in Madrid and had received all kinds of recognition, as

he told Gutiérrez in another letter dated November 28, 1806 (Table 1).<sup>25</sup> The tone was affectionate and warm, he described the honors he had received, told him about his family, whom he saw frequently, and gave him new instructions for taking care of the vacciner children, his two nephews, and Isabel Zandal. He sent him the *Gazeta de Madrid* supplement, which made a review of the expedition,<sup>26</sup> and recommended him to continue looking for the cowpox and to monitor the activity of the vaccine boards. The letter shows Balmis's trust, mentorship and preference for Gutiérrez.

Balmis, however, had to leave Madrid on late 1808 due to the Napoleonic invasion, although on August 11 he would write to Gutiérrez again.<sup>27</sup> He described the situation of political instability, told him to prepare the homecoming trip and asked him for a report on the status of established boards. Declared an outlaw on October 13, 1809, together with other Madrid personalities, he requested a new commission to take care of vaccine problems in Mexico. On this last trip he participated in diplomatic, political and personal activities, decorated with the honors of the Minister of the Supreme Council of Finance. On January 24, 1810, he departed from Cádiz heading to Veracruz.<sup>28</sup>

In Mexico, looking at the poor status of the vaccine, Balmis drew up a plan that found detractors, such as the Royal Treasury prosecutor, Ambrosio Sagarzurieta. Even so, he traveled to the Atlixco Valley and Valladolid de Michoacán in search of the "true cowpox", since these are places where Gutiérrez had been before in 1804. In September 1810, he left Valladolid and returned to Mexico City with the intention of returning to Spain. Two disputes delayed his departure: the first one with Bishop Abad y Queipo and the second with Antonio Gutiérrez.<sup>4</sup>

## **Balmis versus Gutiérrez**

Balmis had met with Gutiérrez several times to discuss the status of vaccination and had even written him a letter from Valladolid in an affectionate tone, dated August 9, 1810 (Table 1).<sup>29</sup> In it, he asked him to take care of his nephews until they boarded the ship to sail back to Spain, he repudiated Sagarzurieta and gave him news on his investigations in search of cows with cowpox. Barely one month later, Gutiérrez confessed to Balmis, very remorseful, in a letter dated September 27 (Table 1),<sup>30</sup> that, gambling, he had lost the 575 pesos he had received from the Royal Treasury for his nephews' homecoming trip.

**Table 1. Correspondence between Balmis and Gutiérrez, Archivo General de la Nación de México (AGN) 1803-1810**

| Date, place, author            | Content  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1803/07/29<br>Madrid<br>Balmis | "With date of the 28 <sup>th</sup> of last month, His Excellency Don Josef Antonio Cavallero, communicated to me the Order of H. M. whereby he has had the kindness to appoint me Director of the Expedition that must set off to spread the precious discovery of the vaccine at his domains of America... Similarly, H.M. has appointed your honor as one of my assistants, who must be subordinate in this venture, indicating the salary of one thousand strong pesos per year,... H.M. has also had the kindness to grant your grace the use of the Army surgical first assistant uniform.... what I report to your grace for your knowledge, satisfaction and observance in the part that corresponds to you. May God keep your honor for many years."   |
| 1805/01/05<br>México<br>Balmis | "My beloved Gutiérrez: not only have the two letters I received yesterday, dated December 13 and January 1, brought me out of the state of concern, in which you had me with your silence, but they have filled me with the greatest satisfaction, for the happy success your commission has had, which you have carried out perfectly. Today I am writing to thank the Bishop of Guadalajara and the Mayor of Valladolid, to whom I highly recommend the continuation of the observations of the cowpox, found by your grace, and the examination of the other cows of that district, because it is necessary to find several others with this disease, since it is common to all, unless they have not been cured due to the advanced stage of the season, as I have seen in many of those that, on my journey, I have recognized. It seems very good to me, come back as soon as possible to give you a hug, after you conclude on that, cautioning you not to admit any more youngsters, because we already have 26. Receive, your grace, regards from all colleagues, and the affection of this, your friend, who from the heart loves you"   |
| 1805/08/03<br>Manila<br>Balmis | "Enclosed, your grace will find the attached Instruction that manifests everything your grace shall practice during my absence in the Royal Expedition, which remains under your charge until your return to Spain, hoping that your zeal, love and activity on behalf of the royal service will comply with all the duties imposed by this commission. May God keep your grace for many years."   |
| 1806/11/28<br>Madrid<br>Balmis | "My dearest Gutiérrez: I cannot explain the eagerness with which I hope to know the state of your health, and (of all) companions, and your happy arrival in Acapulco. Because I know that not few vicissitudes surely occurred during navigation, although it is never as prolonged as the one I made from China to Lisbon, which took six months and seven days, with many storms and dangers that completely ruined my broken health. But entering Spain was the same as resurrecting, and although two days after arriving at the Royal Site of San Ildefonso, some damn tertian fevers that reigned attacked me and weakened me extremely, I have already recovered, in the daytime, my health and strength, with this divine climate, good food and the warm welcome that I received from the Kings, Prince of Asturias and of Peace, as well as the ministers, and the entire Court, who looked at me as a hero. Do not doubt, your grace, that no one has ever been better received by their Majesties, and by the entire Nation than I, and even by my enemies, the Catalans, who could not help but to celebrate our work, and confess like everyone else, that only we were capable of doing such great things. Your uncles and little sisters were extremely happy to know of your good services and adorable behavior, and we visit each other quite often. And if your grace has any sorrow, so do I, since I lost a very dear sister and two nephews, with the plague that occurred in my country. But, let us console ourselves knowing that we all have to make this trip. By the Supplement of the Gazeta, of October 14 of this year, which I send to Ángel, your grace will see the praise that is bestowed on all of us. Don't stop your grace trying to bring some live plants as well, if you can, particularly if they took the breadfruit tree from the Philippines, and others that I ordered, taking great care of them so that they arrive alive. Please, your grace, tell my nephew Francisco that his parents and family are very good and happy for his good behavior, and that I hope he will continue with it, as well as in supporting the jewel he has for brother, if he needs to, and under the care of all your graces I very insistently place, forcing him by all means not to disrespect anyone. You have read the strictest orders of the King in order for the Archbishop and Court of Mexico to look after the innocent youngsters who served us in the Expedition, and assist and care for them as they deserve, bringing them out of the Hospice, where that indolent viceroy sent them. I believe that they are wrong in the Royal Order, the children who should not enjoy the graces of H.M., because their parents preferred to take the reward money they were given by the Mayor of Valladolid and the Bishop of Guadalajara, who were the only ones, and that instead of them, the order excludes those of Zacatecas, serve your grace to the government by clarifying this point with the viceroy, and not letting the latter be harmed, in any way. Likewise, your grace shall scrupulously look at the current state of all the Central vaccine boards that we let established in the main cities of each province, to report to H.M., and your grace shall also examine the state of the discovery of cowpox in the cows of Valladolid, which your grace made, and in that which in Puebla I made. To that end, your grace shall go to both cities, trying to recognize other cows to see if your grace finds it in other parts of that Kingdom, asking the viceroy, ex officio, for the necessary aid on the King's account. Since H.M. orders this chief to execute with the Expedition at his return from Manila what he did not do at our arrival, it is normal for your graces to be assigned one more task, and that establishing in Mexico the vaccine that was not implemented then should be tried. Try your grace to offer to practice everything that H.E. stipulates, everything ex officio and nothing by word, in order to be able to give an account to H.M., enclosing copies of everything, as I have always done. Please agree with Ángel, who knows well the formulas that have to be used. I do not recommend to your grace the friendship and peace that should reign among all companions, because I am sure that they will execute it that way, and that they will take care of poor Isabel as her heroism deserves for having undertaken such painful journeys and performing her duties so well. I particularly recommend her to your grace. In short, by the orders of the Court that have been communicated to me, your grace will be able to manage to perfectly fulfill your duties, keeping in mind the instructions I left for you, and what interests your honor, filling exactly the position of Director in order for the glory of our venture to be completed, which has left even our greatest enemies speechless and astonished. Such is the power of virtue!" |

(Continued)

**Table 1. Correspondence between Balmis and Gutiérrez, Archivo General de la Nación de México (AGN) 1803-1810 (continued)**

| Date, place, author                | Content   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1808/08/11<br>Madrid<br>Balmis     | <p>“My good sir and friend: since I came to this Court, I have received one letter from your grace which I have answered, but whether this answer has reached your grace’s hands I do ignore, due to the circumstances of the war with Great Britain, which was made for others that I have addressed to that city to get lost. Thank God, the scene that was being represented here, and whose characters were sacrilege, robbery, perfidy, murder, fire, and acquisition of the rest of the vilest passions, is over. With Bonaparte being the author, Marshal Savary the prompter, and Joseph Bonaparte the snuffer. We have remained covered in glory, and a wise and legitimate government will immediately begin to make this great nation happy. With the new order of things, the return of the Expedition shall be tried. But this should not take place so rapidly as to force to do it hastily. Your graces can comfortably prepare yourselves to pick up whatever you like, and at the same [time] [think about receiving from the viceroy as many advance payments as possible, because in matters of money things are very bad, and thus will this last for a long time. For this, you can also resort to Colonel Jáuregui, brother of the vicereine, intimate and highly appreciated friend [of mine], and a subject of sublime circumstances. In addition, it is necessary to arrange with the viceroy the travel fares and everything else, on account of the Royal Treasury, so that you return with the same comfort you travelled there with. Notifying me immediately from the port upon arrival in these Kingdoms, to arrange for your free arrival at your homes. It is essential that you send to me an account of all the central Boards established in that part, and of everything else that, with regard to that, your grace may know, because I am preparing a general regulation for this branch of Medicine, as ordered by the government, and these news are necessary to me, especially when with this new event all things will take energy. In the meantime, rejoice your grace in our happiness, which you also rightfully deserve, and write when you please, since I am ready to serve you. Your loving and truthful friend, who kisses your hand.”</p> |
| 1810/08/09<br>Valladolid<br>Balmis | <p>“My dear Gutiérrez. From your letter of the 4<sup>th</sup>, I am aware of what you have told me regarding those two scoundrels, shame of your family, who you are keeping in your company until they leave to embark. I beg of you, never speak to me about them, and continue arranging their departure to Spain, to avoid further damage, without counting on me at all, considering that you are authorized in my absence. Do not talk to me about Sagarzurietta or specimens either, because I do not want to give them to him, or him getting involved with nothing of mine, being determined to leave everything, first. A thousand things to the friend and gentleman of Serrano, and tell him that there are many signs indicating that cowpox can be found in several cows, that I have examined, and that I am going to examine again according to the notifications I receive. And that, to address these points, I have had to send other commissioners, and don Ángel to Ixtlahuaca and Sila. But until the end of this, I do not believe the grains that we have recognized will be ripe, in case they are the ones we are looking for. Say hello to Doña Bárbara and Don Silvestre, whom I will always be fond of. Best regards from your friend who loves you”.</p>  |
| 1810/09/27<br>México<br>Gutiérrez  | <p>“My good sir and most esteemed Director. The crime I have committed shames me in such a way that it does not allow me to present myself before your grace, and thus I will suffer the punishment that you would like to impose on me. I went to San Agustín de las Cuevas some days ago, and there, not only did I lose a few ounces of gold that were of mine, but also five hundred and seventy-five pesos that I collected for your nephews, hallucinating, blind and out of my mind. I have undertaken the most exquisite errands, not only among some doctors, but also in the trade, and with some other subjects, to see if I could collect this amount to deliver it to your grace, but all has been in vain, with this having been the reason for not having presented myself before your grace until now. In this regard, and since all resources have rendered useless in such sad circumstances, I find no other way for your grace to be reimbursed the aforementioned amount, but to give you the corresponding receipts for my full allowances, and for your grace to collect them in the treasury up to the full amount of said five hundred and seventy-five pesos. If, in addition to this, you would like for my very small baggage of a few books, and the two trunks that I have with the bed to be sold, I am ready to take care of it. I also commit myself to always expedite the payment not only by the indicated means, but also by giving your grace whatever I can from my visits to the faculty, although I cannot guarantee it because it is eventual and doubtful, despite the fact that I will dedicate myself entirely to it, entirely excluding a criminal passion that has caused so much damage to me. With tears in my eyes, I ask your grace to forgive me and to decide about my unfortunate fate. Your most recognized and obliged. Who your hand kisses”.</p>  |

He begged for forgiveness and offered to settle the debt with his salary or by selling his few belongings. That day, the relationship between both came to an end. The next day, Balmis denounced him before Viceroy Francisco Xavier de Venegas, to whom he requested for Gutiérrez to be brought to Spain to appear before justice. In addition to embezzling his nephews’ funds, he accused him of having been responsible for the death of two expeditionary children on the trip to the Philippines and of having collected payments that did not correspond to him.<sup>31</sup> The

tone and accusations seemed excessive, and the reaction, too exaggerated.

The viceroy, who had ordered the General Treasury to advance funds to Gutiérrez for his trip back to Spain, authorized for this money to be handed over to Balmis, who defrayed the return of his nephews.<sup>32</sup> Gutiérrez was left without any income and wrote to the viceroy to tell him that he had not travelled back to Spain before because of the conflict with Napoleon; in addition, he requested to be paid his salary in Mexico.<sup>33</sup> Balmis was against that request; he demanded

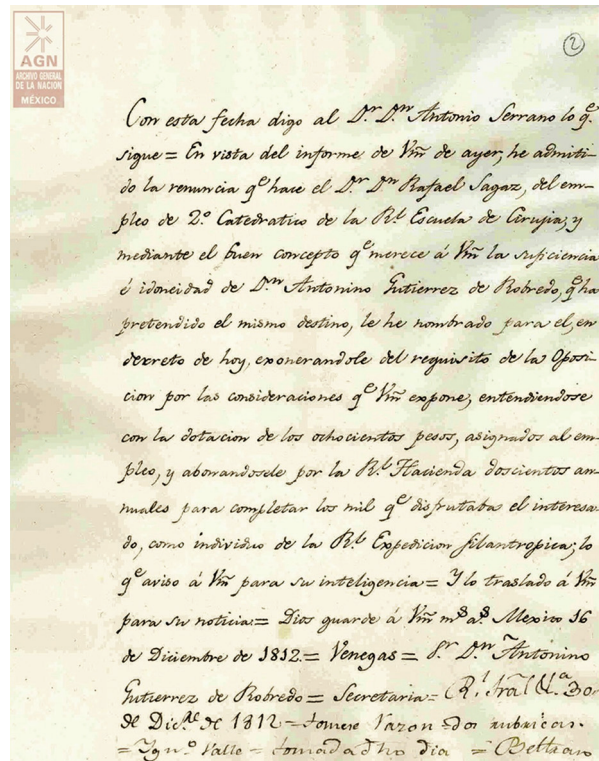


for Gutiérrez to be sent back to Spain, for his salary not be paid to him, and renewed his accusations against him. The case was referred to be examined by prosecutor Sagarzurietta, who sided with Balmis, and informed Viceroy Francisco Xavier de Venegas that Gutiérrez should be ordered to give back the part of the salary he had collected in excess for not having travelled back to Spain after finishing his mission in the Philippines. Should Gutiérrez fail to do so, he was to be brought to Veracruz in chains and embarked on the first vessel to Spain.<sup>34</sup>

Faced with this serious situation, Gutiérrez defended himself with a letter in which he claimed that his side of the story had not been heard, that all of Balmis's accusations were based on resentment and that he would prove how, until the episode of the gambling bet, Balmis had always backed him.<sup>35</sup> A few months later, in January 1812, he presented an extensive statement<sup>36</sup> in which he attached the cited letters as evidence of his excellent relationship with Balmis, up to the date of the incident (Table 1)<sup>22-25,27,29,30</sup> In his defense, he claimed his full annual salary of 1000 pesos until January 19, 1811, to collect 500 pesos annually thereafter. He also declared that he had no responsibility for the children's death.<sup>36</sup>

With unusual rapidness, on February 13, 1812, the Royal Treasury sided with Gutiérrez on his salary claim and stated that Balmis's charges were unrelated to his labor rights as a member of the expedition.<sup>37</sup> This meant Gutiérrez's exculpation, to which the satisfaction produced by the appointment by Viceroy Venegas as Second Professor of the Royal School of Surgery after Rafael Sagaz's resignation was added.<sup>38</sup> Venegas exonerated him from the opposition requirement and ordered that he be paid 1000 pesos as a member of the Royal Expedition (Fig. 1).<sup>38</sup> This recognition, and new employment, was dated December 30, 1812, which coincided with Balmis's trip back to Spain.<sup>39</sup>

The litigation seemed resolved, but unfortunately for Gutiérrez, the file was lost and thus remained at the Royal Court for more than seven years. The matter was picked up by Sagarzurietta, who recognized the mistakes that had been made and that Balmis had unfairly accused Gutiérrez.<sup>40</sup> Viceroy Juan Ruiz de Apodaca, in a harsh reprimand, on September 6, 1819, ruled that the file had been detained for more than seven years with scandalous prejudice of the interested party.<sup>41</sup> Gutiérrez, who had been appointed Surgery Professor at the Royal Hospital of Mexico City on November 14, 1818,<sup>42</sup> finally could rest easy when



**Figure 1.** Appointment of Don Antonino Gutiérrez de Robredo as second professor at the Royal School of Surgery. Archivo General de la Nación. Indiferente Virreinal, box 1706, dossier 009 (Títulos y Despachos de Guerra, box 1706), f.3. Mexico, December 30, 1812.

the case was closed; in September 1819 he was paid 1,169 pesos that were still owed to him. Gutiérrez stayed in Mexico and never went back to Spain. Since Balmis died in Madrid on February 12, 1819,<sup>43</sup> he did not get to know the end of the litigation that he had initiated in such an explosive manner. There is evidence that Gutiérrez lived in Mexico until the middle of the century and evidence that demonstrates a double fruitful professional activity: as first doctor and second professor of anatomy at San Andrés General Hospital, and as director of the National School of Surgery, where he practiced from 1812 until his retirement in March 1833.

## Funding

The author declares that he has not received any funding for this study.

## Conflict of interests

The author declares not having any conflicts of interest.

## Ethical disclosures

**Protection of human and animal subjects.** The author declares that no experiments were performed on humans or animals for this research.

**Confidentiality of data.** The author declares that no patient data appear in this article.

**Right to privacy and informed consent.** The author declares that no patient data appear in this article.

## References

1. Tuells J. Escenarios vitales de Francisco Xavier Balmis, director de la expedición de la vacuna contra la viruela. *Anales (Real Acadèmia de Medicina de la Comunitat Valenciana)*. 2011;12:8-17.
2. Libro de Bautismos de la Iglesia de San Martín de Madrid. 1773. Preserved at: Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid; Sección Universidades, file 1213, dossier 82, f. 419 v.
3. Parroquias: San Martín. 1819. Preserved at: Archivo Histórico Diocesano de Madrid, Madrid; Sección Defunciones.
4. Smith MM. The "Real Expedición Marítima de la Vacuna" in the New Spain and Guatemala. *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*. 1974;64:1-74.
5. Cook SF. Francisco Javier Balmis and the introduction of vaccination to Latin America. *Bull Hist Med*. 1942;11(5):543-560
6. Fernández-del Castillo F. Los viajes de D. Francisco Xavier de Balmis. Notas para la historia de la expedición vacunal de España a América y Filipinas (1803-1806). Mexico: Galas de México; 1960.
7. Mark C, Rigau-Pérez JG. The world's first immunization campaign: the Spanish Smallpox Vaccine Expedition, 1803-1813. *Bull Hist Med*. 2009; 83:63-94.
8. Tuells J, Ramírez-Martín SM. Balmis et variola. Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana; 2003.
9. Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid; Sección Universidades, file 1213, dossier 82.
10. Expedientes de alumnos, Gutiérrez, Antonio. 1797. Preserved at: Archivo Histórico Provincial de Toledo. 50060/03; Universidad, Secretario.
11. Licenciados en Cirugía Médica del Real Colegio de Medicina y Cirugía, libro catorce, tomo 1 de L-30-A-RC. Preserved at: Archivo de la Universidad de Cádiz, Cádiz.
12. Libros de grados. Grados de bachiller en todas las Facultades conferidos por la Universidad de Toledo desde 1797 a 1807. Preserved at: Archivo Histórico Provincial de Toledo. 50279; Universidad, Secretario.
13. Tuells J, Echániz-Martínez B. Francisco Xavier Balmis (1753-1819): training and practice in emergency surgery. *Emergencias*. 2021; 33(3):229-233.
14. Jenner E. An inquiry into causes and effects of variolae vaccinae, a disease, discovered in some of the Western Counties of England, particularly Gloucestershire, and known by the name of cow pox. London: Sampson Low; 1798.
15. Tuells J. Vaccinology: the name, the concept, the adjectives. *Vaccine*. 2012;30(37):5491-5495.
16. Carta de Balmis al ministro de Gracia y Justicia D. José Caballero. 1803. Preserved at: Archivo General de Indias, Seville; Sección Indiferente General, file 1558-A. f 387.
17. Aviso importante al público. *Diario de Madrid*. 1803 Jun 04.
18. Actas juntas de gobierno. 1800-1803. Preserved at: Archivo de la Real Academia Nacional de Medicina, Madrid; folios 242-248.
19. Moreau JL. Tratado histórico y práctico de la vacuna. Traducción de Francisco Xavier Balmis. Madrid: Imprenta Real; 1803. 368 p.
20. Tuells J. The revision process of Francisco Xavier Balmis' translation of Moreau de la Sarthe's historical and practical treatise on vaccines. *Gac Sanit*. 2012;26(4):372-375.
21. Tuells J, Duro-Torrijos JL. La lista de Balmis, agosto de 1803. *Vacunas*. 2011;12(3):111-117.
22. Carta de Balmis a Gutiérrez. Madrid: July 29, 1803. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs. 309-310v.
23. Carta de Balmis a Gutiérrez. Mexico: January 5, 1805. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs. 265-265v.
24. Carta de Balmis a Gutiérrez. Manila: August 3, 1805. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs. 311-311v.
25. Carta de Balmis a Gutiérrez. Madrid: November 28, 1806. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs. 266-268.
26. Suplemento a la Gazeta de Madrid. 1806 October 14. p. 1-4.
27. Carta de Balmis a Gutiérrez. Madrid; August 11, 1808. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs. 272-273.
28. Archivo General de Indias, Seville; Sección Arribadas 441, n. 80
29. Carta de Balmis a Gutiérrez. Valladolid: August 9, 1810. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs.270-270v.
30. Carta de Gutiérrez a Balmis. México: September 27, 1810. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs. 222-223.
31. Carta de Balmis a Venegas. México: September 28, 1810. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume. 17. fs. 224-224v.
32. Declaración de José Monter y Diego Mandobel. Mexico: October 6, 1810. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs. 239-239v.
33. Carta de Gutiérrez a Venegas. Mexico: December 14, 1810. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs. 242-243v.
34. Carta de Sagarzurieta a Venegas. Mexico: April 6, 1811. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs. 256-262v.
35. Carta de Gutiérrez a Venegas. Mexico: Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs. 335-339.
36. Carta de Gutiérrez a Venegas. Mexico: January 8, 1812. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs. 292-298.
37. Declaración de José Monter y Antonio de Batres. Mexico: February 13, 1812. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs. 300-300v.
38. Indiferente Virreinal. Mexico: December 30, 1812. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; box 1706, dossier 009 (Títulos y Despachos de Guerra), f. 3.
39. Tuells J, Duro-Torrijos JL. The second expedition of Balmis: revolution and vaccine. *Gac Med Mex*. 2013;149(3):377-384.
40. Carta de Sagarzurieta a Apodaca. Mexico: August 11, 1819. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs. 306-310v.
41. Carta de Apodaca al Real Tribunal de Cuentas. Mexico: September 6, 1819. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico; Epidemias, volume 17. fs. 314-314v.
42. Carta de Lozano a Apodaca. Madrid: November 14, 1818. Preserved at: Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico: Reales Cédulas, volume 219, dossier 322, f. 322.
43. Tuells J, Duro-Torrijos JL. The five wills of Francisco Xavier Balmis. *Gac Med Mex*. 2012;148(4):411-418.