

Martínez Gómez Gayoso, Benito (pseudonyms: **Benito Gayoso** and **Antonio Gobeyos**), b. ca. 1710, d. 1787, exact dates and places unknown; treasurer and censor at the *Real Academia de la Historia*, author of the first important Spanish grammar of the 18th century.

Although he was not very prolific, M.'s significance lies in the fact that he wrote the first important Spanish grammar of the 18th century, which formed the basis for the Royal Academy grammar (RAE 1771). Also significant is his defense of the term 'Spanish' instead of 'Castilian' for the language spoken in the peninsula. M.'s *Gramática* (1743) represents little advance on the preceding century, systematically rejecting, in fact, all contemporary linguistic doctrines not rooted in the grammatical tradition of the Spanish Golden Age, such as French General Grammar (cf. Valls Toimil 1992: 928). His reliance on → Nebrija is very evident, and also—although less strongly—on → Miranda, Aldrete, and → Jiménez Patón. Aimed at teaching children and youngsters, M.'s grammar is divided into four areas: orthography and orthology, etymology or morphology, syntax, and prosody. He defines grammar as the "art which teaches us to talk and write like cultured men". The purpose of the four areas: "es leer, y escribir, declinar los nombres, y conjugar los verbos, conocer la naturaleza, y fuerza de las palabras, y las frases, y figuras de la lengua, para hacer de este modo una oración perfecta" ['is reading, and writing, declining nouns, and conjugating verbs, knowing the nature and power of words, and phrases, and figures of speech, in order to build a perfect sentence']. Such a declaration makes less surprising the limited presence of orthography in his *Gramática*: he feels free not to teach this because it is already expounded in the Academy's *Ortografía* (RAE 1741). According to G. Miranda (López Martínez & Hernández Sánchez 1994: 47–48), he names the following as parts of speech: article, noun, pronoun, verb, participle, preposition, adverb, interjection and conjunction. He follows → Priscian's norms closely, in his division of the noun into 20 different classes, his definitions and functions of genders and numbers, his consideration of the *especie* and the *figura* of words and, in general, all of his parts (Lázaro Carreter 1949: 194–95). M. was a convinced prescriptivist, thinking that the rules of a language could and should be imposed from above. He has, however, the merit of having written the first important grammar of the 18th century, at a time when publishing a grammar of the vernacular language was being criticized in Spain.

M.'s *Conversaciones críticas* (1780) is based on similarly conservative assumptions. It is nothing but a sterile diatribe against B. de → San Pedro's timid attempts to reform orthography and modernize grammar.

(1743): *Gramática de la lengua castellana. Reducida a breves reglas, y fácil método para instrucción de la juventud*, Madrid (c.1769; repr. in: Gómez Asencio, J.J. ed., *Antiguas gramáticas del castellano*, Madrid, 2001, CDRom). (1780): *Conversaciones críticas sobre el libro intitulado Arte del romance castellano* [...], Madrid.

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