

*Authority, Piracy, and Captivity in Colonial Spanish American Writing: Juan de Castellanos's "Elegies of Illustrious Men of the Indies."* Emiro Martínez-Osorio. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2016. xl + 156 pp. \$70.

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In *Authority, Piracy, and Captivity in Colonial Spanish American Writing*, Emiro Martínez-Osorio exposes the complexities of a work often dismissed as the product of a second-rate imitator of Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga, author of the celebrated epic *La Araucana* (first volume 1569). He thereby places Juan de Castellanos at the center of debates regarding the governance of the Spanish Indies, contextualizes his literary project within the geopolitical rivalries of the sixteenth-century Atlantic world, and provides a fresh, exhaustively researched reinterpretation of the *Elegies* as a genre-bending critique of Spanish colonial government and a defense of the *encomendero* class.

Martínez-Osorio begins by addressing prior readings of the *Elegies* (1589) as either a feeble work of *imitatio* or an untrustworthy chronicle in verse. He suggests that such interpretations fail to take into account the historical context and reception of Castellanos's work, as well as the author's critical engagement with Alonso de Ercilla, his better-known predecessor. Rather than mimicking Ercilla, Castellanos "rewrote emblematic sections of the *Araucana*" (xii) to undermine his predecessor's authority and defense of Native Americans. Recasting iconic passages of Ercilla's text in terms hostile to indigenous peoples and celebratory of those who conquered them, Castellanos lambasted representatives of the Crown in the Spanish American colonies and upheld the first generation of conquistadors and *encomenderos* as "ideal subjects of the Spanish global monarchy" (xxxiv). He thus joined the chorus of voices demanding textual authority derived from firsthand experience of the New World rather than from royal favor.

In chapter 1, a close reading of the encomium to elegy 1 reveals a wholesale rejection of Ercilla's reformist project, particularly his Petrarchist/Garcilacist idealization of native heroines and critique of *encomenderos*. Suggesting that Castellanos wrote the *Elegies* in verse to avoid the tighter censorial scrutiny applied to historiographical works, chapter 2 traces out Castellanos's appropriation of the very Petrarchist idiom that he rejected in the encomium in his portrayal of two native female protagonists. The first of these singlehandedly provokes the destruction of the Fuerte de Navidad with her adulterous treachery; the second, with her calls for revenge against the Spanish and cannibalism of those killed in battle, emerges as a satanic minion who violently resists benevolent Christian evangelization. Together, these women become synecdoches for the ostensible irredeemability of all indigenous females, in contrast to the noble heroines of the *Araucana*. Martínez-Osorio analyzes the "Discurso del capitán Francisco Draque" (Discourse of Captain Francis Drake) as a text evidencing "an internal ideological fissure" (42) that pitted *encomenderos* and conquistadors against royally designated colonial administrators (chapter 3); he then performs an in-depth textual analysis to re-

veal the tacit critique of those administrators and exaltation of conquistadors in canto 3 of the “Discurso” (chapter 4). Finally, chapter 5 examines the apocryphal captivity tale of Juan de Salas. The story of Salas, whom Castellanos claims to have known personally but of whom there is no trace in the historical record, represents the conquest “as a redeeming act endorsed by God to save the Amerindians” (103) and carried out by idealized conquistador/*encomenderos*. As such, it rebuts Bartolomé de las Casas’s indictment of the *encomienda* system and provides an unwavering apology of conquest grounded in fervent—though unverifiable—assertions of Castellanos’s authority as a personal friend of the protagonist.

Through the painstaking analysis of historical sources, Martínez-Osorio both illustrates the lacunae in previous interpretations of the *Elegies* and celebrates the contributions of other scholars. Some passages in chapter 5 seem hastily edited due to a number of erratas and weak textual evidence, for instance: “The notion that the exploration and conquest of the New World confronted the forces of good against evil is first alluded to in the words used by Amerindians to characterize their assault as part of a much larger confrontation: ‘[. . .] but for him to surrender as a their [*sic*] captive / if he wanted to escape this war alive’” (111). Occasional editorial oversight notwithstanding, this book provides an exceptional example of how literary criticism can deepen our understanding of colonial history. As such, it offers an invaluable contribution to the field and will doubtless become a required reference for future considerations of colonial Latin American epic poetry.

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*Diálogos con Quetzalcóatl: Humanismo, etnografía y ciencia (1492–1577).*

Jaime Marroquín Arredondo.

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The aim of this book is to rescue and recognize the ethnographic contributions of humanists who were confronted with Mesoamerican culture after the discovery and conquest of the New World. The author analyzes works of humanists who settled in America in order to give an understanding of the origins of modern science.

The first chapter traces the genesis of Mexican humanism based on the methodology of natural history and the ethnography coming from Renaissance humanism. The work of Lorenzo Valla and the *studia humanitatis* are named as paradigmatic examples concerned with the renewal of grammar and rhetoric of classical antiquity. The humanists order, classify, name, and rationalize the New World’s nature through a rhetorical discourse. Within this framework, Marroquín Arredondo explains the forging