

Miguel Cabello Balboa. *Miscelánea antártica*.

Ed. Isaías Lerner. Clásicos Andaluces. Seville: Fundación José Manuel Lara, 2011. xxxvii + 550 pp. €29.90. ISBN: 978-84-96824-81-2.

Miguel Cabello Valboa, a grandson of Vasco Núñez de Balboa, discoverer of the Pacific Ocean, was a Spanish secular priest born in Archidona (ca. 1535), who wrote the compendious *Miscelánea antártica*, a history of Peru finished in 1586 but that remained unpublished until the nineteenth century, when a part of it appeared in a French translation. Cabello Valboa, who ranged from Bogota to Quito, Lima, yet-to-be-settled areas of the viceroyalty of Peru (part of which would become the Republic of Peru), and the River Plate area, died sometime between 1606 and 1608. He had been a soldier in Flanders and traveled to South America in 1566, where he was ordained a priest in Quito. Cabello Valboa engaged in exploration and evangelization as well as in literary activities, frequenting the Academia Antártica in Lima, a gathering so imbued in Renaissance poetry that occasionally Italian was spoken. He was a consummate humanist as evidenced by his many allusions to classical authors. A relative latecomer to the Spanish Indies, Cabello Valboa's approach to the history of the region differs from that of earlier chroniclers precisely because of the humanistic cast of his thought.

Cabello Valboa's obsession was with the origin of the natives of the New World, and how they figured in the overall history of humanity. His sources are classical and biblical. The enigma of where the so-called Indians came from, how they had been ignored by history, and how they could be incorporated into a believable account of human history had been mentioned by writers going back to Columbus, Las Casas, and humanist historians like Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo and Francisco López de Gómara. The topic would surface again in books by subsequent authors like Garcilaso de la Vega, el Inca, and Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala. So Cabello Valboa did not so much reflect on the topic as enter into an ongoing discussion. In the case of the Incas, his vote for linking ancestor goes to Ophir, son of Sem, son of Noah; their history follows in the aftermath of the Flood. Cabello Valboa's *Miscelánea* blends biblical history with that of the West and Incan history to produce a homogeneous story of Peru up to his own time. His is a stupendous imaginative construct. He also argues, and here he follows the position taken by Peter Martyr d'Anghiera more than a half a century earlier of clearly humanistic origin, that all humanity is one, that indigenous cultures were equal to those of the Europeans but were in an earlier development of their history. Cabello Valboa marshals a considerable number of classical sources in making his arguments and the structure and rhetoric of his discourse is unmistakably humanistic in tenor. In this he anticipates his near contemporary Garcilaso Inca, more famous because of the superior quality of his work, but also because he was born in Peru of a Spanish conquistador father and a mother of Inca lineage, which gives his writings unparalleled legitimacy.

Lerner's edition, as opposed to the 1945 by J. Jijón y Caamaño and that of 1951, published by Universidad Mayor de San Marcos in Lima, with a prologue by

Luis E. Valcárcel, is based on the authoritative manuscript at the University of Texas library. The previous two editions had followed the manuscript at the New York Public Library, which appears to be a copy of the one at Texas, which is reputed to be closer to the original. Valcárcel says that he only saw the Texas one when his edition was already in press, and he added an appendix comparing the two. That 1951 book is a rarity today, so this new edition is certainly a welcome addition. Lerner is a thorough philologist whose annotations, clarifying such details as word usage and etymologies, as well as sources and references, are excellent. The range of his readings in Renaissance criticism beyond the Spanish sphere is adequate and includes bibliography in English. Within the field of Latin American colonial studies and Spanish Golden Age literature it is of high quality, with some lapses, such as listing Guaman Poma's work by the Ayacucho edition, which fails to reproduce the autograph manuscript in its entirety. Lerner has modernized the text, which makes this technically not a critical edition, but with such a little-read work as the *Miscelánea* this is an advantage. Cabello Valboa was not the writer Garcilaso Inca was, but he was good enough, and his compendiousness and thoroughness makes his work worthy of wider consideration. It should be incorporated into the canon. Lerner's edition should help.

Lerner's introduction is a bit sparse though it addresses all the major issues and provides the necessary information. He does not consider sufficiently Cabello Valboa's choice of the miscellany as the overarching structure of his work. That term, like *austral*, is an example of the author's classicist pedantry, but it also suggests a conception of history that is at odds with the *historias generales*, like the one by Fernández de Oviedo, whose cast was encyclopedic in a medieval sense, going back to Alfonso el Sabio's *General e grand estoria*. *Miscelánea* implies a certain pell-mell approach to history in which all details may or may not be dependent on providence, on a Christian conception of the orderly unfolding of time. This, in turn, could be in conflict with Cabello Valboa's own claim for the universality of human history. An examination of this issue would be a productive critical project.

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