

*Epistolario*. Pedro Vélez de Guevara.

Ed. Guy Lazure and Bartolomé Pozuelo Calero. Palmyrenvs Serie Textos 13. Alcañiz: Instituto de Estudios Humanísticos; Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2014. clvi + 400 pp. €43.27.

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This previously unedited collection of fifty-eight Latin letters written by the Sevillian humanist Pedro Vélez de Guevara (1529–91) offers an extraordinary entry into the world of Church politics in sixteenth-century Spain. It was discovered by Guy Lazure and Bartolomé Pozuelo Calero in the library of the Fundación Bartolomé March in

Palma de Mallorca in 2009, and their bilingual edition, which includes an elegant Spanish translation and thoroughly researched introduction, is a valuable addition to the scholarship of sixteenth-century humanism and the political and religious contexts that both nurtured and stunted Spanish humanists' careers.

The 155-page introductory study reveals Lazure's and Pozuelo Calero's comprehensive research into the details of Vélez de Guevara's family background and career, his epistolary circle, and the specifics of the manuscript itself. Together with the extensive textual notes, the study provides a highly detailed picture of the humanist community in Sevilla during Vélez de Guevara's lifetime. The carefully documented biography shows that his family connections, while valuable to a certain point, ultimately undermined his opportunities when an official investigation of *limpieza de sangre*, or the purity of blood required for his appointment as an ordinary of the Inquisition, revealed his mother's converso origins. The editors point out that that reality followed him throughout his life, effectively ending the progression of his career in the court (xli). Thanks to the support of the archbishop of Seville, he was able to accept an appointment as official jurist for the cathedral chapter, with responsibility for all of the chapter's legal dealings and the implementation of the Council of Trent's decrees. But many of his fellow students from Salamanca, where he earned his doctorate in law, took on high ecclesiastical or political positions that were not open to him.

Nevertheless, his background did not diminish his importance within Spanish intellectual circles. As Richard L. Kagan notes in his prologue, Vélez de Guevara's list of correspondents reads like "a 'Who's who' of the erudite and ecclesiastical world of the Spanish monarchy under Philip II" ("un 'Quién es quién' del mundo erudito y eclesiástico de la Monarquía hispánica bajo Felipe II," xiii). While he did publish two short legal treatises, his only other publication was a commentary on Cicero's *Topica*, suggesting that his influence had deeper and more complex roots than his published scholarship would suggest. Interestingly, his list of correspondents also reveals his role as mentor, and his letters to younger relatives and friends are some of the most interesting in the collection, advising them not only on the study of Latin, but on forming acquaintances and spending time away from their books.

The author's own knowledge of Latin was significant. The first appendix catalogs the 505 Latin references the editors detail in the volume's textual notes; the vast majority (383) are from Cicero, but the index includes numerous classical, patristic, and contemporary sources. That said, in part 6 of the introduction, the editors note that Vélez de Guevara's written Latin was not usually "spontaneous" ("espontáneo"); rather, like many of his fellow humanists, he relied on language used by his classical sources (cxi). They suggest that his writing was characterized by the Renaissance concept of *puritas* as defined by Melanchthon in 1531: an attention to diction and syntax in keeping with the classical Latin taught in the schools, with the further aim of imitating those who had spoken with elegance (cxi).

Those studying material culture may find Vélez de Guevara's will and the detailed list of his possessions sold after his death of significant interest, not only for the descriptions of items, names of purchasers, and prices paid, but also for the life they suggest for a widely respected humanist near the end of the sixteenth century. Vélez de Guevara's more than sixty paintings, religious and secular, as well as his numerous books and furnishings, create a sense of context for the letters included in this collection. Scholars of Spanish humanism will value Lazure and Pozuelo Calero's important volume not only for the access to Vélez de Guevara's previously unedited letters, but also for the erudite introduction and notes.

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