

decisions in some editions of *Celestina* reveal how interpretative decisions taken by the printers influenced the readers. The other innovative aspect is the new reading of passages of *Celestina*, which, when interpreted through the selected later texts, acquire interesting meanings. However, without further proof, it is difficult to establish that early modern readers who had read these texts came up with those interpretations of *Celestina*. More factual arguments, as the ones about the use of specific engravings and marginalia, would reinforce these interpretations.

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El imperio de la virtud: "Grandeza Mexicana" (1604) de Bernardo de Balbuena y el discurso criollo novohispano. Jorge L. Terukina Yamauchi.

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In *El imperio de la virtud*, Jorge Terukina Yamauchi provides rigorously documented perspectives on Aristotelian ethics and their selective application by the theorists of the colonization of Mexico. Terukina focuses on Balbuena's portrayal of the divisions between the Creole Spaniards who were the Conquistadors' descendants, and the later generations of imperial bureaucrats who were the product of Philip II's evolving colonial management. *El imperio de la virtud* presents the classic tome of the Mexican Baroque, Bernardo de Balbuena's *Grandeza Mexicana*, from a lucid and unromantic perspective, designed for the scholar but equally accessible to the interested layperson. Rather than interpreting Balbuena's opus as a nascent explosion of Mexican nationalism *avant la lettre*, as has been done frequently since the Mexican revolution, the author places *Grandeza mexicana* within its historical parameters: the Machiavellian world of New Spain's administrative politics.

As Terukina Yamauchi substantiates in *El imperio de la virtud*, Balbuena's omission of Mexico's indigenous population from his pro-Peninsular narrative downplays the main protagonists of the conquest of Mexico, a fact evident in the erasure of the Mexica (Aztec) Indian warriors of Moctezuma II's armies from Balbuena's retelling. Perhaps more unexpectedly for the reader, the Conquistadors, and the dominant personalities of Hernan Cortes and Pedro de Alvarado, are as irrelevant, in Balbuena's eyes, as the supposedly heathen Aztecs.

Aristotle's postulates regarding the natural virtues and their origins in Earth's different climatic zones, and their believed ancillary effects on body and brain, are what, in Terukina Yamauchi's vision, enable Bernardo de Balbuena to relegate the protagonists of the Spanish/Mexica military conflict to minor roles. When some men are called natural masters due to their good fortune at having been bred in ideal locations (such as Mediterranean Spain), then there is no need to praise the bravery of Aztec and Spaniard

fighters. In *Grandeza Mexicana*, Aztec warriors and Spanish soldiers are replaced by the Aristotelian ideal (as Balbuena saw it) of the trained, Peninsular-born bureaucrat. That person is the only figure designated by Balbuena as capable of governing Spain's New World colonies.

Ironically, Terukina Yamauchi notes, the artificial climate of Mexico City is praised in *Grandeza Mexicana* as a construction designed ex nihilo by the Conquistadors and their Creole descendants. Despite that acknowledgment, Balbuena asserts that Mexico City could best be governed by those who had no part in the building of Tenochtitlan (Aztecs) or those, such as the Conquistadors and their offspring, who subjugated Tenochtitlan, and raised Mexico City on its foundations. (Aztec architecture is ridiculed by Balbuena as an inconsequential collection of small huts).

Here, as Terukina Yamauchi's commentary stresses, Balbuena's theory clashes with the historical evidence of Tenochtitlan's past. Even more so, *Grandeza Mexicana* clashes with the writings of the original group of Conquistadors, and the Creole narrators who perpetuated their memory. The latter referred constantly to the grandeur of the Mexica past. Cortés, and the Creole chroniclers, lauded Moctezuma's and Guatemoc's troops for their prowess in battle, and extolled the efficiency of indigenous tributary organization, values which Spanish military men, in the epoch of the *Tercios* of Flanders, would easily have appreciated. Significantly, Aztec architecture was still quite visible in Balbuena's epoch, which spanned the later period of Phillip II and that of his son, Phillip III. Thus, his conscious elimination of Aztec achievements was, in Terukina's eyes, a manner of de-emphasizing the magnitude of the conquest itself, and of minimizing the bravery of the men who defeated Tenochtitlán's armies.

Courageous Aztecs and intrepid Conquistadors, in Balbuena's retelling, simply paved the way for the Peninsular clerk. Wisely, Terukina clarifies the strategy underlying *Grandeza Mexicana*: Balbuena's ambition, as a Peninsular Spaniard, to secure a high-ranking position in Spain's New World empire. Just as British historian Tracey Borman has demystified Protestant Elizabeth Tudor's complex relationship with Spain's most Catholic monarch, so does Terukina's research elucidate the personal motives behind one of the foundational chronicles of colonial Latin America. By so doing, the author enables scholars to undertake research that is free of the clichés of the nascent nationalism that many have projected, retroactively, on early modern texts (such as *Grandeza Mexicana*). In this vein, Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios* would benefit notably from as well-detailed and dispassionate an analysis as Jorge L. Terukina Yamauchi accomplishes with Balbuena's text.

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