

secret healing oil to Romano's urological treatments, Philip II repeatedly brought the treatments of untrained empirics into mainstream use, supporting any medical remedy that showed true potential to help the sick.

In examining the regulation of medicine, Clouse builds upon foundational work from numerous Spanish scholars whose research, over the past several decades, has uncovered much of the documentation in Spanish archives. This work has received too little attention outside Spain, and Clouse's study effectively builds upon much of this research to form a cohesive examination of medical regulation in Spain. This study is also important for its broad focus on Castile as a whole, something often made difficult by Spanish regionalism. The work should be of interest for both medical and political scholars interested in aspects of the expansion of royal control.

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MERCEDES BLANCO, *Góngora heroico: las 'Soledades' y la tradición épica*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2012. 443 pp.

Luis de Góngora's *Soledades* is one of the most beautiful and complex poems of Early Modern Europe. Since the seventeenth century scholars have strived to define the nature of the work and the genre to which it belongs: is it a pastoral or an epic poem? Mercedes Blanco's monograph is undoubtedly the best book devoted to answering these questions.

The book is organized into twelve chapters. The first six analyse the development of the epic mode and its theory in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in relation to the *Soledades* and the debate concerning its genre. Blanco's central thesis is that 'las *Soledades* se plantean como una solución ingeniosa [...] a la demanda del poema épico' (11). Góngora achieves this goal via a personal reading of the heroic tradition, in particular through the lens of Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, which he uses to call into question what Aristotle identified as two of the main features that define this poetic genre, 'la fábula y el suspense narrativo-dramático' (31). The *Soledades*, however, deconstructs the epic code by employing some of its most characteristic *leitmotifs* and stylistic devices. The high register used to praise the actions of noble warriors has now turned to the description of an idyllic world where violence and strength have been replaced by beauty and prudence.

According to Blanco, Góngora found inspiration in Poliziano's *Silvae* and the aesthetics of early Humanism, which linked poetry with *admiratio*. These texts are capable of devoting refined intertextual constructions even to the description of *nugae* such as farm animals in order to produce a sophisticated literary work. With these ideas in mind, Góngora decided to give his personal answer to the 'epic quest', using the opening lines of the *Liberata* and the episode of Erminia's retreat to a peaceful refuge as an inspiration for his *Soledades*. The Spanish poet amplified this pastoral interlude by producing a male equivalent of Erminia, and by projecting the epic common place of the 'héroe acogido por un huésped rústico' (Chapter 6) onto a new Baroque vision of the world and literature. Góngora's response to epic comes, thus, under the sign of the pastoral tradition as presented by Tasso. His imitation takes the *Liberata* as a central subtext, and combines it with a mosaic of literary and cultural references which opens up a dialogue between different genres and authors (Virgil, Claudian, Poliziano, Ariosto, Camões, Tasso, etc). To date this is one of the most convincing and satisfactory explanations of the problematic genre of the *Soledades*.

In order to produce such a revolutionary text, Góngora found in Homer one of his greatest inspirations, as recognized, for example, by López de Vicuña, who entitled his edition of Gongorine poems, *Obras en verso del Homero español* (1627). While Tasso offered Góngora a suitable narrative substratum, Homer was his 'master of style' from whom he learned to create a new heroic language. Chapters 7 and 8 are devoted to studying the circulation of

Homer's works in Spain in the Golden Age and the features of his style that most influenced the *Soledades*, namely those related with the device of *enargeia*. Through a series of fascinating close readings of the text Blanco argues that the pictorial technique present in Góngora's poems is indebted to Homer.

The last three chapters study the development of another crucial epic common place in the *Soledades*, the sea journey, which is present in the heroic tradition since the *Odyssey*. Together with the Homeric model, Blanco analyses the presence of this motif in other heroic poems, establishing interesting connections between these texts, the *Soledades*, the new geographical discoveries and the maps printed in the Renaissance. The 'miniature epic' that appears in the first part of the poem (ll. 366–502) is analysed against the rich backdrop of literary texts, maps and images that circulated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries stimulating Góngora's imagination.

It is very difficult to do justice to Blanco's erudite and monumental book in a few lines. Her writing is both dense and didactic, precise and beautiful, and takes the reader by the hand through the vast gallery of cultural references that contributed to the crafting of the *Soledades*. At times, however, the reader can feel a bit overwhelmed by such an abundant display of references and images, and it could also be argued that certain interpretations are disputable, such as the links found with Homer or Poliziano; whereas other possible connections could have been developed even further, such as those with Sannazaro or Ariosto. But it would be absurd to ask even more from a monograph which is already exemplary.

Mercedes Blanco's research looks at the *Soledades* from any possible angle combining historical analysis, literary close readings, iconography and aesthetics. In each chapter she uses these insights to address different poetic problems in order to overcome the 'heroic quest' of explaining the nature of Góngora's complexity. Where many have failed, she succeeds, offering an inspiring reading that it is as much a new explanation of the *Soledades* and the epic genre as it is a reinterpretation of Baroque poetics. This is a book destined to become a classic of Golden-Age scholarship.

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PEDRO CALDERÓN DE LA BARCA, *El médico de su honra*. Edición de Jesús Pérez Magallón. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra. 2012. 412 pp.

*El médico de su honra* continues to provoke disagreement among critics. On page 11, the editor of this new edition expresses the wish that he could reconcile the very different critical views of the play, but has to admit that this is impossible. To prove his point, he conducts a critique of the studies of the play, with most concentration on the play as tragedy. I am not sure, however, that it is still profitable to refer to the 'escuela inglesa' (e.g., 114) as if this were a unanimous group with a monolithic view of Calderón as tragedian, or of this play in particular. The reference suggests that there is another, 'non-English' view, implicitly more accurate. And yet, to take only two examples, some of the most perceptive studies of Calderonian tragedy are those of Francisco Ruiz Ramón (e.g., *Calderón y la tragedia* [Madrid: Alhambra, 1984]), while the one author to devote an entire book to this play is José Amezcua Gómez. Both of these have expressed views which coincide in many respects with those of members of the supposed 'escuela inglesa'; Amezcua, indeed, 'acepta la postura británica' with regard to King Pedro's shortcomings, and is criticized for his remark that Enrique's treason towards him exists, 'hasta entonces', only in the king's imagination (115, 117); the editor argues that the audience knew that there had already been conspiracies and treasons against Pedro on the part of the Trastámaras. Despite its historical setting, though, this is not a historical play: we cannot assign it to a precise time. The oblique reference to Fadrique (lines