Góngora's Heresy and Humanist Circles

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The historian and anthropologist Carmen Bernand pioneered the topic of humanist circles as a context for Inca Garcilaso's syncretic artistic production, in parallel with Roland Greene, who mapped out Inca Garcilaso's fascinating family tree—which included European literary and political figures such as Lady Jane Dormer, Duchess of Feria and Sir Philip Sydney—intertwined with Spanish and Inca noble families. More recently, the historian Kevin Ingram has investigated early modern Iberian humanist circles in their European context, associating them with various forms of confessional heterodoxy and social critique gathered under the rubric of "converso non-conformism," drawing on the insights of Francisco Márquez Villanueva and other Cervantes scholars. Building on Bernand and Ingram's studies, I propose to examine how the Spanish Baroque poet Luis de Góngora (1561-1927) interacted with these humanist circles, and how this context might have impacted his writing. In addressing the effect of Góngora's converso status upon his work, I continue the line of investigation of Dana Bultman, Colbert Nepaulsingh and Daniel Waissbein.

The idea that Góngora, whose daring "nueva poesía" provoked a famously heated polemic, might be read as illustrative of "converso non-conformism" would have been contentious until recently. Andrée Collard, in her essay, "La 'herejía' de Góngora," based on her study of Gongorism, argued that Góngora's innovation was to divorce art from didacticism and utility, emptying canonical forms of their ancient function, and opening the door to a secular and personal poetry (333). In this sense, she argued, the Gongorism debate thus became an early case of the European battle between Ancients and Moderns. Based on the scholarship of Dámaso Alonso and Américo Castro, she further argued that the attacks on Góngora were in no way isolated from confessional conflict, as they were filled with classic anti-converso (as well as anti-Protestant) epithets and a vocabulary which associated Góngora's transgressions with those of a heretical sect (334-36).[1] In a nod to Góngora's alleged aesthetic nihilism, she further references the religious skepticism common among conversos, seen as virtual atheists by orthodox Jews of the time who had settled in Amsterdam (336-37, citing Revah 90).

Collard's essay roughly coincided with Robert Jammes's monumental work on the poet, in which he disputes the idea that Góngora was of converso heritage (Jammes 21-23). Only in the last decade, thanks to the work of Spanish historian Enrique Soria Mesa, are we now assured that Góngora was in fact of a judeoconverso family, including members who had been burned by the Inquisition (17). Knowing this, however, does not simplify our reading of the sociopolitical factors at issue in the Góngora debate. For example, two of Góngora's main opponents, writer Juan de Jáuregui and church censor Juan de Pineda, are suspected by Ingram to also have been of judeoconverso origins (2018, 312 n. 22; 314 n. 38). An analysis of early modern heterodoxy in Góngora's humanist circle, as we shall see, will yield no easy fault lines.

[1] Dana Bultman's prescient later intervention implicitly combines both the aesthetic and sociopolitical arguments of Collard, locating Góngora's poetic heresy in his usurpation of exegetical functions previously reserved for theologians, as a case of repressed Hebrew theology—Kabbala— resurfacing in poetry. I am Courtesy Asst Professor of Spanish.

Benito Arias Montano and The Family of Love

Both Bernand and Ingram coincide in observing a Counterreformation recurrence of an earlier, more tolerant Renaissance moment, overcoming the conventional blindspots of periodization (Ingram 2018, xii, 126; Bernand 2010, 4, citing Saladin 17). An important locus for reading a history of early modern tolerance across such generational divides is the figure of Benito Arias Montano, who links the poet Francisco Aldana, along with early Christian Hebraist figures such as Fray Luis de León and San Juan de la Cruz, to later humanists such as Fray José de Sigüenza and Pedro de Valencia (1555-1620), Góngora's mentor and Montano's amanuensis. Both Fray Luis and San Juan consulted Montano's "Perífrasis del Cantar," a paraphrase in Spanish of the *Song of Songs*, for their famed poetic interpretations of the biblical verses (García Aguilar 44; Cf Rekers 123-25). Yet Montano's impact extended well beyond Spain, into Protestant Europe and the empire's divided northern provinces. Dutch scholar Ben Rekers's 1971 biography of Montano, written in the wake of the studies of Américo Castro and Marcel Bataillon, offers a foundational study of Montano and his circle within an international framework of late Spanish Erasmism (130),[2] which I will now summarize.

As Rekers describes, Arias Montano (1527-1598) early distinguished himself as a Christian Hebraist, whose knowledge of Semitic languages and participation in the Spanish delegation to the Council of Trent led him to be sent by the king to the Netherlands in 1568 to supervise the ongoing project of the *Biblia Polyglota*, the Polyglot Bible, whose ambition was a redefinition of the scriptures through a studied return to the original texts in five languages. The new bible was to be printed at the press of Christophe Plantin in Antwerp, whose group of heterodox Flemish and French scholars had begun the work in previous years (3-5). Plantin's press had been founded with the capital of merchants devoted to the prophet Hendrik Niclaes, leader of the ecumenist and Spiritualist sect known as the *Familia Charitatis* or Family of Love (70). According to Rekers, the Polyglot Bible, as Plantin conceived it, "was to be in the service of the *unio christiana*, an ideal which found support among progressive biblical scholars as well as those merchants who considered religious tolerance to be beneficial to international trade in the port of Antwerp" (71). After the suppression of the Calvinist revolt known as the Iconoclasm, Plantin sought the support of a Catholic power to save his business (45), but his secretive Familist sect occupied a middle ground between the confessions, committed only to personal inner religion, while dissimulating practice of whichever religion was in power in their locales (7, 8, 73, 84, 94, 95). Significantly, Pedro de Valencia's early and only published work, *Academica*, which Ingram reads as a camouflaged plea for religious tolerance couched as a philosophical debate about skepticism, was printed by Plantin's press in 1597 (Ingram 2018, 165-67). None of this is irrelevant to Góngora's cultural context, as he was not only close to Pedro de Valencia but had studied in Salamanca, where in 1586 Plantin's press would establish a Spanish branch (Rekers 121).[3]

Plantin's press was an important intellectual center to which many European scholars travelled, and Montano met a number of Northern scholars at gatherings at Plantin's house (Rekers 74). As Rekers describes, these included Clusius, Lobelius and Dodonaeus in the fields of medicine and biology; Ortelius and Mercator in geography; Lipsius, Hadrianus Junius and Torrentius in classical literature; Gemma Trisius in mathematics; Andreus Masius and

[2] I use the 1972 English translation of Rekers' Dutch original published by the Warburg Institute, while inserting the original names for Familist leaders retained in the Spanish version. See Zagorin for a general definition of Spiritualism (112) and for a brief history of the sect (116-30).

[3] Góngora attended the University of Salamanca from 1576 to 1580 (Artigas 32).

Raphelengius in biblical exegesis and Goropius Becanus in etymology (74). Montano became a vector for the dissemination of Northern knowledge into Spain, from Antwerp, Frankfurt, and the University of Leyden to the universities at Salamanca and Seville; the latter had been known as a center of Erasmism and a "hotbed of Spanish Protestantism" during Montano's student days (120-21; 1-2). Montano also became close friends with various figures in the Antwerp bourgeoisie as well as in the city's *marrano* colony, including the banker and bookseller Luis Pérez, who himself became a member of the sect (100). During the Calvinist occupation of Antwerp, Plantin became printer to the Calvinist States General, now publicly taking the opposite and opportune confessional tack to publish Bartolomé de las Casas' critique of Catholic Spain's cruelties in the New World (82).

Montano's scholarly and spiritual affiliations dovetail with his political role as a peacemaker. While he initially supported the Duke of Alba, Philip II's "Iron Governor" of the Netherlands (and the same duke the poet Garcilaso de la Vega had befriended and joined in battle), he later sided with the local populations, represented in his humanist colleagues, against the brutality of Spanish rule (Rekers 5). This included not only religious persecution, but the havoc wreaked by plundering Spanish soldiers and a harsh tax policy, made only worse by famine and severe winter (22). In one of his letters to the king's secretary, Gabriel de Zayas, Montano shares his sympathy with the local culture. As Rekers writes, "The Flemish at table and at their carnivals reminded him of the Ancient Greeks, the richest tribute a humanist could pay" (32). Here, we see a similar case of the "reverse ethnography" Michael Armstrong Roche has observed in Cervantes's *Persiles*, and which Mercedes Blanco has remarked in her own terms in Góngora's *Soledades*, where the word "bárbaros," normally reserved for the Amerindians, refers to the Spanish peasantry (Armstrong Roche 29; Blanco 2014, 168). In this case of Montano's observation, the "reverse ethnography" applies to a subjugated European—and quasi-Protestant—people and bears a suggestive resemblance to the sort of "historiographic syncretism" observed by Stephanie Merrim in later New World colonial writing (160).

In 1576 Montano returned to Spain to serve as librarian of the Escorial, where he created "a nucleus of Spiritualists among the Hieronymite monks" (Rekers 106). After his contact with Montano at the Escorial, Montano's humanist colleague, the poet Fray José de Sigüenza "turned violently against scholastic theology and became a fervent adherent of personal biblical interpretation and inner religion," which led him to be "accused of Lutheranism, Judaism and Wyclisfism," among other charges (110). Yet Sigüenza was granted a provisional pardon; Rekers surmises that "Philip's protection may have been responsible, for the king admired Sigüenza's oratorical talents and his cultured taste in painting" and "was unaware of the Spiritualist tendencies of his monks" (111). In 1590 Montano retired, dividing his time between the Santiago convent in Seville and his country house in Peña de Aracena, where he continued to teach Hebrew. It was there that Montano engaged Pedro de Valencia as his pupil and then his secretary (117).

Of central importance to the impact of Montano's circle on Góngora is Montano's association with Pedro de Valencia, the poet's humanist mentor. Valencia's dedication was such that he also took charge of publishing Montano's posthumous work as his literary executor and in 1618, decades after his teacher's death, laboriously defended the Polyglot against the anti-Hebraists of the Inquisition (Rekers 119, Ingram 2018, 174-77). Montano had also cultivated intellectual circles unrelated to Spiritualism—in Seville, for example, where he befriended a number of scientists and painters (120)—so it is possible that Grace Magnier and others are correct

in distancing Valencia from membership in the Familist sect (Magnier 262-63, 21).[4] Yet Rekers believes that between 1573-75, Montano himself was initiated into the House of Love (77), whose new iteration was led by Henrik Jansen Barrefelt, known as Hiël (72),[5] and his studies of Montano's correspondence make a case for Valencia's association with Familism.

As Rekers writes,

> In the Psalm dedication which Montano addressed to Valencia at the end of his life he described his disciple as 'initiated into the secret of true piety.' Evidence of Montano's profound influence is found in Valencia's frequent correspondence with Sigüenza. When his friend suffered from misunderstanding and persecution, Valencia consoled him in terms almost identical to those used by Plantin in his Spiritualist correspondence. He, too, spoke of sudden revelation and the identification with the Divine Being, prior to which life was empty and hollow. Occasionally Valencia warned his too audacious and candid friend not to get involved again in theological arguments (119).

Kevin Ingram translates some telling examples of Sigüenza's audacity in statements he made at his 1592 trial: "Give me Arias Montano and the Bible, and I have no need for other books"; "in order to understand Holy Scripture we should not follow the saints but the Hebrew texts, paying no attention to the views of the saints or scholastic theology"; "many barbarians and pagans, Turks and Muslims, even without knowledge of our faith, are saved only by believing in one God and following natural law"; and "My advice is to forget devotional works, just read the evangelists and commend yourself to God, and He will enlighten you" (2015, 149; 2018, 143). Rekers suggests that Sigüenza's ideas were so unorthodox as to view his later works as "almost indistinguishable from those of Protestant writers" (110). The testimony of Sigüenza, with its suggestion of various types of heresy, points to the breadth of religious dissidence within a generalized culture of national repression, international collaboration and displacement, dissimulation, and clandestinity, which makes it difficult to isolate clear-cut genealogies of heterodoxy (see García Arenal 2009). In this context, we may well consider the sort of stylistic analysis Rekers proffers to be a valid form of evidence for a humanist world in which, as Perez Zagorin has shown, the private could easily contradict public forms of documentation (327-28).

Yet while Ingram relies on Reker's history, he disputes his suggestion that Montano was actually a member of the *Familia Charitatis* or that he founded a Familist "cell." As Ingram writes,

> Whether Montano ever considered himself a member of the sect is debatable. Certainly he shared the Familists' disdain for the ceremonial and doctrinal trappings of organized religion, as well as their predilection for private, mystical practice. He was also taken with the biblical exegeses of the Family's leader Hendrik Jansen van Barrefelt [...] and specifically with Barrefelt's interpretation of Saint John's Apocalypse, which he, Montano, plundered to write his own *Elucidaciones* […]." (2018, 131).

However, he concludes, the views of Montano's circle (and this would include Pedro de Valencia) "were formed independently of the Family of Love, in a peculiarly Spanish, New Christian setting. Thus, while Montano undoubtedly relayed Familist secrets to his Seville friends (it would be naïve

[4] At an earlier time, Valencia, as well as the dukes of Medina Sidonia, had links to the Santa Cruz de la Restauración, Lucrecia de León's millennial cult (Kagan 1990, 127; Magnier 80 n. 136).
[5] Here, Rekers translates this Hebrew name as "Light of God," but most render it as "Life of God."

to believe otherwise), there is little to suggest that he created a Familist cell on Andalusian soil" (2018, 147).

Ingram relates Montano and Sigüenza's work at the Escorial not to building the sect but instead to a project of converso integrationism, which coalesced around the use of the imagery of the Old Testament king Solomon "as a figurehead for peace, syncretism and assimilation" in Philip II's Spain, in a parallel to the Sacromonte project of dissident Moriscos who concocted false relics, decorated with "Solomonic" letters, ostensibly demonstrating an early and foundational Arab Christianity on the peninsula (2015, 129, 146; 2018, 111, 138-39).[6] Carmen Bernand has identified similar syncretic validation efforts on the part of Inca Garcilaso, who incorporated features of Solomon's Temple in his description of Coricancha, the Inca temple of the sun, in his *Comentarios reales* (1609) (2006, 275). She thus signals a common participation in "la moda salomónica" by representatives of Iberian minority elites, relating the creation of foundational histories by Pablo de Céspedes and Inca Garcilaso to their mentorship by the humanist antiquarian Ambrosio de Morales (2010, 11; 2011).[7] Ingram suggests that the Turpiana and Sacromonte falsifications, thought to have been produced by Miguel de Luna and Alonso del Castillo, may have been inspired by a pattern of earlier fabrications by converso humanists going back as far as the Catholic Kings, which purported to identify early Jewish settlement of Iberia by lost tribes not implicated in the crucifixion (2018, 17-18, 137-39). These syncretic inventions reverberate across national and religious divides in ways which suggest a greater cultural significance. Bernand relates Inca Garcilaso's syncretic defense of his people to a revival of the Florentine Quattrocento hermetic dream of unity within Christendom, between Paganism, Christianity and Judaism, and between the ancient and modern worlds (2010, 4). Perhaps we find another version of that dream on the level of language in Góngora's defense—and elaboration—of his new poetry.

Transcending Babel

Isabel Torres offers an insightful reading of Góngora's letter in defense of his new poetry, the "Carta en respuesta" directed to an anonymous opponent,[8] by focusing on the dialectical relationship between its allusions to Babel, the biblical episode of the confusion of tongues, and its transcendence in Pentecostal grace. As she argues, if we recognize in the reference to Babel "a return to the inaugural scene of linguistic diversity, a confrontation with the critical provisionality of language itself, then the letter comes to represent a more provocative intervention in the politico-linguistic debates of the period" (114). The attacks on Góngora's poetry as Babelic focused on the radical subversion of aesthetic and linguistic norms in his long lyric poem in two cantos, the *Soledades*.[9] For Torres, "the extreme defamiliarization of Castilian in Góngora's opaque poetics

[6] On Solomism and Góngora's Escorial sonnet, see Chemris (2021c) and Waissbein (2014, 326-27).

[7] Céspedes was a friend of Góngora from his novitiate days, who Rubio Lapaz suspects was the intermediary who introduced Góngora to Pedro de Valencia (152), and Morales had testified on behalf of Góngora at his *limpieza* hearing (Bernand 2011, 24). Ingram describes Céspedes' antiquarian scholarship, in which Céspedes argues that a Hebrew temple was established below the Roman temple to Janus under the Mezquita-Cathedral of Córdoba (2018, 159-63). This documentation would support Waissbein's reading of Góngora's sonnet, "Si ya la vista de llorar cansada" (1594) as a statement of "veiled sadness for the fate of those who built the Mosque, and for the expulsion of the Jews from Spain" (2014, 303).

[8] The letter to which Góngora responds is thought to have come from Lope de Vega and his friends. Of interest to our analysis is Ingram's citation of a verse by Lope alluding unsympathetically to Arias Montano's Jewish heritage (2018, 145, 297 n.70).

[9] Robert Jammes dates the composition of the *Soledades* in several steps from 1612-1617, with the final 43 verses composed 1619-1626 (Góngora 1994, 20-21).

[…] may have been received as a disturbing onslaught from within, a deconstruction of Baroque political fictions through an admission of 'otherness' which extended far beyond a perceived allegiance to heretical Judaism" (112). In Góngora's insistence that "no van en más que una lengua las *Soledades*," she concludes, "Góngora proclaims the inauguration of a single, sublime language, 'perfected' rather than perfect, in which unity and plurality aspire to reconciliation," and presents his "Soneto quadrilingüe" (1600), a poem which enacts Latin's loss and return in the vernaculars, as testimony to the anxieties inherent in such an endeavor (118). I will suggest that we might extend Torres's reading by applying some of the frameworks we have observed operating in contemporary humanist circles: late Erasmism, hermeticism and converso non-conformism. In "engaging plurality,"[10] Góngora's poetry will inhabit the same semiotic world as Arias Montano's library at the Escorial or Ambrosio de Morales' archeological studies.

Góngora's "Carta en respuesta" incorporates a number of structures common to late Erasmist and what Ingram defines as converso non-conformist technique: double entendre covered by deceptive displays of orthodoxy and signaled by hints of deeper meaning (the admonition to look beneath the "corteza"), inversion, and a pseudo-sacerdotal citation of Augustine related to the rejection of the authority of patristic writings by heterodox humanist circles.[11] The text itself has its issues of definition, as Antonio Carreira, after finding more variants, revised the version in his edition of Góngora's *Epistolario* to the most common, which references the Old and not the New Testament, probably, I suspect, referring back to the authorized story of Babel, and possibly to Góngora's converso ancestry.[12] Finally, I will argue, again applying Ingram's insights, Góngora's famous disparaging of the *vulgo* and his use of the trope from St. Matthew of not casting precious pearls before swine (referring to the ignorant who found his verse obscure), are not simply expressions of aesthetic elitism, but also conventional markers of religious dissidence and more specifically of converso non-conformism.[13]

In his *Parecer*, the Abad de Rute cites St. Jerome's defense of obscurity in prophecy, but insists that the saint's arguments cannot apply to Góngora's poem: "Pues no es este poema misterios de religión ni profecía, de que no deben hacerse participantes muchos" (Pariente 35). In the letter, Góngora takes up the issue directly: "Pregunto yo: ¿han sido útiles al mundo las poesías y aun las profecías (que *vates* se llama el poeta como el profeta)? Sería error negarlo" (1999, 2). Interestingly, like Augustine's response to Petrarch's assertion, in the *Secretum*, that his love for Laura had led him to God, namely, that he had inverted the true order, Góngora reverses the order of importance of poetry and prophecy: "¿han sido útiles al mundo las poesías y aun las profecías [...]?" In this use of inversion, Góngora continues the process of secularization begun by Petrarch to affirm the subjective vision of the poet, using the language of the scholastics to go beyond them. In this sense Góngora's arguments are *pseudosacerdotal*, and his reference to Augustine's *sententia*

[10] Here I recall Stephanie Merrim's term regarding Sor Juana's approach to the disparate cultures and ages of empire (Merrim 150; see also Chemris 2024a, 475). I also note Betty Sasaki's concept of the *Soledades* as a "sea of signs" and the apparent resurgence of semiotics in Seth Kimmel's new book on the Escorial library.

[11] See Ingram on typical features of converso non-conformist discourse (2018, 5-7). Edmund Cros describes the technique of inversion in the post-Erasmist work *Lazarillo de Tormes* (82-83). Nb the parallel between Góngora's "corteza" and Alonso Nuñez de Reinoso's claim for his *Clareo y Florisea*, cited by Ingram, that "debaxo de su invención ay grandes secretos," referencing "abscondida moralidad" and "gran fruto" (Ingram 7; Nuñez de Reinoso 369). References to the Old Testament are another feature Ingram signals, pertinent to this passage and to a selection of Góngora's sonnets; on the latter, see Nepaulsingh (129-30) and Waissbein (2014, 314-16).

[12] See Nepaulsingh (132) and Waissbein (2014, 328 n. 33) for other readings of this passage.

[13] Ingram and Zagorin list numerous cases. See Chemris (2008, 47-50) for a detailed discussion of Góngora's "Carta," which engages more of the critical history and is the source for the next paragraph. Roses (1994) is the canonical work on obscurity in Góngora.

should be read as the same sort of defensive display of orthodoxy which Américo Castro notes in Cervantes' otherwise subversive text (Castro 256).

One further biblical allusion introduces another level of complication when Góngora writes, "si no pareciere a vuesa merced lo contrario, y a esos discípulos ocultos como Nicodemus, no van en más que una lengua las *Soledades*, aunque pudiera, quedándome el brazo sano, hacer una miscelánea de griego, latino y toscano con mi lengua natural, y creo no fuera condenable […]" (1999, 3). In the reference to Nicodemus, the figure who visited Christ in private, Góngora appears to set up a double argument. To his detractor, in a pose of orthodoxy, he affirms that the *Soledades* are not a Babelic but a sublime language, as in the terms defined by Torres. Yet to his clandestine, dissident supporters ("esos discípulos ocultos como Nicodemus"[14]), he suggests that the poem could be read "a dos luces," here, not reduced to a coded allegory as such, but appreciated, as John Beverley has argued, by a circle of readers trained to interpret his complex symbolic representations of contemporary political issues (1980, 7-8). In elegantly pairing the Carta with the "Soneto quadrilingüe," a miscellany in the spirit of what Góngora offers to write, Torres offers us the possibility of contextualizing Góngora in parallel humanist circles linked to hermeticism.

The "Soneto quadrilingüe" takes its place in a recognized pattern within Góngora's corpus of miniature études in preparation for longer works. In a play on the pedagogical form of the quadrilingual grammar, Góngora alternates the verses of the sonnet's two quartets from Spanish, to Latin, to Italian, and then to Portuguese. They anticipate the *Soledades* in tracing the lyric progression from epic (represented by the opening shipwreck's *ex votos*) to pastoral, in the return of a sailor to life as a shepherd, cultivating the "triste son" of the pan pipes formed in the metamorphosis of Syrinx. In the tercets, Latin disappears and the final verse in Portuguese testifies to an Orphic song which will "move wild beasts to sadness" ("saudade à as feras") "and make rocks feel pain" ("e aos penedos, magoas") (Trans. Torres; Torres 119). Building on Dana Bultman's earlier analysis, Torres reads the progression of the sonnet as a return to Latin, paradoxically evoked by its absence, "to the scene of origin for the vernaculars" and then to the power of the emergent human *logos* which Benjamin associates with a fall into history (119; 119, n. 87).[15] Torres' analysis recalls Agamben's reading of Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499), which Mercedes Blanco has identified as a hermetic source text for Góngora's *Soledades*, reinforcing the notion of a resurgence of a more open Renaissance humanism within the Counterreformation Baroque (2012a, 249-50; 499-61; see Chemris 2024a, 473-74). Agamben argues that Colonna's work celebrates the revival of Latin in a new poetry of vernaculars and a novel imaginative language of textual reality alone (56, 60), both features of Góngora's "nueva poesía."

The celebration of poetry in three vernacular languages in dialogue with Latin points to the reconciliation of unity and plurality Torres reads in Góngora's transcendence of Babel. I will relate this to the ecumenism of Góngora's humanist circle, one which aspired to a type of world unity

[14] John Calvin referred disparagingly to clandestine Protestants in Catholic lands as "Nicodemites," named for the Pharisee Nicodemus who visited Jesus privately. Ingram argues that the term Nicodemism is equally applicable to private religious non-conformists who were advocates of tolerance at a time of religious strife (2015, 129-30 and 2018, 108; Cf Zagorin 70).

[15] As Bultman writes, "Linguistic coherence dissolves in the sonnet, with waves of Italian, Castilian, and Portuguese emanating from the Latin. The disintegration of Latin is a dispersal of differing languages, implying the impossibility of reinventing a united identity based on the lost culture of Imperial Rome" (450). "In play here is the recognition of a cultural separation from Latin and a consideration of the vernaculars' distinct potentials for poetic regeneration" (451).

beyond what Mercedes García Arenal has termed "parallel colonialisms" of Moriscos and indigenous (1992). As I have shown in previous scholarship, Góngora included a symbolic protest of the Morisco expulsion in the *Soledades*, and also incorporated previously unrecognized features of Inca Garcilaso's *Comentarios reales*, demonstrating solidarity with the indigenous and *mestizo* writer (2021a, 29-54). These include a cartographic image of world unity which echoes Inca Garcilaso's opening assertion that "no hay más que un mundo" and imagery which evokes the frontispiece of the *Comentarios reales* featuring Inca Garcilaso's Andean heraldic shield (2021a, 41-42). The solidarity Góngora shows with subjugated peoples—not akin to our contemporary values of tolerance, as some have pointed out, but notable for the era—coalesce in the "saudade" of the oaten flute of his sonnet as a song of grief.

Grief, Suffering and Human Agency

To make my argument for Góngora's camouflaged protest of the Morisco expulsion, I reinterpreted previously recognized sources and the poet's political context, with a focus on the theme of mourning. In the *Soledades*, Góngora highlights this topic of grief, and specifically parental grief, through strategic incorporation of allusions to Claudian's *Rape of Proserpine*, a poem which focuses on Ceres' loss of her daughter (Chemris 2016). The topic is treated explicitly in the *serrano*'s lament for the loss of his son at sea in the long *discurso de las navegaciones* (I, 366-502). In more subtle allusions, Góngora incorporates other classical and Old Testament Biblical sources, as well as references to his mentor Pedro de Valencia's treatise against the Morisco expulsion, while cautiously memorializing his patrons in the house of Medina Sidonia who protested the breakup of Morisco families and permitted the return of the expelled along the coastline they patrolled as part of their hereditary duties (Chemris 2019). Thus, Góngora links the grief of Andalusian families over the loss of their sons in imperial ventures at sea[16] to the grief of Morisco families subjected to the confiscation of their children for placement with Old Christians during the expulsion campaign.

I believe there is a parallel case of symbolic reference to indigenous grief in the *Soledades*, as yet unremarked. The allusion is typically fragmentary and subtle, overlooked, perhaps, because it occurs in amatory plaint, much as the reference to an expulsion from the coastal reeds, replete with ecclesiastical and political vocabulary, was overlooked as an allusion to the Morisco expulsion because it occurred in a deceptively playful episode of zoomachia (see Huergo). This amatory plaint, the *peregrino'*s soliloquy at the beginning of the second *Soledad*, contains parallels with the *discurso de las navegaciones,* casting the lovesick *peregrino*'s wandering against the backdrop of the oceans and mountains of the entire world and the farthest reaches of empire: "donde el Sol nace o donde muere el día" (II, 150). Interestingly, the *peregrino*'s lament also contains descriptions of tears which recall those of Garcilaso's uncle, Cusi Huallpa, from the *Comentarios reales*, in his reference to tears too difficult to shed because of the pain he suffered as a witness to the destruction of the Incas:

> Si de aire articulado
> no son dolientes lágrimas süaves

[16] Rivers (1992, 857). In a recent essay, Blanco and Ponce Cárdenas signal the tragic death at sea of the younger brother of the 4th Marquis of Ayamonte, Luis de Córdoba, on return from America, in one of the most noteworthy maritime disasters of the period, in which four ships and 800 crew members were lost. They suggest that Góngora may have learned of the Ayamonte family's memories of this loss when he was in contact with them (66).

> estas mis quejas graves,
> voces de sangre, y sangre son del alma. (*Soledades* II, 116-19)
>
> "[…] y por no hacerte llorar no he recitado esta historia con lágrimas de sangre, derramadas por los ojos, como las derramo en el corazón, del dolor que siento de ver nuestros Incas acabadas y nuestro imperio perdido" (*Comentarios reales* I: XVII).

This testimony by Cusi Huallpa, signaled by Francisco A. Ortega in his analysis of trauma in Garcilaso's narrative, elicits a striking reaction by Garcilaso, who in the face of such a memory of tragic loss, comments that the Inca republic was "antes destruida que conocida," (Ortega 401-2; *Comentarios reales* I: XIX). This striking syntactic grouping pairs with a similar structure in the *peregrino*'s soliloquy, in which he discounts the possibility of his beloved shedding a tear, so hypothetical and withheld that it dries before it is shed: "lágrima antes enjuta que llorada" (*Soledades* II, 157). Here readers are prompted to consider parallel figures of impossibility which draw upon two radically different registers. While on their own, these cases of similarity between the two works might simply signal structural parallels (the first, a conceit based on a commonplace: the belief that tears are generated from blood; the second based on a striking temporal paradox), in the context of Góngora's other references to Garcilaso's work, they are significant echoes, which might point to their function within the *Comentarios reales*, as markers of trauma and the struggle to recuperate the memory of an unknown, as Ortega argues (401), as well as intensify, through contrast, the theme of *menosprecio de corte* and critique of imperial ambition in the *Soledades*. The tear withheld by grief over catastrophic civilizational loss is juxtaposed implicitly with the tear withheld by courtly disdain. This obscure reference to indigenous grief, whose comprehension depends on a dynamic of memory and reader response, connects to the explicit reference to the *serrano*'s loss and to the veiled reference to the grief of Morisco parents in the work, together all testimony to the human cost of empire among a plurality of world peoples.[17]

Our study of Góngora's humanist context allows us to cast other poems in sharper relief. My earlier analysis of Góngora's sonnet, "De pura honestidad templo sagrado" (1582), as an expression of the intersection between the incipient Neoclassicism of the Góngora polemic and Church debates on the sacred image, seems more pertinent when we bring to bear the possible impact of clandestine Protestantism upon the poet (Chemris 2021b, 160-62; 2024b, 194-95).[18] Daniel Waissbein's acute sense of how loaded the topic of the sacred icon was for a writer of known converso origins like Góngora, expressed in his reading of the sonnet, is here strongly vindicated (2010, 2016). A second sonnet criticized by Padre Pineda, "Al nacimiento de Cristo, Nuestro Señor" (1600), gains new insights as well. I was puzzled by its obviously heterodox theological content in celebrating the Nativity over the Crucifixion (Chemris 2024b, 195). In light of Ingram's study, I now realize that the sonnet evinces a typical converso rejection of the cult of the Passion, often a focus of anti-converso violence over the old charge of deicide (Ingram 2018, 38, 259 n. 80). The Passion is also defamiliarized in the sympathy towards enslaved African women Nick Jones has observed in Góngora's *letrilla*, "En la fiesta del Santísimo Sacramento"

[17] Here I continue Betty Sasaki's reader response approach and consider that Góngora's readers would have likely read the *Comentarios reales*, while Pedro de Valencia, as Paniagua Pérez points out, in his capacity as *cronista real*, would issue the *aprobación* for the second part of Inca Garcilaso's book, while also refusing to write a panegyric history of the conquest of the Araucanas (1993, 79; 1996, 240).

[18] As Rekers points out, Christophe Plantin, in a letter to one of Montano's disciples at the Escorial, had warned, "accepting or adorning images, what else is it but committing idolatry?" (Rekers 107, 158).

composed for Corpus Christi 1609, the same year as the first edict of the Morisco expulsion, which would have included Moriscos of African origin (Jones 27, 41-42; Barletta 114-15). The suffering of the enslaved would have been highlighted by the juxtaposition of their dialogue about cruel punishment with the procession of a *Cristo sangrante* on a crucifix (Chemris 2024b, 191). Here, Góngora engages plurality again, in confronting the pain of the most marginalized people of the empire, and his critiques of the Passion are an early defense of human dignity and human agency, much as the innovations of his new poetry celebrate the human *logos*.

Context as *Sfumato* Effect

Kevin Ingram's history of converso nonconformism offers us the opportunity to place Góngora within a time of repeated assaults on religious minorities, within a pattern of ecumenical patronage, and within a literary and intellectual tradition. Góngora was born not long after the Protestant trials in Seville and Valladolid of the late 1550s (Ingram 2018, 75). He also lived through Pedro de Valencia's various tribulations with the anti-Hebraist attacks on the Polyglot, as well as the climate of renewed suspicion of judeoconversos—viewed as another internal enemy—in the wake of the Morisco expulsion (174). By the 1620s, Seville was immersed in a scandal which included almost a thousand accused of Illuminism, a movement associated with Cryptojudaism (10, 27). Yet in his defense, Góngora also had the advantage of patronage within the southern aristocracy, which Trevor Dadson has shown to have had a long history defending the Moriscos as productive vassals (110-11). Ingram adds to this portrait by also signaling their defense of judeoconversos, and in the case of the Mendoza family, of Protestants as well, as Diego Hurtado de Mendoza had suggested a regime of private tolerance, *politique*, similar to what had been proposed for the Huguenots in France, and much earlier (2018, 21-22). The House of Medina Sidonia, whose patronage was a factor in Góngora's symbolic defense of the Moriscos, as we have discussed, as well as other southern nobles, offered sanctuary to the thousands of conversos who fled the Seville Inquisition in 1480 (54). In 1506, the son of another southern aristocrat, Pedro Fernández de Córdoba, first Marquis of Priego, stormed Córdoba's Inquisition jail and freed its prisoners, mainly conversos convicted of judaizing (54). Pedro's physician was the father of our antiquarian Ambrosio de Morales, for whom there is now some evidence that he came from an old Mudéjar family of early Morisco converts (55-57). An exception to this pattern of regional aristocratic solidarity with New Christians is the Marquis of Priego who testified against one of Góngora's relatives in a *limpieza de sangre* hearing (Jammes 22, n. 78). Any isolated relationship is not necessarily defining, but patterns may well be. Context becomes a *sfumato* effect, delicate shading which helps us to interpret the solid and often sparse lines of historical events and documentation. While avoiding facile taxonomies and genealogies, we should attend to the model of scholars who urge us to consider broader, interdisciplinary types of evidence which might allow us to uncover voices lost to official history.[19]

Contextualizing Góngora within literary and intellectual converso non-conformism gives us the opportunity to re-read him in the light of both his humanist past and his future. Dana Bultman's association of Góngora with Fray Luis's Christian Hebraism, and specifically with Kabbala, not only enhances our appreciation of Góngora's expansion of the poetic word, but reinforces the poet's association with the ongoing struggle for equality of New Christians that links

[19] Ingram (2018, xii-xiii, 240-41), Dadson (118, 120), Nepaulsingh (123-39) and Waissbein (2014, 322-24) all make this argument.

Fray Luis's writings with a number of earlier interventions leading to Valencia's *Tratado*.[20] We also better appreciate Góngora's later parallels in the visual arts.

In 1609, Pedro de Valencia was asked to design some frescoes for the royal palace at El Pardo (Magnier 233). In a second set of plans, preserved in manuscript and apparently never executed, he describes allegorical representations of four cardinal virtues to guide the Christian king, including Astraea as a symbol of Justice (233-34, 238). Ingram points out that the figure of Justice is given the attributes of Ceres, an olive branch in her right hand and an ear of corn in her left, rather than Astraea's traditional scales (Ingram 2018, 171, Magnier 238-39). Like Magnier, he observes in this iconography a representation of Valencia's agrarian reform program, which critics such as John Beverley and Mercedes Blanco have seen as operating symbolically in the *Soledades* as well.[21] Ingram argues that Valencia's use of Ceres as a figure of Justice recurs later, in Diego Velázquez's painting of the Morisco expulsion (now only available through description, as it was lost in a fire) (171-72). According to Ingram, the work had won a 1627 competition, stage managed by Olivares as a political event to critique the effects of the expulsion (210). In the painting, Velázquez portrays the king directing the exit of weeping Morisco families, aside a figure of Spain depicted in Roman armor as "a corruption of Ceres," having traded her agricultural attributes for weapons (210-11). Thus, Ingram concludes, "Given the fact that the exiled Moriscos were above all a rural community, renowned for their agricultural skills, it would seem that Velázquez's armed maiden was a subtle allusion to Phillip III's (and Lerma's) rapacious attack on a productive minority" (211). Ingram's interpretation of Velázquez's use of a Ceres with shifting attributes to critique the expulsion validates my own view of Góngora's use of the myth of Ceres to encode opposition to the expulsion in the *Soledades* (Chemris 2016). As Góngora sat for his famous portrait by Velázquez, we know the two were acquainted, and can thus surmise some interaction within their humanist circle, encompassing the visual arts and poetry, over the issue of the expulsion.

Expanding the Map

John Beverley has argued that Góngora's *Soledades* are the poet's "retreat into art" as "pilgrimage": "the search for the image and quality of a possible utopia that can be placed against the experience of history as disaster […]" (1980, 7). Mercedes Blanco, on her own terms, similarly places the poem within utopian discourse, in a space between Sannazaro and More (2014). Both also locate Góngora within the limitations of his time. Beverley explicitly views Góngora's critique as a case of avant-garde hegemony, or loyal opposition, and others have signaled the limits of Pedro de Valencia's program.[22] Yet Góngora's critique, with all its contradictions, should also be understood in its humanist context. Kevin Ingram's history of converso non-conformism offers eloquent testimony to the emerging consensus among historians in Spanish religious studies, articulated by Mercedes García Arenal, that one of the effects of forced conversion was a generalized lessening of faith, that Protestantism took hold on the Iberian Peninsula to a degree not previously recognized, and that Spain participated in the European-wide struggle for freedom of conscience (2009, 907, 916-17). Oumelbanine Zhiri has expanded our appreciation for the

[20] See Ingram (2018, 93-96). See Waissbein regarding other echoes of Fray Luis in Góngora, evincing a common sympathy for the Islamic builders of Spain's past (2014, 325 n. 29).
[21] Beverley (1980, 6-7; 2008); Blanco (2012b, 291-94, 298 n. 56, 405-06; 2004).
[22] Beverley (1993, 59). See Chemris (2021, 30-36), Hutchinson, Martínez Góngora (28) and Kimmel (151-57, 171) on the limits of Valencia's program.

interaction of humanist circles even further, making the case for an Islamic Republic of Letters in dialogue with the European.

Joaquín Roses, in a meticulous recent essay, maps out common routes for Inca Garcilaso, Góngora and shared acquaintances along the streets of Córdoba to posit interactions within their humanist circle (2017). Perhaps we need to expand the map, considering the intersections of the small, often private groups which were at the center of intellectual life at the time—in the confraternities, tertulias, academies, country houses, secret conventicles and study groups, literary salons, libraries, debating societies and even clandestine networks—across borders European, American and Mediterranean, and across the confessions.[23]

[23] See Chemris for examples of the intersection of Iberian humanist circles with European hermeticism (2023, 246).

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