Routledge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture

LITERATURE AND HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE SPANISH GOLDEN AGE

THE POETICS OF HISTORY

Sofie Kluge

Literature and Historiography in the Spanish Golden Age

Golden Age departures in historiography and theory of history in some ways prepared the ground for modern historical methods and ideas about historical factuality. At the same time, they fed into the period's own "aesthetic-historical culture" which amalgamated fact and fiction in ways modern historians would consider counterfactual: a culture where imaginative historical prose, poetry and drama self-consciously rivalled the accounts of royal chroniclers and the dispatches of diplomatic envoys; a culture dominated by a notion of truth in which skilful construction of the argument and exemplarity took precedence over factual accuracy. *Literature and Historiography in the Spanish Golden Age: The Poetics of History* investigates this grey area backdrop of modern ideas about history, delving into a variety of Golden Age aesthetic-historical works which cannot be satisfactorily described as either works of literature or works of historiography but which belong in between these later strictly separate categories.

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The Poetics of History

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A brief note on the text. To facilitate reading, all quotations and titles of works have been translated into English with original quotes from primary sources provided in the endnotes. Given the unexplored nature of much of the material, English translations of both texts and titles have in most cases not been available. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are therefore mine and I ask forgiveness for their pragmatic nature.

Introduction

In his preface to the *Treasury of the Art of History* (*Artis historicae penus*), printed in 1579 by the prestigious Basel publisher Pietro Perna, the editor Johann Wolf (1537–1600) addresses the volume's dedicatee duke John Frederick I of Württemberg with a positive message about the many benefits to be had from the study of history. In sharp contradistinction to the opinion of the "many" who think that nothing can be learned from the "examples of the ancients," Wolf contends that "prudence is nothing but the memory of the past" and that historical knowledge can even be applied to divine the future.[1] However, while he is thus more than confident about the universal epistemological and didactic value of history, the German polyhistor also acknowledges the pitfalls of history writing which, for example, tends to exalt certain historical characters and their deeds beyond measure. This is not necessarily done on purpose, he emphasises, but simply because so "maximal" are the "difficulties" of writing history that the historian easily incurs in "multiple errors" when trying to sort out not only what happened but also when, where, how and why it happened.[2] After all, it takes quite an effort to harvest all those profitable lessons that history teaches.

Fortunately, then, erudite scholars have diligently penned the historiographical works disseminated in the anthology, projecting the "light of their intellect" on the "shadows of histories."[3] Through the medium of the Latin language, the humanist *lingua franca*, Wolf's compendium establishes a virtual dialogue between these beacons of historical theory across time and space. In its exceedingly learned pages, giants of contemporaneous European historical theory such as Jean Bodin (1530–1596) and Francesco Patrizi (1529–1597) rub shoulders with select ancient writers and less famous but certainly no less learned contemporaries, each presenting their view of history writing and historical method under the everywhere implicit notion of history as an *ars*.[4] Indeed, as its title suggests, the work is a virtual treasure trove of state-of-the-art theories of history which in addition to theoretical reflections on the origin of history and the problem of historical evidence also offers concrete, practical advice on the art of history writing including technical discussions

of historians' use of metaphor, invention of speeches and organisation of the historical narrative.

This latter "poetological" aspect of the period's historical theory is of paramount importance to the present study. For with its unequivocal stipulation of history as an art form and ensuing attention to the creative or form-giving aspect of historiography, Wolf's anthology reaches beyond the relatively narrow field of historical theory and methodology and bears witness to a much more comprehensive but only sporadically investigated contemporaneous phenomenon: The epistemologically complex aesthetic-historical culture that flourished in most of Europe roughly between 1550 and 1650 and not the least in Golden Age Spain, a major player on the contemporaneous political, intellectual and cultural scene. No doubt, the sixteenth-century departures in historiography and theory of history printed in the *Treasury* prepared the ground for modern historical methods and ideas about historical factuality which are, for example, anticipated in the contributors' manifest efforts to establish a systematic scientific basis for the writing of history. Yet, at the same time, they also quite evidently fed into the period's own aesthetic-historical culture which amalgamated fact and fiction in ways modern historians would consider counterfactual: A culture which through its emphasis on the creative element of history writing implicitly placed imaginative historical prose, poetry and drama alongside the factual accounts of royal chroniclers or the dispatches of diplomatic envoys as so many specimens of the *ars historica*. A culture, in brief, dominated by a notion of truth in which skilful construction of the argument and exemplarity took precedence over factual accuracy.

The present study investigates this grey area backdrop of the modern historical paradigm from a Spanish perspective, delving into a variety of aesthetic-historical works produced in the Iberian Peninsula from the mid-sixteenth century until the mid-seventeenth century. Works, that is, which cannot be described satisfactorily neither as works of literature nor as works of history but which belong somewhere in between these later more separate categories and which reflect the ideal of an at once truthful and delightful discourse unanimously put forward by contemporaneous literary theorists and theorists of history. In order to understand these works as they would have been understood by a concomitant audience and reconstruct their historical significance, I begin each section with consulting the theorists, trying to sort out the different strands of their thinking about history and aesthetics and to identify the period's understanding of key concepts such as "verisimilitude," "imitation" and "invention." Then I apply these concepts to what I consider exemplary primary works in each of the Golden Age aesthetic-historical corpus' main genres – historical prose, historical lyric, historical epic and historical drama – examining the merging of aesthetics and historiography in these forms and the specific textual

devices that were the vehicles of their aim to truthfully and convincingly mimic historical reality.

The primary works have been chosen not only because of their excellent exemplification of what I, borrowing a term from Hayden White but infusing it with new meaning, call the period's "poetics of history."[5] They have also been carefully selected so as to represent different decades, authors and historical subjects: In my endeavour to offer a comprehensive image of the rich and varied Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture, I have aimed for a combination of canonicity and diversity including, on the one hand, major authors of the period such as Juan de Mariana, Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca but not their most acclaimed or most studied works. On the other hand, I discuss lesser known writers such as Miguel de Luna, Juan de la Cueva and Luis Vélez de Guevara whom many students and scholars of Golden Age literature today would consider minor authors yet who are, as we shall see, major figures in the period's aesthetic-historical culture and as such deserving of general recognition. Though a certain overrepresentation immediately before the year 1600 – or just around the middle of the investigated period – can be observed, I also discuss earlier and later texts so as to have almost the entire time span from 1550 to 1650 represented. Nonetheless, without being able to go further into details here, I do concede a special importance to the 1590s as an aesthetically and culturally particularly interesting sub-period of the Spanish Golden Age. In other work on the period treating other topics and other materials, I have also found this decade to be exceptionally fertile and it therefore comes as no surprise to find it overflowing with aesthetic-historical products as well.[6]

Examining my chosen primary texts, I show how Golden Age historical prosaists, poets and dramatists employed a range of kindred but different aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices not only in order to make their histories delightfully edifying, as recommended by contemporaneous theorists of all stripes, but also so as to contest other interpretations of the past and persuade audiences of their particular version of history. Indeed, Golden Age historical authors oftentimes competed self-confidently with the official accounts of royal historiographers and political envoys: The three-dimensional historical images of the Golden Age stage effectively served as the history books of the broad illiterate public, and playwrights were employed at court as interpreters of history on a par with chroniclers (for past history) and diplomatic writers or envoys (for contemporaneous history). Still, the contribution of literature, poetry and drama to transformations in the ways history was written and understood in the Spanish Golden Age has gone largely unrecognised. Against this backdrop, the main conceptual claim this study makes is that although the period's aesthetic-historical products may later have been marginalised as strange remainders of medieval fabling, they were all but the fabulous "other" of a progressing culture of facts,

misbegotten or premature specimens of a modern historiography by then still *in nuce*. They were, to the contrary, vital to the dissemination of reflective attitudes towards history in this major European context.

Today, in what is sometimes portentously referred to as the "post-factual" era, the time seems ripe to reassess these hybrids. Recent decades have seen different fruitful theoretical approximations between history and aesthetic scholarship which are likely able to further our understanding of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture and lead to a reassessment of its contribution to modern notions of history as well as to modern literary aesthetics. Following the narrative turn in the theory of history inaugurated by Hayden White's much-discussed *Metahistory* (1973), so-called narrative historians of the twenty-first century have, on the one hand, suggested a cross-over between historiography and literature.[7] The hybrid nature of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture calls for a kindred expansion of the concept of history writing and of historiographical categories to include texts not traditionally considered historiographical such as historical poetry and historical drama. On the other hand, new historicist scholars from different fields have theorised and practised a levelling of aesthetic and historical texts, positing both types of texts as essentially equal sets of symbolic systems, and over the last three decades their semiotic conception of texts has expanded the canon of aesthetic scholarship widely beyond the confines of art and literature.[8]

The present study builds on these theoretical advances but amends their lack of attention to the historiographical refinement and epistemological sophistication of aesthetic texts. For while new historicist readings have highlighted the aesthetics of historical texts and the historicity of aesthetics, they have also downplayed the privileged status of literature vis-à-vis other discursive forms. Their position thus implies a neutralisation of the very aesthetic discourse which this study posits as vital to the stimulation of reflective attitudes towards history writing arguing, as it does, that Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture owed its historiographical sophistication exactly to the advanced use of aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices. On the other hand, the ideas of narrative historians have never materialised in concrete historiographical readings of texts traditionally considered aesthetic nor in aesthetic readings of historiographical texts. Thus, though a good many modern historians in theory acknowledge the overlap between aesthetics and historiography in the investigated period, they apparently do not attribute so much historiographical value to aesthetic representations of the past as to actually study them.

In my attempt to vindicate the historiographical refinement of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture and its products, I also draw extensively on studies of the *artes historicae* and early modern historical theory by leading modern intellectual historians and recent important work on early modern historical forgery. My study thus stands on the shoulders of

the historiographical work initiated by Arnaldo Momigliano, continued by Peter Burke and Anthony Grafton and recently given an interesting new direction by Katrina Olds, according to whom early modern historiography and historical forgery must be understood as different but kindred expressions of the same essentially moral notion of historical truth.[9] Taking this important idea a step further, my study widens the scope to suggest an even more encompassing Golden Age conception of history writing including a whole array of forms from historical forgeries, historical poetry and historical drama to prose histories, dispatches and chronicles. One could add historical painting, historical tapestries and historical opera, though discussing these lies beyond the scope of the present study which focuses narrowly on the poetics of history as an act of writing, as textual production. For the sake of argumentative cohesion, but also because I am neither an art historian nor a historian of music, I have had to exclude artistic forms of historiography from consideration though but my guiding assumption is that if the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – as Wolf's anthology testifies and modern intellectual historians agree – considered history as an art, then aesthetic representations of the past were very likely also, *mutatis mutandis*, considered forms of history writing.

By thus taking research on the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century aesthetic conception of history to what I believe to be its logical consequence, I aim to advance current knowledge of a fascinating field which deserves and still awaits in-depth investigation. For as the subsequent pages will hopefully show, a lot really stands to be gained from applying the aesthetic-historical perspective to a range of different texts from this period, many of which have lied more or less dormant in archives and libraries for a very long time essentially because they were incomprehensible, ridiculous or even abhorrent to a posterity which distinguished more sharply between aesthetics and historiography. This is indeed oftentimes the case with the texts discussed in the present study, some of which do not have modern editions, many of which are considered second-rate works by their authors (if considered at all) and most (if not all) of which have been very little studied in Golden Age scholarship. Thus, the applied aesthetic-historical perspective illuminates a range of little-known, non-canonical works by both canonical and non-canonical authors all of which acquire a new significance when placed in this their proper context. In that sense, the present study offers a new lens through which to scrutinise a key period not only in Spanish but also in Western history, uncovering its generally unacknowledged or at least underresearched historiographical refinement and epistemological sophistication: A lens which at long last makes visible a number of texts which have undeservedly lived a life in the shadows.

The idea of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture also has a number of effects which are either not pursued or only briefly touched upon in

the present study yet which are highly interesting and deserving of future efforts. The historiographical approach to the Spanish drama of this period is, for example, a highly promising one with the ability to throw new light on quite a few classics of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European theatre currently stuck in a deadlocked scholarly discussion about the existence or not of Golden Age tragedy and outdated classicist notions of the tragic genre which, generally speaking, is of little relevance to Spanish plays from this period.[10] In continuation hereof, an array of works by a canonical playwright such as Calderón take on a whole new shape when considered in the light of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture. Furthermore, the aesthetic-historical approach also benefits the period's notorious historical forgeries which, as discussed in Olds' fascinating study of Román de la Higuera's *cronicones*, essentially resist categorisation as either true or false histories, deliberate fraud or naïve fabrication, but which come into their own as thought-provoking interpretations of the past with important cultural historical functions when conceived as works belonging to the epistemologically ambiguous Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture. These are but a few specific cases where the approach applied in the present study could inspire a rethinking of conventional categories and break new ground in Golden Age scholarship. Colleagues will be able to add others.

Finally, if only implicitly, the present study raises the question of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture's relation to the proverbial modern historical paradigm which eventually displaced it. Indeed, acknowledging the historiographical refinement and epistemological sophistication of Golden Age aesthetic-historical products could cast new light on one of the unsolved enigmas of Western intellectual history: The broad rise of modern historical consciousness, in the sense of recognition of the pastness of the past and reflection on the problem of historical understanding, roughly between 1550 and 1650. For, naturally, the developments of those hundred years in historiography and the theory of history not only determined modern historiographical methods and modern ideas about historical factuality. They also changed the way ordinary people conceived of historical agents, of historical events and of their own individual historical existence. Logically, the birth of history as an encompassing cultural trend is not attested by any one specific source nor can it be explained with reference to a single path-breaking work (historiographical or literary). It may even be a wild, unsubstantiated idea.[11]

Nevertheless, the findings of the present study strongly indicate that Golden Age hybrids of aesthetics and historiography stimulated precisely the type of reflective or indeed critical attitudes towards history writing which we today tend to identify as "modern" – as if we were the first to think critically and reflectively about history or, indeed, as if we were the first to be modern. In this sense, my study suggests an inversion of

the traditional Enlightenment narrative of the advancement of historical understanding through the outmanoeuvring of fictions and the vulgar understanding of fictions as synonymous with fables and lies – as something diametrically opposed to the truth and therefore as something which must be marginalised in order to make way for a rational understanding of history. Indeed, the provocative questions which the present study can ultimately, albeit only implicitly, be seen to raise are: What if the cross-breeding of fact and fiction in Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture was actually a productive agent of historical reflection, and not an obstacle to it? What if it was in essence like Miguel de Cervantes' famous masterpiece, exorcising credulous fancy not by way of factuality but by way of a new and subtler kind of fiction?

Within the framework of the present study, these questions are but inciting and thought-provoking speculations which serve as the backdrop of my strictly historical study of Spanish sixteenth- and seventeenth-century aesthetic-historical culture and its products. However, if they were to be answered in the affirmative it could lead not only to new theoretical insights concerning the seminal role played by aesthetics in the formation of modern ideas about historical factuality but also to a better understanding of aesthetic products' historiographical value and, eventually, to a reassessment of the modern historicist paradigm which currently shows certain limitations in dealing with its own troublesome backside – the (in)famous alternative facts. Indeed, the present study's implicit archaeology of the roots of modern historical consciousness in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century aesthetic-historical culture could provide a new analytical lens for considering the contemporary crisis of historicism. At least, the subsequent demonstration of how reflectives attitudes towards history writing were stimulated during these hundred years through historical prosaists', poets' and dramatists' transformation of their audiences into reflective and potentially critical consumers of history would seem to suggest that the most effective answer to current anti-historicist tendencies may be to cultivate problem-oriented, audience-involving approaches to history like the ones found in the examined texts. As the attentive reader will notice, Cervantes plays quite an important role in the present study, even if his own contributions to aesthetic-historical culture are not directly addressed.

***

In order to grasp the intriguing complexity of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture, the present study pursues two intertwined lines of enquiry conjointly examining the role of aesthetics in Spanish historical theory and historiography between 1550 and 1650 and the historiographical profile of Golden Age historical poetry and drama during the same period. To describe the latter, I variously employ the concepts

"aesthetic historiography," "poetic historiography" and "dramatic historiography." Occasionally, I also describe poets' and dramatists' representations of the past as "historical mimesis" and refer to their "poetics of history." Implicit in all these conceptual coinages is, of course, the amalgamation of art and historiography which came to the fore in the concomitant idea of history as an art so beautifully epitomised by Wolf's anthology.

The book's first section (Chapters 1 and 2) studies contemporaneous theory of history and what I term historical prose or prose histories: Which ideas of history writing can be observed in historiographical treatises of the period? Which guidelines for historical representation are provided by Golden Age theorists of history such as Sebastian Fox Morcillo (*Dialogue on the Instruction of History*, 1557), Juan Costa y Beltrán (*How to Write History*, 1591), Luis Cabrera de Córdoba (*On Understanding and Writing History*, 1611) and Jerónimo de San José (*Genie of History*, 1651)? Which ideas of the historical script are conveyed and how is the creative element of historiography exploited in the Juan de Mariana's *General History of Spain* (1601) and Miguel de Luna's *True History* (1592)? My claim is that Golden Age historical prosaists consciously exploited a whole variety of fictional devices and that, with their idea of history as an art, contemporaneous theorists essentially played along though they also carefully kept their distance to poetic excess and rhetorical manipulation. Historians' demonstrable use of invented speeches, allegorising schemata, frame stories and literary topoi, on the one hand, and theorists' production of the guidelines of an at once delightful and edifying history writing, on the other hand, support this claim.

The second section (Chapters 3 and 4) examines Golden Age literary theorists' ideas of poetic history writing and contemporaneous lyric and epic historical poetry: How were seminal concepts such as "imitation" and "verisimilitude" conceived and how was the relation between history and poetry defined in the poetic treatises of Antonio López Pinciano (*Ancient Poetic Philosophy*, 1596), Luis de Carvallo (*Apollo's Swan*, 1602) and Francisco de Cascales (*Poetic Tables*, 1604)? Which notion of historical representation and of history writing comes to the fore in Juan de la Cueva's *Phoebean Chorus and Historical Ballads* (1587)? Which ideas of historical narrative and what conception of the historian's voice characterise Lope de Vega's historical epic, the *Dragontea* (1596)? My claim is that Golden Age authors of historical poetry – epic as well as lyric – considered their works legitimate and indeed in some respects superior works of history writing and that theorists essentially supported this view even as they were eager to differentiate ingenious poetic re-creation of historical characters and events from the dry and factual accounts disapprovingly attributed to historians. The fact that a major creative figure such as Lope positively aspired to the position

as royal historiographer and literary theorists' pervasive ideas of poets' narrative refinement of historical truth and of historical poetry's "universal" representation of history support this claim.

The third section (Chapters 5 and 6) scrutinises Golden Age theories of the dramatic representation of history along with historical drama: Which ideas of the historical world and of history plays are conveyed in contemporaneous theories of drama? Which implicit and explicit guidelines for the staging of history are provided by the already mentioned Pinciano, Cascales and Jusepe Antonio González de Salas (*New Idea of the Ancient Tragedy*, 1633)? How and to which ends did dramatists take on the writing of history and how are historical sources exploited in Luis Vélez de Guevara's *The Conquest of Oran* (c. 1618)? To which extend does Pedro Calderón de la Barca and Antonio Coello's *The German Prodigy* (1634) qualify as a balanced historiographical work on contemporaneous history, a news report? My claim is that the period's Spanish dramatists and theorists of dramatic art variously subscribed to Aristotle's fundamental idea of the drama as a more philosophical – explorative, potential – form of history writing. The facts that, from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, Spanish dramatists increasingly took identifiable historical characters and events as their theme and that theorists of drama increasingly recommended historical topics as worthy dramatic material back this claim.

The final conclusion ties the ends and resumes the bird's-eye view of the previous pages, discussing the scholarly relevance and broader interest of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture and its products.

Notes

1 Wolf (1579: 3):

> Nam quod multi arbitrantur veterum exempla nihil ad prudentiam conciliandam attinere, perniciosus est error: cum constet prudentiam nihil esse aliud, quàm præteritorum memoriam, ratione quadam applicata ad coniecturam futurorum.
>
> It is a grave error when many think that the examples of the ancients possess nothing friendly to prudence. For it turns out that prudence is nothing but the memory of the past which can with certain reason be applied to divine the future.

2 Wolf (1579: 5):

> [...] historiarum profecto tractatio maximis difficultatibus obstructa: ut eum sit necesse in multos errores impelli, qui non diligenter assidueque animum intenderit: non solum quid acciderit, sed quando, quo loco, modo, consilio, qua de causa, in quem finem sit quodque factum: quid antecedat, quid subsequatur.
>
> [...] the historical treatise is indeed challenged by maximal difficulties, wherefore it necessarily happens that the person who does not diligently

> and constantly strain the mind incurs in multiple errors: Not only concerning what happened, but when, where, how for what reason and why something was done; what came before, what followed.

3 Wolf (1579: 5–6):

> Verum cum istud non in communi omnium intelligentia positum esse videretur, cæperunt viri eruditi, & qui plurimum studii atque temporis historiis impertivissent, reliquis infiniti laboris modum ostendere: & ad ea quæ longissimo tempore, summaque diligentia percepissent, quasi suorum ingeniorum lumina, cum magna laude, contra historiarum tenebras præferre, in illis libris, quos Methodus historiarum non iniuria inscripserunt.
>
> For as it was perceived that this could not be understood by the common intelligence of everyone, erudite scholars who had devoted many studies and much time to history began to exhibit the method of their infinite labour with the remnants of the past. And what they had perceived after a long period of time using the highest diligence they brought forth by the light of their own genius, and with great praise, against the shadows of the histories, in these books which are not unjustly entitled *Historical Method*.

4 Authors included in the *Treasury of the Art of History* are Jean Bodin, Francesco Patrizi, Giovanni Pontano, François Baudouin, Sebastian Fox Morcillo, Giovanni Viperano, Francesco Robertello, Dionysios Halicarnassos, Christopher Milieu, Uberto Foglietta, David Chytraeus, Lucian of Samosata, Simon Grynaeus, Celio Secondo Curione, Christopher Pezel, Theodor Zwinger, Johannes Sambucus and Antonio Riccoboni.

5 White uses the concept in his interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of history (1973: 81–131).

6 See especially Kluge (2014).

7 For example, Munslow (2003 and 2007) and Ankersmit (1983 and 2001) but also, in a different sense, Ginzburg (1999 and 2006).

8 For the new historicist conception of text, see Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000: 1–19). For a practical example of new historicist practice, see Greenblatt (1988).

9 Momigliano (1950 and 1990); Burke (1970); Grafton (2007); Olds (2015).

10 In a number of pilot articles written in preparation of the present study, I have thus read the *Numancia* and *The Great Sultana* by Miguel de Cervantes, Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *Dawn in Copacabana* and Lope de Vega's *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus* as history plays (Kluge 2018; 2019a, 2019b and 2019c). I have also discussed Juan de la Cueva's *Tragedy of the Seven Infantes of Lara* as a mixture of tragedy and history play (Kluge 2020). To the Golden Age "ostracism" of tragedy, see Kluge (2010).

11 For a discussion of the "birth of the past" in European thinking, see Schiffman (2011).

Part I
Writing History

1 Theory of History

> If philosophy is to remain true to the law of its own form, as the representation of truth and not as a guide to the acquisition of knowledge, then the exercise of this form – rather than its anticipation in the system – must be accorded due importance. This exercise has imposed itself upon all those epochs which have recognized the uncircumscribable essentiality of truth in the form of a propaedeutic, which can be designated by the scholastic term treatise because this term refers, albeit implicitly, to those objects of theology without which truth is inconceivable.
>
> Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* 28[1]

> By 1560, both in Italy and in the north, a new *ars historica* had taken shape – an art cast as a guide not to writing, but to reading history, and one that offered an Ariadne thread through the frightening, demon-haunted labyrinths of historical writing, ancient and modern, trustworthy and falsified, that every learned man must explore.
>
> Anthony Grafton, *What Was History?* 26

In the prologue to *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 1925, the German literary critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) proposed that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century epistemology combined a Platonic focus on transcendent metaphysical truth with an acute attention to form. Because the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries considered truth to be definitively out of human reach, its tentative approximation in knowledge paradigms and other cultural systems took centre stage. Style – the manner of this approximation – became essential. Knowledge was conceived as an *ars* and art, in turn, regarded as metaphysical enquiry; and both were understood as circumscriptions or configurations of that elusive transcendent truth around which everything in the baroque universe revolved.[2] Benjamin's own writing style in the prologue is itself arty, esoteric even, illustrating this point in a somewhat tiresome modernist way. Yet his intuition is unfailing with regard to the *artes historicae*, a contemporaneous genre not mentioned in the study

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but clearly characterised by the baroque interplay of "truth" and "representation" described in the "Epistemo-Critical Prologue."[3]

In a more recent book on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century historical theory, the contemporary American intellectual historian Anthony Grafton presents a kindred image of the period's historiography as a precarious hunt for truth in the labyrinthine library of human history. Judging by his study, the *ars historica* which emerged between 1550 and 1650 as "an Ariadne thread through the frightening, demon-haunted labyrinths of historical writing" answered to a conception of historiography akin to the baroque Platonic epistemology described by Benjamin: An epistemology characterised by a transcendent concept of truth and a pertaining emphasis on the intricacies of writing, the intricacies of form and, also, the intricacies of understanding (as primordial – mental – form-giving). The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the rise and flourishing of a historiographical meta-genre precisely because the representation of historical truth was perceived to be if not a problem then at least a challenge, in ways it apparently had not been before.[4] As discussed by Grafton, the *ars historica* was a fertile but short-lived genre. Already from the mid-seventeenth century, new epistemological, historiographical and stylistic ideals were blowing in, especially in France.[5] That, however, is another history. My concern here is exclusively with the golden age of the Spanish Golden Age *ars historica* or, specifically, the time span from Juan Páez de Castro's 1555 call for a new art of history to Jerónimo de San José's *Genie of History* (1651).

During those hundred years, Spanish theorists of history continuously discussed historiographical style within the Platonic framework sketched above, striving to define the art of history in recurrent contradistinction to the arts of poetry and rhetoric.[6] This endeavour either explicitly or implicitly took as its paradigm Plato's profiling of his own philosophy against the backdrop of "tragic" poetry, on the one hand, and Sophist rhetoric, on the other hand, both allegedly unconcerned with philosophical truth and devoid of moral substance.[7] It resulted in the establishing of a rather elaborate set of guidelines for a high narrative style employing a whole range of aesthetic and rhetorical devices in order to communicate a morally conceived truth in the manner of the *historia magistra vitae* tradition.[8] Indeed, to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish theorists of history, moral instruction was important and became increasingly so during the period. At least, this is the impression one gets from the rhetorical level of the texts which shows a growing preoccupation with the audience of history. Yet, theorists' conception of the stylistic apparatus they recommended to further the moral agenda of historiography was highly ambiguous: For did the cultivation of historiographical style not lead straight into the problematic domains of deceitful poetry and manipulative rhetoric? In accordance with the Platonist framework of Golden Age historical theory, which rhymed well not only with Christian moral didacticism but also with the

perennial theological suspicion of "hedonist" language, there was a need felt for continuous gatekeeping. The use of artful devices to suggestively communicate the profitable moral lessons to be drawn from history was problematic because it entailed a potential leap from the sphere of truth into the carefree world of fiction or, equally bad, into the partisan discourse of rhetoric. However, as Plato had suggested, banishing the "tragic" poets from his ideal republic while at the same time presenting his own philosophy in the form of sophisticated literary dialogue, there was good and bad style. As already Strabo acknowledged, the example of Herodotus demonstrated how the historian could all too easily be led astray.[9] From this essential Platonic insight arose the Spanish *ars historica* to provide the guidelines for a history writing that was exactly so delightful that truth could shine upon its readers to their moral benefit.

Calling for Plot

When the Jesuit philosopher and humanist Juan Páez de Castro (1510–1570) was appointed Royal Chronicler in 1555, his presumed first deed was to write a "Memo of Things Necessary to Writing History" ("Memorial de las cosas necesarias para escribir la historia"): To lay the foundation of the future work to issue from his entrusted hand.[10] The text – directed to his benefactor, the Holy Roman Emperor – was for some time presumed a prologue to the Spanish history which the later confessor to Philip II projected but never completed.[11] Yet it is in fact rather something like a research proposal for a large-scale historiographical project, complete with the applicant's curriculum vitae, a state of the art, methodology, project description and an overview of operating expenses.[12]

Considering the exorbitant demands which the text imposes on the would-be historiographer (who must be prudent and eloquent in addition to well-versed in moral and natural philosophy, geography, aristocratic history, law and geometry) and the overambitious historiographical plan sketched out in the second half of the text, it is hardly surprising that Páez de Castro never got to the writing of his *crónica*. His proposal is for nothing less than a book about everything connected with Spain and its colonies from the beginning of time to the reign of Charles V (1520–1558).[13] Even the most erudite of Renaissance polymaths would have shrunk before so monumental a task and even the most generous, well-meaning sponsor would surely have had doubts about the proposed project's feasibility.

However, though Páez de Castro thus never became the Thucydides or the Livy of his nation, he achieved something else. With its call for a new art of history to keep the memory of the nation's virtuous deeds alive as paradigms for future rulers, his "Memo" planted the seed of the fertile Spanish Golden Age tradition for thinking and theorising about the writing of history as a key educational and political instrument.[14] Indeed, this curious and self-assertive little text sheds interesting light on the more elaborate and substantial *artes historicae* to appear in the course of the next hundred

years and therefore deserves to begin the present little history of the genre in Spain even if it is not, strictly speaking, an *ars historica*. For despite its immediate unimpressiveness (a mere score of pages in plain Spanish without scholia or references), the "Memo" can be understood as one of the founding documents of Spanish Golden Age historiography together with Juan Luis Vives' reflections on the decadence of history writing in *On Education* (1531) V:2 and Antonio Llull's chapter on the decorum of historical discourse in book VII of his *On Oration* (1558).[15]

Though Páez de Castro's initial survey of prior historical writing is cursory at best, it serves its purpose of underscoring the need for a fresh start in historiography, tendentiously (but in good research proposal manner) presenting precursors in the field as "coarse and unpolished in doctrine and in art." Communicating the recently appointed Royal Chronicler's feeling of standing at the threshold of a new era in need of a new historiography, the "Memo" pinpoints the defects of existing history writing and calls for historiographical change:

> Coarse and unpolished as they were in doctrine and in art, the ancients still believed that the primary foundation of history was not risking to say something false and having the courage to say everything true; not writing anything to please some or to displease others, but always showing an independent mind and writing the things that happen, free from all passion. Yet, it is also necessary that these foundations are not crude and without wit [*discreción*], for many truths do not make a history but, if they be written, would amount to infamatory libel or childishness rather than to history. The ancients took this as their foundation and so did our Spanish historians whose books contain little artifice and delicacy.[16]

Páez de Castro's message here is one of both praise and criticism. Like the ancients, medieval Spanish historiographers rightly understood truth to be the necessary foundation of history writing and they also recognised the importance of historiographical impartiality. Nevertheless, their historical edifices were "crude and without wit" and had "little artifice and delicacy," because they merely presented an array of truths, "many truths," not a "history";[17] not a delicate, ingenious, organic or coherent account of these truths. Although earlier historiographers did have the right mindset, they mistook factuality for history, essentially writing annals and not histories.[18]

What Páez de Castro is calling for in pondering the importance of "artifice" here thus seems to be a practice of artful history writing, an *ars historica*. He does so not only because raw unadapted truth may be misinterpreted as "infamatory libel" or, alternatively, conceived as "childishness." As soon becomes evident, the Royal Chronicler first of all encourages a new take on history writing because the mere annalistic rendering of facts cannot turn the great but withering deeds of the past

into the durable edifying examples around which history, conceived as the *magistra vitae*, inevitably circles. For history is indeed the most efficient way of providing virtue with "the praise it deserves" while at the same time drawing useful moral lessons from past excellence to the edification of future generations of rulers. It is the "memory of memories," the only form of cultural memory which will stand the test of time:

> As a thing most important in life – wherefore it has been called the light of truth, the messenger of antiquity, testimony of the times and living memory – history needed great foundations […]. For if we consider the time past according to what is left of it, then there is no memory more durable than history. Other remnants of edifices such as hospitals, monastries, bridges, graves or whatever other works are either already lost and only known from histories or they persist and then there is no recollection of them and they lack a lot in order to be understood, for they cannot be omnipresent like writing which God intended to be the memory of memories. And just like the wind or the waves of the sea, which show their strengths precisely against that which most resistance poses yet are broken by frail things, thus the great power with which time erodes stones, bronzes and memories cannot defeat so fragile a thing as is paper and ink. […]. All the ancients owe their glory and fame to fine authors. This is the only remedy in the world against dying. If it did not exist, virtue would not have the praise it deserves.[19]

As this passage demonstrates, the "Memo" is impregnated by a strong sense of the ephemeral nature of worldly glory and the related need to preserve this glory for posterity through history writing – by a moral philosophy of Stoic-Christian stock. However, Páez de Castro's view of history is not all vanity thinking. His text also harbours a more positive Renaissance philosophy of history, according to which the West, long immersed in spiritual darkness after the fall of the Roman Empire, is now finally about to recover its former splendour through the rebirth of ancient letters:

> As the Empire began to decline eloquence was the first thing that suffered, as do the most delicate things always in pestilential times, and then came the sciences and after them the arts, until by the time of the Goths and afterwards everything had come to such a cutback and misery that nobody knew how to paint any longer, or build or navigate, nor how to write in any language or how to govern. […] But God in his mercy conserved a few libraries and good authors were little by little rediscovered and thus returned the arts.[20]

Thus, Páez de Castro's envisioned new art of history, in classic humanist fashion, will take its cue from the ancients. For according to the "Memo," history is double imitation: Of the virtuous historical deeds of the ancients and of the admirable representation of these deeds in

ancient historians. However, whereas the "Memo" gives quite a few illustrative examples of the moral imitation of antiquity – who to imitate and why – it gives no concrete indications about how precisely to imitate the ancients in terms of style.[21] The *cronista real* leaves the establishing of detailed stylistic guidelines to successors such as Juan Costa and plants only the seed of a new history writing *a lo antiguo*:

> It may seem daring and novel, but it is a great truth that without imitation of the ancients one cannot write well in any language nor associate with others or live as one should, all of which I will clearly demonstrate in a more appropriate place.[22]

Strikingly, from a historical as well as from a historiographical perspective, Páez de Castro presents his idea about stylistic imitation of the ancients as "daring and novel": Something as yet unimagined, scandalous even, but imperative if the desired renewal of Spanish historiography is to be achieved. The "Memo" plainly provides first-hand evidence of the desire for and birth of a Spanish humanist *ars historica*: A tradition which took the implicit double meaning of the term *historia* – study of the past but also artful narrative – to its ultimate consequence, replacing the annalistic listing of "many truths" with a coherent, artful and morally edifying historical narrative after the possible example of imperial Roman historiographers such as the "Spaniard" Lucan, born at Córdoba (*Civil War*, first century), and the ante terminem humanist Alfonso X el Sabio.[23] Or – as we shall now see – after the positive example of Plato, another ancient master of style and authority on living "as one should."

Platonic History

Sebastian Fox Morcillo's *Dialogue on the Instruction of History* (*De historiae institutione dialogus*, 1557) – a humanist dialogue in 39 erudite sections on the "instruction" of history, conducted between the author's alter ego, Foxius; Petrus Nannius, a fictive version of the Dutch poet and scholar (1496–1557) who was Fox's teacher in Leuwen; and a third unidentified man by the generic name Tertius – is the first of its kind in Spain and one of the first in all of Europe.[24] Whereas the death of this Sevillan convert, possible heretic and should have been tutor of the *infante* Don Carlos may be steeped in mystery, his work bears unequivocal testimony to the Platonic bias of Golden Age historical theory under scrutiny in the present context.[25] Indeed, both formally and in terms of content, the *Dialogue* is the most openly Platonic of the Spanish *artes historicae*, illuminating the underlying logic of other more opaque specimens of the genre.

A philosopher by education and a Plato scholar, Fox (c. 1526–1559) first of all pursues a classic Platonic argument about the necessary philosophical basis of history writing.[26] Second, with its dialogical form and narrative setting in the house of the historical character Nannius,

his text appears to consciously emulate Platonic works such as *Protagoras*, set in the house of the historical Athenian aristocrat Callias. In the opening scene, the interlocutors agree that Foxius, as main speaker, should not proceed "after the Socratic fashion," asking questions, but instead pursue a "continuous oration."[27] However, he does not follow that agreement and, on the whole, the text closely imitates the "inquisitorial" paradigm of Plato's Socratic dialogues.

After some initial musing, the origin of historiography is presented as correlative of the human hunger for honour and immortality, as also seen in Páez de Castro.[28] Then, Foxius turns to the history of historiography voicing a rather harsh but likewise familiar critique of medieval historians as "rough, horrid, cruel and bereft of all rhetorical and historical virtue."[29] His narrative of the upsurge and decline of the discipline is impregnated by the same Renaissance philosophy of history observed in the "Memo": Since the Fall of Rome at the hands of the barbaric Goths, history has been continuously deteriorating together with all the other arts.[30] Yet Foxius ends his overview noting a light at the end of the tunnel. "Especially in Italy," knowledgeable men are beginning to restore not only art but also history to its former glory.[31]

Nannius' subsequently expressed surprise to hear such a "splendid and succinct" presentation of the origin, rise and progress of history from someone normally dedicated to the "graver matters" of philosophy provides Foxius with the perfect occasion to introduce his main point:[32] That there is no original opposition between eloquent storytelling and serious philosophical enquiry; and that the heart of the proposed artful renewal of historiography is, therefore, a recognition of its philosophical nature. He then proposes Plato's dialogues and Aristotle's *History of Animals* as stylistic paradigms of history writing:

> FOXIUS: But truly – I said – do you think that eloquence and that part of it which pertains to the writing of history belongs to us only and is not also granted to philosophy together with us? […]. For which distinguished and terse historian has written anything as blamelessly, as lucidly, as eloquently and as agreeably as did Plato the narratives in his dialogues or Aristotle the *History of Animals*?[33]

According to Foxius, the historiographical reporting of the causes and origins of things and events, of places and periods, of human life and the customs and values of peoples is indeed impossible without "extensive knowledge and a perfect understanding of philosophy."[34] History is philosophy and philosophy, history. Their uncompromising orientation towards truth unites them and, at the same time, separates them from other types of discourse. Thus, following Plato's positioning of his own philosophical writing in opposition to poetry and rhetoric – a tripartition of discourse resumed by Quintilian in *Institutio oratoria* II: 4: 2 and spreading from there to posterior theory – Foxius proceeds with a first,

"ontological" definition of history juxtaposing history with tragedy and comedy. In contradistinction to the narrative of the tragic poets, which is entirely false, and that of the comedians, which is invented but verisimilar, history is the true narrative of things which really happened:

FOXIUS: Thence Quintilian's opinion that there are three forms of narrative: One false; another verisimilar but fictive; and a third which is mixed and extended. Indeed, a fable is that narrative which, as he says, lives in tragedies and epic songs, not truthfully but remotely from the truth. An argument is that which, though it be false, resembles something true, as in comedy. History, then, is the exposition of things that actually happened.[35]

From this perspective, history is a most noble form of discourse bearing no connection to the demi-monde of poetic and rhetorical excess. However, Fox Morcillo is not out to deprive historiography of all eloquence. The whole idea of writing something is, of course, to draw an audience. The project is, precisely, to present an *ars historica*, a theory of history writing, which recognises history as an art, a craft, on a par with other arts yet also its own.[36] Thus, Foxius launches a second definition comparing history with other forms of representations of the past such as chronicles, commentaries, annals, ephemerides and biographies. The point of comparison here is not veracity, but style. In continuation of the celebration of the prose of Plato and Aristotle, praised at the outset of the dialogue as paradigms of historiographical eloquence together with Xenophon, Theophrast, Plutarch, Livius, Sallust, Julius Caesar, Herodotus and Thucydides, there is a recognition, in this passus, of *historia* as simultaneously true and beautiful, and exactly therefore as the single most useful thing for the human race:[37]

FOXIUS: History, finally – as we said before – is the full, eloquent, true, lucid and ornate exposition of deeds. Thus, nothing could indeed be more useful, excellent, divine or more necessary to the human race.[38]

Unlike other forms of historical representation, history is not simply a chronological account of events structured in days or years or life spans. It is a coherent and catching narrative, a "full, eloquent, true, lucid and distinguished exposition." Indeed, the fact that history writing concerns itself with truth in a philosophical way, for Foxius, does not mean that it should be ugly and boring. As Páez de Castro also insisted, the historical narrative must be well wrought in a language which makes truth appealing for only that way can it persuasively teach its audience all the profitable moral lessons to be drawn from the past; only thus can it truly be a *magistra vitae*.[39] In the *Dialogue*, we thus find a clear recognition of the importance of style. Platonic historiography, for Fox Morcillo, or at least for Foxius, does not equal a total ban on aesthetics and eloquence. Far from it, actually. As with Plato, it entails a ban on "empty" aesthetics,

or aesthetics devoid of philosophical substance and moral instruction – a ban on manipulative rhetoric out merely to seduce or twist the truth and not to teach and improve. The historian, in Foxius' words, should cultivate a style that is, exactly, both "lucid and ornate," not divesting his discourse of all charm but not succumbing to the excessive ornateness of lustful poets and the manipulations of orators either.

This precarious balance of the historian is the indirect subject of the subsequent main part of the *Dialogue* which discusses a series of concrete aspects of historiographical discourse more in detail, including the election of theme (chapter 70), representation of time (chapters 71–74), places (chapters 75–81), events and deeds (chapters 97–115) and persons (chapter 142), the production of causality (chapters 82–86) and – in the lengthy section entitled "What kind of discourse is suitable for history" (chapters 163–186) – the choice of the proper historiographical style, repeating and further elaborating the tripartite system of discourses established at the beginning of the dialogue:

> P. NANNIUS: For my part – P[etrus] N[annius] said – I approve of your structuring of the discourse.
>
> FOXIUS: These forms that I just spoke of – I said – both coincide and differentiate themselves from each other. They certainly coincide in that they are all orations which are made out of words and connections between words which express, pronounce and make intelligible the thoughts of the soul; but they differ in the very form of expressing the things shown. For the sake of voluptuousness and delight, poetry always speaks not of that which is true and right but of what may be false and foul; the philosophical argument is grave and austere and always has strenuous strength so that it will not permit the reader to relax or enjoy for long; dialogues, about the affairs of human life, turn the mind directly to the matter, disregarding eloquence; history, finally, is somehow in between poetry and the philosophical discourse taking gravity, moderation, force and soundness from the latter and elegance, passion and pleasantness from the former.[40]

What we have here is nothing less than a key passage in the development of the Spanish *ars historica*, positing history now not only as a form of philosophy but also as intimately related to poetry: While it borrows gravity, moderation, stringency and reason from the former, it embraces the charm, exaltation and delight of the latter. This is certainly an aesthetic breakthrough in the theory of history and one which – judging from the dialogue's last section "Against the poets and their method" (chapters 287–289) – was in need of a specification. Perhaps Fox Morcillo feared he had let his Foxius go too far with an aestheticisation of history writing that risked being condemned by sterner minds as a kind of historiographical heresy. Perhaps he just wanted, in good Platonic fashion, to clarify once again the difference between good and bad style.

Either way, in regard to the Golden Age development of the guidelines for a new art of history that is the focus in the present context, Foxius' establishing of history as an "intermediary" discourse between poetry and philosophy is the uncontested climax of the *Dialogue* which subsequently turns to issues, as it were, external to the concrete form-giving practice of history writing: The societal role of historiography, the moral consumption of history, the usefulness and use of history compared to other disciplines, and its function in the education and political practice of the élite.[41]

Ut pictura historia

In his erudite two-volume treatise *How to Write History* (*De conscribenda rerum historia*, 1591), the distinguished professor of law at Zaragoza University and chronicler of the Kingdom of Aragon, Juan Costa y Beltrán (1549–1595) followed in his predecessor's footsteps, not only adopting Foxius' view of history as an "in-between" discourse borrowing from both poetry and philosophy, but also (though in a different way than Fox) working with his own writing style to support that argument. Indeed, the opening ekphrasis comparing history writing and painting clearly communicates a conception of thinking as form-giving or, indeed, as art:

> Painters, about to portray the most beautiful image, first draw lines with the charcoal; then they fashion the rough form adding lively colours with the spatula and perfect it sketching with the pencil. Likewise, I drew up – in the mind […], that is – those first lines of the precepts of history writing which lay scattered around obscurely in infinite places of other authors, and brought them back to light and life in the shape of two volumes. However, just as the integrity of the work requires living colours added to it, it also demands the decoration of words and great dignity of sentences […].[42]

Like a painter who first draws lines with the charcoal, then adds colour with the spatula and finally perfects his image with pencil strokes, Costa "drew up" in his mind "those first lines of the precepts of history writing which lay scattered around obscurely in infinite places of other authors, and brought them back to light and life in the shape of two volumes," adding "decoration of words and dignity of sentences." This worthy beginning of a treatise on the art of history certainly suggests Costa's favourable attitude towards the artistic element of all types of writing which he clearly conceives as a creative act. However, like his predecessor, he is far from what one would term an "aesthete." He expressly favours a philosophical art and a Platonic *ars historica* with eyes firmly fixed on the truth. Thus, in his first chapters, Costa repeatedly references Plato, defining the art of history in contradistinction to that of the "bad poets" epitomised by Homer and recommending "poets that are simultaneously philosophers" as stylistic paradigms:[43]

> Therefore we reprove bad Poets and call those Poets-cum-Philosophers the best who before the constitution of civilisation educated the first rough, unpolished, wild humans and led them from ferociousness to humanity, well-being and culture; they described the beauty of virtue better than the lesser philosophers and made us love it; not, like the Historians, through stories of true deeds and the sayings and doings and happenings of individual persons, but after the Philosophers' fashion, they simultaneously instructed us in the most useful precepts and imbued us with the best customs by way of verisimilar invented things, fictive persons and cases which one would accept as concurrent circumstances.[44]

After thus acknowledging the Platonic framework of his treatise, Costa proceeds with quite an eclectic history of the progress of historical learning (pages 20–30), from Moses, "the inventor of history among the Hebrews," and Homer over more classic historians such as Thucydides, Herodotus, Livy, Tacitus and Strabo to humanist scholars such as Petrus Daguinus and Jacobus Tanuarius, "celebrated by the whole of Italy," Fernando de Córdoba (another Spanish Plato scholar), Ramon Llull, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (an Aristotelian), Poliziano and Pico della Mirandola.[45] In its apparent arbitrariness, this list of authorities resembles those of Vives and Fox Morcillo yet, with its heterogeneous pantheon of authorities, the passage also recalls Grafton's "frightening, demon-haunted labyrinths of historical writing, ancient and modern, trustworthy and falsified, that every learned man must explore." For despite the efforts of all these different learned men, human understanding of the nature of things is not really moving forward; it appears to simply pass from one antechamber of the world's great labyrinth to the next.

Referring Democritus, the proverbial sceptic, and the Socratic "I know that I know nothing," Costa underscores how "truth lies submerged," "everything is wrapped in opinions" and "concealed in the densest shadows."[46] Historical knowledge is, in other words, an approximation, circumscription or configuration – an *ars* linking logic and faith in the sense of Ramón Llull's *Ars magna* (published 1305).[47] And exactly because truth resides in the shadows there is a need for a book such as *How to Write History* to serve as an Ariadne thread through the labyrinth of historical writing, ancient and modern.[48] At this point, Costa makes a dramatic break, launching his definition of history as the one true type of discourse that shines in the dark of epistemological bewilderment:

> Now, history is the true, clear and ordered narrative of things past and present written so as to become firmly committed to the memory of humankind. It is the truly useful narrative of what really happened and an exposition necessary to the instruction in life. For indeed we call that narrative a history, not false, which we either perceive as verisimilar or as simple; and the false narrative presented in epic songs

> [*carminibus*] and Tragedies which is a far cry from the truth is called either poetry or fable; and a verisimilar narrative is that fictive and false argument, true yet resembling, which pursues and represents the image of what may be and which is put down in Comedies.[49]

This definition, however, like the one before it and like Foxius', is largely a definition *ex contrariis*. Before embarking on his detailed guidelines for a true yet also artful history writing, taking up the rest of volume 1 and most of volume 2, Costa obviously wishes to make sure that no one mistakes his agenda. He therefore scrupulously differentiates historical narrative from that of tragic and epic poetry on one hand, which is "a far cry from the truth," and that of comedy on the other hand, which is fictive and false, but "verisimilar." However, with his reassumption of Foxius' juxtaposition of his Platonic art of history with tragic and comic poetry, Costa does not exactly lay suspicions to rest. Placing history within the Aristotelian system of literary genres – not outside of it – his treatise consummates the aestheticisation of historical discourse implicit in the *Dialogue*.

Accordingly, *How to Write History* then continues with its main part: An elaborate handbook of historical discourse touching on different aspects of history writing such as style, rhetorical figures, invention, composition and the use of *sententiae*, most of which had already been discussed (albeit more briefly) by Fox. These sections balance adroitly between the everywhere implicit conception of history writing as an art and the recurrent separation of the practitioners of this art from "those ancient and more recent poets who plant infected chimeras and the criminal seed of vice in the young."[50] All this is fairly familiar from Fox Morcillo and Plato and I will not go into further detail here, but only point out one seminal aspect where Costa significantly develops the ideas of his predecessor: The treatment of *orationes* or *conciones* – invented speeches, harangues or exhortations – with which historians had invested kings, military leaders and other historical protagonists since Thucydides' *The Peloponnesian War* (I, 85–86; II, 35–46 et al.).[51]

Of course, the historiographical practice of inventing speeches had been debated ever since antiquity.[52] Referencing the ancients, all theorists active between 1550 and 1650, in Spain and elsewhere, addressed the problem of these speeches in historical narratives.[53] Indeed, at the end of the period, a virtual theoretical battle centring on harangues would come to rage in Europe leading in the end, in Grafton's words, to "the death of a genre."[54] How could a historian know exactly what someone had said many centuries ago? How was his report of a long-dead general's exhortation to his troops, for example, any different from Aeschylus' invention of Xerxes' words in *Persians* or Shakespeare's rendering of Henry's St Crispin's Day speech in *Henry V*? Indeed, the speeches' fundamental intertwinement of fiction and fact was bound to be a controversial point in the period's Platonic *ars historica* which, as we have seen, encouraged a history writing that was exactly so delightful

and inventive that truth could shine upon its readers to their moral benefit. Nothing less but preferably also nothing more.

Rhyming well with his personal cultivation of florid poetic imagery, Costa's in-depth engagement with the harangues indicates his position as being at one extreme of the contemporaneous theoretical spectrum. However, what can be termed his aesthetic "propensity" was continually held in check by a just as persistent tendency to underscore the moral function of aesthetics: Like Spanish theorists before and after him, his stance on invented speeches – and on all the other aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices discussed in *How to Write History* – was essentially favourable as long as they communicated edifying moral messages in keeping with good taste and the general norms of communication: In keeping with decorum.[55] The implied regulation of historical discourse in relation to both content and style was of course anticipated both by Páez de Castro's idea of the historian's doubly virtuous imitation of the venerable deeds of the ancients and of the admirable representation of these deeds in ancient historians and by Fox Morcillo's idea of a Platonic *ars historica* teaching through delight. Only by balancing the philosophical quest for truth with an acute attention to form could history be "life's schoolmaster," so everyone writing about these matters in Spain seemed to agree, at least so far. After the turn of the seventeenth century, the tendency to tip the precarious balance of a Platonic aesthetic-philosophical history writing by adding an extra dose of morality became more pronounced. How did that development impact the conception of historiography as an art?

Verisimilitude

On Understanding and Writing History (*De historia para entenderla y escribirla*, 1611) by Luis Cabrera de Córdoba (1559–1623) essentially follows yet also in significant ways alters the historiographical paradigm issuing from Vives and transmitted by Fox Morcillo and Costa. Neither a Plato scholar nor a philosopher but a courtier and a historian, the confidant of Philip II and the author of a history of his reign (*Historia de Felipe II, Rey de España*, 1619) turns up the rhetoric of "utility" compared to his predecessors and further extrapolates the idea of the "verisimilar," but his concept of history writing remains solidly rooted in the *ars historica* tradition with its emphasis on the aesthetic aspects of historiography. The author of a 29 cantos poem in the ornate Gongorist style, the *Laurentina* (c. 1580–1590), and praised as a writer by Miguel de Cervantes in *Journey to Parnassus* (1614) for his Tacitist style, Cabrera most emphatically is not a poetry-hater, but someone who acknowledges beauty's ability to move a large-scale audience.[56] His thinking is "baroque" in the sense of precariously balancing moralisation and sensuality.[57]

Structurally, Cabrera's treatise adapts the model of his predecessors with the first volume dedicated to various superordinate aspects of history writing and the second volume treating concrete aspects of

historiographical discourse.[58] The latter in itself bears witness to Cabrera's fundamental interest in the aesthetic, form-giving aspect of history writing, but in view of the somewhat repetitive and unoriginal nature of this part of his treatise (essentially a potpourri of prior historiographical treatises), I will not go into detail and instead focus on two points where the favourite of the *rey prudente* clearly distinguishes himself from his predecessors: In his focus on the audience of history and in his development of the concept of the *verosímil* as a point where the *utile* and the *dulce* of historical discourse can intersect, in typical baroque manner, to the combined benefit and delight of that audience.

In regard to the first, Cabrera combines by now familiar ideas about history as cultural memory and remembrance of past excellence with a baroque concern for the rhetorical element of all utterance, grafting an interest in the historian's outreach on to Fox's and Costa's Platonic art of history.[59] Thus, in volume 1, discourses 4 and 5 "On the Parts and Definition of History" and "On the Historian's Vantages" ("De las partes y definición de la historia" and "De las buenas partes del historiador"), he first juxtaposes poetry and history *ex contrariis* and then *ex similis*, establishing a negative concept of poetry as a discourse "of lies" (*de mentiras*).[60] Then, however, he subsequently arrives at a more balanced view of the relation between aesthetics and historiography as something intimately intertwined with the fact that history always addresses someone: An audience. Cabrera now underscores how this audience will never take an interest in – "will not fall in love with" – a history writing that is not beautiful, even though it be true:

> Those who believe that history is without artifice are mistaken; it has its doctrine and laws prudently set down by the most excellent masters. Others, caring little for fidelity, attend only to artificial, wile, polished and groomed elegance so that readers will read it because it speaks well. Histories (according to Polybius) surge from both the one and the other like a damsel with pretty features who lacks eyes; or if she has pretty eyes, then has freckles or pockmarks in the whole face or is otherwise defective. The pure and clean notice of things, without interest or considerations, is the light and soul of this damsel; but if she is stuttering or full of big moles and wrinkles, people will not fall in love with her.[61]

In order to reach out and enthral his readers so that they may be morally illuminated, the historian must adorn his discourse – not too much, but not too little either, equally avoiding the "artificial, wile, polished and groomed elegance" and the narrative that is "stuttering" or blemished with "big moles and wrinkles." Of course, Páez de Castro, Fox Morcillo and Costa were aware that there is an audience to any speech act, but they would never define "public usefulness" as the purpose of history writing.[62] To them, history certainly did yield useful lessons, but it was first of all a

form of philosophical enquiry. And while they adhered unwaveringly to the idea of history as *magistra vitae*, their interest in exemplarity did not have the baroque element of mass communication impregnating Cabrera's more accessible and slightly superficial text – the first of its kind to be written in Spanish and clearly aimed at a much broader reading public than the *Dialogue* and *How to Write History*.[63] With his acute attention to an audience which must be moved through beautiful historical narratives, Philip II's chronicler thus breaks new ground, paving the way for later theorists such as Jerónimo de San José who would, as we shall see, begin his treatise with a lengthy discussion of the "benefits of history."

Before proceeding to the end of this story and the *Genie of History* (1651), however, I will discuss the seminal innovation of Cabrera's text which is immediately relevant to my purpose here and also, incidentally, reaches into San José's treatise: The development of the "verisimilar" as something in between the truth of history writing and the falseness of poetry:

> So, we have the true and the verisimilar and that which is more true than verisimilar and that which is more verisimilar than true. What is true and what is verisimilar is evident: The true is confirmation of the certain and negative of the uncertain, which shows things just how they happened; verisimilar is that which, though it has the appearance of truth, neither negates nor affirms. More true than verisimilar are the deeds of the Spanish in Flanders, in the crossing of Zierikzee and in the Indies which are so exceptional that they will appear fictitious [*fabulosos*] to posterity, since it is more verisimilar than truthful that they could be done. More verisimilar than true is that which is written about what goes on in the state council and the cabinet, what the king proposed and the words exchanged, what those who voted said, the arguments, the answers, all things that are difficult to know: This is how the verisimilar is written, for it is drawn from the effects and from some circumstances and the way of doing business and the execution of acts.[64]

As something that partakes of both discourses, the verisimilar is the form of that whole part of history writing which is not a rendering of hard facts or what Castro called "many truths," but something "drawn from the effects and from some circumstances and the way of doing business and the execution of acts": Causal explanations, interpretations, analyses, value judgements or, simply, morality understood in the sense of the second definition in online *The Oxford English Dictionary* as "a particular system of values and principles of conduct."

To the extent that Cabrera's concept of the verisimilar thus, in effect, covers the intersubjective sphere of cultural encounters, machinations of power, human decision, his definition evidently also applies to historical drama, even if that is not intended. For what is a history play other than an exploration of why something happened, interpretation of motives,

analysis of historical situations or characters – an imitation of πρᾶξις or "people in action" (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1448a), of "what goes on in the state council and the cabinet"?[65] Indeed, the chronicler's development of the concept of the verisimilar softens his moralising take on history writing, explicating that the "public usefulness" around which his treatise revolves is, in fact, not hard-line moralisation but instead a reflective scrutiny of the causes and origins of historical developments, of all those grey zones of human action and interaction. Castro, Fox Morcillo and Costa – while acknowledging the aesthetic side to the art of history writing – fundamentally upheld the distinction between good and bad style, truthful history and deceitful poetry. In comparison, Cabrera's introduction of the concept of the verisimilar entails a blurring of this distinction and a typically baroque reconciliation of doctrine and delight.[66] With this concept, he takes the recognition of the epistemological function of style inherent in the Platonic paradigm in a new direction and transforms history from moral *magistra vitae* into a Socratic midwife teaching its audience not to live well but to think well: To scrutinise, reflectively, "things that are difficult to know."

True Falseness

Cabrera's seventeenth-century reinterpretation of the Spanish *ars historica* tradition leads directly to the final treatise to be considered in this context: Jerónimo de San José's *Genie of History* (*Genio de la historia*, 1651). For in this rounded and thorough three-volume work, the poet, biographer and head chronicler of the Carmelite order (1587–1654) both affirms his predecessor's baroque alignment of the *utile* and *dulce* and develops the vindication of a non-factual conception of truth implicit in Cabrera's concept of the verisimilar in – for the purposes of the present study – an especially interesting way.[67]

San José's at once readable and erudite text is more in-depth than Cabrera's, but like his predecessor's it is a vernacular adaptation, by and large, of the work of Fox Morcillo and Costa (among other recent and contemporaneous European theorists). It consequently includes, in volume 1, by now a predictable Platonic definition of the historian's truth-centred narration in opposition to that of the "Poet, Orator and Fabulist" and a likewise expectable enumeration of the "benefits" of history in its capacity as *magistra vitae*;[68] various discussions, in volume 2, of concrete aspects of historiographical style;[69] and a final section, in volume 3, on the office of the historiographer with lengthy reflections on the "integrity and rectitude of the historian."[70] Most of this is familiar from the other treatises and in order to avoid repeating what should already be clear, I proceed directly to the one really surprising and significant novelty of the *Genie*: Its defence of "false history."

Following quite a lengthy discussion of history's utility and a shorter section on its dignity, San José in volume 1 chapter 5, "On the Nature and

Divisions of History," turns to the problem of "True and False History." It here appears that the historiographical ideal of true content in a true form is not always realisable in human history where "the truth of the narration can be joined, this way or the other, with the falseness of the things narrated."[71] For example, a history can deliver a moral truth, even though it be based on a misunderstanding or incomplete knowledge of the things narrated:

> The truth consists in an adjustment of the words and the understanding to the things themselves in their reality. For the understanding can be misinformed and produce a wrong and false notion of an event; the narrative which accounts it the way it is perceived is not therefore false, but true. And so would the History also essentially be; for the formal and substantial part of it, which is the narrative, would in the said way be true. And in this sense we may understand as truthful all the historians who write what they perceived was the truth even if it was not.[72]

San José's separation of "words" and "the things themselves in their reality" has two important consequences: On the one hand, it opens up the possibility of accepting historical narratives as true even though their authors were ignorant of the truth. Like the heathen philosophers lingering in Dante's limbo, ancient historians can, thus, still be part of the great divine comedy. On the other hand, it sanctions the truth of what can be termed aesthetic historiography, including historical drama, whose perceptions, interpretations and conjectures about historical characters and events can be "true," even though they be based on erroneous information or bad reasoning, on a "wrong and false notion." Like San José's own Carmelite history or his biography of the patron of the Spanish poets, John of the Cross, both censured by the order for their credulity but both supposedly well-intentioned, the intention underlying the historian's endeavour is what counts. For according to the author of the *Genie*, it is more important to extract the correct lesson and impart the right message, than to adhere strictly to facts: Morality comes before factual accuracy.[73] In continuation hereof, the demonstratively false can indeed be "true":

> And in this way, Lucian could call his two accounts of history and fictive events (which we would term novels) by the title of *True histories*, even though he himself proclaimed from the outset that they were about false things which are not, were not and could not in any human way possible come be, but which he himself invented and feigned.[74]

In the manner of Lucian of Samosata's *True History* – which begins by explicating that the story is not at all true and that everything in it is, in fact, a complete and utter lie – not only all the mistaken and misinformed histories of the ancients but also all the creative and demonstratively

fictive histories invented by poets and dramatists through the ages can, paradoxically, be considered true as long as they openly and honestly profess their untruth.[75] This is indeed a genuine theoretical innovation. How did it comply with the *ars historica* tradition?

From its very beginning, as we have seen, the Spanish *ars historica* rested on an epistemology which understood knowledge as a fumbling in the dark of the Platonic cave, a vain reaching for the light of truth, a strife through the "frightening, demon-haunted labyrinths of historical writing, ancient and modern, trustworthy and falsified." As we have seen, this epistemology persistently separated truthful honourable discourse from manipulative seductive lies. However, somewhere along the line, an argumentative flaw had sneaked in. Theorists were hailing history – a mere human discourse – as "true" in what looked like an almost metaphysical sense; and even if they specified quite a detailed set of rules that allegedly made this particular discourse more truthful than all others, the predication of *historia* as *vera* tasted of vain presumption – of heresy, even. As San José puts it, somewhat en passant, in his passage on "True and False History," the perfect historical lesson in the perfect form was an ideal that had only – and could only – be realised in the divine history penned by the holy ghost: In the Bible understood as the one true universal history.[76] Outside of Scripture, there can, in principle, only be "false history."

With this typically baroque emphasis on the omnipresence of fiction and falsity, the creative Carmelite finally abandoned his predecessors' Platonic accentuation of one style over others, putting all histories on the same footing as equally true and equally false. With this inclusive gesture, however, he simultaneously renewed the Platonic paradigm underlying the Golden Age art of history. Recommending the use of meta-historiographical devices to subtly underscore the incompleteness, vanity or indeed the falsity of historical narrative, he gave this tradition a typically baroque touch of humility and sophistication combined:[77] As long as they aimed to teach a useful moral lesson and made sure to humbly emphasise their own falsity in self-relativising prologues or self-reflective commentary, for example, all types of histories were basically all right.[78] In the end, San José's admission of all the historiographical chimeras that Spanish theorists of history had been fighting for more than a century was thus a full-blood continuation of the Platonic *ars historica*. As we shall now see, it was also basically in line with the histories which were being written in Golden Age Spain.

Notes

1 Benjamin (1996: 28, trl. Osborne). Cf. Benjamin (1991: 207–208):

> Will die Philosophie nicht als vermittlende Anleitung zum Erkennen, sondern als Darstellung der Wahrheit das Gesetz ihrer Form bewahren, so ist in der Übung dieser ihrer Form, nicht aber ihrer Antizipation im System, Gewicht beizulegen. Diese Übung har sich allen Epochen,

> denen die unumschreibliche Wesenheit des Wahren vor Augen stand, in einer Propädeutik aufgenötigt, die man mit dem scholastichen Terminus des Traktats darum ansprechen darf, weil er jenen wenn auch latenten Hinweis auf die Gegenstände der Theologie enthält, ohne welche der Wahrheit nicht gedacht werden kann.

2 Thus, the complement of the baroque Platonism described by Benjamin in the "Epistemo-Critical Prologue" is the metaphysical aesthetics of allegory famously developed in *Origin of German Tragic Drama*. The idea of humanist historiography as rhetorical (rather than source critical) was later introduced by Momigliano (1950).

3 For a discussion of Benjamin's prologue, see Kluge (2004a and 2014: 9–66). For a discussion of Benjamin's concept of the Baroque and baroque drama in the context of Spanish Golden Age literature, see Kluge (2010: 18–28 and 2020).

4 Latin translations of the Augustan Greek rhetorician and historiographer Dionysios of Halicarnassus' *On Thucydides* (first century BCE) and Lucian of Samosata's *How to Write History* (second century CE) were both included in Johann Wolf's anthology, but besides these two texts there are no known ancient or medieval predecessors of the genre. There are, of course, lots of classical inspiration: Cicero's notion of history as "life's schoolmaster" (*On the Orator* II: 36) is routinely cited in the *artes historicae* and ancient historians such as Thucydides, Herodotus, Sallust, Livy and Tacitus are recurrently referenced.

5 Grafton (2007: 189–255).

6 Golden Age theorists knew Platonic philosophy through Cicero's *Academica* and *Republic*, Plutarch's *Moralia*, Marsilio Ficino's Latin translations of the dialogues, Juan Luis Vives' *On the Causes of Corruption of the Arts* (1531) and Pedro de Valencia's *Academica* (1596).

7 Platonism and Counterreformation philosophy intersected in the demand for instructive, yet at the same time delightful discourse. Plato's discussion of unphilosophical poetry unfolds in various dialogues, including *Ion*, *Republic* and *Phaedrus*. In *Republic*, he famously has Socrates expel the "tragic" poets – Homer, Hesiod and the Attic tragedians – from his ideal state on moral-ethical as well as on ontological grounds: The tragic poets have no intention of improving the virtue of their audience (book 2) and voice an immoral worldview, representing the cosmos as a violent and chaotic scenery inhabited by weak and wicked figures (book 3). Finally, their representations are of an ontologically inferior nature, since they are merely imitations of an imitation: The historical world of phenomena as an imitation of the world of ideas (book 10). Plato's critique of non-moral Sophist rhetoric is scattered all over his work yet perhaps appears most clearly in dialogues such as *Sophist*, *Protagoras*, *Hippias* and *Cratylus*, referring the names of famous Sophists in their titles.

8 Considering the importance of the *historia magistra vitae* passus in Cicero's *On the Orator* II: 36, which will be referred to repeatedly in the following, I quote it here at length: "Historia vero testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis, qua voce alia nisi oratoris immortalitati commendatur?" (1862: 110). Cf. Cicero (1860: 92): "By what other voice, too, than that of the orator, is history, the witness of time, the light of truth, the life of memory, the directress of life, the herald of antiquity, committed to immortality?"

9 As discussed in Olds (2015: 3–4).

10 The "Memo" is conserved in the Biblioteca Nacional MS Q-18, entitled *Methodo para escribir la Historia, por el Dr. Juan Paez de Castro, Chronista del Emperador Carlos V, á quien le dirige. Sacado de sus MS. que se conservan en la Real Bibl. de San Lorenzo*. The text's nineteenth-century editor, one Eustacio Esteban, believes that Páez de Castro "wrote this

elegant discourse when [Charles V] made him royal chronicler" (Páez de Castro, 1892a: 602).

11 Thus, Esteban, at the beginning of his "Advertencia":

> What a pity that such a learned man with such relevant gifts did not come to write a single page of our history! For this memo which some has believed was a prologue to his projected Chronicle, is not that prologue, as is clear from the memo itself.
>
> (Páez de Castro, 1892a: 601)

12 The final section of Castro's text begins

> Restaba declarar la costa desta fábrica, y asi concluir todo lo que propusimos (1892b: 37).
>
> All that was left was to declare the costs of all this, thereby to conclude the task we set ourselves.

See also Covarrubias (1611: 545):

> MEMORIAL, peticion que se da al juez, o al señor para el recuerdo de algun negocio.
>
> MEMORIAL, petition to a judge or a master in recollection of a business.

See also the modern definition 3 in the Diccionario de Español Vox entry "Memorial"

> Documento en el que se pide una gracia, alegando las razones o los méritos de dicha solicitud.
>
> Document in which a favour is asked, laying out the reasons or the merits of the said request.

13 Probably with an eye to the comprehensive historiographical tradition issuing from Strabo's *Geography* and Diodorus Siculus' *Historical Library*, both first century CE, Páez de Castro outlines a Spanish history which will begin with a thorough description of the country and proceed with accounts of dynasties, noble houses and knightly orders, cities and their histories, flora and fauna, culture and arts, religion and more. Following this, it will touch on wars and conquests, internal and external, as well as on the New World (1892b: 32–34). As he states, "to write history is not an easy and frivolous thing, as people think" (1892b: 29).

14 Instigator of the royal library at El Escorial, Paéz de Castro is unwaweringly élitist and his is not a project of general education:

> Como estos niños naturalmente se mueven con las consejas, así se alteran los vulgares con libros que llaman de caballerías y lloran, y ríen, y se enamoran, y se aíran. Pero el que escribe cosa que haya de durar, no ha de contentar sino á los buenos, y sabios, que son los maestros del arte.
>
> (1892b: 28)
>
> Like children are naturally moved by fables thus the common folk is upset by the so-called chivalric novels and cry and laugh and fall in love and get angry. But he that writes things that are meant to last should aim to please noone but the good and learned who are the masters of art.

15 For a discussion of these texts and their relation to the Golden Age *ars historica*, see Esteve (2014: 117–136).

16 Páez de Castro (1892a: 608–609):

> Los antiguos por rústicos que eran y mal polidos en la dottrina y arte todavia entendieron que el fundamento principal de la historia era no atreverse á decir cosa falsa y osar decir todo lo que fuese verdad, y no escribir cosa por hacer placer á unos, o pesar á otros, sino mostrar siempre el ánimo libre, y sereno de toda passion, cuanto á escribir lo que pasa. Pero es menester que estos cimientos no sean toscos y sin discresión, porque muchas verdades no hacen al propósito de la historia, los quales, si se escribiesen, en lugar de historia, seria libelo infamatorio ó cosas de niñerias. De manera que en esto hizieron fundamento los antiguos, y tambien nros. historiadores Españoles, cuyos libros tienen poco artificio y primor.

17 The topic of historiographical evolution invoked, as we shall see, by most Golden Age theorists of history, probably originated with Livy who began his *History of Rome* with the reflection:

> Whether the task I have undertaken of writing a complete history of the Roman people from the very commencement of its existence will reward me for the labour spent on it, I neither know for certain, nor if I did know would I venture to say. For I see that this is an old-established and a common practice, each fresh writer being invariably persuaded that he will either attain greater certainty in the materials of his narrative, or surpass the rudeness of antiquity in the excellence of his style
>
> (1912: 1)

18 As evidenced by Tacitus' *Annales* and *Historias*, ancient historiography distinguished between annals and histories as two different types of recording events, the former a listing of events by year and the latter a narrative presentation of deeds past and present, preferably presenting a causal logic. Whereas later Roman historiography developed the latter, the Middle Ages particularly cultivated the annalistic tradition which may be what the author is criticising here. Páez de Castro does not mention the names of his predecessors, but he is probably referring to the largely anonymous annalistic tradition in different ways revised in Lucas de Tuy's *Chronicle of the World* (*Chronicon mundi*, c. 1236), Jiménez de Rada's *On the Affairs of Spain* (*De rebus Hispanae*, second half of the thirteenth century), Alphonsus X "the Wise" (*General History* and *History of Spain*, both second half of the thirteenth century) and the *Latin Chronicle of the Kings of Castile* (*Chronica latina regum Castellae*, second quarter of the thirteenth century), probably written by Juan de Soria.

19 Páez de Castro (1892b: 30–31):

> La historia como cosa tan importante á la vida, por lo qual fué llamada luz de la verdad, mensajera de la antigüedad, testigo de los tiempos, y vida de la memoria, tuvo necesidad de grandes fundamentos […]. Por que si bien consideramos el tiempo pasado, conforme al qual será lo que resta, ninguna memoria hallaremos más durable que la historia. Las otras memorias de edificios, como hospitales, monasterios, puentes, enterramientos, y otras qualesquier obras, o son ya perdidas, y se saben por las historias, ó si duran y no ay memoria de ellas, para que se entiendan les falta mucho, porque no pueden estar presentes en todo el mundo como la escritura, la qual quiso Dios que fuese memoria de memorias, y parece que como los vientos, y olas del mar, muestran sus fuerzas contra lo que más resistencia haze, y se rompen con las cosas flacas, así la potencia grande, con que el tiempo consume las piedras, y bronce de fábricas, y memorias, no puede vencer á cosa tan débil, somo es el papel, y tinta. […] A los buenos escritores, deben la gloria, y fama que tienen en esta

vida todos los antiguos. Este es el único remedio para no morir del todo quanto á la vida. Si esto faltase no tendría la virtud el premio que aquí mereze.

20 Páez de Castro (1892b: 31):

> Comenzando á declinar el imperio lo sintió, primero la elocuencia, como hazen en tiempos pestilenciales las cosas más delicadas, y luego las sciencias, y tras ellas las artes, hasta que en tiempo de los Godos y despues vino la cosa á tanta diminución y miseria, que ni sabían pintar, ni edificar, ni navegar, ni escribir bien en lengua ninguna, ni gobernarse. […] Pero Dios por su misericordia conservó algunas librerías, y se fueron hallando buenos autores, y así retornaron las artes.

21 For the imitation of moral examples, see the passage (1892b: 30 f.):

> ¿Quántas liberalidades se hizieron y se hazen á imitacion de Alexandro Magno? ¿Quántos se han preciado de ser bien queridos de sus vasallos, y súbditos por amor de Tito Emperador? ¿Quántos han guardado su palabra por parezer á Trajano? ¿Quántas provincias se han gobernado bien por no mudar los buenos ministros á ejemplo de Tiberio, y de Antonino Pio?
>
> How many liberalities have been and are made in imitation of Alexander the Great? How many have prided themselves to be cherished by their vasals and subjects for the love of Titus? How many have kept their word to be like Trajan? How many provinces have been well governed in order not to move the good ministers after the example of Tiberius and Antoninus Pius?

In regard to style, Páez de Castro simply states that:

> El estilo de la historia según dicen los que de esto saben es necesario, que no sea estrecho, ni corto de razones, ni menos tan entonado que se pueda leer á son de trompeta, como decian de los versos de Homero […]
>
> (1892a: 609)
>
> The style of history, according to those who know, has to be not tight or short of reasoning but not that well-tuned either that it can be read to the sound of trumpets, as they said of Homer's verses.

22 Páez de Castro (1892b: 32):

> Parezera cosa atrevida, y nueva, pero es gran verdad que sin imitación de los antiguos no se puede escrivir bien en lengua ninguna, ni contratar, ni vivir como se debe, lo qual mostraré claramente en otra parte más á propósito.

23 Páez de Castro mentions neither, but, on one hand, Alfonsine historiography enjoyed a revival in the sixteenth century with Florián de Ocampo's 1541 "re-edition" of the *History of Spain* (*Estoria de España*), in reality a compound of different Alfonsine chronicles. On the other hand, the *Pharsalia* – first (anonymous) Spanish translation incidentally included in the *General History* – was published in a new Spanish translation by Martín Laso de Oropresa in 1541 and reprinted many times during the sixteenth century (Valladolid, 1544; Amberes, 1551; Burgos, 1578; Amberes, 1585; Madrid, 1588). The currency of Lucan in the second part of the sixteenth century is confirmed in the *Ancient Poetic Philosophy*, 1596, by Alonso López, "El Pinciano" (see below).

24 Printed in 1557, Fox's *Dialogue* is posterior to other dialogical works on history such as Sperone Speroni's *Dialogue on History* (*Dialogo della istoria*, 1542) and Francesco Robortello's *Discussion of the Discipline of History* (*De historica facultate disputatio*, 1548), but prior to Francesco Patrizi's famous *Ten Dialogues on History* (*Della historia diece dialoghi*, 1560). It is the only Spanish text to be included in the above-mentioned *Artis historicae penus*. The *Dialogue* is published in a modern edition with a Spanish translation by Antonio Cortijo Ocaña (2000) from which all subsequent quotes are taken.

25 Fox was long presumed to have drowned in a shipwreck on his way from Leuwen to take up the position as tutor to the *infante* Don Carlos in Madrid, but new research has questioned that story. For a study of Fox's life and death, see Salazar (2015).

26 Fox's publications thus include Plato commentaries such as *Commentaries to Plato's Timaeus* (1554) and *Commentary on the Ten Books of Plato's Republic* (1556) along with different attempts to reconcile Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy such as *A Compendium of Philosophical Ethics Collected from Plato, Aristotle and Other of the Best Authors* (*Ethices philosophiae compendium ex Platone, Aristotele aliisque optimos quibusque auctoribus collectum*, 1554) and *Five Books on Natural Philosophy or the Agreement between Plato and Aristotle* (*De naturæ philosophia seu de Platonis et Aristotelis consensione libri quinque*, 1554). His main work, *De imitatione, seu de informandi styli ratione libri II* (1554), treats of imitation, a crucial point of disagreement between both ancient philosophers.

27 Fox Morcillo (2000: 117 [203]). In the following, I refer to the main speaker as "Foxius" to emphasise the fictional nature of the text, rightly called attention to by Salazar (2015).

28 See Fox Morcillo (2000: 118 [203]):

> Historiae instituendae mihi originem eius intuenti, haec causa fuisse videtur, quod appetitu honoris et immortalitatis, qui est omnibus a natura insitus […].
>
> As regards the institution of history and its origin, the cause was seen to be that appetite for honour and immortality which implanted in everyone by nature.

29 Fox Morcillo (2000: 121 [209]):

> incultos, horridos, asperos, nullaque virtute oratoria aut historica insignitos;
>
> uncultured, horrid, rough and marked by no oratorical or historical virtue.

This critique is, of course, also found Páez de Castro and largely adapted from Vives' list of recent historiographers in *On Education* V: 2.

30 Fox Morcillo (2000: 121 [208–209]):

> Nam post vastitatem illam a Barbaris clademque Imperio Romano illatam, autores certe plaerique qui temporum eorum historiam literis mandavere, non minus barbari atque horridi fuere quam illi ipsi barbari homines quorum res tum describebant.
>
> For after the devastation and destruction of the Roman Empire by the Barbarians had been carried out, many of the authors that committed the history of their times to writing were certainly no less barbaric and rough than the very barbarian people whom they described.

31 Ibid.:

> sicut artes omnes purgatae ac restitutae as pristinam dignitatem sunt, ita etiam historia […].
>
> Thus, all the arts are now purged and resituated to their former dignity, as is history […].

32 Fox Morcillo (2000: 121–122 [209]).

33 Fox Morcillo (2000: 122 [209–210]):

> [FOXIUS] An vero, inquam ego, putatis vos eloquentiam et hanc eius partem quae in conscribenda historia versatur ad nos solum pertinere nec eandem a philosophia nobis mutuo concessam? […]. Quis enim tam ornatus ac tersus historicus ullam rem descripserit tam pure, distincte, copiose et suaviter quam narrationes illas in dialogis suis Plato aut historiam animalium Aristoteles?

34 Fox Morcillo (2000: 122–123): "[…] sine magna scientia et philosophiae perfecta notitia fieri potuisse intelligetis."

35 Fox Morcillo (2000: 123–124 [211]):

> [FOXIUS] Unde Quintiliani sententia, cum triplex narratio sit: una falsaaltera verisimilis, ficta tamentertia diffusa et productior. Ac fabula quidem narratio est, ut ille inquit, quae versatur in tragoediis atque carminibus, non a veritate modo sed etiam a forma veritatis remota. Argumentum, quod, cum falsum sit vero tamen est simile, ut comedia. Historia, in qua est vera rei gestae expositio.

The reason for Fox's and later theorists' partial admission of comedy may be explained by the absence of a coherent Platonic critique of comedy (similar to the critique of tragedy in *Republic*). This absence may be explainable by the fact that ancient comedy did not touch on more serious topics such as ethics or religion but stuck to the prosaic sphere of everyday existence, the life of the *polis*, which it treated in a satirizing vein which could be construed as edifying. The fact that Aristotle also did not object to the genre, considering comedy a representation of the "harmlessly ugly," may also be important.

36 This project is explicitly recognised in the closing section which opposes calm historiographical technique – *ratio artis*, artistic reason – to uncontrolled poetic creativity, resuming Plato's critique of "rhapsodic" art in *Ion*. The idea that authors of treatises and *artes historicae* were more concerned with rhetoric than with philological and historical source criticism in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century historiography was influentially introduced by Arnaldo Momigliano in his 1950 essay "Ancient History and the Antiquarian."

37 The recognition of the moral impact of beautiful historical narrative is already found in Vives (*On Education*), see Esteve (2014: 122 f.).

38 Fox Morcillo (2000: 125 [213]): "[FOXIUS] Historia, denique, ut antea dicebamus, plena, copiosa, vera, dilucida ornataque rerum gestarum est expositio. Qua quidem nihil humano generi utilius, praestantius, divinus aut necessarium magis accidere potuit."

39 Refuting Dionysious of Halicarnassus' understanding of Plato in *Letter to Gn. Pompeius* (2000: 126–127 [214–215]), Foxius – with examples taken from Livy – underscores that the historiographer should not only report that the triumphs of a given nationmoral edification can also be drawn from unfortunate events and defeats, as long as the story does not dwell

inappropriately on horrifying details (as does, for example, a "history recently written in the Spanish language" with its unpleasant rendering of a martyr's death in the New World, according to Ocaña [2000: 127, n. 24], Gómara's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*). Thus, in the section "As many good and bad examples as you wish" (2000: 183–184 [274]), Foxius discusses the benefit of both good and bad examples.

40 Fox Morcillo (2000: 162–163 [251–252]):

> [P. NANNIUS] Equidem tuam istam, P[etrus] N[annius] inquit, orationis partitionem probo. [FOXIUS] Hae porro, inquit ego, formae a me dictae tum inter se congruunt, tum etiam differunt. Congruunt quidem in eo, quod orationes sunt, quam verbis et eorum connexione continentur, quod animi sensa exprimunt, declarant et intelligunturdifferunt autem forma ipsa expremendi res oblatas. Nam poesis ad voluptatem et delectionem non quod verum et rectum sed falsum turpeque sit saepe dicitphilosophica disputatio atque gravis austera est semper intentosque veluti nervos habet nec respirare lectorem aut delectari diu permittitcolloquia, negotiis humanae vitae implicata, ad res, oratione neglecta, mentem convertunthistorica, demum, media quodammodo inter poesim ac philosophicum sermonem, gravitatem, moderationem, nervos, sanitatem ab hoc, ab illa venustatem, elationem amoenitatemque habet.

41 The argumentative movement of Fox's text is thus from infra-historiographical issues to extra-historiographical aspects. This structure would become the standard of subsequent Spanish *artes historicae*, all of which begin with an exposition of the nature and history of history writing, continue with more specific guidelines for the representation of historical characters and events, time and place, and end zooming out to consider the societal role of history. Though they are both relevant and interesting, these perspectives are not my concern here. However, the social and political role of Golden Age historical theory and history writing has been discussed at length and in depth and with a Foucaultian focus on discipline by Esteve (2008 and 2018). See also the fundamental study by Kagan (2009).

42 "Pictores, imaginem pulcherrimam expressuri, primum carbone lineas ducunt, deinde rude corpus atque incultum viuis additis coloribus, ac penycilo adumbrant, eformant, atque perficuit: Sic ego hactenus primas duxi praeceptorum lineas, id est intra mensem (…) quae infinitis prope auctorum locis ad historiae institutionem obscure dispersa erant, ad duorum librorum Epytomem dilucide reuocaui. Iam verò cum operis integritas viuos sibi adhuc addi colores postularet, maioremque verborum ornamentum & sententiarum maiestatem exposceret (…)." (Costa 1591: "Epistola as studioso lectori", unpag.).
See also Costa's words, that:

> Pictores tacentes Historicos, Historicos vero loquentes Pictores recte nominemus.
>
> We may rightly call painters silent historians and historians, speaking painters. (1591: 16)

43 See, for example, Costa (1591: I, 6). The first section, pages 1–30, includes numerous references not only to *Republic* but also to dialogues such as *Gorgias* and *Hippias maior* – and to Plutarch who, besides being an important historiographic (biographic) reference for the sixteenth century, was a noteworthy Neoplatonist Plato scholar who reestablished the Academy at Athens. For the critique of Homer, see especially the chapters "Polytheist

superstition in the epic poets is condemned" and "What to censure in Homer" (1591: I, 8–9).

44 "Quare malos Poetas exprobremus, optimos efferamus, qui cum Poetae simul & Philosophi fuerint, ante constitutas ciuitates, primos homines rudes, impolitos, feros erudierunt, & et à feritate ad humanitatem, victum, cultumque traduxeruntvirtutis pulchritudinem meliùs quàm plerique minuti philosophi descripseruntnos eius amore inflamarunt, atque non ut Historici ex verum rerum gestarum narrationibus, singularumque personarum dictis, factis, eventis sed Philosophorum more rebus verisimilibus excogitatis, personis fictis, casibus subiunctis quique persona consentaneis, nos & praeceptis utilisimis instruxerunt & moribus optimis imbuerunt" (Costa 1591: I, 10–11).

45 Costa (1591: I, 20–30).

46 Costa (1591: I, 28–29):

> Hinc saepe dicebat, Socrates, scio me nihil scire, quod existimaret, omnia tenebris in uoluta in occulto latere, nec esse cerni ac intelligi posse.
>
> Hence Socrates often said 'I know that I know nothing', which supposedly meant that everything lies encrypted in the shadows of the unknown and cannot be discerned or understood.

47 Costa (1591: I, 27).

48 See also Popper (2011: 375):

> The most intractable problem faced by historians in the sixteenth century was the perceived preponderance among historical witnesses of fabulists whose scurrilous lies and malicious omissions spawned wholly inaccurate narratives.

49 Iam historia est vera, dilucida, & ordine distincta narratio aliquarum rerum praeteritarum, vel praesentium ad earum notitiam hominum memoriis firmiter inhaerandam. Narratio vero est rei gesta utilis & necessaria ad vita institutionem expositio. Cum vero historiam narrationem esse dicimus, non falsam, aut verisimilem aut simplicem intelligimus: falsa siquidem narratio poesis aut fabula dicitur, quae in carminibus & Tragediis ab omni veritate remotis posita est: verisimilis narratio est argumentum fictum & falsum, vero tamen simile, cuius imaginem quod potest sequitur & representat, quod in Comediis constitutum est. (Costa 1591: I, 29)

50 Thus, for example, Costa (1591: I, 65–66):

> Verum ut hos cum Isocrate mirificè laudo, sic cum Platone poenitùs abominor omnes eos Poetas antiquos & recentiores, qui quocumque modo infectas iuuentuti chimeras, ac nocentia vitiorum semina obtulerunt, exquibus impios & turpes adolescentes mores combiberunt.
>
> As much as I praise these [Hesiod and other poets] to the sky, following Isocrates, following Plato I simultaneously abhor those ancient and recent Poets who plant infected chimeras and the criminal seed of vice in the young, from which the adolescents acquire impious and shameful customs.

See also the section on the poet's, the orator's and the historian's organisation of their narrative (1591: II, 86 f.).

51 Whereas Fox devoted six pages to the *conciones* (chapters 144–162), Costa's discussion of the matter takes up nearly 25 pages (1591: II, 39–63).

52 In his work *On Thucydides*, Dionysios of Halicarnassus (first century BCE) critically assessed his predecessor's insertion of invented speeches praising, for example, that of Pericles' on the eve of war while vituperating others for their lack of propriety. In his epitome of Trogus' lost *Phillipic Histories* (second century CE), Justin similarly criticised Livy and Sallust for their harangues.

53 For a comprehensive overview of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century opinions on the matter, see Pineda's anthology (2007). Further, the texts included in the above-mentioned *Artis historicae penus*.

54 Grafton (2007: 189–255).

55 Thus Costa (1591: II, 40). For an overview of positions on the *conciones*, see Pineda's introduction (2007: 95–99). See also Ginzburg on the use of harangues in Jesuit historiography (1999: 71–91).

56 Only seven cantos of the *Laurentina* are extant. These are in the library at El Escorial. See Cervantes (1991: 78):

> No lo harás con éste de ese modo, / Que es el gran Luis Cabrera, que pequeño / Todo lo alcanza, pues lo sabe todo. / Es de la Historia conocido dueño, / Y en discursos discretos tan discreto, / Que Tácito verás, si te le enseño.

Cf. Cervantes (1883: 42):

> The next in turn deserves a better meed / The great LUIS DE CABRERA, who, though small / Achieveth much, for much he knows indeed/ A master he of history, prized by all / And in discreet discourses so discreet / That Tacitus himself seems at thy call.

57 For such a concept of the Baroque, see Kluge (2010: 28–40).

58 These include structure and order of the discourse (II, 1–3 and 6–7), representation of character (II, 4–5), descriptions and digressions (II, 8–9) and harangues (II, 10). From *discurso* 18, the subject is style. See especially 123–146.

59 Cabrera (1948: 12):

> Si las figuras y simulacros hechos por mano de artífices despiertan para imitar lo representado en ellas […] ¡quánto mejor mouerá la historia, que muestra la compostura y delineamiento del cuerpo, faciones del rostro, virtudes y passiones del animo, que hizieron a los claros varones dignos de inmortal memoria!
>
> If the figures and simulacra made by the inventor's hand incite us to imitate that which is represented in them […], then how much more will history nove us, showing that composure and outline of the body, those features of the face, those virtues and passions of the soul which made great men worthy of immortal memory!

60 Cabrera (1948: 24):

> Yo digo, es la historia narración de verdades por hombre sabio, para enseñar a vivir bien. […] La diferencia es verdades, con que excluye la narración de la poesía, que es de mentiras.
>
> I say that history is a narrative of truths told by a wise man in order to teach how to live well […]. The difference is truthfulness, whereby it excludes poetic narrative, which is all lies.

61 "Engáñanse los que piensan ser la historia sin artificiotiene su dotrina, leyes, por los clarissimos maestros con prudencia confirmadas. Otros no cuidando mucho de la fidelidad ponen su cuidado en solo la elegancia artificada, castigada, limada y peinada, para que lo lean porque lo disen bien. Salen (según dise Polibio) las historias de los vnos y de los otros, como una donzella hermosa en las faciones, a quien faltan los ojos o teniendolos hermosos, tiene pecas o hoyos de viruelas en el rostro, o es en lo demás defectuosa. La pura y limpia noticia de las cosas, sin interés ni respetos, es luz y ánima desta donzellamas si es tartamuda o llena de lunares groseros y berrugas, no se enamorarán della" (Cabrera 1948: 30).

62 Cabrera (1948: 35).

63 Baroque culture as mass culture is, of course, one of the main points in José Antonio Maravall's *The Culture of the Baroque* (*La Cultura del Barroco*, 1975). Besides the fact that it is written in the vernacular, the broader appeal of Cabrera's text emerges from its – relatively – few references, from its lack of scholia as well as from its popularizing quality. The broader audience of *On Understanding and Writing History* could be, for instance, diplomats, ambassadors and other political envoys.

64 "Aduiertiendo, que ay verdadero y verisimil, y más verdadero que verisimil, y más verisimil que verdadero. Qué sea lo verdadero y lo verosimil es notorio: pues lo verdadero es confirmación de lo cierto, negatiua de lo incierto, que muestra las cosas como passaron: verisimil es lo que con apariencia de verdad no niega ni afirma. Más verdadero que verisimil son los hechos de los españoles en Flandres, en el esguazo de Zier Kisee y en las Indias Occidentales que son tan prodigiosos, que en los venideros tiempos parecerán fabulosos, porque son más verdaderos que verisímiles de poderse hazer. Mas verisimil que verdadero es lo que se escriue de lo que se trata en consejo de estado o gauineto, en lo que el rey propuso, y las palabras, lo que dixeron los que votaron, los argumentos, las réplicas, cosa difícil de saberse: y assí se escriue lo verisímil, que se saca de los efectos, y de algunas circunstancias y manera de hazer los negocios y executar las jornadas" (Cabrera 1948: 42).

65 Aristotle (1999: 33).

66 For the baroque reconciliation of doctrine and delight, see Kluge (2010: 54–59).

67 San José was a prolific writer in many genres. Besides the history of the Carmelite order, *History of the Reform* (*Historia de la Reforma*, 1635), which did not pass internal censure but was nonetheless published, he authored a biography of the Carmelite poet saint, Juan de la Cruz (1641), which also met censorial resistance from the order, and a number of satires and poems in the Lopean style.

68 Inspired, probably, by Cabrera's emphasis on beauty as the necessary way to the audience's heart, San José highlights *deleite* as one such utility:

> De aqui nace entre las demás utilidades [de la historia] el gusto y recreacion que infunde su letura: de la qual no solo saca el animo institucion para la vida humana, sino tambien un dulce, y por todas partes honestisimo deleyte. Porque como sea tan propio y natural al hombre el apetito del saber, y por otra parte le sea tan penoso el trabajo de adquirir la ciencia: de aqui es que con mayor facilidad se aplica à la noticia que le ofrecen las Historias, por venir vestida de aquellas circunstancias y ropage esterior tan familiar á los sentidos, de los quales tanto depende el discurrir del alma en esta vida: y asi trabajando menos el ingenio, gusta mas deste modo de aprender y saber á menos costa suya.
>
> (1769: I, 11)

> From this surges, among the other profits [of history], the pleasure and recreation that its reading arouses: from which the soul not only draws instruction in human life but also a sweet and absolutely honest delight. For as the appetite for knowing is wholly proper and natural to humankind and as it is so troublesome to acquire knowledge, humans apply themselves more easily to the lessons [*noticia*] that History offers, being equipped with those outer circumstances and apparel that are familiar to the senses, on which so much of the soul's destiny in this life depends: And as the brain thus has to work less, this way of learning and knowing with lesser expense is more generally liked.

69 The Carmelite first states that

> el [estilo] medio, con la segunda mezcla, en que tenga mas de llaneza que de celsitud, pertenece à la Historia (II, 69).
>
> the medium [style], with the second mixture, where there is more plainness than loftiness, belongs to History.

His subsequent and more extensive description of historiographical style as a harmonical organism is de facto impossible to distinguish from contemporaneous poetics:

> De tal suerte, que las varias partes que componen el todo de la obra escrita, aunque en si cada una sea diversa de la otra, tengan similitud en la perfeccion y correspondencia: y esta será su propia igualdad. Esto que habemos discurrido universalmente en todo genero de escritura, facilmente se acomoda á la Historia: la qual se compone de partes que tienen en sí mucha diversidadpero todas entre si gran proporcion. Porque las narraciones deben ser, unas mas llanas, otras mas floridas. Las Conciones, ó razonamientos, unos mas largos, otros mas concisos: unos mas á lo vulgar, y otros mas á lo sublime. Las digresiones, las figuras, las sentencias, y finalmente quanto en el cuerpo de la Historia se halla, en una parte pide estilo, elocución, energia, difusion, ó brevedad diferente que en otra.
>
> (II, 110–111)
>
> In such a way that the different parts which make up the whole of the written work, even though the one be different from the other, share the same perfection and correspondence: And this is their proper equality. This which we have said universally of all genres of writing is easily applied to History which is made up of parts that are very different from one another, yet which have great proportion among them. For some narratives are more plain and others more florid some of the harangues, or speeches, are longer and others more concise some more vulgar in tone, others sublime. The digressions, the figures, the maxims – all, finally, that is contained within the History, demands a specific style, elocution, energy, spreading or brevety.

70 San José (1768: III, 163–184). In fact, volume 3 is exclusively concerned with such issues, revealing an increased pressure on historians and historiographers in what Maravall termed the baroque *cultura dirigida* (1972: 167). Together with the author's emphasis on the benefit of history writing, this augmented focus on the figure of the historian can be seen to indicate a new political and ideological situation which is, however, not my subject in the present context.

71 San José (1768: I, 33).

72 "La verdad moral consiste en un ajustamiento de las palabras y mente con las cosas mismas en la realidad de su ser. Pudiendo pues la mente estar mal informada, y hacer concepto errado y falso de algun sucesola narracion que lo declaráse de la manera que se concibe, no sería por esta parte falsa, sino verdadera: y asi lo sería tambien la Historia sustancialmentepues lo formal y sustancial della, que es la narracion, sería en el modo dicho verdadera. Y en este sentido debemos tener por verdaderos á todos los Historiadores que escriben lo que entendian era verdad, aunque no lo fuese" (San José 1768: 33).

73 Cf. Olds' assessment of the forger Román de la Higuera's "notion of truth" as one "in which exemplarity seems to have taken precedence over factual accuracy *sensu stricto*" (2015: 25).

74 "Y desta manera pudo intitular Luciano dos discursos de historia y sucesos fingidos (que ahora llamariamos novelas) con el nombre que les dá de Historias verdaderas, advirtiendo él mismo al principio que son de cosas falsas que ni son, ni fueron, ni humanamente pudieron ser, sino que él mismo las inventó y fingió" (San José 1768: 34).

75 Lucian (1913: 252–253):

> Well, on reading all these authors, I did not find much fault with them for their lying, as I saw that this was already a common practice even among men who profess philosophy. I did wonder, though, that they thought that they could write untruths and not get caught at it. Therefore, as I myself, thanks to my vanity, was eager to hand something. Down to posterity, that I might not be the only one excluded from the privileges of poetic licence, and as I had nothing true to tell, not having had any adventures of significance, I took to lying. But my lying is far more honest than theirs, for though I tell the truth in nothing else, I shall at least be truthful in saying that I am a liar. I think I can escape the censure of the world by my own admission that I am not telling a word of truth. Be it understood, then, that I am writing about things which I have neither seen nor had to do with nor learned from others – which, in fact, do not exist at all and, in the nature of things, cannot exist. Therefore my readers should on no account believe in them.

76 San José (1768: I, 33–34):

> La humana Historia se divide en falsa y verdaderay ponemos aqui esta division, porque solo comprende al un miembro de la division pasada, que es la Historia propiamente humana, no al otro que es la divina, en la qual no puede caber falsedad alguna.
>
> Human History is divided into false and true and we refer this division here, because it includes only one of the members of the preceding division, which is human History properly speaking, and not the other, which is divine and in which there can be no falsity.

77 Kluge (2010: 34–40).

78 San José does not specify how precisely false histories should be presented as false, but his reference to Lucian indicates that it could be through prologues and different types of metadiscursive devices.

2 Historical Prose

> To say that a historical narrative resembles a fictive one is obvious enough. More interesting is to ask ourselves why we perceive as real the events recounted in a work of history. Usually it is a result produced both by textual and extratextual elements. I shall focus on the latter and attempt to show some procedures, associated with literary conventions, with which both ancient and modern historians have attempted to communicate that "effect of reality" which they considered an essential part of the task they had set for themselves.
>
> Carlo Ginzburg, *Threads and Traces. True False Fictive* 8[1]

> Of course, what made truth and fiction so difficult to disentangle in early modern histories and pseudohistorical novels alike was that the topoi that forgers invoked to underwrite the authenticity of their discoveries were, ever since the Renaissance, also employed by authors of "authentic" histories as well. We know that the authors of forgeries constructed their texts with a profound understanding of what true histories really looked like, and, moreover that the techniques of forgers contributed to the critical apparatus of scholars.
>
> Katrina Olds, *Forging the Past* 15

In his compilation of essays on historiographical method, *Threads and Traces. True False Fictive* (It. original 2006), the Italian intellectual historian Carlo Ginzburg discusses various procedures employed by historians through the ages in order to achieve that "effect of reality" considered essential to their writing. Today, the affirmation that these "procedures" were "associated with literary conventions" is trivial (*ovvio*), he declares, nodding to three decades of narrative historiography. Yet, as Ginzburg has repeatedly made clear in his writings, he will not have this affirmation confused with the view of history writing propagated by recent neo-sceptic philosophers of history.[2] The recognition that the historiographer and the literary author share a set of aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices should not lead to the misapprehension that truth plays no role or can play no role in the historian's work.

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Instead, it should orient a methodology focused not only on historical content but also on historiographical form. A methodology, in other words, which acknowledges history writing as something crafted, composed, without therefore depriving it of truth value. Though *Threads and Traces* only touches briefly on the humanist *ars historica*, Ginzburg's conception of historiography as a discourse that is simultaneously artful and truthful clearly builds on the ideals of the Renaissance humanists, as the modern historian himself has acknowledged in various places.[3] Indeed, in the light of the previous chapter, we can understand Ginzburg's position as the vindication of a historiographical practice on a par with Golden Age theories of history writing as an artful approximation to truth. The erudite historical scholar's elegant and witty writings confirm this impression.

In her study of historical forgery in early modern Spain, *Forging the Past: Invented Histories in Counter-Reformation Spain* (2015), the American historical scholar Katrina Olds analyses the cultural and historiographical backdrop of *The Chronicle of Universal History* (*Chronicon omnimodae historiae*, published in 1619, but widely divulgated before its printing) which the Jesuit pater Jerónimo Roman de la Higuera (1538–1611) forged and presented as new-found chronicles by one Flavius Lucius Dexter, an alleged late antique writer detailing the hitherto undocumented early Christian history of the Iberian peninsula. Olds' sympathetic presentation of Higuera's forgeries as inventions informed by a conception of history writing that cannot be measured with the proto-modern standards of a posterior critic such as Nicolás Antonio, raging against the false chronicles in his acclaimed *Censure of the Fabulous Histories* (*Censura de las historias fabulosas* mid-seventeenth century, published 1742), nor with modern criteria of history writing, sits well with Ginzburg's idea of history writing as an at once creative and heuristic enterprise:[4] Both modern historians go beyond the opposition of fiction and fact characterising the modern historical paradigm in its various forms – obviously not to undermine the veracity of historiography, but in order to vindicate a different perception of history writing. Just as specific literary motifs (fratricide, the doppelgänger) or specific forms (tragedy, the Gothic novel) have made sense to other audiences in other contexts even though they may not appeal to us now, a particular kind of history writing may have made sense to a particular audience in a particular historical context even though it does not meet our idea of what historiography should be. Viewed thus, the history of historiography becomes a plethora of forms, of ever-changing approximations to the truth, a versatile *ars*. History writing becomes historical literature.

To modern ears, historical literature – like the *ars historica* – may sound like a contradiction in terms, an oxymoron, an impossibility. However, Golden Age historical literature was not informed by the binary opposition between history and literature impregnating the modern

historical paradigm (and its neo-sceptical offshoots). As long as the historian or pseudo-historian did not touch directly on matters of faith, he or she could fabulate freely exploiting the whole catalogue of aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices endorsed by contemporaneous theorists of history. The idea of a supreme, untouchable truth that must be kept free of the tentacles of fiction was reserved for religion. The false chronicles examined by Olds are a case in point as are the so-called Lead Books of Sacromonte, the famous forgeries attesting the Arab introduction of Christianity into Spain "discovered" outside Granada in the 1590s.[5] However, that is another history which will only be briefly addressed in this chapter. My concern here is first and foremost to explore if and how Golden Age prose interpretations of past events conformed to the principles laid down in the *artes historicae*.

The last decades of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century saw the publication of various types of histories, from what is generally qualified as "authentic" works of historiography to pseudohistorical accounts and what we would today term historical forgeries. All these works variously employed the tools put at their disposal by contemporaneous theory of historiographical discourse, either explicitly or implicitly presenting themselves as colourful, fabulous – human – approximations to the truth: As "false histories," to adopt Jerónimo de San José's striking phrase. I will now discuss two concrete examples of Golden Age historical prose. Though they come from each their side of the historiographical spectrum and their historiographical "takes" differ widely, both clearly share in the contemporaneous idea of history writing as an *ars*, a particular form which makes sense in a particular context to a particular audience: An act of persuasion.

A General History

As a theologian and political thinker Juan de Mariana (1536–1624) needs little introduction. His *The King and Education of the King* (*De re et regis institutione*, 1599), expounding Counter-Reformation anti-Machiavellism, is widely studied and so is, increasingly, his *Treatise on the Alteration of Money* (*De mutatione monetae*, 1609), a critique of the Spanish fiscal system. However, besides his career as a teacher at the Collegio Romano and a professor of theology in Paris, the versatile Jesuit was an important historian. Indeed, though it may represent an underresearched part of his intellectual production – comparatively speaking, at least – his 30-volume *General History of Spain* (*Historiae de rebus Hispaniae libri 30*, 1592) stands as a virtual monument of the period's idea of historiography, one which remained the authoritative history of Spain through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[6]

Mariana's pioneering attempt to write a unitary history of Spain – not of one of its kingdoms, but of the whole nation – was first published in

Latin catering to European readers and subsequently issued for the home audience in the author's own translation under the title *Historia general de España* (1601).[7] In almost 2,000 pages, this 30-volume history covers the time span from the pre-historic arrival in the Iberian Peninsula of Tubal, grandson of the Biblical Noah and legendary founder of the Spanish people, to the death of Ferdinand II of Aragon, the great national unifier, in 1516.[8] Like Jerónimo de Zurita's 20-volume history of the kingdom of Aragon (1562–1580), covering the period from the Islamic invasion to Ferdinand the Catholic, Mariana's history of Spain is not a source-critical historical study in the modern sense of the term.[9] The average chapter is but a few pages long and the text is written in an elegant yet transparent style without scholia or references.[10] It presents an engaging and eminently readable historical narrative, providing its readers not so much with microhistorical understanding of specific situations or characters as with a morally conceived macrohistory about the birth, fall and rebirth of a nation. And as such a narrative it is something quite different from what modern readers expect from a work of history: It is a complex allegory, a moral fable even, explicating the history of Spain after the paradigm of the Biblical narrative of the fall and salvation of humankind.

This is not the place for an all-round study of the *General History* in its entirety. What interests me in the present context is to observe, up close and in-depth, the intertwinement of aesthetics and historiography in this central piece of historical prose; to see if and how it employs the various aesthetic and rhetorical devices of true history listed in the previously discussed *artes historicae*. To this end, I will employ the literary scholar's favourite method: Close reading of a central passage in order to suggest, by way of the illustrative example, the overall nature of the work. Thus, in what follows, I will zoom in on book 6, chapters 21–23, which treat of the Islamic invasion in the early eighth century. It is my contention that Mariana's account of this turning point in Spanish history, when the Catholic Visigoths were defeated by the Umayyad army in the Battle of Guadalete (711) and Christian territory on the Iberian Peninsula was reduced to the kingdom of Asturias in the north, allows a privileged peek into his idea of history writing and may thus serve as a magnifying glass for the general poetics of the *General History*.

Mariana's sources for the history of the last Visigoth king Rodrigo and the fall of Spain could have included the so-called Asturian chronicles, the *Albelda Chronicle* (*Crónica albeldense*, from the Monastery of San Martín de Albelda, 881) and the *Alphonsine Chronicle* (*Crónica de Alfonso III*, ninth century, two versions); the Mozarabic *Chronicle of 754* (*Crónica de 754*, eighth century); the al-Andalusian historian Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Mūsā al-Rāzī's *Chronicle of the Moor Rasis* (*Ajbār Mulūk al-Andalus*, mid-tenth century), divulgated in various Portuguese and Spanish translations; the synthetic *On the Affairs of Spain*

(*De rebus Hispaniae*, 1243) by Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada, basis of Alphonsus X's prestige project *The General History* (*General Estoria*, late thirteenth century, also known as *The First General Chronicle*); Pedro de Corral's semi-literary *Saracen Chronicle or the Chronicle of King Rodrigo and the Destruction of Spain* (*Crónica sarracina* or *Crónica del rey don Rodrigo con la destruyción de España*, mid-fifteenth century, published 1499), extensively read at the time when Mariana penned his history;[11] Jerónimo de Zurita's *Annals of the Crown of Aragon* (part 1, 1580); and the *romancero viejo*, or the traditional ballads, which by the mid-sixteenth century had become a fashionable literary genre due to an array of prestigious compilations. As suggested by my use of the potential "could," this list is merely tentative. Mariana only explicitly names the Albelda chronicle,[12] but his text reflects interpretations and historiographical takes found in the other accounts, which makes it likely that he knew them either directly or indirectly.[13]

With minor variations, all medieval chronicles present the same political interpretation of the events leading to the Battle of Guadalete. Thus, the earliest version of the Alphonsine chronicles, the so-called *Roda Chronicle* (*Crónica rotense*) in chapter 7, describes how king Rodrigo's opponents, the sons of the deceased king Witiza, allied themselves with the Saracens to rid the kingdom of what they perceived to be an impostor.[14] According to these early accounts, the Islamic invasion was the result of a fatal backroom deal broken in an unhealthy political climate impregnated by distrust and conflict – a political scheme gone wrong as the alliance turned out to be, in fact, a sleeping with the enemy. Although the Asturian chronicles remained unpublished until 1615, their interpretation reappears in one of Mariana's most probable historiographical sources, the *Annals of the Crown of Aragon* by Jerónimo de Zurita. The Aragonese chronicler touches only briefly on the Visigoth reign, the end of which marks the beginning of his own historical narrative, but he repeats the medieval chroniclers' view that the Saracens' appearance on the scene was the result of a political scheme to dethrone Rodrigo ("they were incited and instigated to this by the sons of King Wittiza who pretended they had the right to succeed").[15]

However, the Aragonese *cronista mayor* also introduces a second motive for the treacherous calling of the Saracens: The king's seduction of the daughter of Don Julian, the powerful count of the Christian enclave Ceuta in North Africa ("Count Julian, who had a particular hostility toward King Rodrigo because of the adultery he had committed with his daughter").[16] With his mention of Don Julian's daughter, a girl nicknamed Cava, Zurita complicates the political analysis of historical events by adding an honour motive. At the same time, he alludes to an alternative interpretation which was absent from the early medieval chronicles yet which flourished in later medieval ballads such as "The Ballad of the

King Don Rodrigo" and "The Ballad of La Cava," both of which present the king as a licentious predator whose unbridled lascivity caused the fall of Spain.[17]

Don Julian's daughter also played a role in the *Saracen Chronicle*, though Pedro de Corral certainly gave the material another twist. In his chronicle, La Cava – Arabic for "prostitute"– was transformed from a violated maid into a diabolic temptress who actively seduced an idealised chivalric king leading to his fall and the "destruction of Spain," as stated in the prologue and explicitated in chapters 251 ("On how the devil tried to deceive Don Rodrigo in the figure of La Cava, the daughter of Count Julian") and 252 ("On how the devil tried to deceive the king in the figure of La Cava, the daughter of Count Julian but was prevented by the Holy Spirit who visited him and guarded him").[18] With this turn, historiographical interpretations appeared to have come full circle, with Rodrigo metamorphosing from Machiavellian intriguer into rapist and finally into a Christ-like figure tempted by the devil. We can now proceed to observe and analyse what Mariana does with the inherited historical material. However, before turning to the various aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices employed in the *General History* – my main focus in the present context – I will briefly sketch the contents of part 1, book 6, chapters 21–23.

Mariana's account of the fall of Spain essentially combines existing political and moral interpretations, though it tends to give priority to the latter. This tendency is clear from the very beginning of chapter 21 which paints the image of a Visigoth kingdom on the verge of political disintegration and moral collapse, pondering how the once war-like Goths had become "feminised as a result of the laxity of life and customs," exchanging their former "lawfulness and dominion" for "banquets, delicate food and wine."[19] In Mariana's account, the new king is the perfect mirror of this situation: Once a worthy man, a warrior and a diplomat, Rodrigo was soon corrupted by power.[20] Prone to shameless and imprudent behaviour, he drove his political enemies, the sons of his predecessor Wittiza, into exile in Barbary. Here, they joined forces with Don Julian, who feared the king might claim his prosperous estate in Ceuta; Oppas, the bishop of either Toledo or Segovia (the Alphonsine chronicles differ on this detail); and a host of others "with a wish for revenge."[21] Though he embeds his account within a symbolic framework of moral and physical decadence and corruption, Mariana so far presents a clear-cut political interpretation of the Islamic invasion, highlighting oppression, power struggle and territorial conflict as the trickers of war. However, having named all the many people angry with Rodrigo and depicted them with weapons in hands ready to spring into battle from the North African coast, the historian suddenly halts to consider – wholly in the manner of Zurita – a second thread of his historical fabric: The story of Don Julian's daughter.

The *General History* details how this extremely beautiful girl was sent to court, as was "the custom in Spain," and was desired by the king who had beheld her almost naked from his window and become consumed with "that dishonest flame."[22] He pursued her, but since the girl would not give in neither to flattery nor to threats, at last "he took her by force."[23] When Don Julian learned what had happened, it was the straw that broke the camel's back and "he decided to precipitate the treason that they had recently plotted, arranged his affairs in Africa and without delay set off for Spain."[24] His plan was cunning: He went to Toledo and ingratiated himself with the court. Once he had earned the king's trust and confidence, he persuaded Rodrigo to send all soldiers and knights away to France and Africa, "which meant emptying the reign of forces so it would be unable to resist."[25] Then he himself withdrew to Ceuta, allegedly to visit his sick wife but in reality to meet with "the heads of the conspiracy."[26]

With Don Julian off to Africa and everything hanging in the balance, the historian allows himself two excursuses. First, he relates the story of another of Rodrigo's fatal transgressions: "Abhorred by God and humankind," the king forced his entry into a hermetically sealed enchanted palace in Toledo which, if unsealed, was said to bring the ruin of Spain.[27] Inside he found a canvas with men dressed *a lo morisco* painted on it and a Latin inscription saying "Spain will shortly be destroyed by these people."[28] Afterwards, Mariana provides his readers with a short history of the Saracens ("This rabble had its origin and beginning in Arabia and Mohammad as their leader, who first of all deceived a lot of people under the cloak of religion").[29] Then, finally, the *General History* returns to the main story, detailing how Don Julian persuaded Mūsā, the governor of Islamic Africa, to make a quick attack on Spain, "for the time was ripe to attack Spain and this way take control of the whole of Europe."[30] Rodrigo learned of the conspiracy and the invasion and gathered the few men left in Spain, but his army was a sorry sight.[31] Then follows a lengthy description of the Umayyad progress through Andalucia, the final battle at Guadalete and Rodrigo's flight to Portugal where he allegedly lies buried in Viseu.[32]

The Historian's Toolbox

My subsequent analysis of Mariana's narrative of the fall of Spain will focus in particular on the historian's use of three specific devices: Allegory, historiographical disclaimers and harangues. These devices in different ways sustain the truth claim of the text yet at the same time they contribute to its distinctive literary feel. They are, in other words, the formal vehicles around which Mariana's engaging historical narrative revolves, or what makes it historical literature: Not history, at least not in the modern sense of the word, nor literature genuinely speaking,

but something in-between, one of the many hybrids fostered by Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture. In this context, I understand allegory as an aestheticising emplotment device which assembles a series of more or less closely connected historical events into a narrative with a plot; by historiographical disclaimers I understand a type of apophasis, or the rhetorical device of simultaneously bringing up and taking back a subject; finally, I consider the harangues a performative device in the sense that they directly address the readers asking them to participate actively in the story, make up their minds about the events described and take side.

As moral anchor of the text, allegory is the cornerstone of Mariana's historical poetics, the device that upholds the entire universe of the *Historia general* and, therefore, the first of the literarising tools to be discussed in this context. As anticipated above, the historian begins his account of the fall of Spain by painting an image in black detailing how the Goths – these former warriors who strove their way through Europe from the North and sacked mighty Rome – succumbed to decadence once they laid down their weapons and settled in the Iberian Peninsula (where they became Visigoths, or "noble Goths"):

> Thus was the state of things in Spain by the time when Don Rodrigo, after the sons of Wittiza had been sent away, took control of the kingdom of the Goths after the desire of the leaders, which many lamented. For the wishes of the people could not be welded, being so different among themselves with factions and camps, and nor did they have the strength to resist foreign enemies. They had no friends to save them and they themselves had weak bodies and feminised souls as a result of the laxity of life and customs. Now it was all banquets, delicate food and wine whereby they had ruined their strengths; and with the loss of all honesty, the rest of the people lived a lowly disgraceful life after the example of the nobility. They were very good at making noise, behaving wildly and arrogantly, but very unable to use weapons and fists against an enemy. Finally, the empire and realm, which had been won through valour and effort, was lost through the usual lavishness and the pleasures.[33]

It is the well-known story of military virtue corrupted by pleasurable leisure, Mars tamed by Venus, recurring in innumerable guises throughout Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. However, Mariana's vivid description of the Visigoths and their orgies not just provides an eye-catching opening scene; it also prepares the ground for the imminent tragedy which the reader already knows to be lurking on the horizon: The Islamic invasion, spurred on by internal rivalry and the general laxity of morals. Fatal historical events presumably brought on by a great number of more or less contingent worldly causes are, thus, presented as

a well-deserved divine punishment. Contingent secular history is turned into a moral narrative – an allegory from which a lesson can be learned, as Mariana's history assumes the familiar function of a *magistra vitae*. This essentially allegorical take on the historical material is emphasised again in the closing words:

> The preceding years had been very sterile and because working of the land had ceased due to the wars, Spain suffered the hardships of both famine and plague. The inhabitants, weakened by these evils, took up arms with little spirit. Their vices, first of all, and their shamelessness had ruined them and God's punishment made them undergo such great misfortunes.[34]

As the opening and closing of the *General History*'s account of the fall of Spain thus make evident, Mariana exploits allegory as an emplotment device which assembles historical events into a narrative with a morally conceived plot. His use of this aestheticising device in essence transforms the historical material into a type of epic. At least, his account of events reads like those Homeric passages endorsed by Socrates in *Republic* 389e, leaving the reader in no doubt about the narrator's stance on what is narrated and extracting clear moral messages from characters and events.[35] "Oh! incredible evil," he exclaims when speaking about bishop Oppas' treason.[36] Likewise, his description of king Rodrigo is less psychological or motivic scrutiny than moral analysis.[37] Everywhere, characters and events are beheld from a bird's-eye view, *sub specie aeternitatis*, as the narrator-historian assumes the perspective of the "author" (as the period liked to call the creator of the world's great stage). Thus, Mariana's use of allegory transforms history into a huge complex fable in a process which, in accordance with the continuity between the good and the beautiful in Platonic-Christian thinking, is simultaneously moralising and literarising.

Turning now to the historiographical "disclaimers" scattered all over the three chapters in generous measure, a more specific but no less important device, these are a particularly shrewd part of Mariana's rhetorical toolbox. Simultaneously a legitimacy relativising and a legitimacy creating device, they build credibility through acknowledging the historian's incomplete or insecure knowledge of the distant past (after all, Mariana is dealing with events that took place almost 900 years earlier), yet at the same time obviously also obstruct this credibility by exhibiting the lacunae in historical knowledge. As a main consequence of this tendency to mention something only to take it back again or take it back partly, the narrative voice takes centre stage, becomes loud: Instead of the transparent objective account that most people today would expect from a work of history, the *General History* presents a historical narrative which in no way tries to hide its subjective origin. Indeed,

what the historiographical disclaimers first and foremost do is stage the narrator-historian as a speaking subject very much present in his historical narrative and inviting the reader into the machinery of history writing with its process of research, source criticism and reasoning.[38] This laying bare of the problem of historical knowledge is the legitimacy relativising part, of course. However, at the same time, as noted above, the historical disclaimers also create historiographical legitimacy. Paradoxically, the historian's openly admitted subjectivity endows the text with a kind of second-degree "truthfulness" not unlike Miguel de Cervantes' self-reflective chivalric novel, exorcising credulous fancy not by way of factuality but by way of a new and subtler kind of fiction: A falseness that is "true," as Jerónimo de San José would have it, exactly because it is openly and admittedly false. Yet, the parallel can be stretched even further: Through his use of advanced literary stratagems, at the same time creating and relativising narrative credibility, the so-called Prince of Wits forced his readers to critically assess information received through books. Similarly, with his historiographical disclaimers, Mariana stimulates his readers' critical reflection on what the narrator narrates, asking them to think for themselves and critically examine the information they receive.[39] As what may be termed a performative rhetorical tool, reaching out to readers to make them share in the construction of the historical narrative, the disclaimers thus in effect become the vehicle around which the historiographical legitimacy of the *General History* revolves.

I now come to the most striking literarising element of Mariana's history writing, at least from a modern point of view: The harangues which have already been introduced as a much-debated phenomenon in contemporaneous historical theory. These speeches provide solid evidence of the period's conception of history as an *ars*, not only emphasising history writing as historical prose but also linking it with historical drama: Whereas the latter is of course nothing but invented speeches, Mariana's text mixes *oratio directa* and *indirecta*, making plenty of room, as we have seen, for the narrator yet also generously giving the floor to different characters who step forward to inform of their inner life or take the scene to deliver harangues. Of the eight-page-long account of the fall of Spain, almost a fifth is taken up by direct speech, distributed in three passages and graphically marked in the edition used here by the use of italics: First, La Cava's letter to her father, describing her predicament, and then the two genuine harangues delivered in the heat of battle by Rodrigo and Tārik Abū Zara, the general of the Islamic forces. In none of the cases does the narrator-historian name a source and, knowing the discursive scarcity of the sources closest to the narrated events – the medieval chronicles (none of which mention speeches let alone refer them) – it seems likely that they are the inventions of our Jesuit historian. We have seen in the previous chapter how the speeches were a controversial point in the period's Platonic poetics of history, yet were endorsed by an

authority such as Costa for their ability to communicate edifying moral messages. Let us consider their use in the *General History*.

If we begin with La Cava's letter to her father, this passage first of all confirms the general tendency of the narrator-historian of the *Historia general* to read his characters' minds and exploit their thoughts and feelings.[40] Thus, the use of *oratio directa* in this case provides the text with the gripping personal perspective of one of Rodrigo's victims, exploiting pathetic exclamation ("Oh … oh"; "What will be the end of these our evils"; "oh, sad and miserable destiny!") and tragic vocabulary ("eternal pain and suffering"; "tears"; "evils") in order to add pathos and verve to the historical account.[41] At the same time, however, La Cava's letter obviously also serves the purpose of delivering a couple of sound moral lessons: That the sins of the flesh also taint the soul, lest they be confessed;[42] and that fathers should be cautious with whom they entrust their daughters.[43] It thus complies perfectly with contemporaneous theorists' demand that the use of poetic and rhetorical devices should not only make the text more appealing, but also serve a sound moral purpose.

Turning to the text's two genuine harangues – the military leaders' speeches to their men during the battle – the impression is similar but different. The speeches are alike in their unblushing exploitation of pathos, but the king's speech is in a retrospective mode, exhorting the Christian army to "revenge the injustices done to us and to our holy faith" and recall "your ancestors," the glorious past of the Goths.[44] It is a call for the men to defend all that they hold dear faced with an enemy who will slaughter infants, violate women and profane alters.[45] Tārik's harangue, in contrast, while recognising the possibility of defeat, looks towards a bright future: "This day will either give us the power over Europe or deprive all of us of our lives."[46] It ponders that destiny is in the soldiers' own hands, not the least because of the sorry state of the Christian army ("Perchance you fear this army without arms, summoned from the dregs of the vulgar masses, without order and valour?").[47] With our knowledge of what will come to pass, this was all to be expected. Even if Mariana does a good job reimagining the opulent rhetoric of Rodrigo and Tārik's more understated Arabic mode of reasoning, the real coup is elsewhere: In the exploitation of tragic irony, or the literary technique by which the full significance of a character's words or actions is clear to the audience or reader but remains unknown to the character.

Indeed, Rodrigo's harangue is characterised by a fundamental ambiguity which has to do with the fact that while he represents the good side in the battle (Christianity), he is not a virtuous character. The historian-narrator therefore needs to perform a precarious balancing act, on the one hand, underscoring the iniquity of the Saracens, "this rabble abhorrent to God and humans," while, on the other hand, making sure the reader does not mistake his fundamental aversion to the

depraved king. He achieves this balance through the use of tragic irony, drawing on the carefully prepared moral allegory of the decadence of the Visigoth reign: The king refers to the "invincible blood" of the Goths ("Until now they have waged war against eunuchs; they will be made to feel what it means to attack the invincible blood of the Goths"), but thanks to the narrator's allegorical framing of the historical events the readers well know that this blood has thinned over the years due to laxity of morals; similarly, they inevitably shake their heads at Rodrigo's contention that the battle is as good as won ("The game is set up thus that it cannot be lost").[48]

Through its use of tragic irony, Rodrigo's harangue thus balances between aesthetic suggestiveness, facilitating the reader's empathy and adherence to the Christian cause, and the moral lesson that even if the cause is right, the "hero" may be wrong. A centre piece of Mariana's historical poetics replete with historical interpretation, tragic pathos, moral teaching and rhetorical verve, the passage certainly demonstrates the power of historical prose to "renew fame … in the memory of the people," as Lope de Vega wrote about history plays in his dedication to the historical drama *The Church Bell of Aragon* (*La campana de Aragón*, 1623).[49] This is the stuff that history is made on – or, rather, was made on around 1600. But there were also other kinds of engagement with the past. In order to put Mariana's achievement into perspective, I now proceed to consider a different form of Golden Age historical prose.

Alternative Histories

The very same year that Mariana issued the original Latin edition of his Spanish history, the Grenadine doctor of medicine Miguel de Luna (1545–1615) published *True History of King Don Rodrigo* (original complete title: *La Verdadera hystoria del Rey Don Rodrigo, en la qual se trata la causa principal de la perdida de España, y la conquista que della hizo Miramamolin Almançor Rey que fue de el Africa, y de las Arabias. Compuesta por el Sabio Alcayde Abulcacim Tarif, de nación arabe, y natural de la Arabia Petrea. Nuevamente traduzida de lengua arabiga por Miguel de Luna, vezino de Granada, e interprete de el rey don Phelippe nuestro señor*). As the title reveals, Luna – who regularly roamed the royal archives at El Escorial in connection with his duties as official translator to Philip II and Philip III – claimed to have unearthed an unknown Arabic account of the "loss of Spain" and translated it into Spanish. In the 430 pages of this allegedly new-found manuscript, a so-called Middle Eastern "sage" narrated the history of Islamic Spain, ignored if not in fact actively opposed by contemporaneous political and religious proponents of "neo-Gothic" ideology.[50]

In a cultural context where ideas about Old Christian supremacy and *limpieza de sangre* were vigorous, the implicit vindication of *morisco*

culture was nothing short of scandalous. Yet, though he went directly against the grain of the period's dominant anti-Arabism, the author of the *True History* was not alone in understanding Spanish culture as a melting pot amalgamating Christian and Moslem traditions over the centuries. His conception was supported by the so-called Lead Books of Sacromonte discovered in a cave outside of Granada between 1595 and 1606. Indeed, both new-found "sources" assigned a crucial role in the history of Spain to a Spanish Arab community then under immense cultural, religious and political pressure after the unsuccessful Rebellion of the Alpujarras (1568–1571) and soon to be either forcibly converted to Catholicism or expelled from their homes:[51] In the *True History*, the Moors bring peace and civilisation; and the Lead Books of Sacromonte attest the special affection of Virgin Mary for the Arabic peoples of Spain who allegedly brought Christianity with them to the Iberian Peninsula in early Christian times. This ideological coincidence, along with the fact that both were incidentally discovered by Miguel de Luna, who also happened to translate them, has led scholars to assume a close connection between the *True History* and the Lead Books of Sacromonte corpus.[52]

Already at the beginning of the seventeenth century, critical voices were raised concerning the authenticity of the Lead Books of Sacromonte, though most contemporaneous readers apparently considered them true, or at least truthful, and Grenadine religious authorities in particular cherished them as miraculous.[53] After several investigations, the Holy Office in Rome declared the Lead Books a forgery in 1682. Today, scholars widely agree that they were invented by Luna and his father-in-law, Alonso del Castillo, who perhaps formed part of a secret intellectual society aiming to vindicate the historical significance of the *morisco* community. The *True History*, on the other hand, steered free of controversy. This work, which purported to be an eyewitness account of the end of the Visigoth reign, was so full of anachronisms and blatant historiographical errors that it apparently provoked nothing but headshaking from contemporaneous historical experts.[54] The reading public, however, loved it. With the publication of the second part (*Segunda parte de la Historia de la perdida de España y Vida del Rey Iacob Almançor: en la qual el autor Tarif Abentarique prosigue la Primera parte*, 1600), it became a genuine bestseller both in Spain and abroad.[55]

The differing fortunes of Luna's two historical forgeries may be explained by the fact that whereas, in the sphere of religion, Golden Age Spain knew one truth and one truth only, there was not any rock solid concept of historical truth. History was a species of oratory, an art. And as the title of Luna's alternative history suggests with its playful reference to Lucian, contemporaneous historians always entered into a negotiation with their readers, seeking to win their confidence and convince them of the truth of their narratives. To this end, they employed the whole range

of aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices that has been discussed in the first chapter and exemplified in the previous reading of Mariana's *General History*. Which elements did the toolbox of the historical forger then contain?

The True History

Carlo Ginzburg called it "obvious enough" that invented and historical narratives resemble each other, generally speaking. This was indeed the case in Golden Age Spain. As Katrina Olds noted, it is often difficult to separate early modern histories and pseudohistorical novels. For in their pursuit of the perfect history mixing *utile* and *dulce* in perfect measure, pseudohistorical authors and more clear-cut traditional historiographers recurred to many of the same aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices in order to simultaneously delight and enlighten their readers.[56] In my subsequent discussion of the key elements of Luna's poetics of history, I will focus specifically on his use of the "found manuscript" topos and what I term philological "markers." In their mutual reliance on the humanist annotation, translation and editing of ancient and medieval texts, on the one hand, and the emulation of this industry by contemporaneous authors of chivalric novels, on the other hand, both these devices underscore the essential continuity between history and fiction in the Golden Age historical prose under scrutiny in the present chapter.[57]

However, before proceeding to review the toolbox of the Grenadine pseudo-historiographer, we should take a brief look at the points where his account of the fall of Spain differs from Mariana's. In its final version, the *True History* is structured in four parts of differing length (part 1: 230 pages; part 2: 80 pages; part 3: 100 pages; part 4: 20 pages), in turn divided into various books. The fall of Spain takes up chapters 1–9 or about 40 pages of the first book of part 1. The rest of the work – almost 400 pages – describes the turbulent political life of 800 years of Spanish Arab history. Though it figures prominently in the title of the work, the story of king Rodrigo and the end of the Visigoth reign thus in fact serves as a rather brief proem to the main narrative which the author wishes to convey: The history of Al-Andalus. Nevertheless, the *True History* is more well-wrought than later critics such as Menéndez Pelayo and Menéndez Pidal thought.[58]

First of all, what Fernando Villanueva has termed "the artifice of Abentarique" – Luna's construction of the Arab author of the text – liberates his narrative from the medieval political interpretation adopted by Mariana, lifting it into the sphere of intercultural and religious conflict.[59] This move makes the material more immediately relevant to contemporaneous readers, not the least the *morisco* community which formed a considerable part of the work's audience.[60] Second, Luna adds

to the familiar list of Rodrigo's misdemeanours the horrifying story of how he instigated the death of his own nephew Sancho, legitimate heir to the throne (book 1, chapters 1 and 2), and the account of how he demolished castles and killed nobles to prevent them from rising against him (ibid., chapter 3). This addition transforms the Christian moral didacticism propounded by Mariana and others into a kind of universal poetic justice, as Rodrigo is turned from a bad moral example into a man so afraid to lose his power that he lost everything trying to safeguard it. Finally, though Mariana also referred the story of the enchanted tower in Toledo, Luna's version, as narrated in chapter 6, includes an allegorical reading of the things discovered in the tower.[61] This inclusion adds a subtle metanarrative and self-reflexive dimension which Mariana's account does not possess. As all this demonstrates, there is a lot of thought behind every detail of Luna's alternative history.

Turning to the forger's toolbox, the first device that I will discuss, the "found manuscript" topos, in principle runs through the entire text in its capacity of being – supposedly – this very manuscript. However, the topos is addressed directly in the translator's first proem to the first part of the *True History*, the "Proem to the King Our Lord" or proem to Philip II. Here, "Miguel de Luna, Translator" declares that he "unearthed and resuscitated" the text:[62]

> Experience shows quite clearly that the sciences are perfected and augmented through continuous exercise; and that the person who pursues them, adorned with great virtues which elevate the mind and allow it to contemplate high and divine contemplations, finally acquires an antidote against the ocean of blind, monstruous ignorance. With this aim (Catholic Majesty), from my very infancy, I began to cultivate my wit in this sweet and pleasant exercise of letters, primarily in Arabic, by virtue of which I unearthed and resuscitated the present History, so desired by our Spaniards.[63]

Neither here nor in his subsequent "Proem to the Christian Reader" does the alleged translator say anything very specific about the origin of the manuscript that he has translated and now publishes. This information is provided instead by the purported Arab author of the text, one "Abulcacim Tarif Abentarique." In his own "Proem to the Learned Reader," this Abentarique, "Born in the City of Almediña in Arabia Petrea," explains that he was an eyewitness to the Islamic invasion ("The principal cause of my audacity is that I was present in the war of Spain"), a claim suggesting the extraordinary nature of the "History, so desired by our Spaniards" allegedly unearthed and translated by Miguel de Luna.[64] What we have before us is nothing short of a hitherto ignored eyewitness report of the single most important event in the history of the Iberian Peninsula, miraculously conserved in its entirety through almost

800 years and now brought to light and translated into *romance* to the benefit of the "Christian Reader."

However, the truth claim of the text does not rely solely on the assertions put forward in the three proems. In his subsequent narrative of the fall of Spain, the actual author of the *True History* takes different means to support the professed author's claim of first-hand knowledge, upholding the illusion of a newly discovered eyewitness report. This can be observed when "Abentarique" narrates things of which he could not possibly have any direct knowledge. Thus, when the said author reproduces the contents of a letter which Rodrigo's sister-in-law, queen Anagilda, allegedly sent to the king complaining about his persecution of her son, Sancho, for example, "Miguel de Luna, Translator" scrupulously details in the margin that:

> This letter was translated by Abentarique from Castillian into Arabic, and has now been translated back from Arabic into romance.[65]

As we have seen, Mariana did not care much for this kind of details. Confident in the superior moral truth value of his narrative, he simply "reproduced" Cava's letter and the two harangues following the Thucydidean tradition for imagining the thoughts and words of historical characters.[66] Not so Luna. Precisely because it seems highly unlikely that "Abentarique" should have gained access to the king's chambers, there to recover Anagilda's letter, he lets the purported translator help sustain the illusion of authenticity pointing to yet another "found manuscript." Inside the found manuscript of the *True History* there is, in other words, another "found" historical document, the authenticity of the first guaranteeing the authenticity of the second. As readers we find ourselves inside Grafton's "frightening, demon-haunted labyrinths of historical writing, ancient and modern, trustworthy and falsified": If we believe "Miguel de Luna, Translator," we must believe "Abentarique," "Born in the City of Almediña in Arabia Petrea"; and if we believe "Abentarique" we must believe "Anagilda." Indeed, the author of the *True History* conserves the illusion of the "found manuscript" by creating chains of narrative voices vouchsafing for each other. Sometimes, as in the case of the retrieved letter from Anagilda to Rodrigo, these voices speak directly to the reader. At other times they are embedded within the discourse of the purported Arab author who then assumes the role of eyewitness by proxy. This can be observed in "Abentarique's" account of Rodrigo's entry into the enchanted tower which claims to faithfully reproduce the testimony of a person actually present at the event, the "Archbishop Troiso," who subsequently turned sides:

> […] they decided to open the enchanted tower in that same city of Toledo, thinking they would find a great treasure, and because this

> story is so notable I will not refrain from recounting extensively what the Archbishop Troiso told me, an individual who was present when King Rodrigo opened it, having turned from Count Julian's camp to ours. He told me the following story.[67]

Around the found manuscript topos, the *True History* thus weaves an intricate web of voices that work together to sustain the illusion of the hitherto ignored but now unearthed eyewitness report of the Islamic invasion, underlining the veracity of the text.

Paradoxically, however, the traditional theme of the "found manuscript" not only legitimises but simultaneously jeopardises the work's truth claim. For while it certainly relies on the medieval and humanist tradition of scholars who with their translations and editions of ancient texts unearthed from archives and libraries similarly gave voice to forgotten authors who, in their works, gave voice to emperors and generals and other protagonists of history, the topos also has a distinguished literary pedigree. A device familiar to contemporaneous readers from a range of chivalric novels beginning with Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadis of Gaul* (published 1508) and culminating with the *Quijote*, it would not only have signalled "authenticity" but, at the same time, "fictionality":[68] As Cervantes' novel made clear once and for all, veracity was a literary convention. Indeed, in a world where every human design was essentially fictive and therefore false, a fiction that openly confessed to being a fiction became "true," as Jerónimo de San José would later establish. This mind-boggling ambiguity sits well with the playful attitude that Luna's historical construction confessed up front with the title's reference to Lucian's *True Story*. The found manuscript topos thus underscores the ambiguous nature of the *True History* as a typical Golden Age work of historical prose thriving on the period's lack of a clear separating line between invented and authentic histories and consequent reliance on style: On persuasion.

The other, slightly more diffuse device sustaining Luna's historiographical edifice that I will discuss here is the author's comprehensive use of philological tools, including: The alleged translator's theoretical reflexion on translation in his second proem; frequent translation notes in the margins; meticulous synchronisation between Arab, Julian and Christian calendars; and scrupulous accounts of two-way translations. Conscientiously wishing to lay bare the premises of the book he publishes, "Miguel de Luna, Translator" begins his "Proem to the Christian Reader" by suitably referring the agonies of Jerome, the Christian translator par excellence. Considering the tribulations of this scholar-saint, whose work translating the Bible mortified him more than all the fasting and abstinence in the wilderness together, Luna professes to have had his scruples about the immense task that he set himself.[69] Yet, in the end, "grave persons" to whom he had shown parts of the work convinced

him to translate "this History (so much used and well received among the Arabs)" in order to delight and instruct his Christian reader "with a reading so true as this and so desired by our Spaniards, being by so grave an author who wrote it with such veracity."[70]

Following this initial – personal – account of the project and its history, Luna turns to consider some fundamental theoretical aspects of translating including, first of all, the question of the translator's interpretive freedom: In every act of translation but especially in the translation of manually recorded and therefore typically quite summary Arabic texts ("as this way of writing is so laborious, they try as hard as they can to avoid prolixity and heaviness"), the translator must make a choice between loyalty to the word ("atandose à la letra secamente") and loyalty to meaning ("guardando el sentido, y no mas"); or else he must venture a combination ("estas dos condiciones juntas").[71] Though he is conscious of the difficulties involved in mediating between literality and meaning – including the need to know the cultural backdrop of both languages well enough to be able to create a meaningful semiotic transferral – Luna declares that he chose the third option. Considering his life-long study of Arabic, professed at the outset of the proem, this decision seems wholly logical, and his subsequent address of concrete strategies employed in his "translation" certainly suggests his intercultural intelligence.[72]

The first of these strategies – providing the original Arabic terms in the margin whenever a real transferral of meaning is deemed problematic – is used very frequently.[73] In the about 40 pages taken up by the professed author's proem together with his narrative of the fall of Spain there are 44 translation notes in the margin, detailing, for example, that "Creator and the sublime maker in Arabic is called *alhalique alhadim*" or "Invention in Arabic is *muzala*."[74] Occasionally, these notes appear superfluous.[75] Most of the time, however, as in the just cited examples, they are enlightening because they provide key religious or political concepts that help the "Christian reader" understand the Moslem way of thinking framing the text. In sharp contrast to Mariana's hostile description of the Umayyads as "this rabble abhorrent to God and humans," the explicit intention of the *True History* is "describe and commemorate truthfully the loss of King Rodrigo and the conquest of Spain […], giving to each the valour and honour with which nature endowed them."[76] The margin notes on translation are of course an integral part of this attempt to facilitate two-way intercultural understanding, but – more importantly in the present context – they are also a key element in Luna's endeavour to legitimise his historiographical project in the first place by making it appear scientifically (philologically) sound. The same double agenda applies to the other translational strategy expressly mentioned in the purported translator's second proem: The recurrent notes synchronising the Julian calendar of the Visigoths with Christian chronology and the Arab *Hijiri*.[77] In the second proem and the part about Rodrigo and

the fall of Spain taken together there are nine such notes in the margin, explicitating, for example, that "This era signifies 38 years before the coming of Christ, our Redeemer."[78]

The final philological "marker" employed in the *True History* that I will mention is the account of the back-and-forth translation of Anagilda's letter provided in the margin by "Miguel de Luna, Translator" in chapter 2 ("This letter was translated by Abentarique from Castillian into Arabic, and has now been translated back from Arabic into romance […]").[79] This is indeed an invention worthy of the genius of Cervantes: A letter purportedly first translated from Arabic into romance and then back again. With Luna's conscientious theoretical reflection on translation in mind, however, one wonders how much has been lost in translation: Was the translation of "Abentarique" loyal to the word ("atandose à la letra secamente") or loyal to meaning ("guardando el sentido")? Or did it aim to reconcile the two, like Luna? We are told he was in Spain at the time of the Islamic invasion, but what did he actually know about the culture? Did he know enough to facilitate a meaningful semiotic transferral of Anagilda's words? While it sustains the found manuscript topos (as discussed above), the note about the letter simultaneously shakes the philological credibility of the text that the alleged translator is working so hard to produce. And, as such, this small note encapsulates the work's overall amorphous mixture of authenticity and fictionality, turning into an emblem of Luna's poetics of history.

Notes

1 Ginzburg (2012: 8, trl. Tedeschi and Tedeschi). Cf. Ginzburg (2006: 16):

> Affermare che una narrazione storica somiglia a una narrazione inventata è ovvio. Mi pare più interessante chiedersi perché percepiamo como reali gli eventi raccontati en un libro di storia. Di solito si tratta di un risultato prodotto da elementi sia extratestuali sia testuali. Mi soffermerò su questi ultimi, cercando di illustrari alcuni procedimienti, legati a convenzioni letterarie, con cui storici antichi e storici moderni hanno cercati di communicare quell' "effetto di verità" che consideravano parte essenziale del compito che si prefiggevano.

2 The opposition to the "neo-sceptic" philosophy of history of Hayden White and others is a recurrent feature of Ginzburg's writing. See, for example, the lectures contained in *History, Rhetoric, Proof* (1999), notably the "Introduction," and the "Introduction" to *Threads and Traces* (2012: 1–6).

3 See, for example, the essay "Lorenzo Valla on the 'Donation of Constantine'" in Ginzburg (1999: 54–70).

4 Nicolás Antonio (1617–1684) is traditionally hailed as the first enlightened Spanish writer, a reputation that largely hangs on his painstaking examination of the false chronicles in the *Censura*. In this work, the bibliographer and book historian envisioned a new, critical art of history to replace the corrupted Spanish histories. See Antonio (1999: 1):

> Entre lo mas sencillo i puro de nuestras Historias se ha mezclado una semilla inutil, i vana, que con hermosura aparente se quiere alzar con toda la tierra, que indignamente ocupa: a cuya vista el verdadero i fecundo grano de las antiguas verdades se halla defraudado de la alabanza, i aprecio que merece: porque los ojos engañados creen ciegamente a la belleza superficial, o a las hojas, sin querer passar a la experiencia suave, i colmada de los frutos. Mi deseo es restituir en su possesion a la Verdad, i alimpiar las Historias de España de la torpeza, i fealdad que las desacredita en el juicio de aquellos que saben pesar quanto mas infaman, que ennoblecen, honores falsamente atribuìdos, i algunos a sus propios i legitimos dueños injustamente usurpados.
>
> With the most simple and pure of our Histories an unuseful, vain seed has mixed itself which with apparent beauty wants to spread itself all over the soil that it so unduly occupies. And at the sight of it, the true and fecund grain of the ancient truths is deprived of the praise and appreciation that it deserves. For the deceived eyes adhere blindly to superficial beauty, or the leaves, without passing on to the sweet and juicy experience of the fruits. My desire is to restitute Truth in its rightful place and purify the Histories of Spain of its stupidity and the ugliness which discredits them in the judgement of those who recognise how much more falsely attributed honours defame than ennoble, some even injustly usurped by their own legitimate owners.

5 To the Lead Books of Sacromonte, see Barrios & Garcí-Arenal (2006).

6 See Braun's description of the *General History* as (2006: 2):

> the standard work on Spanish history up to the 18th century which does not merely report events in lucid chronological order and with admirable objectivity, but includes analyses of the mechanisms of princely power.

7 I subsequently use the Spanish version and quote from Javier Martínez Romeo's modernised version of the Real Biblioteca's 1780 edition (based on the 1623 Spanish edition revised by the author). In the prologue to this version, Mariana explains that he originally wrote the work in Latin to meet a European demand:

> Lo que me movió a escribir la historia latina fue la falta que de ella tenía nuestra España (mengua sin duda notable), más abundante en hazañas que en escritores, en especial de este jaez. Juntamente me convidó a tomar la pluma el deseo que conocí los años que peregriné fuera de España, en las naciones extrañas, de entender las cosas de la nuestra: los principios y medios por donde se encaminó a la grandeza que hoy tiene.
>
> (3)
>
> What moved me to write the Latin history was the lack of such one in Spain (a notable decline, no doubt) which is more abundant in deeds than in writers, particularly of this kind. Furthermore, in taking up the pen, I was moved by the desire that I became acquainted with during the years when I travelled outside of Spain, in foreign nations, to know the things of our nation: the origins and the way in which it came into the greatness that it has today.

Though this note may be referring a real motive on the part of Mariana, the notion of a foreign "demand" for a history of Spain is a topic which recurs in many other Spanish historical or historiographical works, from Páez de Castro's "Memo" to Mariana's predecessor, Ambrosio Morales' *General*

Chronicle of Spain (*Crónica general de España*, 1574, 1577, 1586; a continuation of Charles V's chronicler Florián de Ocampo's unfinished history of Spain) and beyond.

8 In comparison, Morales, in his *General Chronicle of Spain*, only covered Spanish history until Ferdinand I of Leon (c. 1015–1065).

9 Zurita was, however, more of an *ante terminem* modern historian who critically examined the work of his predecessors and meticulously searched archives both in Spain and abroad in order to verify existing accounts of the past. As he states at the opening of his work:

> Y assi, quando propuse escriuir las memorias de lo sucedido, desde el princio del los Reyes de Aragón, me determinè, que en lo que por mi propia diligencia no podia afirmar en las cosas antiguas por constante, se deuia remitir a la fe y credito que se deue a cada vno delos Autores.
>
> (1610: 1)

> Thus, when I proposed to write the memories of things past, from the beginning of the Reign of Aragon, I decided that, in those things so ancient that I could not affirm by my own diligence, it was necessary to remit to faith and the credit that is owed to each of the Authors.

Mariana's work also aims at precision, though in an antiquarian sense:

> En todo el discurso se tuvo gran cuenta con la verdad, que es la primera ley de la historia. Los tiempos van averiguados con mucho cuidado y puntualidad. Los años de los moros ajustados con los de Cristo, en que nuestros cronistas todos faltaron. A las ciudades, montes, ríos y otros lugares señalamos los nombres que tuvieron antiguamente en tiempo de Romanos.
>
> (4)

> In the whole discourse, the truth – which is the first law of history – has been taken very much into account. The past times are verified with much care and precision. The years of the Moors have been synchronised with those of Christ, something our chroniclers failed to do. To cities, mountains, rivers and other places we give the names which they had originally, in the time of the Romans.

10 In his prologue to the 1623 edition, Mariana pondered the translation as a new work, aimed at a broad and varied audience:

> En la traducción no procedí como intérprete, sino como autor, hasta trocar algún apellido, y tal vez mudar opinión; que se tendrá por la nuestra la que en esta quinta impresión se hallare: até a las palabras ni a las cláusulas; quité y puse con libertad, según me pareció más acertado, que unas cosas son a propósito para la gente docta, y otras para la vulgar.
>
> (3)

> In the act of translation, I did not proceed like a translator, but like an author, even transforming a surname and maybe changing my mind: So that it should be called ours that which is found in this fifth edition: I stuck with the words, not the clauses; I removed and added with liberty according to what I found best, for some things are appropriate for learned people and others for the common folk.

11 In his *Origin of the Novel* (1905), Menéndez Pelayo deemed the *Saracene Chronicle* not a historiographical text but a mixture of chivalric romance, *libro de caballerías* and historical novel (2018: 389).

12 Mariana (1780: 340).

13 For a detailed account of the transmission of the legend of Rodrigo until Corral, see Fogelquist's introduction to his edition of the *Saracence Chronical* (2001: 14–32), pondering that

> from the Arab versions come the details of the sealed house in Toledo, the table of Salomon, the description of Rodrigo's luxurious battle attire, his golden cloak and boots set with precious stones; from the Christian versions, the destruction of weapons after Count Julian's destruction, the discovery of Rodrigo's tomb in Viseu and Pelayo's victory against the Moors at Covadonga, all of which is narrated in the *Chronicle of Alphonsus III*.
>
> (17)

As we shall soon be able to ascertain, Mariana was influenced by both Christian and Mozarabic accounts.

14

> Muerto Witiza, quedó elegido Ruderico por rey de los godos. Éste llevó sobre sí los pecados y excesos de Witiza, y no sólo no los estorbó con el celo de su justicia, sino que los aumentó. Los hijos de Witiza, poseídos de envidia, porque Ruderico había ocupado el trono de su padre, enviaron astutamente emisarios al África, pidiendo auxilios a los sarracenos, y para proporcionarles naves, con las que los introdujeron en Hispania. Mas estos que fraguaron la ruina de su patria, fueron justamente muertos con la espada de los sarracenos. Noticioso Ruderico de la entrada de estos, salió a combatirlos con todo el ejército de los godos. Mas la escritura dice: En vano corre aquel a quien precede la iniquidad. Así, oprimidos por los pecados de los sacerdotes y los suyos propios, y engañados por los hijos de Witiza, huyeron todos los godos y fueron pasados a cuchillo. No es conocida la causa de la muerte del rey Ruderico; en nuestros tiempos cuando repoblamos la ciudad de Viseo y sus cercanías, se encontró en cierta basílica un monumento en que estaba escrito un epitafio que dice: Aquí descansa Ruderico, rey de los godos.
>
> (Crónica de Alfonso III, 1985: 4)

Since it gives a useful minimal description of the event under scrutiny here, I quote the passus here at length in Nicolás Castor de Caunedo's translation

> With Wittiza dead, Rodrigo was elected king of the Goths. He took upon him the vices and sins of Wittiza which he not only not obstructed, but augmented. The sons of Wittiza, possessed by envy because Rodrigo has taken possession of their father's throne, cunningly sent emissaries to Africa, asking the Saracens for help and providing them with ships with which they sailed to Spain. However, these who fraught the ruin of their homeland were justly killed by the Saracens' sword. When Rodrigo learned of the invasion, he went to fight them with the whole army of the Goths. But Scripture says: "He who is preceded by iniquity runs in vain." Thus, oppressed by the sins of the priests and their own people, and deceived by the sons of Wittiza, all the Goths flew and were put to the sword. The cause of death of Rodrigo is unknown; in our time, when we resettled in the city of Viseu and surroundings, in a certain basilica a monument with an epitaph was found, saying: "Here rests Ruderico, king of the Goths."

The slightly older *Crónica albeldense* also mentions that the Saracens did not come to Spain by their own initiative but were "treacherously called" (1852: 11).

15 Zurita (1610: 2):

> fueron para ello incitados y introduzidos por los hijos del Rey Vitiza, que pretendian tener derecho a la sucession del Reyno.

16 Ibid., ibid.:

> Tambien concurrio con ellos el Conde Julian con particular enemistad que tuuo al Rey Rodrigo, por el adulterio que auia cometido con su hija.

17 Both the *Romance del rey don Rodrigo* and the *Romance de la Cava* were reissued in Mariana's life time by Joan Timoneda in the *Rosas de romances* (1573). See notably the latter, vv. 27–30;

> cumplió el rey su voluntad,/ más por fuerza que por grado,/ por lo cual se perdió España/ por aquel tan gran pecado ("the king had his will,/ but more by means of force than through good will,/ wherefore Spain was lost/ because of so great a sin." *Romancero viejo*, 2005: 93).

For an overview of the "king and the whore" interpretation of the Roderick-Cava story, see Drayton (2007).

18 Pedro de Corral (1586: unpaginated prologue):

> Pues que se dira de aquel muy poderoso rey don Rodrigo, en cuya historia se puede leer y contemplar las grandes y notables hazañas que en su tiempo acaecieron, siendo entonce España floreciente y esclarecida partida en grande abundancia de muchos valientes y esforçados caualleros, y de todas gentes belicosas y guerras: y esto mas que reyno alguno que en aquel tiempo era, ciertamente se puede dezir, que este rey don Rodrigo incomparable fama y mas alto estado que rey de sus precessores posseyo. Empero Dios que es justisimo juez viendo el poco temor que a su magestad tenia precipuamente por aquel estrupo forçoso corrompimiento de aquella muy cruel donzella la Caua, y no menos por los muchos y grandes pecados de las Españolas gentes, toda España de los barabros infieles ser destruyda permitio. Esto fue causa de la terrible y espantosa penitencia.
>
> What should be said of that very powerful king Don Rodrigo, in whose story one can read and contemplate all the great and notable deeds of his times, when Spain was flourishing and illustrious with an abundance of valiant and hard-working knights, and full of warlike people and wars. And this more than any other kingdom of that time, and it can certainly be said that this king Don Rodrigo possessed an incomparable fame and more elevated position than any of his predecessors. But when God, who is the most just judge, saw how little [Rodrigo] feared him, principally in that rape through which he was corrupted by that very cruel damsel, La Cava, but also because of the many and grave sins of the Spanish peoples, he let the whole of Spain be destroyed by the barbarous infidels. This was the cause of the terrible and horrifying penance.

The Spanish titles of the mentioned chapters are "De como el diablo en figura de la caua hija del conde don Iulian quiso engañar al rey don Rodrigo" (251) and "De como el diablo quiso engañar al rey en figura del la caua hija del conde don Iulian, sino por el espiritu sancto que lo visito y guardo" (252).

19 Mariana (1780: 335): "afeminados a causa de la soltura de su vida y costumbres"; "imperio y señorío"; "convites, manjares delicados y vino."

20 Ibid., ibid.

21 Mariana (1780: 335–336): "con deseo de vengarse."

22 Mariana (1780: 336): "aquella deshonesta llama."
23 Ibid.: "le hizo fuerza."
24 Ibid.: "resolvióse de apresurar la traición que poco antes tenían tramada, dio orden en las cosas de África, y por tanto sin dilación pasó a España."
25 Ibid.: "que era desnudar el reino de fuerzas para que no pudiese resistir."
26 Mariana (1780: 337–338): "los cabezas de la conjuración."
27 Mariana (1780: 337): "Aborrecido de Dios y de las gentes."
28 Ibid.: "Por esta gente será en breve destruida España."
29 Mariana (1780: 338): "Tuvo esta canalla su origen y principio en Arabia, y a Mahoma por caudillo, el cual primeramente engañó mucha gente con color de religión."
30 Mariana (1780: 338–339): "Que era buena sazón para acometer a España y por este camino apoderarse de toda la Europa."
31 Mariana (1780: 339):

> El ejército era compuesto de toda broza, y como gente allegadiza, poco ejercitada; ni tenían fuerza en los cuerpos ni valor en sus ánimos; los escuadrones mal formados, las armas tomadas de orín, los caballos, o flacos o regalados, no acostumbrados a sufrir el polvo, el calor, las tempestades.
>
> The army was composed of all kinds of scrub, people that just took up place, with little experience; they possessed neither physical strength nor valour of the soul; the squadrons were poorly formed, the arms rusty, the horses either skinny or stolen, unaccustomed to suffer dust, heat or tempests.

32 Mariana (1780: 339–342). There are separate sources for the battle itself, including first of all the *Chronicle of 754* (also called the *Mozarabic Chronicle* or *Continuatio Hispana*), a Latin chronicle in 95 parts written by an anonymous Mozarab writer in Al-Andalus or Moslem Spain. My focus here, however, is less on the battle itself than on how Mariana portrays its causes and I will therefore not go further into this.
33 Mariana (1780: 335):

> Tal era el estado de las cosas de España a la sazón que don Rodrigo, excluidos los hijos de Witiza, se encargó del reino de los godos por voto, como muchos sienten, de los grandes; que ni las voluntades de la gente se podían soldar por estar entre sí diferentes con las parcialidades y bandos, ni tenían fuerzas bastantes para contrastar a los enemigos de fuera. Hallábanse faltos de amigos que los socorriesen, y ellos por sí mismos tenían los cuerpos flacos y los ánimos afeminados a causa de la soltura de su vida y costumbres. Todo era convites, manjares delicados y vino, conque tenían estragadas las fuerzas, y con las deshonestidades de todo punto perdidas, y a ejemplo de los principales, los más del pueblo hacían una vida torpe e infame. Eran muy a propósito para levantar bullicios, para hacer fieros y desgarros, pero muy inhábiles para acudir a las armas y venir a las puñadas con los enemigos. Finalmente, el imperio y señorío, ganado por valor y esfuerzo, se perdió por la abundancia y deleites que de ordinario le acompañan.

34 Mariana (1780: 342):

> Fueron los años pasados muy estériles, y dejada la labranza de los campos a causa de las guerras, España padeció trabajos de hambre y peste. Los naturales, enflaquecidos con estos males, tomaron las armas con poco brío; los vicios principalmente y la deshonestidad los tenían de todo punto estragados, y el castigo de Dios los hizo despeñar en desgracias tan grandes.

35 Plato (1999: 215). In this passage, in the midst of his famous Homer critique, Socrates applauds Homeric passages such as that in *Iliad* 3:8: "Breathing high spirits the Greeks marched silently fearing their captains."
36 Mariana (1780: 341).
37 Mariana (1780: 335):

> Era de corazón osado para acometer cualquiera hazaña, grande su liberalidad, y extraordinaria la destreza para granjear las voluntades, tratar y llevar al cabo negocios dificultosos. Tal era antes que le entregasen el gobernalle; mas luego que le hicieron rey se trocó y afeó todas las sobredichas virtudes con no menores vicios.
>
> In his heart, he was so bold as to commit any deed, his liberality was great, extraordinary his skill in winning people over and in concluding difficult business. This was before he was made to rule; but after they made him king, he changed and spoiled all the said virtues with no smaller vices.

38 "Paréceme a mí," "It seems to me" (1780: 335); "Juntóse a este llamamiento gran número de gente; los que menos cuentan dicen fueron pasados de cien mil combatientes," "A great number of people aligned with this call; those who say the least count more than a hundred thousand combatants" (340); "Pelearon ocho días continuos en un mismo lugar; los siete escaramuzaron, como yo lo entiendo," "They fought eight days in a row in the same place; seven of these days, as I understand it, they skirmished" (ibid.); "Del suceso no se escribe; debió ser vario," "Nothing has been written of this events; it could be many things" (ibid.); "[…] vendría a ser por el mes de junio conforme a la cuenta de los árabes; pero yo más creo fuese a 11 de noviembre, día de san Martín, según se entiende del *Cronicón albeldense*, año de nuestra salvación de 714," "[…] according to the Arabs' account it was around June, but I rather believe it was 11 November, the day of St Martin, as stated in the Albeda Chronicle, the year of our salvation 714" (ibid.); "entiendo yo," "as far as I understand" (342); "Don Pelayo, de quien algunos sospechan se halló en la batalla, perdida toda esperanza parece se retiró," "Don Pelayo, of whom is suspected that he participated in the battle, appears to retired when all hope was out (342); "otros dicen que se fue a Toledo," "others say he went to Toledo" (ibid.).
39 "No hay para qué encarecerlo, pues cada cual lo podrá juzgar por sí mismo," "There is no reason to praise him, for everyone can judge for themselves" (1780: 336);

> Algunos tienen todo esto por fábula, por invención y patraña; nos ni la aprobamos por verdadera ni la desechamos como falsa; el lector podrá juzgar libremente y seguir lo que le pareciere probable. No pareció pasarla en silencio por los muchos y muy graves autores que la relatan, bien que no todos de una manera.
>
> Some hold all this to be but a fable, an invention or a tall story. We do not verify it as true nor do we reject it as false; the reader is free to judge and believe what is found probable. It did not seem right to pass it over in silence, considering the many and grave authors who relate it, albeit not all in the same way.
>
> (ibid.: 337)

40 See his empathetic description of the feelings of the Christian army, the Arab invaders and Rodrigo himself:

> Ellos, atónitos con traición tan grande y por estar cansados de pelear, no pudieron sufrir aquel nuevo ímpetu, y sin dificultad fueron rotos y

> puestos en huida, no obstante que el rey con los más esforzados peleaba entre los primeros y acudía a todas partes, socorría a los que veía en peligro, en lugar de los heridos y muertos ponía otros sanos, detenía a los que huían, a veces con su misma mano.
>
> These, astonished with such great treason and tired from fighting, could not repel this new force and were effortlessly slain and sent fleeing, although the king was fighting among in the front row and was virtually everywhere, saving those whom he saw to be in danger, changing the dead and the wounded for other that were well and holding back those who tried to flee, sometimes even with his own hand.
>
> (1780: 341)

> Los unos y los otros deseaban grandemente venir a las manos; los moros orgullosos con la victoria; los godos por vengarse, por su patria, hijos, mujeres y libertad no dudaban poner a riesgo las vidas, sin embargo que gran parte de ellos sentían en sus corazones una tristeza extraordinaria, y un silencio cual suele caer a las veces como presagio del mal que ha de venir sobre algunos. Al mismo Rey, congojado de cuidados entre día, de noche le espantaban sueños y representaciones muy tristes.
>
> The ones and the others greatly wished to begin: The Moors proud of their victory, the Goths to revenge themselves, for their homeland, sons, wives and liberty did not hesitate to put their lives at risk, although most of them felt in their heart an extraordinary sadness and a silence that is wont to fall as the portent of a coming evil. The king, distressed with worries at day, was frightened in the night by very sad dreams and visions.
>
> (340)

> Irritáronse ellos con aquella respuesta y palabra de aquel hombre afeminado.
>
> They were annoyed by the answer and words of that effeminate man.
>
> (338)

41 Subsequent quotes from Mariana (1780: 336).

42 Mariana (1780: 336):

> Con cuántas lágrimas describa esto, estas manchas y borrones lo declaran; pero si no lo hago luego, daré sospecha que, no sólo el cuerpo ha sido ensuciado, sino también amancillada el alma con mancha e infamia perpetua.

43 Mariana (1780: 336):

> En una palabra; vuestra hija, vuestra sangre y de la alcurnia real de los godos, por el rey don Rodrigo, al que estaba (mal pecado) encomendada como la oveja al lobo, con una maldad increíble ha sido afrentada.

44 Mariana (1780: 340): "vengar las injurias hechas a nosotros y a nuestra santa fe."

45 Mariana (1780:340):

> ¿Qué otra causa tienen de movernos guerra, sino pretender de quitar la libertad a vos, a vuestros hijos, mujeres y patria, saquear y echar por tierra los templos de Dios, hollar y profanar los altares, sacramentos y todas las cosas sagradas como lo han hecho en otras partes?

46 Subsequent quotes from Mariana (1780: 341).
47 Mariana (1780: 341):

> nadie podrá escapar con la vida, sino fuere peleando. No hay lugar de huir; en las manos y en el esfuerzo está puesta toda la esperanza"; "En vuestras diestras consiste y lleváis el imperio, la salud, el alegría del tiempo presente, y del venidero la esperanza"; "¿Temeréis por ventura este ejército sin armas, juntado de las heces del vulgo, sin orden y sin valor?

48 Ibid.:

> Hasta ahora han hecho guerra contra eunucos; sientan qué cosa es acometer a la invencible sangre de los godos"; "El juego está entablado de manera que no se podrá perder.

49 "renovar la fama … a las memorias de las gentes" Quoted in Case (1975: 203–204).
50 To the "mito neogótico," originating in Lucas de Tuy's *Chronicle of the World* (1236) and the archbishop Jiménez de Rada's *On the Affairs of Spain* (early thirteenth century), see Márquez Villanueva (1981: 361–365) and Bernabé Pons (2001: xlv).
51 Bernabé Pons (2001: xxii) thus presents the Lead Books of Sacromonte as an "intellectual rebellion," a cultural rehabilitation of the *moriscos* vis-à-vis the unsuccessful political rebellion of the Alpujarras, and – we may add – the imminent threat of deportation that would be a reality in 1609.
52 For a brief overview of the Lead Books of Sacromonte [Spanish "libros plúmbeos de Sacromonte"] affair and Miguel de Luna's role in it, see Bernabé Pons' introduction to Luna (2001).
53 Alongside the historian Luis Mármol de Carvajal, Bernabé Pons lists famous intellectuals and humanists such as Benito Arias Montano, Pedro de Valencia, Juan Bautista Pérez and Ignacio de las Casas among those critical of Luna's and Castillo's "findings" (2001: xxvi).
54 For Luna's anachronistic "Hispanización" of Al-Andalus, see Márquez Villanueva (1981: 372–374). For a more nuanced historical study of Golden Age historical forgery, albeit with focus on the Jesuit Román de la Higuera's *cronicones* of early Christian Spain (1594), see Olds (2015).
55 The work was reissued five times during the author's lifetime plus four more times during the seventeenth century, and quite quickly translated into various European languages (English 1627; French 1638; Italian 1648). See Bernabé Pons (2001: xxxvi–xxxviii).
56 Like the contemporaneous author of the false *cronicones*, Jerónimo Román de la Higuera, main object of Olds' analysis, Miguel de Luna was a highly trained individual with an extensive knowledge of historiographical scholarship. To the scholarly aspects of early modern Spanish historical forgery, see Olds (2015).
57 See Bernabé Pons in Luna (2001: xl–xliii); Olds (2015: 14–15).
58 See Márquez Villanueva's résumé of the work's modern reception (1981: 360 note 3): "M. Menéndez Pelayo" considers it a "ridiculous and dull book" which "obtained a scandalous celebrity" and sees Luna as "an inept forger" who "outrageously" intended to supplant the Rodrigo tradition epitomised by Pedro de Corral's work (*Origins of the Novel*, Santander, 1943, t. 2: 106). To R. Menéndez Pidal (*Verdant Grove of Spanish Heroic Legends. Rodrigo, the Last Goth*, Madrid, 1925–1927, 3 ts.), Luna and his work are the epitome of "a series of grand impostures through which Spanish historiography degraded from the end of the 16th century" (t. 2: 48).

59 Márquez Villanueva (1981: 361).
60 Bernabé Pons in Luna (2001: lxix).
61 Miguel de Luna (2001: 25):

> Salido el Rey desta torre, luego mandò juntar hombres sabios, para determinar con certidumbre lo que significauan aquellas letras, y auiendo conferido, y estudiado sobre ellas, vinieron à declarar, que aquella vision, y estatua de bronce, significaua el tiempo: con el mouimiento q hazia significaua su oficio escrito en los pechos, q jamàs sosiega punto, ni momento. El epitafio en sus espaldas, que dize A Arabes inuoco, significaua, que andando el tiempo España auia de ser conquistada de los Arabes. Las letras de la parte de la mano izquierda, dieron à entender la perdida del Rey D. Rodrigo. Las de la mano derecha, la mala calamidad q auia de venir por los Españoles, y Godos, y como el desdichado Rey auia de ser desposseido de todos sus Estados. Y finalmente las letras de la portada significauan q auia de auer bienes para los conquistadores, y males para los conquistados, como despues la experiencia mostrò ser assi.
>
> After the king had left the tower, he ordered that a group of sages be assembled who could determine with certainty what these letters meant. When they had studied them, they declared that the vision and bronze statue signified time: With the movement it made, it signified its working in the hearts which never rests not even for a moment. The epitaph on its back which says 'I invoke Arabs' meant that Spain would eventually be conquered by the Arabs. The letters on the left hand represented King Don Rodrigo's loss. Those of the right hand, the evil calamity that would befall the Spanish and Goths, how the wretched king would be dispossessed of all his estate. And finally, the letters of the façade signified that there would be good things for the conquerors and bad things for the conquered, as experience also later showed.

62 See Bernabé Pons in Luna (2001: xxxviii); Márquez Villanueva (1981: 369–370).
63 "Bastantemente tiene hecha cumplida demonstracion la experiencia, que con el continuo exercicio del hombre, las ciencias reciben perfeccion, y aumento: y el que las sigue, ornato de grandes virtudes, leuantandole el entendimiento à contemplar altas, y diuinas contemplaciones, y finalmente adquiere con ellas modo para pielago de la ciega, y monstruosa ignorancia. Con este designio (Catolica Magestad) començè desde mi niñez à cultiuar mi ingenio en este dulce, y sabroso exercicio de las letras, mayormente en la facultad Arabiga, de el qual saquè à luz, y resuscitè esta presente Historia, tan deseada de nuestros Españoles" (Luna 2001: "Proemio al Rey Nuestro Señor", unpag.).
64 Luna (2001: 2): "La causa principal de mi atreuimiento, fue auerme hallado en la guerra de España."
65 Luna (2001: 8): "Esta carta fue traducida por Abentarique, de lengua Castellana en Arabiga, y aora se bolviò à traducir del Arabigo en romance, y fue hallada en la Camara del Rey Don Rodrigo, en la Ciudad de Cordoua."
66 See the relevant characterisation of this "Annian" type of historical writing in Popper (2011: 379):

> Conviction of received illumination authenticated their claims, and personal sanctity endowed their evidence with credibility. For such scholars, *fides* derived from their commitment to the recording of divine truth, rather than in the dispassionate reporting of worldly events.

67 Luna (2001: 23):

> […] determinaron entre ellos de abrir la torre encantada, que estaua en aquella Ciudad de Toledo, pensando sacar de ella gran tesoro, la qual por ser digna de notar, no dexarè de contar por extenso lo que della me contò este Arçobispo Troiso, auiendo hecho del vando del Conde Don Julian en nuestro campo, como persona que se hallò presente quando la abriò el Rey Don Rodrigo: la qual relacion me contò desta manera.

As Bernabé Pons notes (Luna, 2001: lxvi–lxvii), it remains a "misterio" which Arabic sources Luna had at his disposal, but the testimony of an archbishop turned traitor in all likelihood was not one.

68 In the words of Isabel Lozano Renieblas (2003: 90):

> In the prologue to *Amadis*, Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo writes that he has translated *Las sergas de Esplandián*. After him, numerous authors of chivalric novels claim to have translated their works from some ancient language, such as Greek, Latin or Arabic. From the Greek are translated, according to their authors, *Palmerín de Oliva*, *Primaleón* or *Cirongilia de Tracia*; from Latin *Amadís de Grecia*, *Florisel de Niquea*; and *El caballero de la cruz* from Arabic. Others, for the lack of a suitable classic or oriental language did not hesitate to affirm that they had translated their works from Italian, German, English or, indeed, Hungarian, such as Juan de Barros' *Crónica del emperador Clarimundo*. This [found manuscript] topic culminates with the invention of Cide Hamete and the transcribed Moorish translator of the Arabic manuscript of the *Quijote*.

See also Olds (2015: 14).

69 We know by now that Luna does not take quoting lightly and the passage thus duly names its sources:

> èl lo muestra en la carta que escriuio a Rustico Monge, y à Eustochio virgen, en el epitafio de su madre Santa Paula, y en la carta à Sunia, Fratella Alemanes, y en las questiones Hebraicas sobre el Genesis.
>
> he shows it in the letter which he wrote to Rufinus the Monk, and to Eustochio concerning the Virgin, in the epitaph for his mother St. Paula and in a letter to Sunnia, Fratella Alemanes, as well as in the *Expositiones in Hebraicas*.
>
> (Luna, 2001: "Proemio al Christiano Lector" [unpag. 1])

70 Luna (2001: "Proemio al Christiano Lector" [unpag. 1–2]): "con vna lectura tan verdadera como esta es, y tan deseada de nuestros Españoles, siendo de Autor tan graue, y que con tanta verdad la aya tratado."

71 Luna (2001: "Proemio al Christiano Lector" [unpag. 2–3]).

72 Luna (2001: "Proemio al Christiano Lector" [unpag. 4]): "Destos caminos que auemos referido, pareciendome el mas conueniente de todos, escogi para esta version el que guardè juntos el sentido, y la letra."

73 Luna (2001: "Proemio al Christiano Lector" [unpag. 4]): "acortè al margen los mismos vocablos Arabigos, que eran dificultosos."

74 Luna (2001: "Proemio al Christiano Lector" [unpag. 4]): "Destos caminos que auemos referido, pareciendome el mas conueniente de todos, escogi para esta version el que guardè juntos el sentido, y la letra."

75 E.g., Luna (2001: 4): "Exteriormente llama el Arabigo aldahir" and "Interior llaman los Aragigos [sic] alcahir."

76 Luna (2001: "Proemio al Christiano Lector" [unpag. 2]): "tratar, y memorar con verdad la pèrdida del Rey Don Rodrigo, y conquista de España [...] dando à cada vno el valor, y honra, de la qual le dotò naturaleza."

77 Luna (2001: "Proemio al Christiano Lector" [unpag. 4]):

> ay diferentes datas, à causa que en aquellos tiempos passados contauan los Romanos, y Godos sus años de la Era de Cesar; la qual se ha de entender treinta y ocho años antes del Nacimiento de Christo nuestro Redentor; y los Arabes cuentan su Hixera, que es quando tuvo principio su secta, la qual concuerda el año de nouenta y vno della, que fue donde el Autor començò esta lectura, con el año del Nacimiento de N. Señor de setecientos y doze.
>
> There are different dates because, in those times, Romans and Goths counted the years of the ear of Caesar, by which must be understood 38 years before the birth of Christ our saviour; and the Arabs used their *Hijiri*, which counts from when their sect began, and according to which it happened in the year 91, which was when the Author began this lesson, in the year 712 after the birth of our Lord.

78 Luna (2001: 10): "Esta era ha de entender 38 años antes del advenimiento de Christo nuestro Redentor."

79 Luna (2001: 8): "Esta carta fue traducida por Abentarique, de lengua Castellana en Arabiga, y aora se bolviò a traducir de Arabigo en romance [...]."

Part II
Poeticising History

3 Theory of Poetry

> Categories like fiction and non-fiction are far from being universal and they were by no means clearly differentiated in sixteenth-century Spain. 'Vernacular prose' to some authorities would have been a contradiction in terms. Romances of chivalry and sentimental novels were in many ways hybrids, bridging the gap between the categories of History and Poetry. There had always been some room for fiction in historical accounts, which might incorporate the fabulous and the hearsay in the interest of entertainment or edification. But, for the most part, fact, or whatever went under the guise of fact, was the realm of History. Unashamed fiction went under the banner of poetic truth and was the province of Poetry.
>
> Barry W. Ife, *Reading and Fiction in Golden Age Spain* 10

> If Carvallo [...] almost deserves to be counted among the authors of Romanticist poetics [...] the three hyper-erudite books by Pinciano, Cascales and González de Salas give us classical doctrine with such purity and mastery that those who have read the *Ancient Philosophy*, the *Poetic Tables* and *New Idea of Tragedy* will be able to learn very little or indeed nothing about Aristotle and Horace from the Latin and Italian poetices composed during the 16th century by Julius Caesar Scaliger, Castelvetro, Minturno, Robortello and the other Italians which our theorists sometimes follow, though with independence and proper judgement.
>
> Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *History of Aesthetic Ideas in Spain* 487[1]

In *Reading and Fiction in Golden-Age Spain. A Platonist Critique and Some Picaresque Replies* (1985), the English Hispanist Barry W. Ife explores the Golden Age conception of literature, analysing the period's Platonic critique of fiction and the strategies developed by contemporaneous writers in response to this critique. In Golden Age Spain, he argues, there was a virtual theoretical abyss separating truthful history from the "poetic truth" of "unashamed fiction" which writers tried to bridge by employing different types of apologising, illusion-breaking

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devices that would make their fictions less "unashamed," more self-conscious or self-reflective. Ife's study primarily concerns the picaresque, but his analysis of the anti-poetical climate in Golden Age Spain and the hybrid forms developed by writers in response to this climate also applies to the products of aesthetic-historical culture under scrutiny in the present context. Like the anonymous author of *The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) or Mateo Alemán, author of *The Life of Guzman de Alfarache* (1599), writers of historical prose, historical poetry and historical drama did not answer to any strict differentiation of history and poetry, but – as we have already seen in Mariana and Luna – developed and employed an array of aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices in order to cloak their historical and pseudo-historical accounts in the "guise of fact." In so doing, they may have gone against the grain of contemporaneous theological thinkers and moral writers.[2] However, they did not depart from the recommendations of Golden Age literary theorists striving, instead, to achieve the same balance between truthfulness and invention recommended by these theorists.

In *History of Aesthetic Ideas in Spain* (*Historia de las ideas estéticas en España*, 1883), Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo boldly presented his compatriots Alonso López – nicknamed the "Pinciano" after his native city Valladolid, the ancient Pintia – Francisco de Cascales and Jusepe Antonio González de Salas as frontrunners of contemporaneous poetics; as a kind of late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century European theoretical avant-garde. Against prevailing critical conceptions, the young Complutense professor of literature and philosophy praised the ability of these Spanish *preceptistas* to reconcile a profound understanding of "classical doctrine" with a sympathetic attitude towards the innovations of contemporaneous Spanish literary writers and dramatists.[3]

Though one could wish for a greater patience with the "extremely rare" nature of some of the Golden Ages *artes poeticae*, Menéndez Pelayo's positive assessment of these treatises actually did hit the nail on the head. As I have discussed elsewhere, Golden Age theorists were much superior to their reputation as die-hard classicists.[4] A few theorists were, indeed, almost romantic in their defence of poetic freedom and imagination. And though the rest of them were quite unequivocal in differentiating truth and poetry, they were far from unwelcoming towards poetic experimentation as long as it served a moral purpose and followed at least some idea of decorum. As we shall see, Golden Age literary theorists developed the concept of "verisimilitude" precisely in order to reconcile Aristotle's idea of the poet's freedom of invention (particularly in dealing with historical subjects) with the demand for truthfulness imposed by the period's Platonic epistemology. Their stance is thus directly comparable to that of the theorists of history discussed in the first chapter who, as we have seen, applied concepts of the verisimilar and "true falseness" to similar ends, operating an identical idea of human

intellectual industry as an art, a craft, as form-giving. In many respects, it is nuance rather than essence which separates the period's theorists of history from the theorists of literature.

Indeed, though they tended to see the relation between history and poetry from the diametrically opposite perspective, Golden Age literary theorists discussed poetic imitation and historical mimesis in much the same vein as their historiographical colleagues, seeking to sort out this relation to the mutual benefit of both. Vis-à-vis the Platonic challenge to poetry, as we may call it, theorists such as Pinciano and Luis de Carvallo expressly underscored the universality of poetic imagination and the poet's corresponding freedom to – at least to some extent – creatively reimagine the past, on more than one occasion referring to poetry's perceived divine origin to justify this claim. Though he underscored that the principal action had to be true, Cascales basically agreed, quoting Aristotle's slightly twisted words that "It is not the poet's business to narrate things precisely the way they happened, but how they could have or should have happened after the law of the verisimilar and necessary."[5]

At the same time, however, Golden Age theorists emphasised the edifying end of all literature, whether based on historical fact or not. Though they arguably represented one extreme of the theoretical spectrum, Pinciano's and Carvallo's defences of the poet's freedom of invention formed part of an impressive array of poetological treatises which all essentially defended poetry against the accusations of falsehood and manipulation of truth levelled at it by moralists and dogmatists. Between Francisco Sánchez de Las Brozas' commentary on Horace (1558) and Jusepe Antonio González de Salas' reinterpretation of Aristotle in *New Idea of Ancient Tragedy* (*Nueva idea de la antigua tragedia*, 1633), Golden Age Spain produced more than a handful of weighty treatises.[6] To these can be added as much as three different annotated translations of Aristotle's *Poetics* within a single decade.[7]

Beginning in the second part of the sixteenth century, peaking in the decades around 1600 and dying away with the closing of the 1630s, the Spanish poetological vogue coincided quite precisely with the golden age of the Golden Age *ars historica*. This coincidence was no mere coincidence. Both sprang from the same humanist tradition informed by the idea of knowledge as an art and of art, in turn, as metaphysical enquiry; and like their historiographical counterparts, Golden Age literary theorists aimed to produce the stylistic guidelines of an at once edifying and delightful writing, historical as well as invented. Indeed, although the literary theorists obviously did not share their colleagues' anxiety of poetry, the *artes poeticae* are at times almost indistinguishable from the *artes historicae* – except, perhaps, for the slightly more defensive approach also observable, for example, in Philip Sidney's more acclaimed *Defence of Poesie* (published 1595). Like their European colleagues, Spanish literary theorists of this period not without reason perceived poetry to

be an endangered species of discourse in need of defence and even – as Fernando Luis Vera y Mendoza's *Panegyric for Poetry* (*Panegírico por la poesía*, 1627) suggested – of confident hyperbolical exaltation. Their answers to the challenge posed by Platonic epistemology were different shades of Aristotelian. Against the critique of poetry for being unphilosophical – untruthful – they implicitly or explicitly referred Aristotle's words in *Poetics* 1451 b about the "universal truth" communicated by poetry, pinning it against the historian's "particular" accounts.[8]

In the Golden Age defence of poetry, the theoretical clarification and vindication of the concepts of "verisimilitude" and "imitation" became key. These are, of course, highly pertinent to historical prose as well as to historical poetry and historical drama.

Weaving a Story

Though it be but little read outside of Spain, the *Ancient Poetic Philosophy* (*Philosophia antigua poética*, 1596) penned by the royal physician to Philip II's sister, Alonso López el Pinciano (1547–1627), can be considered a milestone of late sixteenth-century European literary theory. As we have seen, the weighty authority of Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo put the *Philosophy* on a par – or actually above – the more famous Italian treatises *Explications of Aristotle's Art of Poetry* by Robortello (*In librum Aristotelis* de arte poetica *explicationes*, 1548), Scaliger's *Seven Books of Poetics* (*Poetices libri septem*, 1561), Minturno's *Art of Poetry* (*L'Arte poetica*, 1564) and *Aristotle's Poetics Popularised and Explained* by Castelvetro (*Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata e sposta*, 1570). Indeed, though the Cantabrian professor deemed Pinciano's exposition of Aristotelian poetics "bizarre," he considered the *pucelano* an "excellent critic."[9]

Whether we perceive this as bizarre or not, the *Philosophy* mixes what can be termed epistolary novel and humanist dialogue. It presents 13 "epistles" and 13 "answers" allegedly exchanged between Pinciano and a friend, one Don Gabriel. In his letters to this friend, Pinciano more or less verbatim refers a series of conversations on the nature and species of poetry which purportedly took place in the home of a historian named Fadrique between the same Fadrique, Pinciano and a poet by the name of Ugo. The latter, "a laureate from the University of Poland," predictably embodies an Aristotelian pro-poetic viewpoint while Fadrique, given his profession, represents a Platonic truth-oriented perspective. Pinciano generally performs the role of a slightly naïve amateur of poetry, asking all the 'stupid' questions which make the conversation flow.[10] To enhance the realism of this narrative frame, the epistles end with Pinciano withdrawing to his room to write his friend after a good long day of spirited conversation, reporting the contents of the dialogues and the conclusions reached.[11] In his subsequently reproduced answers to Pinciano's letters, Don Gabriel weighs in with his opinion on the matters discussed

by the interlocutors at Fadrique's house – in the first four epistles, superordinate aspects such as the role of beauty in human happiness (epistle 1), the art of poetry broadly (epistle 2), the essence and origin of poetry (epistle 3) and the ramification in genres (epistle 4);[12] afterwards, more specific questions concerning fable (epistle 5), poetic language (epistle 6) and metre (epistle 7); and then the different poetic genres: Tragedy (epistle 8), comedy (epistle 9), "dithyrambic" poetry or satire (epistle 10), "heroic" poetry or epic (epistle 11), minor genres (epistle 12). The 13th and final letter concerns actors and scenification.

With its thorough discussion of all these different aspects relating to imitative art, Pinciano's work presents a rounded and comprehensive exposition of Aristotelian theory. However, by letting a group of interlocutors discuss Aristotle's *Poetics* 'Plato style,' the *Philosophy* simultaneously frames the Stagirite's famous defence of poetic imitation with Plato's proverbially poetry-critical idealist philosophy. The very form of Pinciano's *ars poetica* thus appears to contradict its content, yet the *Philosophy* – like Fox Morcillo's *Five Books on Natural Philosophy or the Agreement between Plato and Aristotle* (*De naturæ philosophia seu de Platonis et Aristotelis consensione libri quinque*, 1554) – attempts to reconcile Platonic and Aristotelian approaches to poetry. Though my interest here is first of all in the concepts of imitation and verisimilitude in relation to historical poetry, Pinciano's development of these concepts rests on the confraternisation of Plato and Aristotle established in the "Second epistle, or prologue to the Ancient Philosophy" which I will therefore begin by briefly explicating. The "plot" of this seminal part of Pinciano's poetics is the Aristotelian and poet Ugo's gradual recognition that Plato was, after all, on the side of the poets, not against them. Complement of this recognition is the acknowledgement that the "Philosopho" – as Aristotle is persistently called in the *Philosophy* – also occasionally uttered a more critical view of art than the one usually ascribed to him. Thus, the interlocutors set out establishing that the *Politics* operated a definition of art as something potentially harmful, distinguishing between a "noble art" and a "vile art":

> To this Ugo answered:
>
> According to Aristotle in the *Nichomachean Ethics* and as can be deduced from other great thinkers, art is a way of doing things reasonably, I mean applying reason; and in this sense, Ovidian love was an art just as poetry is an art. Yet, I would use the latter as an example of noble art and the former as an example of vile art.
>
> "I think I understand" – Pinciano responded – "but I would like to know more about how an art can be 'vile' and how we can know if the art of poetry escapes being so." To this Ugo said:
>
> According to the existing definition, both the so-called liberal arts and the mechanical arts, or what we today would term the trades, are included under the name of art. This being said, I would like

> to recall that the Philosopher, in *Politics*, touches on the problem of vile arts, saying: 'As vile exercise should be considered all the arts and disciplines which separate either the body or the soul of humankind from virtue'. And thus it is that the art of love is vile as are those which the Philosopher says occupy the understanding with mere things and which are always accompanied by lies.[13]

Given his distinction between a "good" and a "bad" art outside the *Poetics*, the proverbial defender of poetry was perhaps not so much at odds with his purportedly poetry-hating master after all. Despite his famous rejection of the poets in *Republic*, Plato in various other parts of his work showed himself sympathetic towards poetry just as his own writing reveals a striking stylistic mastery.[14] Indeed, as Pinciano states at the beginning and end of the second letter, the reputed hater of poets can himself be considered a poet.[15] True, the originator of idealistic philosophy could not accept the abuse of poetry to immoral ends nor tolerate poets who upset the minds of the citizens in his perfect republic with their tragic fables about human suffering, but he was ultimately "on the side of the poets," as Ugo finally concedes:[16]

> [...] Thus, I say that, in what refers to Plato, there are two forms of poetry; a mimetic one which consists in narrative [*fabula*] and a non-mimetic one which consists in metre. And with this definition drawn from Plato himself, your two great challenges are solved, for if there exists both a mimetic and a non-mimetic poetry, Plato was perfectly able to expel the mimetic one from his Platonic republic and admit the non-mimetic which consists in hymns, songs and that sort of thing, as he indeed did in *Republic* 5 and *Laws* 2.
>
> Fadrique went quiet and Ugo said:
>
> Certainly, Sir Fadrique, you speak so soundly that I have nothing to say and cannot dispute your argument, and I am very satisfied that Plato is on our side. For we who profess poetry are always confronted with Plato's expulsion of the poets and banishment by a man so just must perforce be just. Yet, for all the things he said about Homer, that he did not teach and that there is little doctrine in his works and other similar things, in the end we have him on our side.[17]

What Pinciano is arguing for in the second epistle is thus, essentially, a more holistic understanding of Aristotle's and Plato's views on poetry, one which does not cherry-pick single utterances and read them as theorems but which takes the context into account: The perspectives on art in Aristotle's *Politics* and Plato's *Republic* are necessarily different from the ones found in, say, *Poetics* or *Phaedrus*.[18] More precisely, the second epistle of the *Philosophy* reads as a revindication of poetry which

cleverly addresses the contemporaneous critique of poets' mendacious embellishment of the truth in order to pacify it. A defence of poetic invention and imitation, this revindication removes the most serious obstacle to the Golden Age *ars poetica* – and *ars historica* – namely Plato's expulsion of the poets from his ideal republic on the grounds of their alleged falsification of reality; or because of their imaginative exploration, in Aristotle's words, of what Alcibiades "would or could have said or done" (*τὰ ποῖα συμβαίνει λέγειν ἢ πράττειν*), being the kind of person that he was, rather than what he "actually did say or do" (*τί Ἀλκιβιάδης ἔπραξεν ἢ τί ἔπαθεν*):[19]

> [Fadrique] And as you recognise that I have wandered these paths before, I say that Plato, in *Republic* 9, says that Poetry agitates and disturbs the souls of humankind; and in book 10 he says that it is naff and fibber and three removes from the truth; and being thus agitated and deceitful, it is his last and ultimate wish that it leaves his most holy Republic. […] A poet who agitates the souls with a fiction that never happened and which is so distant from the truth, sometimes making people laugh in a decomposing manner and at other times making them cry so that their hearts ache and they are much perturbed: This is bad, according to Plato.
>
> Whereupon Pinciano said: "And so it is according to me."[20]

Like Aristotle, Plato distinguished between a morally corruptive art and a spiritually edifying art, adopting various poetological perspectives in his different dialogues, rejecting some forms of poetry (tragedy), but essentially approving of a poetry that corroborated with the moral norms and civic needs of a given society. To illustrate his point, Pinciano narrates an anecdote about a friend who was found lifeless in his room one night by the maid. When he recovered from what luckily turned out to be but "a deep faint" and was asked what had happened, he answered that he had been reading *Amadis of Gaul* and became so affected by what he read that he passed out.[21] In a gesture inspired by Vives' Platonic critique of chivalric romance in the second book of *On the Causes of Corruption of the Arts* (*De causis corruptarum artium*, 1531), famously resumed by Cervantes a decade later, Pinciano draws the conclusion from this anecdote that "these fictions" are highly dangerous indeed.[22] In other words, Plato was right in his scepticism and the fact that he did not uncritically accept all sorts of harmful fictions cannot be used as an argument for a general hate of poetry on his part. Thus, the three interlocutors in Fadrique's house can finally agree that poetic imitation of reality – of the life and deeds of famous knights, for example, or kings – is admissible as long as it takes care not to upset the audience and aims instead to teach edifying lessons. Yet it becomes condemnable if it does not heed the imperative to use its overwhelming

allure to educate readers. In his "answer to Pinciano's second epistle," Don Gabriel expresses his agreement with this conclusion, closing the more general part of the *Philosophy* on the art of poetry broadly:

> I have read it and was much delighted by the answers and I am still impressed with how Fadrique managed to reconcile Plato and the Philosopher in the approval of poetry, something that noone – in my view – surely can doubt any longer, for the veneration and great authority with which he invested poetry is clear from many other passages in Plato himself.[23]
>
> For my part at least, I will henceforth not doubt that the Prince of the Academics was in favour of poetry, of what I am convinced by the fact that he himself was a poet and the many praises of poetry that he sings in various places […].[24]

The multifaceted Platonic challenge to poetry being thus laid to rest, the rest of the *Philosophy* can concern itself with what a "noble art" might then look like in practice. It discusses an array of different aspects of poetic creation of greater or lesser import to the present scrutiny of Golden Age aesthetic historiography. In order to understand Pinciano's view of this particular matter, I will first zoom in on what he and his imaginary friends have to say about the relation between history and poetry more generally and then look at their views of a particular genre that is especially pertinent in this regard: The historical epic.

The first thing of note in regard to the relation between history and poetry is that both the historian Fadrique and the poet Ugo subscribe to Aristotle's above-quoted view, expressed in *Poetics* 1451 b, that poetry communicates a form of truth more "universal" than history, a "truth" that can best be described with the concept of verisimilitude.[25] Poetic imitations do not respond to the order of the factually true but obey the rules of the verisimilar which is grander, more noble and more spiritually nourishing than the historian's factual accounts. The *Philosophy* transforms this Aristotelian insight into a virtual defence of a poetic writing whose law is not truthfulness in the veristic sense of the word but instead, like the verisimilitude recommended by the theorists of history, a combination of "delight and doctrine" (in this interesting order). At the end of epistle 5 where the interlocutors discuss the poetic fable, Ugo sums up the interlocutors' conclusions regarding the relation between poetry and history coining the striking image of a loom to describe the specific form of imitation pertinent to historical poetry:

> "I am satisfied," Ugo said and proceeded,
>
> The field of poetry is immense (as Ovid says) and it is not obliged by history, which means that the poet is not bound by the truth but by what is necessary to create verisimilitude. Tragic and epic

> poets use this license in an especially prudent manner in order to make their narrative more verisimilar, using some truths as patches to keep the tapestry of their fictions together. All with the above-mentioned aim of delight and doctrine. Thus, the poems which take history as their foundation are like a piece of fabric whose warp is history and whose weft is imitation and fable. The thread of this weft weaves its fabric with history and it is thus that the poet may take from history what he feels like and leave out what he pleases, so that there is not more history than poetry. For if that is the case, then the poem becomes imperfect and lacking in imitation, as the name says. Lucan has some fabulous imitations yet, being more to the side of history than to fable, he is counted among the historians, as already mentioned.[26]

In order to simultaneously delight and teach, historical poetry may manage the facts of history as it pleases, for these are but the warp upon which the historical poet exercises an imaginative weft, weaving the historical plot as a synthesis of fiction and fact formed by poetical imagination.[27] Indeed, "the poet may take from history what he feels like and leave out what he pleases." Thus, though Pinciano's point of departure is in key respects similar to that of the historical theorists discussed in the previous chapter (based on Plato's case against poetry; aiming for a reconciliation of Aristotelian poetics and Platonic philosophy; citing the intertwinement of doctrine and delight as justification of poetic licence), there is a notable and also expectable shift in emphasis from the *artes historicae* to the art of poetry developed in the *Philosophy*: Whereas Fox Morcillo, Costa and their colleagues could accept and indeed recommended the historian's use of aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices as a means of making the moral lessons of history more lucid and appealing to readers, they would never have accepted the levelling of history and poetic fable, much less have endorsed the creative falsification of historical reality. Truth could be embellished to didactic ends but should never be altered according to the whimsies of the writer. Even San José, who vindicated "true falseness" as the essential form of all human histories, would have found that idea absurd. The literary theorist, however, with backing secured not only from Aristotle but also from Plato – the unpardoning censor of Homer's licentious representation of the historical character Achilles – can subvert the traditional hierarchy between history and poetry, presenting the historical poem that sticks too closely to the facts as "imperfect and lacking in imitation."[28] It is Páez de Castro's ideal of a history writing based on "artifice" and not merely "many truths" taken to extremes.

The concept of historical poetry as something which must transform the dry facts of history into art is further elaborated in epistle 11, on "heroic" or epic poetry. The eventual author of an epic poem about the

eighth-century Visigoth king Pelayo of Asturias – the *Pelagius* (1605) – Pinciano underscores the historical epic as an especially noble form of epic poetry:[29] "In what regards the materials, the epic which is founded in history will be more perfect than that which is not based on any form of truth […]."[30] This is all in theory, of course. For as the conversation about the poetic fable recorded in the fifth letter demonstrates, it is perhaps not so easy in practice to write a historical narrative as it is to theorise about it: It quickly becomes too long and too digressive, including too many historical characters and events unnecessary for the organic unfolding of the plot, for example.[31] However, first of all, it often becomes too "historical" in the Aristotelian sense of reporting facts, or what Páez de Castro called "many truths," instead of reimagining these facts and ordering them in an at once delightful and instructive narrative. The transformation of the empirical "particulars" of history (what Alcibiades said and did) into the "universal" truth of poetry (lifting the particular words and actions of Alcibiades into a higher sphere of meaning) is, in other words, not all that simple. Many examples prove this.

In the *Philosophy*, Lucan's historical epic *Pharsalia* also known as *The Civil War* (first century CE), putting the horrible events of the Roman civil war into highly graphic language, serves as the recurrent example of the problems associated, in the literary theorist's mind, with a work which is part poetry part history.[32] As discussed above, the second epistle aimed to establish Plato as a poet and a someone who was "on the side of poets." The accompaniment of this endeavour is the denunciation of the epic poet Lucan as a mere "historian," or someone who was not on the side of the poets:

> I write news even more novel that those communicated before. And they are that Lucan in the *Pharsalia* was a historian and Plato, in his Dialogues, a poet.[33]
>
> There are some here who have wondered at hearing that Plato was a poet and indeed a lot. Fadrique responded that he was so much so in his dialogues as Lucan was a historian in his *Pharsalia* […].[34]

Because of Lucan's flamboyant language, heavily loaded with epithetes and metaphors, Quintilian considered the *Civil War* a specimen of rhetorical rather than poetic excellence (*The Orator's Education* 10. 1. 90). This view is interpreted somewhat freely by Pinciano and his friends as testimony that the great rhetorician placed Lucan among the historians and not among the poets.[35] In the fifth letter, we learned that Fadrique, Ugo and Pinciano considered the historical poem which adhered too closely to facts "imperfect and lacking in imitation," echoing Páez de Castro's emphasis on the historian's need of "artifice." The historical poet should not simply report past events but work his magic on these events in order to transform them into a compelling narrative to the combined delight and benefit of the reader. In order to make this point about the poet's

necessarily creative take on historical reality, Lucan's epic poem about the Roman civil war is again and again held up as an example of a poem poor in "imitation" and "fable" – that is, the arrangement of historical events in a plot – and, therefore, as history rather than poetry:

> some other [type of poetry] was in verse without fable nor imitation, like Lucan's *Pharsalia* which has very little or almost nothing.
>
> for this reason, Lucretius and Lucan and others such which do not have fables are not Poets.
>
> therefore Lucan who, though he has fables, has fewer of these than factual accounts [*historias*], is counted among the historians.
>
> Lucan has a few fabulous imitations, and since it is more history than fable he is counted among the historians, as already mentioned.
>
> I would rather have been the author of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* than of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. The latter (said Ugo) is not counted among the poets.
>
> The same as has been said of the history of Pelagius, I say that it is very appropriate for the epic, because it is short and that way will not occupy the papers of the poem so that the poet loses space for his imitation: For which Silius Italicus was reproached as was Lucan whose material was so large that they had to decipher what the historians wrote.
>
> if the episodes were removed, that kind of fable would become very dry and would, ultimately, become history and not a poem, just like Lucan's fable.
>
> do carry on with your so happily commenced epic and hopefully with more fortune than Lucan.[36]

As suggested by these quotes, Pinciano in all probability did not take Lucan as his role model when he sat down to compose his *Pelagius* a few years later. Whereas the theorists of history – had they discussed the matter – would have seized on the exaggerated use of poetic language which led Quintilian to place Lucan among the rhetoricians, the literary theorist attacks the *Pharsalia*'s lack of "invention." Indeed, while the Iberian-born Roman would probably have been too much of a poet in the eyes of the former, he was clearly too much of a historian in those of the latter. Together with much that has been said in the first chapter, this little thought experiment indicates how narrow was the path that Golden Age writers of history had to tread in order to conform not only to the restrictions imposed by the period's Platonic epistemology but also to the demands of Aristotelian theory.[37] We shall subsequently see how contemporaneous theory solved this problem recurring to the Ciceronian idea of history as the *magistra vitae*. As Jerónimo de San José

would later argue in relation to historical writing broadly, what mattered first of all was the lesson it imparted, and he therefore began his *Genie of History* with a lengthy consideration of the "Benefit of History." This view was also central to the defence of poetry (historical and other) on the part of another major Golden Age literary theorist.

Benefits of History

Taking off from emblem 184 in Andrea Alciato's famous *Emblems* (*Emblemata*, 1531), "Distinguishing Mark of the Poets," which represents the poets' coat of arms with the image of Apollo's swan, Luis Alfonso de Carvallo's *Apollo's Swan* (*Cisne de Apolo*, 1602) delivers one of the period's most passionate and singular defences of poetry. Against the common prejudice that poets distort the truth and jeopardise public morality with their fabulous 'lies,' this curious *ars poetica* launches the idea of poetry as a form of encrypted spiritual communication:[38] Just like Alciato's emblem, the poets' fables are instructive images riddling an elevated content in a beautiful, symbolic language. They are allegorical figurations of a higher truth.[39]

While its theory of poetry is unequivocally metaphysical, the form of Carvallo's treatise adds a certain dynamism and prevents the *Swan* from becoming sheer panegyric. Following in the footsteps of Pinciano, the Asturian Jesuit and eventual author of *History of the Antiquities and Memorable Things of the Principality of Asturias* (*Historia de las Antigüedades y cosas memorables del Principado de Asturias*, 1613, published posthumously in 1695) gave his treatise the form of a dialogical exchange between the allegorical figure Lectura, defending the high art of poetry as a form of metaphysical contemplation; the likewise generic figure Zoilo, representing a slightly caricatural – vulgar – anti-poetical view; and the author's alter ego, Carvallo, who acts as a kind of secretary summarising the conclusions of the interlocutors in neat octaves at the end of each section or paragraph.[40] Thus, though the reader is left in no doubt about the superordinate message, as Lectura in good Socratic fashion largely runs the show, the *Swan* does give voice to critical questions and opposing views which spark debate but are finally refuted.

Carvallo's art of poetry is a conceptual work in the sense that it circles around the esoteric metaphor of Apollo's sacred bird as a means of circumscribing the essence of poetry, allowing contrasting perspectives to clash within the safe space of erudite conversation.[41] Like Fox Morcillo's *Dialogue*, *Apollo's Swan* is congenial to the period's Platonic epistemology, combining an intense focus on transcendent metaphysical truth with an acute attention to form, tentatively approximating truth through the exercise of style. It is divided into four dialogues, each distributed in varying numbers of paragraphs: Dialogue 1, on poetic invention, containing the theoretical defence of poetry, in 15 paragraphs;

dialogue 2, on poetic disposition or form, with discussions of the different species of poetry, in 19 paragraphs; dialogue 3, also on disposition, but with special focus on the "utility" of the different forms of poetry, in 27 paragraphs; and dialogue 4, on poetic elocution, including passages on poetic fury and decorum along with a final celebration of poetry, in 17 paragraphs.

I begin by briefly considering Carvallo's general view of poetry and development of the concept of poetic verisimilitude, seminal to his literary theory as well as to my discussion of historical mimesis in the present context. In order to oblige Carvallo's curiosity and Zoilo's scepticism, Lectura in the first dialogue presents a serene yet also highly enthusiastic encomium of poetry, citing a medley array of historical examples of the high estimation of poetry among secular rulers and Christian authorities. Her argument is based on revered pagan and Christian authority and her exalting tone exemplifies Ernst Robert Curtius' conception of baroque "theological art theory": The theory of poetry's divine worth and indeed divine origin.[42] Thus, at the end of the first section, the Carvallo character sums up *Apollo's Swan*'s fundamental idea of poetic creation as a furious imaginative practice imitating divine Creation:

> *Through the Swan the Poet is signified,*
> *and a maker properly means*
> *a person who, moved by fury*
> *with a clear, sharp and excellent intellect,*
> *in elegant verse has forged*
> *things greater than humans*
> *can perceive with their human sense,*
> *and who rather imitates God in his artifice.*[43]

From the first sections' superordinate definition of poetry as the clear, witty, acute and excellent putting into elegant verse of the "things greater than humans / can perceive with their human sense," the interlocutors go on to consider the more specific question of poetic invention in I: 6. After Lectura's initial lecturing on the poet's need of learning in order to invent properly, Zoilo here seizes the opportunity to launch an attack on poets' careless handling of the truth: As they never do anything but tell lies anyway, they may as well stick to wholly invented fables and not try to imitate something real which they will just end up misrepresenting. That is a false conclusion, Lectura answers. For there is a notable difference between "inventing" (*fingir*) or "imagining" (*imaginar*) and "lying" (*mentir*) and the latter is the business of liars, not of poets.[44] Establishing a Platonic distinction between the lying and the truthful poet – the reckless fabulist and the divining prophet speaking in delightful and edifying enigmas – this passage prepares the ground for the subsequent explication of Carvallo's allegorical aesthetics in I: 7–8 which continues

I: 9–10 and culminates in I: 11, "That true poetry is licit and approved by our Mother Church. And the origin of vain poetry."

The problem of non-metaphysical poetry is everywhere lurking in the background. Yet in I: 6, the focus is mainly on pinpointing the kind of invention pertaining to admissible – allegorical – poetry. This is where the concept of the verisimilar, as in Cabrera de Córdoba's *ars historica*, comes in handy. In her answer to Zoilo's malicious allegations, Lectura first establishes a distinction between two types of poetic material, "true" and "invented" things. As her dispute with Zoilo revolves mainly around the poets' "fictions," she goes on to specify the latter, subdividing these in "verisimilar" and "fabulous" and expounding on the first:

LECTURA: I have already said that the Poet's material is all the things he cares to treat, true or invented materials. Leaving the true ones apart which are things that really happened or which some doctrine teaches, let us speak of the invented ones which we were arguing about before. Fictions come in two versions, verisimilar or fabulous. The verisimilar are those which narrate something that, if it not actually happened, could have happened or may happen and these must be very transparent [*aparentes*] and close to the truth, with no impossible things being told in them which is repugnant to the general understanding and order of events, and to nature. The Hebrews used such fictions and called them parables through which they represented and taught much and profitable doctrine.

ZOILO: If they are all invented in the end, why do they need so much appearance of truth?

LECTURA: Because these types of fictions have their delight in how things proceed and happen and, being absurd, they tend to offend more than they delight; and in my opinion that is what Horace meant to say in the following verse: *Let fictions be in line with truth*.[45]

Thus, the difference between the poetic licence of true poetry, on the one hand, and sheer lies, on the other hand, is that poetry represents "something which, if it not actually happened, could have happened or may happen" – the Aristotelian *τὰ ποῖα συμβαίνει λέγειν ἢ πράττειν* – and that its fictions are "very transparent [*aparentes*] y close to the truth." Here – as in the didactic approach revealed in the identification of the "verisimilar fictions" with parables – Carvallo differs from Pinciano who, as we have seen, defended the poet's right to "take from history what he feels like and leave out what he pleases." Whereas the author of the *Philosophy* favoured poetic licence above everything else, the theorist behind *Apollo's Swan* recommends as verisimilar a type of fictions which invent something, but "with no impossible things being told in them which is repugnant to the general understanding and order of events, and to nature." The sign of true fictions is precisely that they are true to life, to

"how things proceed and happen," even if they be simultaneously (like the Biblical parables) at once delightful and edifying ciphers of a universal but transcendent truth.

This idea is further extrapolated in the more specific discussion of poets' imaginative yet at the same time highly "beneficial" representation of history in the third dialogue. In this dialogue, the interlocutors discuss the question of the "benefits" of the various forms of poetry.[46] After a while, in paragraphs 8 and 9, "On History and its Benefit" and "Disposition, Parts and Circumstances of History," the subject of *historia* comes up. Though the talk here is expressly of historical poetry and not of the "history" or historical prose discussed by Fox Morcillo, Costa, Cabrera and San José, there are two major points of intersection between Carvallo's *ars poetica* and the *artes historicae*. First, the question of aesthetic-historical hybridity; and second, the idea of history as the collective memory of characters and deeds worthy of imitation. I begin by looking at the question of hybridity or the fact that "taking true things in their hands, [the poets] mix them with so many fictions that one cannot make out what is true and what is false," as Zoilo formulates it in accordance with his usual popularisation of Platonic epistemology.[47] As we have seen, the Golden Age *ars historica* essentially revolved around this problem, which also played a certain part in Pinciano's *Philosophy* (though here it was viewed from the opposite perspective, as works with "little invention" were deemed "unpoetic" or indeed, like Lucan's civil war epic, pejoratively termed "historical"). Considering that history is all about "things that happened and not invented ones" – is it not a problem that poets go around amalgamating fact and fiction in their histories? Well, this is so only to those who are ignorant about art, Lectura answers, rather provocatively.[48] For indeed, there are numerous meaningful and permissible ways for poets to include fictive threads into their historical fabric without deceiving the audience. For one thing, poets may use "examples, comparisons and similarities" – mythical figures, but also "spiritual characters" and even "demons" – as an icing on the cake to adorn and embellish their rendering of the dry facts of history.[49] Furthermore, they are allowed to imagine things that could have happened or perchance happened – the Aristotelian *τὰ ποῖα συμβαίνει λέγειν ἢ πράττειν*.[50] They may also employ typologising devices to tell one story through another.[51]

The only price of all these licences to invent, imagine, adorn and embellish is truthfulness to fact: Poets are not allowed to alter the facts of history at their pleasure for that would be to lie, which is not permitted.[52] However, they may add as many supernatural beings, epithets and similes as they wish to spice up their narratives; or they may present one historical event as a typological variation of another more important event to ponder the significance of the narrated events. As long as they do not mess with chronology or attribute deeds to the wrong historical

persons, as Cervantes discussed in *Quijote* 1: 48, all this is quite alright. What the historical poets should aim for is beautiful, engaging history – "artifice" and not just "many truths," in the words of Páez de Castro. In the end, the literary theorist Carvallo is thus in full agreement with his historiographical colleagues, pondering the historical writer's need to stick to the truth yet also recommending the use of various aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices to make the historical narrative more appealing.

Having clarified the question of hybridity, the interlocutors turn their attention to what kind of "benefit one gets from history." As we have seen in the first chapter, the Ciceronian idea of history as life's schoolmaster had pervaded Golden Age theories of history at least since the time of Juan Luis Vives. Thus, Lectura indirectly quotes Cicero's famous words about history from the *On the Orator*:

> But so many are the benefits that are had from histories that it is impossible to name them all, for history is the light and testimony of truth, life's schoolmaster, president of memory, ambassador of antiquity, through her we get acquainted with all the ages, all the places, all the people, all the nations, all the customs and everything that happened. Through her we get to know foreign deeds which help us know and correct our own; she teaches what to flee and what to pursue; she curbs tyrants and spurs on magnanimous Kings. She does not flatter, dissimulate or deceive; she tells, discovers and declares everything; makes the timid brave, moderates the bold, makes famous the worthy and exhibits as infamous the wicked; praises and exalts virtue and vituperates vice, just like the Swan signifies. Finally, history makes eternal the good deeds so that a glorious memory is had of them and brings down the bad ones, so that the virtuous should not think themselves without praise and the wicked do not confide in that they will stay without the punishment of eternal affront.[53]

The end of this quote touches on the second element of Carvallo's argument that I will discuss here, namely the idea of history as instructive collective memory. Like Fox Morcillo's Foxius, Lectura underscores that the historiographer or historical poet should not only tell of the heroes and triumphs of a given nation; it should also show all the crimes and misdemeanours of our ancestors, for moral edification can likewise be drawn from bad examples. History, in whichever form, should not reduce itself to sycophantic praise: "she tells, discovers and declares everything." Moreover, in continuation of Páez de Castro's perception of history as double imitation – of the virtuous deeds of the ancients and of the admirable representation of these deeds in ancient historians – Lectura emphasises the nobility not only of glorious deeds but also of

their historiographical perpetuation: The one who "spills ink" is just as important as the one who "sheds blood."[54] Indeed, when it comes to public benefit, which is the pivotal point of the third dialogue of the *Swan*, the former is even more important. For whereas the captains' deeds are ephemeral, giving "an example only to those who were present," historians' writings perpetuate these deeds translating them into eternity, presenting "the example to the present, the absent and those of the future." With this noteworthy vindication of history vis-à-vis Zoilo's charge that "taking true things in their hands, [the poets] mix them with so many fictions that one cannot make out what is true and what is false," Carvallo declares himself "satisfied" and concludes the section coining his octave:

> *The name "history" derives from Historeo*
> *for it means to tell of things that happened*
> *there are those who write fiction in them*
> *while others are used for history*
> *but that which is true is always insinuated*
> *with its well-known comforts*
> *and those who did the deeds and those who told them*
> *were awarded the same prize.*[55]

The three interlocutors now proceed with the question of "which style should be used in making histories" (§9), or what may be termed Carvallo's very own *ars historica*. This section interestingly sets out putting the history "written in a book" on a par with the one sung "in a ballad."[56] Stylistically, the historical account and the historical poem obey the same rules; and these, it soon becomes clear, are the ones established by the *ars rhetorica* and adopted by the writers of the *artes historicae*. Though the interlocutors of the *Swan* do not enter into the kind of detailed explications found in the latter, Carvallo's poetics of history rests on the same idea of historiographical style as the one expounded in Fox Morcillo, Castro, Cabrera and San José: Clarity of diction as well as of thought and corresponding moderate use of aesthetic effects;[57] well-organised plot and ingenious narrative structure.[58] All in the service of the "reform of customs."[59] This is all familiar by now. Carvallo's main deviation from his colleagues in historical theory is his greater emphasis on the importance of the exordium as the historian's or historical poet's platform for communicating directly with the audience in order to "win the favour of the person to whom we dedicate the book […] so that it be read with love, attention and caution."[60] This emphasis links with the didactic tenor of *Apollo's Swan* which, in turn, connects with the period's pervasive conception of history as life's schoolmaster. Carvallo's *ars poetica* thus confirms the continuity between "traditional" and aesthetic historiography, both conceived as beneficial cultural memory.

Writing Christian Deeds

Francisco de Cascales' *Poetic Tables* (*Tablas poéticas*, 1604, published 1617) – a humanist dialogue in ten "tables" on poetry (five *in genere*, five *in specie*), conducted between the author's alter ego, Castalio, and one Piero – in many respects reprises the form and the content of the *Philosophy* and *Apollo's Swan*.[61] I will therefore not go into too much detail with this professional – streamlined, academic – art of poetry but simply discuss one seminal point where it deviates from its precursors: In its Italian-inspired insistence on the need of a new epic based not on ancient history but on "the true history of our Christian religion":

> Apropos what you say about religion, it is fitting that the Epic material be founded in the true history of our Christian religion. For if it were in that of gentiles or barbarians, the reasons that moved them and caused them to be amazed, to us would be frivolous and ridiculous. Among these, Pallas Athena, Juno, Venus, Apollo, Jupiter and other gods were worshipped and revered, from whom they expected their good fortune and feared adversity, wherefore they made them sacrifices at all events. If I were to choose such a material which obliges me to treat of the superstitions of the ancients, being Catholic you would anger yourself at hearing me and would grimace when I told you things contrary to our religion. And even if you are able to imagine these things as those of an exotic sect, even so, because you are undeceived and live in Evangelic truth, what these others did in reverence of their gods cannot cause you to admire.[62]

Echoing Torquato Tasso's recommendation – expressed in the second book of his *Discourses on the Heroic Poem* (*Discorsi del poema eroico*, 1594) – that the Christian epic poet should avoid pagan religious imagery and stick to Christian heroes, history and miracles, Cascales here gives the Golden Age *ars poetica* a decisive Counterreformation – anti-pagan, myth-critical – twist.[63] Of course, Pinciano and Carvallo both took off from a Christian morality, but neither felt compelled to specify that the material of the historical epic should preferably be Christian. Though he did spend an entire section of *Apollo's Swan* on the problem "How Poets Understand Themselves as Christians Though Their Are Consecrated to Phoebus" (I: 13), Carvallo opted for an allegorical solution which enabled the poet to embellish his works with all kinds of mythical figures, "spiritual persons" and "demons" as long as the poem stayed true to facts. He did not specify which kind of facts. Likewise, though Pinciano chose the story of the *reconquista* Asturian hero Don Pelayo for his own historical epic, he expressly did so on formal grounds, "because it is short and that way will not occupy the papers of the poem so that the poet loses space for his imitation."[64]

The Counterreformation bent of the *Tables* is confirmed in Cascales' tendentious interpretation of Aristotle's distinction between history and poetry in *Poetics* 1451 b. As we have seen, Aristotle's "defence" of poetic invention rested on the word *συμβαίνει* [*λέγειν ἢ πράττειν*], describing the idea that poets' represent what someone is "wont to" say or do, being who that person is: A potentiality.[65] Cascales, however, quoting Aristotle in a Latin translation (perhaps adapted from Robortello), uses the verb *dever* which usually translates as "should" and implies a (moral) responsibility or obligation.[66] Thus, in his interpretation of *Poetics* 1451 b, poetic invention is put in the service of a moral embellishment of historical characters and events which rhymes well with the *Tables*' general definition of the epic as a decorous celebration of the worthy deeds of "illustrious princes and knights naturally inclined to great honours":[67]

> […] Aristotle well and eruditely says that the Poet does not narrate things precisely as they happened but how they should [*deuieran*] happen. Thus, even the true action, in as much as it is not verisimilar, should be changed and narrated so as to how it should be [*deuiera* ser]. For some things pass so monstrously that they are extremely difficult to believe if narrated to someone who has not seen them. And wherever this difficulty is perceived in things, even though they actually happened this way, they should be removed or at least fortified with the strongest explanations [*razones*].[68]

Poetic invention as a way of making things which pass "so monstrously" credible in the eyes of the public even though they be "extremely difficult to believe": Cascales' defence of poets' imaginative freedom certainly has a baroque taste of propaganda. Yet, this aspect of his poetics does not take away its fundamental emphasis on verisimilitude as the law of poetry, including historical, extrapolated at considerable length in the second part's *tabla primera*, "On the Epic Poem."[69] The poet's rendering of historical characters and events is and remains "recognised lies," "false history," in San José's words, but that does not deprive it of its worth.[70] Indeed, as the *Poetic Tables* suggests, this makes it ideologically highly valuable as a means of exalting the protagonists of history and their glorious deeds.

Returning to Ife's point that Golden Age poets were "bridging the gap between the categories of History and Poetry," quoted at the outset of this chapter, we can add that contemporaneous literary theorists were certainly also doing what they could to mediate between "fact, or whatever went under the guise of fact" and "unashamed fiction." Indeed, in their understanding of classical theory they were, as Menéndez Pelayo thought, quite advanced or indeed "modern" in as much as they, albeit to varying degrees and to varying ends, vindicated poetic invention and verisimilitude.

Notes

1 Menéndez Pelayo (1985: 487):

> Si Carvallo [...] merece ser contado casi entre los autores de poéticas románticas [...] los tres eruditísimos libros del Pinciano, de Cascales y de González de Salas nos dan con tal pureza y con tal señorío de la materia la doctrina clásica, que quien haya leído la *Philosophia Antigua*, las *Tablas Poéticas* y la *Nueva idea de la tragedia*, muy poco o nada tendrá que aprender, respecto a la inteligencia de Aristóteles y de Horacio, en las poéticas latinas e italianas que durante el siglo XVI compusieron Julio César Scaligero, Castelvetro, Minturno, Robortello y otros italianos, a los cuales siguen los nuestros a veces, pero con independencia y juicio propio.

2 Ife (1985: 24–49).
3 The idea of Spanish literature informing Menéndez Pelayo's *History* can be seen as a response to George Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature* I-III (1849), promoting an idea of Spanish letters as national and popular.
4 Kluge (2007a and 2007b).
5 Cascales (1617: 268–269): "No es officio del poeta narrar los mismos hechos como passaron, sino como pudieran o devieran passar, segun el verisimil, y necessario."
6 Besides those of Pinciano and Carvallo under scrutiny here, e.g. Miguel Sánchez de Lima's *The Art of Poetry in the Castilian Language* (*El arte poético en romance castellano*, 1582), Juan Díaz Rengifo's *Spanish Art of Poetry* (*Arte poética española*, 1592), Juan de la Cueva's *Poetic Exemplary* (*Ejemplar poético*, 1609), Ricardo del Turia's *Compass of Spanish Poetry* (*Norte de la poesía española*, 1616), Cristóbal Suárez de Figueroa's *The Passenger* (*El pasajero*, 1617), Francisco de Cascales' *Philological Letters* (*Cartas philológicas*, 1634), Pedro de Salas' *The Poets' Thesaurus* (*Thesaurus poetarum*, 1631) and Antonio López de Vega's *Heraclitus and Democritus of Our Century* (*Heráclito y Demócrito de nuestro siglo*, 1640). To which may be added Juan Luis Vives' *Three Books on the Art of Rhetoric* (*Arte dicendi liber III,* 1535), a treatise anticipating the more technical parts of the *artes poeticae*.
7 Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo's *Aristotle's Poetics Translated from Latin and Explained and Commented* (*Poética de Aristoteles/Traducida de Latin/ Illustrada y Commentada por/ Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo*, 1623); Ordóñez das Seijas y Tobar's *Aristotle's Poetics Translated in our Castilian Language* (*La Poética de Aristóteles dada a nuestra lengua Castellana por Don Alonso Ordónez das Seyjas y Tobar*, 1626); Vicente Mariner's *Aristotle's Book Truthfully Turned from the Greek Text* (*El libro de Aristóteles vertido a la verdad de la letra del texto griego por el maestro Vicente Marinero*, 1630).
8 Considering the importance of Aristotle's definition of the history-poetry relation in *Poetics* 1451 b, which will be referred to repeatedly in the following, I quote it here at length:

> Herodotus' work could be versified and would be just as much a kind of history in verse as in prose. No, the difference is this: that the one relates actual events [*τὰ γενόμενα*], the other the kind of things that might occur [*οἷα ἂν γένοιτο*]. Consequently, poetry is more philosophical and more elevated [*φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον*] than history, since poetry relates more of the universal [*τὰ καθόλου*] while history gives particular facts. "Universal" [*καθόλου*] means the kind of things which it suits a certain

> kind of person to say or do [*τὰ ποῖα συμβαίνει λέγειν ἢ πράττειν*] in terms of probability or necessity: poetry aims for this even though attaching names to the agents. A "particular" [*τὸ δὲ καθ' ἕκαστον*] means, say, what Alcibiades did or experienced [*τί Ἀλκιβιάδης ἔπραξεν ἢ τί ἔπαθεν*].
>
> (1999: 59–61)

9 Menéndez Pelayo (1985: 487).
10 Pinciano, *Ancient Poetic Philosophy*, ep. 2 (1596: 74).
11 See e.g. Pinciano, *Ancient Poetic Philosophy*, ep. 5 (1596: 216): "Dicho, se apartó el vno y el otro, y el Pinciano se fué a la posada, adonde luego hizo memoria de lo que auía oydo para os lo escriuir el día siguiente." "This being said, they parted and Pinciano went to his room where he commemorated what he had heard in order to write it to you the following day."
12 Pinciano, *Ancient Poetic Philosophy*, ep. 3 (1596: 100–121).
13 Pinciano (1596: 76):

> A esto respondio Vg. arte (segun Arist. en los Ethicos a Nichomacho, y en los grandes se colige) es vn habito de hazer las cosas con razon, digo siguiendo el vso della: y desta manera fue arte la de amar de Ouidio, y desta manera lo es la Poetica. Doy exemplos de arte noble qual esta es, y de arte vil como aquella. Pareceme que lo entiendo (respondio el P.) mas desseara saber mas, y es en que està el ser vil vna arte: y por ay entenderemos si la Poetica escapa dello. A esto dixo Vgo: Segun la difinicion dada consta, que assi las que dizen artes liberales, como las mecanicas y los que oy dezimos officios, son comprehendidos debaxo deste nombre arte. Esto supuesto digo que el Philosopho en sus Politicos toca esta materia de las artes viles, diziendo assi: Por vil exercicio deue ser tenida la arte toda, y disciplina, que o el cuerpo, o la alma del hombre aparta del vso de la virtud. Y assi es conforme a razon, que el arte de amar, y semejantes son viles, como los que el Philosopho ay dize que ocupan el entendimiento en cosas: a las quales acompaña siempre la mentira.

14 See Kluge (2010) on Plato as a literary writer.
15 Pinciano, *Ancient Poetic Philosophy*, ep. 2 (1596: 73 and 97).
16 Pinciano, *Ancient Poetic Philosophy*, ep. 2 (1596: 85):

> Pienso auer ya respondido a las dificultades; a la del Epinomis, con dezir, que no despide a la Poetica por ser mala, sino por ser incierta y ineuidente. Y a la del tercero de la Republica, con auer mostrado, que Platon no reprehende en dicho lugar a la arte, sino a los artifices que della vsaron mal, poniendo miedo y pauor al morir.
>
> I think I have answered these difficulties; the difficulty of *Epinomis* by saying that [Plato] does not dismiss Poetry for being bad, but for being uncertain and lacking in evidence; and that of *Republic* 3 by demonstrating that Plato in that place does not reprehend art, but the artists which abused it causing fear and terror of dying.

17 Pinciano (1596: 94–95):

> Digo pues que a cerca de Platon ay dos maneras de poesia, vna imitante que consiste en fabula, y otra no imitante la qual consiste en el metro. Y con esta difinicion sacada del mismo Platon quedan vuestras dos grandes difficultades facilisimas, porque si ay poesia imitante, y no imitante, la imitante pudo Platon desterrar de su republica Platonica, y la no imitante que consiste en hymnos, canciones, y cosas desta manera, pudo ser del

> recibida, como lo fue en la verdad en el 5. de republica y 2. de legibus sobredichos, callo F. y dixo V. por cierto señor F. voys days tan buena razon de vos que no tengo que hablar ya, ni que redarguyr, y estoy muy contento que Platon esta de nuestra parte, porque a los que professamos la poetica luego nos dan con que Platon nos desterro y destierro por hombre tan justo deue ser justo. Y al fin tengamosle de nuestra parte, aunque mas y mas diga de Homero, que no enseño y que su doctrina es poca, y otras cosas semejantes.

18 Pinciano, *Ancient Poetic Philosophy*, ep. 2 (1596: 69, 87, 95 et al.).
19 Aristotle (1999: 61).
20 Pinciano (1596: 87–88):

> Y porque entendays que he passado por essos lugares, digo que Platon en el nono de Republica, dize, que la Poetica alborota y inquieta los animos de los hombres; y en el decimo, que es fullera y mentirosa, y que dista de la verdad tres grados: y quiere, y es su ultima voluntad y postrimera, que assi por alborotadora, como por embaucadora salga de su santissima Republica. […] vn poeta, que con vna ficcion, que jamas passò, y tan distante de la verdad, alborote los animos de los hombres, y que vnas vezes les haga reyr demanera que se descompongan, y otras llorar de suerte que les lastime el coraçon, y le perturben tanto: esto es acerca de Platon malo. El Pinciano dixo entonces: y aun acerca de mi lo es tambien.

21 Pinciano (1596: 88): "estaua leyendo en Amadis la nueua que de su muerte truxo Archelausa, y diome tanta pena que me salieron las lagrimas, no se lo que mas passo, que yo no lo he sentido."
22 Pinciano (1596: 90): To the influence of Pinciano on Cervantes, see Canavaggio (1958).
23 Pinciano (1596: 99):

> Yo le vi y me agrede muchos de las respuestas, y aun me admire como F. dexo tan hermanado a Platon y al Philosopho en la aprouacion de la poetica, cosa en que ninguna persona dudara a mi parecer de oy mas, pues del mismo Platon consta en otras muchas partes la mucha autoridad y veneracion que el dio contino a la poetica.

24 Pinciano (1596: 100):

> Yo a lo menos, de aqui a delante no pienso dudar, que el Principe de los Academicos, no aya sido muy a fauor de la poetica, a lo que me suade el auello el sido y las muchas alabanças que de ella en muchas partes canta […].

25 Pinciano (1596: 142):

> […] porque la obra principal no està en dezir la verdad de la cosa, sino en fingirla que sea verisimil y llegada a razon, por cuya causa (y porque el poeta trata mas la vniuersalidad) dize el Philosopho en sus poeticos, que mucho mas excelente es la poetica que la historia: y yo añado, que porque el poeta es inuentor de lo que nadie imaginò, y el historiador no haze mas que trasladar lo que otros han escrito.
>
> (ep. 4)

> […] for the primary business [of poets] is not to tell the truth about a thing, but to invent it in a verisimilar and reasonable manner, wherefore (and because the poet speaks more of the universal) the Philosopher says in his Poetics that poetry is much more excellent than history. And

> I add that this is so also because the poet is the inventor of what noone imagined, whereas the historian does but translate what others have written.
>
> See also (1596: 167, ep. 6)

26 Pinciano (1596: 215):

> Vgo dixo: Yo estoy contento, el qual prosiguio, diziendo: El campo de la poetica es immenso (dize Ouidio) y a ninguna historia es obligado, que es dezir, el poeta no es obligado a la verdad, mas de quanto le parece que conuiene para la verisimilitud: lo qual especialmente vsan los tragicos y epicos prudentissimamente en general para hazer su narracion mas verisimil, y con algunas verdades, como rafas tener firme la tapiceria de sus ficciones. Todo esto se haze para el fin que esta dicho, que es el deleyte y la doctrina. Assi que los poemas que sobre historia toman su fundamento, son como vna tela, cuya vrdimbre es la historia, y la trama es la imitacion y fabula. Este hilo de trama va con la historia texiendo su tela, y es de tal modo, que el poeta puede tomar de la historia lo que se le antojare, y dexar lo que le pareciere, como no sea mas la historia que la fabula: porque en tal caso sera el poema imperfecto y falto de imitacion: la qual da el nombre. Lucano tiene algunas imitaciones fabulosas, y por ser mas la historia que la fabula es numerado entre los historicos, como antes de agora està tocado.

See also (1596: 205):

> Callo F. y V. dixo: Reparo a los dos golpes con dos escudos, y no malos (y aun pudiera con mucho mas, pero basten estos), el vno es Platon, y el otro Aristoteles, que dizen que el fabular es natural a la poetica: lo qual està ya tan prouado, que no ay que gastar tiempo en ello: supuesto lo qual, digo, el poeta no se obliga a escriuir verdad, sino verisimilitud: quiero dezir possibilidad en la obra: y todas essas cosas que dezis la tienen, porque fue possible auer puerto en la África semejante en algo, ya que no en todo al que descriue Virgilio, y al poeta le es licito alterar la historia (como està dicho) y no la fabula.
>
> (ep. 5)

27 To the loom as an ancient metaphor of poetry, see Fanfani, Harlow & Nosch (2016).

28 See, e.g., *Republic* 3 388a-b (Plato, 1999: 208–209). Socrates refers again to Homer's "feminising" depiction of Achilles' furious mourning over Patroclus in 391b-c (ibid., 220–221).

29 In the brief section marked in the margin as "The History of *infante* Pelagius is suited for the epic" (1596: 463–464), the three interlocutors discuss the utility of the story of the alleged initiator of the *reconquista* as epic material. Here, Pinciano professes to take up the task of writing an epic on the material: "Y El Pinciano: Yo lo hiziera, principalmente por que el subjeto es digno de epica" (464). "Pinciano: I would undertake [an epic about Pelagius], primarily because the subject is worthy of the epic."

30 Pinciano (1596: 462): "Serà perfecta la heroyca, quanto a la materia, la que se funda en historia, mas que la que no se funda en alguna verdad." The point is repeated shortly afterwards by Fadrique: "Torno pues a mi lugar, y digo, que quanto a este punto tiene mas perfeccion la epica fundada en historia que no en ficcion pura" (1596: 462–463). "I return to my point and claim that the epic founded in history is more perfect than that which is pure fiction."

31 Pinciano (1596: 449–490).

32 See J. C. Bramble's apt characterisation of Lucan's style:

> Likewise, in the sphere of diction and metre Lucan avoids the precedent of mainstream epic. He abandons the versatility of the Virgilian hexameter, opting for a rhyth which is unmusical and prosaic. *Logopoeia* – 'poetry that is akin to nothing but language, which is a dance of intelligence among words and ideas, and modifications of ideas and words' [Ezra Pound] – is his chosen mode, a more suitable vehicle for the abstractions and difficulties of his theme than the musicality of Virgil.
>
> (in Kenney & Clausen, 1982: 45)

To the Neo-Aristotelian aversion to Lucan, see Paleit (2004: 2): "Neo-Aristotelian poetic theory – articulated in England by Philip Sidney, for example – discriminated against Lucan because it preferred 'poetic' or imaginative truth, describing universal human action, over 'historic' truth, tied to particular events."

33 Pinciano (1596: 73): "os escriuire nueuas mas nueuas que las passadas. Y son, que Lucano en su Farsalia fue historiador, y Platon en sus Dialogos poeta."

34 Pinciano (1596: 97):

> aqui ay quien se ha admirado, y mucho en oyr que Platon fue poeta. F. respondio assi lo fue el en sus dialogos, como Lucano historico en su Pharsalia, y quedese aqui la chaza hecha, que otro dia Dios delante, se acabare este juego.

35 Pinciano (1596: 106): "Y lo mismo Quintiliano, quando a Lucano cuenta entre los historicos, y no entre los poetas" (ep. 3). "Quintilian himself counted Lucan among the historians and not among the poets." As discussed by Steele (1990: 131–149), Renaissance theorists conflated Aristotle's dictum that Herodotus would not be a poet had he written in verse (*Poetics* 1451 b) with Quintilian's view that Lucan was a rhetor rather than a poet, Plutarch's remarks about the insignificance of verse to poetry (*Moralia* 16c) and the late antique grammarian and Virgil commentator Servius' dismissive remark that Lucan was a historian in verse rather than a poet (*About Aeneid* 1.382).

36 Pinciano (1596: 150): "otra alguna [especie de poesia] se pusieron en metro sin fabula, ni imitacion, como la Pharsalia de Lucano, que tiene muy poca, o casi ninguna"; ibid. (166): "por esta causa, Lucrecio y Lucano, y otros assi que no contienen fabulas, no son Poetas"; (168): "por esso cuentan a Lucano entre los historicos, el qual aunque tiene fabulas son pocas en respeto de las historias"; (215): "Lucano tiene algunas imitaciones fabulosas, y por ser mas la historia que la fabula es numerado entre los historicos, como antes de agora està tocado"; (462): "mas quisiera auer sido autor de la historia de Heliodoro, que no de la farsalia de Lucano. Esse (dixo Vgo) no es contado entre poetas"; (465): digo, que allende de lo dicho la historia de Pelayo es muy aparejada para la epica, porque es breue, y no de tal manera ocupara los papeles del poema, que el poeta pierda lugar para la imitacion: en lo qual fue reprehendido Silio Italico, y lo fue tambien Lucano, cuya materia fue tan larga que tuuieron necesidad de cifrar lo que los historiadores escriuieron. (465): "y si por ventura quitan los episodios, a la tal fabula quedara muy seca, y al fin quedara historia, y no poema como lo fue la de Lucano"; (511): "proseguid en vuestra epica empeçada felizmente con mas buena fortuna que Lucano."

37 To the relation between the "Platonic-Christian bias" and the Aristotelian *preceptos* of Golden Age literary criticism and theory more generally, see Kluge (2007a and 2007b).
38 On the Golden Age idea of untrustworthiness of poets, see Green (1950).
39 See especially Carvallo (1958 I: 7–8), "How the Poets lie in their fictions, and about the literal, moral, allegorical and anagogical meanings" and "About the literal sense and how it is mendacious in poets." To the religious element of Carvallo's theory, separating it from that of his predecessor, see Porqueras Mayo: "Another characteristic which separates him radically from López Pinciano is the general religious tone and the metaphysical [*divinizantes*] arguments wielded by Carvallo" (in Carvallo, 1997: 11).
40 See Carvallo's words in the *prólogo*:

> Helo reducido en diálogo, preguntando yo mismo, y respondiendo la Lectura, de quien todo lo he sabido. He introducido también un Zoilo, que en nombre del vulgo y los malsines arguya contra la poesía, para tener ocasión de refutarle sus falsas opiniones que en perjuicio de la poesía tienen. He recogido la sustancia de cada párafo en una octava para que se pueda tomar de memoria.
>
> (1997: 62)

> I have made it a dialogue, where I myself ask the questions and Lectura, from whom I have learned everything, answers. I have also introduced the character Zoilo who in the name of the common folk and the quarrelsome argues against poetry, in order to have the possibility to refute the false opinions and prejudice about poetry that these hold. I have summarised the essence of each paragraph in an octave so that it can be committed to memory.

In the introduction to his critical edition of the *Swan*, Alberto Porqueras Mayo comments about the dialogue form:

> The dialogue form offers great agility in the exposition of ideas, it gives mobility and perspectivism to the discussion and avoids the latent dryness in the themes presented through movement, laughter and allusions to daily life. What we have here is a 'creative' way of introducing us to the world of literature, just as Cervantes would do in the *Quijote*, beginning with the prologue.
>
> (in Carvallo, 1997: 14)

Menéndez Pelayo, on his part, criticised Carvallo for presenting his precepts in "detestable octaves" (1985: 484).
41 This metaphor is primarily explicitated in the first dialogue, §1–5, dealing with the sublimity of poetry and the ideal – sultry – "complexion" of the poet. In his account of the poet's temper, Carvallo draws on Huarte de San Juan's famous humoral treatise *An examination of the talents required for the sciences* (*Examen de ingenios para las sciencias*, 1575). See Carvallo (1958 I: 71) where it is revealed that "the good Poet has to have three degrees of heat."
42 Curtius (1939) – who mentions Carvallo in a footnote on page 170 – analyses Vera y Mendoza's *Panegyric for Poetry* in the larger context of ancient rhetoric, patristics and Counterreformation theology.
43 Carvallo (1958 I: 47):

> Por el Cisne el Poeta es entendido, / y hazedor significa propriamente / el que de furor siendo mouido / con claro ingenio agudo y excelente, / en

elegante verso ha referido / cosas mayores que la humana gente, / puede alcançar con su humano juyzio, / y mas imita a Dios en su artificio.

44 Carvallo (1958 I: 79):

> Zoylo. –Por esso tuuieron razon los Poetas, en acogerse a las fabulas, y mentiras, porque como su officio es mentir, entre tantas no se echara de ver vna mentira dessas, y quando se note es mas de loar, quanto mayor fuere, pues en su officio aquel es mas señalado que en su obra mas se auentaja. Lectura. –Fingir, o ymaginar diras que es su officio, y no me[n]tir. Zoylo. –Que mas me da esso que essotro. Lectura. –Nunca a los Poetas es licito mentir, ni su officio es mentir absolutame[n]te, y quando algunos lo ayan hecho, no por ser Poetas, sino mentirosos, aura sido […].

45 Carvallo (1958 I: 80–81):

> Lectura. –Ya os he dicho como la materia del Poeta son todas las cosas de q [ue] quiere tratar, verdaderas, o fingidas, (quedando las verdaderas aparte, que son las que realmente succedieron, o las que enseñan alguna doctrina) tratemos de las fingidas, sobre que se nos leuanto la porfia. Las fictiones son en dos maneras, verisimiles, y fabulosas. Las verisimiles son las que cuentan algo, que sino fue, pudo ser, o podra succeder, y estas han de ser muy apparentes, y semejantes a verdad, sin que se cue[n]te en ellas cosas imposibles, que repugnen el entendimiento, y orden, ordinario de successos, ni a la naturaleza. Destas vsaron los Hebreos, llamandolas parabolas, significando y enseñando en ellas mucha y prouechosa doctrina. Zoylo. –Pues al fin son fingidas, que necessidad tienen de tanta apparencia de verdad. Lectura. –Porque esta suerte de fictiones tiene su sal y gusto en el proceder y successo de las cosas, y siendo disparatado, mas suele enfadar que deleytar, y assi entiendo yo, que lo quiso enseñar Oracio en este verso. *Conforme a verdad sean las fictiones*.

46 The fact that this dialogue is by far the longest part of the *Swan* says quite a lot about the didactic tenor of Carvallo's theory. To the didactic element of Carvallo's theory, separating it from that of Pinciano, see Porqueras Mayo (in Carvallo, 1997: 11).

47 Carvallo (1958 I: 41): "tomando [los poetas] las cosas verdaderas entre manos, sembran las con tantas fictiones que no ay distinguir cual es lo cierto, ni cual lo fabuloso."

48 Ibid., ibid.

49 Carvallo (1958 II: 42): "Puede el Poeta en las historias traer exemplos, comparaciones y semejanças de cosas fabulosas, como aplicar la fiction de Icaro y Faeton y otras semejantes al propositio de lo que se va diziendo." See also (1958 II: 43–44):

> Es licito ansi mismo fingir personas espirituales, como se ve en la Mexicana vna junta fingida de demonios, a imitacion del Mantuano donde finge que Iuno pedia a Eolo soltasse los vientos para anegar a Eneas […]. Esto es que los Poetas a las cosas sucedidas añadieron cierto color, no por perjudicar sino por adornar.
>
> It is also permissible to invent spiritual persons, such as the invented host of demons found in the *Mexicana*, imitating the Mantuan where he pretends that Juno asked Eolus to let the winds loose in order to overwhelm Aeneas […]. Thus, the Poets addad a certain colourfulness to the things which happened, not to destroy them but to adorn them.

50 Thus, Lectura indirectly quotes *Poetics* 1451 b, stating that "Puede mas y le es licito fingir lo que pudo succeder, y a caso sucedio […]" (1958 II: 42). "[The poet] can and indeed is allowed to invent what could have happened and perhaps happened […]."

51 Carvallo (1958 II: 42–43):

> Es demas licito hazer vna fiction para traer a proposito de la historia que va contando cosa agena della y fuera de proposito, como hizo el excellente don Alfonso de Ercilla que en la historia que hizo de la rebelion de Arauco quiso contar por algun oculto aspecto la vitoria de Lepanto siendo tan agena de la historia que lleueua.
>
> It is also licit to make a fiction in order to add something external or even irrelevant to the history, as did for example the excellent Alfonso de Ercilla who, in his story of the Chilean rebellion, secretly wished to communicate the victory of Lepanto which was wholly beside the story he was narrating.

52 Carvallo (1958 II: 44):

> Otra cosa seria si contra la verdad de lo que ha sucedido, dixese alguna mentira falseando la historia, que esto no se permite, no solo en las historias ciertas mas ni las historias recibidas quiere Aristoteles que sean alteradas, ni seria verdadero Poeta el que lo hiziesse como ya queda dicho, que preuertirian el fin de la arte, que como significa nuestro Cisne dar gusto y aprovechar.
>
> It would be another matter if [the poet] against the truth of what happened told a lie thereby falsifying the history; for this is not allowed, neither in verifiable histories nor in received histories does Aristotle' want them changed, and he would not be a real Poet who did so and thus perverted the idea [*fin*] of art which, as our Swan signifies, is to please and edify.
>
> See also Grafton (2005: 58–64)

53 Carvallo (1958 II: 44–45):

> Antes son tantos los prouechos que de las historias se sacan que sera impossible referirlos, que al fin la historia es luz y testimonio de la verdad, maestra de la vida, presidente de la memoria, embaxadora de la antiguedad, por ella venimos en conocimiento de todas las hedades, de todos los lugares, de todas las gentes, de todos los pueblos, de todas las costumbres, y de todos los acaecimientos de todas las cosas. Por ella sabemos los hechos agenos, por donde venimos a conocer y corregir los propios; ella enseña lo que se deue huyr, y lo que se ha de seguir, sirue de freno a los tyranos, de espuelas a los magnanimos Reyes. No lisongea, no disimula, no engaña; todo lo dize, todo lo descubre, y manifiesta, al timido haze osado, al temerario reporta, al bueno haze famoso, y al malo publica por infame, alaba y ensalça la virtud, y vitupera el vicio, como el Cisne ha significado. Eterniza finalmente los buenos hechos, para que de ellos aya gloriosa memoria, y los torpes abate para que ni los virtuosos piensen que han de quedar sin premio de alabança, ni los malos confien que han de quedar sin el castigo de la perpetua afrenta.

54 Carvallo (1958 II: 46–47):

> Zoylo. –Que mayor premio se auia de dar a quien derramauan tinta, que a los que vertian propia sangre. Lectura. –No respeto de sus trabajos

> se premiauan sino del prouecho que dellos redundaua a la republica, y assi eran premiados los Poetas, mas que los capitanes, porque estos solamente dauan exemplos a los que se hallauan presentes con sus hechos, y espantauan a los enemigos con quien peleauan, y aquellos a los presentes, ausentes, y futuros, ponian delante el exemplo, y a los ausentes ponian espanto.
>
> Zoylo. –So a greater prize should be awarded to the one who spills ink than to the one who spills blood? Lectura. –They were not awarded after their deeds but according to the benefit that these deeds had on the common good [*la republica*] and thus Poets were awarded more than the captains, because the latter presented an example only to those who were present at the time of their deeds, scaring the enemies against which they fought, while the former set before the present, the absent and the future an example to behold, scaring the absent.

55 Carvallo (1958 II: 48):

> De Historeo el no[m]bre historia se deriua / porque es contar las cosas sucedidas / tambien ay quien ficcion en ella escriua / y otras para la historia son traydas / pero lo que es verdad siempre se isi[n]ua / con sus comodidades muy sabidas / y con iguales premios se premiauan / los que hazia[n] la hazaña, y la contaua[n].

56 Carvallo (1958 II: 49).
57 Carvallo (1958 II: 51): "Ha de ser la historia clara no confusa, con efectos de esperanças, miedos, sospechas, desseos, yras, misericordias, fines no pensados." "History must be clear and not confused, full of hope, fear, suspicions, desires, wraths, misericordia and unimagined ends."
58 Carvallo (1958 II: 52): "[…] con la buena traça y disposicion ingeniosa se causan todos aquellos afectos." "all these affects can be achieved through good appearance and ingenious disposition."
59 Ibid. (1958 II: 51).
60 Ibid. (1958 II: 49).
61 Cascales was probably not the great innovator. Sandra Ramos Maldonado, the editor of Cascales' *Epigramas. Paráfrasis a la poética de Horacio. Observaciones nuevas sobre gramática. Florilegio de versificación*, downright characterises the *Poetic Tables* as "a 'literal plagiarism' of the three most widely disseminated poetic treatises" of the period, i.e. those of "Robortello, Minturno and Torquato Tasso" (in Cascales, 2004: 21).
62 Cascales (1617: 261–262):

> Quanto a lo que dezis de la religion, conviene que la materia Epica sea fundada en historia verdadera de nuestra religion Christiana: porque si fuesse de gentiles, o barbaros, las razones que a ellos les movieran y admiraran, para nosotros serian friuolas y ridiculas; que entre ellos, Palas, Iuno, Venus, Apolo, Iupiter y otros dioses eran adorados y reuerenciados, de los quales esperauan su prospera fortuna y temian la adversa, y assí les hazian sacrificios en todos sus acontecimientos. Pues si yo tomo vna materia tal que me obligue a tratar las supersticiones de los antiguos, vos que sois catholico os enfadareis de oirme, y torcereis los labios quando os narre cosas contrarias a nuestra religion. Y si bien las imaginais como de estraña secta, con todo esso, como vos estais desengañado, y viuis en la verdad Evangelica, no os puede causar admiracion lo que essotro hizo en virtud de sus dioses.

63 A little earlier, Cascales emphasises Tasso's *Jerusalem delivered* as an epitome of this modern epic which, in his definition, celebrates "the glorious and shining deeds of illustrious men" (1617: 217). To the Counterreformation framing of Tasso's poetics, see Kluge (2014: 145–146):

> The context of [Tasso's] view is the second book's general discussion of the relation between poetic verisimilitude and the marvellous, a problem closely associated with the fantastic elements of the ancient epic: the gods and everything associated with them (Athena's assistance to Odysseus; the mythological frame of the Iliad and the Odyssey: the story of the golden apple and Paris' judgement, and so on). These kinds of marvels are defined by Tasso as "false" and thus as unsuitable for the modern heroic epic which is necessarily Christian (at this point Tasso reproaches Giraldi's *Ercole* and Bolognetti's *Costante* for their anachronistic use of pagan gods). […] in the heyday of the Counter-Reformation, the pagan gods and everything pertaining to their world are banned, marginalized or segregated from the modern epic.

64 Pinciano (1596: 464–465): "Digo, que allende de lo dicho la historia de Pelayo es muy aparejada para la epica porque es breue, y no de tal manera ocupara los papeles del poema, que el poeta pierda lugar para la imitacion."

65 See the third definition of the verb *συμβαίνω*, to stand on the same feet as, in the online Liddell & Scott Greek-English Lexion:

> III. of events, *to come to pass, happen*, Lat. contingere, Aesch., Plat., etc.: – impers., *συνέβη* μοι, c. inf., *it happened* to me to do a thing, Hdt., etc.; also c. acc. *it happened* that I did, id=Hdt., Thuc., etc.: *ξυμβαίνει* c. inf. *it happens* to be, i. e. *it is* so and so, Plat.: *–τὸ συμβεβηκός a chance event, contingency*, Dem.; so, *τὰ συμβαίνοντα* Xen.; *τὰ συμβάντα* id=Xen.

66 See Sebastian de Covarrubias Orozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1611: 314): "DEVER, del verbo Latino Debeo, tener que cumplir deuda, o obligacion." "DEVER, from the Latin verb Debeo, to have to pay a debt or fulfill an obligation." Confirming this impression, Cascales elsewhere paraphrases *Poetics* 1451 b as:

> No como passò la cosa, sino como fue possible, o verisimil, o necessario que passasse. Porque entre el Historiador y el Poeta ay esta differencia, que el Historico narra las cosas como sucedieron, y el Poeta, como conuenia o era verisimil que sucediessen.
>
> (1617: 267)

> Not how the thing happened, but how it was possible or verisimilar or necessary that it should happen. For between the Historian and the Poet there is the difference that the Historian narrates things just like they happened whereas the Poet narrates them such as they were wont to happen or it were verisimilar that they should happen.

Here, the "verisimilar" transforms into a necessity ("como fue … necessario que passasse"; "como conuenia … que sucediessen").

67 Cascales (1617: 219):

> [Epica] es imitacion de hechos graues y excelentes, de los quales se haze vn contexto perfecto, y de justa grandeza, con vn dezir suaue, sin musica y sin bayle, ora narrando simplemente, ora introduziendo a otros a

> hablar. Dan materia al Poema Heroico con sus claros hechos los ilustres Principes y Caualleros inclinados naturalmente a grandes honras.

68 Cascales (1617: 270–271):

> […] bien y doctamente dize Aristoteles, que el Poeta no narra las cosas passadas como passaron, sino como deuieran passar. Quanto mas que aun la verdadera action, en lo que no fuere verisimil, se deue mudar, y narrarla como deuiera ser. Porque algunas cosas suceden tan monstruosamente, que narradas ante quien no las ha visto, son difficultosissimas de creer. Y donde vuiere esta difficultad en las cosas, aunque realmente aya sucedido, se deue quitar, o alomenos esforçarla con fortissimas razones.

69 Cascales (1617: 267–278).
70 Cascales (1617: 263).

4 Historical Poetry

> History modes of expression can vary widely in their substance and function. Because they are narratives, they can be spoken, or written, a fixed or moving image, or a gesture, a myth, a legend, a fable, a tale, a novella, a history, an epic, a mime, a stained glass window, a film, a comic, a postcard, a performance, a street theatre, a conversation or a painting.
>
> Alun Munslow, *Narrative and History* 64

> Before enumerating the myriad lies, exaggerations, and oversights imputed to historical witnesses by early modern scholars, it is necessary to survey the status of inquiry into the past in the sixteenth century. This pursuit was not, at that time, compartmentalized as its own unique discipline, but rather was one of the fields comprising the *studia humanitatis*. Readers of history viewed examination of the past as one among a variety of methods of investigating and intervening in the theater of terrestrial life, and as a mode of analysis that shaded into poetry, moral philosophy, rhetoric, and other arts generative of virtue and prudence.
>
> Nicholas Popper, "An Ocean of Lies" 376

Recent decades have seen various theoretical approximations between historical and aesthetic scholarship. Following the narrative turn in the theory of history inaugurated by Hayden White's *Metahistory* (1973), historians such as Alun Munslow and Frank Ankersmit have, notably, suggested a cross-over between historiography and literature taking off from the basic view of "history modes of expression" as "narratives."[1] As the present study suggests, the hybrid nature of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture calls for a kindred expansion of the concept of historiography and of historiographical categories to include texts not traditionally considered historiographical. Indeed, if history writing is – as Munslow proposed in *Narrative and History* (2007) – a "form of literature," it becomes paramount to recognise the different "rules," "procedures" and "figurative and compositional techniques" followed by historians in their writing of history.[2] Yet, for the purposes of the

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present study there is also another important fruit to be reaped from the insights of narrative historians, namely that if history be a form of literature, then literature must *mutatis mutandis* be a form of history; and then aesthetic texts can be ascribed historiographical value and contribute to our understanding of the past. Nevertheless, though the point was briefly introduced by Munslow, the ideas of narrative historians never materialised in aesthetic readings of historiographical texts such as those presented in the chapter on "Historical Prose," nor did they come to inform historiographical readings of texts traditionally considered aesthetic such as the ones which will be offered in the present chapter.[3]

Yet, precisely such a double optics becomes all the more relevant as we move back in time and turn our attention to Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture.[4] In the sixteenth century, history was, as the American intellectual historian Nicholas Popper has pointed out, not yet "compartmentalised as its own unique discipline." The examination of the past was, rather, a matter that fell under the study of the "theater of terrestrial life" more broadly, shading into various other forms of the *studia humanitatis* including poetry. Thus, in Golden Age Spain, history was not confined to prose works like the ones examined in previous chapters; it was also sung by epic and lyrical poets. Spanish historical epic emerged around the mid-sixteenth century and flourished around 1600 with Alonso de Ercilla's pioneering *The Araucanaid* (*La Araucana*, 1569–1589, published posthumously in 1597) and Pedro de Oña's *Arauco Tamed* (*Arauco domado*, 1596) to which must, of course, be added Lope de Vega's *Dragontea* (1598), *Isidore* (*Isidro*, 1599) and *Jerusalem Conquered* (*Jerusalén conquistada*, 1609). At the same time, historical characters and events were the objects of a wide range of lyrical forms, from the medievalising ballads of Juan de la Cueva's *Phoebean Chorus and Historical Ballads* (*Coro Febeo y romances historiales*, 1587) to the celebratory poems of Luis de Góngora's sonnet cycle on the House of Ayamonte (c. 1609). An intrinsically aesthetic form, where even the smallest linguistic units (alliteration, metre, accentuation) carry semantic significance – a *multum in parvo* – the various forms of historical poetry are no doubt key to the present mapping of the discursive subtleties of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture. Yet, what happened when historical characters and events migrated from prose forms of history writing to poetical ones? What sort of historical mimesis came out of poets' reworking of historiographical sources? And how did their poetic practice comply with contemporaneous theoretical conceptions of imitation and verisimilitude?

A Historical Master

Outside the narrow circle of specialists, very few people today know the work of the Andalucian poet and playwright Juan de la Cueva

(1543–1612) though, in his own day, he was a rather famous dramatist whose comedies and tragedies were staged in Sevillan playhouses in the years around 1580. Cueva's misfortune with modern critics may be explained by the fact that considerable parts of his work remain unpublished in the Biblioteca Capitular y Colombina in Seville and other Spanish research libraries.[5] Yet it is also possible, as I have argued elsewhere, that the Andalucian poet fell between two stools – not belonging quite to sixteenth-century Renaissance classicist aesthetics nor conforming to emerging baroque trends in poetry and drama – and that he was therefore deemed an inferior writer by posterior critics routinely operating these categories.[6] Either way, the fact that his literary production includes noteworthy early examples of the history play (a subgenre that Cueva more or less invented in Spain and was among the first to practise in all of Europe), the historical epic *The Conquest of Andalucia, an Epic Poem about the Restoration and Liberty of Seville through the Holy King Don Ferdinand* (*Conquista de la Bética, poema heroico en que se canta la restauración y libertad de Sevilla por el Santo Rey Don Fernando*, 1603) and at least two collections of historical ballads of course makes the Sevillan humanist particularly relevant to my examination of the Golden Age intertwinement of aesthetics and historiography. Indeed, with his consistent and multifaceted linking of aesthetics and historiography, Cueva illustrates far more than any of his contemporaries – excepting perhaps Lope – how Golden Age history was, as Nicholas Popper described it, not yet "compartmentalised as its own unique discipline" but shaded into various other forms of the study of the "theater of terrestrial life." In the present context, my interest is first of all in the historical ballads published in the *Phoebean Chorus and Historical Ballads* (1587), which will serve as my example of Golden Age historical lyric. However, in what follows, I will also link the historical ballads with other parts of Cueva's aesthetic historiography.

Juan de la Cueva's only published collection of historical ballads is structured in ten books, the first of which is dedicated to Apollo and the other nine to the nine Muses, each book in turn divided into ten *romances* with varying historical themes, from "How Marcus Tulius Cicero Was Killed" to "Ballad of Hali Albahacen, King of Granada," interspersed with mythological-historical poems such as "Ballad of Queen Pasiphae Who Fell in Love with a Bull" and a couple of comical ballads. I begin by taking a look at the author's prologue and will proceed from the tentative *ars historica* contained in this programmatic text to a discussion of one of the relatively few poems on Spanish history in the collection:[7] The "Ballad of Doña Teresa Sister of King Don Alonso," narrating the story of the sister of king Alonso V of Leon (999–1027) who was given away in marriage to king Abdallah of Toledo against her will in order to strengthen her brother politically. Cueva's moulding of this semi-historical, semi-legendary material is based on both official

historiography and early ballad tradition. Thus, its sources would probably have included Diego Rodríguez de Almela's *Favourite Ecclesiastical Histories* (*Valerio de las historias eclesiásticas*, 1487), Florian de Ocampo's *History of Spain* (*Estoria de España*, 1541) and the *Songbook of Ballads* (*Cancionero de romances*) published in 1550 in Antwerp.[8] Yet, it is not its medley aesthetic-historical backdrop nor the poet's frequent use of his right to, in Pinciano's words, "take from history what he feels like and leave out what he pleases" – shared by all poems in the collection – which makes the Teresa ballad deserving of special attention.[9] What makes it relevant in the present context is, rather, its singular exemplification of the prologue's concept of historical balladry as an accessible, popular, emotionally engaging form of history writing, a concept which reflected contemporaneous theorists' ideals of teaching through delight and pursuing the "verisimilar" rather than the factual. No one can certainly accuse Cueva of merely reporting, in the manner of the poet-historian Lucan, "many truths" and not creating a proper narrative out of the historical raw material.

Indeed, the Teresa ballad's particular realisation of the aesthetic, moving historiographical approach described in the prologue makes it stand out not only compared to the collection's other ballads on Spanish medieval history, which do not obtain the same degree of affective intensity, but also in relation to its historiographical sources. Yet the difference between the ballad version, on one hand, and archpriest Almela's moral exegesis and royal chronicler Ocampo's political interpretation, on the other hand, should not be perceived as one between verse and prose, or between 'literary' and 'historical' accounts of the past.[10] As we have seen in previous chapters, Golden Age historians used plenty of literarising devices and their narratives were at times highly imaginative. Equally so Cueva's ballad: In accordance with the conception of history writing laid out in the prologue, the "Ballad of Doña Teresa" is written in a transparent language apparently devoid of art and yet replete with artful takes.

Thus, my focus in the subsequent reading of Cueva's both exemplary and exceptional historical ballad is once again on the aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices sustaining the poet's historiographical artifice or, in Munslow's terms, the "rules," "procedures" and "figurative and compositional techniques" followed by the poet in his writing of history: How did he make his historical material come alive? Which historiographical agendas did he pursue in his reimagination of the historical material? In my examination of Cueva's historical balladry, I will focus on three specific devices: (1) the poet's use of ballad form, (2) his adoption of a female perspective and (3) his emulation of the frontier ballad. As I will argue, the Teresa ballad's unique combination of these three devices forms the basis of Cueva's ingenious alternative history of the *reconquista*, turning the "Ballad of Doña Teresa" into a paradoxical – critical – epitome of the prologue's ideal of an accessible,

popular, emotionally engaging form of history writing. To the creative Sevillan 'historiographer,' history was obviously, as Munslow suggested centuries later, a "narrative" crafted out of facts – or "whatever went under the guise of fact," in Ife's cautious formulation – yet woven into a suggestive tapestry on the loom of historical poetry.

Popular Historiography?

The historiographical reflection put forward at the beginning of the *Phoebean Chorus* rehearses many of the same themes as the *artes historicae*, including the transience of everything worldly and the exemplary quality of history as a form of cultural memory. Indeed, the Andalucian poet almost verbatim repeats the theorists' view of history writing as a monument of past deeds more durable than even the most solid architectural edifices which – as Petrarch famously mused in his poem on the ruins of Rome – inevitably wither and disappear.[11] Like the tragic part of Cueva's historical drama, the prologue of the *Phoebean Chorus* is, thus, permeated by a strong feeling of vanity and the idea of history writing as an almost heroic preservation of great deeds in the face of their inevitable oblivion: As a "remedy" against the destructive passing of time and the consequent dispersal of fame.[12] Following this melancholy reflection, however, the prologue also presents a more constructive discussion of poetry as a historiographical form invented by "the ancients" in order to perpetuate "the deeds that were worthy of praise." Thus, again, as in the period's theory of history, the feeling of transience and decay does not stand unrivalled. Its other side is a historiographical fervour, the by now familiar Renaissance cherishing of the art of history fertilised by the rediscovery of ancient historians. Here, we approximate the first of the three devices that I have selected for discussion: The ballad form. For more specifically, the prologue ponders the accessibility of historical poetry – its "plain language" and "humble style" – which makes the laudable deeds "generally known." Again, we can hear the echo of contemporaneous poetics, hailing historical representation as a means of preserving past greatness against the erosion of time. Thus, to Cueva's ideal of history as *magistra vitae* and cultural memory corresponds a necessary plainness of style:

> This we owe to history
> which informs us of all things,
> and the deeds we know of
> come from history,
> for to perpetuate them,
> the ancients established
> that the deeds which
> were deserving of praise

should be sung in ballads
in plain language and humble
style, so that they be
generally known.[13]

In the first chapter, we have seen how Golden Age theorists of history generally recommended that the writing of history be an ornate but clear exposition, hereby understanding that history should be written in the austere, unaffected prose of a Thucydides or a Livy.[14] Subsequent literary theorists fundamentally backed this ideal, pondering that history must be clear and not confused.[15] Cueva, the historical poet, however, opts for a different kind of clarity: He chooses the humbleness of the *romance*, the original form of Spanish folk poetry whose plain language and simple yet flexible poetic meter of casually rhymed verse is able to express "all the things / which anyone would want to sing":

Ballads are the compendium
or abbreviation of what is written,
of ancient histories,
and because of them many stories
have lived on until today
which otherwise would have been lost.
In their humble and plain style
ballads encompass all the things
which anyone would want to sing,
about virtue and vice,
the ventures of fierce Mars,
sighs burning with love,
complaints, suspicions, jealousies, mockeries, truths,
loyalties, invented businesses,
affections and fictions,
and other things that happened
all of which are largely
treated in this book.[16]

In various respects, the "Ballad of Doña Teresa" indeed reflects the prologue's ideal of a "humble and plain style." To begin with, it is composed in the typical octosyllables with assonant rhyme in even numbered lines and a generally unaffected poetic idiom recalling the oral origins of traditional balladry.[17] Narratologically, Cueva also courts an audience of non-experts providing just enough political-historical background information at the head of the text for them to be able to understand the subsequently unfolding action without tiring over a wealth of dynastical and chronological details. Finally, on a semantic level, the text is permeated by cultural (religious, racial, sexual) stereotypes and a rather

inflexible binary opposition between good Christians and bad Moors. All this is indeed in perfect accordance with the prologue's recommendation of the humble ballad as an ideal medium for making the laudable deeds of the past known to the broad public. What we are dealing with here is purported mass communication about history, and what better way to address the common folk than proceeding in a pedagogical manner, using plain language and catering to common cultural prejudice?

Whether Cueva succeeded with this mission is more uncertain. The unpublished status of his first ballad collection and the obsolete nature of the *Phoebean Chorus* appear to speak against the anticipated massive impact.[18] This may be due to the fact that Cueva's ballad poetics is not all that humble and plain and straightforward after all. An educated man descending from scholars and Inquisitorial censors, a probable disciple of the great Sevillan humanist Juan Mal de Lara (1526–1571), taunted by posterior critics for the erudite dryness of his – pioneering – dramatic use of ballad material, it may seem puzzling that Cueva should choose the ballad's "humble and plain style" as his poetic medium.[19] Especially at a time when complex poetic forms were beginning to emerge in Spain with the italianised lyric of Herrera and Boscán and the poetry of the young Góngora. Yet, as the appearance of prestigious collections such as Martín Nucio's aforementioned *Songbook of Ballads*, Lorenzo de Sepúlveda's *Ballads Recently Drawn from the Ancient Histories of Spain's Chronicle* (*Romances nuevamente sacados de historias antiguas de la crónica de España*, 1551), Timoneda's *Rosebuds of Ballads* (*Rosas de Romances*, 1573) and the *Historicised Songbook* (*Romancero historiado*) compiled by Lucas Rodríguez (1582) in the second half of the sixteenth century indicates, by Cueva's time, the *romance* had developed into a fashionable literary genre consumed by educated readers as well as by the common people. Treating historical themes and legends such as the deeds of Rodrigo Díaz de Bivar, the Cid, the legends surrounding Peter I "the Cruel" (also, confusingly, known as Peter "the Just") of Castile, and the history of the House of Lara, the traditional ballads were like voices from the past, waking the dead to sing of their "virtue or vices" as either deterrent or inspiration to posterity. For centuries, the ballads had been the history books of the illiterate. Now, an erudite writer such as Cueva revived them on the page and on stage to teach a different, more heterogeneous audience all the profitable lessons of history.[20] Like the movement from original folk tales to literary fairy tales this movement from traditional ballad to what may be termed humanist balladry implied a significant transformation of the genre that is also detectable in the Teresa poem.

Cueva's stylistic refinement of the humble ballad form can be observed in various places of the "Ballad of Doña Teresa," yet it is perhaps most evident in the passage following Teresa's prayer:

> The sad, afflicted *infanta*
> was thus occupied
> when the Phoebean horses
> incline toward the Ocean,
> the world is enclosed in night,
> the day is wrapped in Sea,
> sleep stretches its wings
> thereby inviting to rest,
> and the banquets suddenly stop
> the parties that were cease.[21]

With its mythological imagery ("The Phoebean horses"), cultured wording ("incline toward the Ocean") and use of elaborate metaphor ("the world is enclosed in night, / the day is wrapped in Sea, / sleep stretches its wings"), anticipating emerging culteranist and conceptist trends in Golden Age poetry, this passage quite contradicts the "humble and plain style" held up as historiographical ideal in the prologue to the *Phoebean Chorus*. Yet, it corresponds rather well with the author's shrewd use of the other two devices that I have selected for discussion here: The female perspective and the emulation of the frontier ballad. All three can be considered integral to a greater endeavour to give official – elitist, male-centred, ideologically partisan – historiography of the *reconquista* a critical twist.

Dominated by a female perspective singular to the collection's group of poems on Spanish medieval history, the "Ballad of Doña Teresa" emphatically shifts focus from history's usual masculine protagonists, voicing instead that other side to official or political history typically represented by women in supporting roles to their husbands, brothers and sons. This shift makes the poem simultaneously exceptional and exemplary of Cueva's alternative version of Spanish medieval history. Indeed, like its deceptively humble ballad style, the Teresa ballad's female perspective supports the author's subtle tampering with a heroic or high-style history writing dominated by war-waging kings, knights and generals. Thus, in the ballad rendering of Teresa's story, the readers or ballad audience eavesdrop on the protagonist's intimate feelings and frustrations as she converses with God in prayer. Shortly after, they witness her rape by the man whom she has just been given in marriage: The adversary of her faith, the fictive Moslem king Abdallah or Abd-Allah, who was in all likelihood in fact Abu ʿĀmir Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullāh ibn Abi ʿĀmir al-Maʿafiri, nicknamed al-Manṣūr or Almanzor (938–1002), chancellor of the Umayyad Caliphate in Cordoba (here, Cueva clearly crosses the separating line between "inventing" or "imagining" and "lying," altering historical fact; and yet the literary theorists – had they considered the case – would have excused him citing poetic licence and the poet's holistic purpose).[22] On her wedding day, intuiting

the calamities awaiting her in the bedroom, the "sad, afflicted" *infanta* turns to the Lord:

> She says: "Oh, Redeemer
> of the world who made the high
> Hierarchies and the eternal throne
> which you inhabit in your
> Three-fold essence. [...]
> What can a mere woman do,
> defeated by two kings?
> If your help was ever clearly
> visible to someone
> I ask you, dear God,
> that you will not allow me,
> who bear your Chrism,
> to become the wife of a pagan".[23]

At first, her prayers appear to go unheard. Thus, when night falls, king Abdallah returns to his chambers and sends for his wife ("King Abdallah rises / and goes to sleep, sending / soon for his bride").[24] Aflame with desire, he begins to court her with amorous talk and hand kissing which she flees like the icy ladies of contemporaneous love poetry. Cueva here inserts quite a piquant little courtship scene in which the lover to begin with pursues his "evasive" love and the two perform a sort of *pas de deux* back and forth. Seeing that his gallant courtship is unsuccessful, however, Abdallah quickly assumes the attitude of the unjustly rejected lover, begging for kindliness ("why do you treat me / with such rigor?") and evoking his royal privilege ("behold, my lady / that I am a much-respected a king").[25] When that does not work either, he finally loses patience and decides to take his wife by force, "loosing respect":

> he seeks force to effectuate
> what courtesy cannot.
> And thus, loosing respect,
> he seized her and said:
> "Look, *infanta* Doña Teresa,
> you really do protest too much,
> don't flee my desire
> for you are my wife now."[26]

The dramatically intense rape scene constitutes the climax of the "Ballad of Doña Teresa." Here, the audience is taken into the backstage room of history's great stage to witness one of those small but significant Christian victories over the infidels presaging the final *reconquista* that was consummated with the fall of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada in 1492.

Complementing the heroic deeds of the male protagonists of the *Phoebean Chorus*' other ballads on Spanish medieval history – all but one concerned with Christians and Moors – Teresa's spiritual vanquishing of her husband-enemy becomes yet another sign of the on-going completion of God's will.[27] With the king literally on top of her and struggling against his embraces, the *infanta* again addresses her god and this time her prayers are heard: Abdallah "falls senseless," his eyes rolling back in his head, spewing black saliva and screaming in a strange voice.[28] When he recovers from his near-death experience, the king acknowledges his defeat. Abdallah – who bragged that he was "a much-respected king" and "feared in Castile" – throws in the towel.[29] As he recognises the greater power of the Christian God, his lips imitate the language of defeated heretics and exorcised demons:[30]

> […] the Moor came to
> himself and says: "this is
> the will that your Christian
> God wishes me to follow,
> from whose hand comes
> this punishment and who
> prevents me from
> marrying a Christian,
> being Moor, and as his power
> obliges me to leave
> your company, I will not
> fight someone who
> thus demolishes me.[31]

Shortly after, the ballad ends with a brief statement explaining that Abdallah went back to Toledo and Teresa entered a monastery in Oviedo where she remained until her death.[32] The political consequences of king Alonso's unsuccessful attempt to pacify his aggressive neighbour are not detailed (Did Abdallah go back to his previous harassment of Castile? Or had he learned his lesson?). They are unimportant to Cueva's alternative history of the *reconquista* where the perspective is not a male one of politics and power but a female one of emotions and spiritual strength. The alternative nature of this approach to Spanish medieval history becomes evident when compared with Ambrosio de Morales' version of the incident:

> With these words, the *Infanta* threatened him if he would touch her: "Look, Sir, I am a Christian woman and I abhor this matrimony with an infidel. Do not touch me or else Jesus Christ, whom I venerate and serve, will kill you." Disregarding this threat, the Moor satisfied his base desire forcing himself on the *Infanta*; and in

> that moment he felt like he was dying, because the heavens executed what he had been threatened with. Feeling death approaching, Abdallah hastily ordered many camels to be loaded with jewels and the richest things and with a big company and much honour, he had the *Infanta* return to Leon.[33]

Here, the rape barely occupies half a sentence and the royal chronicler quickly returns to the male sphere of politics and official historiography to discuss Lucas of Tuy's assertion that king Alonso, by then a mere boy, acted in good faith in giving away his sister because Abdallah "pretended to be Christian in order to obtain this marriage."[34] Whereas both the majority of the *Phoebean Chorus*' other ballads about medieval Spanish history and the historiographical sources show us an epic scenery of *arma virumque*, the "Ballad of Doña Teresa" – in a faint echo of Ovid's counter-Virgilian poetics, perhaps – communicates the reverse side of the official accounts of men at arms.[35] Together with Cueva's refinement of the ballad form, the female perspective makes the Teresa ballad both exceptional and exemplary: It epitomises the collection's underlying idea of historiography not merely as a representation of the "ventures of fierce Mars," but also of "sighs burning with love, / complaints, suspicions, jealousies, mockeries, truths, / loyalties, invented businesses, / likings and fictions" – that whole realm of feelings, passions and emotions that are usually associated with the female but are traditionally left out of official chronicles.[36] The third and final device that I will discuss forms a significant basis of this enterprise.

What the audience encounters in the "Ballad of Doña Teresa" is not, of course, a representation which lays claim to factual accuracy.[37] It is, rather, an ambiguous arabesque challenging its audience's habitual way of thinking about Christians and Moors by queerly emulating the so-called *romance fronterizo* or frontier ballad, a subgenre of the *romance noticiero* or 'news-bearing' ballad revolving around the intercultural conflicts of the *reconquista* period and culminating between 1410 and 1492.[38] Essentially, the ballad's tongue-in-cheek poetic-historical project resembles Cervantes' emulation of the so-called captivity tale in (notably) "The Captive's Tale" in *Quijote* I: 37 and the Algerian plays (*The Baths of Algiers*, *The Algerian Deal* and *The Great Sultana Catalina de Oviedo*) but also in various episodes of the *Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*.[39] Much like these contemporaneous Cervantine texts, Cueva's ballad pursues a fascination with cultural encounters and the eminent other of Iberian Catholicism while at the same time twisting the religious stereotypes circulating in Christian Spain at the time: In direct continuation of the Sevillan poet's transformation of the ballad form, the "Ballad of Doña Teresa" does not merely apply the aesthetic paradigm of the frontier ballad but also interrogates its ideological substrate.

The central vehicle of this interrogation is the recurrent parallelisation of the Moorish king Abdallah and the Christian king Alonso as the twin instigators of Teresa's misery. This parallelisation first becomes evident in the comparison of the Moorish "festivities" (*zambras*) and "dances" (*leilas*) of Toledo with the "feasts and ball games, bullfights and ring games (*surtijas*)" of Castile – all in celebration of the political union of the two kingdoms, but against the will of the bride who cries and sighs while the new two brothers-in-law have become best buddies:

> The Moor came to the refuge
> and signs the pact,
> which the king Don Alonso
> proposed, without protests;
> indeed he sends his thanks
> for so singular a favour,
> and as recognition of this glory
> so highly valued by him,
> he ordered that it be announced
> to his whole reign and commands
> that his joy be celebrated
> with *Zambras* and *Leilas*.
> Don Alonso is occupied
> with the same thing and
> arranges lively feasts and ball games,
> bullfights and ring games
> […]
> The day of the wedding arrived,
> and all was happiness in Castile,
> only Doña Teresa,
> the bride, moans and sighs.[40]

Shortly after, the parallel between the two kings is underscored again with the protagonist's explicitly stated feeling of being "a mere woman, / defeated by two kings," a victim in the game of high politics dominated by male decision makers.[41] Similarly, when Abdallah tries to seduce Teresa by impressing her with his regal status, he likens himself to her brother ("behold, my lady / that I am a much-respected king / like your brother, the king").[42] The parting of responsibility between Alonso and Abdalla implied by their recurrent parallelisation as the crooks of the story obviously destabilises the "good-Christians-bad-Moors" binary which, on the surface at least, sustains the frontier ballad as a genre. As mentioned above, in his account of the Teresa affair, Ocampo referred to a discussion among medieval historians concerning the rationale of Alonso's decision to marry off his sister to a man who was not only a political but also a religious enemy, citing Lucas de Tuy's apology for

the young king. Cueva's poem can be seen as a piece of special pleading for the opposite, transferring focus from the main action of history with its men at arms fighting for some elevated religious or political ideal to the "private" history of those who feel the personal consequences of all the politicising and war waging. In the poet's endeavour to thus nuance a historical-political picture endlessly pinning male Moors against male Christians, the complex and diverse tradition of the frontier ballad with its flexibility of perspective was a congenial companion. For though it was essentially a *reconquista* art form promoting a Christian agenda, Spanish frontier balladry harboured multiple perspectives and sometimes even adopted the outlook of the defeated Moors.[43] From the outset, the genre focused on the clash between conflicting viewpoints rather than promoted a single such, and Cueva exploited this generic trait in order to suggest a different story of Christian and Moors: Not the heroic account of some Christian male defeating a male Moor, but the "humbly" told story of a heroic woman defeating two cynical kings.

To briefly sum up, Cueva's sophisticated emulation of the frontier ballad in the "Ballad of Doña Teresa" sits comfortably with the poem's refinement of traditional ballad style and shrewd cultivation of the female 'underdog' perspective on history. Taken together, these three devices sustain the poet's ingenious alternative history of the *reconquista* exemplifying the prologue's ideal of an accessible, popular, emotionally engaging form of history writing while reflecting contemporaneous theorists' demand that the aesthetic historiography be both delightful and edifying. However, as the at once exemplary and exceptional Teresa ballad demonstrates, in its ideal form, Cueva's aesthetic historiography is anything but an easy, simple and melodramatic form catering to the unrefined taste of the common folk. Quite to the contrary, it has a pronounced critical impetus and appears to urge its audience to rethink habitual historiographical categories such as 'the hero' and 'the enemy.' To the extent that Cueva's twisting of official historiography of the *reconquista* thus seeks to educate its audience, and not merely to cater to existing cultural and religious prejudice, the *Phoebean Chorus* fundamentally aligns with the *historia magistra vitae* idea of contemporaneous historical theory, but simultaneously goes beyond it recalling the tongue-in-cheek ideology criticism of Cervantes' emulative poetics. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, for all its good intentions, the Sevillan poet's historical ballads were in all likelihood not a huge public success. Cueva's real breakthrough as a popular 'historiographer' would be the stage.[44] But that is another history.

Poetry as Counterhistory

To Félix Lope de Vega Carpio (1562–1635), history was certainly a narrative in the broad understanding outlined by Munslow at the head of

this chapter. The author of a vast number of plays on varying historical themes, but mostly about Spanish history, this giant of the Golden Age stage clearly beheld the past as an exuberant source of dramatic plots eminently fit to simultaneously entertain and educate the broad masses in the public playhouses.[45] Yet, like his predecessor in historical theatre, Juan de la Cueva, Lope not only wrote history for the stage. Besides his impressive production of history plays he, if apparently somewhat less successfully, tried his hand at historical epic poeticising the life and deeds of Madrid's patron saint in *Isidore*, the transatlantic phase of the Anglo-Spanish War in *Dragontea* and the Third Crusade in *Jerusalem conquered*.

The *Dragontea* – which will serve here as my example of Golden Age historical epic – more specifically narrates the last expedition and death of the English sea captain, explorer and privateer Francis Drake (1540–1596). After his successful circumnavigation during 1577–1580, this near-mythical figure had been knighted by Elizabeth I in 1581 and despite his humble descent entered the English parliament. However, Drake did not content himself with honours, privilege and life as a landsman. Alongside his political career, he continued his exploits at sea sacking Cádiz in 1587, playing a prominent role in the defeat of the Spanish Armada in the English Channel (1588) and leading a series of attacks on the Spanish fleet and settlements in Spanish dominions between 1589 and 1596. As the period's emblematists never tired of pointing out, though, Fortune is an inconstant goddess. After his disastrous 1589 Counter Armada expedition (to destroy what was left of the Spanish fleet after its defeat in the English Channel and support the Portuguese rebellion against Philip II in Lisbon), Drake fell into disgrace and withdrew to his native Plymouth. However, just a few years later, he managed to gain the Queen's support for another campaign against Spanish America. In the autumn of 1595, the old salt – by then in his mid-50s – sailed off from England on what would be his last journey. After a failed attack on Las Palmas, Canary Islands, where they tried to gather supplies, the privateer and his almost 2,000 men continued towards Panama. Their plan was to plunder transportation ships near Nombre de Dios, a Spanish outpost on the Atlantic side of the isthmus of Panama from which the Potosí silver was shipped over to the Iberian peninsula. Drake had successfully done something similar near Lima in his 1578 Pacific expedition. However, when the English fleet reached Nombre de Dios, the Spanish intelligence network had already warned local authorities and the Viceroy of Peru, García Hurtado de Mendoza, had called on Alonso de Sotomayor (1545–1610), a veteran from the Flanders and Chile wars, to lead the defence of the isthmus. The English were able to enter the poorly defended city but were subsequently repelled and defeated by the Spanish when they tried to cross the promontory weakened by shortage of supplies and illness. On 28 January 1596,

the captain died from dysentery upon which a diminished English fleet departed for Europe after reportedly burying Drake at sea in the Portobelo Bay in the Caribbean.[46]

A poem of ten cantos of each 70–80 octaves, comprising almost 5,000 verses in total, the *Dragontea* detailedly describes the near-contemporaneous events of Francis Drake's last expedition and death from what can be termed a critical Spanish perspective:[47] Its portrait of the English privateer illustrates how "El Draque" was at once vilified and admired as a worthy enemy by the Spanish while at the same time illuminating the complexity of Lope's poetic historiography – recurrently taunted as nationalistic and anglophobic yet in fact, as we shall see, a far cry from the one-sided communication of contemporaneous propaganda.[48] As I will show in my examination of Lope's historical poetics in this epic, the *Dragontea* can be understood as a multifaceted and rather polemical counterhistory, not only refuting the Black Legend about Spanish imperial cruelty diffused by Protestant partisans (6: 15–43) and the English idolisation of Drake – depicting his calling by Greed (1: 35–78); his deal with the devil (9: 6–8); his vandalistic and blasphemous actions (5: 18–86) and his humiliating death (canto 10, stanzas 3–16) – but also going against Spanish authorities' official narrative of the Drake affair in a daring vindication of imaginative, poetic historiography.[49]

That Lope saw his Drake epic as a serious historiographical undertaking can positively be gleaned from the many details which he meticulously collected from dispatches sent by crown officials from the Spanish fleet and the Panama court (*audiencia*), including the "Account of what Happened upon the Arrival of the English Armada, with its General Captain Francis, to Tierrafirme and the Port of Nombre de Dios"; the "Account of what Happened to Don Alonso de Sotomayor when he Arrived at Tierrafirme to Defend that Reign and his Victory over the English Armada and its Captain, General Francis Drake, in the year 1595"; the "Account of the Return that the English Armada, and General Francis Drake, made to the Port of Portobelo 24 Days after it had left that of Nombre de Dios Defeated, and what was Done again by General Alonso de Sotomayor Francisco in Tierrafirme to Attack and Defend" and the "Account of what Happened in San Juan in Puerto Rico with the English Armada led by Francis Drake and John Hawkins on 23 November 1595."[50] The *Dragontea* follows these sources very closely indeed but weaves the dry historical facts detailed in them – strategical moves of commanders and leaders; casualties and losses; cartographic and geographical descriptions; local alliances and fractions – into an engaging narrative uniting (more or less) factual sea battle scenes (3: 6–25; 8: 24–62) with fictitious 'intimate histories' of the Anglo-Spanish War describing the price paid by English soldiers' families (2: 47–61; 4: 1–8; 6: 46–53) or the suffering of indigenous civilians (5: 46–86), exaltation of the Habsburg dynasty and Spanish nobles (1: 4–5; 8: 63–87) and

allegorical passages in which abstractions such as Christian Religion, Greed, and Spain decipher the greater metaphysical significance of the transpiring historical events (1: 7–27; 1: 42–78; 2: 1–6; 9: 58–59; 10: 48–60).

As such a colourful fabric of changing perspectives, the *Dragontea* gives a reasonable idea of what Lope's take on the position as royal chronicler would have been, had he achieved it.[51] Indeed, as the American colonial scholar Elizabeth Wright has argued, with the narrator's extensive historical and religious survey of the Iberian peninsula (8: 63–87), the poem appears to effectively offer to "finish Spain's general chronicle" by writing the chapter on New Spain – an audacity that did not go unnoticed by the person then holding the position as royal chronicler, Antonio de Herrera (1549–1625).[52] In a letter sent to Philip III in 1599, he criticised the Drake epic recommending its continued suppression on the grounds of its alleged spreading of misinformation.[53] The suppression was highly successful. Until recently, the *Dragontea* was at best considered a work of mere cultural-historical interest and it still awaits a thorough aesthetic vindication.[54]

Intending to spread misinformation or not, with his poetic version of the Spanish victory at Panama, Lope had knowingly thrown himself into the post-war row for battle honours then raging between Sotomayor and the mayor of Nombre de Dios, one Don Diego Suárez de Amaya. The latter went practically unmentioned in the archival sources, yet the *Dragontea* – for reasons that can only be guessed at – turned him into the great hero of the Spanish' last face-off with Francis Drake, assigning a minor 'finishing' role to Sotomayor (10: 39–40).[55] Glorifying the apparently insignificant and positively quarrelsome mayor of a small colonial town against the official narrative which assigned the role of the hero to a long-time servant of Philip II, a highly decorated war veteran, the Fénix was clearly stretching contemporaneous theorists' ideas about poetic licence and the pursuit of the "verisimilar" rather than the factual. Yet, so convincing was this poetic counterhistory apparently considered to be, that the whole historiographical establishment turned on it and continued to do so long after the coveted battle trophy – the position as Royal Governor of Chile – had been awarded to Sotomayor. More than 20 years later, Lope's tampering with the official version of events prompted the biographer Francisco Caro de Torres to denounce the Drake epic's version of historical events in his *Account of the Services that Don Alonso de Sotomayor Payed to Their Majesties Philip II and III* (*Relación de los servicios que hizo a Sus Majestades Felipe Segundo y Tercero, don Alonso de Sotomayor*, 1620), citing the poem's misinformation as the very reason for publishing his own book: "[…] after having read this history, in which they take part, many people have asked me to publish the account that I presented to his Majesty."[56]

Thus, we have the interesting case of the official historiography of the Drake-affair countering Lope's counterhistory, a case very pertinent indeed to the present examination of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture. Precisely because the historiographical establishment so eagerly opposed and worked to suppress the *Dragontea*, the whole case invites reflection on what was Golden Age history writing really. One thing is the official dispatches whose factual accuracy can hardly be doubted (though they were of course – like any "account" (*relación*) – also biased or at least reproducing culturally determined norms about who and what a 'hero' was supposed to be). But was Lope's Drake epic necessarily less 'true' than Caro de Torres' *Account*, if assessed in accordance with the period's conception of history? As we have seen in previous chapters, Golden Age theorists considered history a rhetorical genre, an art, and literary theorists devoted large sections of their treatises to the art of history writing. Contemporaneous theorists of both stripes would certainly have discussed whether Lope went too far in his poetic embellishment of history (ostensibly cultured language, pervasive symbolism, widespread use of harangues and other types of speeches, invented characters). But they would all have cherished the poem's appealing epic sweep and narrative drive – certainly a far cry from the detested assemblage of "many truths" of the medieval annalists or the historian-poet Lucan's allegedly unpoetic reporting of facts; and they would easily have explained away the factual inaccuracies concerning Suárez de Amaya, construing Lope's fashioning of the Spanish victory at Panama as a moral allegory of New Spain's spiritual vanquishing of the demonic Dragon that had been marring Old Spain for so long. Historical theorists' unwavering conception of history as an art and literary theorists' persistent view of poetry as the allegorical cipher of a moral truth both underscore the futility of conceiving the *Dragontea*-controversy as a matter of history versus poetry. Moreover, if Lope wrote history to please some patron, as his enigmatic exalteration of Suárez de Amaya has been seen to suggest, then so did his historiographer opponents: Dependence upon patronage was not only the thought-directing situation of the poet. It was also a prerequisite of sixteenth-century historians who did not write their chronicles in an ivory tower or research library far removed from political life. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, every work of history was commissioned or paid by someone with a particular interest; and the interests of Lope's patrons obviously collided with those of Lope's opponents' patrons. Thus, rather than a clash between objective and non-objective historiography, the *Dragontea*-controversy shows the clash of rival histories – of rival histories competing for readers' confidence and interest.

How, then, did Lope try to get readers on his side? Which aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices did he employ to adapt his creative version of events to the standards of contemporaneous history writing?

As suggested by the sketch of the *Dragontea*'s historical poetics, adumbrated above, the Fénix certainly exercised a large number of literary devices to make his history appealing, using practically every trick up his sleeve to move and engage readers. Yet what particularly interests me here is his mimicking of contemporaneous history writing. Thus, in my examination of the Drake poem, I will focus on two specific devices which transform Lope's historical epic into a confident but also ambiguous chronicle: (1) the constitution of the narrator as the voice of history, and (2) the use of the dream topic. As I will discuss, the text emphatically stages the narrator as an authoritatively speaking subject. Yet, at the same time, its exploitation of the ancient literary dream topic – ever introducing epistemological uncertainty – appears to call into question the eschatological chronicle design engineered by this subject.

The Voice of History

Setting off with an unmistakable reference to the opening line of the *Aeneid*, the *Dragontea* consciously parades as a classic imperial epic.[57] It is sung by an authorial 'I' largely employing the Spanish language's historiographical tense par excellence, the preterit perfect simple, to represent action "situated prior to the time of speech."[58] Narratologically, however, Lope's epic is anything but simple. First of all, the poem does not merely narrate past action but performs a constant 'simultaneous translation' of this action into something of greater constancy, creating innumerable links between the prosaic world of historical characters and events and a cosmic, metaphysical sphere where these characters and events take on a universal – transcendental and eschatological – meaning: In the *Dragontea*, Francis Drake is at one and the same time a historical person and an allegory of Protestant Heresy and Greed. Likewise, the English privateer's assault on Panama and final overcoming by the Spanish are simultaneously meticulously detailed historical events and a cipher of the universal combat between Good and Evil.

Though it is most explicitly present in the opening and closing canto, this allegorical framework – clearly compatible with both contemporaneous literary theorists' view of history as a moral genre and the *historia magistra vitae* tradition informing the contemporaneous *artes historicae* – pervades the poem from front page through the last stanza.[59] It is eruditely introduced on the frontispiece and subsequently explicitated in the exordium (1: 4–5) where the narrator first suggests the identity of the English corsair with "that foul Dragon from Scripture":[60]

> Oh, heroic Philip, the Third
> in the row after the older Second […]
> if you wish to behold in its last agony

that foul Dragon from Scripture,
[…];
hear me now […].[61]

Following this introduction, Lope's historical epic sets forth with a lengthy scene in which "Christian Religion complains to divine Providence about the corsairs, Moors and heretics afflicting Spain, Italy and the Indies" (1: 7–27), illustrating the cosmological significance with which the narrator consistently invests prosaic characters and events: All historical actions have an eschatological dimension; everything that happens on earth will resonate in heaven; Francis Drake is not only an English corsair but simultaneously a figuration of the Biblical dragon who will eventually be defeated by the poem's hero, Diego Sánchez de Amaya, as historical incarnation of St George Dragon Slayer, in a prefiguration of the final combat between good and evil.[62] Indeed, this more than 150-verse opening scene provides quite a privileged peek into the allegorical and eschatological imagination informing Golden Age historical thinking generally and omnipresent in Lope's poem as a bird's-eye view suggesting the deeper meaning of history.[63] Recalling the iconography of contemporaneous war painting, the *Dragontea*'s "divine spirits" everywhere hover audience-like over the "theatre of terrestrial life":[64]

Above the English armada
hovered victorious Christian religion,
surrounded by divine spirits,
with its severe sword of fire […]
In an island in front, on a meadow
full of emeralds, diamonds and hyacinth,
[…]
with eyes different from mortal sight,
Spain, Italy and America beheld
the flames that threw red light on them.[65]

At first glance, this framing appears a highly controlling and homogenising device, leaving little to readers' imaginations and individual assessment of depicted characters and events. However, as becomes clear in the above quote, the concept of the *theatrum mundi* everywhere implicit in this framing device essentially divides reality into a supernatural 'spectator level' inhabited by allegorical creatures and a historical 'stage level' populated by a myriad of more or less historical characters. And while the allegorical design of the former may be fixed, the representation of the latter is decisively more equivocal. Despite the promise of the opening verse ("I sing of arms and the famous man"), the narrator does not sing all the cantos by himself but functions instead like the director of a large choir which performs an oratorio, calling forth a

number of soloists to sing individual arias or recitatives.[66] The contributions of these individual voices vary greatly in length, ranging from the relatively few sentences spoken by captain Quiñones (5: 14–15), general Sotomayor (9: 70), an English preacher (6: 63–64) or a Spanish captive soldier (7: 32) over the more extensive plead of a female civilian taken by Drake's soldiers (5: 55–60) or the complaint of Hawkin's wife (2: 47–61) to the 23-stanza harangue delivered by the poem's hero as he incites his men to fight the English supremacy (8: 1–23), Greed's address to Drake (1: 42–78) or Christian Religion's final eulogy (10: 49–60).

In Lope's "theatre of terrestrial life," some characters are assigned a smaller part and others, a leading role. As discussed above, the principles of and motives behind Lope's division of roles in this epic are by no means clear. Yet if one were to venture an infra-poetic explanation, the sorting principle could be the characters' edifying value. This would not only explain the large number of lines given to the allegorical figures who are, of course, moral characters; it would also illuminate the somewhat surprising fact that the poem's eponymous arch-fiend is allowed just one longer speech – his entreaty to Elizabeth I (2: 12–27) – before his last words ("I come, I come, oh, horrifying shadows!" 10: 16): While Drake must perforce be made to speak to exhibit his immorality and depravity, the conscientious chronicler would not wish to give him the floor more than is absolutely necessary. One should be careful about giving the word to the Devil.

Whether their role be a short or a long one, the multitude of individual voices speaking in the *Dragontea* surely contribute to the poem's narrative complexity yet they are all tautly managed by the narrator who elegantly glides in and out of viewpoints, dialogues and stories, composing a great colourful polyphony out of all the individual voices. This impression of a virtuoso narrator in masterful control of his story is confirmed by the narrative I's recurrent breaking of the narrative illusion through serial addresses to the poem's dedicatee, the future Philip III.[67] These numerous addresses not only draw flattering attention to a hoped-for maecenas who gets to be very present in the poem although he probably never received it, much less read it.[68] They also stage the narrator as the authoritative voice of history or indeed the very "genie of history" courted by Jerónimo de San José, translating the prosaic events of Francis Drake's last expedition and death into a larger allegorical-eschatological narrative, orchestrating a plurality of more or less dissident 'alien' voices and always making sure noone forgets who is in charge of this marvellous, versified chronicle which by far outdoes all official accounts.

Allegory and eschatology, extended use of speeches and harangues, palpable writing subject: These are all historiographical traits familiar from Juan de Mariana's *General History of Spain*, written almost at the exact same time as the *Dragontea*. As we have seen, Mariana's account of the "Fall of Spain" – relying on the same neo-Gothic doctrine about

the Spanish monarchy's key role in salvation history, embraced by Lope in canto 8 (63–87) – also imposed a tight allegorical grid on historical characters and events and suggested their eschatological significance.[69] Yet, precisely as our epic poet, the Jesuit historian was not afraid to allow alien voices into his authoritative moral narrative, repeatedly giving the floor to different characters. Finally, like the Fénix, this prototypical Golden Age author of historical prose repeatedly stepped forward as the speaking subject of his historical narrative. Indeed, narratologically, historian and historical poet are almost indistinguishable.[70] Yet if the Fénix largely succeeded in mimicking authoritative chronicle style, merging narrative techniques of epic and historiography, seamlessness does not exhaustively describe his historical poetics in the Drake poem. As I will now discuss, the text's exploitation of the literary dream vision – ever pondering epistemological uncertainty – seriously calls into question the poem's apparently self-confident, eschatological chronicle design.

Destabilising Dream

As described above, a considerable part of the *Dragontea* is taken up by oneiric-visionary sceneries peopled by allegorical characters, including almost the whole first canto and large part of canto 10. These passages are key in Lope's transformation of contingent historical facts into a meaningful narrative, as called for by both historical and literary theorists. However, just after the second of these scenes – Drake's calling by Greed in a dream (1: 42–78) – the narrator inserts a striking reflection on dreams and visions (2: 7–10). Reflecting the general logic of Golden Age oneirology, evidenced in numerous contemporaneous handbooks and literary works from the period, this passage separates 'legitimate' dream visions from the "animal sleep" that is the product of human desire:[71]

> Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and David dreamt
> because of their admirable excellence;
> Nebuchadnezzar and Pharao, because they praised
> the glory of God with their interpretations.
> The prisoners of Joseph and others having
> such visions in sacred history had them
> because of the omen that God wished to send
> or the notice he wanted to give them of danger.
> But animal dreams proceed and are born
> from thought's solicitude which
> satisfies the instinct of the individual;
> the judge dreams of law, the defendant of torment,
> the miser does, the liberal undoes,
> Mars asks for arms, Neptune for wind,

> yet there are also dreams which proceed
> naturally from their originator's complexion.
> The sanguine dreams of pleasant things,
> the flegmatic of snow and cold waters,
> the melancholic of horrific happenings,
> the choleric of wars and disputes.
> Thus, from these various solicitudes,
> from the brain to the heart, Morpheus
> could occupy our Englishman,
> for humankind always dreams its own desire.
> He believed his evil and not the psalmist
> who says that they were asleep and, awakened,
> they did not find the richness they saw in dreams,
> for the dreams of life are uncertain,
> and the multitude attacking Zion
> will be like the person who dreams of goods,
> of whom Isaiah says that the soul will
> find itself empty of that which it dreams itself full.[72]

Bottom-line, dreams and visions cannot be trusted, "the dreams of life are uncertain" and "humankind always dreams its own desire." How can one be sure that one's dream or vision is of the legitimate kind, like those of Abraham, Jacob, José and David reported in the Bible, and not a mere "animal sleep" showing us what we most desire? Dreams and visions carry with them the problem of what kind of truth value can be attributed to them. They are tainted by the problem of legitimacy and a suspicion of not being true inevitably clings to them. Thus, in a play probably written the very same year as the Drake epic, *The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus* (*El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón*, 1598), Lope lets his protagonist dream up a vision in which Christian Religion and Idolatry (the heathen divinity of the New World) negotiate the legitimacy of the Spanish conquest of America before the seat of divine Providence. This oneiric scene ends with Providence's endorsement of Columbus' journey yet leaves it to the spectator to judge whether the dream vision is trustworthy or not, subtly letting the generally accepted ambiguity of dreams and visions resonate in the background in order to destabilise the play's jubilant message about Spain's spiritual salvation of the indigenous people of the New World.[73] Similarly, in the *Dragontea*, Drake's calling in a dream vision frames the entire eschatological design of the poem with epistemological uncertainty: If "our Englishman" only dreams his visitation by Greed, then the reader may also be doubtful of the ultimate reality of the other allegorical passages, even if they contain "divine spirits" and not "black infernal spirits."

Thus, despite its heavy framing, Lope's counterhistory of the Drake affair does not impart an unequivocal evangelic message about the coming of a new era, where good triumphs over evil under the auspices of the Habsburg monarchy. It is a story fraught with ambiguity. Indeed, the *Dragontea* not merely challenges the Black Legend, takes on the contemporaneous mythologisation of Francis Drake and counters Spanish official historiography of the Battle of Panama. It also thought-provokingly invites critical scrutiny of its own eschatological chronicle design, underscoring the reflexive strength of Lope's poetic historiography compared with, for example, Mariana's Spanish history. In the end, this inherent self-reflection was probably too subtle and too unmanageable for the author to ever have been a successful royal chronicler, a position which required a different kind of historiographical authority – one not based on aesthetic reflection.

Notes

1 Munslow (2007) and Ankersmit (1983 and 2001). See also Ginzburg (2006).
2 Munslow (2007: 1).
3 Munslow (2007: 64–79).
4 As can be gleaned from the above quotation from *Narrative and History*, Munslow's discussion of alternative forms of history writing – including films and photography, television and radio, graphic novels and comics, games and digitised representations, but not historical novels, historical drama or historical poetry – has quite a different focus than the present study.
5 See Cebrián (1991: 15–16).
6 Kluge (2020: 265–266).
7 Of the *Phoebean Chorus*' 100 ballads, only about a tenth treats topics from Spanish history, including "Ballad of Arias Gonzalo" (1587: 52–54) and "Ballad of King Sancho the Tremulous" (1587: 70–73) from book 2; "Ballad of King Don Alonso the Wise" (1587: 97–99) from book 3; "Ballad of the Death of King Don Enrique" (1587: 125–127) from book 4; "Ballad of Count Don Manuel Ponce de Leon" (1587: 151–158) and "Ballad of Count Fernan Gonzales" (1587: 160–162) from book 5; "Ballad of Sancho Fernandez Count of Aragon (1587: 211–215) and "Ballad of Doña Teresa Sister of King Don Alonso" (1587: 215–218) from book 7; "Ballad of Hali Albahacen, King of Granada" (1587: 257–259) and "Ballad of Don Rodrigo from Cisneros" (1587: 263–267) from book 8; and "Ballad of Egas Nuñez" (1587: 326–330) from book 10. The majority of the historical ballads in the collection poeticise various forms of ancient history (Roman, Egyptian, Asian).
8 In her study of the sources of *Tragedy of the Seven Infantes of Lara* (1579), Coates names Ocampo and the *Songbook of Ballads* as the two generally acknowledged sources of Cueva's play (2008). This implies that they would also have been (among) the sources of Cueva's posterior works, including the ballads on medieval Spanish history from the *Phoebean Chorus*. I add Almela's work – a collection of moral interpretations of historical characters (Biblical and national) which received multiple reprints during the sixteenth century – because its moral treatment of the Teresa story in book 4: 4 under the heading "On abstinence and continence" could have inspired Cueva's version.

9 Reflecting its aesthetic-historiographical backdrop, the history of princess Teresa story has seen a variety of creative reimaginations. After the Golden Age, notable literary and semi-literary reimaginations of the Teresa legend include those of the Romantic poet Gregorio Romero Larrañaga (in *The Bible and the Coran. Religious Tradition in the 11th Century*, 1845), the novelist Manuel Torrijo (*The Infanta Doña Teresa*, 1857), and the folklorist Eugenio Olavarría y Huarte (*Toledan Traditions*, 1878).

10 Taking off from Aristotle's remarks in *Poetics* 1451 b that "[t]he difference between the historian and the poet is not that between using verse or prose; Herodotus' work could be versified and would be just as much a kind of history in verse as in prose" (1999: 59), Golden Age theorists of both history and literature tirelessly reiterated that it is not verse that makes the poet nor prose that makes the historian.

11 Cueva (1587: unpag. Prologue):

> Porque las cosas de este mundo / siguen aqueste camino, / qu'en el ninguna ai perpetua / si del tuvieren principio. / Y assi dexando estas cosas / vengo al fin que en esto sigo. / Que contra tan ciertos riesgos, / y daños tan conocidos, / contra la fuerça del tiempo, / contra el rigor del destino, / ai solamente vn reparo / ya qu'el daño, y perjuycio / de la vida, no lo tiene, / por ser preceto divino / que à de morir el que vive, / sin que quede vivo vivo. / Este, es la immortal istoria, / del largo tiempo registro, / luz clara de la verdad, / del'antiguedad testigo […].
>
> For the things of this world / follows such a road, / in which nothing is perpetual / if it had its origin here. / And leaving it at that / I come to my point. / That against so sure risks / and well-known harms / against the force of time / the rigor of destiny, / there is only one remedy / now that life's harm and damage does not have it, / for it is divine law / that all that lives must die / without staying alive. / And that is immortal history, / register of long time, / bright light of truth, / witness of antiquity […].

Cf. Petrarch (1996: 84), Páez de Castro (1892b: 30–31) and Cabrera (1948: 12). Further, Carvallo (1958 II: 46–47)

12 Compare Carvallo's notion that he who "spills ink" is just as important as the one who "sheds blood" (Carvallo, 1958 II: 46–47). To Cueva's theatre of vanity in the *Tragedy of the Seven Infantes of Lara*, see Kluge (2020).

13 Cueva (1587: unpag. Prólogo):

> Esto se deve a la istoria, / que nos da de todo aviso, / y los hechos que sabemos / a la istoria son devidos, / y para perpetuallos, / inventaron los antiguos, / que los hechos se cantassen, / que era de alabança dinos, / en romances, y estos fuessen / en lengua llana, y estilo / vmilde, para que fuessen / generalmente sabidos.

14 Fox Morcillo (2000: 125 [213]) and Costa (1591: I, 29).

15 Carvallo (1958: II, 51).

16 Cueva (1587: unpag. Prólogo):

> Los romances, son compendio, / o abreviacion de lo escrito, / de las antiguas istorias, / y por ellos an vivido / muchas, que tienen oy vida, / que se uvieran ya perdido. / Los romances, comprehenden / en su vmilde, y llano estilo, / todas cuantas cosas quieren / cantar, de virtud, o vicios, / empresas del fiero Marte, / de amor ardientes suspiros, / quexas, celos, burlas, veras, / lealtades, tratos fingidos, / aficiones y ficiones, / y otros casos sucedidos, / cual se veran largamente / tratados en este libro.

17 On the oral origin of the *romancero*, see the definition of Menéndez Pidal (1997: 9): "The ballads are short epic-lyrical poems which are sung to the sound of an instrument whether in choral dances, in recreative gatherings or accompanying labour."
18 Cueva's second and unpublished compilation of historical ballads is conserved as Ms. 82-2 5bis in the Biblioteca Columbina in Seville with the title *Historical Ballads* (*Romanças Históricos*). For the book historical details, see Cebrián (1991: 16–17).
19 The scholarly tendency to downvalue Cueva's various reimaginations of ballad material probably originates in Menéndez Pidal's negative assessment of the Sevillan's ballads and ballad-inspired drama in his works on the Spanish ballad tradition (see, for instance, *The Legend of the Seven Infantes of Lara* (*La leyenda de los infantes de Lara*, 1896).
20 As described by Medina-Bocos Montarelo (2001: 34), Juan de la Cueva was the first Golden Age dramatist to base plays on ballad material. Thus, plays such as *Comedy of the Death of King Don Sancho* (*Comedia de la muerte del rey don Sancho*), the *Tragedy of the Seven Infantes of Lara* (*Tragedia de los siete infantes de Lara*) and the *Comedy of the Liberty of Spain through Bernardo de Carpio* (*Comedia de la libertad de España por Bernardo de Carpio*) have their basis in ballad material.
21 Cueva (1587: 216):

> En esto estava ocupada / la triste Infanta afligida, / cuando los Febeos cavallos / al Oceano se inclinan, / cierrase con noche el mundo, / con el Mar se embuelve el dia, / tiende sus alas el sueño / con que al reposo combida, / alçan las mesas apriessa, / cessan los saraos que avia.

22 Thus, Le Strange, editor of *Spanish Ballads*, states that "It is certain, however, that the Moslem whom the Infanta Teresa was forced to marry was not Audalla (Abd-Allah) King of Toledo, but was the great Almanzor […]" (2013: 64).
23 Cueva (1587: 216):

> Dize, ò Salvador del mundo / que las altas Hierarqias / hiziste, y el trono eterno / en tu Trina essencia abitas / […] / que hara una muger sola, / de dos reyes combatida? / si para vno tu ayuda / fue visiblemente vista / la cual te pido Dios mio, / y suplico no permitas, / que muger sea de vn pagano, / quien tiene puesta tu Chrisma.

24 Cueva (1587: 216): "Levantase el rei Abdalla/ y a dormir se va, y embia/ luego por la desposada."
25 All quotes in this paragraph from Cueva (1587: 217): "porque con esse rigor/ me tratais?"; "ved Señora/ que soi rei de tanta estima."
26 Cueva (1587: 217):

> quiere que haga la fuerça, / lo que no la cortesia. / Y assi dexando el respeto / asio della, y dixo mira / infanta doña Teresa / qu'es mucha tu demasia, / no huigas de mi querer / pues eres ya muger mia.

27 Of the collection's 11 ballads on Spanish medieval history all except "Ballad of Don Rodrigo from Cisneros" treat of the *reconquista*.
28 Cueva (1587: 218): "el Moro cae sin sentido,/ sin habla, y casi sin vida,/ echava en blanco los ojos,/ lançava negra saliva,/ dava vozes mal formadas,/ que oillas causava grima."
29 Cueva (1587: 217).
30 For this topic, see Kallendorf (2003).

31 Cueva (1587: 218–219):

> […] bolvio en su acuerdo / el Moro, y dize ya es vista / la voluntad, que tu Dios / Christiana, quiere que siga, / de cuya mano me viene / este castigo, y me priva / casarme yo con Christiana, / siendo Moro, y pues m'obliga / su poder, a que lo haga / yo dexo tu compañia, / que no quiero contender / con quien assi me derriba.

32 Cueva (1587: 218).

33 Morales (1586: 308):

> […] la Infanta le amenazo si la tocaua con estas palabras. Mira señor que yo soi Christiana, y aborrezco este matrimonio con infiel. No me toques, porque no te mate Iesu Christo a quien yo reuerencio y siruio. No haziendo el Moro caso desto cumplio forçando a la Infanta su torpe deleyte, y al punto se sintio mortal, con executar el cielo lo que se le auia amenazado. Abdalla pues sintiendo cerca su muerte, a mucha priessa mando cargar muchos camellos de joyas y arreos riquissimos, y con grande acompañamiento y mucha honra hizo boluer la Infanta a Leon.

34 Morales (1586: 308): "por alcançar este matrimonio fingio ser Christiano." The reference is to the *Chronicle of the World*.

35 Cf. that in *Amores*, the poet – repeating the opening of Virgil's *Aeneid* – prepares to write hexametric epic poetry but is disturbed by Cupid who steals a verse foot and turns his poem into elegiac love poetry.

36 Cueva (1587: unpag. Prólogo).

37 See, however, Menéndez Pelayo (1944: 86) who emphasises the truth value of the historical ballads:

> The frontier ballads never lie. No fable has mixed itself with them, though our annals of kingdoms and cities hold so many. What they do contain are confusions about persons, places and times that are almost always easy to disentangle once the common thread of historical chronology is at hand.

38 See Martínez Iniesta (2003: 3): "[frontier ballads] form a popular poetic chronicle of the progress of the *reconquista* from the last third of the 14th century and the different coexistence of Moors and Christians in frontier territories." Further (ibid.: 4): "The peak of these epic frontier songs begins after the siege of Antequera by Fernando in 1410 and culminates with the conquest of Granada in 1492."

39 Grieve (2016: 102–103) describes the captivity tale as a genre centring on conversion and exploiting motives such as the fear of apostasy and escape/rescue as divine intervention on the backdrop of epic schemata of loss, exile and return and superordinate eschatological narratives about the battle between good and evil. There are a number of links between especially the *Sultana* play (1585) and Cueva's Teresa ballad, including the emulative poetics, the forced intercultural marriage, the heroine's unwavering faith and the city of Oviedo. For a discussion of this Cervantine 'history play,' see Kluge (2019).

40 Cueva (1587: 215):

> El Moro acercò el recaudo / y las alianças firma, / cual pidiò el rei don Alonso / sin que en cosa contradiga, / antes le enbiò a dar gracias / por merced tan escogida, / y en señal de aquella gloria, / por el tan encarecida, / mandò que a todo su reino / se le avisa, y aperciba / que la celebren con Zambras, / y con Leilas su alegria. / En lo mismo ocupa el tiempo / don Alonso, y exercita, / alegres fiestas, y juegos / de cañas, toros, surtija.

> / […] / Llegò el dia de las bodas, / alegre en toda Castilla / y sola doña Teresa / la novia, gime, y suspira […].

41 Cueva (1587: 216): "una muger sola,/ de dos reyes combatida."
42 Cueva (1587: 217): "ved Señora / que soi rei de tanta estima / qual es el rei vuestro ermano."
43 Thus, the ballads describing the Siege of Antequera (1410) for example generally adopt the perspective of the defeated Moors, approximating the pro-Arab angle of the *romance morisco*.
44 Cebrián (1991: 15) thus calls Cueva "a celebrated and famous dramatist."
45 The mere fact that Menéndez Pelayo dedicated four of his six-volume *Studies of the Theatre of Lope de Vega* (vols. III–VI) to the playwright's "Dramatic Chronicles and Legends of Spain" (a total of 97 plays by his counting) illustrates the importance of historical themes – national history in particular – in the theatre of Lope.
46 To Drake's biography, see Kelsey (2000). To the 1595 "Drake Norris" expedition, see Andrews (2008).
47 Through the years, scholarly opinion of Lope's characterisation of the Englishman has differed widely, from Jameson's view that "a great deal of the work is taken up by furious invective against Drake" (1938: 116) to Wright's contention that "Lope contributed to the mythification of Francis Drake" (2001a: 117) or, indeed, that "The poem about empire, therefore, takes its shape through the English adversary rather than the Spanish defenders" (2001b: 38).
48 Thus, Wright comments: "The few readers that the work has had have agreed in censuring what they perceived as an aglophobia that came from the role of national propagandist" (2001a: 125, note 34), citing the work of Pierce (1968), Jameson (1938) and Flecniakoska (1979).
49 Here and subsequently, numbers refer to (canto, stanzas). I will not go into Lope's countering of the Black Legend in the present context, but submit to my article about his Columbus-play (Kluge, 2018) which was probably written the same year as the *Dragontea* and also addresses Protestant propaganda.
50 "Relación de lo sucedido en la venida de la armada inglesa, General el Capitán Francisco, al Reino de Tierrafirme y puerto del Nombre de Dios"; the "Relación de lo sucedido a don Alonso de Sotomayor luego que llegó a Tierrafirme en la defensa de aquel Reino y victoria que tuvo de la armada inglesa y su Capitán general Francisco Draque, año de 1595"; "Relación de la vuelta que hizo el armada inglesa, General Francisco Drak, al puerto de Portovelo después de 24 dias que habia partido del de Nombre de Dios desbaratado, y lo que para su ofensa y defensa se ejecutó nuevamente en Tierrafirme por el general don Alonso de Sotomayor Francisco"; "Relación de lo sucedido en San Juan de Puerto Rico de las Indias con la Armada inglesa del cargo de Francis Draque y Juan Aquines a los 23 de noviembre de 1595." Jameson (1938: 106–107), adding that these sources "are corroborated in practically every detail by the English ones" (116).
51 Though he had no academic training as a historian, Lope positively aspired to Spain's highest historiographical office (Lope de Vega, 1941: 45).
52 Wright (2001b: 30–31):

> In the manner of [Ambrosio de Morales and Jerónimo de Zurita] who wrote under official commission […] the narrative voice gives a historical and religious survey of the Iberian peninsula. […]. In this sweep through Spanish imperial history, Panama becomes a site for a new reconquest. By using the language and narrative structure found in the era's histories, the poetic voice essentially offers to finish Spain's general chronicle.

> Such a proposal carried a practical importance circa 1598: as Lope wrote his poem, the longstanding goal of a monarchical history that stretched from the Gothic kings to the Habsburg dynasty remained stalled in the eleventh century. The narrator, working without an official commission, lends his talents to this goal. But for the consonant verses, the parenthesis emulates the era's official histories: it describes peninsular geography using methodology humanists adapted from Pliny and Strabo; it draws a seamless royal lineage from Pelayo to the Habsburgs; and it celebrates famous aristocrats, military men, and church leaders.

53 According to Herrera, Lope's rendering of the events was "very adverse to the truth, with manifest affront to the persons who served there," wherefore printing of the book had justifiably been prohibited in Castile and should continue to be so. Sánchez (2008) disentangles the threads of the Lope-Herrera controversy, reproducing Herrera's letter in full (569–570).

54 Epitomising the poem's modern reception, Jameson noted that "Lope's poem has deservedly sunk into oblivion, but it has an interest, especially for those of English speech, for giving a picture from the enemy side of one of England's popular heroes" (1938: 119). Wright (2001a and b) has a plausible reading of the poem as a mirror-for-princes guiding its dedicatee, the *Príncipe de Asturias* and later Philip III, in colonial regentship, but essentially considers the *Dragontea* a failed imperial epic glorifying the enemy – Drake – and breaking down the "monstrous other/heroic self" binary upon which it is based (2001b: 33–39).

55 See Sánchez (2008).

56 "[…] auiendo leydo efta hiftoria muchas perfonas que fe hallaron en ella, me han perfuadido [que] imprima la relacion que hize a fu Mageftad." Quoted in Wright (2001a: 125).

57 Lope de Vega (2002: 13): "Canto las armas y el varón famoso," compare Virgil's "Arma virumque cano," somewhat hyperbolically comparing Don Diego Suárez de Amaya to Aeneas. There are numerous references to classical and contemporaneous epic in the *Dragontea*, which I cannot pursue here. See, e.g., Richard Hawkin's farewell to his wife (2: 47–61), modelled on *Iliad* VI, 390–470 (Hector and Andromache scene), and the reference to Aeneas' carrying his mother in 7: 43–45.

58 See the definition of *pretérito perfecto simple* in the Real Academia Española's online dictionary: "Tiempo perfectivo que indica que la acción, el proceso o el estado expresados por el verbo se sitúan en un punto anterior al momento del habla"; "Past tense which indicates that the action, the process or the condition expressed by the verb are situated prior to the time of speech."

59 E.g., Carvallo (1958 I: 40–48, on the "benefit of history").

60 The frontispiece of the first edition (Valencia: Pedro Patricio Mev, 1598) parades a fragment from Psalm 90, *et conculcabis leonem et draconem*, "thou shalt trample upon the lion and dragon" and a woodcut showing an eagle defeating a dragon, a symbolic illustration of the Habsburg defeat of Drake, and the poem recurrently refers dragon imagery drawn from Revelations, ch. 12 and 13, Psalms 90: 13 and ancient sources such as Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (10: 22–23).

61 Lope de Vega (2002: 14): "Vos heroico Filipo, que el Tercero / os cupo en suerte del mayor Segundo […] / si ver queréis en el rigor postrero / aquel Dragón de la Escritura inmundo, / […] / oídme agora […]."

62 Lope de Vega (2002: 14): "La India, a quien el mar de perla baña, / medrosa dama del Dragón de Oriente, / Hidra de Alcides y Pitón de Febo, / hoy libra

de su furia un Jorge nuevo." "The Indies, which the sea baths in perl, / fearful lady of the Oriental Dragon, / Hercules' hydra and Phoebus' python, / today is freed of its fury by a new George."

63 The omnipresence of the allegorical interpretation of history is notably observable in the identification of Drake with the Biblical dragon which recurs no less than 57 times through the poem.

64 For example, Paolo Veronese's *Allegory of the Battle of Lepanto* (1571), in the Gallerie Accademia in Venice, showing the Virgin, Mark the Evangelist, St Peter and others hovering over the famous sea battle.

65 Lope de Vega (2002: 173):

> Estaba encima de la inglesa armada / la religión cristiana victoriosa, / de divinos espíritus cercada, / con su espada de fuego rigurosa […] / En una isla enfrente, sobre un prado / de esmeraldas, diamantes y jacintos, / […] / con ojos de mortal vista distintos, / España, Italia, América, miraban / las llamas que sobre ellos arrojaban.

Cf. *Dragontea* 2: 1–6 describing the jubilation of the "black infernal spirits" (2: 4) upon witnessing Greed's calling of Drake (1: 42–78)

66 The *Dragontea*'s complete list of speakers includes Christian Religion; Greed; Richard Hawkins and his wife; Francis Drake and Thomas Baskerville; the Spanish leaders Francisco Beltrán de Castro, Pedro de Quiñones, Alonso de Sotomayor and Diego Suárez de Amaya; the priest of Nombre de Dios; a native "Spanish" woman and an elderly peasant; an English envoy; Luis de Mozambique, king of the black runaways of Santiago del Príncipe; Drake's nephew Rudolpho and his lover; Alberto de Ojeda, a Spanish traitor; Spanish soldiers; Francisco Cano, a Spanish mule driver who resists torture; a heroic Spanish soldier; a Spaniard by the name of Guillermo; a Spanish captive; an English soldier; Spain; an English sargent; one Hubert and one Edward, contenders for the command over the English fleet after Drake's death.

67 All in all, the Prince of Asturias is formerly addressed no less than 21 times by the title "señor" (2: 47; 3: 15; 3: 20; 3: 25; 3: 28; 3: 43; 3: 46; 3: 48; 3: 88; 4: 15; 4: 21; 4: 24; 4: 48; 5: 27; 6: 14; 6: 54; 7: 48; 8: 62; 8: 87; 9: 6; 9: 8), plus once as "Gran Príncipe" (4: 71) and twice as "Filipo" (1:4, 1:5).

68 Wright (2001b: 42).

69 Lope (2002: 155).

70 Cf. Wright (2001b: 30), on Lope's use of "the language and narrative structure found in the era's histories."

71 Cf. Covarrubias (1611: 1308):

> SOÑAR, del verbo Latino, as. Son ciertas fantasias, que el sentido comu[n] rebuelue quando dormimos, de las quales no ay que hazer caso, y solos aquellos sueños tienen alguna apariencia de verdad, por los que los Medicos juzgan el humor que predomina en el enfermo y no entran en esta cuenta las reuelaciones santas y diuinas.
>
> DREAM, from the Latin verb. These are certain fantasies that the common sense stirs when we sleep, which should not be given much importance; only those dreams have some appearance of truth from which the Doctors deduce the humor dominating in the sick, and holy and divine revelations do not enter here.

For dreams and visions in Golden Age literature, see Kluge (2003, 2004b, 2008, and 2018), discussing central "dreamworks" by San Juan de la Cruz (*Spiritual Canticle*, 1584), Quevedo (*Dreams and Discourses*, c. 1608),

Calderón de la Barca (*Life is a Dream*, 1635) and Lope (*The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus*, 1598).

72 Lope de Vega (2002: 33–34):

> Abraham, Jacob, José, David soñaron / por excelencia suya meritoria; / Nabuc y Faraón, porque ensalzaron / con su interpretación de Dios la gloria. / Los presos de José, y otros que hallaron / tales visiones en la sacra historia, / por presagio que Dios enviarles quiso, / o para darles de su daño aviso.
>
> Pero el sueño animal procede y nace / de la solicitud del pensamiento, / que a cada cual su instinto satisface; / sueña el juez la ley, el reo el tormento, / hace el avaro, el liberal deshace, / Marte pide armas y Neptuno viento, / pero también hay naturales sueños, / como las complexiones de sus dueños. / Sueña el sanguíneo cosas agradables, / el flemático nieves y aguas frías, / casos el melancólico espantables, / el colérico guerras y porfías; / de estas solicitudes variables, / desde el cerebro al corazón las vías / a nuestro inglés pudo ocupar Morfeo, / que siempre sueña el hombre su deseo.
>
> Creyó su daño, no creyó al salmista, / que dice que durmieron, y despiertos / no hallaron la riqueza en sueños vista, /que son los sueños de la vida inciertos, / porque la multitud que a Sión conquista / será como el que sueña bienes ciertos, / de quien dice Isaías, que ha de hallarse / vacía el alma en lo que piensa hartarse.

73 Lope de Vega (2001: 110–118 [1: 688–819]). For this reading of the Columbus play, see Kluge (2018).

Part III
Staging History

5 Theory of Drama

> History merges into the setting.
>
> Walter Benjamin *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* 92[1]

> In Frye's view, as we have seen, history (or at least "proper history") belongs to the category of "discursive writing", so that when the fictional element – or mythic plot structure – is *obviously* present in it, it ceases to be history altogether and becomes a bastard genre, product of an unholy, though not unnatural, union between history and poetry. Yet, I would argue, histories gain part of their explanatory effect by their success in making stories out of *mere* chronicles; and stories in turn are made out of chronicles by an operation which I have elsewhere called "emplotment". And by emplotment I mean simply the encodation of the facts contained in the chronicle as components of specific *kinds* of plot structures, in precisely the way that Frye has suggested is the case with "fictions" in general.
>
> Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* 83

Around the year 1600, history certainly – as Walter Benjamin proposed in his study of the baroque – "came on the stage" (*wandert[e] in den Schauplatz*).[2] Yet, in logical continuation of Plato's singling out of the scenic arts as particularly damaging to public morality, the "emplotment" of chronicle material which Hayden White identified as the basic "operation" of history writing proved especially controversial when effectuated precisely by playwrights.[3] In the pinnacle of European historical drama, plays based on historical material provoked more controversy than any other type of historiography though, with their ordering of the "many truths" of history into well-wrought dramatic plots, they were arguably the very archetypes of this operation. Invectives and apologies saw the light of day, either accusing historical dramas of tampering with facts or, to the contrary, celebrating this "bewitching thing" with "the power to new mold the hearts of the spectators and fashion them to the shape of any noble and notable attempt," as Thomas Heywood wrote apropos of history plays in his *An Apology for Actors* (1612).[4]

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In a Spanish context, the critique pronounced by the village priest Pero Pérez in *Don Quijote* 1: 48 certainly illustrates how the history play had around 1600 become a prime suspect of that falsification of the real with which contemporaneous literature was generally charged.[5] Indeed, the canon's anti-theatrical rant reveals how Golden Age historical drama was, in several important respects, the very epitome of all that was considered reprehensible about the theatre during this period of recurrent condemnations of actors, invectives against dramatic poetry and bans on the representation of plays.[6] Like most other contemporaneous drama, history plays violated stylistic decorum and standing societal norms mixing the noble personages and serious action of tragedy with the platitudes and frivolities of fictive comic characters. However, beyond these standard transgressions of good classicist taste, Golden Age historical drama also defied the common sense of even a "mediocre understanding," "inventing an action which takes place in the time of king Peppin or Charlemagne, and then making the emperor Heraclius the principal character." History plays, in other words, mixed "invented things" with "historical truths" and were therefore more unacceptable than almost all other types of drama, including the notorious "cloak and dagger plays" widely criticised for their immorality.[7] For while these blockbuster romcoms were wholly fictitious – pure fun – history plays claimed to represent something that had actually taken place, something true, and yet they contaminated historical truth with "obvious errors that from every point of view are inexcusable." As we have seen, contemporaneous theorists operated a distinction between, on one hand, the admissible lie which (after the paradigm of Lucian's *True Story*) openly recognised its own mendacity and, on the other hand, the reprehensible untruth which deceitfully masqueraded as truth. In Pero Pérez's view, history plays clearly belonged in the second category. It was therefore the most natural thing in the world for him to link them immediately after with the blasphemies of the religious plays which, in the opinion of contemporaneous dogmatists adopted by the Cervantine village priest, corrupted divine truth with vulgar illusions and lies.[8]

In Pero Pérez's hilarious diatribe against the different kinds of contemporaneous shows, 'the Prince of Wits' no doubt echoed the general critique of the theatre's falseness and threat to public morality voiced by thinkers such as Juan de Mariana (who lacked personal acquaintance with the stage and more or less verbatim repeated the second-century condemnations of public spectacles by Tertullian and other ecclesiastical authorities of the early Christian era).[9] However, *Quijote* I: 48 also resonates with more acute, expert observations such as those put forward by the Aragonese chronicler Lupercio Leonardo Argensola (1559–1613) in his petition to Philip II to keep up the 1598 ban on the public representation of plays. Underpinning his view that historical and religious plays in equal measure deceived the public with "bad doctrine," the

ex-playwright and author of a trio of acclaimed tragedies referred the example of a recent history play, in which John II of Aragon was attributed "deeds and actions which are not only contrary to the truth but also against the dignity of his person."[10] Argensola's petition was not only a probable incentive of Cervantes' satire, but it also suggests the centrality of history plays in the Golden Age theatre controversy.[11] With their deceitful feigning of reality, theatrical representations were overall seen bad, but to the Aragonese chronicler, history plays – with their manifest corruption of truth – were even worse (in particular those which treated the history of Aragon). Indeed, as the "Memo on the Representation of Plays" ("Memorial sobre la representación de comedias") clearly demonstrates, the Golden Age theatre controversy revolved around the by now familiar truth-fiction binary, pinning theatrical representations of the real against an abstract ideal of transcendent moral truth. In this regard, history plays were definitely in the explosive category.

Was detraction, then, the main tenor of the Golden Age discourse on history plays? The absence of ancient theories of historical drama no doubt left contemporaneous history plays in a precarious place, as a kind of bastard genre. There was of course Aristotle's good old endorsement of poetic invention and historical potentiality in *Poetics* 1451 b, but unfortunately it was rather vague. Though he provided a seminal apologetic argument, the philosopher had not specified how far dramatists could actually go in their pursuit of poetic truth – how much they could play with probability. The unclear demarcation line between poetic licence and sheer lies not only provoked the type of critique satirised by Cervantes. It also turned into a point of contention between Golden Age theorists of drama, with radical positions on both sides.[12] Yet, though they differed on the question of verisimilitude, contemporaneous literary theorists were generally comprehensive towards what Cervantes' pedantic clergyman less enthusiastically termed "downright nonsense and things that have neither head nor tail."[13] As we shall see, several of them, including such weighty theorists as Francisco de Cascales and Jusepe Antonio González de Salas, expressly favoured plays with historical plots and historical spectacles ended up not only as some of the period's most popular entertainment but also as one of the most prestigious theatrical forms – a genre which the incomparable Lope de Vega exploited in hundreds of plays among which were some of his most acclaimed pieces, such as *The Sheep's Well* (*Fuenteovejuna*, 1619).[14]

Considering the "power of represented history," exalted by Lope for its hold on the audience's imagination, the public success of these spectacles was hardly surprising. But how could a genre without classical pedigree gain critical acceptance in a literary culture which routinely looked to antiquity for its paradigms? How could what Argensola termed the "bad doctrine" of contemporaneous history plays find its way to the Parnassus? Here, Hayden White's concept of "emplotment"

becomes relevant, though it needs elaboration. The history play's success in "making stories out of *mere* chronicles" was certainly key to the Golden Age recognition of the genre, as dramatist answered directly to the "need for plot" formulated by Páez de Castro and the theorists of history who followed in his footsteps. Yet, though philosophers of history may consider "making stories" a basic "operation," to literary scholars (then as now), emplotment is never just emplotment. It can be tragic or comic, for example. Or moral. Thus, while contemporaneous theorists of all stripes incessantly called for the transformation of "many truths" into persuasive well-ordered narratives, the crux for them was also which kind of emplotment: To Pinciano, Cascales, Carvallo and their colleagues, it mattered a great deal how, according to which generic pattern, characters and events were plotted and – not the least – whether or not the plot aimed at communicating a moral lesson.[15]

Though contemporaneous poetics essentially treated the history play as a tragic subgenre, the negative worldview presumably informing Attic tragedy went directly counter to Christian faith; and tragic determinism, moreover, collided with the Counterreformation doctrine of free will. Benjamin's contention, that the version of history which "came on the stage" in the baroque period was "a process of irresistible decay," therefore does not hold true for Spain.[16] After 1600, the Spanish Golden Age saw the upsurge of precisely *comedia* as hegemonic term for 'play' and the general, if not altogether complete disappearance of Aristotelian tragedy.[17] On the other hand, however, as Argensola's memo demonstrates, the comic or indecorous representation of noble characters "against the dignity of [their] person" was also problematic. There was something rotten in the Golden Age literary republic, a smouldering discontent with the snaring norms and rigid schemata of classicist poetics. As the philologist and translator Francisco de Barreda argued in his polemical "Invective against the Comedies Prohibited by Trajan and an Apology for Ours" ("Invectiva a las comedias que prohibió Trajano, y apología por las nuestras," 1622), a new age with a new vision of the real demanded a new aesthetic.[18] In a moment of national decline, the time was ripe for a new historical mimesis which could do justice to all the inspiring deeds and characters of the past beyond the generic constraints of traditional tragedy and comedy.[19] As a tragicomic *theatrum historiae*, staging history as a vivacious and colourful tragicomic medley of melancholic kings and merry common folk, defeats and victories, heroic action and heinous treason, disastrous destinies and happy dénouements, the Golden Age history play eventually came to fill the role of "visible history of the People […] for its education better than history," in the words of the late seventeenth-century playwright-literary theorist Francisco Bances Candamo as stated in the *Theatre of the Theatres of All Times* (*Theatro de los theatros de todos los tiempos*, 1690).[20] What were the vehicles of the history play's advance from pariah to theoretical canonisation?

In the following subchapters, I will discuss two interrelated steps in this process: (1) literary theorists' reinterpretation of Aristotelian catharsis as moral purgation and linking of this concept with the concept of verisimilitude, and (2) the theoretical conceptualisation of the Golden Age history play as a tragicomedy exploiting history's treasure trove of good and bad *exempla* to the moral benefit of the spectator. Both these elements had to do with the independisation of the type of drama which "fabricates a thousand fictions on a single truth" from the generic mould of tragedy, and both evidently accommodated the *historia magistra vitae* tradition.[21] They are quite difficult to disentangle, but I will nevertheless first treat them separately and then consider their interaction as key constituents of the period's concept of the history play as a moral, tragicomic and ante terminem 'realist' *theatrum historiae*.

Cathartic History

As I will discuss more in detail below, the intense Golden Age focus on morality tended to dissolve generic boundaries: When the purpose of all writing – whichever the genre or topic chosen – was to teach edifying lessons, genres of writing became fundamentally indistinct. Thus, as we have seen in previous chapters, the same ideal of both moderately delightful and morally instructive writing was endorsed again and again across literary theory and the theory of history. Indeed, it was often quite difficult to distinguish the pages of the *artes poeticae* from those of the *artes historicae*. Yet, the period's didactic approach to writing not only blurred boundaries between individual rhetorical genres. It also muddled long-established infra-generic distinctions. Most surprisingly in this respect, no doubt, Golden Age literary theorists' moral reinterpretation of Aristotelian catharsis led them to approximate tragedy and comedy as kindred but different dramatic forms aimed equally at "purify the soul of its passions":

> CASTALIO: Tragedy is the imitation of an illustrious action, unified and of right nobility, written in a sweet dramatic language in order to purify the soul of its passions through pity and fear.[22]

> CASTALIO: Comedy is the dramatic imitation of a unified and delimited, humble and mild action which purifies the soul of its vices through pastime and laughter.[23]

This moral reinterpretation of the concept of catharsis on the part of leading literary theorists of the period in effect eliminated the boundary between tragedy and comedy – not formally, of course, but in terms of their *raison d'être*: Whereas the former sought to improve the virtue of

its audience showing bad examples of fatal choices and bad behaviour which provoked compassion and fear, the latter allegedly pursued the same end using "pastime and laughter" to exhibit human folly. Thus, in the eyes of Golden Age literary critics, both dramatic main genres revolved around the purgation of "passions" and "vices," aiming to move spectators towards virtue and away from vice (showing "what to flee and what to pursue," in Carvallo's words).[24] They merely employed different aesthetic tools.

The Golden Age reinterpretation of catharsis as moral purgation also, importantly, connected with the contemporaneous discussion of verisimilitude: For if the whole goal of dramatic poetry was to teach moral lessons, which subjects were then best suited to achieve spiritual purification – fictive or historical? As anticipated above, the period's theorists differed on this question. In his *Ancient Poetic Philosophy*, Pinciano had underscored the aesthetic superiority of invented fables over "vulgar fables," going against the grain of contemporaneous critics of the theatre but embracing his generation of European literary theorists who generally endorsed poetic freedom.[25] According to his view, good poetry was a product of the poet's free invention and not a mere spin-off of already existing histories.[26] This was one extreme in the spectrum of positions on verisimilitude. At the other extreme, Francisco de Cascales, Pinciano's most important successor, endorsed historical plots with real characters revealing an attitude reminiscent of Cervantes' village priest turned theatre critic: Art will be art and as such intrinsically untrue; but if it distances itself too far from the factual it becomes ridiculous. Needless to say, this goes especially for plays with historical plots where the audience presumably has previous knowledge of what is supposed to pass. Thus, if the aim is to effectuate a moral change in the audience, the dramatist should aim for a true representation of true things. For, as Cascales rhetorically asked through the mouth of his alter ego, Castalio, "if verisimilar things move us, how much more so will not the true ones?"[27]

CASTALIO: You already know how Aristotle says that Tragedy conserves real names. For these cannot come from the invented action, but from the real one, which is History. And you know how he demonstrates that in such grave cases as are the tragic (and the same goes for the epic), the things we know to have really happened persuade and move more than the invented ones. And this truth is so obvious that there is no need to prove it, even if we lack the authority of the Philosopher. And if the Tragic Fable should have an action that never happened nor was true, it would not persuade to the same degree. For it is more difficult to move to pity and fear, which is the goal of Tragedy, than to move to laughter, as do the Comical writers, for we are easily led on by pleasurable things. And after all, if verisimilar things move us, how much more so will not the true ones?[28]

Cascales' implicit reply to Pinciano's vindication of poetic invention is clearly interesting as testimony to the existence of a fundamental dividing line in the spectrum of Golden Age theoretical positions on verisimilitude, of general importance to the present examination of the period's aesthetic-historical culture. Most importantly in the present context, however, the *licenciado*'s rhetorical question signals the beginning of the theoretical and conceptual development under scrutiny here: The emerging idea that catharsis, the spectator's moral purgation, was best achieved through plays "based on a true story" (in the terminology of modern-day film producers).[29] Even in the absence of a final Aristotelian view of the matter – "even if we lack the authority of the Philosopher" – the basic truth of this idea is, in Castalio's formulation, "so obvious that there is no need to prove it."

Some 15 years after the publication of the *Poetic Tables*, Cascales' idea of the edifying value of the "true action" was consolidated in the weighty *New Idea of the Ancient Tragedy* (*Nueva idea de la tragedia antigua*, 1633) penned by the humanist Jusepe Antonio González de Salas (1588–1654).[30] In Chapter 6, Section 2, on "The Principle of Verisimilitude," Francisco de Quevedo's erudite friend discussed the question of poets' use of "invented fables" respectively "true fables" from a historical perspective:

> Aristotle then poses a question concerning whether it will be a forced obligation for the poet to choose a true fable or if it is enough to invent a verisimilar one. Here, we must acknowledge that the ancients had a type of histories that were destined for tragic plots. Aristotle shows as much in the said place and later he mentions some families whose stories were destined for tragedy. […] And the great Augustine too, reminiscing about tragic spectacles in his *Confessions*, understands their actions as either 'false' or 'ancient', thereby meaning the respectively invented and true fables about which we are talking; so true a passage, but so little noticed. Finally, the Philosopher rules that the poet may invent the fable, making the following argument: Tragedies with a true fable is well-received by the audience because, being familiar, noone doubts their verisimilitude, for I do not doubt the truth of the thing I know happened. However, tragedies with invented fables will also be admitted by the audience, if they be verisimilar, so then the poet may also invent them.[31]

As González de Salas argues here, the distinction between "true fables" and "invented fables" was ancient as drama itself. In the opinion of the future editor of the *Spanish Parnassus* (*Parnaso español*, 1648), the latter were acceptable ("the poet may invent them"), of course, and the audience would admit them. However, the former were really much more

persuasive, "for I do not doubt the truth of the thing I know happened." Greater and more effective catharsis was, in other words, had from "true examples of great princes who suffered major adversities […] than if the represented examples were invented." The significance of this point in González de Salas' poetics is emphasised by the fact that it is repeated shortly after, as the theorist continues his train of thought:

> But one would doubtlessly always have to prefer the tragedies with true fables, for their end goal – which is to cure the soul of affects of fear and pity – would without comparison be much better achieved; for to see true examples of great princes who suffered major adversities would diminish the feeling of one's own misfortunes more […] than if the represented examples were invented.[32]

The greater moral utility of historical plots being thus established, the theorist turns to discuss which kinds of historical materials should then be preferred. In this respect, González de Salas declares his predilection for plays treating "all those things which are most remote from us," in the same breath dismissing the notion that the greater applicability of ancient history over contemporaneous history has do to do with "the respect owed to the powerful as long as they are alive." Citing the "free poetic constitution which alters the deeds and improves them after its own art whenever necessary," he simply emphasises the greater interest of histories which have stood the test of time:

> But what I believe was never permitted for the ancients was to write tragedies whose plots were about contemporaneous events. Dion Chrysostom expressly teaches this in the famous discourse *On Beauty*. However, the reason for this is not (as some politicians thought) that representation was prohibited because of the respect owed to the powerful while they are alive; this would indeed be embarrassing to history, but not to the free poetic constitution which alters the deeds and improves them after its own art whenever necessary. The reason was the esteem in which we generally hold all those things which are most remote from us which the passing of time surely endows with veneration.[33]

Though this passage thought-provokingly refutes the accusations later levelled against the baroque theatre by scholars of the Maravall school, I will not go into a discussion of the period's "culture of control" here but merely draw attention to the fact that, judging by their recurrent election of historical subject matter for their plays, Spanish dramatists largely shared González de Salas' preference for older historical materials. The same as in England, Italy and France, Roman history was an evergreen and so was medieval history – the "dramatic chronicles and

legends of Spain" as Menéndez Pelayo labelled Lope's many plays dealing with Spain's pre-*reconquista* past.[34]

All this strongly indicates that Golden Age theoretical differences over verisimilitude and historical representation can ultimately be understood as disagreements about how best to achieve that all-important catharsis which contemporaneous Aristotelians, liberals as well as conservatives, understood as moral purgation. Whether they endorsed the dramatist's freedom of invention or pondered his confinement within the boundaries of the factual, they did so with their eyes firmly fixed on the edifying lessons that the theatre was supposed to impart. Pinciano, who took pleasure in free artistic invention, emphasised that the end of poetry was to "purify the passions of the soul."[35] Significantly too, González de Salas – arguably the period's most acute and philologically conscientious interpreter of the *Poetics* – read the passage about catharsis through Augustine's *Confessions* III: 2 and later, in the curious "scholastic exercise" appendix closing his treatise, let the "scenic theatre" direct an unequivocal message to humankind:[36]

> Well, though it is true that you find them configured in my dramatic actions, for these are the true image of all the human passions, you need to acknowledge that it is your own defects which are being represented there, in order that you may better recognise and abhor their ugliness when you see them in other people […]. In me you behold your own wickedness painted in vivid colours […] so that, observing the lesson, you may improve your habits.[37]

In its own words, the theatre is a "mirror to sin": A mirror to nature showing – in Shakespeare's words – "virtue her own feature, /scorn her own image" (*Hamlet* 3.2 22–23).[38] Thus, Lope affirmed that "With Attic elegance those of Athens / reprehended vices and customs / with the comedies" (*New Art of Making Comedies* vv. 119–121).[39] We can say, then, that though they disagreed somewhat about the way to achieve it, Golden Age literary theorists agreed that the goal of all dramatic art was moral purgation – that exact quality which according to their rather tendentious interpretation of the key concept of *poesis* equalled poetic creation, human art, with divine creation itself.[40]

The implied interdependence of verisimilitude as the means and moralisation as the end of dramatic art underscores how, in this period, history certainly "shaded into poetry," as Nicholas Popper formulated it: The Golden Age poetological emphasis on moralisation was clearly on an equal footing with the idea of history as life's schoolmaster. In this tradition, the past was a treasury of good and bad examples the didactic utility of which depended precisely on credibility and, hence, on verisimilitude: For how was anyone supposed to learn anything from stories which from the outset discredited themselves by their absurdity,

by "obvious errors that from every point of view are inexcusable"? As we have seen, the importance of the *historia magistra vitae* tradition for Golden Age literary theory became wholly explicit in Luis de Carvallo's poetics. Indeed, this treatise, praised by Menéndez Pelayo for its "romantic" endorsement of artistic freedom, devoted an entire section to the "benefits of history," pondering that "so many are the benefits that are had from histories that it is impossible to name them all."[41]

Essentially, the Golden Age transformation of the Aristotelian concept of catharsis as the catastrophic downfall of someone "like ourselves" through unvoluntary error or frailty (*Poetics* 1453 a) into a moral purgation of the soul's passions by means of edifying historical examples represented an independisation of the history play from the generic mould of ancient tragedy.[42] For Attic tragedy was based on a pagan worldview and therefore, in the eyes of Golden Age theorists, represented a limited view of both historical reality and historical representation: Though the Greeks presumably perceived their tragedies as true representations of things that actually had taken place (Agamemnon's murder, Ajax' suicide), their focus was narrowly on suffering and death. Good historical examples of virtuous people avoiding *hamartia* apparently did not exist or represented exceptions to the rule. In Aristotelian literary theory as well as in medieval poetics, all the good and positive things in the world were consigned to the – entirely fictive and low – world of comedy.[43] Yet, in the Spanish Golden Age, edification was not seen to be had only from negative examples, be they ever so true and historical: To stay on the narrow path of virtue, the audience needed both good and bad examples, moral purgation through tears as well as through laughter. Thus, the dissolution of generic boundaries between the tragic and the comic resulting from contemporaneous theorists' transformation of the concept of catharsis was closely connected to the period's embryonic conceptualisation of tragicomedy as a new realistic and therefore educational idiom of most moving "true things."

Tragicomedy Takes the Stage

Since antiquity, traditional dramatic theory had treated the tragic and the comic separately on thematic grounds (if a play showed persons of high rank, it was a tragedy, if it showed persons of low rank or common people it was a comedy; if it involved death and suffering, it was a tragedy, if it didn't, it was a comedy).[44] It is noteworthy that the upsurge of the European history play coincided precisely with the breakdown of the tragedy-comedy binary and the proliferation of tragicomedy not only in Spain but also in England, Italy and France.[45] In the decades just before and after 1600, most of the plays represented on Spanish stages indeed mixed "illustrious, magnificent real and great tragic action" with the "humble persons" of comedy.[46] Yet, even a quick glance at the tables

of contents of contemporaneous poetic treatises confirms that literary theorists continued to treat tragedy and comedy separately, though they did on occasion acknowledge that it was not so easy to uphold this distinction in practice: What should be made of a canonised ancient play such as the *Amphitryon* by the much-revered Plautus? Or the tragedies with a happy ending, such as Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*, praised by Aristotle in *Poetics* 1454 a? And – more pressing yet – how should Lope's famous words that "[t]he tragic mixed with the comic / Terence with Seneca, though it would / be like another Pasiphae's Minotaur / will make one part grave, the other ridiculous / and this variety delights a lot" (*New Art*, 174–180) be assessed?[47]

To an early theorist such as Pinciano, whose active period coincided with the tragic production of Juan de la Cueva (*Tragedy of the Seven Infantes of Lara* and *Tragedy of Ajax Telamon's Death on the Arms of Achilles*, 1579; *Tragedy of the Death of Verginia and Appius Claudius* and *Tragedy of the Tyrannical Prince*, 1580), Argensola (*Filis*, *Isabela* and *Alejandra*, mid-1580s) and Cervantes (*The Destruction of Numancia*, 1585), the phenomenon of tragicomedy was puzzling yet still clearly of minor importance: Something to be wondered at, like an exotic animal, but certainly not something one encountered everyday or had reasons to spend a lot of time thinking about. Thus, in the ninth epistle on comedy, Pinciano's three interlocutors address the problem of laughter in tragedy and death in comedy, but come to the conclusion that if the applied generic paradigm is comedy, then the whole thing is definitely for laughs ("These things are all for laughs"), no matter the amount of deaths and crying involved:

> Then Ugo said: "What do you think of Plauto's *Amphitryon*, then? Are those characters not rather grave? There are not kings and even gods? And the *togatas* and *trabeatas* were they not about grave and patrician persons?" Fadrique said: "Plauto's *Amphitryon*, which you mention, is not pure comedy. For Mercury himself, in the prologue, calls the play a tragicomedy because of its mixture of grave persons and the ridiculous; and we can say the same thing about the *togatas* and *trabeatas*, that they are not pure comedies but have an odeur of the tragic." Ugo responded: "Watch out what you are saying, sir Fadrique, for it then contains all the elements of your definition." "That is true", Fadrique replied, "But please keep in mind that it does not have the ridiculous that suits a pure comedy and that these actions refrain from a lot of jokes and sharp comments in order to keep decorum vis-à-vis the gods, kings and leading characters to whom is unsuitable a practice which calls forth laughter. To the second there is no other way of replying than that it is all mine. For if tragedy is full of terror and dangers, it cannot create pastime and laughter but only fear and pity. Comedy, which has neither, can

> and is apt to evoke laughter and pastime, as we have said." Then Pinciano said: "Certainly, sir, I have seen many fearful things, crying and even death in comedies that were very fine and pure." And Fadrique: "So have I and yet I ask: These fears, crying and deaths – are they meant to move me to compassion or to make me laugh?" Ugo remained thoughtful and Fadrique continued, saying: "These things are all for laughs, not for crying. And if you are not laughing at them, then you deserve that they be laughing at you […]."[48]

Basically, Pinciano's approach here is to try to manoeuvre tragicomedy back into one of the two main generic categories, pretending it does not really exist as an individual genre; or that, if it does, it is primarily as a curious historical phenomenon from the classical period of Roman drama: In his prologue addressed to the play's audience, Mercury called the *Amphitryon* a tragicomedy;[49] and the *fabulae togatae* (written by playwrights such as Lucius Afranius and Titus Quinctius Atta) and *fabulae trabeatae* (penned by Gaius Melissus) were not "pure comedies" but had an "odeur of the tragic." At this point in the development under scrutiny here, the Golden Age tragicomic was obviously still *in nuce*. Tragicomedy had indeed been developing in Spain since the late fifteenth century with the Verardo brothers' "tragicomedia" *Fernando Servato* (1493), Fernando de Rojas' *Celestina: The Tragicomedy of Calisto and Melibea* (1499), the "Prohemio" to Torres Naharro's *Propalladia* (1517), Gil Vicente's *Tragicomedy of Don Duardos* (1521), Timoneda's *Tragicomedy Filomena* (1559) and the anonymous *Tragicomedy of Paradise and Hell* (1599).[50] Yet, weighty dramatists continued to imitate ancient tragedy, Senecan mostly, or else they practised comedy. Juan de la Cueva, for instance, explicitly labelled all his plays as either "comedy" or "tragedy" in their titles, and indeed wrote comic and tragic versions of the same play.[51] Before 1600, then, the boundary between the two dramatic main genres still stood strong in Spain, generally speaking.

Soon, however, Lope de Vega would be active and changing this picture dramatically along with other dramatists of his school such as Guillén de Castro, Antonio Mira de Amescua, Luis Vélez de Guevara, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón and Tirso de Molina.[52] Theorists now could not avoid dealing with tragicomedies, but that did not necessarily mean that they liked them. The general tendency in this early phase of the Golden Age tragicomic was disapprobation, though opinion obviously varied.[53] In his erudite *Multiple Instruction* (*Didascalia multiplex*, 1615), the renowned Cordobese humanist Francisco Fernández de Córdoba (1565–1626) followed the path indicated by Pinciano, launching a defence of the mixture of tragedy and comedy based on the lack of pure tragedies and comedies in antiquity itself: If the ancient dramatists did not uphold generic purity, how could contemporaneous detractors demand that Lope de Vega and his followers should do so?[54] Others strongly

resented tragicomedy's "hermaphroditic" union of tragedy and comedy, like Francisco de Cascales:

PIERIO: Oh, my God! Following this, those plays are not comedies which Cisneros, Velázquez, Alcáraz, Ríos, Santander, Pinedo and other famous actors act everyday, then. For all or most of them contain griefs, turnabouts, affronts, atonements, duels, knife fights and deaths; yet, although all those things are in the plot, seeing that they do not end that way, they are considered comedies.

CASTALIO: They are not comedies and not even close. They are hermaphrodites, monsters of poetry. None of these fables contain comic material, even if they end in happiness.

PIERIO: Lest they should be called tragicomedies.[55]

Virtually resuming the discussion of the interlocutors in Fadrique's home, Cascales' rabid debaters come to quite a different conclusion than Pinciano's more moderate discussants, signalling not only the above-mentioned development in contemporaneous dramatic practice but also a decisive shift of tone in Golden Age debates about the theatre: Comedies which contain "griefs, turnabouts, affronts, atonements, duels, knife fights and deaths" are *not* comedies. Full stop. They are perversions of the comic, "hermaphrodites" or "monsters of poetry," which should be called by the name of tragicomedies. As Cascales' rhetoric suggests, the early seventeenth century saw a violent clash between classicist dramatic theory and what may for lack of a more precise term be called baroque dramatic practice. This clash has typically been seen as testimony to a fundamental incompatibility between the rigid rulemaking of contemporaneous theorists on one hand and the conscious law-breaking activity cheerfully announced in *New Art*, 40–41 ("when I want to write a comedy, / I lock up the precepts with six keys") on the other hand.[56] However, as I will discuss below, more was definitely at stake. Golden Age dramatists were not merely pushing boundaries in an ante terminem modernist thrust against antiquated generic conventions; and theorists were not all as negative as Cascales' hermaphrodite metaphor could lead to believe. Contemporaneous critics such as Ricardo de Turia, author of "Apology for the Spanish *Comedias*" ("Apologético de las comedias españolas," published in *Compass of Spanish Poetry*, 1616), and Francisco de Barreda (the already mentioned "Invective") defended Lopean *comedia* and posterior critics gradually advanced the concept of a new mimesis, a new notion of how the real could and should be staged, a new idea of historical representation. As genres both emerging from the Aristotelian system and liberating themselves from traditional generic categories, the history play and tragicomedy became the twin pillars of this new Golden Age idea of the drama as a tragicomic and moral but at the same time realistic *theatrum historiae*. Indeed, in large parts of Lope's

dramatic production, history play and tragicomedy merged exactly in order to "imitate the actions of humankind / and paint the customs of that century" (*New Art*, 52–53) – to become what Bances Candamo in the above quote termed the "visible history of the People."[57] In this period, the "emplotment" of "*mere* chronicles" into staged histories thus took a decisive generic turn with profound implications: History was no longer tragic, as it was to the ancients; but nor was it comic in the sense of staging civil trifles. It was comic like Dante's *Divine Comedy* was comic or, more precisely, tragicomic like the world's great pageant itself. Thus, the once taunted and subsequently neglected Spanish history play – a victim of the same "misinterpretation" as misbegotten tragedy and mere propaganda which, in the words of Walter Benjamin, befell the German mourning play – was transformed into an almost ideal theatrical form for teaching the audience those profitable moral lessons around which Golden Age poetics generally revolved.[58]

Theatrum Historiae

The gradual establishment of a new tragicomic and moral concept of historical mimesis – sparked by Pinciano's reinterpretation of Aristotelian catharsis as moral purgation, strengthened with Cascales' recommendation of plays with historical plots and cemented with Carvallo's demonstration of the moral benefit of history – culminated in the mentioned appendix to Jusepe Antonio González de Salas' *New Idea of the Ancient Tragedy*, a curious little text entitled "The Scenic Theatre to Humankind. Scholastic Exercise." In a parabatic gesture typical of the allegorical theatre of the period, a personification of the scenic theatre here addresses humankind with a discourse on theatricality. Employing a language permeated by the ancient topos of *theatrum mundi*, exploited by philosophers and poets since the beginning of Western intellectual and literary history, the idea is laid out of a theatre which converts the "many truths" of human history into edifying "warnings and lessons":

> Learn, then, in the Moral Philosophy of my school, warnings and lessons where, personified, you will find the human condition condensed since you cannot perceive it in the expanded history of its events.[59]

In this theatre, humans can come and learn about the "human condition," indiscernible in the "expanded history of its events" – in real time, so to say – but comprehensible when abstracted into "personifications" on the stage in the manner of an "artistic infinitesimal calculus."[60] The idea is that of an allegorical theatre imparting moral lessons in densely symbolic dramatic plots, it appears. However, since antiquity, the *theatrum mundi* signified not only a scaffold upon which the world was staged before the eyes of an audience, but also the world itself conceived

as a stage.[61] In this tradition, and especially in its baroque version, the theatre audience is simultaneously spectators watching a representation and performing actors in masks on the cosmic scene of the "theatre of the earth" whose "deceptive appearance" and "deceitful representation" exist only "brief space of the fable":[62]

> Oh, treacherous mortals, how you all represent in masks in the theatre of earth.[63]
>
> Cities are invented in the deceptive appearance of my stage whose deceitful representation lasts only in the brief space of the fable.[64]

We may recall Calderón's *Great Theatre of the World* (written between 1633 and 1636, or virtually at the same time as González de Salas' treatise) in which the character Mundo's second address to the play's audience opens up a kindred vision of reality as an infinitely complex structure in which humans are at one and the same time actors and spectators in a great cosmic drama.[65] Yet, as in Calderón's famous liturgical play and many other exploitations of the *theatrum mundi* topos, ancient and contemporaneous, there is more at stake here than playful toying with the audience's epistemological orientation. The deceitful and ephemeral world stage envisioned by the future author of *Geographic-Historical Figure* (*Epitoma geographico-historica*, 1650) is no mere aesthetic game. It harbours important moral and metaphysical elements. For it presupposes that if there is a theatre, then there must also be an audience, someone out there watching the play.[66] Thus, in contradistinction to current notions of identity performance, role-playing and self-fashioning on social media and reality television – the world stages of postmodernity – the Golden Age world stage described in González de Salas' "Scholastic Exercise" involves a solid ground behind the historical world's rapidly shifting appearances, theatrical and real:

> You can exclaim with no little pain the sentence pronounced by so many illustrious men: "What we live is so little"; or, in the teaching of my school: "For a brief time only are we the actors in the theatre of the earth". Well, if your life is a tragedy, this name may be agreeable to you. You are actors, mortals, and this theatre which appears so wide, made up of innumerable provinces and regions, is but a point compared to the heavens which surround you, the legitimate home of immortality and the only worthy ambition of the human soul.[67]

In both senses of the *theatrum mundi*, outside "the theatre of the earth" there is "the heavens," the "legitimate home of immortality." In the cosmic sense, this refers to God, the original author and impresario of the world's great pageant, beholding the play of human life as a colourful medley of misery and joy, despair and rejoicing, a festive comedy in celebration of divine splendour.[68] In the worldly sense, it refers to the

edifying core of the plays staged on this world's scaffolds which through their fleeting and deceitful appearances after all do deliver "warnings and lessons" to the moral benefit of the spectator. Thus, despite its emphasis on the adverse aspects of human experience ("pain," "nothing," "brief time," "tragedy") and generally negative anthropology, González de Salas' idea of the *theatrum mundi*, like Calderón's, is essentially positive.[69] Histories – worldly as well as cosmic – begin and end, actors enter and exit the stage, great cities are created in the "brief space of the fable" and disappear again in the blinking of an eye, like pieces of scenery that are changed from one stage set to the next. Still, behind their apparent meaninglessness there is a deeper meaning, a moral message that they deliver in the form of an edifying "personification." Thus, the formulation "this theatre which appears so wide, made up of innumerable provinces and regions, is but a point compared to the heaven which surrounds you," refers to the greater metaphysical context of human life on earth yet it simultaneously touches on dramatic genre or the problem of "emplotment."

For, narrowly defined, both historical existence on the world stage and historical drama staged on this world's scaffolds may appear to be a tragedy. Yet there is something outside the brief and insubstantial theatre of misery, a larger picture, an Archimedean point towards which the soul strives and bends and whose very existence annuls the ultimate tragedy of both understandings of the *theatrum mundi*. Thus, Gonzáles de Salas' "Scenic Theatre" stresses that the world stage, in whichever sense, is no clear-cut tragedy but a play worthy "equally of tears and of laughter." In other words, what is represented on the world's great stage and on Spanish Golden Age stages alike is both tragedy and comedy, "or the tragicomedies which are more common today and in which the two things are ingeniously united":

> Now that you understand that I am the universal theatre inhabited by humankind, know that I sometimes bewail the ambitions of humans, the infidelity of their relations and the contagious malignancy of their deceptions. At other times, I poke fun of them. I take the shape of Heraclitus who, weeping, attested the pain caused – oh, mortals! – by your iniquity; or I simulate Democritus who, laughing, showed that he was familiar with your lying. To stage both, I give you tragedies and comedies; or tragicomedies, which are more common today and in which the two things are ingeniously united.[70]
>
> This much have you learned about your brief representation from my discourse: Your mortal life is both tragedy and comedy, worthy equally of tears and laughter.[71]

The *theatrum mundi* – conceived simultaneously as human existence and as the representation of this existence on worldly scaffolds – is thus, according to González de Salas, necessarily tragicomic in nature. Anticipating the central device of Antonio López de Vega's later *Heraclitus and Democritus of Our Century* (1641), the Theatre accordingly summons

both Heraclitus, the philosopher "who, weeping, attested the pain caused – oh, mortals! – by your iniquity," and Democritus, the philosopher "who, laughing, showed that he was familiar with your lying," in order to provoke both kinds of catharsis conceptualised by Pinciano and Cascales.[72] As we have seen, Cascales considered tragicomedies "monsters of poetry." In González de Salas' appendix, to the contrary, tragicomedies are positively described as the ingenious union of the tragic and the comic, or the type of play "in which the two things are ingeniously united." Again, the underlying logic is moral: The goal of all dramatic poetry being to provide "warnings and lessons," the dramatist must find the best way to achieve that goal. So, if possible, why not try all the means available all together at once? Purgation of the soul's passions through the pity and fear evoked by the downfall of princes and generals was effective, of course, as every contemporaneous moralist and preacher knew; and so was purgation through ridicule of the petty vices of common folk, as a satirist such as Francisco de Quevedo demonstrated with his *Dreams and Discourse* (*Sueños y discursos*, published 1627). However, united in the tragicomic universe of the *theatrum mundi* both together could work wonders, simultaneously purging the tragic "vanity" and "deceptions" of a Don Quijote and the comic gluttony of this world's Sancho Panzas.

In continuation of these points, González de Salas' personified scenic theatre also in several passages touches on the function of history on the world's great stage. We have already seen that the erudite theorist, in his discussion of Aristotle's theory of tragedy, expressly favoured plays with historical plots which, according to his argument in the main part of the *New Idea*, was better suited to "cure the soul of the affects of fear and pity."[73] The discoursing voice of the "Scholastic Exercise" accordingly presents "ancient examples" as functional moral paradigms provided by history itself for the audience's moral edification:

> These are the mighty of the earth? This is what it means to be king among humans? Well, when you see them represented on my stage they can do their magic on you and yet you will, in equal measure, be grateful to the ruler of destinies that the histories extensively feed you with examples, where no prince is exempted but that the annals of time perpetuate his vices so that noone will thenceforth fear fighting shadows.[74]

Fed by "histories," the theatre pillories and eternalises the vices of the past as an example to posterity. Indeed, in González de Salas' moral, tragicomic and historical *theatrum mundi*, "no prince is exempted but that the annals of time perpetuate his vices." Similarly, the moral corruption of this world's courts and palaces is castigated.[75] Everywhere, the prevalence of "true fables" – plays based on a true story – is implicit. Again and again, characters referred are historical in the broad sense of the term applied in the period: Creon, Agamemnon, Menelaus, Alexander the Great, Augustus Caesar. Thus, the conception of the world stage

put forward in the appendix to the *New Idea* can reasonably be conceived as a *theatrum historiae*.[76] For it is, essentially, a secular theatre aimed at "imitate the actions of humankind / and paint the customs of that century" as Lope formulated it (*New Art*, 52–53), and through verisimilar imitation of these actions and customs to teach moral lessons. In the allegorical bird's-eye vision of the personified "Scenic Theatre," the past thus once again caters to the present in the form of a *magistra vitae*.

Important for the implementation of the concept of the *theatrum historiae* in contemporaneous dramatic practice, however, the "warnings and lessons" provided by the theatre were not all of the traditional moral kind suggested by the above quotes. In another passage, González de Salas describes a different – performative or critical even – impact of historical spectacles:

> Consider it well, mortals: Is he who reigns here blessed? Well, my tragedies disillusion you of your misconceptions. They show you kings who, if they are worthy kings, should rather be considered the unofficial slaves of their people whom they sweatingly serve, deceived with apparent sovereignty. And if they spend their years unworthy of majesty, dulled in carelessness, you see how they will be detested by their own and dishonoured and blamed by foreigners.[77]

Confronted with past examples of rulership – the tyrannical reign of a Peter I "the Cruel" of Castile or the saintly such of a Ferdinand the Catholic – spectators are not only encouraged to look within themselves and scrutinise their own moral flaws. They are also led to reflect on their sovereigns who, like many a historical predecessor put on stage, are perhaps not truly great but in fact "deceived with apparent sovereignty," "unworthy of majesty" and "dulled in carelessness." Historical stagings may thus arouse hate, opprobium and blame towards a sitting ruler or, in modern terms: It may provoke critical thinking. As we shall see in the subsequent chapter, this particular interpretation of the *historia magistra vitae* tradition was highly relevant to contemporaneous dramatic practice which rather than unequivocal moral figures tended to present ambiguous historical characters and events for the audience to wonder at or contemplate as so many riddles stimulating reflection on what was the truth about a king or other historical agent (Was Columbus, after all, a hero? Was Albrecht von Wallenstein indubitably a contemptible traitor?). For now, it suffices to conclude my examination of González de Salas' treatise underscoring that the new conception of ancient tragedy promised in its title was exactly the tragicomic and moral *theatrum historiae* sketched out in the scant but erudite pages of his "Scholastic Exercise": A historical theatre, that is, which tops the success formula of ancient historical tragedy with a moral superstructure.

As the *New Idea* suggests, around the time of Lope de Vega's death in 1635, the Golden Age history play which the Fénix perfectioned had in many respects been transformed from epitome of reality falsification into

an edifying and therefore tolerable *theatrum historiae*.[78] The implicit idea of historical drama as a tragicomic art form contemplating historical life from a moral point of view represented a noticeable conceptual reinterpretation or, perhaps better, a specification of Aristotelian verisimilitude: As secular spectacle treating history on a moralising basis, the history play conquered the goodwill of the critics even though it broke with the classicist rules of poetic composition, all too readily altered historical facts and even on occasion treated the protagonists of history in a disrespectful and improper manner (it may be recalled that the untitled history play criticised by Argensola not only attributed false words and deeds to John II of Aragon, but also ascribed "lightnesses which in a person of much inferior rang would have been reprehensible" to his "most serene queen").[79] Once again, in a period of unbroken Platonic-Christian poetics, moral agendas trumped all others. Thus, to the progressing triumph of the historical drama in dramatic theory corresponded an increasing expectation, on the part of literary theorists, that the contemporaneous *theatrum historiae* extracted moral lessons from history.

Did this development, ultimately, mean the replacement of Aristotelian mimesis with a transcendental Platonic-Christian poetics? As I have argued elsewhere, contemporaneous Aristotelianism was more often than not a legitimising rhetorical device and must inevitably be understood on a Christian backdrop:[80] Though the period's poetical treatises were oftentimes dressed up as commentaries on the *Poetics*, Golden Age Aristotelianism generally throve on a wholly un-Aristotelian demand that both tragedies and comedies should be morally informed and state examples. Yet, we have also seen how Golden Age poetical treatises defended tragedies with historically based plots referring to Aristotle's vindication of the dramatic poet's creative and potential interpretation of history, or imitation of what Alcibiades would or could have said or done, being the kind of person that he was, rather than what he actually did say or do.

Thus, in relation to the history play – that once taunted epitome of reality falsification which ended up at the zenith of the Golden Age theatre – theorists seemed to aim for a careful balance between Aristotle's admission of poetic licence and Plato's censure of the poets' lies. It may be said that they accepted Aristotle's notion, that the historical imitations of dramatic poetry were not subject to the laws of the real, to factual accuracy, in the strictest sense because they had a higher purpose, but under the condition that this purpose be understood as moral. Regardless of their differences, theorists such as Pinciano, Luis de Carvallo, Francisco de Cascales and Jusepe Antonio González de Salas all operated within the framework of Aristotelian mimesis, and all christened it underscoring the tie between verisimilitude and moralisation. Thus, in the case of the Golden Age history play, it makes sense to speak of a revisionist-Aristotelian rather than anti-Aristotelian development – one which signalled both the increasing maturation and self-consciousness of the historical drama as secular art form and its continuous adherence to Christian morality.

Notes

1 Benjamin (1996: 92). Cf. Benjamin (1991: 271): "Die Geschichte wandert in den Schauplatz hinein."
2 In Benjamin's theory of the baroque mourning play, the dramatic production of Gryphius and other dramatists of the so-called Silesian school therapeutically vented the embryonic but traumatic idea of history as metaphysical absence. For discussions of Benjamin's theory of the mourning play as dramatic form representing a modern historical experience – as history play, essentially – see Kluge (2019c and 2020).
3 Plato's alertness towards drama has to do with the lack of a guiding, narrative voice which leaves for instance moral assessment of characters up to the audience. Cf. *Republic* 394 e on "mimetic art."
4 Quoted in Pollard (2004: 221).
5 Cervantes (1998: 554):

> Y si es que la imitación es lo principal que ha de tener la comedia, ¿cómo es posible que satisfaga a ningún mediano entendimiento que, fingiendo una acción que pasa en tiempo del rey Pepino y Carlomagno, el mismo que en ella hace la persona principal le atribuyan que fue el emperador Heraclio, que entró con la Cruz en Jerusalén, y el que ganó la Casa Santa, como Godofre de Bullón, habiendo infinitos años de lo uno a lo otro; y fundándose la comedia sobre cosa fingida, atribuirle verdades de historia y mezclarle pedazos de otras sucedidas a diferentes personas y tiempos, y esto no con trazas verisímiles, sino con patentes errores, de todo punto inexcusables?
>
> And if truth to life is the main thing the drama should keep in view, how is it possible for any average understanding to be satisfied when the action is supposed to pass in the time of King Pepin or Charlemagne, and the principal personage in it they represent to be the Emperor Heraclius who entered Jerusalem with the cross and won the Holy Sepulchre, like Godfrey of Bouillon, there being years innumerable between the one and the other? or, if the play is based on fiction and historical facts are introduced, or bits of what occurred to different people and at different times mixed up with it, all, not only without any semblance of probability, but with obvious errors that from every point of view are inexcusable?
>
> Cervantes 2004 (unpag. internet text)

6 A range of historical documents relating to the Golden Age theatre controversy were published in Cotareli y Mori (1904).
7 See Kluge (2010: 180–187).
8 Cervantes (1998: 554): "Pues, ¿qué si venimos a las comedias divinas? ¡Qué de milagros falsos fingen en ellas, qué de cosas apócrifas y mal entendidas, atribuyendo a un santo los milagros de otro!" Cf. Cervantes 2004 (unpag. internet text): "And then if we turn to sacred dramas – what miracles they invent in them! What apocryphal, ill-devised incidents, attributing to one saint the miracles of another!"
Cf. Ife (1985: 24–49).
9 Thus, the title of Mariana's *De spectaculis* (1609) pays homage to Tertullian's eponymous invective against public shows. The tone of the debate is suggested by the title of Juan Gaspar Ferrer's *Treatise of Comedies, in Which It Is Declared Whether They Are Licit and Whether It, Strictly Speaking, Is a Mortal Sin to Represent Them, See Them and Allow Them* (*Tratado de las comedias: en el qual se declara si son licitas, y si hablando en todo rigor sera pecado mortal el representarlas, el verlas, y el consentirlas*, 1618).

10 Argensola (Cotareli y Mori, 1904: 67):

> En una [comedia] que pocos días ha se representaba del casamiento del Serenísimo rey D. Juan, padre del Católico rey D. Fernando, le aplican hechos y acciones, no solamente contra la verdad, más aún contra la dignidad de su persona; y á la Serenísima reina, su mujer, liviandades que en persona de mucha menor calidad fueran represibles.
>
> In one [play] about the marriage of the most Serene king Don Juan, father of Ferdinand the Catholic, which was represented a few days ago, [Juan II] is ascribed deeds and actions which are not only contrary to the truth but also against the dignity of his person; and the most Serene queen, his wife, lightnesses which in a person of much inferior rang would have been reprehensible.

11 Cf. that Argensola's three Senecan tragedies –*Filis*, *Isabela* and *Alejandra* (mid 1580s) – are praised by Pero Pérez for keeping "the precepts of art" (Cervantes, 1998: 552), strongly indicating the Aragonese chronicler's presence in Cervantes' mind.

12 To the discrepancies on verisimilitude in Golden Age dramatic theory, see Escribano & Mayo (1971).

13 Cervantes (1998: 553).

14 Lope's most famous play is seldom considered a history play, yet it has a historical basis and contains a number of historical elements (Anibal, 1934).

15 On the relation between generic and moral aspects of the Golden Age theatre controversy, see Kluge (2007a).

16 Benjamin (1996: 178). Cf. Benjamin (1991: 353): "ein Vorgang unaufhaltsamen Verfalls." The turnabout, in which the mourning play's vanitas landscape of accumulating historical debris transmogrifies into a cipher of hidden divine meaning, is described in the last six pages of *Ursprung* (1991: 404–409).

17 To the Golden Age "transfiguration of tragedy" and the upsurge of *comedia* as hegemonic term for a play, see Kluge (2010). For exceptions to this rule, see Kluge (2012a: 194–195):

> The tragic *comedia* thus depicts situations where the cosmic balance has tipped toward the tragic. There appear to be three main reasons for this imbalance, informing three types of comedias, which thus become instruments for 'venting' the tragic in the essentially anti-tragic Baroque theater: 1) the play represents action which occurs in a Christian setting, but is incompatible with Christian morality […]; 2) the play is set in barbaric pre-Christian Roman, Iberian and Semitic historical milieux clouded by spiritual darkness before the coming of Christ […]; or 3) the play is set in the entirely fictive, but likewise pre-Christian universe of pagan mythology, dominated by wicked unpredictable gods who play mercilessly with human destiny as if humans were their puppets.

18 Barreda (in Escribano & Mayo, 1972: 224):

> Finalmente, [el atrevimiento dichoso de los ingenios de España] ha aventajado a las comedias antiguas con las suyas. De manera que ya no parecen aquéllas sino diseños o sombras déstas. Tampoco el provecho de las comedias antiguas nos encomienda su imitación porque, como condena Platón en Homero, las fábulas de que hacían fuste para sus comedias eran escandalosas y de siniestro ejemplo […].
>
> Finally, [the blessed nerve of the Spanish geniuses] has overtaken the ancient comedies with their own. In such a way that the former now appear

> as nothing but the sketches and shadows of the latter. But then the morale of the ancient comedies does not recommend them as an example to be imitated for, as Plato condemns in Homer, the fables upon which they built their comedies were scandalous and of sinister example […].

19 To the decline of Spain, see Elliott (1989: 325–368).

20 Bances Candamo (1970: 82): "historia visible del Pueblo, […] para su enseñanza mejor que la historia."

21 Pinciano (1596: 168): "sobre vna verdad fabrica[n] mil ficiones."

22 Cascales (1617: 314):

> CASTALIO. La tragedia es imitacion de vna action illustre, entera, y de justa grandeza, en suave lenguage dramatico, para limpiar las passiones del animo por medio de la misericordia y miedo.

Cf. Pinciano (1596: 327):

> Tragedia es imitacion de accion graue y perfecta, y de grandeza conueniente en oracion suave, la cual contiene en si las tres formas de imitacion cada vna de por si hecha por limpiar las passiones del alma, no por narracion, sino por medio de misericordia y miedo.

23 Cascales (1617: 351):

> La comedia es imitacion dramatica de vna entera y justa action humilde y suaue, que por medio del passatiempo y risa, limpia el alma de los vicios.

Cf. Pinciano (1596: 378):

> comedia es imitacion actiua, hecha para limpiar el animo de las passiones por medio de deleyte y risa.
>
> comedy is active imitation made to purify the soul of the passions through delight and laughter.

24 Carvallo (1958 II: 44): "lo que se deue huyr, y lo que se ha de seguir."

25 In his emphasis on invention, Pinciano may have been influenced by Italian theorists such as Jacopo Mazzoni's *Discourse in Defence of the Comedy of the Divine Poet Dante* (1572), defending imitation.

26 Pinciano (1596: 329):

> [...] Torno al propósito, y digo con el Filósofo que el poeta trágico no debe estar ligado a las fábulas vulgares, sino fingir y inventar otras de nuevo, que en esto está el mayor primor; y si sobre las antiguas quiere fundar la suya, sea de modo que, mudándolas, varíe, porque tanto hará oficio mejor de poeta.
>
> I return to the purpose and say with the Philosopher that the tragic poet should not stick to vulgar fables but feign and invent new ones, for in this is delicacy; and if he wishes to found his fable on the ancients it should be thus that, transforming them, he makes variation, for this way he will be so much better a poet.

27 See also Juan de Cueva's *Ejemplar poético*, 1600, ep. III, vv. 709–714:

> En la tragedia alguna vez afean / los sucesos contados de otra suerte / dando ocasión que la verdad no crean, / Y si en este preceto no se advierte / la Historia en que se funda la tragedia / se ofusca, y, de lo cierto se divierte. (1973: 167–168)
>
> In tragedy is sometimes made ugly / events that have been told otherwise / occasioning that truth is not believed, / and if heed is not taken of this /

the History in which tragedy is founded / is obfuscated and the whole thing turns away from the certain.

28 Cascales (1617: 48–49):

> Ya entendeis a Aristoteles, como dize que en la Tragedia se guardan los verdaderos nombres. Pues estos no los podemos auer de la action fingida, sino de la verdadera, q[ue] es la Historia: y como prueua, que en los casos ta[n] graues como son los tragicos, (y lo mismo se entie[n]de en los heroicos), mas persuaden y mueue[n] las cosas que sabemos auer passado y sucedido realmente, que no las que fingimos. Y esta verdad es tan clara, q[ue] no à menester prouacion quando nos faltara la autoridad del Filosofo. Y si la Fabula Tragica tuuiesse action, no hecha ni verdadera, no persuadiria ta[n]to: por ser mas dificultoso mouer à lastima, y terror, que es el fin de la Tragedia, que no mouer à risa, como hazen los Comicos, porque facilmente nos dexamos lleuar a cosas de contento. Y despues desto si las cosas verisimiles nos mueuen, qua[n]to mas nos mouerán las verdaderas?

29 With its focus on impact, the Golden Age concept of *movere* was indebted to Ciceronian rhetoric (*On the Orator* 27.115).

30 Together with Lope de Vega's *New Art of Making Comedies in the Present Time* (1609) and Antonio López de Vega's *Heraclitus and Democritus of Our Century* (1641), González de Salas' poetics is the only Golden Age Aristotelian treatise concerned exclusively with drama. Carlson (1984: 65) calls the *New Idea* "outstanding."

31 González de Salas (2003 II: 598–599):

> Mueve luego una cuestión Aristóteles cerca de si será forzosa obligación del poeta trágico elegir fábula que sea verdadera o bastará fingirla verisímil. En donde es necesario que advirtamos haber tenido los antiguos un género de historias como destinado para argumentos de las tragedias. Así lo muestra aquí Aristóteles, y más adelante señala algunas familias cuyos sucesos estuvieron consignados para lo mismo. […] Y también el grande Agustino, cuando, haciendo memoria en sus *Confesiones* de los espectáculos trágicos, comprehende en ellos las acciones 'falsas' y 'antiguas', significando las fábulas fingidas y verdaderas de que ahora tratamos; lugar de ninguna manera advertido así, siendo tan cierto. En fin resuelve el Filósofo que puede fingir la fábula el poeta, y hace este argumento: las tragedias de fábulas verdaderas se admiten bien del auditorio porque, siendo conocidas, nadie duda de su verisimilitud, pues no dudo yo de la fe de aquel caso que sé que sucedió; luego las tragedias de fábulas fingidas, si también fueren verisímiles, serán bien admitidas de los oyentes; luego podralas fingir el poeta.

32 González de Salas (2003 II: 599):

> Mas es sin duda que se habrían de anteponer siempre las tragedias de fábulas verdaderas, pues su fin, que es de curar el ánimo de los afectos de miedo y lástima, sin comparación con más ventaja lo conseguirían; porque el ver ejemplos verdaderos de grandes príncipes que padecieron adversidades mayores, más deminuiría el sentimiento en las proprias desdichas […] que si los ejemplos representados se imaginasen fingidos.

33 González de Salas (2003 II: 600):

> Pero lo que hallo yo que de ninguna suerte era permitido a los mayores es que escribiesen tragedias cuyo argumento fuese de sucesos presentes. Expresamente lo enseña así Dión Crisóstomo en la insigne oración *De*

> *la hermosura*. Pero no es la razón (como algunos políticos pensaron) el impedirsela significación de las cosas con el respeto que a los poderosos se guarda en tanto que permanecen vivos, pues este escrúpulo para la fe de la historia pudiera hacer embarazo, no a la libre constitución poética, que altera los hechos y los mejora conforme la arte suya en cualquiera ocasión lo necesita. La causa fue la estima con que ordinariamente miramos todas aquellas cosas que más lejos están de nosotros y a quien, sin duda, la sucesión del tiempo comunica veneración.

34 That Golden Age dramatists should have preferred older historical topics because they were canonised by tradition does seem more probable than that they should have eschewed contemporary history because of "the respect owed to the powerful." As we shall see in the subsequent chapter, dramatists did take up controversial contemporaneous topics. Thus, Zugasti (1996) counts 23 extant "American" plays, or plays dealing with the controversial topic of Spanish imperialism. In a different genre, we may think of Lope's *Dragontea* poem.

35 Pinciano (1596: 191):

> assi toda buena fabula deue perturbar y alborotar por dos maneras, por espanto y conmiseracion, como las Epicas, y Tragicas, por alegria y risa como las comicas y Dithirambicas, y deue tambien quietar el animo, porque despues de estas perturbaciones el oyente ha de quedar enseñado en la doctrina de las cosas que quitan la vna y la otra perturbacion.
>
> thus, every good fable should disrupt and agitate in one of two ways: Either through fear and pity, like the Epic and the Tragic fables, or through happiness and laughter like the comic and Dithyrambic fables; and they should also calm the soul, for after these disruptions the listener must be educated in the doctrine of the things that removes the one and the other type of disruption.

36 For the Augustinian reading of *Poetics* 1453 b, see González de Salas (2003 II: 583–584). I return to González de Salas below.

37 González de Salas (2003 II: 892–893):

> Pues, aunque es verdad que figurados los halláis en mis dramáticas acciones, porque ellas son imagen verdadera de todas las pasiones humanas, debéis advertir que propios defectos vuestros son los que allí se representan, para que mejor podáis en sujetos extraños percebir su fealdad y aborrecerla; […] Pintada veis en mí vuestra maldad con vivos colores […] para que, preveniendo el escarmiento, mejoréis las costumbres.

38 Shakespeare (1987: 288). González de Salas (2003 II: 893): "No, pues, se armen de oprobios hoy contra mí las melancólicas hipocresías, porque oficina me juzguen del pecado: su espejo soy, no su oficina." "Let not the melancholic hypochrisies arm themselves against me with their opprobium, because they consider me the cradle [*oficina*] of sin: For I am a mirror to sin, not its cradle."

39 Lope de Vega (1990: 127): "Con ática elegancia los de Atenas / reprehendían vicios y costumbres / con las comedias."

40 Pinciano (1596: 167):

> […] la poetica haze la cosa y la cria de nueuo en el mundo, y por tanto le dieron el nombre Griego, que en Castellano quiere dezir hazedora, como Poeta hazedor, nombre que a Dios solamente dieron los antiguos, mas la historia no da la cosa, sino solo el lenguaje y disposicion de el.
>
> (ep. 6)

> […] poetry makes the thing and creates the world anew and therefore it was given the Greek name which in Castilian means 'maker', as in Poet maker, a name which the ancients only gave to God, yet the history does not give the thing itself but only the language and disposition of it.

To the period's theological poetics, see Curtius (1939).

41 Carvallo (1958 II: 44): "son tantos los prouechos que de las historias se sacan que sera impossible referirlos […]."

42 Aristotle (1999: 71):

> A plot of this kind [showing the downfall of the utter villain] would, doubtless, satisfy the moral sense, but it would inspire neither pity nor fear; for pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves.

43 Newels (1974).

44 Thus, Pinciano (1596: 379–380):

> Esso desseo, dixo Vgo, que las oyáys, para que me respondáys a algunas dificultades que se me ofrezcan. Es la primera de las diferencias que entre la tragedia y comedia se ponen que la tragedia ha de tener personas graues, y la comedia, comunes, y es la segunda que la tragedia tiene grandes temores llenos de peligro, y la comedia, no; la tercera, la tragedia tiene tristes y lamentables fines; la comedia, no; la quarta, en la tragedia, quietos principios y turbados fines; la comedia, al contrario; la quinta, que en la tragedia se enseña la vida que se deue huyr, y en la comedia, la que se deue seguir; la sexta, que la tragedia se funda en historia, y la comedia, es toda fábula, de manera que ni aun el nombre es lícito poner de persona alguna, como ya se dixo antes; la séptima, que la tragedia quiere y demanda estilo alto, y la comedia, baxo; y aun otras muchas más que no me acuerdo ponen los escritores, y ansí me admiro que vos, con sola esta palabra 'por medio de passatiempo y risa', queráys diferenciar a la comedia de la tragedia.
>
> 'I would like you to hear this', said Ugo, 'so that you may help me with some difficulties that present themselves. The first of the differences between tragedy and comedy is that tragedy must have grave persons and comedy, commoners; and the second is that tragedy has great fears full of danger and comedy does not; the third, that tragedy has sad and lamentable ends and comedy does not; the fourth, that in tragedy the beginning is quiet and the end, disturbed, and the opposite in comedy; the fifth, that tragedy shows the life one should flee and comedy that which one should pursue; the sixth, that tragedy is founded in history whereas comedy is all invention [*fábula*], in such a way that not even one real name must appear, as I said before; the seventh, that tragedy needs and demands high style and comedy, low. Theorists list many other differences that I do not recall, and I therefore wonder that you want to differentiate tragedy from comedy by the sole qualification 'through pastime and laughter'.

Cf. Newels (1974: 71)

45 To the Golden Age upsurge of tragicomedy, see Kluge (2007a). The German *Trauerspiel*, literally "mourning play," flourishing in the second half of the seventeenth century, provides a later example of the period's tragicomic poetics.

46 Cascales (1617: 315 ["De la tragedia"] and 353 ["De la comedia"]): "la actión trágica […] ilustre, magnífica, real y grande"; "personas humildes."

47 Lope de Vega (1990: 128–129): "Lo trágico y lo cómico mezclado / y Terencio con Séneca, aunque sea / como otro Minotauro de Pasife / harán grave

una parte, otra ridícula / que aquesta variedad deleita mucho." Lope here probably echoed Cicero's words from *Orator* XXXI: 109, that: "comoedum in tragoediis, et tragoedum in comoediis admodum placere vidimus." In the prologue to *The Castellation of Toro* (*Las almenas de Toro*, 1619), Lope repeated the ideas about tragicomedy set forth in the *New Art*, affirming that:

> Como en esta historia del rey D. Sancho entra su persona y las demás que son dignas de la tragedia, por la costumbre de España, que tiene ya mezcladas, contra el arte, las personas y los estilos, no está lejos el que tiene, por algunas partes, de la grandeza referida, de cuya variedad tomó principio la tragicomedia.
>
> (Quoted in Morby, 1943: 199)

> In this history of Don Sancho enters the king himself and others who are worthy of tragedy; yet after the Spanish custom, which mixes persons and styles against art, that person is never far away who relies on [*el que tiene, por algunas partes, de la grandeza referida*] the said greatness, from which variety tragicomedy took its name.

48 Pinciano (1596: 380):

> Vgo dixo entonces: Pues q[ué] me dezis del Amphitryon de Plauto, no son harto graues aq[ue]llas personas, pues contiene reyes, y aun dioses? Y las comedias togatas y trabeatas no eran de ge[n]te patricia y graue? Fadrique dixo: El Amphitryon de Plauto q[ue] dezis, no es pura comedia: porque el mismo Mercurio prologando la dize tragicomedia, por la mezcla que tiene de las personas graues: y de lo ridiculo, de las togatas, y trabeatas podemos dezir lo mismo, que no son puras comedias, y que tienen olor de lo tragico. Vgo replicò: Mirad lo que dezis señor Fadrique, que tienen todas las partes de vuestra difinicion. Assí es la verdad (respondió Fadrique) mas co[n]siderad que no tienen lo ridiculo que a vna pura comedia conuiene, y que faltan burlas muchas y palabras de donayre mucho en essas acciones, por guardar el decoro a los dioses, reyes, y personas principales: a los quales es desconueniente la plática que engendra risa. A la segunda diferencia no ay que responder, que es la mia del todo: porque si la tragedia està llena de temores y peligros, no podra criar passatiempo y risa, sino lastima y compassion: la comedia que no los tiene, puede y es apta para hazer la risa y passatiempo que auemos dicho. El Pinciano dixo entonces: Por cierto, señor, yo he visto en comedias muy finas y puras, muchos temores, llantos, y aun muertes. Y Fadrique entonces: Ansi, yo tambien, mas pregunto: essos temores, llantos y muertes, son para mouer a compassión, o para hazer reyr? Vgo se quedò vn poco pensatiuo, y Fadrique prosiguio, diziendo: Para reyr son todos essos, no para llorar; y, si vos dellos no os reys, mereceys que se ryan de vos […].

49 Platus (1852: 5):

> Mercury: […] Now, the matter which I came here to ask, I'll first premise, after that I'll tell the subject of this Tragedy. Why have you contracted your brows? *Is it* because I said that this would be a Tragedy? I am a God, *and* I'll change it. This same, if you wish it, from a Tragedy I'll make to be a Comedy, with all the lines the same. Whether would ye it were so, or not? But I'm too foolish; as though I didn't know, who am a God, that you *so* wish it; upon this subject I understand what your feelings are. I'll make this to be a mixture – a Tragi-comedy.

50 Newels (1974: 125–126).

51 Cf. his *Comedy of the Tyrannical Prince* (1580) and *Tragedy of the Tyrannical Prince* (1580).

52 According to the timeline of Lope's life at Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, Lope began writing *comedias* during the period in which he frequented the house of the empresario Jerónimo Velázquez (1584–1588). A considerable number of his dramas bear the subtitle *tragicomedia*, among these some of the most famous plays such as *The Knight of Olmedo*, *Acting is Believing* and *Peribáñez and the Comendador of Ocaña*.

53 Alone among European literary theorists of the period, Giovan Battista Guarini (1538–1612) launched a positive – humoral – theory of tragicomedy, *On Tragicomic Poetry* (*Il compendio della poesia tragicomica*, 1612). Here, he described tragicomedy as

> il temperamento del diletto tragico e comico, che non lascia traboccar gli ascoltanti nela soverchia né malinconia tragica né dissoluzione comica. Da che risulta un poema d'eccellentissima forma e temperatura, non solo molto corrispondente all'umana complessione, che tutta solamente consiste nella temperie di quattro umori, ma della semplice e tragedia e commedia molto più nobile; come quella che non ci reca l'atrocità de' casi, il sangue e le morti, che sono viste orribili ed inumane, e non ci fa dall'altro lato sì dissoluti nel riso, che pecchiamo contra la modestia e 'l decoro d'uom costumato.
>
> (1914: 233)

Cf. Guarini (1991: 153–154):

> the moderate tempering of tragic and comic pleasure in order to prevent the listeners from falling into the excessive melancholy of tragedy or the excessive lewdness of comedy. From this results a poem of the most excellent form and composition which not only fully corresponds to the complexity of human nature, which consists entirely in the tempering of the four humours, but is also much nobler than simple tragedy and simple comedy: It does not inflict on us such horrible and inhumane sights as atrocious events, blood and deaths, while, on the other hand, it does not render us so dissolute in our laughter that we sin against the modesty and decorum of the well-bred man.

54 The same argument, based on the systematic philological comparison between theory and practice in antiquity, is found in Ricardo de Turia's *Compass of Spanish Poetry* (1616) as well as in Sánchez de Moratalla's *Complaint against the "Spongia"* (*Expostulatio Spongiae*, 1618), a rehabilitation of Lope.

55 Cascales (1617: 330–331):

> PIERIO. Valame Dios! Luego segu[n] esso no son Comedias las que cada dia nos representan Cisneros, Velazquez, Alcaraz, Rios, Santander, Pinedo, y otros famosos en el arte histrionica; porq[ue] todas o las mas lleva[n] pesadumbres, revoluciones, agravios, desagravios, bofetadas, desmentimientos, desafíos, cuchilladas, y muertes; que aunque las aya en el co[n]texto de la fabula, como no concluyan co[n] ellas, son tenidas por Comedias. CASTALIO. Ni son Comedias ni sombra dellas. Son vnos hermafroditos, vnos monstruos de la Poesia. Ninguna de essas Fabulas tiene materia Comica, aunque mas acabe en alegria. PIERIO. A lo menos llamarse han Tragicomedias.

56 Lope de Vega (1990: 125): "cuando he de escribir una comedia, / encierro los preceptos con seis llaves."

57 Lope de Vega (1990: 125): "imitar las acciones de los hombres / y pintar de aquel siglo las costumbres." On Lope's propensity to tragicomedy, see Morby (1943: 207–209).
58 Benjamin (1991: 228–236).
59 González de Salas (2003 II: 900): "Aprended, pues en la Moral Filosofía de mi escuela avisos y escarmientos, donde, como en epítome, hallaréis comprehendida la condición del hombre, ya que advertirla no podáis en la historia dilatada de sus sucesos."
60 Cf. Benjamin (1991: 271):

> Wenn die Geschichte sich im Schauplatz säkularisiert, so spricht daraus dieselbe metaphysische Tendenz, die gleichzeitig in der exakten Wissenschaft auf die Infinitesimalmethode führte.
>
> If history is secularized in the setting, this is an expression of the same metaphysical tendency which simultaneously led, in the exact sciences, to the infinitesimal method.
>
> Benjamin (1996: 92)

61 For a comprehensive survey of the idea of the world as theatre through the ages, see Christian (1987).
62 To the baroque development of the *theatrum mundi* topic, see Warnke (1969).
63 González de Salas (2003 II: 894): "¡Oh pérfidos mortales, cómo todos con máscaras representáis en el teatro de la tierra!"
64 Ibid. (896): "Ciudades son fingidas en la apariencia engañosa de mi escena, cuya mentida representación también llega sólo a permanecer en el espacio breve de la fábula."
65 Cf. Calderón (1977: 89): "Y pues representaciones / es aquesta vida toda, / merezca alcanzar perdón / de las unas y las otras" (1569–1572). See Kluge (forthcoming).
66 This conception of "theatre" as something evolving a spectator finds basis in the etymology of *θέατρον*, from *θεάομαι*: "see," "contemplate," "view."
67 González de Salas (2003 II: 895–896):

> Podréis exclamar con no pequeño dolor la sentencia de tantos varones ilustres: 'Nada es lo que vivimos'; o, según es la enseñanza de mi escuela: 'Breve tiempo es el que en el teatro de la tierra somos representantes'. Bien, pues, si vuestra vida es tragedia, os podrá convenir ese nombre. Representantes sois, mortales, y ese teatro que tan ancho os parece, compuesto de inumerables provincias y regiones, un punto es comparado al cielo que os rodea, legítima patria de la inmortalidad, y digna sola ambición del ánimo del hombre.

68 As Calderón formulated it in *El gran teatro del mundo*, written between 1633 and 1636 or almost exactly at the same time as González de Salas' treatise:

> AUTOR. Una fiesta hacer quiero / a mi mismo poder, si considero / que solo a ostentación de mi grandeza / fiestas hará la gran naturaleza; / y como siempre ha sido / lo que más ha alegrado y divertido / la representación bien aplaudida, / y es representación la humana vida, / una comedia sea / la que hoy el cielo en tu teatro vea.
>
> (Calderón, 1977: 41)

> AUTHOR. I want to make a feast / in honour of my own power, and I contemplate / that to celebrate my greatness / great nature shall put on

a show; / and seeing that what / pleased and delighted the most, / has always been the most applauded show / and that human life is a play, / then let it be a comedy / that heaven shall behold in you theatre today.

69 To the negative anthropology of the text, see for example González de Salas (2003 II: 902):

> Por ventura es así, ¡oh mortales!; pero ved cuán viciosamente ese cuerpo que componéis será construido cuando de tan venenoso y mortal alimento se sustenta, no de otra suerte que el áspid o el basilisco conservan su vida también con la mortífera ponzoña. Envenenados, pues, vivís de avaros intereses, unos más y otros menos; de donde la sed, varia también, se os origina de los bienes humanos; porque con sed, para que todo sea conforme, infecciona el veneno de las serpientes.
>
> Fortunately – oh, mortals! – this is how it is. But behold how viciously this body that you compose will be constructed when it sustains itself on such poisonous and deadly feed, just like the asp and the basilisk stay alive through lethal poison. For, poisoned, you live off miserly interests, some more and others less; from whence the thirst, also varying, for human properties originates; for the poison of the snakes infects precisely with thirst.

70 González de Salas (2003 II: 893):

> Ya, pues, que no me ignoráis por el teatro universal que habitan los hombres, sabed que con lágrimas unas veces me lastimo de la vanidad de sus ambiciones, de la infidelidad de sus correspondencias y de la contagiosa malignidad de sus engaños; y otras veces con risa burlo de ellos. Heráclito me figuro ya, que llorando significaba el dolor que a la maldad vuestra, ¡oh mortales!, se debe, siempre que la contemplaba; ya me figuro Demócrito, que riyendo mostraba conocer bien vuestra mentira. Para ambas representaciones tragedias os doy y comedias; o las tragicomedias, que hoy florecen más, en que aquellas dos ingeniosamente se ven unidas.

71 González de Salas (2003 II: 905): "Algo, pues, de vuestra breve representación podréis ya haber advertido en mi discurso. Tragedia es y comedia vuestra vida mortal, digna igualmente de lágrimas y de risa."

72 To the revival of both these ancient philosophers in the Renaissance, see Lepage (2012: 81–135).

73 González de Salas (2003 II: 599):

> Mas es sin duda que se habrían de anteponer siempre las tragedias de fábulas verdaderas, pues su fin, que es de curar el ánimo de los afectos de miedo y lástima, sin comparación con más ventaja lo conseguirían; porque el ver ejemplos verdaderos de grandes príncipes que padecieron adversidades mayores, más diminuiría el sentimiento en las proprias desdichas [...] que si los ejemplos representados se imaginasen fingidos.
>
> But one would doubtlessly have to prioritise tragedies with true fables, for they would without comparison achieve the end goal – which is to cure the soul of the affects of fear and pity – with the greatest advantage. For to behold true examples of great princes who suffered major adversities would diminish the feeling of one's own misfortunes much more [...] than if the examples represented were invented.

74 González de Salas (2003 II: 899):

> ¿Éstos son los poderosos de la tierra? ¿Esto es ser reyes entre los hombres? Bien, pues, en mi escena los contempláredes representados, os podrán advertir de vuestra mejor influencia y agredecidos quedaréis, en igual comparación, al que gobierna los Hados, en tanto más dilatadamente con los proprios ejemplos las historias os alientan, cuando ningún príncipe se esenciona de que perpetúen sus vicios los anales del tiempo, pues nadie teme después el lidiar con las sombras.

75 Ibid. (894):

> Qué vario, qué fingido se miente en la cámara del príncipe; qué astuto, qué infiel allí desacredita a su opuesto, y desfigurado en lo dulce de la lisonja, no áspid disimuló en la flor tanto mortal veneno.
>
> How many ways and how hypocritically do they lie in the prince's chambers. How shrewdly, how unfaithfully do one and the other there discredit their opponent, disfigured in the honey [*dulce*] of flattery. Indeed, no snake hided so much mortal poison under a flower.

76 In his work on the Shakespearean histories, Brian Walsh applies the term *theatrum historiae* to distinguish Shakespeare's visual (sensual and quintessentially theatrical) historiography from, first of all, Thomas More's textual (moral and didactic) presentation of history as *theatrum mundi*. Rather than serving ethical or reflective ends, this temporary giving body to history as "the realm of the fleeting and insubstantial," in Walsh's theory, functions as a means of establishing that essentially pleasurable "dialogue with the dead" of which he writes in the opening chapter of his book (2007: 10–47). As should be clear, my concept of the Spanish history play as *theatrum historiae* distinguishes itself from the *theatrum mundi* tradition not through lack of moralisation but through the historicity of its subject matter, its choice of concrete historical rather than abstract theological or philosophical topics.

77 González de Salas (2003 II: 898):

> ¿Será ya (pensadlo bien, mortales) el que reinare aquí bienaventurado? Mis tragedias, pues, de vuestra injusta opinión os desengañan. Los reyes os figuran que, si dignamente lo son, se podrán mejor juzgar esclavos oficiosos de su pueblo, a quien sirven en continuo sudor, engañados con la aparente soberanía. Y si indignos de la majestad pasan sus años, en su descuido entorpecidos, veis como ya serán odio de los suyos, y oprobio y vituperio de los extraños.

78 On the relation between history play and Lopean tragicomedy, see Kluge (2007a: 311): "The dynamic organicity of the historical world surely required a flexible aesthetic form. The double perspective of tragicomedy met this need, its monstrous hybridity being better able to capture ever-changing human fortune than pure tragedy or pure comedy."

79 Argensola (in Cotareli y Mori, 1904: 67): "liviandades que en persona de mucha menor calidad fueran represibles."

80 Kluge (2007b). See also Kristeller (1993: 60): "[…] at the beginning of the 16th century, Aristotle has become the 'master of those who know'."

6 Historical Drama

> The "historiographical" approach to history plays is a promising one. It has the potential to enhance our understanding of early modern historical culture and of the drama's contribution to it. History plays are rightly interpreted as a form of history writing, alongside prose historiography, historical poems, historical ballads, and historical pamphlets.
>
> Paulina Kewes, "The Elizabethan History Play: A True Genre?" 184

> The theatre's answer to the influence necessarily exerted upon it by the forces of social orthodoxy and popular taste [...] was to exploit the capacity of drama, with its dialectic and its multiple perspectives, for dealing 'innocently' with received values and ideologies, so that it could be made to support and subvert simultaneously. It is not just that in great art one reading perhaps necessarily suggests a contrary one; what I believe we often see at work in the Spanish theatre is an application of the contemporary political theorist Saavedra Fajardo's principle that an appearance of accommodation can be an instrument of liberty.
>
> Melveena McKendrick, *Playing the King* 11

The last two decades of the sixteenth century and the first quarter of the seventeenth century saw the emergence of historical drama in a range of European countries. Indeed, the overwhelming number of history plays written between 1580 and 1650 would seem to suggest that, for quite a few decades, history was the most prestigious subject a dramatist could pursue. Shakespeare's English histories and Roman plays, accounting for more than a third of his total dramatic production, are an obvious case in point. Yet, other Elizabethan dramatists such as Robert Green (*The Scottish History of James the Fourth*, 1590) or Thomas Heywood (*Edward the Fourth* parts 1 and 2, 1599) also produced plays with historical themes, as did Christopher Marlowe (*Edward the Second*, 1592; *The Massacre at Paris*, 1593).[1] In France, what is usually termed the "humanist" tragedy of sixteenth-century dramatists such as Étienne Jodelle, Claude Mermet, Antoine de Montchrestien and Nicolas de Montreux exploited Roman history. Subsequently, Jean Mairet

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(*Marc Antony or Cleopatra*, 1635; *The Great and Last Suleiman*, 1637) and Pierre Corneille (*Cinna*, 1641; *Pompey's Death*, 1643; *Rodogune*, 1644), from each their end of the "querelle du Cid," treated ancient and Ottoman history – materials also later taken up by Jean Racine in his historical tragedies (*Alexander the Great,* 1665; *Bajazet*, 1672).[2] In Germany and the Germanic-speaking lands, the trend showed in the drama of Andreas Gryphius (*Leo Armenius*, 1650; *Carolus Stuardus*, 1657; *Catherine of Georgia*, 1657), who staged history mainly in the form of Byzantine hagiography and martyr legends, and it appeared in the production of Dutch playwright Joost van den Vondel (*Mary Stuart or Tortured Majesty*, 1646).[3]

Needless to say, Spanish Golden Age playwrights also contributed to this flourishing dramatic historiography. From Juan de la Cueva's first attempts at a ballad-based historical drama around 1580 and Cervantes' acclaimed *Numancia* (1585) to the end of Calderón's production for the commercial theatres ca. 1650, Spanish stages virtually exploded with a wide variety of historical drama culminating with Lope's production. Insatiable was the demand, apparently, for plays on national history, foreign history and ancient history, just as hagiographical plays based on the lives of historical saints and martyrs did not fail to draw a crowd. Indeed, among the many forms of Golden Age aesthetic historiography, the Golden Age history play was arguably the most influential source of popular historical knowledge, reaching large and heterogeneous audiences in the public playhouses. We have already seen how, in this period of widespread censure and dogmatic criticism, public outreach oftentimes equalled trouble with authorities, opinion makers and Parnassian theorists. Yet, from the perspective of power, the commercial theatres' extraordinary success could also be seen to have certain advantages. The dramatic medium's unparalleled ability to make history come alive before the eyes of a mass audience made it a potentially potent vehicle of cultural identity formation. Thus, in the eyes of modern-day memory scholars, it was hardly a coincidence that Lope's "dramatic chronicles and legends of Spain" and Shakespeare's English histories popped up exactly during this period of nascent European nation states.[4]

Nevertheless, as the Oxford Renaissance scholar Paulina Kewes has convincingly argued, the nationalist understanding of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century history plays is unsatisfactory, if not downright mistaking concomitant perceptions of history.[5] The above examples from the treasure throve of the period's historical drama show how stagings of national history were but one type which formed part of a much larger group of historically based plays, and contemporaneous European historical drama could be about virtually any historical subject or character. Moreover, as discussed in the present study, historical stagings formed part of an even larger group of historical writings which also included "prose historiography, historical poems, historical

ballads, and historical pamphlets." Indeed, as formulated by Kewes, sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century history plays are really best understood as "a form of historiography."

Even so, considering the period's pervasive idea of history as *magistra vitae*, we need to address the societal role of historical stagings which was no doubt the period's most influential "art of history," at least in terms of public impact. For precisely which type of lessons did the scenic versions of life's schoolmaster teach its wide and heterogeneous audiences? This question is perhaps especially pertinent in a Spanish context, where the historiographical view of historical stagings proposed by Kewes has been absent from the scholarly discussion of Golden Age theatre or has, more accurately, been present only in the negative form of allegations of indoctrination. In the wake of José Antonio Maravall's influential *Theatre and Literature in Baroque Society* (*Teatro y literatura en la sociedad barroca*, 1972) and *The Culture of the Baroque* (*La cultura del Barroco*, 1975), Golden Age historical stagings were for a long time, like all other types of Golden Age theatre, considered the epitome of the period's "guided culture," a propagandistic *ancillae theologiae et politicae* with no independent stance towards the issues treated and no critical distance towards the ideology of the power apparatus that sponsored them.[6]

Fortunately, times have changed. The last decade has witnessed a revisionist reassessment of Maravall's legacy which has paved the way for new scholarly insights.[7] The new historicist-inspired work of Cambridge scholar Melveena McKendrick – notably her *Playing the King. Lope de Vega and the Limits of Conformity* (2000) – has been crucial in this respect, emphasising the drama's capacity, as "great art," to counter the "influence necessarily exerted upon it by the forces of social orthodoxy and popular taste." However, much as it has sparked a necessary revision of Maravall's ideas in Golden Age theatre scholarship, McKendrick's conception of the work of art as something "dealing 'innocently' with received values and ideologies" in order "to support and subvert simultaneously" remains inextricably bound to the Complutense historian's political approach to Golden Age theatre, operating within the same ideological framework. This becomes clear in the above quote when the important thing about the drama's inherent dialectic is said to be not "just that in great art one reading perhaps necessarily suggests a contrary one," but that this multiplicity of perspectives may be used for the political purpose of subversion. Indeed, the formulation that "an appearance of accommodation" may be turned into an "instrument of liberty" communicates directly with Maravall's much-quoted view that "[…] the Spanish theatre seeks to impose or maintain the oppression of a power system […]."[8]

One consequence of the continued emphasis on the Golden Age theatre's political role is that other functions of this theatre are downplayed

or even neglected. Thus, the drama's contribution to "transformations in the ways history was written and used" during the period has for example, as Paulina Kewes noted about the English history play, "gone largely unrecognised."[9] It is the purpose of the present chapter to fill that lacuna. Grafting McKendrick's description of the "dialectic" and "multiple perspectives" of drama onto Kewes' idea of the history play as a form of history writing, my subsequent discussion adopts the idea of Golden Age historical drama's discursive complexity but changes the focus from politics to history. Any pick from Lope's nearly 100 history plays would have been relevant to this end, but I have already discussed the Fénix's aesthetic historiography in Chapter 4. Thus, for the sake of variation and in order to illustrate the extraordinary richness of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture, the current chapter will present two less canonical examples of the Golden Age history play: (1) *The Conquest of Oran* by Luis Vélez de Guevara, a dramatist of the Lopean school, author of more than a dozen history plays, and (2) *The German Prodigy* by Pedro Calderón de la Barca – a major figure in Golden Age theatre, obviously, yet not a dramatist usually linked with the historical genre.

This selection involves new historical materials revealing new aspects of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture: Whereas the Vélez play treats the remote but not distant national past, chronicling events transpiring during the emblematic and historically consequential reign of the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand II of Aragon (1452–1516) and Isabella I of Castile (1451–1504), Calderón and Coello's drama represents contemporaneous historical events from the ongoing Thirty Years' War.

Dramaturge of History

The Sevillan playwright and novelist Luis Vélez de Guevara (1579–1644) is not exactly among the Golden Age *ingenios* most frequently discussed by modern critics.[10] Admired by his contemporaries, Vélez quickly fell into obscurity.[11] Influential Enlightenment and Restoration critics placed him in the category of "secondary Golden Age dramatists" and today his most well-known work is, paradoxically, the satirical novel *The Limping Devil* (*El diablo cojuelo*, 1641).[12] Thus, although scholars today have at their disposal a soon complete series of new critical editions of his plays, this prolific dramatist still awaits in-depth critical engagement.[13]

The subsequent discussion of one of the many historical dramas penned by the *astigiano* courtier and servant of Diego de Sandoval y Rojas de la Cerda (1587–1632), the Count of Saldaña, does not aspire to such engagement. It simply aims to align Vélez de Guevara with Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture and the contemporaneous *ars historica* of which he was a shining star. The author of more than 400 plays, of which approximately 100 have been identified by modern scholars,

Vélez exploited a wide variety of historical themes from the conquest of America (*The Words of the Kings*, about the Pizarro brothers and the Peruvian campaign, 1628); over foreign history (*The Slave-Prince and the Deeds of Scanderbeg*, about the Albanian national hero Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg, 1634; *Reigning After Dying*, about Inés de Castro, mistress and posthumous wife of Peter I of Portugal, 1635; *Atila, the Scourge of God*, about Attila the Hun, date unknown; *Tamerlame of Persia*, about the Asian emperor Tamerlane or Timur the Lame, published 1642; *Julian the Apostate*, about the last pagan emperor, published 1650); to Spanish medieval history (*The King Is Stronger than Blood*, about the Leonese reconquest hero Guzmán "the Good," 1621; *The Restoration of Spain*, about Don Pelayo and the Battle of Covadonga, 1617; *The Devil in Cantillana*, about Peter I "the Cruel" of Castile, 1622); and recent history (*The Rebels of Flanders*, about the Dutch War of Independence, 1634; *The Eagle of the Sea and the Battle of Lepanto*, about the naval battle between the Ottomans and the Christian coalition led by Spain off the Greek coast, after 1627).[14]

The Conquest of Oran (1618 or 1619) – the first of my two examples of the Golden Age dramaturgy of history – belongs to a further category of Vélez's historical drama, namely the comparatively large group of plays about the reign of the Catholic Monarchs.[15] Condensing the time span from 1492 to 1509, this play stages the Spanish conquest of the Algerian port city of Oran in May 1509 along with the events leading up to it, interweaving the writing of this important historical event with hagiographic life-writing of its main architect, Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436–1517). The Oranian conquest, which inaugurated 200 years of Spanish government in the area, aimed simultaneously at putting an end to the Berberian piracy marring southern Spain and converting Muslims to Catholicism, and it was therefore only natural that it should be led by Cisneros, even though he was by then an elderly man. After all, the Cardinal had been a successful converter of Muslims in post-1492 Andalucia and he was also the originator of the 1505 conquest of the neighbouring city Mers-el-Kébir or Mazalquivir, successfully used as a base to land the Spanish army in the 1509 attack on Oran. The eventual subject of an unsuccessful canonisation process, Cisneros was quite a controversial figure in his own day who had no straight rise to power but suffered both a six-year-long imprisonment (1473–1479) and severe spiritual tribulations that led him to change his name from the given Gonzalo to that of his spiritual father, St Francis. However, as *The Conquest of Oran* attests, effectfully exploiting hagiographic schemata, history had great things in store for this Franciscan reformer who ended up a both religious, cultural and political key figure of Spain's magnificent Golden Age: Confessor of Isabella I "the Catholic" from 1492 until her death in 1504; archbishop of Toledo from 1495 and, in this capacity, primate of Spain and chancellor of Castile; Grand Inquisitor of

Castile (1507–1517); twice regent of Spain (1506–1507 and 1516–1517); founder of the University of Alcalá de Henares (1508); editor of the first printed editions of the Mozarabic – early Christian Iberian – missal and breviary and promoter of the famous *Complutensian Polyglot Bible* (*Biblia políglota complutense*, published in 1520), the first multilingual edition of the Bible in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin.

Chronicling the history of Cisneros and the Spanish conquest of Oran, Vélez de Guevara very likely consulted contemporaneous works such as Álvar Gómez de Castro's *Deeds of Francisco Jiménez* (*De rebus gestis Franciscii Ximenii*, 1569), Alonso de Villegas' *Prime of Saints* (*Flos Sanctorum*, 1589) and the *Ecclesiastical History and the Flowers of Spanish Saints* by Juan de Marieta (*Historia eclesiástica, y flores de Santos de España*, 1594), along with the fourth part of *General Chronicle* by Antonio Daza (1611).[16] First of all, however, he clearly close read Eugenio de Robles' *Compendium of the Life and Deeds of Cardinal Don Brother Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros* (*Compendio de la vida y hazañas del Cardenal don fray Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros*, 1604) from which he – as demonstrated by the play's modern editors – copied many and extensive passages, almost verbatim sometimes.[17] These comprehensive and quite unconcealed reworkings of Robles' *Compendium* seem to indicate that the playwright viewed his Cisneros play as a serious historiographic and biographical enterprise, though it should be clear by now that this did not mean he aimed for factual accuracy in the modern sense of the word. We have previously seen how contemporaneous theorists of both history and literature encouraged a historiographical style that was, in the words of Fox Morcillo, "lucid and ornate" and that many of them favoured poetic invention and downright chided the dry reporting of "many truths" allegedly characterising Lucan's *Civil War*, among other aesthetic-historical classics. In the conception of these theorists, history was supposed to impart useful moral lessons and writers of history should employ every aesthetic trick in the book to do so – without, however, departing too much from the truth and without embellishing their narratives excessively. The Golden Age *ars historica* was delicate indeed and it was only all too easy to offset the precarious balance between dry fact and deceitful fiction that supposedly led to moral edification.

Perhaps seeking to comply with the pervasive Golden Age idea of history writing as an at once instructive and delightful art form, Vélez's play about the Spanish conquest of Oran is a truly strange hybrid of morally informed life-writing (Cisneros hagiography); Homeric-style epic historiography (the catalogue of Spanish nobles, the battle of Oran)[18] and Lopean comedy (the Doña Ana/Don Gutierre de Cárdenas/ Marquis of Cenete love triangle and the prevalence of the two clowns, Velasquillo and Holofernes).[19] Indeed, at first reading, *The Conquest of Oran* comes across as somewhat of a mess with its unresolved romantic subplot;[20]

apparently unmotivated scenes (such as the banquet of thieves in the chapel ruin or the scene where Velasquillo feigns to be the Algerian ambassador);[21] characters without any clear plot function (including those involved in the subplot's amorous intrigue, but also the two buffoons); and coarse historical inaccuracies and anachronisms (including, first of all, Isabella's presence at the 1509 parade of Spanish nobles on their way to Oran and Diego Gómez de Sandoval y Rojas' participation in the same parade).[22]

However, following Alexander Parker's theory of Golden Age drama as conceptual – revolving around an abstract idea or theme rather than around the naturalistic development of characters and plot – a unifying principle can in fact be identified providing *The Conquest of Oran* with the cohesion that it lacks on the level of plot.[23] Indeed, construed as a conceptual exploration of Stoic-Christian *firmitas* – spiritual strength, or the ability to stick to one's purpose and stay on the path of virtue – the play effectively transmogrifies from a confused compilation of seemingly incongruous plot strands into a rather tightly knit tapestry of narrative threads: The first act presents the love intrigues in the royal palace and Doña Ana's amorous infidelity more specifically as a negative counter-image to the virtuous firmness of the leading female character, queen Isabella, and the spiritual tenacity of Cisneros. It also introduces the play's main incentive of firmness, namely the Berberian piracy.[24] The second act juxtaposes a verbose hagiographic celebration of the Cardinal's spiritual and psychological firmness with the vainglory of the court and the Church (in its capacity as highly competitive career path and powerful office); and the third act's stern military parade of Spanish nobles puts the irresolute and hedonist leadership of Oran into perspective, culminating with the final triumph of firmness at the hands of a miracle-working Cisneros, hailed as the "second Joshua" (III: 2503).[25]

From an aesthetic point of view, viewing Vélez's play as a conceptual exploration of firmness is thus not wholly fortuitous. Furthermore, it communicates well with the image of Ferdinand and Isabella propagated in the works of their appointed chroniclers Hernando del Pulgar (*Chronicle of the Catholic Monarchs Don Ferdinand and Doña Isabella of Castile and Aragon*, 1492) and Galindez de Carvajal (*Memorial of the Catholic Monarchs*, c. 1516). For firmness was not only central to the consciously propagated image of the Catholic Monarchs as sturdy political-religious stronghold vis-à-vis the Muslim enemy in the South. It was also crucial in their attempt to create a unified nation out of a geographical context characterised by an arguably extreme degree of cultural, ethnical and religious heterogeneity; key in their establishing of the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition (1478) to secure the tenacity of Catholic faith in the face of proliferating heresy; and ideological backdrop of their promotion of Antonio Nebrija's *Castilian Grammar*

(1492) to endorse linguistic stability. As Vélez's play suggests, this programme aligned perfectly with the ideas of the man who so successfully united the Spanish Catholic struggle with heretics, apostates and infidels with a progressive "renaissance" posture: Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros.

Yet, as I will argue, *The Conquest of Oran* does not present this struggle nor the reforming figure of Cisneros in an unequivocally positive light. To a certain extent, the dramatist can no doubt be seen to perpetuate the self-conception of the Catholic Monarchs as Firmness Incarnate, reflecting "the political thinking and social pretensions of powerful persons."[26] Still, as I will argue, this Maravall-inspired notion of Vélez's Golden Age history play as a "propagandistic vehicle" may be productively complemented through other perspectives.[27] In my subsequent discussion, I will therefore focus on the playwright's use of a specific device which transforms the Cisneros play into a rather provocative "theatrical history lesson" or indeed a "critical reading of history":[28] The ambiguity creating referencing of *Don Quijote* as omnipresent intertext. According to my reading, Vélez's play can indeed be seen to deal "'innocently' with received values and ideologies," as McKendrick formulated it. However, this was not in order "to support and subvert simultaneously" but to present a productive reflection on a key period in Spanish history, at once offering a conventional history of the reign of the Catholic Monarchs and inviting critical reflection on it.

History-Errant

In his *Tragic Sense of Life* (*Del sentimiento trágico de la vida*, 1913), the Spanish author and philosopher Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936) compared the chivalric idealism of Don Quijote with the spiritual zeal of Ignacio de Loyola (1491–1556), founder of the Jesuit Order and key figure in the Counterreformation idea of the Church Militant, pondering the affinity of the Cervantine knight errant not only to the Golden Age "mystics" but also to the "conquistadores" and the "counterreformers."[29] *The Conquest of Oran* establishes a similar connection between the character of Cisneros and the famous anti-hero from La Mancha, a connection which casts an ambiguous light on the character of the Cardinal, his North African campaign and, by extension, the cultural-religious-political ideology of firmness of the Catholic Monarchs providing the larger framework of this campaign.

The text contains an explicit reference to Cervantes' novel in act I where the Cardinal's follower and burlesque mirror image, Brother Holofernes, presents himself before Queen Isabella I as "Holofernes from la Mancha" (I: 490), provoking, in the words of the play's modern editors, "comic rupture" in relation to the biblical character.[30] However, on closer inspection, I claim that the play actually abounds in couched references to Cervantes'

ironic masterpiece, producing an ambiguous "quixotic" rupture of its Cisneros hagiography and jubilant history of the Oranian conquest.

Indeed, once we begin to notice it, *Don Quijote* is everywhere present in *The Conquest of Oran* as an ambiguity-creating intertext which twists and disrupts its writing of history. First of all, the play's central portrait of Cardinal Cisneros appears to be modelled not only on Robles' hagiographical biography but also on the highly equivocal depiction of militant Christianity as a kind of mad idealism which the Prince of Wits famously put down in his tale about the Knight of the Sad Countenance.[31]

When the Cardinal incites his men with the words "Close, Spain, and go in front, St. James!" (III: 2446–2448) at the end of the play, for example, we recognise the battle cry of the *reconquista* heroes, of course;[32] yet, we simultaneously discern the echo of the exchange in *Quijote* II: 58 where Sancho Panza says

> I wish your worship would tell me what is the reason that the Spaniards, when they are about to give battle, in calling on that St. James the Moorslayer, say 'Santiago and close Spain!' Is Spain, then, open, so that it is needful to close it; or what is the meaning of this form?[33]

A number of links between Vélez's play and Cervantes' novel sustain this observation. Thus, both Alonso Quijada and Gonzalo Cisneros are spurred on in their quests by an illusion – the former by the reading of fiction, the latter by a dream:

> *Cisneros*: [...] sometimes I am
> infuriated in my sleep,
> even in this advanced age,
> because I believe I see
> many Moors at my
> feet and that to Castile,
> I give back African loot
> with sovereign deeds,
> liberating its shores,
> from the African infestation
> and what most incites me
> to arms is Oran. "Oran,"
> sacred trumpets appear
> to whisper in my ear,
> yet they must be vain
> illusions with which sleep
> deceives the power of my intellect. [I: 608–624][34]

What the audience of Vélez's play witnesses here may of course be the calling of a saint, and the mayor of Oran's corresponding dream about a Christian avenger with his head crowned by a red headdress (the

cardinal's galero) would seem to confirm such an interpretation.[35] However, the nightly vision may also, as Cisneros himself recognises in the quoted passage, be a mere illusion, the calling of a madman who megalomaniacally believes himself to be selected for a higher purpose. Thus, while the play generally appears to support the hagiographic, Roblean interpretation of the Cardinal's character, it simultaneously allows for an ironic reading which casts an ambiguous light on everything. The parallel is confirmed by various other elements.

Following their callings, for example, both Alonso Quijada and Gonzalo Cisneros undergo a spiritual transformation, change their names and become knights of faith, the one setting forth to combat evil sorcerers and save damsels in distress and the other going off to fight the infidels and serve a virtuous queen. Thus, just like Don Quijote honours his lady Dulcinea of Toboso, the protagonist of *The Conquest of Oran* humbly and unselfishly serves Isabella the Catholic:

> *Cisneros*: […] Your Highness is
> our sovereign queen and it is not
> fitting that in front of
> so high a majesty
> a worm should be seated, now that
> there is so much earth
> on which to kneel. [I: 410–415][36]

However, the parallel between Cisneros and Don Quijote goes beyond the manner of their calling, their changing of identity and the loyal services paid to their worthy mistresses. Like the Cervantine knight who adheres faithfully to the code of chivalry, the Cardinal strictly observes the "sovereign rule / of my father, St. Francis" which urges him to travel by foot in sandals, sleep in a humble cell and sweep the floor even though he holds one of the highest positions in the Catholic Church and could, as the Queen's confessor, claim a comfortable residence in the royal palace:

> *Isabella*: How did you come here?
> *Cisneros*: In these sandals, My Lady,
> and with this stick which is the mule
> of the sovereign rule of
> my father, St. Francis. [I: 429–433][37]

As Cisneros puts it later in the play when he is offered the archbishopric of Toledo, "I do not want more Indies / than this broom, / brother Holofernes, my mass / in my convent and my cell" (I: 1060–1063).[38] Like Don Quijote, he is not motivated by worldly ambition. His incentive is his quest against the forces of evil who, in his case, are not sorcerers and magicians but Muslims.

The quixotic rupture provoked by the dramatist's partial modelling of his main character on the figure of Cervantes' mad knight spills over into Cisneros' relations with the other characters of the play who – like Don Quijote's friends from the village – come to represent what may for the lack of a better term be called "reality." In Cervantes' novel, the village priest Pero Pérez and Master Nicholas the barber regularly try to make the Don give up his chivalric ways employing different types of deceit; in Vélez play, representatives of so-called normality similarly need to play tricks on Cisneros in order to make him adapt to the values and norms of contemporaneous society. Thus, in act 2, Queen Isabella effectively lures her confessor into the archbishopric of Toledo, asking him to name candidates for the prestigious position only to present him with a papal bull with his own name on it:

Isabella: Well, Father, I would like you
to tell me if I have made
a good choice with the person
named in these bulls.
Read them, for your life,
for without anyone knowing
my intention, or whom I choose,
I had them brought from Rome.

Cisneros: Your choice will no doubt
be right if your Highness
has contemplated it so well.

Isabella: Go on, read!

Cisneros: Thus reads the title
My Lady, which is written
in our Castilian language.

Isabella: I am listening.

Cisneros: "To our venerable
brother..."

Isabella: Thus it begins,
Cisneros: go on.
"... brother Francisco
Jiménez ..."

Isabella: Do not stop!

Cisneros: "... de Cisneros, archbishop
of Toledo..." Your Highness
has deceived me ...! [II: 1541–1561][39]

Of course, this scene can be read as a straightforward testimony to the Cardinal's admirable humbleness, underscored by his biographers and recurrently emphasised by the playwright through the mouth of other characters.[40] That a quixotic reading of the scene as an instance of "the struggle between the real and the ideal" – between a collective reality

principle and the unconforming individual – is, however, also possible seems to be confirmed in the following scene.[41] Here, the Queen's *privado*, Don Gutierre, and the Marquis of Cenete catch up with Cisneros and Holofernes, who have fled the palace following the Queen's dirty trick with the papal bull. And as the two gentlemen approach the Cardinal to make him accept "the great mitre of Toledo" (II: 1810), the playwright revisits the Cervantine contrast between representatives of normality and the idealist who resists sinking to their level:[42]

Gutierre: Give us
Your Grace, to me and
the Marquis, the hands.
Cisneros: This
coming to poke fun,
at me yet again.
[II: 1800–1805][43]

The dramatist's depiction of the relations between the protagonist and the play's other characters thus also reprises patterns from Cervantes' novel. Most evidently, *The Conquest of Oran* imitates the main Cervantine device of the odd couple, providing Cisneros with his very own Sancho Panza, the "divine clown [*bufón a lo divino*]" (I: 531) Brother Holofernes.[44] The editors Peale and González note that this character is modelled on the real-life companion of the Cardinal, one Francisco Ruiz, whose character traits the dramatist combined with "buffonesque motives," transporting "the historical friar into the universe of the lowly corporeal and material."[45] While the factuality of the figure adds an interesting facet to the play's dramaturgy of history, Holofernes can also be construed as a thinly disguised variation of the most famous clown of Spanish literature, Cervantes' *manchego* peasant. Like Sancho and his kins, who gladly demonstrate their gluttony, Vélez's Franciscan clown loves a good meal and wine and enjoys an hour of feasting:

Holofernes: Let noone be uncomfortable.
Sit down here, Father.
Cut this bread, Father.
Eat these eggs, Father,
and ¡cheerio, *ojo de gallo*!
Nice wine! I'll pour it …
[II: 1737–1740][46]

Yet, something more than his appetite links Holofernes to Don Quijote's squire. The Franciscan friar also shares the Cervantine character's norms and values, including his admiration for worldly glory and honour. When, like another knight and squire, the two journey back to their convent at La Esperanza after the episode with the papal bull – by foot of course, as good Franciscans – they converse about the Cardinal's reasons for wanting to leave the royal palace headlong in the middle of

the night. As Holofernes realises that Cisneros is running away from the archbishopric of Toledo, he gets all excited:

Holofernes: […] Will you not tell me, Father,
if you can without
offending with the answer,
what it is that caused this alarm?
From which ray are you protecting?
Which plague in the villages
is intimidating you to flee?

Cisneros: The most certain danger in life,
a risk desired by those
who ignore the humble state,
and, in brief, I run in fear
of being archbishop of Toledo.

Holofernes: Body of the Lord! Did
the Holy Church and Christ's
apostles, and the saints,
those famous prelates,
govern with such nudity and humility?

Cisneros: They have many obligations
and so few days.
I don't want more sheep than my own.

Holofernes: I am mad with hearing this!
If he steps on his Fortune,
a colleague from Osuna
will take the chance!

Cisneros: Do not overstep, Father,
with these inappropriate remarks,
or else I will change companion,
once we get to La Esperanza.

Holofernes: Excuse me, Father,
for I am a madman, a very lay friar.
[II: 1651–1682][47]

Here, as in many other passages of *The Conquest of Oran*, Holofernes plays the pragmatic foil to his master's quixotic idealist. Of course, the scene may be seen to deal "'innocently' with received values and ideologies," staging the Cardinal's exemplary devotion in accordance with contemporaneous Cisneros hagiography. Yet, it may also, contrarily, be seen to give these values a disruptive quixotic twist. As the play's modern editors state, the "ease [*gracejo*] and autonomy of Velasquillo and Holofernes" is the hallmark of Vélez's dramaturgy.[48] On the backdrop of the above scrutiny of the function of Cervantes' novel as ambiguity creating intertext in *The Conquest of Oran*, I believe we can extend this insight and identify a certain ironic strain of Vélez historical dramaturgy, at least as exemplified by this play. A far cry from the unequivocal celebration

of the Catholic Monarchs' ideology of firmness and Cardinal Cisneros' personification of it that it at first glance appeared, this irony depended exactly on the "dialectic" and "multiple perspectives" identified by McKendrick as intrinsic to dramatic form. Yet, in accordance with its Cervantine intertext, the driving idea was not "to support and subvert simultaneously" but instead to enhance the audience's historical understanding of a key period of national history, offering at once a conventional interpretation of the reign of the Catholic Monarchs and a critical reflection on this reign – in a manner similar to how the *Quijote* at once mimics the ideology of chivalry and critically reflects on this ideology.

History as Divine Pageant

Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600–1681) is not particularly well known for writing history plays. In contrast to colleagues such as Lope de Vega, who wrote dozens and dozens of historical dramas, or Luis Vélez de Guevara, the Golden Age stage's still to be recognised *genio de la historia*, Calderón is first of all considered a theological and philosophical dramatist whose work projects a bird's-eye vision of the human world as a great divine pageant where historical detail supposedly means little. The Madrid-born playwright himself certainly helped further this impression. In a famous letter concerning his artistic estate written in 1680 to his patron and friend, the Duke of Veragua, he bluntly stated that out of his entire production, the *autos sacramentales* was "the only thing I have tried to retain."[49] However, the Castilian playwright actually did pen a rather large number of plays with historical plots drawn variously from Spanish history (*The Mayor of Zalamea*, c. 1640; *Love after Death* or *The Tuzaní from Alpujarra*, 1633; *Dawn in Copacabana*, 1664; *The Constant Prince*, 1629; *His Honour's Doctor*, 1635; *The Last Duel in Spain*, 1640–1655); Old Testament history (*Absalon's Hair*, 1634; *The World's Greatest Monster*, 1634; *The Women's Joseph*, 1660; *Judas the Maccabean*, 1623); Christian history and hagiography (*The Purgatory of Saint Patrick*, 1634; *The Wonder-Working Magician*, 1637); foreign history (*The Great Prince of Fez*, 1669; *The Second Scipio*, 1677; *The Great Cenobia*, 1634; *Affects of Hate and Love*, 1658); recent and contemporary history (*The Siege of Breda*, 1626; *The Schism in England*, 1627; *The German Prodigy*, 1634).[50] As this perfunctory list suggests, quite a few of Calderón's most acclaimed pieces indeed fit into the category of history plays in the broad sense of plays treating verifiable historical characters and events on the basis of identifiable historiographical sources. Nevertheless, though it could entail a fruitful reappreciation of quite a few classic pieces, this category is very little applied in Golden Age theatre scholarship generally and – for reasons just touched upon – even less in Calderón studies.[51]

This is a pity. For as *calderonistas* know, with the author of *The Great Theatre of the World*, it is never a question of either heaven or earth, eternity or the historical world. In Calderon's universe, both are intricately intertwined and his allegorical poetics ingeniously produces their relation, placing the emphasis variously on earthly detail or the greater metaphysical picture according to subject matters treated.[52] Sometimes, his plays explore a world marred by vice and despair; at other times, the world they depict is evangelically shot through with metaphysical significance and hope. Thus, while *His Honour's Doctor* (set during the reign of Peter I "the Cruel" of Castile), for example, moves in the closed labyrinthine darkness of human passion, a play such as *Dawn in Copacabana* (about the sixteenth-century Spanish conquest of Peru) strikes an evangelic and apotheosising note.

A curious hybrid between a news report and a morality play, *The German Prodigy* (1634) – which figures here as my example of Calderón's dramatic historiography though it was probably co-authored by Antonio Coello (1611–1652) – resides in between these extremes, simultaneously delving into the sordid quagmire of political conspiracy and rummaging the human soul for moral lessons.[53] Like Lope's Drake epic, this relatively unresearched play draws its audience into a world of politics and propaganda, only here the antagonist is not some foreign power but the enemy within.

In 1618, Europe saw the outbreak of the most extensive, bloody and destructive war in its entire history. Though always mentioned in the singular, the Thirty Years' War was in fact a whole array of different wars playing out in different parts of the continent as well as in a few European overseas colonies.[54] It began with the Protestant rebellion against the Catholic German-Roman Emperor in Prague, May 1618, but not all its players were driven by pious fury. Many used the confessional schism to pursue political and economic interests. Under the surface of the famous religious war there was, thus, a complex undergrowth of secular conflicts including rifts over commerce and territory, succession rivalries and political power struggles.

This morass of religious, political and economic motives and agendas was just as difficult to understand as modern-day international politics and, like today's breaking news, it was the object of intense scrutiny in different media. For one thing, it was analysed in the dispatches of envoys and diplomats. These were the 'foreign correspondents' of the period though they did not share current ideas about impartiality and factuality: Seventeenth-century diplomatic dispatches were not objective in any modern understanding of the term, but rather a medley of eyewitness accounts, political theory and religious propaganda. Second, there were the illustrated broadsheets or broadsides, precursors of the newspaper, directed at a wide and not necessarily literate audience. With their aim to further religious agendas, defame political opponents or exaggerate

one's own party's excellence, the manipulations of these ephemera can be described as fake news in the sense of deliberate misinformation and impact campaigns.[55] However, diplomats and propagandists were not the only ones to describe the war.

In Madrid, Vienna, Paris and London, poets and dramatists scrutinised reports from the front lines in order to present the latest news to their audiences. Thus, in *The German Prodigy*, as in *The Siege of Breda* (1625, about the Dutch War of Independence), Calderón delivered what can be termed breaking news from the Thirty Years' War: In the former, he staged the successful Spanish siege on the Dutch city of Breda, 1624–1625, commanded by Ambrogio Spinola; in the latter, the mysterious murder of the imperial generalissimo, Albrecht von Wallenstein, in 1634.[56] While both these plays were undoubtedly historical dramas in the most immediate and unmistakable sense of the term, mixing historical facts retrieved from diplomats' dispatches and elements of the broadside impact campaigns with invented characters, fictive harangues and the obligatory moral lesson, they arguably only just made ends meet.

After all, there was quite some way from the diplomatic dispatches' bewildering and contradictory historical facts and the partisan universe of the pamphleteers to the edifying historical fiction which the dramatist had to produce in a very brief period of time in order to keep his audience posted. Though Lope performed a similar task in the *Dragontea*, he took two years to do so whereas Calderón and his co-author apparently had but a few weeks.[57] As a form of news reporting, the aesthetic writing of contemporary history thus tested the Golden Age art of history which – as we know from previous chapters – rested on careful narrative plotting, ingenious elaboration of language and, not the least, conscientious devising of a useful morale. Continuing my enquiry into this tradition but introducing a new terminology, I will subsequently discuss whether Calderón and Coello's representation of the latest news from the Thirty Years' War ultimately complied with the critical-reflective vein of the Golden Age poetics of history or whether it simply amounted to what we would term fake news or deliberate misinformation.

Though later periods came to consider art and literature autonomous and unprosaic spheres, it is actually not wholly fortuitous to understand seventeenth-century stagings of contemporary history as a kind of news reporting. Whereas they had more easy access to ancient and medieval history, which was transmitted in both ballads and published works, large parts of Calderón's audience could only get information about current political developments through the theatre. Like the movie theatres during the Second World War, Golden Age public theatres provided visual updates from the front lines. Thus, together with the illustrated broadsides, dramatic stagings of these developments naturally played a central role in the popular historical understanding, sidelining the diplomatic dispatches which required not only reading skills but also in

many cases, a sound knowledge of Latin.[58] The moving images of the stage became the history books of the unlearned and, as such, they were liable to accusations of propaganda. Yet, were Calderón's dramas on contemporary history on a par with the political impact campaigns of diplomats and pamphleteers? Or did they live up to the standards of the Golden Age *ars historica*, stimulating their audience's reflection on consequential and difficult historical matters and approximation to truth?

Exclusive access to the eyes and ears of the people, such as Calderón and his colleagues at the Golden Age theatres had, indeed required what may be termed a "consideration" of dominating ideas – a certain dexterity, political tact – not the least when the topic (as in this case) was politically explosive. To write this kind of play was something one was chosen to do because those in power trusted you and expected you to be loyal to their cause. However, as discussed in relation to Vélez de Guevara, the question remains whether dramatists' consideration of received values and ideologies necessarily entailed either the support of these values, as claimed by scholars of the Maravall school, or the subversion of them, as posited by New Historicist critics. In previous chapters, I have discussed how creativity played a crucial role in Golden Age theories of history and the contemporaneous writing of history, traditional as well as aesthetic (even if the Platonic drift of this tradition demanded a balancing act between being true to fact and being pleasurable enough to convince an audience). Through readings of a series of historical works, I have shown how historiographers', historical forgers', poets' and dramatists' creative take on history – furthered by their masterful use of advanced aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices – opened up a myriad of oftentimes conflictive perspectives which cannot be accounted for through the support-versus-subversion approach. Thus, completing my examination of the period's poetics of history, I here take up the challenge of illustrating how even the seemingly most biased, most politicised Golden Age history play can in fact be construed as a nuanced piece of aesthetic-historical writing; how Calderón and Coello's breaking news from the Thirty Years' War is, in other words, anything but fake news.

The central character of *The German Prodigy* is Albrecht Eusebius von Wallenstein (1583–1634), the famous Bohemian general who led the Imperial army to a long array of victories between 1604 and 1634 yet who was murdered on 24 February 1634 by order of Emperor Ferdinand II – an event so mysterious that it has led to numerous conjectures through the centuries: Had the general become so mighty that he threatened the Emperor's authority? Did he not whole-heartedly enough back the 1629 Edict of Restitution which revoked the territorial and religious situations reached in the Peace of Ausburg? Was he in fact a demon who had taken possession of a human body? Or an apostate who trusted more in heathen science than in the Christian God?[59] In *The German*

Prodigy, Calderón and Coello can be seen to launch their own bid to figure out what the whole case was actually about.

The play begins immediately after the Battle of Lützen in 1632, when the imperial army led by Wallenstein was defeated by the troops of Gustav II Adolph yet, in a very successful pr-stunt, proclaimed itself victor because the Swedish king was accidentally killed in the battle. It ends with the general's death at the hands of his entrusted men, lured into an ambush by a group of conspirators who allegedly meant to prevent the coup d'état that Wallenstein was said to be planning. The main character is by and large presented as treason in human form and, following Parker's abovementioned theory of Golden Age drama, the play as a whole can be construed as a conceptual exploration of the moral theme of treachery. Indeed, as I will subsequently discuss, *The German Prodigy* quite openly builds on the moral dramatic tradition that Calderón so famously renewed in his liturgical plays.[60]

For my purposes here, it is of course of paramount importance that *The German Prodigy* treats of events that took place almost at the same time that they were staged in Madrid. Moreover, it is relevant that the play presumably replaced a today no longer extant play by the same authors which celebrated the person and deeds of Albrecht von Wallenstein but had to be withdrawn when news arrived in Spain in March 1634 that the general had been assassinated for high treason:[61] Nobody in Madrid apparently had any intelligence of this development and the play thus virtually delivers breaking news. In order to illustrate Calderón and Coello's take on their role as news breaker, I will subsequently discuss two aesthetic devices used in this play: (1) the metadramatic epilogue and (2) the protagonist's parabatic monologue in the second act. As I will argue, both these devices essentially serve to present the Wallenstein case in a nuanced or even aporetic manner, providing the audience with multiple and apparently incompatible perspectives on one of the world's greatest murder cases: The death of the imperial army's generalissimo in the Bohemian town of Cheb at the hands of the Irish captain Walter Devereux in 1634.

The Historian's Hand

There can be no doubt that *The German Prodigy* meets many of the criteria of tentative news reporting and the play can thus be seen to form an at least indirect part of the imperial impact campaign designed to justify the conspicuous killing of the commander-in-chief. The opulent finishing speech put into the mouth of Captain de Bros ("de Bros" = distortion of "Devereux") in many ways sums up the play's propagandistic framing of its topic. With its conventional reference to the act of writing, this speech effectively serves as an epilogue and it is therefore a good place to begin looking for the play's message:

Captain: And here – oh Senate! –
the hands lift their coarse pens,
which in these sheets lively
portray this event,
to the punishment and revenge
over all the conspirators,
to the terror of Germany,
to the display of the Empire and
honour of the Austrian house.
[III: 2691–2699][62]

However, this little epilogue where the authors speak directly to their audience, flatteringly addressed as "Senate," through the mouth of the play's only unequivocal hero is in fact quite equivocal.[63] With its reference to the "coarse pens" which write the history, it first of all underscores the dramatic news report as a creative process – an *ars* but at the same time a "true falseness" – implicitly relativising its truth claim by evoking what Anthony Grafton later described as the "frightening, demon-haunted labyrinths of historical writing, ancient and modern, trustworthy and falsified."[64] This relativisation, in turn, casts an ambiguous light not only on the purported significance of the Wallenstein affair as a moral fable which shows the "punishment and revenge / over all the conspirators," but also on its alleged function as "display of the Empire / and honour of the Austrian house." For both are intimately connected with the news script which has just been revealed as an artefact through the thematisation of the hands that write the history; and if that script is creative, fabricated or fictive, then the moral lesson of the story and even the glory of the rulers will also be fabrications: Not necessarily bad fabrications, but fabrications all the same. Thus, upon closer inspection, the epilogue presents its audience with a thoroughly double-tongued morale, on one hand sticking to the official story about "the conspirators" allegedly led by Wallenstein while, on the other hand, calling attention to the fact that victory is always written by the victors (or their favoured dramatists).

The propagandistic framing of the news about Wallenstein's death is thus, upon closer scrutiny, ambivalent. Though the dramatists in their epilogue obviously "considered" the official explanation of the general's murder – that he was a preposterous traitor and that his death therefore did honour to the leaders of the Catholic League – *The German Prodigy* simultaneously launches an explorative probe into the Wallenstein case which runs counter to its immediate propagandistic message. The play's take on the general's purported high treason and death is, in other words, far from unequivocal.[65] It can be described as an instance of the refined doublespeak which I have elsewhere termed "diglossia," or the irreducibly complex synthesis of apparently irreconcilable

perspectives.[66] It is, however, not just the epilogue which muddles the edifying story of how treason never goes unpunished. Unsurprisingly, the protagonist's long monologue in act 2 is the epicentre of Calderón and Coello's ambiguous news report, seriously complicating the play's dramatic historiography.

Doublespeak

As suggested by the play's ambiguous title, which can linguistically refer to both the prodigious killing of the traitor and to Wallenstein himself, the German (Bohemian) prodigy of war, the general's story as referred in *The German Prodigy*, is not the one-sided portrait of a treacherous individual.[67] It is the story of the hero who became a traitor and the plot can be construed as a detectivesque unravelling of how this came to be so. The protagonist's monologue in the second act, which both formally and in terms of content gives the audience something to think about, is the sophisticated centre piece of this interpretation, placed strategically in the middle of the play.

In his monologue, Wallenstein recounts his life-story and military career. The speech occupies over 200 verses, or about a tenth of the play (II: 1462–1668), and begins with an ekphrastic passage in which the Bohemian landscape functions as a mirror of the general's soul:

> *Duke*: Hear my glories.
> The famous province of Bohemia […]
> is my homeland which the
> Hercynian wood encircles
> with various forests as a wall. […]
> This wild wood,
> full of prodigies and horrors,
> was my childhood's second mother,
> its offspring gave me
> the valour and the ferocity,
> and conceived me a second time
> in the robust entrails
> of its horrific mountains.
> [II: 1462–1488][68]

For a play merely seeking to imperil the reputation of Wallenstein this passage is oddly mythifying, with its central image of the general as a creature of Hercynian woods which are, like the general's life, full of both "prodigies and horrors." Indeed, in the description of the "valour" and "ferocity" which the famous soldier inherited from the "robust entrails" of his at once majestic and savage homeland, there is everywhere a kind of estranged admiration. The same holds true of Wallenstein's subsequent relation of his journey to the pinnacle of power and account of his military achievements:

Duke: I disarmed Lower Alsace
which, agitated by some electors,
raised squadrons against the Empire.
I evicted the Count Palatine
of the Rhine, whose enormous breast,
expelled from Vienna,
found patronage in London.
I cut the wings of the Danish king
who in stupid flight aimed
for the splendours of the Sun
competing with the Austrian Eagle […].
[II: 1523–1535][69]

Suppression of Alsatian rebellion; dispossession and forcing into exile of the Winter King Frederick V, Protestant Count Palatine of the Rhine (1596–1632) in 1620; defeat of Danish king Christian IV during the Battle of Wolgast in 1628. While this selection of famous deeds may be perceived as immoderate bragging, it can also be seen as a mere listing of facts.[70] Indeed, emphasising how all of his endeavours were executed in service of the "Empire" and the "Eagle of Austria," Wallenstein comes across as quite a loyal figure. So, what happened? How can we understand his alleged turning on the Emperor and the Spanish king? The next bit of Wallenstein's monologue gives an attempted answer to this question, with its painful account of how the general fell victim of envious slander and was eventually divested of the responsibility for the imperial army which he had led to so many glorious victories; and of how this humiliation devoured his soul. In a highly poetic language, the proud Bohemian describes how anger and disappointment finally got the better of his loyalty:

Duke: But envy, which loathsomely
makes use of the
coat of idleness
to forge vile defects
against the purest actions,
armed its poisonous tooth
against my fame. Ferdinand
believed them and, to my
disadvantage, he was conceited
by the traitors.
He orders me to leave the arms
and that the army shall no longer
be under my command […].
Offended I withdraw,
but since then, ever since then,
a snake dwells in my breast
which devores my entrails,
feeding a viper
whose poison hides
in the heart which, as soon as
it is infected, responds
to the loyal beats
of my noble blood.
[II: 1543–1570][71]

Full of the deep psychological insight and emotional nuance familiar from more acclaimed Calderonian character studies, this portrait of a character who is supposedly the devil in disguise is again oddly sympathetic, though not quite. It underscores the original loyalty and nobility of the general's blood ("the loyal beats / of my noble blood") but also introduces a certain ambiguity. On the one hand, the snake imagery suggests an innocent Wallenstein attacked by envy ("armed its poisonous tooth / against my fame"); yet, on the other hand, snakes of course inevitably suggest temptation and the fall from innocence through an act of defiance. Innocent or not, the outcome was clear: The generalissimo was alienated from his former master. It may be that he briefly regained command of the imperial army (1632–1634), because his successor could not tackle the Swedish threat, but in *The German Prodigy*, Wallenstein never recovered from his first humiliation and the degradation made his proud soul strive for the crown of his native Bohemia:

Duke: My anger takes up arms
against the Austrian, against the
world,
for I am the ray of Bohemia,
and the atrocious reigns [...]
Come, valiant friends,
nobles of the invasions,
spread your wings,
shake off the leashes [...],
so that I may crown myself
in Bohemia in spite of
the invidious and the traitors,
flaunting my valour.
[II: 1637–1668][72]

On a thematic level, Wallenstein's monologue, which ends with the exhortation to rebellion against the Emperor ("Come, valiant friends"), thus demonstrates the same fundamental ambivalence as the play's epilogue. The dramatists do not deviate from the official explanation of the general's assassination – that he was planning high treason – but they simultaneously present a subtle psychological portrait of the hero who became a traitor, opening the back door for placing the responsibility for the whole affair with a weak leader, Ferdinand II, who listened to envious slander ("Ferdinand / believed them") and allowed that his best man turned himself against him because he felt that he was being treated unfairly.

However, in order to fully understand the play's ambiguous presentation of its protagonist we also need to consider how, in what manner, the dramatists stage his great monologue. Here, it is first of all important that this monologue takes the form of a parabasis, or direct address from the character onstage to the audience.[73] Employing this device, the

dramatists namely create a secondary dramatisation, adding an additional scenic level with an onstage audience who listens to the protagonist's story:

> *Gordon*: I am listening.
>
> *Marshal*: I am paying attention.
> [II: 1460–1461][74]

This establishing of a stage upon the stage and an onstage audience has two important consequences in regard to the play's dramatic historiography. First, it heightens the theatre audience's awareness of the scenic illusion: Beholding spectators on stage watch a performance, the audience is reminded that it is itself an audience beholding not reality itself but a representation of reality, a play. Second, the use of secondary dramatisation enhances the biographical complexity of the play's historical characterisation: Like another Richard of Glouchester, Wallenstein reaches out to the theatre audience seeking to win it over and to counter the negative image of his person that was clearly the official when the play was written. Yet, precisely as in the case of Richard, the outcome of this device is not only empathy. With its implicit reference to the devil of religious drama, who commonly directed this type of alluring addresses to the audience, the parabasis adds yet another layer to the dramatic news report.[75] For with the reference to the morality devil, the already quite complex image of the general is complicated even further: A traditional moral perspective, implicitly identifying the speaker with evil itself, is projected onto the empathetic psychological portrait of the betrayed hero which, for its part, nuanced the propagandistic conception of Wallenstein as a heinous traitor. The audience of Calderón and Coello's play consequently finds itself challenged by the tantalising coincidence of irreconcilable perspectives reflecting the enigma of the Wallenstein murder. Does this exempt their writing of contemporary history, their dramatic news report, from the charge of promoting fake news and lift it into the art of history?

If we look at existing academic understandings of fake news, the answer must be both affirmative and negative.[76] For though *The German Prodigy* was probably based on the contemporaneous impact campaigns – revealed in extant documents such as the "True Account of the Rebellion which the Duke of Friedland and Mecklenburg, Generalissimo of the Imperial Troops and Knight of the Golden Fleece, had Planned to Commit against the Caesarean Majesty of the Emperor and other Royal Persons and for which he and his Confederates, after being Discovered, were Killed by the Hands of his Soldiers 26 February of this year 1634" and the "Account of the Treason which Albert Wladislao [sic], Duke of Mecklenburg and Friedland, Generalissimo of the Imperial Army and

Knight of the Golden Fleece, had decided to Commit against his Majesty and other Persons of the House of Austria, and how after being Discovered he and his Confederates were Prodigiously Killed by the Hands of his Soldiers 26 February, Carnival Sunday, of this year 1634" – it should be clear by now that the dramatists had no wish to sell an unequivocal political message.[77] Calderón and Coello neither condemn nor exhibit their protagonist. They give no definitive explanation of who he was and why he became a traitor. At the end of the play, Wallenstein more than ever stands as an enigma which the audience must try to solve. In the end, the dramatists' creative news reporting represents a viable third way beyond the opposition of "true" and "fake" news, allowing the audience to reflect on the problem of historical truth and the intricacies of historical understanding in the safe space of the Golden Age *ars historica*.

Notes

1 Walsh (2009); Pugliatti (1996).
2 To the French humanist theatre of the late sixteenth century, see Biet (2006); Stone (1974). On Racine and historiography, see Schmidt (2018).
3 To German historical drama of early modernity, see Niefanger (2005).
4 Cohen (1985); Loftis (1987); Paterson (2001); Ryjik (2011).
5 Kewes (2003).
6 Maravall (1986: 57–78). Cf. Maravall (1975: 131–175).
7 *Bulletin of the Comediantes* vol. 65, no. 1, 2013, dedicated to Maravall's legacy in Golden Age theatre studies, made this change manifest. See, notably, the essays by Laura Bass (1–13) and Ruth MacKay (45–56). For an early critique of the Maravall tradition in Golden Age literary scholarship, see Poppenberg (1990) and Cascardi (1997). See also studies of the Golden Age theatre's register of advanced scenographic measures as vehicle of semantic complexity by García-Reidy (2015) and González (2011).
8 Maravall (1972: 18): "[…] el teatro español trata de imponer o de mantener la presión de un sistema de poder […]."
9 Kewes (2006: 4–5).
10 Schevill & Spencer (1937) operate 94 plays. In his miscellaneous *For Everyone* (*Para todos*, 1632), the concomitant dramatist Juan Pérez de Montalbán (1602–1638) attested Vélez's productivity: "Había escrito [Vélez de Guevara] más de cuatrocientas comedias, y todas ellas de pensamientos sutiles, arrojamientos poéticos y versos excelentísimos y bizarros, en que no admite comparación su valiente espíritu" (quoted in Profeti, 1983: 2). "[Vélez de Guevara] wrote more than four hundred plays and all of them of subtle thinking, poetic power and the most excellent and bizarre verses in all of which his valiant spirit has no comparison." See also the words by José Pellicer Ossay y Tovar (1602–1679): "[Vélez de Guevara es] bien conocido por más de 400 comedias que ha escrito y su grande ingenio, agudos y repetidos dichos y ser uno de los mejores cortesanos de España" (ibid.). "[Vélez de Guevara] is well-known for the more than 400 plays which he wrote and his great genius, his sharp and often-cited formulations as well as for being one of the best courtiers of Spain."

11 Profeti (1983: 1–2) quotes praise by Cervantes, Lope and the dramatist Andrés de Claramonte (1580–1626).
12 See Miguel Zugasti's 1996 state of the art:

> The negative judgements of Alberto Lista, Gil de Zárate, Mesonero Romanos or Barrera y Leirado (who were all occupied with making [Vélez] compete in vain with Lope) created a current of opinion which weighed heavily on the 18th and 19th centuries. Thus, it is not surprising that, following Adolph Friedrich von Schack's much-read *History of Literature and Drama in Spain* (1887), the tag 'second order dramatist', subsequently repeated by Menéndez Pelayo and even Cotarelo (despite having dedicated an excellent study to [Vélez]) begins to spread and becomes thoroughly accepted in the majority of current manuals of Spanish literature. Adding to this that two of his works (*Reigning After Dying* and *The Limping Devil*) have captured many of the scholarly analyses dedicated to [Vélez], the final conclusion is that a big part of his extant work remains unknown to us.
>
> (300)

13 These editions, initiated by the late William R. Manson together with C. George Peale, the current editor, are published in the Juan de la Cuesta Hispanic Monographs series (2002–).
14 Original titles of the mentioned plays (in the listed order): *Las palabras a los reyes*; *El príncipe esclavo y hazañas de Escandenberg*; *Reinar después de morir*; *Atila, azote de Dios*; *Tamerlán de Persia*; *Juliano Apóstata*; *Más pesa el rey que la sangre*; *La restauración de España*; *El diablo está en Cantillana*; *Los amotinados de Flandes*; *El águila del agua y Batalla de Lepanto*. Publication dates as provided in Cotarelo y Mori (1916/1917) and Schevill & Spencer (1937). According to Schevill and Spencer, Vélez's "historical-novelesque" plays (*comedias históricas-novelescas*) amount to a total of 33 plays. However, to this list must be added most of the 32 plays which the American scholars classify as "novelesque" plays (*comedias novelescas*, a category including, for example, *The Rebels of Flanders*). Vega (2005: 52–54) provides a useful categorisation of Vélez's plays.
15 Cf. Vega (2005: 53):

> The reign of the Catholic Monarchs, at the end of the 15th century and beginning of the 16th century, is one of the principal frames, with as much as five plays, among which are some of Vélez's best creations: *The Moon of the Mountains* [*La luna de la sierra*, before 1628], *Gómez Arias' Daughter* [*La niña de Gómez Arias*, c. 1614], *The Mountain Girl from la Vera* [*La serrana de la Vera*, 1613], *The Executioner from Malaga* [*El verdugo de Málaga*, after 1620] and *The Conquest of Oran*.

16 Peale & Gónzalez (Vélez, 2020: 17–18), based on Schevill & Spencer.
17 See Peale & Gónzalez (Vélez, 2020: 18): "Actually, the play has twenty-eight passages in which Vélez de Guevara appropriated and versified Robles' *Compendium*." These passages are listed in footnote 10 and many are discussed in detail (18–24), but see notably Cisneros' own account of his life I: 559–792 (Vélez, 2020: 109–115).
18 Cisneros' dream about the Conquest of Oran followed by the catalogue of Spanish nobles seems to be loosely based on Agamemnon's dream and the catalogue of ships in *Iliad* 2.
19 According to Peale & González, *The Conquest of Oran* combines drama, history, poetry and journalism (Vélez, 2020: 13).

20 Peale & Gónzales (Vélez, 2020: 40): "Además, esta trama secundaria […] se queda en el aire, sin resolución."
21 Act II: 1689–1794 and act I: 833–893. Cf. Vélez (2020: 142–145 and 116–118).
22 Isabella died five years earlier and the Count of Saldaña lived a century later. See Peale & Gónzales (Vélez, 2020: 30 and 32).
23 Parker (1957). For a critique of Parker, see José María Ruano de la Haza (2005: 6):

> The distinguished hispanist […] read Spanish Golden Age plays far better than did his predecessors, but he also relegated the playwrights' character-drawing to the lowest rung of the dramatic ladder by subordinating it to action, theme, unity, and moral purpose.

24 Vélez (2020: 102):

> CENETE […] [las] costas [de Andalucia] se quejan, / que las tienen infestadas / los moros de Orán, llevando / cada día de sus playas / niños, hombres y mujeres / cautivos, que es de piratas / del mar Orán madriguera / de las costas africanas.
>
> (I: 303–310)
>
> CENETE […] the coasts [of Andalucia] complain / that they are infested by the Moors of Oran / who everyday take from their beaches / kids, men and women / as captives, for on the African coast / Oran is the den of pirats.

25 Vélez (2020: 166).
26 Peale & González (Vélez, 2020: 17). See also the editors' comment (56) that the play

> sustained the continuation of the political objectives of the Duke of Lerma [whose family was patron of Luis Vélez de Guevara between 1603 and 1619] which were, more specifically: The construction of national unity and the securing of prosperity and internal peace underpinned by an expansionist politics toward south and the abandonment of European conflict, particularly in the Low Countries.

27 Peale & González (Vélez, 2020: 13).
28 Peale & González (Vélez, 2020: 36).
29 Unamuno (1983: 341):

> Mas donde acaso hemos de ir a buscar el héroe de nuestro pensamiento no es a ningún filósofo que viniera en carne y hueso, sino en un ente de ficción, más real que los filósofos todos; es a Don Quijote. Porque hay un quijotismo filosófico, sin duda, pero también una filosofía quijotesca. ¿Es acaso otra, en el fondo, la de los conquistadores, la de los contrareformadores, la de Loyola y, sobre todo, ya en el orden del pensamiento abstracto, pero sentido, la de nuestros místicos? ¿Qué era la mística de san Juan de la Cruz sino una caballería andante del sentimiento a lo divino? y el de Don Quijote no puede decirse que fuera en rigor idealismo; no peleaba por ideas; peleaba por espíritus.

Cf. Unamuno (1954: 665):

> But perhaps we must look for the hero of Spanish thought, not in any actual flesh-and-bone philosopher, but in a creation of fiction, a man of action, who is more real than all the philosophers – Don Quixote. There

> is undoubtedly a philosophical Quixotism, but there is also a Quixotic philosophy. May it not perhaps be that the philosophy of the Conquistadores, of the Counter-Reformers, of Loyola, and above all, in the order of abstract but deeply felt thought, that of our mystics, was, in its essence, none other than this? What was the mysticism of St. John of the Cross but a knight-errantry of the heart in the divine warfare? And the philosophy of Don Quixote cannot strictly be called idealism; he did not fight for ideas. It was of the spiritual order; he fought for the spirit.

To Unamuno's idea of Christian *quijotismo*, see García (1999) and Mohamed (2019). For a discussion of Cervantes and Catholic spirituality, see McGrath (2020).

30 Vélez (2020: 107). Cf. Peale & González (Vélez, 2020: 26).

31 Cf. also Cervantes' toying with the hagiographic genre in plays such as *The Blessed Scoundrel* and *The Great Sultana* (1585), notably, and in several of his fictions, including "The Force of Blood" (*Exemplary Novels*, 1615).

32 Vélez (2020: 165): "¡cierra, / España, y vaya delante / Santiago!"

33 Cervantes (2004, unpaginated internet text). Cf. Cervantes (1998: 1098):

> […] qué es la causa porque dicen los españoles cuando quieren dar alguna batalla, invocando aquel San Diego Matamoros: '¡Santiago, y cierra España!'. ¿Está por ventura España abierta y de modo que es menester cerrarla, o qué ceremonia es esta?

34 Vélez (2020: 111):

> CISNEROS […] algunas veces me causan / tanto furor entre sueños, / aunque en esta edad pesada, / que me parece que veo / muchos moros a mis plantas / rendidos, y que a Castilla, / con hazañas soberanas, / doy africanos despojos, / librando de la africana / infestación sus riberas, / y quien más me toca al arma / es Orán. "Orán" me dicen / a las orejas sagradas / trompetas, al parecer, / pero deben de ser vanas / ilusiones con que el sueño / a las potencias engaña.

35 Vélez (2020: 153):

> BENZAIDE […] Me parece, Alí, que vi / un hombre sobre mi cama, / de venerable presencia, / cuyas venerables canas / respeto y temor ponían, / con unas grabadas armas / sobre un hábito de jerga, / la cabeza coronada / de un rojo tocado, y puesta / en el pomo de la espada / una mano, y en esotra / un bastón, tocando al arma […].
>
> (III: 2041–2052)
>
> BENZAIDE […] Ali, I think I saw / a man beside my bed, / of venerable apperance, / whose venerable grey hair / induced respect and fear / with arms etched / on a habit of thick cloth, / his head crowned / with a red headdress and with one hand / on the sword's handle / and in the other hand / a baton, touching the weapon.

36 Vélez (2020: 105): "CISNEROS […] vuestra Alteza es soberana / reina nuestra, y no es razón / que a los ojos de tan alta / majestad sentado esté / un gusano, habiendo tanta / tierra en que estar de rodillas." See also ibid. (116): "CISNEROS […] para serviros nací" (I: 820), et al. "CISNEROS […] I was born to serve you."

37 Vélez (2020: 105–106): "ISABEL En qué habéis venido? CISNEROS Yo, señora, en estas sandalias, / y este palo, que es la mula / de la regla soberana / de mi padre San Francisco." For the floor sweeping, see further Vélez (2020:

121–122): "CISNEROS Que hoy es viernes./ Que traiga, padre Holofernes,/ las escobas. Barreremos" (II: 1009–1010). "CISNEROS Today is Friday. / Father Holofernes, bring out / the brooms. Let us sweep." See also Cisneros' conditions for accepting the position as royal confessor in act I: 757–782 (Vélez, 2020: 114–115) which include " […] que no tengo/ de tener otra posada/ sino la de mi convento" (I: 757–759); "that I will not have / to saty anywhere else / than in my convent" and "Cuando he de ir a las jornadas,/ la segunda, sino a pie/ como mi regla me manda" (I: 764–766); "When I have to go somewhere / (this is the second) it will be by foot / as my rule demands."

38 Vélez (2020: 123): "[CISNEROS] No quiero más Indias / que esta escoba que me trae / fray Holofernes, mi misa / en mi convento y mi celda."

39 Vélez (2020: 138):

> ISABEL Pues yo quiero, Padre nuestro, / que veáis si he hecho buena / elección en la persona / que en estas bulas se encierra. / Leedlas, por vuestra vida / que sin que nadie supiera / mi intención, ni a quien elijo, / hice de Roma traellas. CISNEROS Será, sin duda, acertada / la elección, si vuestra Alteza / tan de espacio lo ha mirado. ISABELLA ¡Leed pues! / CISNEROS De esta manera / dice el título, señora, / que en nuestro romance suena. ISABEL Ya os escucho. CISNEROS "Al venerable / hermano nuestro ... ISABEL Así empieza, / adelante. CISNEROS " … fray Francisco / Jiménez …" ISABEL ¡Nada os detenga! CISNEROS "… de Cisneros, arzobispo / de Toledo…" ¡Vuestra Alteza / me ha engañado …!"

40 See, for instance, I: 263–268: "ISABEL Guárdeos el Cielo. CENETE: Por horas pienso que aguarda / a fray Francisco Jiménez / de Cisneros, que es un alma / perfecta, y un religioso / de grande abstinencia y fama" (Vélez, 2020: 101). "ISABELLA Heaven protect you. CENETE Right now, I hope it protects / brother Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, / a perfect soul and a religious man / of great abstinence and fame."

41 See Schelling's famous resumé of Cervantes' novel (1927: 330).

42 Vélez (2020: 146).

43 Vélez (2020: 146): "GUTIERRE Denos / vuestra Ilustrísima, a mí / y al Marqués, las manos. CISNEROS Eso / es venir a hacer de mí, / otra vez burla."

44 Vélez (2020: 108).

45 Peale & González (Vélez, 2020: 28–29).

46 Vélez (2020: 144): "HOLOFERNES Nadie se desacomode. / Siéntese aquí, Padre nuestro. / Parta, Padre, de este pan. / Coma, Padre, de estos huevos, / y ¡brindis, ojo de gallo! / ¡Lindo vino! Echarle quiero …."

47 Vélez (2020: 141–142):

> […] HOLOFERNES ¿No me dirá, si puede, / sin que ofendido en la respuesta quede, / Padre nuestro, el recato / de que le ha procedido este rebato? / ¿De qué rayo se guarda? / ¿Qué peste en los poblados le acobarda / que le pone en hüida? CISNEROS El más cierto peligro de la vida, / un riesgo deseado / de los que ignoran este humilde estado, / y, en fin, huyo del miedo / de no ser arzobispo de Toledo. HOLOFERNES ¡Cuerpo de Dios!, ¿con tanta / desnudez y humilidad la Iglesia Santa, / apóstoles de Cristo / no rigieron, y santos que hemos visto, / tan insignes prelados? CISNEROS Están a muchas cosas obligados / para tan cortos días. / No quiero más ovejas que las mías. HOLOFERNES ¡Loco estoy de escuchallo! / ¡Que huelle su fortuna / luego lo hiciera un colegial de Osuna!

CISNEROS No pase más adelante, / Padre, con sus desaciertos, / porque en llegando a Esperanza, / mudaré de compañero. HOLOFERNES Perdóneme, que soy, Padre, / un loco, un fraile muy lego.

48 Peale & González (Vélez, 2020: 30). See also Peale (1997) on Vélez's "clown poetics" (*poética del bufón*) in *The Mountain Girl from la Vera*.
49 Calderón's letter as quoted in Parker (1983: 20): "lo único que he procurado recoger."
50 Original titles of the mentioned plays (in the listed order): *El alcalde de Zalamea*; *Amar después de la muerte o El tuzaní de la Alpujarra*; *La aurora en Copacabana*; *El príncipe constante*; *El médico de su honra*; *El postrer duelo de España*; *Los cabellos de Absalón*; *El mayor monstruo del mundo*; *El José de las mujeres*; *Judas macabeo*; *El purgatorio de San Patricio*; *El mágico prodigioso*; *El gran príncipe de Fez*; *El segundo Escipión*; *La gran Cenobia*; *Afectos de odio y amor; El sitio de Bredá*; *La cisma de Ingalaterra*; *El prodigio de Alemania*. Dates based on the chronology of Calderón's plays established by Hilborn (1938).
51 Calvo & Romanos (2002) represent an exception to this rule.
52 For such an interpretation of Calderón's allegorical poetics, see Kluge (2008, 2012b, 2017 and 'forthcoming').
53 *The German Prodigy* was discovered in the archives of the Biblioteca Nacional around the turn of the millennium by Germán Vega García-Luengos. As he explains (2001: 818–822), Vega first believed that Calderón wrote it in collaboration with Coello, wherefore the only existing modern edition of the play – the edition used in the present section – gives both Calderón and Antonio Coello (1611–1652) as authors. Later, Vega tells me, he came to doubt Coello's co-authorship, but since he has not yet written anything to the effect I retain the double authorship here and do not go further into the question.
54 For a study of the Thirty Years' War, see Wilson (2009).
55 For a definition of fake news, see Tandoc, Lim & Ling (2018: 141).
56 Wallenstein was duke of Friedland in northern Bohemia and contemporaneous Spanish sources therefore, as we shall see, refer to him variously as "Frislán" and "Fritlandt." For a detailed biography, see Mann (1971).
57 Černy (1962).
58 There can, for example, be little doubt that Calderón and Coello's Breda play reached a much wider audience than the Jesuit Herman Hugo's *The Siege of Breda by Ambrogio Spinola* (*Obsidis Bredana sub Ambrosio Spinola*, Antwerp, 1626).
59 On the Wallenstein "enigma," see Mortimer (2010).
60 The Wallenstein story did eventually reach the religious stage with Álvaro Cubillo de Aragón's *Sacramental Play on the Death of Friedland* (*Auto sacramental de la muerte de Frislán*, 1661, whose list of characters identifies Wallenstein with the devil – the first and worst traitor in Christian history: "EL DEMONIO que es el DUQUE DE FRISLÁN" (Cubillo de Aragón, 1984: 133)). "THE DEVIL who is the DUKE OF FRIEDLAND."
61 There are at least two rather detailed extant descriptions of this play, penned by an Italian and a German envoy (reproduced in Černy, 1962: 179 og 184), based on which Sullivan (2000) conjectures the title *The Heroic Deeds of Friedland and Death of the King of Sweden* (*Las proezas de Frislán, y muerte del Rey de Suecia*).
62 Calderón & Coello (2013: 109–110):

> CAPITÁN Y aquí la mano levantan, / Senado, toscos buriles, / que entre laminas retratan / al vivo aqueste suceso, / para castigo y venganza / de todos los conjurados, / para terror de Alemania, / para blasón del Imperio, / y honor de la casa de Austria.

63 See the entry "SENADO" in the *Diccionario de Autoridades* tomo IV (1739): "Junta, ò congresso, donde assistian los Senadóres à tratar los negocios importantes de la República. […] Por extensión se toma por qualquier junta, ò concurrencia de personas graves, respetables, y circunspectas" (online at www.rae.es). "Committee or congress where the Senators attended to important business of the Republic. […] By extension, whichever committee or audience of grave, respectable and circumspect persons."

64 See Vega (2012: 46).

65 In his introduction to the play (2013: c), Rueda registers what may be called an ideological inconsequence in the play's characterisation of the protagonist – at one and the same time tragic hero and ambitious crook – but rather speculatively explains this inconsequence recurring to the genesis of the work as a patchwork of recycled passages from the earlier play.

66 Kluge (2014).

67 Vega understands the title's *prodigio* as referring to the killing of the traitor (2001: 808), but it could also refer to Wallenstein, the legendary German (Bohemian) war hero with the superhuman track record of victories.

68 Calderón & Coello (2013: 61–62):

> DUQUE Pues eschucha mis blasones. / Bohemia provincia ilustre […] / es mi patria quien la selva / Ercinia en diversos bosques / ciñe en forma de muralla. […] / Esta selva inculta pues, / de prodigios y horrores, / segunda madre de mi infancia, / porque sus hijos me informen / el denuedo y la fiereza, / segunda vez concibiome / en las robustas entrañas / de sus espantosas montes.

69 Calderón & Coello (2013: 63–64):

> DUQUE Quieté la inferior Alsacia / que de algunos electores / movida contra el Imperio / alzaba sus escuadrones. / Desposeí al Palatino / del Rín, cuyo pecho enorme / desterrado de Viena, / halló patrocinio en Londres. / Corté al rey de Dinamarca / las alas, que en vuelo torpe / a par del Águila de Austria, / se atrevió a los resplandores / del Sol […].

70 Rueda, for example, sees the entire monologue as loud and boastful (in Calderón & Coello, 2013: lx ff.).

71 Calderón & Coello (2013: 64–65):

> Mas la envidia, que el abrigo / del ocio infame se acoge / a fraguar viles defectos / y en las más puras acciones / su diente armó venenoso / contra mi fama, creyoles / Fernando, y en mengua mía / lisonjeó a los traidores. / Manda que las armas deje / y no esté más a mi orden / el ejército […]. / Ofendido me retiro, / desde entonces, desde entonces / un áspid mora en mi pecho, / que las entrañas me rompe, / una víbora alimenta, / cuya ponzoña se esconde / en el corazón, que apenas / de insicionada responde / a los latidos leales, / que pulsa mi sangre noble.

72 Calderón & Coello (2013: 68–69):

> DUQUE Contra el Austria, contra el mundo / mis iras al arma toquen, / que soy rayo de Bohemia, / y de los reinos atroces […]. / Ea, amigos

> valerosos, / nobles de las invasiones, / sacudid las alas libres, / soltad las pihuelas torpes […] / y porque a pesar del mundo, / de envidiosos y traidores / ostentando mi valor / en Bohemia me corone.

73 *Oxford Dictionary of English*:

> parabasis | pəˈrabəsɪs | noun (plural parabases | pəˈrabəsiːz |) (in ancient Greek comedy) a direct address to the audience, sung or chanted by the chorus on behalf of the author. • a digression in a fictional work in which the author addresses the reader.

74 Calderón & Coello (2013: 61): "CORDÓN Yo te escucho. / MARISCAL Yo te atiendo."

75 Shakespeare's arch-villain famously stages himself as morality play devil, most notably in the lines (2009: 251): "Thus, like the formal vice, Iniquity,/ I moralize two meanings in one word" (*King Richard III*, 3.1.82–3).

76 Tandoc, Lim & Ling (2018).

77 "Relaçion verdadera de la rebelion que el Duque de Frislant y Mequelburg Generalissimo de los Exerçitos Ymperiales, y Cauallero del Tuson de Oro, tenia dispuesta cometer contra la Magestad Çesarea del Emperador y demas personas Reales, y como auiendo sido descubierto fue muerto el y su confederados a manos de sus soldados en 26 de Febrero deste año de 1634" and the "Relaçion de la traiçion que Alberto Wladislao de Walenstain Duque de Mechelburg y de Fridland Generalissimo del exercito imperial, y Cavallero del Tuson de oro, avia determinado de hacer contra Su Magestad y demas personas de la casa de Austria, y como habiendo sido descubierto fue muerto prodigiosamente el y sus confederados a manos de sus soldados en 26 de febrero, Domingo de Carnestolendas de este año de 1634" (Biblioteca Nacional de España Ms. 2365 ff. 1–7 and 91–96, respectively). Titles quoted in Vega (2001: 807).

Conclusions

What has the preceding study taught us? Which are the main take-aways? Which new directions have been suggested? First of all, my study has called attention to the factual existence of a both vital and comprehensive Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture based on the complementary notions of history writing as an art and of art as a viable form of historiography. As evidenced by historical theorists' sophisticated precepts of historiographical style, literary theorists' meticulous conceptualisation of poetic verisimilitude and prosaists', poets' and dramatists' recurrence to historical characters and themes, such a culture *de facto* throve in Spain between 1550 and 1650. It was openly hybrid and exploratory in nature – combining epistemological enquiry with creativity – and it included most of the writers from the period generally studied today in addition to others who are now mostly known to specialists. Second, I believe my study has demonstrated how recognition of this culture has rather wide-ranging consequences for our understanding of the Spanish Golden Age and its cultural productions. Thus, the preceding examination of purported minor works by major authors and of major works by so-called minor writers demonstrates how the idea of a Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture indeed has the potential to challenge habitual thinking about the period. For recognising this culture not only renders visible and relevant an array of works hitherto considered obsolete and writers previously regarded as secondary, thereby potentially destabilising the balance of power between the canonical and the non-canonical. It could also throw a refreshing new light on familiar authors and classics stagnated in deadlocked interpretations, though pursuing that point lies outside the scope of the present book.[1]

However, while it presents Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture as an epistemologically speaking rather homogeneous group of cultural products, the preceding study has also elucidated some interesting and not entirely unexpected dividing lines within what may be termed the aesthetic-historical corpus. We have, for example, seen how theorists of history consistently held the embellishment of historiographical discourse in check even as they answered to Páez de Castro's call for plot, conscientiously drawing up the aesthetic precepts of a history writing

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that was just so delightful that truth could shine upon its readers to their moral benefit. For in the eyes of Golden Age theorists of history, a fine balance between beautiful historiographical form and true historical content indeed had to be maintained in order to keep "true" history at a safe distance from the deceitful and beguiling demimondes of fiction and rhetoric. In this view, they naturally differed from their colleagues in literary theory. For though contemporaneous theorists of literature fundamentally agreed that aesthetic (poetic and dramatic) representations of the past should teach through delight, they generally endorsed the freedom of poetic invention and challenged the rigid interpretation of Platonic epistemology which equalled poetry and rhetoric with falseness. While theorists of all stripes unwaveringly concurred with the Ciceronian idea of history as "life's schoolmaster," literary theorists namely also subscribed to Aristotle's brief but acute account of the relation between history and poetry in *Poetics* 1451 b which seemed to prioritise poets' potentialistic or hypothetical writing of history (as the narrative of what this or that historical person would or could have said or done, being the kind of person that he or she was) over the historian's factual account of what the person actually did say or do. Literary theorists hereby implicitly problematised the notion of an immutable transcendent truth to which the period's theorists of history all essentially adhered (even if the most baroque among them underscored the essential falseness of all human histories compared with the universal history revealed in Scripture). Thus, the challenge went two ways, as it were. For in their preoccupation with truth, writers of the *artes historicae* were suspicious of the creative notion of style which literary theorists saw as the basis of potentialistic historical representation. Or rather, they wanted style to be as un-stylish as possible in order not to steal the scene and obfuscate truth. This notable difference spilled over into the period's aesthetic-historical practices, with each type of theorists in broad terms theorising their own branch of the Golden Age poetics of history. Thus, on the backdrop of the preceding discussions of various concrete aesthetic-historical products, a tentative but not unequivocal variance can be established between writers of historical prose, who tended to employ aesthetic devices as a means to enhance the truthfulness of their narratives, and authors of historical poetry and historical drama who used similar devices to explore potential truths.

Thus, while the two cases of historical prose examined in the first section together present a somewhat muddled picture of how the precepts laid out in *artes historicae* were practically applied or reflected in contemporaneous histories, they also share important characteristics not the least when compared with the more traditionally "aesthetic" forms of Golden Age historiography or, better, the texts from the other end of the aesthetic-historical spectrum. In Mariana's *General History of Spain*, skilful construction of the argument and exemplarity took clear

precedence over factual accuracy. There was no little poetic licence involved in the Jesuit's fabrication of letters and harangues and the dry facts of history were certainly weaved into a delightfully readable allegorical narrative. At the same time, however, the historian had his eyes firmly fixed on the edifying message conveyed through this narrative, namely the moral truth about the birth, fall and rebirth of the Spanish nation which his historiographical style served exactly to communicate and exalt but which it was certainly not supposed to overshadow. In a kindred but different sense, Miguel de Luna's *True History* also fixated on its own truth value though its implied notion of truth was not exactly moral but instead what may for the lack of a better term be called factual: Competently mimicking the scientific language of humanist scholars, Luna clearly aimed to produce an impression of veracity in the sense of being true to facts, of being accurate. In his self-appointedly "true" history, authenticity takes pride of place yet the particularly interesting thing about his text is of course that the very basis of its purported truthfulness is, precisely, a lie: The new-found manuscript. In this sense, the *True History* is, epistemologically speaking, a more ambiguous work than the *General History* – one which approximates the aesthetic-historical products of contemporaneous poets and dramatists and which despite the author's considerable efforts to the contrary effect was presumably understood by his contemporaries as a work of fiction. Nevertheless, while the two writers of historical prose literature discussed in the preceding study thus evidently had widely differing takes on the Golden Age art of history, they both essentially answered to a historiographical convention which regarded the pursuit of an immutable transcendent truth as the hallmark of history writing and saw style as a means to approach this truth. This did not mean that they looked down on style or had no regard for the power of words (which they certainly had). They simply had a different agenda and perhaps also a different – more philosophical – temper.

Turning to the historiography of Golden Age lyrical and epic poets there are, again, important differences between the examined cases but there are certainly also notable similarities, especially when compared with the parts of the aesthetic-historical corpus which more explicitly paraded as historiographical. In the poetic historiography of the period, we everywhere recognise literary theorists' emphasis on the creative aspect of history writing which must remove itself from dry facts and embrace the realm of the "verisimilar" to explore the complex human motives, feelings and emotions which drive the wheels of history in appealing narratives. Thus, in Juan de la Cueva's *Phoebean Chorus and Historical Ballads*, the role of poetic imagination in the writing of history was notable. While the poet – just like the historical prosaists discussed in the preceding chapters – deals with the medieval period of Spanish history, his emphasis is on exploration rather than

on any abstract notion of truth. Indeed, Cueva's historical balladry is consciously conceived as an alternative form of history writing and in some respects as directly opposed to the historians' approach. Whereas these pursued an abstract absolute truth, the poet's business is expressly described in the collection's prologue as an accessible, popular, emotionally engaging form of historiography. Its underlying notion of truth cannot be exhaustively or even satisfactorily described as either factual or moral, though it is affiliated to the latter through its emphasis on virtue. Imaginatively exploring the thoughts and feelings of a historical character from a distant period of time, it emphatically courts the potential or hypothetical type of truth attributed to poets' historical mimesis by Aristotle in the *Poetics*. The same holds true of Lope de Vega's *Dragontea* albeit in a different and more radical sense. For the Fénix does not contend himself with exploring alternative – emotional, spiritual, psychological – truths. As we have seen, he raises the stakes and launches his historical epic as a provocative, self-confident and indeed polemical counterhistory which looks royal chroniclers straight in the eye challenging their official accounts. In Lope's poetic history of the transatlantic phase of the Anglo-Spanish War, there is no beating about the bush, no underplayed modesty or humbling before the authority of chroniclers, as there arguably was in Cueva who duly addressed historiographical conventions in his prologue. While the epic poet is of course aware that he is not penning a traditional chronicle, he clearly conceives his poem as a history communicating a higher truth. Indeed, with its visionary allegorical and eschatological framing of historical events from a bird's-eye perspective, the Drake epic approximates the moral notion of truth dominating Mariana's history with which it also shares the preference for invented speeches. Yet, in contradistinction to the author of the *General History*, Lope embeds his history in ambiguity inserting an extended passage on the unreliability of dreams and visions which threatens to undermine the whole historiographical edifice of the epic in its capacity, exactly, as a vision: A personal visualisation or reimagining of history on the part of the poem's ever-present poetic "I."

Finally, the two examples of dramatic historiography discussed project yet a third image of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture, complementing those provided by the period's historical prose and historical poetry. Again, there are obvious differences from one playwright to the other, notably in the degree of comicality applied to historical characters, but these turn into minor variances when compared with both the prose histories' pursuit of an immutable transcendent truth and the rather demonstrative inversion or dismantling of this notion of truth in the period's poetic historiography. Indeed, even more than the poets, Golden Age playwrights can be seen – Aristotle in hand – to explore the realm of potentiality in its own right or independently of the Platonic imperative to pursue an immutable transcendent truth. Their history plays do

not present alternative histories or counterhistories polemically refuting official histories as did the lyrical and epic historiography of their predecessors. They are virtual avatars of history, bringing historical characters back to life on the stage and re-enacting historical events before the audience. Indeed, the scenic medium provided dramatic historiography with a "true-to-lifeness" unequalled by any other form of Golden Age history writing and yet this hyperreal quality simultaneously pushed the problem of historical understanding to extremes: With history not scrutinised calmly in writing but happening here and now – in real time, as it were – before the eyes of the spectators, it became even more murky and difficult to interpret and assess. Thus, though Vélez and Calderón obviously made history come alive in very different ways they both conjured up a decidedly undecided past, with the one emulating Cervantine irony and the other employing a subtle doublespeak to make way for ambiguity. The character studies which take centre stage in both their plays consequently present themselves not so much as alternative historical images rivalling the flattering ones of contemporaneous hagiography and the derogatory ones summoned in the period's propaganda, respectively. They are, rather, tantalising surrogates of the real staging historical individuals whose desires and motives the plays' spectators must seek to decipher like those of any other live human being standing before them in real life. As such a physical encounter with the past, Golden Age historical drama obviously did not present stable historical figures carved in marble but versatile individuals who with their very physical presence on the stage made it difficult to pass a definitive (or even a quick) judgement on them or on their actions. In Vélez's tongue-in-cheek staging of the ideological mastermind behind the Catholic Monarchs in *The Conquest of Oran*, for example, the historical character of Cardinal Cisneros appears as a highly paradoxical figure – at one and the same time virtue incarnate and an idealist madman. Owing to the playwright's ingenious grafting of quixotic idealism onto concomitant Cisneros hagiography, both interpretations of Vélez' main character become possible and are indeed suggested as complementary. This openness, in turn, has profound consequences for the play's dramatic historiography not only of the cardinal's life but also, by extension, of the cultural-religious-political programme of the Catholic Monarchs which he largely ideated and which consequently appears as a spiritual quest equally admirable and mentally deranged. Similarly, at the end of *The German Prodigy*, Calderón and Coello's protagonist appears as an intriguing enigma defying the vulgar villain-hero dualism and thus challenging the audience's habitual cognitive categories. This ambiguity, in turn, casts a disturbing light on the contemporaneous political world of power struggles, intrigues and conspiracy which the dramatists depict as backdrop of the Wallenstein affair, turning the play into a thoroughly double-tongued news report which simultaneously stays true to the official

record of the generalissimo's death and challenges it by asking the deceptively simple question why he became traitor.

There is thus an identifiable spectrum of notions of truth in the Golden Age aesthetic-historical corpus, ranging from the immutable transcendent Truth of Platonic epistemology over alternative truths and counter-truths to the verisimilitude of Aristotelian poetics. However, although they had different ideas of what was true, all the authors discussed in the preceding study and all the theorists studied unvaryingly, albeit to varying degrees and in various ways, operated a fluid continuum of literature and historiography developing an array of novel concepts and a range of advanced aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices in order to conceptualise and represent that endlessly fascinating but ever-elusive thing – the past. Their endeavours catered to a contemporaneous audience with an apparently insatiable appetite for histories: For epic relations of victorious Roman armies, gruesome tales of monstruous medieval rulers, exotic accounts of the destinies of foreign dynasties, heroic reports of Spanish triumphs in the New World and informative news reports from ungoing European wars. Yet, beyond the essential success of many products of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture, we may wonder about their educational value: Were they any good, historiographically speaking? Did people actually learn anything from them, as prescribed by the *historia magistra vitae* tradition, or were they mainly entertained? Did the authors succeed in combining the useful and the delightful to the moral benefit of their audiences? Or were they, in fact, more misguiding than guiding – a Golden Age version of modern-day alternative facts?

As stated in the introduction, the main conceptual claim this study makes is that although the period's aesthetic-historical products may later have been marginalised as the obsolete remnants of an unsophisticated pre-historicist approach to the past, they were all but the fabulous "other" of a progressing culture of facts, misbegotten or premature specimens of a modern historiography by then still *in nuce*. They were, to the contrary, vital to the dissemination of reflective attitudes towards history in this major European context. Obviously, then, the answer to the last of the above questions is a resounding "no": Although they may bear a superficial similarity to both, Golden Age aesthetic-historical products were generally a far cry from both the radical relativism of modern-day alternative facts and the mischievous manipulations of fake news. Indeed, as the preceding study has hopefully demonstrated, their historiographical refinement and epistemological sophistication served precisely to stimulate reflection on historical truth and further historical understanding, not to wilfully deceive or subvert the notion of truth. Authors generally sought to stimulate readers' awareness of the form-giving aspect of history writing because they recognised its importance for the story being told: In an epistemological paradigm where knowledge was

an art, there was no such thing as unmediated truth. Nevertheless, my study suggests a dividing line between, on the one hand, Golden Age aesthetic-historical authors and theorists whose pedagogical take on history writing was principally that it should lead readers to accept a proposed truth about historical characters or events and who considered style an acceptable and efficient means to achieve that end; and, on the other hand, contemporaneous authors and theorists who shared an, as it were, maieutic notion of historiography as a practice which should encourage the audience to re-think such proposed truths or imagine other ones, and who considered style a proficient vehicle of what could *ante terminem* be termed critical thinking.

With their masterful exploitation of an impressive array of aesthetic devices Golden Age historical prose works, for example, no doubt heightened readers' awareness of the rhetorical aspect of historiography. Yet stimulating reflection on the art of history or nourishing meta-historical thinking was not their main purpose or even a desired end. Golden Age histories first of all exploited historiographical style in order to convey truth. Style served the argument. Precisely as prescribed by the *historia magistra vitae* tradition informing contemporaneous historiography and theory of history, historical prosaists sought to impart truth through the medium of a moderately beautiful historiographical language. Though it depended on the potentially problematic premise that the historian would not intentionally deceive or manipulate the audience, the perception of Golden Age historical prosaists and theorists of history was evidently that historical narratives helped enlighten and reform their audiences and that the historiographer only worked language so as to make it reveal a truth most nourishing and beneficial in the best way possible. Thus, in his historical narrative about the fall of Spain in book 6 of the *General History of Spain*, Juan de Mariana united a strong sense of the aesthetic mechanisms of "the good story" with a relentless quest for the transcendental moral significance of the Muslim invasion and the fall of the Visigoth kingdom. Similarly, as signalled in its very title, Miguel de Luna's *True History* fundamentally claimed to be true and sought to persuade readers of its authenticity even as it played ostensibly with the notion of truth and coquetted with what we would perceive as a world of alternative facts. Luna's history of Arab Spain employed aesthetic devices precisely in order to conceal its subtle poetics of history, seeking to win readers over by mimicking authenticity. At the same time, however, its massive reliance on the "found manuscript" topos unmasked authenticity itself as a literary convention and the work thus suggests the notable rhetorical element in the Golden Age *ars historica*, approaching the aesthetic-historical products of poets and dramatists.

These, for their part, explored the realm of the verisimilar with the aim of stimulating reflective attitudes towards history: With their admission of the potential and the hypothetical, they implicitly but unmistakably

questioned hegemonic interpretations of historical truth and employed a range of aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices in order to make their audiences do the same. In creating their thought-provoking reimaginations of the past, they had backing from contemporaneous literary theorists who unanimously defended poets' right to creatively reimagine the real as long as their reimaginings had a higher purpose: While Golden Age theorists of literature conceived this purpose quite unequivocally as a moral one, concomitant poets and dramatists seemed to interpret it more in the vein of Aristotle who, in the by now familiar passage of the *Poetics*, described poetry as a discourse occupied with "the universal" and therefore "more philosophical and elevated" than history. What exactly went into the Golden Age understanding of "the universal" is not entirely clear, of course. However, on the backdrop of the preceding discussions of different Golden Age aesthetic-historical products, I would like to venture the qualified guess that it referred to the ideas of potentiality, openness and creativity cultivated by poets and dramatists of the period as a countermove not only to the uninspiring, unphilosophical compilation of "many truths" allegedly characterising earlier historians' accounts but also to the related notion of an immutable transcendent truth dominating the *artes historicae* and (most of) the period's historical prose.

Thus, with his historical balladry, Juan de la Cueva aimed precisely to make his imagined mass audience reflect critically on the *reconquista* and key ideas connected with it, such as "the hero," "the enemy" and "valour," presenting the other side to the traditional good-male-Christians-fighting-bad-male-Moors image. Going one step further, in his historical epic about the death of Francis Drake, Lope de Vega not only urged his readers to question both foreign and national accounts of the Anglo-Spanish War; he also suggested the illusory quality of his own poetic historiography, pondering the fictional nature of all human history, factual as well as imaginative, and the pertaining need for the audience of history to exercise its common sense and sound judgement. Staging the rise of the Golden Age during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs in his history play about the life of Francisco de Cisneros, Luis Vélez de Guevara asked the audience of his own time, when Spanish expansionist politics was seriously challenged in numerous ways, to think critically about this key period in national history and its historical consequences for the audience's own present. Finally, in their news report from the ongoing Thirty Years' War, Pedro Calderón de la Barca and Antonio Coello presented a highly equivocal account of the intriguing Wallenstein affair, stimulating their audience's critical thinking about the mysterious death of the general and, by extension, about the validity of intelligence reports and the truthfulness of official historiographical accounts. To complete their aporetic picture of concomitant high politics, they made sure to emphasise the fictional nature of their own dramatic "news script."

Returning to the above questions concerning the epistemological profile of Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture and its products, I think it is safe to conclude that, whether they relied on a top-down *bona fide* idea of pedagogy or a maieutic such activating the audience's latent critical competencies, the period's authors developed and employed advanced aesthetic, rhetorical and performative devices precisely with the aim of educating their audiences. Whether they conceived of education as moral or as cognitive, their historiographical refinement and epistemological sophistication served precisely to stimulate reflection on historical truth and further historical understanding, not to wilfully deceive or subvert the notion of truth. Concomitant theorists of all stripes were definitely on the same page. That history was an art and that historiographical form was, consequently, inseparable from historical content by no means entailed that it renounced on conveying truth. So everyone agreed.

This, I believe, is an important point in relation to current scepticist tendencies in the theory of history and historical culture to which the present study owes a great deal even as it also dissociates itself from them in central respects. As Carlo Ginzburg has noted, modern scepticist trends in historiography originally surged as a relevant response to nineteenth-century scientific optimism and the positivistic idea of knowledge as a passive reflection of reality.[2] However, they have tended to develop into a mere negative mirror image of the epistemology they confronted, ultimately only affirming an unproductive truth/no-truth binary. For as the Italian intellectual historian acutely observes, historical recognition is neither unproblematic nor impossible, neither all constructivistic nor all scientific: "Knowledge (even historical knowledge) is possible," but it has an imaginative element.[3] It is – so my study of the prehistory of modern historiography suggests – a Benjaminian approximation to truth through style, through form; an at once exhausting and inspiring walk through Anthony Grafton's "frightening, demon-haunted labyrinths of historical writing, ancient and modern, trustworthy and falsified" in which the historian must exercise both inventiveness and reason.[4]

As the preceding pages have hopefully demonstrated, Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture projects an idea of historical knowledge similar to the one informing the thinking of the three just cited modern intellectual historians and philosophers: An idea of history as a grey zone characterised neither by epistemological naïveté nor by scepticism but by a combination of epistemological enquiry and creativity. The fact that this culture conceived of history writing as an art and of art as a viable form of historiography did not equal a renunciation on producing truth and furthering historical knowledge. Far from it, actually. It implied an enhanced awareness of the intricate interplay of historiographical form and historical content not unlike what Ginzburg terms the historian's necessary attention to "the specific distortion of every specific source."

For as historical recognition was, in Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture, neither a transparent process nor an impasse, but a creative approximation, an *ars*, the devil was in the detail: In the acute attention to how precisely history was written – using which type of words and applying which generic paradigms, accentuating which elements of the historical raw material and so on – and in the linking of "these specific distortions" to the embedding historical context.

As such a "form-sensitive" historical paradigm, I believe Golden Age aesthetic-historical culture holds an important lesson for a post-historicist world (not post-factual, for how can the world be beyond facts?) currently struggling with the scepticist chimeras known as alternative facts and fake news. At least the preceding demonstration of how reflectives attitudes towards history writing were stimulated through Golden Age historical prosaists', poets' and dramatists' transformation of their audiences into reflective and indeed potentially critical consumers of history would seem to suggest that the most effective answer to current scepticist tendencies may be to cultivate problem-oriented, audience-involving approaches to history like the ones found in the examined texts. Perhaps it is, once again, time to learn from history?

Notes

1 I submit to pilot studies I have made which back this claim. See, e.g., Kluge (2017, 2018, and 2019b).

2 See Ginzburg's description of this development:

> Last century the enthusiasm for scientific and technological progress translated itself into an image of knowledge (including the historiographical) hinging on the passive reflection of reality. In our own century an analogous enthusiasm has emphasized, instead, the active, constructive elements of knowledge.
>
> (1999: 25)

3 Ginzburg (1999: 25):

> […] But my disagreement with skeptical relativism should not deceive anyone. The idea that sources, if reliable, offer immediate access to reality, or at least to one face of reality, seems to me equally rudimentary. Sources are neither open windows, as the positivists believe, nor fences obstructing vision, as the skeptics hold: if anything, we could compare them to distorting mirrors. The analysis of the specific distortion of every specific source already implies a constructive element. But construction […] is not incompatible with proof; the projection of desire, without which there is no research, is not incompatible with the refutation inflicted by the principle of reality. Knowledge (even historical knowledge) is possible.

4 Grafton (2007: 26).

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