

ARREDONDO, María Soledad, **Literatura y Propaganda en Tiempo de Quevedo: guerras y plumas contra Francia, Cataluña y Portugal**. Madrid y Frankfurt, Biblioteca Aurea Hispánica, 2011, 378 págs., ISBN: 978-8-48489-549-7.

*Plumas teñidas* (or «hired pens») — this was the term Baltasar Gracián used to describe the political writers featured in this book. He also dismissed these writers as «gaceteros y relacioneros, todos materiales muy mecánicos, sin fondo de juicio ni altanerías de ingenio.» (Baltasar Gracián, *El Criticón, cri iv, en Obras Completa, ed. Arturo del Hoyo, Madrid 1960, 2: 151*).

Gracián exaggerates, as one of these «plumas teñidas» was none other than Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas, a writer whose *ingenio* and *juicio* is not in doubt. Nor, I imagine, is that of Pedro Calderón de la Barca, who took the time off from his dramatic works to draft a polemic in support of the mo-

narchy during the Catalan Revolt. Almost in the same category was Diego de Saavedra y Fajardo, arguably one of the most original and important political thinkers of seventeenth-century Spain, but also someone who, together with Quevedo, did not hesitate to write pamphlets and polemics supporting of the policies of Philip IV and his controversial *privado*, Count-Duke of Olivares. In contrast, Gracián's definition perfectly describes Gonzalo Céspedes y Meneses, a historian of dubious quality who Olivares enlisted to write a noxious polemic directed at France. And it almost certainly applies to another of Olivares's hacks, José Pellicer de Tovar, another historian who parti-

culated in the war of words against France and who figures centrally in this important new book.

Modern scholarship on Pellicer, together with the other writers who worked for Olivares began with José María Jover's *1635: Historia de una polémica y semblanza de una generación*, first published in 1949 and re-issued in 2003. In this now classic study Jover examined the exchange of printed pamphlets —what María Soledad Arredondo labels a «guerra de papel»— that accompanied the actually war that erupted between Spain and France in June, 1635. Inspired in part by Olivares's ideas of using history as a weapon to «mortify» Spain's enemies, Quevedo fired the opening salvo in this conflict with the publication of two scurrilous broadsides, one directed at Richelieu, the other at Louis XIII. Richelieu's formidable *cabinet de presse* promptly returned fire with pamphlets of their own, and it was not long before this skirmish mushroomed into a full-scale battle, with writers in both capitals publishing all manner of broadsides, pamphlets, even lengthy treatises lambasting the motivations of the enemy as both unchristian and unjust while upholding the righteousness of their own cause.

From the outset, however, it was never quite clear which audience, domestic or foreign, this kind of propagandistic writing was trying to reach. In the spring of 1635, Olivares created a special Junta de Cronistas charged with drafting a history demonstrating the perfidiousness and treachery of both Richelieu and the French monarchy. The Junta never completed this work, but had planned to publish it in several languages, including Latin, Italian, and French in the hope of at-

tracting an international readership. In contrast, the pamphleteers doing battle with France wrote in their native language. Those in Paris did so as well, a stand-off which suggests that their pamphlets constituted propaganda aimed primarily at a domestic audience and which was designed to rally popular support for the actual war being fought with bullets and steel.

*Literatura y propaganda...* addresses too little attention to the question of audience. This lacuna can be partly attributed to the lack of archival sources documenting the publication and distribution of the materials this paper war entailed. Many pamphlets only circulated in manuscript, while those that were printed generally appeared in limited editions and often without official license. In some cases, it is even difficult to determine their place of publication. Take Pellicer's *Defensa de España y contra las calumnias de Francia* (1635), a treatise Arredondo analyzes at length. Its *portada* wants the reader to believe that the pamphlet was printed in Venice, «con licencia,» although its failure to include the name of the printer has rightly led to speculation that it was some kind of «pirated» edition, more likely to have been printed in Madrid than in Italy. Technical analysis of the pamphlet's paper and ink might resolve this issue, but assuming, as I do, that the Venetian imprint was essentially a ruse, why would Pellicer, together with Olivares, resort to such tactic? This question is one this volume does not ask.

Its agenda is rather in keeping with Arredondo's previous publications on the topic of political propaganda during the reign of Philip IV. Literature of this kind is one that specialists in Golden Age literature had traditionally ignored,

and in this respect Arredondo is something of a pioneer as she has rightly emphasized the importance of this kind of writing together with the diversity and quality of the authors involved. In this study Arredondo goes one step further and elevates political writing into a full-fledged literary genre, one she defines as «literatura de combate» (p. 73). Following Jover, her starting point is the paper war directed at France, but she broadens the conflict to include the polemics associated with other crises, notably the revolts of Cataluña and Portugal, each of which are treated in separate sections of the book. Another is devoted to Diego de Saavedra y Fajardo, especially his *Locuras de Europa* and *Suspiros de Francia*, two treatises especially designed to influence the diplomatic interchanges leading up to the Peace of Münster in 1648.

As for the writers who engaged in these literary skirmishes, Quevedo, as book's title suggests, receives the most attention, and deservedly so, as he was clearly the most talented author in the literary stable of the Count-Duke. Pellicer is also featured, together with Adam de la Parra, Francisco de Rioja and Calderón. In contrast, Virgilio Malvezzi, a writer favored by both Olivares and Philip IV, makes only a cameo appearance in a short chapter devoted to *La Libra*, his controversial account of the Spanish victory at Fuenterrabia. Notably absent is Juan Antonio Vera y Figueroa, Conde de la Roca, another prolific polemicist and one whose *Il miglior giglio de Francia*, published in 1640, offered one of the sharpest—and since it was translated into French, probably most widely disseminated—of all the critiques directed at Louis XIII.

Of particular interest is the section analyzing the rhetorical techniques these writers deployed. Arredondo compares Malvezzi's «tacitista» style with Pellicer's «ampulosidad» (p. 110) and contrasts the measured, «sobrio» style of Calderón de la Barca used in his *Conclusión defendido por un soldado del campo de Tarragona del ciego furor de Cataluña*, with the verbosity of Adam de la Parra's *Súplica... de Tortosa* and the brilliance of the biting satire coming from Quevedo's pen. Other rhetorical techniques included «amplificación,» repetition, hyperbole, and what Arredondo describes as «omisión interesada,» which I interpret to mean the deliberate omission of certain facts, notably those that might compromise the argument these authors were trying to make. Such techniques can be found in most works of propaganda, both present and past, and their origins date back to antiquity. They are best approached through Michel Rambaud's *L'art de la déformation historique dans les Commentaires de César* (Paris, 1953), a work Arredondo does not cite but might have been used to deepen her understanding of the manner in which the writers examined in this study went about their work.

My chief reservation concerns Arredondo's somewhat one-sided approach to this «literature of combat.» By her own definition, this literature involves a competitive give-and-take as each side in the battle responds to the other. In the process the rhetoric becomes increasingly shrill, the charges and counter-charges ever more dire. As a result, it is difficult to understand the arguments launched by one combatant without examining those of the other, but in this study Arredondo fo-

cuses primarily on the writers allied with the Spanish crown. With respect, for example, to the polemical literature surrounding the revolt of the Catalans, the only insurgent treatise examined is Gaspar Sala i Berart's *Proclamación católica* (1642). No mention is made of Sala's other writings, let alone the pamphlets of Josep Çarroza and other Catalan writers. In contrast, the work of Adam de la Parra, Calderón, Rioja, Quevedo, and Pellicer, all of whom wrote in support of the monarchy, re-

ceive detailed treatment. Arredondo's handling of the literature surrounding the Portuguese revolt is similarly biased. But this is the only short-coming in a volume that otherwise offers a wealth of and invaluable insights into the manner in which literature was pressed into the service of politics at the crucial moment in Spain's history. At the same time, it suggests that a re-evaluation of those writers who Gracián summarily dismissed as «plumas teñidas» is long overdue.

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