PROJECT MUSE®

MASCULINITY, WAR, AND PURSUIT OF GLORY IN SEPÚLVEDA'S *GONZALO*

Luna Nájera

University of Illinois–Chicago

ABSTRACT The *Dialogus de appetenda gloria qui inscribitur Gonsalus* (1523) is Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda's first reflection on the moral aspects of war. In it, he addresses whether it is morally licit for Christians to desire worldly honor and glory, a question that Christian mystics, Irenicists, and humanists like Desiderius Erasmus and Juan Luis Vives posed in writings through which they sought to renew and reform spiritual practices in Christendom. Their skepticism was linked to a larger doubt over the compatibility of Christian principles that commanded men to love one another and the state's injunction to kill one's fellow man. In redressing those concerns, Sepúlveda advances a theory that embraces the pursuit of glory and that serves as the foundation for his justificatory theories of war in subsequent writings. His discourse on glory accommodates social mobility, simultaneously inscribing a martial moral code on the terrain of the masculine self and the male body.

Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (ca. 1490–1573) earned the reputation of tireless apologist for the Spanish Conquest with a polemical defense of the Spanish military enterprise in America, the infamous *Apología en favor del libro sobre las justas causas de la guerra*.¹ The present study of Sepúlveda's theory of war

I am grateful to Robert Folger, whose collegial support and written work has greatly enriched my understanding of the relationship between theories of subjectivity and early modern theories of perception. Tom Digby's work on masculinity and his steadfast friendship have been invaluable. Lastly, this article has benefited enormously from feedback from the anonymous referees of the *Hispanic Review*.

1. *Apologia Ioannis Genesisii Sepulvedae pro libro de Iustis belli causis* (Romae 1550).

focuses on the much earlier *Gonzalo, diálogo sobre la apetencia de gloria*,² where he lays out the moral foundation of the war doctrines that he develops in four later works: *Exhortación a la guerra contra los Turcos*, the *Demócrates primero o Diálogo sobre la compatibilidad entre la milicia y la religión cristiana*, the *Demócrates segundo o de las justas causas de la guerra contra los indios*, and the aforementioned *Apología*.³ A seminal work in Sepúlveda's political treatises, the *Gonzalo* has attracted very little scholarly attention, despite the fact that in it the Spanish humanist articulates a moral basis for the practice of war by Christians.⁴ In addition to tracing the theoretical grounds upon which Sepúlveda claims that the pursuit of glory is a moral virtue, this examination of the *Gonzalo* highlights the model of masculinity that underpins his moral code. Further, this study calls attention to the ways in which Sepúlveda's discourse on glory responded to a set of social tensions arising from Spain's status as a hegemonic force.

An ambitious man, Sepúlveda came from exceedingly humble origins. He was the son of a tanner and a descendant of a family of *cristianos viejos* from Córdoba. A paragon of the early modern *homo novus*, he climbed the social ladder, exemplifying, to borrow the language of Cervantes in *Don Quijote*, the ultimate embodiment of man as *hijo de sus obras*. Although Sepúlveda's origins were simple, he nonetheless attended the Universidad de Alcalá for three years, where he cultivated an important relationship with its founder, the Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Castile, Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436–1517). Cisneros wrote a letter of recommendation for him that earned him entry into the *Colegio Mayor de San Clemente de los Españoles de Bolonia* in 1515. The *Colegio* was a Spanish outpost in the Papal States known for its strengths in canonical law and theology. Like other *colegios* and universities at the time, the *Colegio* did more than educate its graduates; it introduced them into a kind of brotherhood that facilitated their entry into royal posts in the Iberian and Italian peninsulas. The students of the *Colegio* were

2. *Dialogus de appetenda gloria qui inscribitur Gonsalus* (Romae 1523).

3. *Cohortatio ad Carolum V, imperatorem invictissimum, ut facta cum Christianis pace bellum suscipiat in Turcas* (Bononiae 1529), *De conuenientia militaris disciplinae cum Christiana religione dialogus qui inscribitur Democrates* (Romae 1535), and *Democrates secundus, siue de iustis belli causis* (written in 1545, published in 1892).

4. In addition to the comprehensive work on Sepúlveda by Ángel Losada, his biographer, the few studies on the *Gonzalo* include those of both Antonio Espigares Pinilla and Juan Jesús Abril Valverde cited in the bibliography. For a general introduction to Sepúlveda's political theories see Francisco Castilla Urbano and Luis Patiño Palafox.

no exception: they formed part of a close-knit community of scholars, and upon graduating, their ties to one another helped them gain access to bureaucratic posts. After immigrating to Bologna at the age of 25 in 1515, Sepúlveda spent the next 21 years of his life in Italy. Throughout his career, Sepúlveda enlisted the patronage of prominent figures, including cardinals, royal councilors, bishops, ambassadors, and other members of noble families. Among his most noteworthy patrons were the Governor-General of the Netherlands (1567–1573), the tyrannical Duke of Alba (Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, Third Duke of Alba, 1507–1582), and the descendants of the subject of the dialogue under consideration, Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba.

The name of the principal interlocutor in Sepúlveda's dialogue is Gonzalo, a nobleman who was widely recognized among his contemporaries for helping to reconquer Granada in 1492 and for acquiring the Kingdom of Naples on Spain's behalf in 1503. His military achievements unfolded on Italian soil and, in Sepúlveda's view, his actions were living proof of the congruous interrelation of martial life and Catholicism. Such was the fame of this Spanish conqueror's military accomplishments in southern Italy that his actions earned him the nickname, *el Gran Capitán*. As the Spanish historian René Quatrefages points out, he was the general who carried out military reforms during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs that made the Spanish military forces almost unbeatable (65–68). In short, Gonzalo was the epitome of the Spanish conqueror, whose military feats at home and abroad contributed to launching Catholic Spain into the theatre of world politics. Sepúlveda renders homage to Gonzalo by naming the dialogue after him and dedicating it to the captain's only daughter, Elvira de Córdoba, Duchess of Sessa, along with her husband, Luis de Córdoba, ambassador of Charles V in the Holy See (1522–1526).

Taking into account Sepúlveda's humble origins, it is reasonable to presume that he would have been deeply invested in writing about the institutions of power that allowed him to ascend the social ladder. It is thus not at all surprising that his writings concentrated on governance and on the multiple dimensions of the art of war. For example, as late as 1571, when Sepúlveda had long since fulfilled his responsibility as Prince Philip's tutor (the future Philip II), he dedicated a treatise on government to Philip II in a work entitled *Acerca de la monarquía*.⁵ Therein, Sepúlveda draws on Aristotle's moral

5. *De regno et regis officio* (Lérida 1571).

philosophy to characterize the ideal type of government and the appropriate use of war. Observing that war is a natural part of human life, Sepúlveda notes that it is sometimes necessary to wage it to secure peace. As in his *Acerca de la monarquía*, in the *Gonzalo* Sepúlveda championed Spanish militarism, elaborating the theoretical foundations that would contribute toward sustaining the hegemony of the Spanish Empire amidst challenges to its power in the wake of the Protestant Reformation, the conflict between the Church and the emerging secular modern state, and the contestation over Spain's claims in America.

In his reappraisal of Sepúlveda's work, Jaime González-Rodríguez calls attention to the cultural environment in which the Spanish humanist moved. In Spanish-occupied Italy there was criticism of Spain's dominance in the peninsula and, as Sepúlveda himself reports in the preface of one of his later writings on war, the *Demócrates primero*, a wave of skepticism toward the compatibility between militarism and Christianity arose among the Spanish aristocrats who studied at the *Colegio* in 1530s Bologna. Their greatest concern, says Sepúlveda, was their belief that being valorous military combatants was incompatible with being true Christians (134). González-Rodríguez rightly notes that in addition to the *Gonzalo*, Sepúlveda's publication of a biography of the Spanish Cardinal Gil Álvarez Carrillo de Albornoz (1302?–1367), *Historia de los hechos del Cardenal Gil de Albornoz*,⁶ would have aroused the ire of many Italians. The founder of the *Colegio de San Clemente* in Bologna (ca. 1365), Albornoz pacified Italy for the popes and, acting as military leader and papal statesman, paved the way for bringing the papacy back to Rome from Avignon (Clough 227). A man of the Church and a warrior, Albornoz, like Gonzalo, embodied the harmonious melding of militarism with Christian faith.

For González-Rodríguez, Sepúlveda's publication of works championing Spanish militarism in an environment hostile to Spanish dominion suggests that he was "un intelectual comprometido" who wrote out of the conviction that "la grandeza del escritor está en atreverse a salir de su gabinete para combatir por la verdad" (225). Indeed, Sepúlveda was a combative intellectual, yet rather than read his commitment as a courageous espousal of truth, his engagement in polemics with figures like Erasmus and the Dominican

6. *Liber gestorum Aegidii Albornotii* (Bononiae 1521), *Historia de los hechos de Don Gil de Albornoz* (Trans. Antonio Vela, Toledo 1566).

friar Bartolomé de las Casas can be viewed as his performance of an ideal of masculinity that was not unusual among humanists. The moral code that Sepúlveda articulated in the *Gonzalo* was grounded in a model of masculinity to which he himself was subjected as an intellectual.

Sepúlveda as Gladiator in the Republic of Letters

Juan Gil cites Desiré Nisard's assertion that humanists were "los gladiadores de la República de las Letras" in his contextualization of Sepúlveda's polemics with other humanists. Prone to fighting among themselves, he says, it was not uncommon for humanists to hurl insults at one another over the most minor of matters: "en vez de sangre, corría tinta, pero era una tinta envenenada, repleta de dicterios y hasta obscenidades con el único fin de estigmatizar al adversario hundiéndolo en el escandalo más absoluto" (103). Ruth Mazo Karras's study of masculinities in fourteenth-century Europe includes a discussion of the model of masculinity to which young men of letters would aspire in their transition from boyhood to manhood. Her insights can illuminate Gil's observation about the ferociousness that characterized humanists' confrontations. While her examination of masculinity focuses on the period just previous to Sepúlveda's career, her insights about how men established their manhood in the court, the university, and the workshop are germane to providing a gender-conscious understanding of the subject position from which the *Gonzalo* emanates.

Karras demonstrates that although knights, university students, and artisans operated in different social spaces, they all "proved their masculinity in competition with other men" (10). In other words, men sought to establish "a place in the hierarchy from which they could master other men" (151), demonstrating that while women operated as a signifying factor in proving the masculinity of knights, men generally defined themselves in relation to other men (11). She points out that for university men, masculinity was determined by the use of the intellect to dominate other men (67). In contrast to the aristocratic knightly masculinity, university men moved in a world without women, in which proving one's manhood rested on the mastery of disputation, defined in terms of the use of Aristotelian logic. Instead of training to fight with arms, university men learned to participate in "ceremonial combats" that required proficiency in "argumentation according to fixed rules" (91). As Karras puts it, "the academic structure of attack and

defense provided a forum for the demonstration of masculinity” (91). The performance of masculinity for university men thus consisted of approaching disputation as combat, employing words as weapons, and reason for gaining tactical advantage. This approach contributed to differentiating men of letters from uneducated people, whom educated men regarded as bestial. Moreover, scholastic disputation, typically in Latin, simultaneously provided a bonding mechanism among elite men (94). These attitudes and practices described by Karras continued in the early modern period, which can be ascertained from the violent tone that polemics among humanists could assume in their public and private writings.

In the particular case of Sepúlveda, his correspondence attests to the tension that characterized his attitude toward Erasmus. For example, in a letter addressed to the Spanish humanist Alfonso de Valdés, secretary and official Latinist in the court of Charles V and one of Erasmus’s most loyal admirers, Sepúlveda asserts that Erasmus’s works do not inspire as much awe among Italian humanists as they do in Spain (*Epistolario* 38). This remark forms part of Sepúlveda’s defensive reaction to Erasmus’s underhanded slight toward Sepúlveda in *Ciceronius*. Therein, the Dutch humanist “praises” Sepúlveda by commenting on his potential. The affront lay in the fact that Sepúlveda was by no means a novice, so Erasmus’s “praise” actually implied a low regard for Sepúlveda’s accomplishments as official translator of Aristotle’s works in the papal court of Clement VII and as author of four treatises. But aside from these personalized squabbles, Sepúlveda engaged with his opponents through publications on more substantive matters, participating actively as a gladiator in the republic of letters to prove his masculinity before other men.

In the case of the *Gonzalo*, Sepúlveda was engaging a number of opponents in a debate that had emerged at the end of the fifteenth century in *contemptus mundi* literature, and that was addressed in humanist, mystical, and fiction writings throughout the sixteenth century. Antonio Espigares Pinilla explains that authors like Francisco de Osuna proposed *recogimiento* as the spiritual path to perfection. This involved rejecting worldly glory and honor in favor of a more spiritual life (“La cuestión” 303). Other thinkers whose views were aligned with Osuna’s included St. Theresa of Avila, who in her *Camino de perfección* cautioned against the passion for honor, and San Juan de la Cruz, who warned against instrumental approaches to virtue for gaining public recognition. Beyond those mystical thinkers there were famous humanist voices such as Lorenzo Valla, Juan Luis Vives, and Erasmus, all of whom

took positions consonant with Osuna and the mystics. That same direction was reflected in the budding spiritual environment that Cisneros initiated through the reform of the religious orders and which was the force behind the production of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible of 1514–1517. Allied with Sepúlveda were other figures who had a favorable view of the pursuit of glory, including the Spanish humanist Sebastián Fox Morcillo (1528–1558/9?) and the anonymous author of the *Lazarillo de Tormes* (Antwerpen 1554), the prologue of which references Cicero's saying that honor nourishes the arts (*honos alit artes*).

The issue over whether it was licit for Christians (read Christian men) to desire worldly honor and glory was part of a larger question regarding the morality deemed necessary for salvation. Yet the underlying issue of the debate harked back to the tension in late antiquity between two models of masculinity: the Roman model, which prized the ideal of the *vita militaris*, and the model of Christian manliness, which proposed a nonviolent path best encapsulated in the virtue known as *patientia*. Mathew Kuefler explains that *patientia* comes from the Latin *patiri*, which means, “to endure, suffer, submit to,” and that although *patientia* implied passivity and the willingness to become a victim, Christians were able to imbue it with metaphors that transformed it into a viable ideal for Roman men who felt helpless during the military crisis of the later Roman Empire (242–43). *Patientia* was thus linked with triumph and success through steadfast endurance through suffering. The full realization of the ideal of *patientia* was, of course, martyrdom. After the period of persecution waned in the fourth and fifth centuries, Christian men could continue to draw on the ideal of *patientia* by envisioning themselves as soldiers of Christ in the spiritual battle against Satan and his army (248–49). Erasmus's *Manual of the Christian Knight* partakes of this conceptualization of Christian manliness.⁷ Written for the *miles christianus*, the *Manual* contains the “weapons” that Christian knights need in the perpetual spiritual war against temptation. Erasmus contends that the most efficacious weapons are prayer, and knowledge of the law and the word of God (127). Accordingly, he associates the pursuit of worldly recognition with the vices and thus by innuendo with carnal desire, asserting that the only praise that men should seek should come from God (396). Sepúlveda redresses Erasmus's take on this question in the *Gonzalo*, further engaging

7. *Enchiridion militis christiani* (Hantuerpieae 1503)

with the latter's skeptical posture toward war in the *Exhortación* and the *Demócrates primero*. As can be gathered from Sepúlveda's veiled references to Erasmus in the latter two works, where he refers to him as a quasi-Lutheran, Sepúlveda embraced his role as gladiator of the Spanish Empire, battling in the republic of letters to refashion the Roman martial masculinity model for service to the nascent empire in terms that he believed were compatible with Christian doctrine.

Battling the Shadow of the Roman Empire

As its title indicates, Sepúlveda's *Gonzalo* is written in the form of a dialogue, a genre drawn from Plato, Cicero, and Lucian that flourished in the fifteenth century and reached its height a century later. In the *Gonzalo*, three interlocutors speak about whether the pursuit of glory is virtuous and whether it is compatible with the principles of Christianity. Sepúlveda's choice of Gonzalo as the main interlocutor of the dialogue is neither incidental nor inconsequential. For him, Gonzalo is living proof that the appetite for glory in war is compatible with both virtue and the principles of Christianity. In enlisting the voice of Gonzalo for his discourse on glory, Sepúlveda is following Cicero's strategy of naming interlocutors after historical figures to authorize the discourse assigned to them. Who better than this great Christian warrior to exemplify the compatibility of the pursuit of military glory with Christianity? Sepúlveda recruits two other members of Gonzalo's family to serve as interlocutors: Pedro Fernández de Córdoba, the captain's nephew, and Diego de Córdoba, his son-in-law.

The *Gonzalo* opens with a laudatory conversation about Spain's conquest of Granada in 1492 and its victories in the Italian Wars. Reflecting on the dearth of historical writings about the military feats of the Spanish, Gonzalo observes, "Si en cada una de las épocas anteriores nuestros antepasados se hubiesen cuidado de esta labor, quizá no tendríamos que acudir a ejemplos extranjeros para explicar las distintas virtudes" (212). Although, he continues, Spanish soldiers are generally known for seeking glory, "las esclarecidas acciones que en otro tiempo acometieron los nuestros han quedado sepultadas en la actualidad en tan gran olvido debido a la escasez de escritores" (212). These statements are *topoi* from classical and late-medieval Iberian literature. The idea that the constant engagement in warfare kept men of

letters from documenting the glory of their republic is here conjoined with a justification for having to cite foreign examples (*exempla*) to illustrate the idea of virtue and its link with glory. Sepúlveda's use of these *topoi* has the effect of presenting his homage to Gonzalo as somehow filling a void: his dialogue memorializes the deeds of Spanish heroes and places recent Spanish military conquests in Granada and Naples into a larger historical continuum that extends back to the Greeks and Romans. More significantly, Sepúlveda's discursive monuments to the deeds of Spanish heroes contribute toward laying a foundation upon which Spain can claim itself as the source of its own glory. Thus, in addition to Gonzalo, the names of many other Spanish aristocrats who distinguished themselves in battle appear throughout the dialogue as exemplars of virtue.

The crucial tension to which Sepúlveda's text responds emanates from Spain's ambivalent relation to the Roman Empire. Early modern thinkers adopted the Roman imperial model to frame Spain's military enterprises in Europe and in the New World.⁸ Yet although Rome's imperial model had utility in that regard, it was also necessary, as Sepúlveda's text suggests, to establish an internal foundation from which to project an image of Spain as the next great empire, an empire that could distinguish itself from previous ones on its own merit. That is, in fact, the spirit behind Gonzalo's statement when, after referring to the virtue of the Catholic Monarchs and their reigniting of the war against the Moors, he observes: "Estoy convencido, en verdad, de que en ningún tiempo desde la memoria de las gentes España [sic], la más fértil por lo demás en varones, engendró a la vez tantos nobles, hombres valerosísimos, esforzados y nacidos para guerrear" (214).

The tension created by the indispensability of Greco-Roman models for establishing that Spain itself was the source of its own glory is reflected in the form and content of Sepúlveda's discourse on glory. In terms of form, for instance, Sepúlveda draws on the Ciceronian model of the dialogue. By writing in this well-established literary form from the Greco-Roman canon, he frames his discourse with canonical authority. The tension is also noticeable in Sepúlveda's own prefatory remarks, for example, when he apologizes in advance to his critics for having cited the names of many more foreign heroes than Spanish ones to illustrate the different kinds of virtues (212). There is indeed a concerted effort on his part to cite the names of as many

8. For more on this topic see David A. Lupher.

illustrious Spanish war heroes as possible in his catalogue of virtuous men. The tension between his project of establishing a foundational discourse of empire for Spain and his use of the Roman model is further evident in the following instance: Speaking on the virtue of faithfulness, in particular the virtue of keeping one's word, Gonzalo cites Marcus Atilius Regulus as an example of a man who kept his word even though it meant dying at the hands of the enemy. After falling prisoner to Carthaginians in the third Punic War, Regulus was released to negotiate peace on their behalf, but rather than doing that, he urged the Romans to make war on the Carthaginians until they had secured victory. Keeping his word to the enemy, though, Regulus returned to the Carthaginians and faced death at their hands. Gonzalo asks, "¿Quién poseyó alguna vez fidelidad tan decidida y tan firme, que pueda aventajar de alguna forma a la de Marco Régulo" (225)? His response to his own question is revealing: "Entre los nuestros lo mismo opino de García Gómez Carrillo, quien custodiaba en calidad de alcaide la fortaleza de Jerez, cuando los granadinos asaltaron la ciudad en tiempos del reinado de Alfonso X" (226). Like Regulus, García Gómez Carrillo preferred to give up his life to the enemy rather than betray his promise to guard the fort. Sepúlveda *qua* Gonzalo places the Spanish nobleman alongside the Roman hero in a kind of tension, as is suggested by his justification for comparing the two: "no veo que exista motivo para no equiparar su fidelidad a la de Marco Régulo" (226).

Sepúlveda's text registers another tension for which the discourse on glory provides a response. This one concerns the fissure in the social fabric that resulted from the internecine wars among Spanish aristocrats. For example, in his laudatory comments on the Catholic Monarchs' victory in the war of Granada, Gonzalo and his interlocutors note that this victory would have come sooner had it not been for the "rencillas entre nobles" (213). Christian thinkers would have perceived the internecine wars that plagued the Spanish nobility as civil wars and therefore, as dishonorable and symptomatic of a decadent aristocracy. Thus, although Gonzalo makes numerous references to the deeds of great Spanish noblemen and places them alongside figures like Hercules, Julius Caesar, and Alexander the Great, the decline of and dissension within the aristocracy were diminishing their military reliability to the Crown. That factor, along with the changing material conditions of war that required larger numbers of combatants, meant that there was a need to expand the military to segments of the population previously excluded. This created an opening, according to Sepúlveda/Gonzalo, for common men to

compete for glory alongside aristocrats, and that, in turn, resulted in the possibility of a broader integration of nontraditional social actors in institutions of power that had formerly excluded them.

Gonzalo does assert that the appetite for glory is innate in the souls of noblemen, thereby giving them an appetitive advantage over common men (246). Additionally, he says, among men of noble birth there is a special pressure to live up to the reputations and deeds of their ancestors. Noblemen, in other words, frequently feel more determined to carry out virtuous acts than those who were born in humble families because the former “no se estiman dignos ni de su familia ni de su nombre si no sostienen al límite de sus fuerzas con virtudes de igual categoría el esplendor paterno,” although Gonzalo attaches a necessary qualifier, “a no ser que su espíritu haya degenerado y se haya envilecido por completo” (247). Men of humble origins, on the other hand, are often less motivated to take on great deeds because they do not feel pressured to live up to such standards and so often amount to less. However, Gonzalo says, some men of humble origins who act on the belief that nobility resides in virtue are able to transcend their humble condition by carrying out great deeds that bring them and their descendants glory (248). Drawing on examples from Roman history, Gonzalo mentions, among others, Servius Tullius, a former slave who became the sixth king of Rome. The recognition that men from humble origins could attain nobility on their own merit points to a broadening of the notion of nobility. This more flexible conceptualization of nobility allows for the integration of socially mobile men into the military and other institutions of power (including intellectual power), while accommodating traditional claims to power based on the honor–blood dyad. As Sepúlveda’s own rise from being the descendant of humble tanners to becoming the emperor’s royal chronicler and a noted translator of Aristotle demonstrates, the discourse on glory potentiated social ascension at the individual level, while reviving and strengthening institutions formerly monopolized by a decadent aristocracy.

Virtus, Glory, and the Techniques of the Self

Aristotle’s understanding of man and virtue plays a dominant role in Sepúlveda’s thinking. His view of the relations between the sexes, for instance, draws on Aristotle’s *Politics*, where the philosopher explains the union of man and woman in terms of the hierarchical relationship between master

and subject: “the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules and the other is ruled” (1990). For Aristotle, as for Sepúlveda, men are political animals whose capacity for reasoned persuasion (*logos*) distinguishes them from other animals, for unlike the latter, *logos* enables men to differentiate between good and evil, the just and unjust, and to form into societies (1988). Sepúlveda followed Aristotle in regarding men as superior to women not only intellectually, but also morally. Thus, when he writes about virtue (*virtus*), he is talking about men and not women. In his study of Roman manhood in the late fourth century, Mark A. Masterson observes that *virtus* is difficult to define because of its multifaceted and abstract meanings in various contexts throughout time. However, he notes that while Roman thought “did not associate *virtus* with the male only . . . the reference is never very far” (249). A look at Masterson’s taxonomy of meanings for the word *virtus* prior to the fourth century yields the following generalizations: “1. It is attached to virility . . . 2. It is defined in opposition to women . . . [and] to faults moral and physical . . . 5. It is a catch-all-term for any number of moral and intellectual elite excellences. 6. It refers to physical beauty and strength . . . 10. It is an attribute of the soldiery” (253).

In medieval etymology virtue is, by definition, a gendered category. Isidore of Seville notes in his *Etymologies* that “man (*vir*) is so called, because in him resides greater power (*vis*) than in a woman—hence also ‘strength’ (*virtus*) received its name—or else because he deals with a woman by force (*vis*)” (242). Thus man (*vir*) is aligned with what are held to be masculine qualities, such as fortitude, endurance, vigor, virility, firmness, resoluteness, bravery, and courage. On the other hand, “the word woman (*mulier*),” continues Isidore, “comes from softness (*mollities*),” by which is meant physical weakness and powerlessness, but also the implication that women should submit to men. More insightful yet is another word for woman, “*femina*,” which Isidore notes originates from Greek etymology and which further confirms the lesser rationality of women; he says *femina* derives from “‘fiery force,’ because she desires more vehemently, for females are said to be more libidinous than males” (242). The influence of these ancient and medieval notions on Sepúlveda’s thinking can be traced in his understanding of moral virtue and its inextricable link to glory. In his view, virtue relies on techniques of the self that are grounded in reason’s mastery of *mulier* and *femina*, which is to say everything womanly.

In Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics* the virtues are qualities that integrate members of a male elite into the *polis*, tying men to society in the interest of

the *summum bonum*. Virtue is a social construction that is conducive to the production of a specific type of social economy. Like virtue, the pursuit of glory has a similar function in Sepúlveda's moral theories. He observes that the desire for glory and honor is the motor of social progress, adding that it leads to excellence in the arts, in government and in war (219–21). Convinced that the appetite for glory is socially productive, Gonzalo wonders, for instance, whether Alexander of Macedonia could have become great and conquered so many kingdoms at the age of twenty-eight after only eight years in power had he not been driven by the appetite for glory (237–38).

Gonzalo's view of glory is informed by the Aristotelian idea that an action is virtuous only if it is performed mindfully, not mindlessly, and for its own sake, not instrumentally (Aristotle, *Nichomachean* 1746). Thus, for Sepúlveda *qua* Gonzalo, glorious actions should be performed both intentionally and because they are inherently glorious, not for the sake of some other end (221). However, despite this presumption, whether a person is either virtuous or glorious is dependent on the opinion of a community, so its praiseworthiness relies on spectators. In explaining how glory is recognized, Gonzalo observes that, like any virtue, it is dependent on “elogio unánime procedente de los hombres de bien, la voz incorruptible de quienes juzgan con acierto sobre una virtud eminente, una realidad sólida y relevante” (238). Public recognition of glorious acts implies a kind of spatiality—a public space in which a man's actions are displayed, performed, and even staged for viewing. There, in that visual space that public recognition connotes, an individual who presumably sought glory for its own sake must somehow appear *not* to have been motivated by the desire for recognition. Baldassare Castiglione, a contemporary of Sepúlveda, describes this technique of the self in *The Book of the Courtier*.⁹ Therein, he assigns to Count Ludovico de Canossa a description of the manner in which the perfect courtier should gracefully bring praise upon himself without explicitly appearing to do so: “the whole art consists in saying things in such a way that they do not appear to be spoken to that end, but are so very *apropos* that one cannot help saying them; and to seem always to avoid praising one's self, yet do so” (34). This balancing act, which can be understood as a technique of the self that involves mastery over desire by reason, is encoded in the model of sociability that Gonzalo advances for military men. As an example, consider the praise that Diego,

9. *Il Libro del cortegiano* (Venezia 1528).

one of Gonzalo's interlocutors, lavishes on him for the way he responded to the recognition of his virtues:

Estas virtudes tuyas han sido sancionadas . . . incluso por la reacción del muy poderoso y muy sabio rey enemigo, el cual no ya por el recuerdo de los graves perjuicios de ti recibidos y la doble captura del reino de Nápoles, sino por la admiración que sentía hacia tus eminentes virtudes, te recibió con pompa regia . . . y te hizo un regalo de grandísimo valor, una vajilla de oro y de plata. Pero tú por tu parte, para que no pareciese que te aventajaba ni siquiera en magnanimidad aquél a quien habías batido con las armas, la repartiste por completo entre sus siervos y su séquito, excepto un pequeño vaso que guardaste para ti en memoria de aquel honrosísimo don. Como en este día todos los presentes, franceses y españoles, hablasen de otra cosa sino de tus virtudes, es difícil relatar la extraordinaria admiración con la que atrajiste únicamente hacia tu persona la mirada y la atención de todos. (228)

In this scene, Sepúlveda *qua* Gonzalo establishes that virtue and glory are intertwined, also illustrating the public and performative elements through which each is achieved. Three points stand out in this passage: (1) the recognition of Gonzalo's virtue, (2) his magnanimous response to others' recognition of his virtue, and (3) the ensuing glory that results from both his magnanimity and his virtue in general. Gonzalo's action of redistributing the gifts suggests that he does not view virtue instrumentally. To view virtue instrumentally and desire recognition excessively would imply, in Sepúlveda's view, submitting to one's passions, which would mean to be womanly. In this scene, it appears that the quest for material rewards or personal enrichment has not motivated Gonzalo to be virtuous. Further, he momentarily diffuses the Neapolitan King's admiration of his virtue by regifting the gifts. Yet what appears to be a selfless act, which only briefly shifts attention away from Gonzalo, in fact refocuses everyone's attention on him as he effectively enters into competition with his benefactor over who is the more magnanimous. So Gonzalo's appetite for glory underlies his magnanimity. Having vanquished the Neapolitan King in battle, Gonzalo outdoes him as well in the virtue of magnanimity. In so doing, Gonzalo attracts further admiration from the spectators, thereby accruing even more glory. As can be seen, Gonzalo maneuvers carefully between engaging in virtuous acts for their own sake and accepting praise for being virtuous without appearing to

desire that praise. Of course, to the extent that his maneuver succeeds, both his virtue and his glory are, in effect, redoubled.

As a system of sociability, the model of moral virtue that Sepúlveda advances through Gonzalo thus involves not an absence of desire but rather a strategic deployment of desire that is enabled through the mastery of desire by reason. Such a technique of the self stems, in large part, from the Aristotelian notion of moral virtue. For Aristotle, reason exerts control over desire in the morally strong man (*Nicomachean* 1742). The appetite for glory is a desire and thus falls among those elements of the self over which reason must exert control. This understanding of moral virtue as a practice that requires mastery of desire by reason is operative in Gonzalo's definition of glory. Playing with the two Latin words for glory, Gonzalo opposes *gloriosus* to *gloria*. *Gloriosus* applies to a person who is vainglorious, boastful, conceited, and ostentatious; that is, it describes a person who acts in an otherwise virtuous way out of an excessive desire for admiration. *Gloriosus* is a sign of moral deficiency because it allows the excessive desires (avarice, ambition, vanity) to treat virtue instrumentally. On the other hand, in the notion of *gloria*, as Gonzalo constructs it, the desire that drives men to carry out virtuous acts is fueled by the interests of the greater good, specifically of the State. The desire for praise should not be excessive, nor should individual interest be its motor. Rather, in the case of *gloria*, the greater reason that regulates desire is the reason of the state. Gonzalo makes this idea explicit in his cautionary remarks on glory, clarifying that he is not advocating that glory should be pursued at all costs, especially when what is at stake is the preservation of the State (238).

On the other hand, Gonzalo agrees with those who assert that men should be more resolute about exposing their own wellbeing to danger before that of their community (238). Gonzalo's brother, Alonso de Aguilar, adopted this view when he confronted death in a skirmish with the Granadian Moors. We learn about Alonso's death through the account of his son Pedro, when at one point during the conversation on glory, Gonzalo notices that he has withdrawn from the conversation. When asked to explain his silence, Pedro explains that the discussion on glory has reminded him of the manner in which his father died. Noting that he can hardly suppress his tears, Pedro recalls:

aquella funestísima noche que nos sorprendió en la ascensión por la ladera del monte . . . Los enemigos aprovecharon esta ocasión, cuando se pecataron

de nuestro reducido número. Sólo unos pocos habíamos seguido a mi padre . . . cuando él respondió con voz clara a quienes lo apartaban de su empeño en la ascensión que nunca sus antepasados incurrieron en la cobardía. Así, ahora me parece estar viéndolo ensartado por los dardos de los enemigos, exhortando a los suyos y disparando en respuesta muy valerosamente a sus enemigos . . . Aunque todo apuntaba a una muerte segura, sin embargo, él, un varón muy firme y de espíritu invicto, en ningún momento se dejó persuadir por razón alguna de que se retirase al campamento que tenía abajo, medida que resultaba completamente factible. (217)

At this point, Pedro wonders whether his father could have been deemed glorious without having to give up his life. He notes that the circumstances following the sudden attack of the Moors allowed for Alonso's escape, yet because, like his ancestors, he resisted succumbing to fear out of cowardice, he faced death courageously, fighting with an invincible spirit against the enemy despite the fact that multiple spears had pierced his muscles. In response, Gonzalo empathizes with Pedro's sorrow, but advises him to question whether his sorrow stems from the love that he feels for his father or from self-love. Moreover, Gonzalo proposes that Pedro feel joyful for his father, who died gloriously because he died fighting fiercely against the enemy of the *patria* and of Christendom (217). Lastly, he praises Alonso, asserting that, "para un hombre instruido en ideales nobles no debe existir nada mejor que esta gloria, nada más deseable" (218).

Starting with the fact that Pedro suppresses his tears as he recounts his father's death, there is in this account the subjection of passion to reason that results in the suppression of both sadness and empathy, underlining the extent to which martial manliness requires the deferment of human emotional connectedness in those who adopt the view that men should expose themselves to danger for their community (238). There is also a suppression of the emotion of fear: Alonso suppresses his fear of death and puts his life in danger by fighting courageously so as to honor his family name, the *patria*, and the Catholic faith. As can be seen in Gonzalo's extolment of Alonso's self-sacrifice and his advice to Pedro that he view his father's death from an emotionally detached perspective that privileges the greater interests of the community, the martial model of masculinity involves mastery of anything considered womanly, in the sense of either powerlessness (*mulier*) or excessive passion (*femina*).

Visuality, Spectacle, and the Embodied Self

The attainment of glory relies on public recognition and spectacle. Recall the spotlight that Diego, one of Gonzalo's interlocutors, focused on the looks and attention that Gonzalo's magnanimity aroused in Naples. A closer look at other scenes of glory-seeking men in Sepúlveda's text further reveals the visual economy upon which the discourse of glory relies. This is illustrated in Gonzalo's account of a Spanish man of arms named Manuel Ponce de León, who, he says, could have surpassed Hercules in glory for his lofty spirit and bravery had they been contemporaries. Not content with the praise that he received for his success against his enemies in the war of Granada, Manuel crossed the Sea of Gibraltar in search of opportunities to carry out great deeds. As confirmation of his fearlessness and fierceness, Manuel brought back with him the severed heads of seven valorous Moors that he had personally killed in close combat. Gonzalo reports that the sight of the seven severed heads aroused the admiration of the people of Seville (215).

It is easy to imagine the visual impact those seven severed heads would have had on the spectators who watched Manuel carry them as he marched into the city. Yet, setting aside the gory images of the dismembered heads, what is most captivating about this scene is the importance that Manuel's audience plays in affirming the glory for which he yearned. In his analysis of subjectivity, sex, and gender in late medieval and early modern Spanish sentimental fiction, Robert Folger offers a theoretical framework through which to comprehend the visual force inherent in spectacle as it relates to the constitution of the gendered subject in that period by examining perspectives on human nature and perception in theology, medicine, and natural philosophy. Particularly germane to our understanding of the economy of visuality in Sepúlveda's text is Folger's explanation that vision was understood as "performative, connective, and embodied" (45).¹⁰ While there were different models of perception, for all of them perception was understood as an interactive, productive, and embodied experience. For example, in the extramission model, the perceiver penetrated the exterior world with "seeing rays" emitted from the eyes, and on the intromission model the perceiver was subject to the intromission of forms from the outside.

10. For an extensive and detailed account of intromission and extramission theories of perception see Folger 44–45.

This embodied understanding of vision, strongly influenced by the Greeks, does not fall prey to the issues that bedeviled philosophy after Descartes's separation and differentiation of mind and body, yielding an abstract and disembodied self, about a century after Sepúlveda wrote the *Gonzalo*. When Christian scholars adopted Galen's ventricular theory of the brain along with Aristotle's natural philosophy, they located the mental and motor functions in the interior of the body. In this basic model of faculty psychology, Folger explains, "the mental faculties [imagination, judgment, and memory] are located in three adjacent ventricles in which the *species* [the external object that is perceived] conveyed to the brain by the external senses are received, transformed and stored" (46). Despite the privileged position of the rational soul (*anima rationalis*) in theological discourse, faculty psychology attributed the above-described operation to the sensitive soul (*anima sensitiva*) (48). The implication of this, as Folger notes, is that while "theologically, the rational soul is the essence of man," naturalist philosophical explanations for "man's agency and interaction with the world . . . ignore the rational soul and attribute all higher mental functions to the *anima sensitiva*" (49). In conjunction with the embodied and relational dimension of the models of perception that continued to prevail when the *Gonzalo* was written, the prominence they attributed to the senses allows us to appreciate the centrality of sensorial experience in the economy of visibility that underlies the discourse on glory. If the subject is indeed constituted as an embodied self through others' perception of him/her, then appealing to others' senses would have been of fundamental importance for establishing a sense of being in the world. In other words, projecting an image of oneself as virtuous before others and obtaining affirmation of that projection was fundamental to establishing one's personhood, and to the accrual of glory.

Numerous scenes of glory-seeking men unfold like monumental *tableaus* in Sepúlveda's text. While the function of *exempla* is to offer a story from which to draw moralizing truths, the attention they draw to visibility should not be overlooked, nor should the discussion of visibility remain limited to Sepúlveda's text. In fact, in *The Book of the Courtier*, a kind of "survival" manual for courtiers following the turbulence of the Sack of Rome of 1527, Castiglione elaborates on an element of visibility that highlights the formative capacity of the audience in the constitution of the elite subject. In this excerpt, Federico, one of the courtiers, addresses the selectivity that courtiers seeking honor and glory should adopt when performing in public. He says:

whenever the Courtier chances to be engaged in a skirmish or a battlefield . . . he should discreetly withdraw from the crowd, and do the outstanding and daring things that he has to do in as small a company as possible and in the sight of all of the noblest and most respected men in the army, and especially in the presence of and, if possible, before the eyes of his king or the prince he is serving. (99)

As noted earlier, seeing and being seen was regarded as having concrete consequences for all involved. Federico thus aptly observes that noblemen who compete in public with commoners have little to gain and more to lose, adding that "it is too unseemly and too ugly a thing, and quite without dignity, to see a gentleman defeated by a peasant" (101). The selectivity that Federico advises courtiers to adopt when performing before an audience reveals that the actualization of the elite and masculine man is dependent on the quality of the men who apprehend his actions. Recognition of virtue and honor is thus sought from men of equal or higher status and not so much from a crowd. Karras's observation that men define themselves by their relation to other men could not be more applicable. Consider Gonzalo's vivid account of a soldier who fought alongside him in the Battle of Garigliano against the French in the second Italian war. Says Gonzalo:

Yo mismo vi que el soldado que portaba el estandarte en aquella batalla en la que combatíamos a los franceses . . . habiendo perdido el brazo con el que empuñaba la enseña, la tomó de nuevo con su mano izquierda, sin retroceder ni un solo paso, pues estimaba infamante abandonar el puesto que había ocupado una sola vez y para siempre. Este soldado también perdió después la mano izquierda, ante el acoso de los enemigos . . . pero entonces la abraza con sus brazos mutilados, encendiendo la gloria su ánimo, con la determinación de no perder la enseña antes que la vida, y se mantuvo en pie firme en su puesto tanto tiempo como el que emplearon los nuestros en rechazar y poner en fuga con su valentía al enemigo. (234)

After witnessing such a feat, Gonzalo recalls that he summoned the soldier the next day, lavished him with praise for his bravery, and recommended that he be royally remunerated. As if in awe, Gonzalo reports that the soldier appeared not to feel the pain of his wounds, nor to remember the amputation of his arms, upon the joy that such praise brought him (234). What stands out in this story is not so much the mutilated arms of the soldier

steadfastly embracing the standard, but rather the weight that he reportedly gave to Gonzalo's praise. The *Gran Capitán's* regard for the mutilated soldier's feat heightened both his sense of self and his standing before his peers, with whom, as a man, he is naturally in competition. Mastery over others is here indicated by the soldier's apparent courage and endurance in the face of defeat, so much that he seems to not feel the intensity and pain consequent to the loss of his limbs.

Conclusion

Sepúlveda offers the *Gonzalo* in response to a set of challenges, but in particular, it is directed against the skepticism of Christian reformists whose vision of spirituality raised critical moral questions for Christian rulers who were dealing with ongoing internecine conflict and the waging of war against non-Christians in the Mediterranean. As the polemic surrounding the publication license denial for Sepúlveda's *Demócrates segundo* suggests, those moral concerns gained momentum and complexity as the abusive actions of the Spanish conquerors called attention to the injustice of the Spanish military enterprise in America. In rebutting Christian mystics and humanists who believed that seeking glory through worldly engagements such as war clashed with Christian doctrine, Sepúlveda comes to the defense of glory and affirms its congruity with Christianity, a position that was supportive of imperial interests. His discourse on glory drew on the Roman imperial model to provide a foundation for Spain's imperial ambitions, while also claiming the existence of a characteristic intrinsic to the Spanish people that would add support for the projection of Spain's imperial power on the world stage. His placement of classical and contemporary exemplars of glory alongside each other creates an opening for the integration of nonaristocratic men into the military and other institutions, whose glorious actions could then catapult them into networks of power previously closed to them. Sepúlveda's discourse on glory thus potentiated social ascension and simultaneously strengthened evolving institutions of power like the military, and, as his own career illustrates, the royal court.

In the *Gonzalo*, Sepúlveda provides a moral rationale aimed at transforming the desire for glory into a virtue compatible with Christian doctrine. He draws on the Aristotelian understanding of virtue to argue that in the case of Christians who must struggle with the moral difficulties posed by governance

in the terrestrial world, the pursuit of glory is not only compatible with virtue, it is itself virtuous. In this regard, Sepúlveda's philosophical approach to the issue was not unlike that of fellow neo-Latinists who adapted Greco-Roman concepts to a new "matriz ideológica, nacida de unas circunstancias sociales, políticas y económicas, totalmente nuevas" (Valverde Abril, "El *Gonsalus*" 635).

While the terms of the debate are theological, the underlying approach to the polemic is informed by gender. At stake in embracing or rejecting the appetite for glory as a modality of being, two models of masculinity clash: the militaristic Roman imperial model and the pacifist yet manly Christian soldier model whose weapons are the word and the law of God. An Aristotelian, Sepúlveda prescribes a technique of the self that is predicated on the mastery of the feminine, of passion, by reason. Although the *Gonzalo* opens up social mobility for some men, in the context of war it relies on a sacrificial notion of masculinity, for the pursuit of glory is implicitly premised on both offering men's bodies to the violence of war and subjugating the feminine.

Works Cited

- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Ed. and Trans. Jonathan Barnes. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Vol. 2. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1984. 1729–1867.
- . *Politics*. Ed. and Trans. Jonathan Barnes. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Vol. 2. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1984. 1986–2129.
- Castiglione, Baldesar. *The Book of the Courtier*. Trans. Charles S. Singleton. Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1959.
- Castilla Urbano, Francisco. "Vida activa, virtud y gloria en la etapa italiana de Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1515–1536)." *Estudios filosóficos* 58.169 (2009): 421–56.
- Clough, Cecil H. "Cardinal Gil Albornoz, the Spanish College in Bologna, and the Italian Renaissance." In *El Cardenal Albornoz y el Colegio de España*. Ed. Evelio Verdera y Tuells. Zaragoza: Publicaciones del Real Colegio de España de Bolonia, 1972. 227–38.
- Erasmus, Desiderius. *El enquiridión o manual del caballero cristiano*. 2nd ed. Ed. Dámaso Alonso. Prol. Marcel Bataillon. Madrid: CSIC, 1971.
- Espigares Pinilla, Antonio. "La cuestión del honor y la gloria en el humanismo del siglo XVI a través del estudio de *Gonsalus* de Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda y del *De honore* de Fox Morcillo." Diss. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1992.
- . "El enfrentamiento con Erasmo en el *Gonsalus* de Ginés de Sepúlveda." *Cuadernos de Filología Clásica, Estudios Latinos* 4 (1993): 181–90.
- Folger, Robert. *Escape from the Prison of Love*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2009.
- Gil, Juan. "Introducción histórica." *Epistolario*. By Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda. In *Obras*

- completas*. Ed., Trad., and Intro. Ignacio J. García Pinilla, Julián Solana Pujalte, J. Gil. Vol. 8. Pozoblanco, Sp.: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Pozoblanco, 2007. 19–169.
- González-Rodríguez, Jaime. “Sepúlveda: atreverse a pensar y a hablar.” In *Actas del Congreso Internacional, V Centenario del Nacimiento del Dr. Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda*. 13–16 Feb. 1991, Pozoblanco, Sp.: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Pozoblanco, 1993. 221–35.
- Isidore of Seville, Saint. *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*. Trans. Stephen A. Barney. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2006.
- Karras, Ruth Mazo. *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2003.
- Kuefler, Mathew. “Soldiers of Christ.” *Men and Masculinities in Christianity and Judaism: A Critical Reader*. Ed. Björn Krondorfer. London: SCM Press, 2009. 237–58.
- Lupher, David A. *Romans in the New World*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2006.
- Masterson, Mark Anthony. *Roman Manhood at the End of the Ancient World*. Diss. U of Southern California, 2001.
- Patiño, Luis Palafox. *Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda y su pensamiento imperialista*. México, DF: Libros de Homero, 2007.
- Quatrefages, René. “Génesis de la España militar moderna.” *Militaria: Revista de Cultura Militar* 7 (1995): 59–68.
- Sepúlveda, Juan Ginés de. *Acerca de la monarquía*. Introd. J. M. Pérez-Prendes Muñoz-Arraco. Ed. and Trans. I. J. García Pinilla. Vol. 6 of *Obras completas*. Pozoblanco, Sp.: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Pozoblanco, 2001. 15 vols.
- . *Demócrates primero o Diálogo sobre la compatibilidad entre la milicia y la religión cristiana*. Ed. J. Solana Pujalte. Introd. I. J. García Pinilla. Vol. 15 of *Obras completas*. Pozoblanco, Sp.: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Pozoblanco, 2010. 15 vols.
- . *Epistolario*. Ed. and Trans. I. J. García Pinilla and J. Solana Pujalte. Vol. 9:1 of *Obras completas*. Pozoblanco, Sp.: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Pozoblanco, 2007. 15 vols.
- . *Gonzalo, diálogo sobre la apetencia de gloria*. Ed., Introd. and Trans. J. J. Valverde Abril. Vol. 6 of *Obras completas*. Pozoblanco, Sp.: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Pozoblanco, 2001. 15 vols.
- Valverde Abril, Juan Jesús. “El Gonsalus seu de appetenda gloria dialogus, primera obra filosófica de Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda.” In *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Abulensis, Proceedings from the Tenth International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies*. 4–9 Aug. 1997, Ávila, Sp. Ed. Rhoda Schnur. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000. 631–38.
- , ed. Introducción. *Gonzalo, diálogo sobre la apetencia de gloria*. By J. G. de Sepúlveda. Vol. 6 of *Obras completas*. Pozoblanco, Sp.: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Pozoblanco, 2001. 184–200. 15 vols.