

EPIC AND ARCHIVE: LOPE DE VEGA, FRANCIS DRAKE AND THE COUNCIL OF INDIES

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Antonio de Herrera digo: que Lope de Vega compuso un libro llamado la Dragontea, en que se contiene lo sucedido a Francisco Draque cuando fue resistido en Tierra firme siendo Capitán general don Alonso de Sotomayor, a donde cuenta aquel suceso muy en contrario de la verdad, con manifiesto agravio de las personas que allí sirvieron; y porque aquí no se le quiso dar licencia de imprimile, se fue a Valencia, a donde le ha impreso.

—The Council of Indies, February 15, 1599¹

It is a strange poem.

—George Ticknor. *The History of Spanish Literature* (201-02)

I Lope de Vega's first signed, published work fashioned the author into the king's chronicler. Like the crown officials entrusted to write history, he gathered the first-hand reports that depicted the Spanish victory over Francis Drake at Nombre de Dios in January, 1596, and shaped them into a work that glorified the Spanish empire (Kagan 1995, 76-78). From these labors, an epic poem appeared shortly after May, 1598. Censorship met this daring. Antonio de Herrera, the *cronista mayor de Indias*, suppressed the work that encroached on his domain, blocking editions in the crowns of Castile and the Indies. For this reason, the book circulated extra-legally after the Valencia *princeps*; Lope's Madrid, 1602 omnibus edition slipped the *Dragontea* by censors, concealing it beneath the edition's lengthy Ariostan romance, *La hermosura de Angélica*, and one hundred sonnets labeled *Rimas*.

Paradoxically, after the political backdrop that spurred Antonio de Herrera to censor the work faded, it failed to recapture the attention of readers, editors, or critics. The most recent edition, a hastily prepared, unannotated transcription of the *princeps* appeared thirty years ago.² Despite the hundreds of articles on Lope each decade, few studies have examined this work. Critical studies available show how the loss of its political context truly left a strange work. Frank Pierce includes an analysis in his study of Spanish epic poetry, chaffing before its anglophobia (297-305). The poem's most careful reader, A. K. Jameson, identified key source documents in Madrid archives that Lope probably used, but likewise recoiled

before anti-English vitriol (118-19). The other studies available offer little beyond literal readings that fix nationalism more evocative of twentieth-century readers than Habsburg Spain.³

At a glance, the *Dragontea* is a strange epic, even if we judge it through literary categories its creator would have recognized. Much within its pages belies the alchemy Tasso imagined transforming sublime and magnificent actions or words into the *meraviglia* that made epic the high style (*Discorsi* 24v-26r). That its most famous reader, Antonio de Herrera, came from the Council of Indies offers poetic justice, for its narrator often sounds like a *licenciado* writing to the king, rather than a poet transcribing the muse's visitation. Late-Renaissance canto headings typically guide allegorical readings, heralding celestial councils, angels and daemons that meddle in human affairs. In contrast, the *Dragontea's* headings more often exalt the labors of crown bureaucrats, or depict chains of command and lines of communication. For instance, Canto IV begins, "llegan a Londres las nuevas de la prisión de Ricardo. Va don Pedro Tello por la que traía Sancho Pardo Osorio." Of course, the bureaucratic intrusions mesh with the poet's two-fold task. On one hand, Lope self-consciously spoke through a form linked to literary titans from Virgil to Tasso. But, equally important, he styled himself as a *cronista real*, the position he later sought through official channels.

Restoring the *Dragontea's* intelligibility requires that we reconstruct two masks: the political guise of a self-styled royal servant and the Virgilian posture of an epic poet. Historically-grounded literary scholarship from the past decade provides strategies to engage and juxtapose both. David Quint identifies two strains that operate within the epic, often at cross purposes: one takes shape from the immediate political backdrop and emerges through topical references; another refracts a psychology or mythology, and surfaces through literary allusion. Often the mythic subtext undermines the political message (Quint 1-15). Through such a bifurcated reading, the *Dragontea's* triumphalist anti-English politics coexist with a murkier, more questioning ideology that emerges through its epic form (F. Jameson 76-99). Here, Roberto González Echevarría's insight about Latin American narrative patterns yields a tactic for reading this work: "Latin American history is to the Latin American narrative what the epic themes are to Spanish literature: a constant whose mode of appearance may vary, but which is rarely absent" (6). In the *Dragontea*, the Spanish foundational *epopeya* presents a social vision that intersects and clashes with the Council of Indies's archive. This clash pits a collective, communal vision rooted in myth against the courtier's reach for royal favor. One register praises, the other admonishes, producing a dissonance that resonates far more than the battle between Habsburg Spain and Tudor England. Following the encounter between Drake and Spanish defenders from the battlefield to the archive helps explain its intertwining political and mythic fabrics.⁴

II. In the late sixteenth century, a minuscule thread on the map served as the vast Spanish empire's lifeline; an 18-league path between the Pacific and Atlantic coasts linked Potosí's treasure to the war-strained royal coffers (Cummins 35-39; Lynch 155-58; Herrera 1601). Between Peru and the peninsula, two splendid places on the Renaissance map, Spaniards found Panama and Nombre de Dios, settlements that scarcely fit the European urban ideal. According to royal chronicler Antonio de Herrera, Panama's air remained unhealthy from May through November, leaving a "tierra estéril y falta de muchas cosas" (1601, 39).⁵ In a sense, this small space concentrated the logistical challenges of a worldwide empire to a terrifying extreme. Each year crown officials and soldiers accompanied mules laden with silver across the isthmus, struggling through mountains, forests and swamps, and guarding against attack from the independent escaped slave communities (*cimarrones*) and French and English corsairs. Francis Drake, Spain's nemesis for three decades, embodied the worst nightmare: that pirates allied with *cimarrones* might capture the silver, as he did in a spectacular raid in 1572.

Just before Christmas, 1595, scouts reported Drake had emerged from retirement. The Viceroy of Peru, García Hurtado de Mendoza (Marquis of Cañete), sought to reinforce Panama's frail settlements and assert his jurisdiction over the vital region, sending Alonso de Sotomayor, a commander seasoned in Flemish and Chilean wars. Like the Cortés and Velázquez dispute that shaped the Mexican conquest, conflicts over jurisdiction shaped the events. In the *Audiencia* of Panama, jealous local officials resisted Sotomayor's command until this hardened veteran resorted to threats; at that point, local authorities took the face-saving gesture of appointing him themselves (RAH Salazar F9, 154r).

The hasty fortifications Sotomayor supervised did not prevent Drake's thousand-man force from overwhelming Nombre de Dios in early January, 1596. Its mayor, Diego Suárez de Amaya, led a controversial retreat. At least two eye-witness accounts accused the mayor of neglect in planning the town's defense, and one implied he set a destructive fire as he fled (RAH Salazar F19 4v-5r; RAH Salazar N9, 156v-157r). While the English easily overran the thinly fortified city, rainy weather and a Spanish military unit stopped the invaders at a nearby mountain pass. Eventually, the English withdrew, and Drake died shortly afterward of dysentery.

Drake's defeat coincided with two administrative vacancies that raised the stakes. The highest official post on the isthmus, the *Audiencia* of Panama presidency, remained vacant during the fortifications and battle. An even more prestigious appointment also influenced the event, as Peru's viceroy was known to be leaving his post. Spanish defenders facing the English, from another perspective stood as petitioners seeking more lucrative posts. The Armada commander who issued crucial intelligence reports about Drake's movements, Pedro Tello, petitioned for the position of Viceroy of

Peru (AGI Indiferente General 743, f. 3). Both Alonso de Sotomayor and the mayor of Nombre de Dios, Diego Suárez de Amaya, competed to become the *Audiencia* president. Sotomayor dispatched the friar, soldier and adventurer Francisco Caro de Torres, to present his version in Madrid. Meanwhile, Suárez de Amaya presented his petition in person, a process he later claimed cost a princely seven thousand ducats (Suárez de Amaya 300v). Evidence suggests that Sotomayor's access to Philip II's key advisers, García de Loaisa and Cristóbal de Moura, plus his weighty military résumé overpowered Suárez. In late 1596 he became the first military official appointed as *Audiencia* president (AGI Indiferente general 744, f. 134). Suárez de Amaya received an even more remote posting as the governor of Cumaná, a position he decried as a government of trials and dangers beneath his merits as Drake's vanquisher (Suárez de Amaya 289v, 304v). As late as 1602, he offered himself as the *Audiencia's* rightful president, prodding the king with accusations that Sotomayor mismanaged his charge.

Evidence suggests some of the hapless mayor's ducats inspired the *Dragontea*. Although its opening verses promise a song as Caliopean as any, the patronage dispute lurks from the outset:

Canto las armas y el varón famoso
Que al atrevido Inglés detuvo el paso,
Aquél nuevo Argonauta prodigioso
Que espantó las estrellas del ocaso. (183)⁶

This famous man stands out because of whom he is not: surviving accounts submitted to the Council of Indies would suggest the formidable Alonso de Sotomayor. Instead, the poet's new Aeneas is Diego Suárez de Amaya. Canto I refashions the classic Olympian council into a post-Tridentine hierarchy: an allegorized *Religión cristiana* laments the enemies who launch relentless attacks against the true church. The narrator cuts from the Heavenly court to Drake, whom a lady *Codicia* (covetousness) rouses to action (185). Recalling his exploits, this visitation retells the 1572 attack on Nombre de Dios that secured Drake's reputation. Mixing classical and biblical allusions, Drake becomes a Ulysses whose cunning entreaties to escaped slave settlements penetrated the city's fragile walls without upturning a single stone. Rising from retirement, Drake entices Queen Elizabeth with descriptions of weak Spanish defenses and fabulous riches (Canto II). However, his unsuccessful raid on the Canaries sets in motion the Spanish intelligence network spearheaded by Pedro Tello, the Armada commander. These information channels appear within the poem much as they do in Council archives, in language befitting a *letrado* or other royal bureaucrat. However, protagonist shifts within the poem. When Alonso de Sotomayor arrives, the narrator dismisses his presence as bringing only armaments rather

than much-needed soldiers. Meanwhile, Suárez de Amaya becomes the military leader who initiates desperately needed fortifications (213).

When Drake arrives, administrator's prose squeezed into epic verses yields to a rather different register. After all, a literary account that exalted the town's mayor confronted damaging first-hand accounts. How to paint defensive actions and retreat in heroic colors? Faced with this challenge, the poet deploys Spain's *epopeya*. After all, within the chronicles and popular romances that depicted Gothic Spain's loss, vanquishment and retreat are the conflagrations that forged Christian Spain. The scene reconfigures the mayor's ignominious retreat as a Pelayo's flight that saves sacred images from infidel sacrilege. In *Nombre de Dios*, a young mother faces the marauding corsairs in a scene laden with the maudlin erotic details that peppered the era's popular hagiographies and romances:

Llegan furiosos a buscallo el oro,
 con las desnudas puntas señalando
 el pecho donde estaba su tesoro,
 en dos tan tiernos ángeles llorando.
 Como están al furor del Euro, o Coro
 las hojas de los álamos temblando,
 Así temblando en yelo están desechos
 cabellos, manos, pies, niños, y pechos. (219)

When she flees with her husband and father, they set fire to their house, entrapping the English vandals. In this way, the scene provides a convenient explanation for the suspicious fire that destroyed the town.

From the mountain refuge, settlers swear fealty to Don Diego, transformed from *alcalde mayor* into a *caudillo godo* (237). He delivers a battlefield oration that fits the era's providentialist histories, linking the monarchical present to biblical heroes, Visigothic kings, and Reconquest warriors (236). While this scene displays the poem's hero in an emblematic pose, nervous jurisdictional claims intrude on the stamp's clarity. The narrator cuts short the hero's oratory with the legalistic: "... y todos luego, / como a Español, como a caudillo Godo, / Juran seguir su General don Diego" (237). Indeed, the poem's crucial scene grows steadily more dissonant as the timeless epic oratory clashes with the contemporary political dispute. For instance, one blood-drenched octave fades out in true epic gore, "Enrique aprieta el puño de la hoja, / que hasta la Cruz desde la punta moja." But, it gives way to the legalistic "y ellos y los demás obedecían / como a su General al fuerte Amaya, / que la jurisdicción reconocían" (238).

At this climactic point, the poetic voice interrupts the battle. A long apostrophe to the future king displaces the hero's present tense ("destroza, rompe, y hiere" 238) with the royal chronicler's future: "Tiempo vendrá que cante en otra lira / Con otro Plectro, si lo quiere el cielo (240)." Fol-

lowing the patterns that historians like Ambrosio de Morales and Jerónimo de Zurita set during the reign of Philip II, the long pause sweeps across the Iberian peninsula, from Granada's recently unearthed Sacromonte to the mountainous old Christian redoubts in Vizcaya and Asturias. Over this sacred landscape he invokes the fall of Roderic as the cataclysmic foundation for the Spanish royal lineage that stretches uninterrupted from Pelayo to the Habsburgs. These lines suggest how the periphery becomes a screen through which to view the empire's center. In effect, the poetic voice offers to finish the general history that would join the monarchical present with the Gothic past. As Lope wrote the poem, this royal project remained stalled in the 11th century (Kagan 1995, 77-79).

This chronicler's pause irrevocably alters the poem's balance. The would-be Aeneas, Suárez de Amaya fades out, while the poet takes center stage. The final canto rewrites Drake's death, attributing his demise to a lieutenant's poison dram. After this pause, the poem returns to allegory for its conclusion. Reconvening Canto I's heavenly council, *Religión cristiana* declares victory and celebrates Drake's watery grave. Most important to the aspiring servant of the world's most powerful Catholic monarch, the corsair died outside Jerusalem's gate ("Y de Jerusalém la puerta afuera" 256). The poem's conclusion merits reflection, for its celebration reveals a surprising omission. The Lady Church lays the Spanish triumph at the feet, not of the long reigning monarch, Philip II, but of his heir and Lope's dedicatee:

Ocúpense mil Cisnes en historias
De heroicas y Católicas hazañas (. . .)
Cante la fama triunfos, y victorias
Del Príncipe de Asturias y Montañas,
Y yo, Señor, tus alabanzas diga
Mientras el Sol su eclíptica prosiga. (256)

A truly Lopean gesture cuts through this octave. The poetic voice offers an allegory of Christian religion that embodies the Many, but the voice of the One—here, Lope the self-styled royal chronicler—interrupts. This clash between Calliope and Clio presents a trail that links topical and literary allusions, making the *Dragontea* a work carefully tuned to the end of an era.

III. Exploring Philip II's omission helps retrace topical allusions. Lope's closing offers to sing the triumphs and victories of the Prince of Asturias, as if he sprung *ex nihilo*. Early modern poets could draw upon many tropes designed to accent orderly succession, allaying the anxiety surrounding one king's death with assurances that family resemblance, tradition and divine providence stood ready to smooth the transition. Bypassing the king

within a work about royal officials appears too obvious to be accidental. Indeed, this elision recalls the disenchantment that shaped Lope's own Madrid neighborhoods in the late sixteenth century. Historian Richard Kagan reconstructed the often brazen opposition that simmered in the court city. Street prophets like Miguel de Piedrola and Juan de Dios gained audience and notoriety accusing the king of tyranny and sinfulness (1990: 86-113). A young woman employed as a maid in the palace, Lucrecia de León, gained a wide audience repeating her apocalyptic dreams that portrayed Philip II in monstrous shapes. By the late 1580's, Kagan argues, many citizens of the court city felt the monarch's reign had stretched out longer than his kingly virtues.

An even more immediate political context might have counseled the old king's exclusion. Shortly after the *Dragontea's* publication, Philip III's favorite (*privado*)—Francisco Gómez de Sandoval y Rojas, the future Duke of Lerma—used direct and indirect criticism of Philip II's regime to justify a purge within royal councils (Feros 90-101). The poem's composition likely coincided with the future *privado's* return from a posting as Valencia's viceroy (1595-1597). Lope spent part of his 1588 exile there and maintained ties to Levantine poets like Guillén de Castro, Gaspar de Aguilar and Gaspar de Mercader. Published in Valencia, Lope's connections within that kingdom likely provided early indications that this minister used literature to enhance his power. From this perspective, the *Dragontea* appears the opening salvo of a savvy courtier who already had intimations that the future king's favorite encouraged unflattering portraits of the previous monarch and his ministers.

Criticism of Philip II, whether loud or veiled, likely shaped Lope's epic. But still another more practical motive might lie behind the poet's encounter with the Council of Indies archive. Some of the seven thousand ducats that Diego Suárez de Amaya claimed he spent seeking to present his version of Drake's defeat likely inspired the *Dragontea*. The mayor's clash with Alonso de Sotomayor left traces too abundant to be coincidence; moreover, Lope's poem repeats certain pieces of information that overlap with the mayor's letters to the king, such as the accusation that the great military man spent most of the battle in bed. In other details, the poem faithfully matches relations filed with the Council; yet, where those documents portray the mayor as either irrelevant or incompetent, Lope heralds the Seville gentleman as Panama's savior.⁷ We know little about Lope's biography during the months he likely wrote the poem, except that he served as secretary to a gentlemen of the king's chamber, Francisco de Ribera Barroso, the Marquis of Malpica (Rennert and Castro 111). The only deduction current information allows is that Lope enjoyed court access.

Still, the poem suggests how easily the mayor's petition might have fit with a powerful clientele's broader agenda. The clash that the poem repeatedly intimates pitted Sevillian merchant values against a military ethos

forged in Flanders and Chile. Sotomayor became the *Audiencia* of Panama's first non-*letrado* president, and set about transforming the trading post previously run by a Seville native into a presidio (Panama 1, f. 94-120; Panama 32, f. 48). This might have meant the interruption of lucrative trading relationships. Even as the new military governor drew up fortification plans, officials in Seville's *Casa de Contratación* asked for distinctly commercial remedies like duty exemptions and subsidies (AGI Indiferente General 744 fs. 172-300; Indiferente General 1866, f. 42-78). No other city had as great a stake in New World trade and the kind of officials who oversaw it. The other vacancy filled in Drake's aftermath, Viceroy of Peru, likewise involved a protagonist from the poem. Pedro Tello, an unsuccessful petitioner for this post, receives a more flattering portrayal than Sotomayor or Peru's sitting Viceroy. Like Suárez de Amaya, Tello was a Seville native, and his family included the *Casa de Contratación's* president.

Whatever connections shaped the *Dragontea*, there remains little doubt that potentially lucrative administrative vacancies made Drake's retreat and death particularly important at court. However, going no further than the inference that Lope took sides, for principle or profit, traps the work in the same echo-proof critical dustbin where it has lain for three centuries, disconnected from the poet's other works and from early modern Spanish history. In order to reconstruct its meaning, we must plumb the epic form itself for more information. After all, identifying the possible factions that inspired the poem do not explain why Lope shaped the events into ten cantos. Another more common form, the *relación de servicios* or *hechos*, offered an expedient way to present dissenting versions of events or claims for *mercedes*. Sotomayor's own account circulated in that form. Lope himself worked in this more compact medium: his 1599 *Fiestas de Denia*, a verse relation, celebrated the future Duke of Lerma's rise to power. A goal that transcended the contested audience presidency inspired the *Dragontea's* form. Comparing Lope's account with the pro-Sotomayor version shows what epic offered that a relation did not: *Relación de los servicios que hizo a su magestad el Rey don Alonso de Sotomayor dirigida al Rey don Felipe III against La Dragontea de Lope de Vega Carpio. / Al Príncipe nuestro Señor.*⁸

In the emblematic terms that anchored sixteenth-century literary language, epic rendered Lope a Virgil for the new Rome. Richard Helgerson's apposite study of the interrelationship between literary genre and authorial ambitions in early modern England underscores the special resonance of Virgilian forms (101-02). Epic in particular linked the poet to empire. Literary allusions built into the heroic poem called up mythic resonances that placed the poet in the center of society. Inveterate allegorists, late sixteenth-century readers transformed the epic past into the present. Specifically, they allegorized this form into imperial shape. To readers within Catholic Europe, the imperial present looked Spanish. Examples abound. A half century earlier, Gonzalo Pérez, a crucial predecessor for the aspiring

royal servant, offered the prince of Asturias (later Philip II) his translation of Homer's *Odyssey* (*Ulyxea*). His prologue suggested Ulysses' adventures concealed a mirror of princes.⁹ Pérez later became the king's most powerful secretary, suggesting a palpable link between literature and life: a servant first dedicates works to the prince and later answers the call to serve him directly. Leaping still farther through allegory, Erasmo Viotto dedicated Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (Parma, 1581) to Alexander Farnese, then commanding Spanish forces in Flanders; there, he presented Geoffrey's quest to liberate Jerusalem as a true picture (*vero ritratto*) of the Duke of Parma's campaign to pacify Flanders (prologue). What happened when the epic took on American topics, narrowing the gap between historic past and literary present?

Crossing the Atlantic, the rebellions and corsairs that plagued the Spanish Americas sapped the epic's ameliorative power. Within just two years, three major works displayed this stress: Pedro de Oña's *Arauco domado* appeared in Lima (1596); Alonso de Ercilla's *Araucana* reappeared posthumously in Madrid (1597) in the first edition to combine its three parts; and Lope's poem emerged shortly afterward (1598). Each carried an empire's anxiety within their form. Chile, like Flanders, presented an endless, expensive conflict that threatened to unravel the Spanish empire from its periphery inward. Formal aspects of both Chilean epics echo this anxiety. Like the Araucan rebellion itself, Ercilla's omnibus edition makes the story go on and on, for a staggering 37 cantos. Oña imposed victory through his title, but his prologue conceded: "Acordé darle título de *Arauco Domado*, porque aunque sea verdad que agora, por culpas nuestras no lo esté, lo estuvo en su gobierno [the Marquis of Cañete]" (352). Oña left his poem open-ended, just dropping off after nineteen cantos; implicitly, he projected domination into the imperial future.

Lope's poem imposed closure on ongoing crisis. He focused on less than sixty days, celebrated victory and ended. Off the pages lurked continued English attacks. Royal chronicler Antonio de Herrera somberly recalled 1596, the year of Drake's defeat: "Fatigados se hallaban los Reinos de España con las guerras, con las esterilidades, y otras desventuras (1612, 616)." Nature itself seemed allied with Spain's adversaries: a new, virulent plague struck; frosts and hails destroyed vital wine and seed corn crops between 1597 and 1598; and English raiders wreaked havoc on a disorganized Cadiz in June, 1596 (Herrera 1612, 617-39; Parker 1978, 180-85). Such biblical disasters no doubt sounded like apocalypse in a world still shaped by what Frank Kermode calls a sense of an ending.

With this backdrop, Lope's monstrous portrait of Drake evinces an ameliorative strategy. In a sense, he turned the apocalyptic flames many Spaniards felt on the enemy. Suárez de Amaya's battlefield speech appropriates the dragon-slaying in Revelations (12-13): "Romper de los Dragones la cabeza, / De Cristo fue contra Luzbel victoria" (236). However, as An-

gus Fletcher's classic study on allegory shows, symbols like the dragon form microcosms that reach beyond any univocal trait or theme. In doing so, they laden their literary frame with tension: "The curious fact is that the best instances of *kosmoi* are all objects toward which a degree of ambivalence is felt; they are both good and bad at once" (219).

Such anxiety permeates the *Dragontea's* symbolic order. Because the reigning king remains nearly invisible, the dragon most firmly embodies power within the work's dramatic and moral universe. Drake's voyage clearly emerges from the Elizabethan court. No doubt, the poem depicts English power as sinful, making the queen a greedy Medea. But, her trappings are royal nonetheless. In contrast, the Spanish defenders orbit around a monarchical phantasm. Without a strong court, king or viceroy within the poem, the Habsburg state appears as a bloodless repository of military dispatches. Language reflects this disembodiment, as dry archival prose interrupts many canto headings and octets.

Indeed, the first time the poem depicts Spanish-American society, the dragon holds sway. Against Drake's strength and cunning, the Habsburg state appears little more than the royal seal ineffectually marking the silver crates the English attackers leave in shreds. These lines recall Drake's 1572 attack that made his name:

Este fue saco sin romper los muros
De Troya por pregón de bando y cajas,
Y no con deshazer mármoles duros,
Pues una tabla débil desencajas.
La gente por los árboles seguros
Viendo el nombre real partido en rajas (187)

The mule-train's defenders hide in trees, while the English raiders and their *cimarrón* allies rain down on the cargo, unimpressed that the treasure belongs to the world's most powerful king ("ni el nombre de Philipo le alborota"). Linking the dragon to such scenes of leaderless Spanish territory makes Drake far more than an evil adversary. Rather, he becomes a screen through which to examine urgent issues about government and stewardship on the peninsula.

Indeed, Drake, whether in history or literature, proved an uncanny choice for an adversary. Introducing himself to readers and patrons as a courtier, Lope confronted an enemy who embodied that culture. As a consequence, the poet, like his archival sources, consciously wrestles with the enemy's attractive traits. Alone among the poem's characters, Drake embodies the period's noble ethos. He first appears as an emblem of the courtly disenchantment. Antonio de Guevara's *Menosprecio de corte* popularized: fallen from the queen's grace, he sleeps underneath an elm tree that bears his now idle sword (186). While he seeks the queen's renewed sponsor-

ship, an envious adversary sleeps in a London bed next to an unused sword (193). A hero toiling to win back royal favor enacts a familiar Iberian pattern: this could be the Cid of ballad tradition or the Grand Captain and Cortés of chronicles.

A courtier's wit likewise undercuts the enmity. The first Canto recalls Drake's navigation and piracy with grudging admiration. For instance, at *Nombre de Dios* (1572) Drake exchanges captured silver for a signed receipt:

Satisfaciendo con estrañas veras
 Firmaste de tu nombre las partidas,
 Como si el dueño de la plata fueras (. . .)
 Volviste el libro que fue en tanto estrago
 Para el dueño gentil recibo y pago. (188)

This witty gesture gives life to Castiglione's manual, where ludic men and women rule in courtesy's realm. As important, the courteous Drake recognized Spanish nobility. The canto goes on to recall his capture of a Spanish vessel, whereupon he honored a knight of Santiago as guest rather than captive: "Por su valor su hacienda le volviste, / Que siempre en el rigor piadoso fuiste" (188). Like the aristocrats Castiglione gathers in Urbina, Drake selects noble company, and doing so, accents his own gallantry. Drake as courtier undercuts Drake as monstrous heretic. Given the striking resemblances between the adversary and the poet-courtier's ideal self, what sets them apart? Certainly no ambiguity clouds the poem's overarching mission: to celebrate Drake's vanquishment and to exalt Panama's citizen defenders. On a subconscious level, the poet seeks epic's power to impose closure on an intractable conflict. Here, further examining the dragon's allegorical terrain—keeping in mind Fletcher's notion of allegory as a many-layered *kosmos*—yields the crucial basis to distinguish self from monstrous other. A fascinating place to start is the seventeenth-century lexicographer, Sebastián de Covarrubias, who culled biblical, popular and classical sources for his essay defining *dragón*:

[1] Serpiente de muchos años, que con la edad ha venido a crecer desafortadamente . . . [2] Entre las demás insignias que llevaban los romanos en sus estandartes era una el dragón, o para significar la suma vigilancia del capitán general y el cuidado y solercia que avía de tener en todo . . . [3] Anduvo recibido en el vulgo, que para ser una culebra o sierpe dragón, se avía de comer primero muchas otras sierpes. Y con esta alusión decían los antiguos que para hacerse uno emperador y señor del mundo, se avía de comer muchos reyes y príncipes . . . [4] En otros lugares significa los tiranos, monarcas, emperadores, reyes paganos que han perseguido la Iglesia, y el pueblo de Dios antes y después del advenimiento de Christo Nuestro Señor. [numbering mine] (*Tesoro de la lengua castellana* 485-86)

The second definition, which draws the dragon as an emblem of stewardship, echoes Alciato's widely known emblems. *Custodiendas virgines* places the monster at Athena's feet as a guardian of virginity (54). In contrast, *Ex arduis perpetuum nomen* depicts a bird watching as a dragon consumes her offspring, the calamity representing the trials on the path to fame (171). Both emblems give vigilance a pictorial dimension, whether through a positive representation, the mighty Athena, or through its lapse, the timorous bird who allows the serpent to devour her offspring. In this way, both Alciato and Covarrubias place the symbol within the realm of prudence.

The dragon's multivalence thus transcends its demonizing role, by capturing the anxious end of an era and evoking the painful autumn of Philip II's long reign. After all, the aged serpent [Covarrubias 1, 3] grown to a monstrous size after consuming smaller serpents recalls the monarch's ingestion of Portugal, and thereafter, the constant struggle to retain this and other military or matrimonial prizes (Parker 1995, 266). Accusations that the king failed to protect his realms from English attack formed a focal point of Lucrecia de León's apocalyptic dreams (Kagan 1990, 75-83). Here, we can think of Alciato's *Ex arduis perpetuum nomen*, where the bird's weakness allows the dragon to consume her young.

Indeed, following prudence through the poem's allegorical map transforms the strange work into one that powerfully captures the late 1590's. Its hero, Suárez de Amaya, so strikingly unlike the classic epic hero, nonetheless speaks to this moral context. He embodies, not heroic valor, but princely prudence. For example, when the pirate arrives, Lope's mayor draws closer, not to fight, but to study him:

En el Nombre de Dios previene luego,
Que a su gran diligencia lo atribuyo . . .
De cuyo arbitrio y diligencia arguyo
Su ingenio, su valor, su diligencia,
Y en advertir a la Real Audiencia. (209)

At the poem's low point, when the English overtake Nombre de Dios, the poet's *yo* interrupts to speak to the prince of Asturias. He underscores the pirate's imprudence: "Creed señor que no hay adarme, o grano / Que no le haya costado treinta vidas" (211).

This apostrophe reveals a key aspect of the work's positioning. That is, the poet teaches the young prince about kingship. As Anthony Pagden notes, prudence replaced valor as the signature imperial virtue after the age of expansion gave way to a struggle for preservation (320-22). For Spaniards, Giovanni Botero's *Reason of State* reigned as the manual for this statecraft. Its primary goal, here drawn from Antonio de Herrera's 1593 Castilian translation, helps explain Suárez de Amaya's unheroic caution and delib-

eration: "Formar un Príncipe religioso, y prudente para saber gobernar y conservar su estado en paz y justicia" (prologue). Botero's prestige redoubled within Catholic Europe after Philip II commissioned its translation as a lesson for his son and heir.¹⁰ Given this context, Lope's language and imagery evince a well calibrated strategy. A work that introduced an aspiring royal servant highlighted stewardship and vigilance because these traits anchored the era's mirrors of princes. Moreover, these mirrors also enjoyed notable patronage success. Besides Gonzalo Pérez's trajectory, from giving the prince a manual for kingship to a post as the most powerful royal secretary, Antonio de Herrera provided a very recent example. He gained the coveted position of *cronista mayor de Indias* after translating Botero.¹¹

Even the anti-English invective that proved so distasteful to the poem's anglophone critics (A.K. Jameson, Pierce) shows Lope had his ear tuned to the particularly Spanish way of writing *speculum principis*. The most influential moral philosopher from the post-Armada era, Jesuit Pedro de Rivadeneyra, transcribed reason of state into apocalyptic tones. His 1595 *Tratado del príncipe cristiano* warned the prince of dire consequences should he turn from Christian virtue in his efforts to conserve the state (476-79). The Jesuit's statecraft presented a moral framework that scarcely envisioned differences of degree that Botero implicitly allowed. Rather, imprudence—whether taking poor advice, tolerating heretics or listening to Machiavelian *políticos*—brought disaster. In this way, he made Mary Stuart's beheading a cautionary tale of well-deserved punishment (476-79).

Like Rivadeneyra's gallery of fallen princes, Lope's work draws its urgency from the fragile moral bounds between self and the monstrous adversary. After all, the striking similarity between Drake's courtly image and the Spanish aristocratic ethos made discrimination imperative. With prudence as its signature virtue, the poem offers *codicia* (covetousness) as its dominant vice. Lope chose an appropriate way to instill urgency. Since Columbus's disenchanting Jamaica letter, this sin more than any other haunted Spaniards in the Americas. The *Dragontea* spins action outward from the dueling goddesses, *Religión cristiana* and *Codicia*. Matching a figure for heresy against the Christian Religion might have more safely sealed the rivalry within the realm of absolute differences. But, a moral center that pitted the church universal against covetousness created more tension. Fear that only greed gave men the courage to entrust their lives to the sea haunted the age of European exploration, as well as its epic echoes. Ercilla's *Araucana* makes *codicia* the cause of Valdivia's 1554 death, and thus the long war ("codicia fue ocasión de tanta guerra / y perdición total de aquesta tierra" 136). This theme so firmly entrenched in the century's epics makes Drake's sinful motions stand dangerously close to Spanish forces.

The Dragon/Drake falls because of a *codicia* that overwhelms prudence. What could save Spain from the same fate? Spaniards in the Americas so

quickly recognized this sin in their midst. Here, Quint's depiction of interweaving strands of topical and literary allusion warrants reflection. The topical references bring the self dangerously close to the other's monstrous sins. However, the form itself suggests the way out of this labyrinth. While covetousness haunted late Renaissance epics, civic happiness endowed the epic with a counter-balancing virtue. The Catholic Reformation's most influential poem, Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, emanates from the dream of *civile felicità* (36). The allegorical annotations that framed its cantos placed that civic happiness in a city whose walls stood so strong, ringed by mountains so harsh, that reaching it required all the devotion of political man (27).

In essence, the late sixteenth-century epic uses its cantos to form a trial that stands between citizens and *felicidad civil*, using the term found in Juan Sedeño's Castilian translation of Tasso (335r, 341r). Lope's Panama set such a trial in a particularly apt place. The rivals behind the *Dragonetea*, Sotomayor and Suárez de Amaya, agreed on one thing: the first depicted his domain as "la más enferma tierra del mundo" and the mayor depicted a "tan contrario clima a la salud humana" (AGI Panama 1, f. 103; AGI Panama 32, f. 2).

These shortcomings, in turn, shaped perceptions about residents. Defense scenarios shared deep anxieties that Spanish national identity failed to take root on American soil. Pedro Tello, the naval commander whose warnings likely doomed Drake, contrasted the Spanish settlers' languor ("tibiesa") with the English cunning (AGI Indiferente general 743, 215a). Sotomayor portrayed an unhealthy *polis* to buttress his proposal for the militarization of the Atlantic outpost (AGI, Panama 1, 94, dated December 8, 1596). One fear permeates the Council of Indies's documents that discuss the isthmus: what if English invaders instilled social order where Spaniards failed? Many documents imagined the English allying with the escaped slaves, Indians and mulattos, creating a new society to threaten Spain's Peruvian and Mexican lifelines (e.g., AGI Indiferente general 745, 254a).

Much as González Echevarría suggests, Lope's poem applies the magic of *epopeya* as a defense tactic. Through narrative power, the citizens maligned in council documents become, not simply worthy, but emblematically so. This strategy comes into play when the poem transforms the retreating Suárez de Amaya into a *caudillo godo*. The myth's contours well suited the task at hand. It featured leaders whose sinfulness opened the city gates to infidel invaders; the retreat of citizens and their sacred relics into mountains; and from there, a moral reconfiguration that formed new leaders and initiated the redemption. This myth particularly suited the *Dragonetea's* conscious evocation of an era's long overdue close, with its exhortations to the future monarch and pointed diminution of the long-reigning sovereign.

Introducing narrative patterns reminiscent of Spain's *epopeya* presented its royal dedicatee a two-edged sword. From one vantage point it provided a royal lineage for the Habsburg monarchs that reached back to Pelayo, but it also warned of dire consequences should a king neglect his duty. How was the prince to act in order to avoid becoming a second Roderic? Quite appropriately, the aspiring royal servant fixed on the power of *mercedes*, the royal prizes for service, to overcome vast distance and hold the realms together. Lope plumbed his archival sources, extracting two examples of a king's relationship with his vassals. One depicted fealty, the other treachery. First, he recalled the crucial role that Santiago del Príncipe, the *cimarrón* settlement, played in repelling Drake's men (RAH Colección Salazar F19, fol. 1-10; RAH Colección Salazar N9, fol. 154-161; Panama 1, fol. 94). Second, he selected an obscure traitor mentioned in one source, as an architect named Ojeda, from San Juan de Ullúa, who became Drake's close confidant ("muy su amigo," RAH, Colección Salazar N9, 160v). He juxtaposed these two characters to convey a pointed message to the future monarch. Expanding one line in a relation, the narrative makes the mysterious Ojeda the major adversary after Drake dies. His treachery stems from the complaint that the king failed to reward his service: "Quejávase del César que pudiera / Haber remunerado y conocido / Sus servicios y gastos" (216). These lines place the sin's weight on royal shoulders.

Against Ojeda, the escaped slaves gathered in Santiago del Príncipe become the ideal subjects. Drake sends an emissary who offers the English commander's friendship (*amistad*), asking: "Qué merced os ha hecho el Rey de España / que no se acuerda de que hayáis nacido?" (225). Speaking like a neo-stoic, the *cimarrón* leader rejects Drake's "amistad desigual tan engañosa" (226). Lope's entirely fictional Don Luis Etyope becomes the perfect citizen vassal: "Que no sepa quien somos poco importa, / si sabemos quien es . . ." (226). For support, the *cacique* draws a circle that joins his village, the absent king and their mutual patron:

Santiago es deste pueblo el apellido,
Y del Príncipe a honor del gran tercero,
Pues hoy a tal patrón favor le pido,
Y por mis dos Philipos morir quiero (226)

The pledge to die for both Philips emanates from a citizen's virtue, borne of a sense of place and a heavenly patron. From the most remote vantage point, the poet holds up a mirror for the future king to see already worthy subjects who merit prizes. Lope's own subjunctive valediction ("y yo, Señor, tus alabanzas diga" 256) brings this message about royal munificence closer, into the court itself.

As the poem closes, only the king and the author's *yo* remain. Casting himself as a Virgil for Habsburg Spain, Lope invites his dedicatee, the fu-

ture king, to a banquet already laid out. The epic form likewise calls forth the quest for civil happiness without leaving room for the prince to choose his role or the setting. While Lope never again wrote so explicitly about contemporary politics, this vision lingered. Just nine months before Philip III died, in June, 1620, Lope presented a petition to take Pedro de Valencia's place as a royal chronicler (Pérez Pastor 288-89). The salary, subsidies (*ayudas de costa*) and honor of palace office remained a lodestone despite stunning theatrical success. This offer to trade status and advancement for creative accomplishment presents a tension within Lope's literary development that warrants further study.

Notes

¹Archivo General de Indias (AGI) Indiferente general 745, f. 141. Published in Juan Jiménez Savariego, "Nuevos datos para las biografías de algunos escritores españoles de los siglos xvi y xvii." *Boletín de la real academia española* 5 (1918): 161. I am indebted to Bernardo García García—author of the recent *La Pax Hispanica: Política exterior del Duque de Lerma* (Leuven: Leuven UP, 1996)—for this citation and most important, for the generous suggestions and insights he has shared with me in conversations at Madrid's Biblioteca Nacional. For a discussion of Herrera's censorship, see Richard Kagan, "Clio and the Court" 79-80 and Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, "La censura de obras históricas en el siglo xvii español." *Chronica nova* 19 (1991) 113-121.

²There are only two twentieth-century editions. A commemorative edition issued by the Museo naval (2 vols, Burgos, 1935) with a preface by Gregorio Marañón, includes archival documents from the Museum's Colección Navarrete that relate to Drake and the Spanish Armada. A second edition, Entrambasaguas, 1965, will be cited in this chapter. Original editions available for study are the Valencia *princeps*, Biblioteca Nacional (BN) R1124 and the 1602 omnibus, *La hermosura de Angélica*, where it is part III (BN R5135, R780).

³Jean-Louis Fleckniakoska, "Lope de Vega propagandiste nationaliste: La *Dragontea* (1598) in *Hommage des hispanistes français a Noel Salomon* (Barcelona, Laia, 1979) 321-33; Ismael García, "La *Dragontea*. Justificación y vicisitudes," in Manuel Criado de Val, ed. *Lope de Vega y los orígenes del teatro español*. Actas del I Congreso Internacional sobre Lope de Vega (Madrid: EDI, 1981) 591-603; Ramiro Lagos, "La *Dragontea* y la huella de Lope en Colombia," Criado de Val, ed., 605-15. A short, sympathetic reading appears in John Cummins' recent biography of Drake (268-73).

⁴A. K. Jameson identified three surviving *relaciones*, likely 17th-century copies of Audience of Panama documents Lope likely used. *Real Academia de Historia* (RAH) *Colección Salazar* (Salazar) F19 f. 7 (May, 1596) likely is a

copy of the *relación* Sotomayor himself sent with Francisco Caro de Torres to Madrid; strongly military in its focus, it agrees in all major details with Caro de Torres' 1620 publication, *Relacion de los servicios que hizo a su magestad del Rey . . . don Alonfo de Sotomayor . . . dirigida al Rey don Felipe III*. An eyewitness account that focuses strongly on military fortifications is RAH Salazar N9, f. 154, dated January 21, 1596. Finally, "Relación de la vuelta" from the Museo Naval's Colección Navarrete (Vol. 25, 537-54) features less military detail, and more literary energy depicting conversations and motives about Panama's preparations and Drake's death. Contemporary accounts written after the *Dragontea* include: Luis Cabrera de Córdoba *Felipe segundo* (154-56); Antonio de Herrera, *Tercera parte de la historia general del mundo* III, xi-xii, 597-99. Recent sources include: Cummins 249-55 and Lynch, *Spain Under the Habsburgs* 328-30. My description culls material from these sources; parenthetical citations note important divergences among contemporary accounts.

⁵Spanish descriptions of this region and its population are found in: AGI Panama 32, 2r-2v; Panama 1, 94-103.

⁶Quotations come from *Obras completas de Lope de Vega*, ed. Joaquín de Entrambasaguas. I have elected to draw citations for this little-edited work from this edition due to its relative accessibility. It is a straight transcription of the *princeps* (BN R1124); I retain this orthography, except for abbreviations like q-, that I spell out completely (que). Serious reservations about this edition should be kept in mind: it suggests very rapid preparation. For example, damage to that edition deleted the "varón" of line 1, though the 1602 edition shows this classic epic opening line as such. Instead, the editor inserted "león."

⁷A passenger register stands as the only objective description of this official: "Don Diego Suárez de Amaya, natural de Sevilla, hijo de Fernán Suárez de Amaya y de doña Catalina de Caso, a Tierra Firme como Alcalde Mayor y Capitán General de la ciudad de Nombre de Dios." February 6, 1592. AGI, Contratación 5238 (n. 2, r9, III 106).

⁸Published in Madrid, 1620, a version of the *relación* likely circulated during the two previous decades as a manuscript. Its title typifies the relations offered along with petitions for rewards to Council of Indies.

⁹"que quitada la corteza se descubre muy grandes secretos." *Ulyxea*. Cited here from the prologue of the Salamanca, 1550 edition. The original approbation dates November, 1547.

¹⁰For example, a Milanese inquisition official, Apollinare de Calderini da Ravenna, dedicated his own discourse on Botero's philosophy to the Duke of Parma noting the Spanish connection: "che l'ha data à leggere al Prencipe suo filgio, come opera, e utile e gioueuole per mantener tanti Regni, e Imperi ch'egli spera d'hereditare" (n.p.)

¹¹The Council of Indies memorandum includes this translation of Botero among Herrera's qualifications for the position of royal chronicler. AGI Indiferente General 743, fl. 209. Dated February 12, 1596.

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