



Guillén Berrendero, José Antonio, Hernández Franco, Juan y Alegre Carvajal, Esther (eds.), *Ruy Gómez de Silva, príncipe de Éboli. Su tiempo y su contexto*, Madrid y Frankfurt am Main, Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2018, 412 págs. ISBN: 9788416922758.

Ruy Gómez de Silva (or, as he was born, Rui Gomes da Silva) was Prince of Éboli, subsequently Duke of Pastrana, and a central actor of the early reign of Philip II, recognized as the king's *privado* and a figure of great influence inside and beyond the court. Nevertheless, he remains something of a man of mystery, at least in comparison to the seventeenth-century *validos* Lerma and especially Olivares. This fine collection of essays goes some way toward remedying this relative historiographical neglect. In particular, it offers valuable insights into Éboli's activities outside the political and courtly roles that formed the focus of most previous scholarship. Some essays illuminate the Portuguese background of Ruy Gómez and more broadly the networks and mechanisms of an influential Lusitanian presence in the sixteenth-century Castilian court. Readers will also acquire a more rounded view of Ruy Gómez as lord of vassals, patron of the Church and education, and protagonist and exemplar of the aristocratic culture of magnificence and luxury. Although some contributions are only peripherally relevant to Ruy Gómez himself, all are pertinent to his era and milieu.

Turning first to the light shed here on the Portuguese connection, Ana Isabel Buescu offers a cogent explication of the genealogy of Ruy Gómez and particularly of family ties to the prominent lineage of Teles de Meneses. Félix Labrador Arroyo provides an informative discussion of the vicissitudes in Castile of the Portuguese entourages that accompanied the *infantas* Isabel and then María Manuela to their Habsburg marriages. Despite the antipathy of Francisco de los Cobos and others, many Portuguese courtiers and caretakers persisted at court, especially in the households of the *infantas* María and Juana; Labrador Arroyo argues that these individuals and a larger network founded on the marriages of Portuguese ladies-in-waiting to Castilian nobles comprised essential building blocks of the incipient Ebolista faction.

It is no surprise that Santiago Martínez Hernández contributes a well-wrought essay examining “la hora de los portugueses en la corte de Felipe II.” His particular focus is on the courtly career of Cristóbal de Moura in comparison with that of Ruy Gómez de Silva. Martínez Hernández concludes that Moura was the more impressive of the two Portuguese *privados*, for his ability to gain the trust and favor of an older, mature, and suspicious monarch, while Éboli's rise followed the more familiar pattern of an older courtier becoming the favorite of a young impressionable prince. While Ruy Gómez represented “the paradigmatic *cortesano*,” Moura would “transcend the courtier archetype and elevate himself to the status of *el político*” later defined by Gracián (p. 93). It is to be hoped that Martínez Hernández's more exten-

sive study of Moura will appear soon. In his essay aiming to trace the political legacy of Ruy Gómez, Trevor Dadson makes a case for Éboli's second son Diego de Silva y Mendoza, Count of Salinas and Ribadeo, as a third wise counselor in the tradition of his father and Moura. Salinas, though, attained neither *privanza* nor the supreme influence of *el político*, but instead remained a largely unheeded voice of reason and restraint as the Monarchy turned again to belligerence after the brief interlude of peace orchestrated by Lerma. Dadson envisions Ruy Gómez as a pragmatic pacifist, informed by broad international experience and sympathies, and posits a multigenerational Ebolista tendency within the Monarchy that extended at least to Lerma and Salinas in the seventeenth century. To explain the progressive marginalization of Ebolista prudence, he recurs among other factors to the rather stale notion that around 1559 "the more open and diverse Spain of the first half of the sixteenth century gave way to a closed country, hostile to influences from the exterior and more inward- than outward-looking." (p. 386).

Two essays contribute to understanding Éboli as founder of a duchy and lord of vassals. Esther Alegre Carvajal persuasively sustains her argument that Ruy Gómez had long been gestating plans that he put into play in the last years of his life to transform Pastrana into a magnificent ducal seat. While death derailed some of his intentions, Ruy Gómez left his mark on Pastrana, not just architecturally but economically as well; interestingly, Alegre traces his 1570 efforts to direct Granadine morisco merchants and artisans to Pastrana even before the general policy of exile from Granada was decided. She provides details of the religious patronage of the new duke and duchess, as well as the outlines of Ruy Gómez's instructions for the government of his estates. All-in-all, she depicts him as a thoughtful, energetic, and beneficial lord of his ducal town, which under his guidance was "transformed into a multifunctional space for the development and display of 'princely' power." Where Dadson cast Lerma as a political descendant of Éboli, Alegre asserts that the pattern of urban reshaping Ruy Gómez imposed in Pastrana "would attain its fullest realization in Lerma" when that town was remade by its own new duke in the next century (p. 155).

Francisco Fernández Izquierdo portrays less idyllic aspects of lordship in his essay tracing the frictions that pitted former and continuing vassals of the Order of Calatrava against new seigneurs like the first Duke of Pastrana. At the outset, Fernández Izquierdo makes a crucial but sometimes overlooked point, that while lordship was a supreme ambition of the upwardly mobile in early modern society, "it could well be much less lucrative than one might expect." (p. 213-14) In continuation, his essay opens a window on some of the difficulties of imposing new arrangements on vassals accustomed to different previous patterns of dominance and coexistence. While the author should have condensed some of his blow-by-blow accounts of litigation, his essay does let the voices of commoners unhappy with the new seigneur come through loud and clear.

Various chapters in this collection present Ruy Gómez de Silva in the roles of consumer, collector, and performer of the outward signs of noble status and aristocratic luxury. Perhaps the most intriguing and fully realized essay on this score is Germán Labrador López de Azcona's analysis of Ruy Gómez's role in courtly festivities in Brussels during Carnival season, 1550. He argues that Ruy Gómez's central place in the closing ceremonies of Philip's stay in the Low Countries serves to indicate –to contemporaries and historians alike– the great extent of princely favor he

enjoyed by that time. In Labrador's reading, all the significant courtly events in this Carnival cycle were protagonized by Ruy Gómez, whose evening *máscara* appropriated the storyline of the tournament sponsored by Alonso de Pimentel earlier that day. His star turns in the "theater of magnificence" continued with personal sponsorship of the next week's joust. In addition to offering clear signs of Ruy Gómez's *privanza*, his *máscara* marked a significant evolution of the genre: "Beyond augmenting his fortune and serving the Monarchy, Ruy Gómez de Silva bequeathed to posterity the first *máscara* with a plot of which we have notice in Spanish court theater." (p. 322).

Although more direct documentary evidence continues to emerge of Ruy Gómez de Silva's activities and opinions, it remains necessary for historians to read indirect evidence, such as these accounts of court festivities, to grasp the evolution of Éboli's fortunes. This volume also offers salutary reminders that historians should remain conscious that their narratives and analyses often bridge gaps in the sources by adopting storylines from previous historiography.

In a masterful survey of seventeenth-century historical appreciations of Ruy Gómez, Francisco Precioso Izquierdo finds that treatments of Éboli were subordinate to larger arguments about Philip II, with defenders of the Prudent King depicting him as the mirror and perfection of *privados* while his reputation suffered in writings critical of the deceased monarch. Historians, and I do not exempt myself, have arguably been too quick to pluck from a biased historiography this guise of the perfect *privado* and employ it to clothe Ruy Gómez de Silva. Of course, it is not only immediate historical treatments of the period that influence later historians; in the case of Éboli and the court of Philip II in general, the factional template established by Von Ranke and other nineteenth-century historians continues to shape the questions, the explanations, and the narratives of contemporary scholars. It is also the case that historians will seek to make windows into much broader themes out of the findings of idiosyncratic case studies.

Nearly twenty-five years ago, in my own biography of Ruy Gómez de Silva, I interpreted his career largely through the lens of a clash of hereditary versus service notions of aristocracy. At the time, I clearly overstated the obscurity of Ruy Gómez's lineage, but I would still uphold the general line of interpretation. Perhaps Jaime Contreras would as well, since his preface to this volume offers a lucid analysis of the definitional and existential conflicts concerning nobility in the sixteenth century, and posits a growing conservative backlash against the idea that noble status was conferred by *gracia real* rather than by lineage. While Éboli was doubtless buffeted by this reactionary wind, Contreras makes the point that the eventual resolution of these debates would be social acceptance of nobility as comprising contemporary virtue and wealth alongside immemorial honor. Among other achievements, this volume presents Ruy Gómez de Silva as an exemplar of such composite nobility, a man of honorable birth propelled upward by royal grace predicated on his virtuous conduct and advice, and by his own canny and successful fortune-seeking. This is an excellent and thought-provoking collection of essays.

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