

The Greek and Biblical Architecture of Góngora's *Soledades*: A Frame for Covert Protest Against the Morisco Expulsion

Crystal Chemris
(University of Virginia)

In *Góngora heroico: Las Soledades y la tradición épica*, Mercedes Blanco situates Góngora's master work within the Homeric tradition, arguing that the *Soledades*, in its subtle critique of heroic poetry, constitutes a rather paradoxical construct. Like John Beverley¹ and other critics, she removes the work from epic as it is normally conceived; its lack of a *telos* as well as its apparent political symbolism lead her to characterize the work as "una epopeya de la paz" (2012b, 66). In the poem, she argues, Góngora redirects imperial utopian ambitions of overseas expansion to the homeland, incorporating the writings of his humanist mentor, Pedro de Valencia, by extolling a vision of peace and domestic agrarian harmony on the Spanish peninsula.²

In developing this symbolic critique, Góngora draws on a small collection of classics from ancient Greek literature as well as from the books of Old Testament prophets, although he certainly responds to Latin classics and to more immediate Romance predecessors. As Blanco points out, Valencia had admonished Góngora to seek inspiration in ancient Greek classics rather than in the Italian Renaissance (Blanco 2012b, 229-30; Pérez López). Citing Longinus's advice to writers from *On the Sublime* (*De Sublimitate*), Valencia writes of the fundamental influence of Homer on a number of ancient Greek authors and then extols the ancient Hebrew prophets in their company:

Pluguiera a Dios i yo pudiera comunicarle a v.m. la lección de aquellos grandaços y de otros mui mayores, David, Isaías, Jeremías i los demás profetas, cómo suena con sus propiedades, allusiones i translaciones en sus lenguas originales Hebrea i Griega; pero a lo menos lea v.m. los buenos Latinos que imitan a los mejores Griegos: Virgilio i Horacio y pocos otros; no se dege llevar de los Italianos modernos, que tienen mucho de parlería i ruido vano (Pérez López 69; Cf. Blanco 2012b, 230).³

¹ Beverley maintains that in writing the *Soledades*, "the patriotic epic and the epic hero *per se* are no longer a genuine possibility for Góngora as an artist who writes in the midst of a growing sense of crisis and decadence in Spain and from a personal stance which is antagonistic to the ideology of Christian and national despotism which sustains the imperialist epics of the sixteenth century. There is still a fascination with its possibilities but, at the same time, the necessity of rendering it as a fragment" (1980, 69).

² Recent scholarship deals with the symbolic interaction of peninsula and colony. Blanco refines her argument for "una epopeya de la paz", claiming that Góngora's program to counter the messianic conquest project of Fernández de Quirós in the Pacific "parece devolver a Europa la figura mítica conocida del "buen salvaje" proyectada en América y más aún en Oceanía (figura dieciochesca cuyos precursores van de Fracastoro y las Casas a Montaigne)" (2014, 168). I have studied the interaction of Inca Garcilaso in Góngora's humanist circle. I argue that Inca Garcilaso interrogates the Spanish crisis addressed by Pedro de Valencia's *arbitrismo* in his *Comentarios reales*, counterpoising the example of pre-conquest Incan social structure, while his heraldic shield appears to be celebrated by Góngora in the image of the isthmus of Panamá in the *Soledades* (Chemris 2018).

³ Blanco, referring to this section of Valencia's 1613 letter, associates the turn to Greek authors from those Italian or even Latin with a patriotic affirmation of "la autonomía de una tradición hispana" in parallel with the imagined histories of the origins of Spanish in Greek, Hebrew or autochthonous languages (2012b, 230). It should be noted that parts of the book of Daniel (2.4b-7.28) and one verse of Jeremiah (10.11) were written in Aramaic (May and Metzger xxvi).

I propose to amplify Blanco's argument for the impact of the Greek classics upon the *Soledades* and then to consider the significance of a case of Góngora's assimilation in Spanish of the play of "propiedades, alusiones i translaciones" of one of the Hebrew prophets, with an eye towards better understanding the political significance of the poem, in the context of the aftermath of the Morisco expulsion.

The Greek architecture of the *Soledades* was first recognized by María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, who argued that Góngora employs Dio Chrysostom's seventh (or Euboean) discourse on the hunter of Euboea, translated from the Greek by Valencia, as a narrative thread. The discourse functions symbolically to interpellate the poem's readers on the issue of agrarian reform. In the discourse, the rural hunters are rewarded for their hospitality to a visiting stranger—a figure not unlike Góngora's *peregrino*—with the right to live on the public lands they worked rent free. This symbolic incorporation of Valencia's agrarian vision has been well studied by, among others, John Beverley, who builds on L.J. Woodward's early intervention, and in an essential essay by Mercedes Blanco for the *Góngora Hoy* series. Blanco has signaled Homer's *Odyssey* as another Greek intertext, which she believes Góngora accessed in both bilingual Greek-Latin ad verbum translation as well as in translation into Spanish (2012b, 238-42). In addition to Dio Chrysostom and Homer, Blanco includes Claudian, a poet who spoke Greek but wrote in Latin, as a member of this Greek circle of influence upon Góngora, implicitly one of the "buenos latinos que imitan a los griegos" mentioned by Valencia (2012b, 237, 242-43, n. 73). I propose to analyze the poetic function of this Greek literary tradition as a kind of symbolic scaffolding, beginning with Blanco's reading of the echoes of the *Odyssey* in the *Soledades*.

One of Blanco's most original arguments for the Homeric foundation of Góngora's poem is her suggestion that Odysseus's encounter with the princess Nausicaa is the source for the opening of the *Soledades* (2012b, 291-94). The morning after Odysseus arrives naked and shipwrecked on the island of the Phaeacians, he awakens to the sound of Nausicaa and her handmaidens who have come to the river to do the laundry. He wonders, in a phrase that is repeated in the poem, "Ah me, what are the people whose land I have come to this time, and are they violent and savage, and without justice, or hospitable to strangers, with a godly mind?" (Lattimore 105).⁴ He presents himself to Nausicaa, who offers him a bath and fresh clothing, thereby demonstrating her people's civility through hospitality to a stranger. Jáuregui's ridicule in the polemic over Góngora's new poetry of the seemingly unheroic first act of the shipwrecked *peregrino* of washing his clothes: "lo mismo diría a su lavandera" (25), reveals his incomprehension of the Homeric reference. As Blanco argues, this fragmented reference is meant to recall Valencia's affirmation of the nobility of labor, worthy even of a princess (2012b, 292).

It is significant that Nausicaa's name is never mentioned, a gesture consonant with Góngora's well-known technique of elision, signaled by Dámaso Alonso and described by Blanco: "En realidad, sólo el recuerdo de sus modelos puede explicar todo el texto de las *Soledades*, que debe parte de su decantada oscuridad a su carácter elíptico. Lo que el relato elide debe suplirse con el recuerdo de fuentes ilustres" (2012b, 219). Thus Góngora's readers are interpellated by a veritable symphony of subtle phonic, rhythmic, semantic and literal echoes, as Blanco describes, orchestrated by a poet who is now known to have composed music and who was distinguished by "su excelente oído para la música del lenguaje y su gran memoria verbal" (2012b, 264). Góngora's legendary obscurity thus serves his elliptical critique in elegant, indeed, musical, literary references.

⁴ The Greek original is available in the Loeb bilingual edition (Homer, Bk VI, 105-33); I have also consulted English translations of referenced passages by Lattimore and Mendelsohn.

Another Homeric feature of the *Soledades* which Blanco identifies is Góngora's cultivation of *enargeia* or "vivacidad de la representación" (2012b, 264, 232). In particular she signals the description of an object through a reprise of its history, similar to what Mary Gaylord has termed "capsule histories" of the poem (2012b, 278; Gaylord). Here Blanco reads new resonance into Góngora's devices, reminding us of moments in which myth evokes an "arqueología del objeto" and simple objects such as the *quesillo* of the rustic table are presented in "casi una epifanía" in the spirit of Homer's presentation of Odysseus's scar (2012b, 278; 282-83). These capsule histories are examples of the ring composition which Homerist Daniel Mendelsohn has identified as a feature of classical poetry, in which a story moves digressively, "not straight ahead but in wide and history-laden circles" (33). Thus while the *Odyssey* narrates the journey from family separation to reunion,⁵ its frame is digressive, elliptical on a broader structural level, centering on Odysseus's visit to the island of the Phaeacians, where he describes his adventures since the Trojan War in a long flashback section and from which his hosts return him to Ithaca (Mendelsohn 31).

Góngora may also have followed Homer in the poem's introduction. Blanco argues that Góngora teaches his readers to read his poetry by methodically introducing the features of his idiolect, his poetic language (2012a, 302-03). Mendelsohn offers us a context for such a practice in the Homeric tradition of the proem or prelude to the song, "the introductory lines that announce to the audience what the epic is about" (10). Below is Mendelsohn's translation of the first lines of the *Odyssey*, followed by his comments:

A man-track his tale for me, Muse, the twisty one who
wandered widely, once he'd sacked Troy's holy citadel;
he saw the cities of many men and knew their minds,
and suffered deeply in his soul upon the sea.

After modestly introducing his subject as, simply, "a man" —Odysseus's name isn't mentioned—the poet seems to wander away from this "man" to other men....Just as the man himself had widely wandered, so does the proem [...]. [I]n the case of this meandering work about a meandering and unexpectedly prolonged homecoming, some scholars have argued that the proem of the *Odyssey* itself strays [...]. (13)

The sly, twisty one—"polytropos," the man of many turns⁶—seems to be recalled in the steps of Góngora's "peregrino errante":

Pasos de un peregrino son errante
cuantos me dictó versos dulce Musa,
en soledad confusas
perdidos unos, otros inspirados. (*Dedicatoria*, 1-4)

In these lines, there is no explicit linking between winding steps and winding metrical feet, such as occurs in the *Soledades*. Yet even allowing for all the issues of working from translation as well as for more immediate source texts, there does seem to be a Homeric echo in Góngora's first verses. Francisco Cascales complaint that Góngora's poem was deliberately obscure, moving with

⁵ Family separation in the *Odyssey* is not only dramatized between husband and wife, in the long and faithful waiting of Penelope for her husband, but in the separation between father and son, played out in three generations of men, which Mendelsohn's book, framed as a memoir by a gay man for his father, makes especially poignant.

⁶ This is Mendelsohn's translation of Homer, Bk I, 1-4; Mendelsohn combines the idea of sly and errant in his commentary (30).

the digressive "pasos del lobo," may in fact be another case of incomprehension due to a failure to read the Homeric resonance of the text. While the *Soledades's* Baroque complexity is never presaged in the *Odyssey*, Góngora's digressiveness here is intentionally Homeric. It also suggests, as we shall see, the possibilities for the cautious ambiguity of political critique, like Cascales's "pasos del lobo" covering the trail.⁷

Blanco cites the periphrastic evasion of the hero's name as a common feature in the classical--and Renaissance--epic tradition, but suggests that Góngora gives the trope "un vuelco casi paródico" by thwarting the expectation of the eventual revelation of the hero's identity (2012b, 179-80). I agree, but here again an interesting Homeric precedent applies in the complication of the naming trope. As Mendelsohn points out, Odysseus plots his escape from Polyphemus,⁸ "a grotesque inversion of hospitality" who eats his guests, by telling him that his name is Nobody: *outis* in Greek, a slurred version of Odysseus (160). From this Mendelsohn concludes, "he is Odysseus himself, but also a nobody, a man who has to reclaim his identity" (160). Furthermore, he notes, the name Odysseus literally means "man of pain," his identity marked by a telltale scar (22). Góngora's undefined *peregrino* echoes this pain not in his name but in his emotions, mirrored in those he meets, as in the *Odyssey*, in a series of moments of anagnorisis but more often of its frustration.⁹ Góngora expands this pain symbolically, beyond the figure of the *peregrino de amor*, to describe a generalized *soledad*, grief.¹⁰ To what end?

Here another text of the essential scaffolding I have proposed offers a clue. Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae* (*Rape of Proserpine*) is a recognized source for the *Soledades*, although not for the reasons I describe. José María Micó claims Góngora knew the work quite well and notes that its Spanish translation, by Francisco Faria, in apparently Gongorine language, appeared in 1608 (96-98). I have argued that the fragmentary incorporation of elements of Claudian's poem in the *Soledades* develops the theme of parental grief.¹¹ This theme is explicit in the *serrano's* lament for the loss of his son in the voyages of exploration and conquest; for Elias Rivers, emblematic of the plight of many Andalusian families of the time. However, it is also implicit in a covert protest against the separation of Moriscos from their children as part of their mass expulsion from 1609-1614, a time frame coinciding with the period of composition of a number of Góngora's major works, including the *Polifemo* (1612), *Las firmezas de Isabela*¹² (1612) and all but the last 43 verses of the *Soledades* (1614). The expulsion had been opposed by Pedro de Valencia, who had argued instead for assimilation of the Moriscos through improved evangelization¹³ and who had protested, quite movingly, the proposal to take Morisco children from their parents:

⁷ Cascales complains that in Góngora's poetry "el modo de hablar peregrino y jamás usado ni visto en nuestra lengua [...] camina como el lobo, que da unos pasos adelante y otros atrás, para que, así confusos, no se eche de ver el camino que lleva" ("Espístola VIII").

⁸ See Valencia, "Respuesta" (1994a, 107-09) and "Carta a Fray Gaspar de Córdoba" (1994b, 27), Blanco 2004, Beverley (1980, 86) and Nepaulsingh (130, 136) on the political symbolism of *Polifemo*.

⁹ Zimmermann (57), Burton (iii, 25-28), Chemris 2008 (62-66) and Blanco 2012b (137-38); Cf. Mendelsohn (133, 151, 207).

¹⁰ Beverley states that "the pilgrim's story takes the form of a parable in which an individual experience of alienation and conflict becomes paradigmatic" (1980, 91).

¹¹ In so doing I contest Humberto Huerco's reading of other possible allusions to the expulsion in Góngora's work. Here I reprise material published in Chemris 2016.

¹² See Irigoyen García (386) and Chemris 2018 (295-96) regarding symbolic commentary on the Moriscos in *Las firmezas de Isabela*.

¹³ Valencia's protest should not be understood as a modern defense of religious equality. His defense of the Moriscos was predicated upon the fact that they were baptized Christians. In the cause of the assimilation of the Moriscos, Valencia advocated the suppression of Arabic, the exemplary education of select Morisco children under hostage-like

Volviendo a la consideración de la justicia, ¿cómo se puede justificar con Dios ni con los hombres, ni qué corazón cristiano había de haber que sufriese ver en los campos y en las playas una tan grande muchedumbre de hombres y mujeres bautizados y que diesen voces a Dios y al mundo que eran cristianos, y lo querían ser, y que les quitaban sus hijos y haciendas por avaricia y por odio, sin oírlos ni estar con ellos a juicio, y los enviaban a que se tornasen moros?" (2000, 106).¹⁴

Significantly, Valencia's protest was echoed by one of Góngora's patrons.

Góngora's key regional patron, Alonso Pérez Guzmán el Bueno, the seventh Duke of Medina Sidonia, was part of a powerful bloc of nobles who had a strong record of supporting the Moriscos, many of whom worked as laborers on their estates and were able to benefit from their protection during the expulsions (Dadson 111). In particular, as Trevor Dadson points out, Medina Sidonia questioned the theological basis for the expulsion at the end of December 1609, specifically on the question of the breaking up of families (130). Medina Sidonia, joined by his son, the count of Niebla, was responsible for patrolling the Andalusian coasts; once the expulsion began, he was charged with preventing the return of the Moriscos, an impossible task, as many hired boats to take them back to their homeland.¹⁵ The duke repeatedly wrote to the king of the plight of the Moriscos stranded on the beaches (165), not unlike the coastline described at the end of the *Soledades*. In 1612 Medina Sidonia agreed to place some fifty-nine young, separated Morisco children with villagers on his estate in Sanlúcar (170).¹⁶ His protests became outright defiance of king's orders. That fall he defended his refusal to track and apprehend returnees: "no servía de nada el mucho embarazo, trabajo y gasto que se ha tenido, en echar esa gente" (Álvarez de Toledo y Maura 92). Góngora covertly extols his patron's protest in his incorporation into his poetic architecture Claudian's *Rape of Proserpine*, memorializing the tragedy of the Morisco expulsion through the tale of Ceres's loss of a child.

The *Soledades* is, significantly, framed by allusions to Claudian's text: in the final lines which allude to the rape of Proserpine, and in the initial reference to "media luna las armas de su frente" (I. 3) of the constellation Taurus, which, as Eunice Joiner Gates has pointed out, echoes the portrayal of Proserpine as a young calf beloved by her mother.¹⁷ What is most memorable about the poem is Ceres's unrelenting, unspeakable grief, her pilgrimage to the ends of the earth to find her disappeared daughter:

conditions, and the shifting of Morisco laborers into sedentary work to weaken them (Valencia 2000, 100, 135-36). Mercedes García Arenal sees the Moriscos as subject to a colonial relationship which paralleled that of the Amerindians ("Moriscos e indios" 169); Cf. Seth Kimmel (151) and Chemris 2018 (285-86).

¹⁴ Lerma and his son, the Duke of Uceda, his daughter, the Countess of Lemos, and Lemos himself, all received extravagant shares of the confiscation profits from the expulsion (Henry Charles Lea 373).

¹⁵ Medina Sidonia was Capitán General de las Costas de Andalucía, aided by his son, Niebla, who was groomed to inherit the post with the dukeship upon his father's death in 1615. Medina Sidonia also participated in the suppression of the Alpujarras revolt (Salas Almela 241). Thus his defense of the Moriscos, as for Valencia, was tied to their assimilation.

¹⁶ While a blanket decision to confiscate young children was ruled out as impractical, children en route to "infidel" countries were seized and placed with Christian families, and there were many cases of abuse which led to the separation of Morisco children from their parents. See Mary Elizabeth Perry's eloquent and compelling examples (69-70, 98, 119, 147-49, 153-54, 172-74) and Lea (321-24).

¹⁷ Gates (26) compares *Sol.* I. 3 with *De Raptu* I. 127-29, in which Claudian portrays Ceres's love for Proserpine to that of a fierce mother cow for a calf "whose growing horns curve not yet moonwise over her forehead" "vitulam non blandius ambit / torva parens, pedibus quae nondum proterit arva / nec nova lunatae curvavit germina frontis."

She could not weep nor speak nor breathe and a trembling shook the very marrow of her bones; her faltering steps tottered. She flung open the doors and wandering through the empty rooms and deserted halls, recognized the half-ruined warp with its disordered threads and the work of the loom broken off. The goddess's labours had come to naught, and what remained to be done, that the bold spider was finishing with her sacrilegious web.

She weeps not nor bewails the ill; only kisses the loom and stifles her dumb complaints amid the threads, clasping to her bosom, as though it had been her child, the spindles her child's hand had touched [...]. (357)

She cries to Latona, "Grant a parent the sight of her child [...]. Thou hast known childbirth, the anxiety and love for children [...]. This was mine only child" (367, 369; trans. Platnauer).¹⁸

In an analogy to the selection of wood for shipbuilding, she hews down cypresses from a sacred grove to form torches to guide her journey, torches reminiscent of the burning oak which draws the *peregrino* at the opening of the *Soledades* (373; I. 86-89). She is twice described as the Hyrcanian tigress mentioned in the *serrano*'s speech, and he calls *Cudicia* the abominable mariner "de las profundas estigias aguas," establishing a parallel in the imagery of the underworld to which Ceres must journey (353, 365; I. 443-44). As Claudian's tale closes, Ceres's cries resemble a series of unanswerable questions. Grief drives her zeal to find her daughter as she illuminates the path in map-like vistas with her giant torch. As the flame seeks out the world's most hidden domains, the poem stops abruptly, like the *Soledades*, "non finito" (to use Sánchez Robayna's term¹⁹): "The light reaches the distant cave of Scylla, of whose dogs some shrink back and are still in dumb amaze, others not yet horrified into silence, continue to bark" (377).²⁰ The dogs—animals *par excellence* of the cynical philosophers who influenced Valencia—mirror the dialectic of silence and voice in the progression of Ceres's grief from muteness to questioning cries.

They also reinforce the testimonial function—associated with Arachne and Philomena by Góngora²¹—evoked by the tale's reference to weaving and the striking image of Proserpine's loom

¹⁸ haeserunt lacrimae; nec vox aut spiritus oris
redditur, atque imis vibrat tremor ossa medullis;
succidui titubant gressus; foribusque reclusis,
dum vacuas sedes et desolata pererrat
atria, semirutas confuso stamine telas
atque interceptas agnoscit pectinis artes.
divinus perit ille labor, spatiumque relictum
audax sacrilego supplebat aranea textu.

Nec deflet plangitve malum; tantum oscula telae
figit et abruptit mutas in fila querellas:
attritosque manu radios proiectaque pensa (356. 151-61)
adspectum, precor, indulgete parenti . . . (366. 302)
nosti quid sit Lucina, quis horror (366. 307)
pro genitis et quantus amor . . .
haec una mihi. (368. 308-9).

¹⁹ 308, 310. Sánchez Robayna makes a case for a "non finito" aesthetic in early modern texts which imitate a similar phenomenon in classical literature, thus offering an alternative explanation for the incompleteness of the *Soledades* which is not explicitly political.

²⁰ "antra procul Scyllaea petit canibusque reductis / pars stupefacta silet, pars nondum exterrita latrat" (447-48).

²¹ See Chemris 2008 on this topic and its critical history (2008, 56-57, 60-64; 2010, 83). Various critics have also associated Ascalaphus, figured at the end of the poem, with testimony.

left in disarray. The abandoned loom, emblematic of life interrupted, tools put down, has further symbolic connotations related to the Moriscos, as they were central to the Pastrana silk industry established by another of Medina Sidonia's noble relatives (Dadson 111). The loss of Proserpine mirrors the loss of the Moriscos to the body politic, underscoring the hope that with their return Spanish agriculture would be revived. Parental grief, *soledad*, resonates throughout the social fabric in a poem which encodes cautious witness. Close to the time Góngora had completed the last 43 verses of the *Soledades*, the new king and the new favorite "were desperate to undo the damage done to the economy by their predecessors" and encouraged the return of the Moriscos, who had been such a vital component of the workforce, particularly on the lands of the Southern aristocracy who were Góngora's patrons (Dadson 193).

The mood of national retreat informs the second *Soledad*, with the *Odyssey* continuing to provide essential scaffolding in its themes of anti-militarism and homecoming. Achilles, war hero of the *Iliad*, tells Odysseus in Hades that he would rather be a landless ploughman than be king over all the dead (Lattimore 181; Mendelsohn 172). Teiresias advises Odysseus to appease Poseidon by taking an oar and planting it so far inland that people will think it is a winnowing fan, making the transition from seafaring to agriculture (Lattimore 171; Mendelsohn 285). These acts find their general parallel in the *peregrino's* advice to the islanders of the second *Soledad*:

"Del pobre albergue a la barquilla pobre,
geómetra prudente, el orbe mida
 vuestra planta, impedida
si de purpúreas conchas no istriadas,
de trágicas ruinas de alto robre,
que (el tridente acusando de Neptuno)
 menos quizá dio astillas
que ejemplos de dolor a estas orillas" (II. 380-87)

The *Odyssey's* theme of homecoming, on the other hand, is evoked by its frustration in Góngora's poem. The homecoming of the *peregrino*, the anticipated and redemptive return to Ithaca, never arrives (Beverley, 1980, 7). But homecoming in a symbolic sense remains the question implicit in the suspended ending of the poem, in Beverley's notion of an early modern alienation effect (2008, 51): will Spain make its peace with the sea and come home from its expansionist ambitions?

The images of these final lines of the *Soledades* evoke the solitude of abandoned lives, what Beverley describes as "a weary hawking party, moving along a shoreline stained with blood and the broken bodies of birds; a desolate, empty village; a dissonant screeching; an owl's wing which blots out the sun": a "landscape of war and exhaustion" which ends with a reference to Ascalaphus, the owl responsible for Proserpine's perpetual banishment in winter (*Aspects* 111). Yet this view of the coastline with which the poem ends is more than the generalized landscape of desolation, war and exhaustion observed by Beverley (1980, 99, 111) and Woodward (784), more than a statement on the "Spanish Decadence" (1980, 8). In ways that have not yet been understood, both Homeric parallels and Biblical textual echoes of the very sort Valencia mentions—"propiedades, alusiones i translaciones" from one of the Hebrew prophets, expressed as word play in the Vulgate Latin—relate the beginning and the ending of the poem to the protest against the Morisco expulsion.

Following RO Jones's observations, Colin Thompson has identified references to the Vulgate Book of Jonah in the use of the verbs *vomitare* and *sorber* to describe the ocean's actions

to deliver the shipwrecked *peregrino* to shore in the opening of the *Soledades* (89, citing Jones 191):

Del Océano pues antes sorbido,
y luego vomitado
no lejos de un escollo coronado
de secos juncos, de calientes plumas,
(alga todo y espumas)
halló hospitalidad donde halló nido
de Júpiter el ave. (*Soledades* I. 22-28)

He also notes a parallel combination of Latin verbs in *Jonah* and in Góngora's *hypallage*, "montes de agua y piélagos de montes," used shortly afterwards in the description of the *peregrino*'s ascent:²²

In the second chapter of *Jonah*, the prophet prays in his distress from the belly of the fish: "Circumdederunt me *aquae* usque ad animam: abyssus vallavit me *pelagus* operuit caput meum. Ad extrema *montium* descendi" (2.6-7 [my (Thompson's) emphases]) ("The waters compassed me about, *even* to my soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains" [2.5-6]). The close proximity of "*aquae*", "*pelagus*" and "*montium*" in the biblical text strongly suggests that the poet has remembered and recreated this moment of *Jonah*'s prayer here [...]. He uses the three nouns in the same order, while "de montes" is the equivalent of the Latin genitive plural form. The *hypallage* may also be inspired by the close connection of the mountains and the sea in *Jonah*, because the prophet is taken below the waters to the roots of the mountains themselves ("ad extrema *montium* descendi" [v. 7] ["I went down to the bottoms of the mountains"] [v. 6]), to the place where distinctions between land and sea are effaced (89).

I believe that this obscure echo is intended to recall Pedro de Valencia's citation of *Jonah* in his *Tratado acerca de los Moriscos de España* (1606), in which he uses the example of God's mercy to Nineveh to defend the Moriscos against extermination. *Jonah* had been chastised by God for resisting his command to evangelize the city of Nineveh. When he emerged from the belly of the whale, he was counselled by God to show mercy to all in the wake of the repentance of the city. Evoking the lesson of this book of the Bible, Valencia writes, "Dios nuestro Señor, tratando del castigo de los de Nínive, se compadeció no sólo de los niños, pero aún de las bestias" (2000, 101). Then, applying the parallel with Nineveh to the Moriscos, he argues, "En tan grande número de

²² No bien pues de su luz los horizontes,
que hacían desigual, confusamente
montes de agua y piélagos de montes,
desdorados los siente,
cuando, entregados el mísero extranjero
en lo que ya del mar redimió fiero
entre espinas crepúsculos pisando,
riscos que aun igualara mal volando
veloz, intrépida ala,
menos cansado que confuso, escala (*Soledades* I. 42-51)

gente, por perdida que sea la comunidad, puede ser que haya muchos, no solamente no culpados del crimen de herejía y de infidelidad al Rey, pero buenos cristianos y aun santos" (2000, 101). I will suggest that this early Biblical allusion to Valencia's plea to evangelize the Moriscos, like the early and late allusions to Claudian's *Rape of Proserpine*, pairs with the final specter of the "desolate empty village" (Beverley 1980, 111) of the shoreline, symbolic of the devastation caused by the cruel expulsion of the Moriscos, the failure to show them mercy.

The other textual echo is found in parallel moments on the shoreline, at the beginning and end of the *Soledades*, in the case of Góngora, and in Odysseus's arrival to the island of the Phaeacians and then later to the shrouded coastline of Ithaca, in the case of Homer. Both Homeric moments are marked by Odysseus's questioning the nature of the place and the people at his destination, using the same language. When Odysseus is returned to Ithaca by the Phaeacians at the end of the poem, he does not know where he is, because Athena has enveloped the coastline in mist. This ambiguous coastline is repeated in the *Soledades*, perhaps to appeal to different coastal patrons, perhaps to defamiliarize, intentionally, the Spanish setting, locating it in the utopian space of myth, as Beverley (*Aspects* 78) and Blanco seem to argue. Odysseus, wondering at his location, repeats the phrase of the earlier episode: "Ah me, what are the people whose land I have come to this time, and are they savage and violent, and without justice, or hospitable to strangers and with minds that are godly?" (Lattimore 203; Cf Homer, Bk 13, 200-202). The final view of the coastline in the *Soledades*, in evoking this Homeric phrase implicitly, holds the mirror up to Spain²³: are we a just people, hospitable to strangers?

Hospitality is also a key theme of the Euboean discourse, one of the three pillars of the Greek architecture of the *Soledades*. How might we interpret this theme anew in the poem? Who were the "strangers" in their own homeland, washed ashore repeatedly, seeking return at the time of the composition of the *Soledades*? Given the complicity of Góngora's patron in assisting the return of the expelled Moriscos along the coastline he was charged with defending, given the cautious allusion to the Book of Jonah at the beginning of the poem, and given the fragmentary allusions to *Rape of Proserpine*, I will argue that the *Soledades* is, among its many other qualities, a covert, but compelling, defense of the expelled Moriscos as exiled Christians and much-needed vassals of his patrons. In restoring the function of these classical and Biblical echoes as factors in the poem's reception by Góngora's contemporaries, we may also activate a new dynamics in current reader response. At a time when refugee children are separated from their parents as an official immigration policy of the United States, at a time when migrants wash up on the beaches of much of Europe, Góngora's *Soledades*, an obscure and beautiful poem, in its covert defense of the Morisco minority, gains renewed relevance in our own era of communal violence.

²³ Beverley writes: "The partisan ambition of the *Soledades* is to be a subjective 'mirror of princes' in the form of a prelude to a new sense of value and social harmony" (1980, 102).

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