



PROJECT MUSE®

---

## Imperial Lyric

Middlebrook, Leah

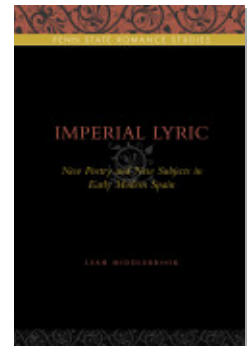
Published by Penn State University Press

Middlebrook, Leah.

*Imperial Lyric: New Poetry and New Subjects in Early Modern Spain.*

University Park: Penn State University Press, 2009.

Project MUSE., <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/294>



## INTRODUCTION

line-forms, and verse forms in general, are fundamentally discussable as mediations of relationships, as rules and orders of politics

—Allen Grossman, *The Sighted Singer*, 283

THIS IS A BOOK ABOUT POETRY and ideology in early modern Spain. Set in the era when Spain was developing from a peninsular monarchy to the seat of a pan-European and global empire (roughly 1526–1600), this book addresses a curious phenomenon in early modern studies: despite the fact that in the 1990s and the early 2000s the humanities began to move beyond the traditional focus on Europe to develop a global reach, and the role of imperial Spain in the Renaissance became central to our reinvention of cultural history, the scholarly conversation about early European and global modernity has yet to fully “place” the significance of Spain and Spanish cultural production.<sup>1</sup> *Imperial Lyric* demonstrates the importance of peninsular letters to our understanding of shifting ideologies of the self, language, and the state that mark watersheds for European and American modernity. As a second but not insignificant point, this book also aims to complicate the historicizing turn we have taken in the field of early modern studies by considering a threshold of modernity that was specific to poetry, one that I believe was inscribed in Spanish culture when the genre of lyric poetry attained a certain kind of prestige at the expense of the epic. The terms *new poetry*, *new art*, and *new lyric* refer primarily, in the context of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poetry, to erudite sonnets and songs that were based on Italian models but composed in Castilian. In the pages that follow, I take up the conundrum that emerged when this new kind of poetry, composed

1. One recent and suggestive exception is Helgerson's 2007 study of Garcilaso, Boscán, and the idea of poetry and empire, *A Sonnet from Carthage*.

in the “minor” genre that was the lyric in the sixteenth century, became synecdochic with the courtly Spanish elites.

Until the early modern era, poetic prestige had been determined either in accordance with the ideas set forth in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, which privileged epic and tragedy, or through a discourse of plenitude of the type framed by Dante when, in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, he elevated the *canzone* over all other poetry on the grounds that only that form could capture “all that has flowed from the heads of the illustrious poetic minds, down to their lips” (2.3.41).<sup>2</sup> Whether a given writer followed Aristotle, Dante, or various combinations of the two, poetic excellence was judged based on a given form’s abilities to preserve and transmit the traditions of a culture from its origins in the native past to the present moment of utterance. The “greatness” of “great poetry” thus resided in its length, in addition to its subject matter and the register of its diction. Meanwhile, the various forms of poetry that fell into the loose and shifting category of “the lyric” were referred to in a number of ways, as *vario stile*, *poemi brevi*, and *poemi piccoli*.<sup>3</sup> The very indeterminacy of their naming indicated their relative lack of importance, and I will demonstrate that this aspect of the lyric concerned aristocratic writers as much as its foreign provenance did. In the wake of Petrarch, and with the onset of the humanist Renaissance, the beauty and adaptability of the poetry of the *Canzoniere* clearly influenced the popularity of the practice of writing in the “small style.” Furthermore, Bembian theories of poetic reform increased poets’ interest in Petrarchism. However, writers remained ambivalent about the status that should be accorded to these short forms whose Italian and classical provenance lent them authority, but whose absence from the texts of Aristotle suggested that they were lacking in nobility.

Of course, the concept of “nobility” itself was undergoing a transformation during the period in question. In Hapsburg Spain, the country’s grandees were drawn away from the battlefield and into the court, where they were seduced and subjected into identifying with new discourses of nobility and new regimes of prestige and power. Within this context, the criteria by which to measure a nobleman’s virility and excellence changed. Previously associated with the force of his sword arm as he fought to secure the Iberian Peninsula for Christianity (during the so-called Christian Reconquest), his worthiness now became linked to equally violent and powerful acts of suppression that

2. In a related vein, see Agamben, *The End of the Poem*, 1–22, on the poetic thresholds crossed by Dante with his turn to comedy.

3. See Maria José Vega, “La poética de la lírica,” 15–43.

were directed inward, against the self, in the manner described by Norbert Elias in his discussions of the process of “courtierization” and by theorists of early modern courtiership and courtliness.<sup>4</sup> Over the following pages I will argue that the lyric’s rise to privilege was conditioned by this radical revision of the social role assigned to the aristocracy in early modern Spain. I will demonstrate that the legitimation of short forms of poetry took place in conjunction with the symbolic and actual abbreviation of the modern courtier’s access to power and agency. Furthermore, I will show that writers examined here understood the complex and self-reflexive utterances forced by the rules of the sonnet form, in particular, as allegories of the intricate psychological operations they had to perform in order to reconcile their traditional senses of identity with the postures and the discourses imposed on them by the imperial state.

Another way of framing the forthcoming argument, then, is that *Imperial Lyric* links the “new lyric” with that emergent modern figure, the individuated, “split,” and interpellated subject.<sup>5</sup> But this book is also fundamentally about *poetic* modernity. The cultural acceptance—more than that, the elevation to a place of privilege—of a poetic genre that was cut to the dimensions of the self at the expense of the expansive forms of poetry whose purpose was to secure a native cultural continuum reflects a passage from what Allen Grossman has referred to as the poetics of Homer to those of Horace, from a notion of poetry as the art that serves to memorialize images of “Achilles and other great persons of value” in an ongoing record of civilization, to a cosmopolitan poetry that appropriates the special privileges assigned to poetic discourse—the privileges of *poiesis*, of unique linguistic contact with the origins of culture and the orders of the mythic and the supernatural that are represented by references to prophecy and the muse—“on behalf of . . . individual personhood, taking the great privilege

4. On “courtierization,” see the discussion in Elias’s *Power and Civility*, especially pages 104–16. On the self-reflexivity of the courtier, see Harry Berger Jr., *The Absence of Grace*, as well as the classic study by Daniel Javitch, *Poetry and Courtliness*.

5. My discussions of the subject in this book tend to quote Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*. Her emphasis on “thinking the theory of power together with a theory of the psyche” (3) is useful when we are considering the category of the subject in its origins in early modern culture and discourse. Another important text in this regard is Paul Smith, *Discerning the Subject*. Smith compares the uses of the term *subject* in phenomenological, psychoanalytic, Marxist, and juridical discourses. His study has been particularly useful to critics working on the early modern period because of Smith’s critiques of the term *subject* as it overwrites the more flexible and precise discourse of agency (see Smith, xxxiii–xxxv and 24–30, as well as José Antonio Mazzotti, on the terms *sujeto* and *agencia* in *Agencias criollas*, 8–16).

of the hero, the privilege of continuity of image, and bestowing it upon himself, declaring that his poetry was a monument to his own selfhood.”<sup>6</sup>

Grossman invokes a long-standing preoccupation: it was Horace himself who first drew this distinction. Furthermore, as humanist writers took Horace up as a model, they, too, confronted the question of relevance: does poetry remain *poetry* when it is turned to the ends of memorializing and elaborating a self that is produced, traversed, and sustained by the discourses and practices of a state regime?<sup>7</sup> Contemporary critics are not the only ones to perceive cultivated sixteenth-century lyric as passing along a trajectory that fixes it as a static icon of monarchic power.<sup>8</sup> Spanish courtiers, perhaps especially, were attuned to the stakes of what the new lyric was empowered to overwrite.<sup>9</sup> As an introductory example, consider the following poem, composed sometime in the mid-sixteenth century by Francisco de Aldana (1537–1578):

6. Grossman, *The Sighted Singer*, 7–8. He writes: “The most passionate advocacies for the art of poetry in sophisticated late periods, such as the period of Horace, turn upon the function of poetry as keeping alive, across the abysses of death and of the difference between persons, the human image. Horace says, for example, that there were many heroes who lived before the heroes whom Homer recorded, but since they lacked a poet, they are overcome in darkness—they cannot be remembered. . . . Horace is recording a fact of his civilization and of our civilization: that Homer was the principle of the recovery of the image of Achilles and of other great persons of value who are the subject of his poems” (6–7). Susan Stewart elaborates on Grossman’s reference to the darkness of forgetting in *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses*. See chapter 1.

7. Grossman continues: “I began by alluding to the use of poetry for conserving the human image—because I think that function constitutes the singular importance of poetry now and also specifies the particular dangers within the practice of poetry to which we are heir. When the poem ceased to conserve information about how to till the fields, about what flood-plains could be inhabited because they were free from cyclical dangers of inundation, when poetry ceased to be the principal instrument for conserving human laws (—it must be remembered that Solon wrote his laws in poetry, and that the Delphic oracle uttered its prophecies in poetic form, and that it was felt by most of Western civilization that the laws of Moses and the agonies of Job were embedded in poetic structures—) what was left for poetry was that fundamental function to which Horace refers: the function of making persons present to one another in that special sense in which they are acknowledgeable and therefore capable of love and mutual interest in one another’s safety. It is the function of poetry as making persons present, of modeling the conditions under which persons can be present, that seems to me to survive to us and to justify the prestige of poetic art.” Grossman was speaking of the state of poetry in 1981. His subsequent doubt reproduces the early modern conundrum: “In part, I believe the immense equivocality of poetry at the present time is a consequence of the use of poetry as an instrument of private self-legitimation” (9–10).

8. See, for example, the work of John Beverley on Sonnet 23 of Garcilaso de la Vega (*Against Literature*, 25–39).

9. Anthony J. Cascardi identifies a similar question informing the famous ode, “Ad Florem Gnidii”: “the project of lyric self-creation involves a dramatization of the poet’s anxieties concerning the efficacy of his own powers. . . . the hypothetical ‘if’ that opens the ode . . . remains always in force in Garcilaso’s verse” (*Ideologies of History*, 256).

## Sonnet 45

Otro aquí no se ve que, frente a frente,  
 animoso escuadrón moverse guerra,  
 sangriento humor teñir la verde tierra  
 y tras honroso fin correr la gente;  
 éste es el dulce son que acá se siente:  
 “¡España, Santiago, cierra, cierra!”  
 y por suave olor, que el aire atierra,  
 humo de azufre dar con llama ardiente;  
 el gusto envuelto va tras corrompida  
 agua, y el tacto sólo apalpa y halla  
 duro trofeo de acero ensangrentado,  
 hueso en astilla, en él carne molida,  
 despedazado arnés, rasgado malla:  
 ¡oh sólo de hombres digno y noble estado!<sup>10</sup>

[Here one sees nothing but, face to face, / the animated squadron  
 fomenting war, / a bloody humor stains the green earth, / and the  
 people race toward their honorable end; / this is the sweet sound  
 which here is heard: / “España! Santiago! Charge! Charge!” / and  
 in place of a delicate fragrance that falls to earth from the air / there  
 is sulfurous smoke, released by the burning flame; / taste seeks cor-  
 rupted / water, and touch palpates, and finds / a harsh trophy of the  
 bloody steel, / shattered bone, lined with ground flesh, / fragments of  
 armor, torn mail: / Oh dignified, noble state, known only to man!]

Aldana was celebrated in his time as an ideal example of the Spanish man of arms and letters.<sup>11</sup> As a fighter, he participated in some of the notable battles of his era before losing his life while fighting at Alcazarquivir at the age of forty-one. As a writer, he was prolific and complex. He spent his youth in Naples and Florence, where he would have been exposed to Ficinian thought; critics identify this influence in his skillful manipulation of the Italian style, and the unusual sensuality with which he elaborated Neo-Platonic and Stoic philosophies, as well as orthodox Christian doctrine.

10. Francisco de Aldana, *Poesías castellanas completas*, ed. Lara Garrido, 344–45. Unless otherwise noted, all translations into English are my own.

11. On Aldana's life, see Rivers, *Francisco de Aldana*.

Stylistically, Sonnet 45 displays a baroque aesthetic and a masterful grasp of rhetoric. It delivers its shock—the encounter with the mangled flesh of the fallen soldier in line 12—by deftly mobilizing the poetic device of the hierarchy of the senses, perhaps, as Elias Rivers has suggested, with reference to the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola.<sup>12</sup> We are *shown* the green earth (lines 1 and 3), we *hear* a harsh sound (line 5), we are led to smell, taste, and, finally, touch. This progress “down” through the order of the senses is encouraged by a skillful deployment of sonorous and rhythmic devices. Assonance between the “l” and “a” sounds in lines 10 and 12 brings the act of touch (*apalpar*) together with its object (*astilla* and *molida*), across the speaker’s editorial gloss in line 11, while the enjambment between lines 10 and 11 underscores the theme of seeking, drawing the action of *apalpar* across the border of its own line into the next. The reader conjoins in the artifice as he or she engages in the physical act of moving the eyes over and down. The result of Aldana’s artistry is a series of intertwined appeals to a reader’s sensual and intellectual faculties, so that we are primed for an experience of disgust upon encountering the mangled flesh and bone, the “hueso en astilla, en él carne molida” in line 12. They are contained neatly in their syntax, and they startle us all the more for that fact.

Sonnet 45 is in keeping with the dramatic sensibility that informs later key works of the Spanish baroque, such as the bloody handprint on the nobleman’s new coat of arms at the close of Calderón de la Barca’s *El medico de su honra*, or the *vanitas* paintings of Valdés Leal. In fact, the poem encompasses both poetry and the visual arts, inasmuch as it is structured as an emblem. The sonnet, the emblem, and the epigram were all closely associated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Here, the poem’s organization as a visual scene accompanied by a moral gloss—“¡Oh sólo de hombres digno y noble estado!”—provides a strong cue to read it as an emblem, and this cue is supported by the apostrophe in the final line. The speaker’s exclamation, “¡Oh . . . !” draws him out of the visual scene and into a middle ground between the landscape and the viewer. The effect is to cast him as a *beschouwer*, the figure—often a man or a boy—in emblem and in painting, who gestures to an onlooker from the foreground of the image, inviting us to gaze “in” on a significant scene.

But what are we gazing on? The most conventional message of the *beschouwer* is *Ecce homo*. The device is common in religious paintings wherein early modern viewers were guided to contemplate biblical events such as

12. See Rivers, *Francisco de Aldana*.

the Nativity, the Crucifixion or the Assumption of the Virgin. Sonnet 45 contains a register of religious allusion, in the echo of St. Paul, Corinthians: “For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then we will see face to face” (1 Cor. 1:13). However, religion is not paramount in this poem. Paramount is the scene of devastation where, heaped at the “bottom” of the visual frame that is created by the rectangular shape of the sonnet, that bloody mass of flesh, bone and mail fixes our attention and invites us to interpret it.

In this reading—and over the course of this book—I argue that we are summoned to gaze on the scene because it represents the clash of two Spanish cultures: the traditional order of Castile represented by the war cry “¡Santiago!” in line six versus the culture surrounding that cry, the culture that supports both the poetic speaker’s arts of demonstration and the artifact of the sonnet itself, that is, the culture of the modern courtier. As carefully as the first thirteen lines of the poem work to describe the battlefield, they also build up an image of the speaker who is showing it to us. We see that he is well educated in the conventions of rhetoric and the visual arts (painting, emblem),<sup>13</sup> and we find that he knows the principal tropes and forms of the Renaissance poetic tradition: he describes a scene that alternates between a battlefield and a Petrarchan *locus amoenus*. The tone of his final commentary, bitter but accepting, identifies him with the dissembling and ultimately passive masculine behavior that came into fashion with the coalescence of the early modern state and the politicization of the aristocracy into creatures of the court. From Castiglione to Gracián, a principal sign of the courtier’s skill was his Stoic capacity to deflect passion into art. The poem’s speaker exhibits his courtliness by waiting until line 14 to unleash his vehement—but cultured, and ironic—lament about the degrading practice of modern war and the disaster that has befallen the second estate.<sup>14</sup> Thus while critics have tended to read Sonnet 45 as a protest against war, I would suggest that we refine that view, and find the speaker disgusted by two phenomena associated with contemporary battle.<sup>15</sup> First is the rise of gun warfare through the middle part of the sixteenth century, as refinements to the harquebus made

13. On “painting with words” in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Bergmann, *Art Inscribed*.

14. “Vehemence” was a quality privileged by mannerist rhetoricians. For example, Herrera employs the term throughout the *Annotations*.

15. Criticism of Sonnet 45 has turned around the question of whether it is or is not an antiwar poem. Rivers and Silva each view it in this way; Walters focuses on its religious nature. These two ways of interpreting the poem are reconciled if we see it as framing a statement of disgust at modern Spanish war. In response to modernity, Aldana here, as in other important poems, such as the “Epistola a Arias Montano,” turns to his worldly and Stoic Christianity for solace.



it the weapon of choice in the European wars after Pavia (1526).<sup>16</sup> Second is the *symbolic* violence that the gunpowder revolution and the turn to a mercenary fighting force enacted on Spain's elite warrior caste.<sup>17</sup> As the nobility were moved away from the front, their place was taken by a combination of professional soldiers and commoners bought or coerced into military service.<sup>18</sup> This shift protected the lives of the scions of the noble houses, but it also greatly diminished the traditional role of the aristocracy within Spanish society. This bit of historical context helps us explain Aldana's reference to corruption (*corrompida*, line 9) and his use of *noble* in line 14. The noble practice of war is no longer noble when it is fought in modern terms, even if one is fighting the infidel and charges to the traditional Castilian shout of "¡Santiago!" The speaker invites us to reflect on this fact as he sets the corrupted scene before us.

But he also invites us to contemplate how the tensions between traditional and contemporary culture are identified with specific kinds of poetry. Sonnet 45 represents two genres of poetry in contention for control of its landscape. The conflict manifests itself, first, in the speaker's style of description, which, phrased as contradictions ("otro aquí no se ve que"), contrasts our expectation of a lover's meadow with a stinking, muddy field that is more proper to the gory scenes that enliven epic and ballad than it is to the sonnet. But it is in line 12, in our encounter with the mass of flesh and bone that transfixes us after the speaker has skillfully led us to "touch" it, that the clash emerges most clearly. The courtly Petrarchan tradition contains a discourse of fragmented bodies, but conventionally those bodies are

16. On the impact of the harquebus on poetry, in particular, see Murrin, *History and Warfare*, who focuses on the epic but whose study is also useful to thinking about the lyric.

17. Cascardi discusses the early modern period and the changeover from a society based on caste to one of class (*Ideologies of History*, 1–4).

18. Albi de la Cuesta discusses the shifts in the makeup of Spanish military forces in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries (*De Pavía a Rocroi*, 13–43). He observes that firearms were used earlier and more widely among Spanish forces than they were in the militaries of France, Italy, and England and argues that the position of the nobility within the battle lines and the fighting strategies of Spanish troops came under significant revision in the last quarter of the fifteenth century and the first quarter of the sixteenth, as squadrons of Swiss pikemen displaced the *caballeros*: "Agrupado en gigantescos cuadros de gran profundidad y formados por miles de hombres, equipados con largas picas, pone fin a siglos de predominio de la caballería noble. La solidez de estas tropas, que durante cincuenta años nunca volvieron las espaldas . . . contribuyó a hacer de ellas las más temidas de Europa. España y Francia pagaron a precio de oro sus servicios" ("Grouped in gigantic squadrons of great depth and formed of thousands of men, equipped with long pikes, it puts an end to centuries of predominance by the aristocratic cavalry. The solidity of these troops, which for fifty years never turned their backs . . . contributed in making them the most feared in Europe. Spain and France paid in gold for their services"); *ibid.*, 16.

female and appear as eroticized fragments represented through proliferations of comparison to jewels, metals, stars, and the sun.<sup>19</sup> The body part we find in line 12 almost certainly belongs to a man, since it is wearing chain maille. Furthermore, it is represented without recourse to metaphor. Finally, we encounter it through the base sense of touch, as opposed to through the exalted sense of sight that is the key to Petrarchan tropes of Neo-Platonic sublimation. All of these elements contribute to the sense that line 12 is playing with a reversal of Petrarchan expression and that the pulverized bone and the clumps of flesh represent a deliberate inversion—or perhaps it is better to say *perversion*—of sonnet-speech, an “anti-blazon.”<sup>20</sup> This reversal of conventions in turn invites us to notice another significant structuring feature of the sonnet, namely, that it is a work of anamorphosis that inscribes two perspectives, one keyed to the tradition of Santiago and the noble Castilian warrior, the other to a new age of the courtier, the sonnet, and Petrarchism.<sup>21</sup> This modern culture is the stronger one. This is evident from the fact that the poem is a sonnet, the form is most clearly identified with modern European court culture. Moreover, a clear aim of this sonnet is to represent the courtier’s view of warfare. But these aspects of the poem allow us to make one more interpretation of line 12. Viewed from the alternate sight line of Castilian tradition, the mass of flesh and bone suggests itself as the remains of the heroic fighting arm, the *diestro brazo* wielded by the noble Castilian knight. From the modern perspective, the *diestro brazo* is perceptible but not legible. For one thing, it has been exploded by guns. For another, it is irretrievably distorted by the culture of the courtier and the conventions

19. *Blazon* is the poetic technique of describing isolated parts of the (generally female) body, often through comparison to natural phenomena such as the sun and the stars and often through comparison to precious objects. On Petrarchan blazon and the fragmenting effects of the erotic gaze, see Vickers, “Diana Described.”

20. Fox (“Frente a Frente”) reads line 12 as a blazon within the context of homoeroticism. I make a different interpretation above, but her discussion of the possible homoeroticism of King Sebastian of Portugal, and possibly of Aldana as well, is informed and provocative.

21. David Castillo has recently discussed the phenomenon of literary anamorphosis in early modern Spanish texts, especially in the picaresque. Using the definition of anamorphosis offered by César Nicolás (“una variación del ángulo de mirada transforma el objeto: la imagen ‘deforme’ supone un doble proceso . . . de estructuración y reestructuración sucesivas” [a variation in the angle of viewing transforms the object: the “deformed” image assumes a double process . . . of successive structuring and restructuring]; Nicolás, 17, cited in Castillo, 1), Castillo points to the suitability of the device to the nascent absolutist, “guided” culture of early modern Spain, in which nature is overwritten by politics such that everything is subject to interpretation. In a manner analogous to lived experience at court, the spectator confronted with a work of anamorphosis is “invited to distance himself or herself from fixed interpretations, and to reflect on the uncertainty and artificial or constructed nature of meaning” (*[A]Wry Views*, 1–2).

of his speech. Despite the formal brevity of the “new” Italianate lyric adopted into Spanish courtly society in the sixteenth century, writers such as Juan Boscán or Fernando de Herrera would defend it as endlessly capacious (“capaz de contener cualquier tipo de materia” [“capable of containing whatever material whatsoever”], as Boscán put it in his “Letter” to the Duchess of Soma<sup>22</sup>). In fact, as we will see over the course of this book, the new lyric was not all-inclusive. Rather, it substituted the plenitudinous, expansive “all” that was preserved and transmitted within Castilian culture in bardic song, epic, and ballad with “all that was necessary” to speak and write in order to be viable and legible as a subject within the coalescing Hapsburg state. Ultimately, Sonnet 45 represents Petrarchism, the mode of poetry that is aligned with modernity and with courtierization, as imbued, through its association with these forces, with the power to suppress Castilian tradition and its principal poetic formulas. Aldana’s sonnet testifies to that transformation, even as its speaker accepts the violence and manages it with the grace expected of the courtier, transforming his disenchantment into art and revealing the resulting scene to us with his good arm. But the *diestro braço* still subtends the vision, as so many deformed but seductive objects strewn across the field.<sup>23</sup>

Having decoded the dense, elaborate, and highly rhetoricized poem that is Sonnet 45 and having identified it as offering a vision of a joined crisis in Spanish masculine identity and in poetry, we are in a position to

22. Boscán, *Obra completa*, 119.

23. In *Writing and Vulnerability in the Late Renaissance*, Jane Tylus distinguishes late sixteenth-century subjectivity as a period of shifts in notions of how the classical ideal of *invulnerabilis* could be achieved. Noting that the ideals of courtiership propounded by Castiglione’s early imitators were from the outset exposed as untenable within the matrix of patronage and dependency that determines the early modern subject’s life, Tylus focuses on a substratum of writers and artists who, “far from being mere accomplices of the social and political orders . . . attempt[ed] to manipulate those orders while seeking legitimation for their voices through different and, in their own eyes, higher authorities. In so doing, they refuse to permit their own creative strategies of immunity to be appropriated by those for whom, ostensibly, they write” (27). This description fits Aldana’s strategies for managing the conditions of modern courtiership, at least as these strategies are represented in his poetry, and here I refer not only to Sonnet 45 but across the spectrum of his work, which combines a deep knowledge of ancient and modern philosophies and sciences (particularly Stoicism, Ficinian Neo-Platonism, and, it would seem, the writings on nature by Pliny) with an equally profound and complex religious sense (Rivers, *Francisco de Aldana*; Walters, *The Poetry of Francisco de Aldana*, especially page 116). The final point of the invitation to readers to look on the scene of the disaster of modern warfare, courtiership, and poetry that is represented in Sonnet 45 may be to lead us to grasp the meaning of the St. Paul line, since it is invoked as part of the poem’s opening (“frente a frente,” or face to face). Such a reading would fit in with Tylus’s notion of the pragmatic courtier who seeks meaning in communities and alternate social constellations that fall outside the dominant institutions and practices of his immediate surroundings.

review our attitudes about both the early modern sonnet and the wider phenomenon of the new lyric. Over the course of this book I will consider the impact of this genre, which, in the second half of the century, especially, became a virtual emblem of state and imperial power. In addition, I will reflect in particular on the sonnet, arguing for how this minor and apparently stable—even lifeless—form came to be associated with the forces of subjection, courtierization, and restraint in the early modern era.<sup>24</sup> Chapter 1 examines how the writers Hernando de Acuña (1514–1580), Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (1503–1575), and Cristobal de Castillejo (1490–1550) engaged with the ideologies and the implicit politics inscribed within the new lyric by means of a trope I call “sonnetization.” In Chapter 2, I consider these same ideologies as they inform an attempt by Juan Boscán (1487–1542) to constrain and rationalize song. In the final part of the chapter, I take up Elegy 2 and Sonnet 33 by Garcilaso de la Vega (1500–1536), both of which systematically dismantle these constraints and thereby demonstrate another aspect of the new art, namely, the opportunities for resistance that are inscribed within discourse by the forces of poetry, even when this poetry is the reformed and abbreviated “new lyric.” Chapter 3 examines another mode of address to the mandates of imperial lyric, a collection of poems by Gutierre de Cetina (1514–1557), which I argue represent an incomplete pastoral text, most likely modeled on the *Arcadia* of Jacopo Sannazaro. Like Boscán, Cetina was engaged by the multiple levels of narration and allusion that were facilitated by the structure of the lyric sequence, and like Boscán, he sought to adapt the Petrarchan model to the specificities of modern Spanish courtier’s subjectivity. Unlike Boscán, Cetina figured the imperial courtier as subject to a complex and divided desire that was more suitably accommodated in a hybrid text than it was within the unifying schema of the Petrarchan *Canzoniere*.

Chapter 4 presents the heroic struggles that Fernando de Herrera (1534–1597) carried on with the various subgenres of the lyric as marking a literary, if not a chronological, endpoint to the interpellation of poetry by institutions of early modern politics and power. Herrera is often framed as a belated Petrarchan; in U.S. and British criticism, especially, his 1580 *Poesía de Garcilaso con anotaciones* (Annotations to the Poetry of Garcilaso) and his

24. Roland Greene observes in the opening pages of *Unrequited Conquests*, “Lyric poetry . . . has a special purchase . . . because it engages the subjective positions of speaker and reader not to drive out society and politics—this is the Romantic notion—but to deliver a closely calibrated reassessment of both those subjective positions and their social contexts, a mutual and self-interrogation” (3).

richly illuminated and embellished sonnets and songs are treated as attempts to rival Italian poetic glory by instituting a new Spanish canon.<sup>25</sup> In a departure from this view, I discuss Herrera's writings in the context of the messianic triumphalism that was rife during the reign of Philip II, arguing that his elaborate mannerist aesthetics represent an attempted solution to what had become an impossible task, namely, representing the heroic Spanish virility of men who were radically subject to the Hapsburg political regime and the religious doctrines of the Counter-Reformation. Despite Herrera's efforts, by the seventeenth century, many writers considered poetry to be a stale and outmoded discourse. This study concludes with a brief reading of a poem by Cervantes that presents the sonnet as the tomb of poetry.

This is a book about politics, about identity, about subjectivity, and about Spain. But most of all it is a book about poetry. I quote and discuss a great deal of poetry in this book. I do so, first, because with respect to the questions I am raising here, the poets "got there first." Horace, who will emerge in these pages as the Roman father of courtierized lyric, forged his style and his poetic voice under the protection of his patron Maecenas, after having fought on the wrong side in the civil war. But in addition, one of my aims in this book is to shift the image that many non-Hispanists have of sixteenth-century peninsular lyric, as a genre devoted to Petrarchism and represented by the figure of Garcilaso de la Vega (some Hispanists hold this view as well). Petrarchism matters to this book. We will observe how writers drew on the *Canzoniere* as a resource as they negotiated their relationships to the shifting social and cultural circumstances in which they found themselves in the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>26</sup> Garcilaso also matters. He will appear as a man of arms and letters who engaged the noble and the ignoble circumstances of warfare with the best poetic resources available to him at the time. But generally this book presents noncanonical poems that, while (nearly) all in print and available in reasonably modern critical editions, may not be familiar to readers. I foreground them to broaden the sample of Spanish lyric available to non-Spanish-speaking readers. To this end, I have provided paraphrases—if not fully literary translations—of the poems discussed here, and have done my best to convey their tone and

25. Some of these discussions are highly informative, even if, as will emerge in Chapter 4, I disagree with the emphasis they place on belatedness and rivalry with Italy. For the most comprehensive reading of Herrera's Petrarchism, see Navarrete, *Orphans of Petrarch*.

26. Roland Greene defined the tradition of "post-Petrarchans," writers who draw on the *Canzoniere* to "represent specific solutions to local cultural and aesthetic problems" (*Post-Petrarchism*, 1).

style. Where a writer has employed a double meaning, I have provided both meanings in a note.

This study is not comprehensive. I pay close attention to a select group of writers, omitting others who, although I wanted them to find a place in these pages, did not engage with the lyric tradition in a way that made it possible for me to include them. What did seem important was to take a category of cultural production that has in recent years been considered resolved as “merely” literary or aesthetic and to show what happens when we read it back into its social and ideological contexts. The results call attention to the fundamental role played by poetry in the reorientation of Europeans toward modernity.