

REVIEWS

Claros varones de Castilla: Letras. Fernando de Pulgar.

Ed. María Isabel de Páiz Hernández y Pedro Martín Baños, and Gonzalo Pontón Gijón. Biblioteca Clásica de la Real Academia Española 14. Madrid: Real Academia Española, 2022. x + 592 pp. €39.90.

María Isabel de Páiz Hernández, Martín Baños, and Gonzalo Pontón Gijón present an exquisite critical edition of Fernando de Pulgar's (ca. 1420s/30s–92) *Claros varones de Castilla* (*Famed Men of Castile*) and *Letras* (*Letters*). Pulgar, a scribe in the Castilian court, presents in the former collection the lives of notable men during the reigns of Juan II and Enrique IV. The second compendium, *Letras*, is the first European collection of letters written in the vernacular since antiquity (ix). The editors begin their nearly six-hundred-page tome with a brief introduction, which is followed by Pulgar's two collections, a critical study of this scribe and his works, the source materials' history, and the editorial decisions made for this edition.

In his *Claros varones de Castilla*, Pulgar presents twenty-one nobles and high-ranking ecclesiastical men, including, to name a few, King Enrique IV, Admiral Fadrique Enríquez, and the Archbishop of Toledo. For each entry, the court scribe describes the person's physiology, notable family members and ancestors, character traits, and biographical details. Enrique IV, for example, is physically described as "tall of body and handsome of face and well-proportioned in the composure of his limbs" (9). Regarding the admiral's family, Pulgar notes that he "had from his parents another brother, who was the Count of Alba of Liste, and eight sisters, who married men of lineage who had long-standing estate homes" (19). The archbishop, in turn, is presented as having a great heart, wanting to do great things, and possessing great fame and renown (87). For each entry, the editors present a short biography of the subject, adding, at times, information that Pulgar does not provide. Throughout the latter's prose, the editors assist with difficult vocabulary and phrases. Additionally, by using primary and secondary sources, they either collaborate, expand on, or correct the information that Pulgar presents.

As Pulgar honors famed men in the first compendium, the second section contains thirty-four letters that range from formal correspondence addressed to nobles and religious leaders to informal ones that were written for close acquaintances and family. The recipients of the former include Queen Isabel I, King Alfonso V of Portugal, and the Archbishop of Toledo, while the latter includes individuals like his daughter. Like the previous section, the editors provide a summary of the letter and then proceed to expand upon Pulgar's epistles.

Following the letters is a critical study of the life of Fernando de Pulgar. A fascinating aspect of this section is that the editors utilize Pulgar's own letters to recreate a portrait of his life, acquaintances, and European issues and conflicts. After this biographical

study, the editors turn to critically discuss the importance of *Claros varones de Castilla* and *Letras*, including how classical, medieval, and contemporary literatures influenced Pulgar, and, how, in turn, the latter crafted his two compendia. The editors argue how this royal scribe elevated the medieval concept of a person's portrait into something more than just a biographical sketch. Afterwards, the critics proceed to discuss the various interpretations of Pulgar's letters and their importance within the context of fifteenth-century Castilian epistle writing. After their critical discussions, the editors describe all the extant copies of these two works and how this book's contents were pieced together and modified for a modern audience. Following this discussion is a detailed catalogue of all the additions and changes made from the different versions of both manuscripts.

My only concern of this critical edition is the heavy use of editorial comments within Pulgar's works. After a while, it appears that nearly every line in the original text has at least a footnote or more, and, in turn, many footnotes have their own corresponding endnote. Although both types of notes are informative, they distract the reader from the original text. Pulgar's entry on King Enrique IV in this edition consists of ten pages, but his original text fills only approximately half of the length of each page due to the number and length of its sixty-seven footnotes, thirty-nine of which have their own endnote. This edition would have benefited from a more judicious selection of what information would be beneficial to readers and what the latter could find out for themselves.

With my singular criticism aside, the editors should be applauded for their extensive research and nuanced discussions of Fernando de Pulgar and his *Claros varones de Castilla* and *Letras*. This tome would be a welcome edition to scholars specializing in fifteenth-century Iberian history and literature.

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Fragments of the Sixteenth-Century Nahuatl Census from the Jagiellonian Library: A Lost Manuscript. Julia Madajczak, Katarzyna Anna Granicka, Szymon Gruda, Monika Jaglarz, and José Luis de Rojas.

Heterodoxia Iberica 4. Leiden: Brill, 2021. xii + 342 pp. \$198.

Scholars and researchers of late Mesoamerican and early colonial periods are often familiar with the main archives and libraries in Mexico, Spain, and Paris. Poland, however, is not a location that one normally thinks of as a go-to place to conduct research on sixteenth-century Nahuatl documents. Beyond the rarity of the physical location of the fragments of the Nahuatl census, the scholarly research in *Fragments of the Sixteenth-Century Nahuatl Census from the Jagiellonian Library: A Lost*