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Special Issue: Cervantes In His 400th Anniversary In China

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Gusmão, Alexandre de. *The Story of the Predestined Pilgrim and His Brother Reprobate, in Which, through a Mysterious Parable, Is Told the Felicitous Success of the One Saved and the Unfortunate Lot of the One Condemned*. Trans., with an introd. and Index by Christopher C. Lund. Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2016. Xxxv, 137 pp., plates.

Lund provides a fluent and graceful translation from the Baroque literary Portuguese of Gusmão's allegorical prose narrative. Gusmão, (1629-1724), who enjoyed a long and influential assignment as Brazil's first great missionary teacher, issued the first edition of his narrative in Portugal in 1682. (Brazil at the time did not have a printing press and, in any case, all works required royal approval in Portugal, where they were, therefore, issued; *História* was published in Mexico in 1815, and there are two other editions of his work in Portuguese in 1685 and 1728).

Lund provides a relatively brief contextualization for the *História*, which was evidently written for use in the instruction of children and adolescent males in the missionary school Gusmão established (the first of its kind in Brazil) in Belém da Cachoeira, some seventy miles west of Salvador da Bahia, at that time the capital of the Portuguese colony of Brazil. Lund touches in his presentation on three key issues of the text, and one wishes that he had provided greater elaboration.

The first is the matter of allegory. Although Gusmão does not use the word in his title or in the elaboration of his text, it would be difficult to disagree with Lund that *História* exemplifies a textbook example of allegory: a story that, while of superficial interest and cohesion in its own right, is meant to be displaced in the reader's interpretive understanding of the text by a putatively higher cohesive meaning, one that usually corresponds with a predetermined narrative schemata, such as, in this case, the alternative stories of redemption and condemnation of human subjects in accord with, also in this case, orthodox Catholic teaching. Since the narrative resolution can, in such a construal of allegory, never be a surprise, the interest of the text lies with the details in the elaboration of the preordained narrative double helix. While one can distinguish different takes on allegory (Lund rightly points out that even a modern text like *Moby Dick* can be read as allegorical), there are different types of Christian allegory, and although Lund refers to Dante's *Commedia* as allegory, his take is not on how it is Erich Auerbach *ur*-text of figural allegory. Rather, Gusmão, as befitting the

Renaissance's return to classical forms, may not be strictly Christological in nature, since Predestined, as the privileged Everyman, is not specifically described as Christ-like, nor his brother, Reprobate, as particularly Luciferian. My point here is that the texture of allegory in *História* might have been better described, with, consequently, emphasis on the ways in which it is, indeed, a paradigmatic Baroque text and not a medieval one.

A second line of inquiry that deserves greater elaboration is the concept of "predetermined." Since it is by the seventeenth century a so-called hot button issue, Lund does well to underscore how it does not mean predestined in the Calvinistic sense (he does not say this as much); what he does say is that in no way does Gusmão's use contradict the concept of absolute human free will that is central to Catholic theology and that Jesuit teachings (allow me to add) reinforce with their own particular vigor. Rather, I would suggest that what is at issue is that man is predestined to salvation, because that is God's plan as his incarnate son. Man fulfills that predestination if he hews to the Church's moral teaching, which the Jesuit Spiritual Exercises were perfected to reinforce and gloriously institutionalize. If one does not hew to those teachings and falls *again* into the sin from which Baptism represents the first step in escaping, he is condemned: hence the name of our hero's "unfortunate" brother Reprobate (= lost or abandoned [to sin]).

Finally, one thing I most missed in Lund's presentation of Gusmão's important text is its relationship to other Jesuit narratives of the period. Writing for an English-language audience, it is inevitable that Lund mention John Bunyon's contemporary *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), although it is highly unlikely that Gusmão knew Bunyon's text. Yet one might profitably look at Gusmão's text with reference to *El Criticón* of Spain's most famous Jesuit writer, Baltasar Gracián. Although Lund does not reference this fact, it is inconceivable for Gusmão not to have been very familiar with Gracián's writings. Published in three parts (1651, 1653, and 1657), it is also an allegory, although a much more problematical one than Gusmão's, as it epitomizes Gracián's bleak vision of human destiny; indeed, its pessimism borders on the cynical. As a consequence, the allegorical structure of *El Criticón* is impressively dynamic, and it can in no way be said to correspond to a predetermined Christian narrative schema.

Lund makes much of Gusmão's *magisterium* to the young in his Brazilian missionary activity, and this might well explain why the allegory is

so transparent in *História*, with none of the Baroque conceptualism found in Gracián. The hold of highly conventional allegory is precisely to make things easy to grasp. Indeed, the sort of narrative allegory that structures Gusmão's text is based on the binary matrix that is so much a part of Western philosophy and its derivatives. Gusmão's readers, particularly his impressionable young Brazilian students who needed, on the frontier of Western civilization, to be molded into the tradition of binary thinking, would have found nothing intellectually challenging about *História*. By contrast, Gracián wrote for a seventeenth-century Peninsular intellectual tradition whose Baroque vision was, precisely, a transcendence of the binary (one could say a queering of the binary, but that is for another discussion). In one sense, Gusmão was undoubtedly writing against the encroaching Baroque tradition in Brazil that was more attuned to Gracián than (to) Gusmão. I have in mind Gregório de Matos (1636-96), for example, who was a direct challenge to the Church's teachings in Brazil (but that, too, is for another discussion).

In sum, Lund has done a good scholarly work in providing a fine translation of Gusmão's text, but other scholars will have to provide it with greater historical and literary context.

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