

## Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



### Blanco, Mercedes, project dir. Góngora et les querelles littéraires de la Renaissance / Góngora y las polémicas literarias del Renacimiento (GQL/GPL; Góngora and the literary polemics of the Renaissance). Other.

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Volume 43, numéro 4, automne 2020

Spaces of Power of the Spanish Nobility (1480–1715)  
Les espaces de pouvoir de la noblesse espagnole (1480–1715)

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1076841ar>  
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v43i4.36397>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)  
2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Collins, M. (2020). Compte rendu de [Blanco, Mercedes, project dir. Góngora et les querelles littéraires de la Renaissance / Góngora y las polémicas literarias del Renacimiento (GQL/GPL; Góngora and the literary polemics of the Renaissance). Other.] *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 43(4), 247–250. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v43i4.36397>

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**Góngora et les querelles littéraires de la Renaissance / Góngora y las polémicas literarias del Renacimiento (GQL/GPL; Góngora and the literary polemics of the Renaissance). Other.**

Paris: Université de Paris-Sorbonne, Observatoire de la vie littéraire (OBVIL), 2018. Accessed 3 April 2020.

[obvil.sorbonne-universite.fr/corpus/gongora](http://obvil.sorbonne-universite.fr/corpus/gongora).

Góngora et les querelles littéraires de la Renaissance / Góngora y las polémicas literarias del Renacimiento (GQL/GPL; Góngora and the literary polemics of the Renaissance) comprises a website, database, and open-source tool, and forms part of the Góngora project of the Observatoire de la vie littéraire (OBVIL)—the University of Paris-Sorbonne’s platform for digital projects in the humanities and social sciences. Like other projects on the OBVIL platform, GQL /GPL represents the ongoing, collaborative research of a team of investigators, in this case an international group of about forty scholars from France, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The project director and lead investigator is the distinguished Góngora scholar and authority Mercedes Blanco of the University of Paris-Sorbonne.

Luis de Góngora (1561–1627), a major Spanish poet, is frequently linked to both mannerist and baroque styles. He was an important influence on writers in Spain and Spanish America in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and again in the twentieth century, when he became an iconic figure and source of inspiration for the Generation of 1927: famous Spanish poets named in honour of the tricentennial commemoration of Góngora’s death. In early modern Spain, the circulation of Góngora’s masterpieces *Polifemo* (1610) and *Soledades* (1612–14) in manuscript form unleashed a firestorm of controversy over a wide range of topics associated with the great literary debates of the epoch: the quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns, the interpretative battles over Aristotle’s *Poetics* and Heliodorus’s *Ethiopica*, the discussion over the relationship and responsibility between author and reader, the polemic over the purpose and function of literature in contemporary society, the struggle over the nascent identification of national identity with a vernacular language and national literary canon formation, the widespread quarrels over the nature and value of vernacular languages and literatures in relationship to classical languages and authoritative literary models, and so forth. With their Latinate

language, complex conceits, and challenging syntax, the *Polifemo* and *Soledades* were almost guaranteed to trigger strong responses identifiable with many of the issues listed above, and so they did.

Blanco's helpful introduction, "Góngora et les querelles littéraires de la *Gerusalemme liberata* de Torquato Tasso aux *Soledades* de Luis de Góngora," contextualizes the Góngora polemic and presents an overview of this ambitious digital project. As she explains, the Góngora controversy can best be understood in the context of an ongoing debate over the reception and interpretation of Aristotle's *Poetics*, especially when viewed through Tasso's neo-Aristotelian interpretation and theory of the epic exemplified in his influential *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581). She emphasizes the significant implications of the Góngora battle itself, which is one manifestation of the Ancients and Moderns quarrels playing out in early modern Europe, but with specifically political and ideological implications pertaining to the ennoblement of Spanish language and culture, and the formation of a Spanish literary canon.

Blanco rightly presents GQL/GPL as a much-needed digital repository of documents that present diverse responses to Góngora's innovative poetry over a period of more than one hundred years, creating a rich database of reception history, readily accessible and usable, that offers insight not only into Góngora's poetic works, language, and influence, but also into the aesthetic tastes and knowledge of late humanism in Spain, Portugal, and America. At this point, twenty-five documents—less than half of the total number, according to Blanco—have been uploaded into the site's database. A number of these documents have never before been edited. Overall, the entries are catalogued by the date of the document, the author's surname, and the title of the document. Metadata also include the place of composition and/or publication, as well as the collector/collection of the document. Each document entry is a meticulously prepared new critical edition, copiously annotated, with detailed information about the author, a summary of the entry's contents, a paleographic analysis of the text, lists of variations in manuscript and/or print versions, and more. The annotations provide readers with a wealth of essential information: definitions of terms specific to the era or the polemic, identification of allusions and source materials, translations of Latin quotations, notations of variations in texts and editions, information on scribal notations and marginalia, and so on. Valuable, too, are the hypertext links between citations of Góngora in the documents

and the digitally enriched versions of Antonio Carreira's editions of Góngora's works that form the other part of the OBVIL Góngora project.

GQL/GPL offers a variety of ways to interface with the database and its textual entries, which in turn foster innovative critical approaches and research projects. The search engine is a valuable tool for students and scholars of Góngora, early modern Iberian and Latin American languages, literatures, and cultures, and early modern literary history and traditions, in that it allows for new forms of study and research. For instance, if one enters the word "oscuridad"—the derogatory characteristic of opaqueness frequently levelled at Gongorine language by the poet's detractors—into the search engine, over five hundred mentions are noted, spread across twenty-four of the twenty-five documents. But one can then see how frequently the term is invoked in a given document, examine each highlighted instance and its context within the document, compare frequency of usage within different time frames among documents, gauge the evolution in the ways in which the term is referenced, and so forth. The variety of formats built into the resource contributes to accessibility and potential for use in a wide array of research projects. Each entry was formatted in XML/TEI and presented in HTML, both formats widely employed by humanities and social science scholars. For those interested in engaging with the site's text coding and software development, all of the XML/TEI encoded documents are available on the collaborative, open-source development platform GitHub ([github.com/gongoradigital](https://github.com/gongoradigital)). The use of IRAMUTEQ software with the documents enables text mining and statistical analysis, and facilitates the creation of data visualization tools such as charts, graphs, and diagrams that map trends, trace patterns, and show the distribution of words, themes, imagery, and the like.

The first investigative fruits of GQL/GPL's digitized Góngora polemic have already been published in the February 2018 issue of the journal *e-Spania* ([doi.org/10.4000/e-spania.27325](https://doi.org/10.4000/e-spania.27325)). These articles attest to the fresh and promising critical perspectives and discoveries facilitated by this website and its tools and resources. Specifically, GQL/QPL enables both close and distant reading of this corpus of polemical documents in combination with the digitized works of Góngora, providing new insights into the use and distribution of certain terms and semantic fields, identifying stylistic change and dominant aesthetic tendencies over time, charting and contextualizing the citation and use of

sources, and inviting comparative studies that hold great potential to teach us about Góngora's work and influence in particular, and the great literary debates of early modern Europe, as well as canon formation and transformation, in general.

*Góngora et les querelles littéraires de la Renaissance / Góngora y las polémicas literarias del Renacimiento* exemplifies the digital humanities at their very best. Mercedes Blanco and the entire collaborative team of scholars involved in this project are to be congratulated on creating such a rich trove of tools, materials, and resources.

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<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v43i4.36397>

### **Fundación Dialnet (Dialnet foundation).**

#### **Dialnet. Database.**

Logroño, Spain: University of La Rioja, 2001. Accessed 22 May 2020.

[dialnet.unirioja.es](http://dialnet.unirioja.es).

Dialnet is a bibliographical database developed by the University of La Rioja (Logroño, Spain). It began in 2001 with the purpose of increasing the international visibility of Spanish research in the humanities and social sciences. Since its inception nearly twenty years ago, Dialnet has become the paramount scientific bibliographical repository in Spain. Its data are drawn from a wide spectrum of sources: mostly academic journals, but also publishers, university libraries, and libraries of non-academic public and private institutions. Today, it is regarded in Spain as the main Spanish research database.

Its origins date back to 1999 when the University of La Rioja contemplated the possibility of developing a system to provide updates on the publication of new issues of scholarly journals. Once these updates were being emailed regularly to a group of users, the University of La Rioja began simultaneously developing a catalogue with the data collected (this catalogue was christened DIAL). By early 2001 it was functioning and serving users in the university. DIAL soon turned into the springboard for a more ambitious project—an online bibliographical database designed under the auspices of an institute established