



CONSTRUCTING POETIC AUTHOR(ITIE)S: RENAISSANCE, BARROCO AND ENLIGHTENMENT

III. PARATEXTOS, EPÍSTOLES I HISTÒRIES DE LA LITERATURA

Clara Marías (University of Sevilla)

Authorial Configuration through the Poetic Epistle: Fernando de Herrera as Addressee

This paper sets out to explore the importance of the poetic epistle for understanding the authorial configuration of poets throughout the 1500s. On this occasion I will not be discussing the ethical epistles written by authors born before Fernando de Herrera (Sevilla, 1534-1597) which I explore in my PhD thesis; my aim here is to focus on metaliterary epistles in which Fernando de Herrera, *El Divino*, acted as addressee, rather than sender. Perhaps surprisingly, especially considering the expansion of this genre throughout the 16th century, no poetic epistle written by Herrera himself has yet been found. However, this is in fact consistent with his poetic practice and his conception of different lyrical genres, as indicated by his scant attention to the definition of the epistle in his *Annotations* to Garcilaso, and his opinion on it, as explored by Valentín Núñez Rivera (2011). So, neither the image that the writer projects of himself in his letters in verse, nor the contacts he tries to establish with other poets to create networks or to ascend to Parnassus, nor the construction of his poetic self in inferiority, equality or superiority with the addressee, are under scrutiny here. On the contrary, the idea here is to reconstruct the image of Herrera projected by the three epistles known to have been addressed to him from 1578 up to his death in 1597: those of Pedro Vélez de Guevara, Juan de la Cueva, and Eugenio de Salazar. These three epistles are analysed with the following questions in mind. What does the fact that Herrera acts as a sort of hub for interactions between authors (chosen as he was by writers as different and distant as those cited above) tell us about Herrera's configuration as the author and "pinnacle" of the poetry that came after Garcilaso? What do these epistles show us about how Herrera was considered and his relationship with older

(Vélez de Guevara and Salazar) and younger (Cueva) poets, who, nevertheless, all ranked below him in terms of the esteem they were held in by their poet contemporaries? What do they tell us about Herrera's literary ideas and his biographical avatars, and what his contemporaries thought of them? What models and counter-models do they mention in their epistles and what assumptions do they make about what the addressee will be interested in?