

TAKING JEALOUSY AT FACE VALUE:
CASTIGLIONE, LEON BATTISTA ALBERTI,
AND THE MYTH OF IPHIGENIA IN
JUAN BOSCÁN'S "CAPÍTULO"

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In Juan Boscán's "Capítulo," the voice of the poem compares the strategy used to express the pain of jealousy to the method employed by a classical artist in a famous mythological painting. In his artwork depicting the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Timanthes concealed the face of the victim's father, Agamemnon, with a hood. Unfortunately, the complex representation of jealousy in the poem and its relation to Renaissance art theory has also remained covered up. However, recent studies by Steven Wagschal and Javier Lorenzo help to foreground and examine these and other significant aspects of "Capítulo," such as self-representation and ekphrasis. Drawing additionally on Wayne Rebhorn's study of *Il Cortegiano*, this study explores how the poem portrays the myth of Iphigenia in a visually oriented way evocative of precepts expressed by the fifteenth-century Italian art theorist Leon Battista Alberti. I contend that this descriptive strategy produces an emotionally compelling and sympathetic portrait of the lyric voice stricken with jealousy that reflects ideas articulated in Castiglione's famous treatise. Finally, this reading argues that, despite explicit claims otherwise, "Capítulo" does ironically put a face on jealousy by appealing to the rhetorical device of *occultatio*.

Consisting of 385 lines of *terza rima*, "Capítulo" expresses the laments of a lover who describes to his beloved the suffering caused by unreciprocated attention and affection. Yet when, after describing a variety of emotions in detail, the uniquely painful experience of jealousy arises, the poetic voice claims only to be able to approximate the effects of such an emotion by analogy. With this comparative



The Sacrifice of Iphigenia

Pompeian fresco. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, Italy

Photo credit: Scala/Art Resource, NY

pretext, the Greek myth of Iphigenia is recounted from multiple perspectives in the complex three-part conclusion to the poem. The first portion of the conclusion (vv. 298-333) vividly and concisely narrates the story of the sacrifice of the young woman before the Greeks set sail for Troy. The second part (vv. 334-60) describes a painting of this tragic execution scene created by the celebrated ancient Greek artist, Timanthes.¹ In his renowned artwork, Timanthes painted the distraught reactions of Iphigenia's family except for Agamemnon. Finally, in the third segment (vv. 361-85) the lyric voice likens the entire poem to a painting in progress, and, in imitation of Timanthes, adopts a strategy

of concealment for his portrayal of jealousy. Claiming to be unable to capture the torments of this emotion, because "faltó el pinzel, faltaron las colores, / quedó de la labor vencida el arte, / para un dolor tan grande entre dolores" (vv. 376-78), the poetic voice leaves such feelings poetically covered up. In the end, the voice verbally paints not jealousy, but his own dead body.

Although readers have been more generous in their evaluation of "Capítulo" than other texts by Boscán, the questions raised by the reference to Iphigenia and Timanthes have not been thoroughly examined. Menéndez y Pelayo, for example, suggests that the primary charm of the poem derives from the inclusion of the myth and cites the digression in its entirety, but his analysis is mainly limited to commenting briefly on the classical versions of the tale. These include texts by Euripides, author of the tragedy *Iphigenia in Aulis*, as well as by Cicero, Pliny, and Quintilian, who wrote descriptions, or ekphrases, of Timanthes's legendary painting (269-70).² In his reading of the poem, Arnold Reichenberger opines that Boscán "[...] relates the legend of Iphigenia's sacrifice with a genuine joy in story telling and elaborateness that goes far beyond the immediate requirements of the comparison" (114). Reichenberger's words suggest that there may be something more to the Iphigenia passage, but critics have not elaborated on this insightful observation. For his part, Darst notes the Neoplatonic premises of the poem, which he attributes to the influence of the fourth book of Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, but he does not offer new perspectives on the Iphigenia passage (93-97). Lorenzo does not examine "Capítulo" specifically, but his research provides support to my analysis of this poem. He has shown that Boscán's texts maintain a sophisticated engagement with the classics, that Boscán is well versed in rhetoric, and that the poet is adept at manipulating his own image.³ The interpretation of "Capítulo" elaborated here builds on Lorenzo's efforts to reevaluate the depth and richness of Boscán's texts.⁴

Wagschal's work on jealousy in early modern Spanish literature, whose approach embraces the visual arts, philosophy, and psychoanalysis, also informs my study of "Capítulo." Reading "Capítulo" through his insights shows that, in many respects, the treatment of jealousy in the poem is typical of the time. Wagschal studies texts by Lope de Vega, Cervantes, and Góngora and

demonstrates that “[...] jealousy is fundamental to understanding the aesthetics, epistemology, and morality of the time” (*The Literature of Jealousy* 2). He also argues that, for these writers, “[...] jealousy is a tool in their texts for working through a series of political and cultural problems involving power” (*The Literature of Jealousy* 2). Similarly, in “Capítulo,” jealousy serves as the canvas upon which the poetic voice as painter can give form to thoughts regarding the creation of a moving story and the relations between painting and poetry. And, as I will argue, much like Góngora’s poems, “Capítulo” explores the extent of poetic expressiveness and how the domains of verbal and visual media affect the portrayal of jealousy.⁵ The real experience of jealousy in and of itself is also important to “Capítulo,” and in Wagschal’s terminology, the voice of the poem appears to suffer from “suspicious jealousy,” which “[...] relates to fears of losing the beloved, or to doubts regarding the actual possession of the beloved, which have not yet been confirmed by proof” (*The Literature of Jealousy* 19). Such feelings of suspicion and uncertainty abound in the verses preceding the Iphigenia myth. For instance, the poetic voice laments:

Pero de mis congoxas las cruexas
son sobresaltos, son desconfianças,
sospechas y temores y tristezas;

y son desengañadas esperanças,
y celos y dolores y tormentos,
y muertes ante mí mis confianças. (vv. 238-43)

Jealousy is mentioned specifically in conjunction with a host of other unwanted feelings, among which variations of suspicion and doubt dominate. The sheer number of emotions accompanying jealousy in this list reflects Wagschal’s claim that “[...] jealousy is not unitary but a complex of distinct emotional experiences and feelings that may be in a situation of flux” (*The Literature of Jealousy* 7-8). These lines are also revealing because the allusion to “certainty turned into death” (v. 243) foreshadows the final image of the poetic voice’s dead body. Thus, following Wagschal’s assertions of the multiple functions of the emotion, I argue that in “Capítulo,” jealousy is presented both mimetically as the feelings of the poetic voice and rhetorically as a

means to display the creativity of the poet.⁶ In short, Boscán's poem is concerned with the experience of someone victimized by the emotion as well as with the capacity of art to influence attitudes toward the person who suffers from jealousy.

As especially evidenced in the last part of the poem, issues of jealousy and artwork are inseparable in "Capítulo," but the ending is not the first occasion in which allusions to painting appear. In fact, one particular reference to the techniques of visual artwork provides important insights into parallels between Baldesar Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* and "Capítulo."⁷ When contemplating his beloved's body in Neoplatonic fashion and considering how he could not possibly describe the ideas, or "figuras," inherent in her soul, the voice of the poem alludes to painting: "Andaré pues así como traçando / las figuras por sí, sin las colores, / la obra con mis fuerças conformando" (vv. 163-65). The speaker's imperfect expression of her spiritual mysteries is analogous to a painter who only outlines the shapes of objects but does not complete the painting by filling in the corresponding colors. Crucially, a similar well-known reference appears in the introduction to Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, which Boscán himself renders in his famous translation:

[...] os envió este libro como un retrato de la corte de Urbino, no hecho por mano de Rafael o de Miguel Ángel, sino de un pintor muy baxo y mal diestro y que solamente sabe debuxar, asentando las líneas principales sin acompañar ni hermohear la verdad con la lindeza de las colores, ni hacer parecer por arte de perspectiva lo que no es. (92-93)

Castiglione describes *Il Cortegiano* as a portrait of the court of Urbino, casting himself as an inferior painter who has only sketched in the lines of his painting without adding colors or perspective. He also takes advantage of the opportunity to drop the names of famous painters, reminding readers that he was, indeed, a friend of Raphael, who created a well-known portrait of Castiglione (Rebhorn 59). Thus, both Boscán's and Castiglione's texts employ the simile of an incomplete painting to highlight the challenges presented by the object being depicted and to emphasize their stated inadequacies as artists/writers.

Rebhorn has examined closely the implications of Castiglione's labeling of his work as a "portrait of Urbino" in the passage above. He emphasizes Castiglione's participation in the world of Italian Renaissance painting and with Raphael in particular, and proposes reading *Il Cortegiano* as a type of painting known as an *istoria*, which Leon Battista Alberti theorizes in his influential fifteenth-century treatise, *Della pittura*.⁸ Rebhorn describes an *istoria*: "[...] an *istoria* was a kind of painting that included not just the depiction of historical events, [...] but mythological and allegorical tableaux [...]. The major requirement for such painting indicated by Alberti was that it possess a *copia* of characters, a sufficiently large number to create a rich, dramatic or narrative scene" (63). As Rebhorn and other readers of *Della pittura* stress, Alberti's concept of the *istoria* was innovative in emphasizing the correlation between inner feelings and human gestures.⁹ For instance, in his praise of a painting by Giotto, Alberti observes that each of the characters "[...] expresses with his face and gesture a clear indication of a disturbed soul in such a way that there are different movements and positions in each one" (78). In this frequently quoted observation, Alberti views Giotto's painting as exemplifying the power of deliberately rendering the human body so as to communicate the character's otherwise hidden emotional state. This painting thus evinces what Renaissance theorists called the *virtù motiva*, the quality of exceptional visual artwork that permitted the portrayal of emotions, which traditionally were thought to be accessible only to poetry.¹⁰ Rebhorn demonstrates that viewing *Il Cortegiano* as an *istoria* accounts for the balance Castiglione strikes between the "[...] half-realistic, half-idealizing mode of presentation" (62-3), and his comparisons between Renaissance artwork and the portrayal of the court of Urbino relax the apparent tensions between history and fiction in the text.

Unlike *Il Cortegiano*, however, "Capítulo" has not been read in light of Alberti's ideas. This is surprising given the importance of painting in the poem, Boscán's profound knowledge of *Il Cortegiano* and the influence that Castiglione had on other aspects of his work.¹¹ Furthermore, Alberti himself alludes to Iphigenia in *Della pittura* and includes an ekphrasis of Timanthes's painting, but his text has not been

suggested as a possible subtext for the episode in "Capítulo." Alberti relates:

Timantes of Cyprus is praised in his panel, the Immolation of Iphigenia, with which he conquered Kolotes. He painted Calchas sad, Ulysses more sad, and in Menelaos, then, he would have exhausted his art in showing him greatly grief stricken. Not having any way in which to show the grief of the father, he threw a drape over his head and let his most bitter grief be imagined, even though it was not seen. (78)

Here Alberti voices his approval of Timanthes's approach to painting the myth, in which he invited spectators to imagine Agamemnon's sadness as expressed on his covered face. Most importantly for Alberti, Timanthes managed to move viewers by means of a mental image of an outward expression.¹² He also refers to Iphigenia in his discussion of appropriate proportions and consistency in anatomical representations, writing that "[i]t would be absurd if the hands of Helen or of Iphigenia were old and gnarled" (74). Thus both Boscán and Alberti make reference to Iphigenia and Timanthes's painting of her to reinforce points in their texts, but the similarities do not end there. For the portrayal in "Capítulo" of the characters in the Iphigenia myth also strongly suggests that Boscán was familiar with Alberti's most influential theories regarding painting. In fact, in all three parts of the concluding mythological interpolation, Alberti's ideas on how to create a moving *istoria* through the strategic depiction of facial expressions, gestures and arrangement seem to be at work in ways unseen in previous accounts of the tale that could have influenced Boscán.¹³ A careful review of the different parts of the Iphigenia digression in "Capítulo" reveals the significant degree to which the poem reflects Albertian principles.

The first segment of the digression (vv. 298-333) is an ekphrasis in that it breaks from the preceding lyric mode and presents a pictorially rich narration of the mythological action.¹⁴ For Alberti, the ideal *istoria* should include a variety of characters striking different poses to enhance the beauty and interest of the scene, as he observes: "In every *istoria* variety is always pleasant. A painting in which there are many bodies in many dissimilar poses is always especially pleasing. [...] And thus

to each one is given his own action and flection of members; some are seated, others on one knee, others lying" (76). The initial scene described in "Capítulo" features the executioner, Iphigenia, and the onlookers, and a contrast in postures is reflected in the positioning of Iphigenia kneeling before her killer ("de rodillas la tierna moça'stava / ante'l crüel verdugo abominable / que ya en su corazón la degollava" [319-21]) as the bystanders surround them both. The climax of the narrative is concentrated into six lines:

Era de ver el caso lamentable:
 el mal sayón con ademán sangriento
 y la virgen con gesto miserable.

El pueblo al triste oficio'stava atento,
 con el semblante del mirar pasmado,
 triste señal del triste sentimiento. (vv. 322-27)

Here the poem achieves the pinnacle of ekphrastic expression as the narrator comments on the visual dimension of the episode ("era de ver el caso lamentable" [v. 322]), suspending the ongoing action for an instant and inviting readers to envision the scene. The lack of verbs in lines 323-24 reinforces the static, pictorial quality of the brief but poignant description. Readers imagine the merciless executioner hovering over the poor Iphigenia, and, as the next tercet unfolds, they read of the horrified bystanders looking on. The function of the lyric voice in this passage recalls Alberti's recommendation for using a character in the composition to guide viewers' attention toward a significant action: "In an *istoria* I like to see someone who admonishes and points out to us what is happening there; or beckons with his hand to see; [...] or invites us to weep or laugh together with them" (78). In this case, the narrator prepares readers to share in feelings of astonishment and sorrow by commenting that "the sad event was a sight to behold" (v. 322). The narrator thus serves as a mediator between the figures in the story and the readers, which constituted a crucial component of an Albertian *istoria* (Spencer 26).

Further intensifying the emotional impact of this moment, these lines make special note of the faces of each of the characters. The executioner is metonymically attributed a bloody expression ("ademán

sangriento" [v. 323]), Iphigenia displays a pitiable look ("gesto miserable" [v. 324]), and the faces of the bystanders are stunned ("el semblante ... pasmado" [v. 326]), which the poetic voice considers a "triste señal del triste sentimiento" (v. 327). This last remark captures perfectly Alberti's overarching thought: that the "[...] movements of the soul are made known by movements of the body" (77). And readers of the tale share a special bond with the onlookers within the narrative. Not only does the lyric voice communicate their feelings of shock through a description of their appearance, but in their portrayal as attentive viewers of the events they model the appropriate response in readers of "Capítulo." Like the witnesses of Iphigenia's sacrifice, readers should also be stunned by the cruel killing of the maiden. Despite the vivid account of the reactions, however, the narrative does not indulge in the unattractive, gruesome details of the execution. The poem leaps from a description of the expectant gazes of the onlookers directly to the spreading news of her sacrifice, which is narrated as already complete.¹⁵ Alberti would have also approved of this technique, as he advises painters to maintain dignity in all subjects.¹⁶

The description of Timanthes's artwork in the second portion of the digression (vv. 334-60) exemplifies a metadescriptive ekphrasis, which is "[...] based on a textual description of a work of art which may or may not exist" (De Armas 22). Indeed, Boscán never did lay eyes on Timanthes's painting, but as already seen, ample ekphrastic tradition accompanied the artwork. And much like the initial portrayal of Iphigenia in "Capítulo," this description emphasizes this same sort of bond between gestures and feelings. For instance, in a clever rhetorical technique, the poem employs a facial quality to describe Iphigenia's predicament by referring to the ugliness of the curse ("fealdad del maleficio" [v. 345]) that condemns her to death. This application of Albertian theory taken to its extreme effectively personifies Iphigenia's circumstances as ugly and thereby gives the scene a sinister undertone.¹⁷ Continuing the description of the painting, the poetic voice also remarks that Timanthes "[...] presentes pintó, en la muerte della, / sus hermanos, con rostros d'amargura, / queriendo y no pudiendo solo vella" (vv. 346-48). Iphigenia's siblings are said to crowd around with bitter looks, wanting, but unable, to gaze upon their dear, dead sister. These lines stress not only their countenances

("rostros" [v. 347]), but also the importance of vision in the context of painting, which Alberti also emphasized in his treatise.¹⁸ Next in the escalating emotional responses appears Iphigenia's mother, "no llorando, la triste, mas muriendo" (v. 350). And, of course, the ekphrasis concludes with the description of Agamemnon: "y así, por no apocar del padre el llanto, / acordó de pintalle, el buen maestro, / la cabeça cubierta con un manto" (vv. 358-60). In all, this account of Timanthes's work produces a much more vivid and more captivating mental image than do the ekphrases penned by Cicero, Quintilian, Pliny and even Alberti himself. And though the description serves a rhetorical role in "Capítulo," it also more successfully conjures a complete, real painting of a scene that transpires in a foreboding setting in front of a variety of distraught characters. This fullness is surely part of what contributed to Reichenberger's impression that the ekphrasis exceeded its stated comparative function in the text.

After the ekphrasis of Timanthes's painting is complete, the poem returns to the issue of jealousy and the rationale for the reference to Iphigenia and her painter. Alluding to the technique used by the artist, the poetic voice continues with the second half of the simile:

De'starte yo, con el dolor que muestro,
si he de pintar mi pena en su figura,
havré de ser de pura fuerza diestro.

En el proceso desta mi pintura,
yo he pintado los tristes acidentés
d'aquel dolor quen mi alma se figura.

Y helos puesto así bien como parientes,
con sus rostros a su dolor conformes,
delante mi morir todos presentes. (vv. 361-69)

He presents the verses that precede the excursus on Iphigenia as an unfinished painting of his emotions, which now needs to be completed. In what amounts to a notional ekphrasis of this figurative painting, the pains of the poetic voice have taken on bodies as if they were family members, each displaying the unique looks of suffering.¹⁹ In addition to emphasizing, once again, their faces ("rostros" [v. 368]), the poem

employs the complementary word "figura" as both a noun (v. 362) and as a verb (v. 366). This use of polyptoton underscores the materialization of feelings in the "painting," as the emotions take the shape of human bodies. To paint suffering in its "figura" would be to anthropomorphize it by which, if seen from an Albertian perspective, it could convey feelings through gestures. But the pain of jealousy is unlike the others, and by "callándole y dexándole cubierto" (v. 383), this distinctive emotion resembles the visage of Agamemnon, hidden from the view of the reader/ beholder. Finally, the poetic voice puts the finishing touches on the verbal *istoria* by "mostrándome por él [el mal de celos] tendido y muerto" (v. 385).

Interpreted in this way, such an approach to expressing jealousy recalls the caution and reticence with which other Hispanic texts studied by Wagschal deal with the emotion. For example, Wagschal points out that in Garcilaso's Sonnet 31, the poetic voice "[...] explains not what jealousy is, but what it is worse than, as if the poet were afraid to define it, suggesting that the fear associated with many psychological accounts of jealousy has taken over the sonnet itself" (*The Literature of Jealousy* 6). Furthermore, Wagschal points to the ultimate indescribable quality ascribed to jealousy in Góngora's sonnet "O niebla del estado más sereno" (vv. 163-76). He writes that "[f]or Góngora, jealousy is not simply worse than hell. Its horror is inconceivable and can only be represented by what it is not, by 'a negative presentation,' thus exemplifying the mathematical sublime in Kantian terms" (*The Literature of Jealousy* 174).²⁰ If read in the way that the poetic voice explicitly directs readers, "Capítulo" also suggests that jealousy cannot be conveyed through poetry, much like the works by Garcilaso and Góngora affirm. Similar to Góngora, who resorts to a "negative presentation" of jealousy, Boscán simply covers up jealousy, leaving it to readers, who can only imagine it for themselves.²¹ Such logic of concealment is summed up by Quintilian just before he describes Timanthes's painting: "[...] there are certain things which have to be concealed, either because they ought not to be disclosed or because they cannot be expressed as they deserve" (295). The covering of jealousy in "Capítulo" exemplifies the latter reason, because capturing the image of jealousy exceeds the talents of the poetic voice.²² Moreover, this concealment recalls the etymological conception of jealousy in

Spanish thought of the day. As Wagschal points out, jealousy (“celos”) was traced both to the Latin word “zelus,” as well as to the verb “celare” (“to conceal”), and in dramas of the day, men who experienced the emotion typically kept others from knowing it (*The Literature of Jealousy* 46). This perceived etymological link would make the concealment of jealousy in “Capítulo” seem especially fitting.²³ The expressive deficiency of “Capítulo” also appears to continue to challenge the traditional theory that attributed poetry the power to convey inner emotional states and denied it to painting. Ostensibly, both Timanthes’s artwork and Boscán’s lyric faint in the face of jealousy.

However, the portrayal of jealousy changes dramatically if focus is shifted away from the portrayal of Agamemnon to that of Iphigenia. As noted above, when explicating the comparison between Timanthes’s painting and his own emotional predicament, the voice of the poem likens his pains to loved ones surrounding him in his death, which are evocative of the family members present at Iphigenia’s sacrifice (vv. 367-69). By extension, the poetic voice implies that, in her death, the poor maiden is analogous to himself in his present circumstances. Her death is crucial, because, in this detail “Capítulo” departs from Euripides’s drama in which she is whisked away at the moment just before her execution and is substituted with a deer by the goddess Artemis. The executioner in the classical play never sheds her blood.²⁴ Perhaps this discrepancy reveals Boscán’s lack of familiarity with the classical tragedy, but in light of Reichenberger’s study, this seems unlikely.²⁵ What is certain is that insinuating Iphigenia’s death makes her fate identical to that which the poetic voice of “Capítulo” projects in the last line of the poem. And, as Wagschal writes, employing mythological analogy to comment on jealousy is common in Spanish poetry: “With respect to lyric, early modern poets from Garcilaso to Calderón frequently used myths for a variety of reasons and desired effects, oftentimes to draw a comparison to a psychological state, especially jealousy” (*The Literature of Jealousy* 136). Also, if taken as a self-representation of the poetic voice, the analogy to Iphigenia would have followed the practice of early modern writers (such as Castiglione), who wrote letters in the name of others, and contemporaneous painters, who created (self-) portraits in the images of famous figures.²⁶ Jodi Cranston calls such paintings “impersonation

portraits," writing that, "[i]mpersonation makes it possible to imagine oneself as another — a different gender, in the past, and so on — and to diffuse one's identity through one's familiarity, actual or imagined, with the persona of another" (87).²⁷ One of the impersonation portraits that Cranston discusses is Albrecht Dürer's *Self-Portrait* from 1500 (90-93), and Lorenzo also refers to Dürer's self-portraits to support his reading. He argues that like Dürer, who paints himself as Christ to justify his self-portraits, Boscán fashions himself as Christ "[...] para autorizar la innovación que su poesía introduce con la reescritura ética de las *Rime* de Petrarca" (112-13). Lorenzo also shows that, in the prologue to his translation of *Il Cortegiano*, Boscán constructs his persona in the mold of one of the interlocutors from the treatise, Guiliano de' Medici.²⁸ Thus, like many other texts and paintings of the time, Boscán's works adeptly manipulate identities, as in "Capítulo," which creates an imaginative self-portrait of the poetic voice in the description of Iphigenia's sacrifice. This "diffusion of identity" enables the poem to elicit two complementary responses to the plight of the poetic voice.

For just as the poetic voice is cast as the victimized maiden, the analogy suggests that their tormentors are also similar. In this way, despite claiming to be unable to capture the experience of jealousy artistically, and thus resorting to comparing the emotion to the unseen, hooded Agamemnon, the mythological tale allows the voice to personify jealousy analogically in the figure of Iphigenia's executioner, or "verdugo." This figure certainly would be an appropriate likeness of jealousy and metaphorically consistent with the kinds of pain experienced by the poetic voice. For example, Covarrubias writes that a "verdugo," "[...] ejecuta las penas de muerte, mutilación de miembro, azotes, vergüenza, tormento" (1522). Conjuring up a figure with such a grisly job description translates jealousy into a familiar, infamous figure, and it conveys the fright and dread such an emotion provokes.²⁹ In its association with death, the poem adheres to a similar negative sort of characterization that appears in later works analyzed by Wagschal. Indeed, in the sonnet "O niebla del estado más sereno," Góngora uses the very image of the verdugo as a metaphor for jealousy.³⁰ And the fate of the poetic voice in "Capítulo" recalls Cervantes's "Romance de los celos," in which one of the voices of the poem dies at the entrance to Jealousy's cave.³¹ Furthermore, "Capítulo"

underscores the arbitrariness of the death sentence in having Iphigenia elected by chance:

Y así ordenaron suertes que se echasen,
y luego a quien la suerte le cabría
que con crüel cuchillo la matasen.

La suerte dio en la triste Iphigenia,
hija d'Agamemnón, rey desdichado,
pues una hija tal así perdía. (vv. 310-315)

Although the selection of Iphigenia as the victim also appears arbitrary in Euripides's tragedy, as the seer Calchas simply declares to Agamemnon that Iphigenia must be sacrificed, the randomness of the verdict is emphasized in "Capítulo" by the drawing of straws. This detail does not occur in the classical drama or in descriptions of Timanthes's painting. Such a deviation from literary and ekphrastic precedent makes the sentence to die at the hands of the verdugo/jealousy seem all the more incomprehensible and capricious.³² It also effectively makes the poetic voice/Iphigenia more sympathetic, strongly contrasting the victim with the cruel executioner.³³

The portrayal of the poetic voice as an innocent victim evokes Pietro Bembo's discussion of love in *Il Cortegiano*. Bembo describes Neoplatonic love as an antidote to the sort of emotional pains brought on by sensual passions, and he claims that, by following his instructions, the mature courtier "[...] no sentirá celos, ni sospechas, ni desabrimientos, ni iras, ni desesperaciones, ni otras mil locuras llenas de rabia, con las cuales muchas veces llegan los enamorados locos a tanto desatino que algunos [...] a sí mismos quitan la vida" (527). Jealousy and suspicions lead a long list of pains that ends in suicidal feelings, but Bembo's method of spiritual contemplation of "universal beauty" permits lovers to avoid these destructive feelings.³⁴ The voice of "Capítulo" even attempts to practice Bembo's Neoplatonic approach to love, but evidently his efforts fail, because he falls prey to the very emotions he strived to avoid.³⁵ However, if one cannot adhere to the austere path that he prescribes, Bembo observes that, in young men, the pains of sensual love "[...] merecen más aína ser *lloradas* que *reprehendidas* y en los viejos mucho más ser *reprehendidas* que *lloradas*"

(my emphasis 521). For Bembo, young men are naturally more inclined toward sensuality, but older men should not be, and the chiasmic positioning of the words "lloradas" and "reprehendidas" accentuates the differing responses that he advocates. The torments of young men ought to provoke a tearful, compassionate response, but those of older men should be reprehended. It is the former image as sympathetic victim of jealousy that the poetic voice reinforces for himself in the comparison to Iphigenia, whose sacrifice elicits a similarly tear-jerking reaction in her family.

Likewise, the mythological analogy enables the poetic voice to move his beloved to compassion and, perhaps, to put an end to his suspicious jealousy by persuading her to confirm her love for him. The beloved is the addressee of the poem, and throughout his verses, the lover is concerned with persuading her to give him the attention he so craves. He shows an awareness of the power of his words and actions to move her, as when he confessed his love: "Y así pudiste tú no embravecerte, / y pude yo mi muerte señalarte, / y pudieron mis lágrimas moverte" (vv. 136-38). From the allusion to his death to the expected emotional impact of tears, the imagery of this tercet foreshadows some of the most significant features of the lover's self-representation as Iphigenia. Ultimately, his multiple descriptions of Iphigenia in the mold of an Albertian *istoria* enable the poetic voice to move his beloved to tears more effectively, and the lover's ardent appeal to sympathy without fear of reprehension reflects Bembo's discourse in *Il Cortegiano*, which would provide the justification for the plea.³⁶ Moreover, the poetic voice implicitly cautions his beloved against being indifferent to his pain and becoming like Agamemnon in the mythological simile. Not that the father was apathetic, but she has the chance either to allow him to die and thus experience inexpressible grief like Agamemnon or to put a stop to the unjust proceedings before it is too late. The jealous lover's plea for sympathy thus seeks to stir the beloved and readers of "Capítulo" in the same way that the Greeks reacted to Iphigenia, whose "historia en toda Grecia [fue] *llorada*" (my emphasis 333), because, as Alberti put it, "[...] we weep with the weeping" (77). In sum, the lover's rhetorical objective of elaborating a persuasive appeal for sympathy converges perfectly with Alberti's theories of painting and Bembo's ideas about jealousy in his rendition

of the Iphigenia myth.

Finally, in addition to commenting on jealousy and the persuasive potential of art, the Iphigenia passage makes bold statements about poetry and painting. For one, by comparing his descriptive ineptitude to that felt by Timanthes only then to overcome it through a clever analogy, the poetic voice of “Capítulo” implicitly outperforms the famous artist. Boscán’s text thus returns to the old idea that poetry had privileged access to the emotions and exceeds any *virtù motiva* present in Timanthes’s painting. This competitive dimension is, after all, in keeping with the spirit of the story of Timanthes, who was said to compose the painting in a competition with other artists.³⁷ This contest between Timanthes’s painting and “Capítulo” comes down to two parallel approaches employed to communicate emotion, and each text is constrained, or aided, by techniques available to their media. That is, Timanthes can literally cover up the face of Agamemnon by painting a hood, which “Capítulo” can only figuratively approximate through silence. But by becoming mute on this subject, Boscán’s poem teeters on the edge of the early modern distinction between painting and poetry. For, following the popular distinction attributed to Simonides, painting was thought of as mute poetry, and poetry was a painting that speaks. But what happens when “Capítulo” no longer speaks? The poem risks squandering its supposedly defining aural characteristic and becoming wholly inferior to Timanthes’s painting. Yet, as I have shown, “Capítulo” is not really silent on the subject of jealousy, because the mythological simile allows the poem to speak about the emotion by likening it to Iphigenia’s executioner. In this way the simile exemplifies the classical rhetorical device called *occultatio*, which is “[e]mphasizing something by pointedly seeming to pass over it” (Lanham 104).³⁸ The appearance of *occultatio* in “Capítulo” completes the play on the distinct senses of concealment in the context of jealousy, poetry and painting. This is an ingenious strategy, not to mention wholly harmonious with the themes of the poem. “Capítulo” alleges to approximate visual concealment through silence, but in reality, through *occultatio*, it vividly describes jealousy (an emotion frequently covered up by its victims) in the figure of Iphigenia’s executioner.

Although critics have not acknowledged the semantic depth of “Capítulo” made possible by the complicated analogy to Iphigenia’s

sacrifice, they have generally concurred in their praise for the execution of these verses. To supplement such a view, this reading of the poem uncovers its concealed commentary on the portrayal of jealousy, its demonstration of the potential of analogy, and its complicating of the divisions between painting and poetry. The attention to facial expressions, the range of characters, and the variety of poses in the Iphigenia passage position its construction and its subject matter in line with Alberti's tenets of an *istoria* and his recommended theme. Through *occultatio*, the poem vilifies a personified jealousy in the figure of Iphigenia's executioner, which continues the traditional reprehension and rejection of the emotion. By contrast, the voice of the poem is portrayed as a victim deserving of sympathy both from the beloved, to whom the origin of suspicious jealousy is attributed, and from the readers of "Capítulo." This compassionate response to the voice of the poem is supported by Pietro Bembo's discourse on Neoplatonism in *Il Cortegiano*, and thus it reflects Lorenzo's claim that Boscán imitated ideas expressed in Castiglione's influential text. Further removed in time, the poem invites comparison with the Greek painter Timanthes, whose technique is ironically invoked and whose painting of the Iphigenia myth is outdone. "Capítulo" clearly represents one of Boscán's most serious and successful works, and it exemplifies why readers must look beyond the face value of his poems to appreciate the depth of his thinking and the excellence of his composition.

NOTES

¹Although he is not mentioned by name, the poem clearly refers to a famous anecdote about the renowned artist Timanthes, a painter from the fifth century BCE, was “[...] famed for his *ingenium* (‘inventive ingenuity’). In his ‘sacrifice of Iphigenia’ he showed degrees of grief culminating in the veiled Agamemnon” (Webster 1527).

²For their ekphrases of the artwork by Timanthes, see Cicero (*Orator* 21.71), Pliny (*Natural History* 35.36.73-75), and Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria* 2.13.13). Reichenberger suggests that the fresco in the House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii is an imitation of Timanthes’s painting (n. 32, 114). Additionally, in his edition of Boscán’s complete works, Carlos Clavería expands the list of versions of the myth to include a painting by the Italian engraver, Valerio Belli Vicentino, a contemporary of Boscán (325). Although I could not locate such a painting, there is one medal (and possibly two) depicting the sacrifice of Iphigenia, which Vicentino designed. For more on Vicentino, see Burns, Collareta, and Gasparotto, and especially pages 259 and 511. Clavería also cites the myth of Iphigenia in Lucretius (*De Rerum Natura* 1.84-88) and Gaius Julius Hyginus (*Fabulae* 98).

³See “*Nuevos casos, nuevas artes*”: *Intertextualidad, autorrepresentación e ideología en la obra de Juan Boscán*. In chapter 2 Lorenzo analyzes Boscán’s self-representation in the prologue to his translation of *Il Cortegiano*, and in chapter 4 he examines the poet’s portrayal in the mold of Christ in his Petrarchan poems. Chapter 3 discusses the complex rhetoric in Boscán’s *Carta a la duquesa*, and chapter 5 demonstrates the ways in which classical and modern texts are manipulated in *Leandro*.

⁴Lorenzo attributes Boscán’s subordinate position in the canon to the Catalan’s perceived socioeconomic and national background and to historical editorial circumstances rather than to any supposedly objective aesthetic criteria. See chapter 1 of “*Nuevos casos, nuevas artes*.” For instance, he contends, “La razón de ello [Boscán’s secondary status] estriba no tanto en la supuesta calidad inferior de sus versos, sino en la atención y el protagonismo desmesurado concedido por la crítica a la figura de Garcilaso, fenómeno que, como hemos señalado, tiene que ver con una serie de factores geográficos, sociales y políticos” (28).

⁵See chapters 6 and 7 of *The Literature of Jealousy in the Age of Cervantes*.

⁶For example, Wagschal writes, “[f]urther complicating matters, all of the authors [Lope de Vega, Luis de Góngora and Miguel de Cervantes] refer not only to jealousy that obtains in actual human minds, but also to literary traditions of jealousy, sometimes as a self-conscious, allusive literary device, while at other times in an intertextual competition [...] In these instances, the object of representation is no longer a feature of the human mind at all,

but a rhetorical strategy" (8). For more, see the Introduction of *The Literature of Jealousy in the Age of Cervantes*.

⁷Painting also serves as a metaphor for memory in line 21. In the context of this passage (vv. 19-30), references to painting, the pains of love, injustice, and death converge to foreshadow the most significant ideas dramatized in the concluding Iphigenia myth. Another allusion to painting appears in line 62.

⁸See chapter 2 of Reborn's study, in which, he writes "[t]hat Castiglione should conceive his work as a painting rather than a history testifies eloquently to his profound involvement with the art and artists of his own day" (59).

⁹Spencer summarizes that the *istoria* "[i]s to be built around antique themes with human gestures to portray and project the emotions of the actors" (24).

¹⁰For more on the irruption of poetry into the domain of external appearances and of painting into internal emotions, see María José Vega Ramos (325-30), who summarizes: "La *virtù motiva* es, por tanto, simétrica a la descripción evidente: son respectivamente, los modos mediante los que la pintura se interna y la poesía se externa. Constituyen los brazos quiasmáticos entre las artes, en las que el instrumento intenta adecuarse para la representación de lo que no es, en principio, su objeto" (330).

¹¹Darst writes that, "Juan Boscán must have known Castiglione well, and he must have talked to the count numerous times about poetry and other matters, especially since Castiglione was in Granada in 1526 with Navaggiere" (26). Lorenzo discusses the influence of Castiglione on Boscán's prologue to his translation of *Il Cortegiano* and on Boscán's allegorical portrayal of the Neptune's court in *Leandro* in chapters 2 and 5, respectively.

¹²It may seem odd that Alberti commends a painting known for concealing a figure's face, which, according to his own theory, is one of the primary means by which the painting can convey a character's emotions. Yet, as Cecil Grayson explains, "[h]is recommendations about the 'historia' all aim to identify the observer with the action of the painting on the emotive plane. Art must move the spectator, excite sympathy or joy, stimulate his imagination either directly by what he sees, or even indirectly by suggestion of what might be implicit within the 'historia'" (14).

¹³The traces of Alberti's thoughts in "Capítulo" attest to Boscán's familiarity with the theory of painting, which is highly regarded in *Il Cortegiano* and considered a crucial trait of an ideal courtier. See, for example, the praise of painting in Castiglione's text (198). Just as in Boscán's imitation of the Magnífico's model analyzed by Lorenzo, this meeting of standards extolled in Castiglione's text contributes to Boscán's self-portrait as the perfect courtier. See Chapter 2 of *Nuevos casos, nuevas artes*.

¹⁴This ekphrasis corresponds to what Frederick A. De Armas describes as an "interpolated ekphrasis" (22), one which "[...] takes into account the pause

in a narrative, but does not use it to describe an art object. This pause can allow for the insertion of an interpolated tale" (22). The introductory narration of the Iphigenia myth conforms to what Rosa Romojaro has labeled the "re-creative" function of classical mythology, which, according to her definition, is characterized by hypotyposis, or vivid description (133-35).

¹⁵The poem relates: "Cuando aquel virginal cuello cortado / fue, con la fuerza de la fuerte spada / y su spiritu en los vientos derramado, / tamaña crueldad fue publicada" (vv. 328-31).

¹⁶For example, when speaking about the importance of variety in a painting, he writes, "[...] I prefer this copiousness to be embellished with a certain variety, yet moderate and grave with dignity and truth" (75). Rebhorn summarizes, "[I]ike all painting, *istoria* had to preserve the dignity of the art by eschewing base characters and unseemly gestures and expressions" (63).

¹⁷Castiglione equates ugliness with evil, as Boscán translates: "Así que los feos comúnmente son malos y los hermosos buenos. Y puédese muy bien decir que la hermosura es la cara del bien: graciosa, alegre, agradable y aparejada a que todos la deseen; y la fealdad, la cara del mal: oscura, pesada, desabrida y triste" (516).

¹⁸As Spencer puts it, "[t]here can be no doubt that Alberti is deeply concerned with vision and visibility throughout *Della pittura*" (19).

¹⁹De Armas, who directs readers to John Hollander's original definition of the term, explains that a notional ekphrasis is "[...] based on an imagined work of art" (22). Of course, the painting imagined here by the poetic voice does not exist in reality, but rather only as an analogy to his lyric laments in his mind.

²⁰On the relation of Góngora's poetry to Kant's ideas, Wagschal writes that, "[t]he phenomenology of the sublime, as described by Kant, is anticipated in broad strokes in Góngora's poetry, notwithstanding the fact that the most influential poetics of his time [...] make no reference to it" (166). See chapter 6 of *The Literature of Jealousy*.

²¹This is also consistent with Boscán's personification of jealousy in his *Octava Rima* (vv. 97-128). Jealousy's home is described as covered up: "En un lugar postrero desta tierra, / ay otra casa en una gran hondura, / cubierta casi toda d'una sierra, / cerrada al derredor d'alta espesura" (vv. 97-100). Furthermore, the house is remarkable for what it does not contain: "No ay cosa en ella para descansaros, / ni suelo apenas en que reposéis; / no veréis cama do podáis echaros, / ni silla ni otro asiento en que os sentéis" (vv. 105-08).

²²Despite this modesty, however, the closing "painted" image of his corpse ravaged by jealousy attests to a certain artistic ambition that might exhibit the influence of Alberti since he considered the rendering of a dead body to be very moving and the mark of a skilled painter when done well. See pages 73-74 of Alberti's text.

²³Interestingly, Fernando R. de la Flor contends that this concealment of emotions became generalized in the Baroque period, which, he argues, is characterized by concealment, dissimulation and secrecy. He writes, for example, that "[a]varitia, libido, ambitio necesitan ser alimentadas de continuo con objetos de cada vez más compleja conquista, y en este punto del recorrido que el afecto describe se encuentra el uso instrumental del secreto, de la disimulación, del fingimiento hipócrita" (18). Along with jealousy, even love is covered up: "Los poetas extienden a todas las situaciones aquella alianza tácita, terminando por teorizar un principio de ocultación que debe necesariamente dominar todos los escenarios donde reside Eros. Así, entre todos, los celos y la pasión de la venganza asociada a éstos, se verán postulados también como de naturaleza muy oculta; afecciones y enfermedades del alma, en cualquier caso, que no pueden filtrarse al exterior" (104-05).

²⁴See the account of the messenger at the conclusion of *Iphigenia at Aulis*.

²⁵Reichenberger maintains that, not only did Boscán appear to have translated Euripides's tragedy, but that the poet probably read Greek (98-99). Nor does the implied death of Iphigenia necessarily reflect the story as portrayed by Timanthes and ekphrases of his painting. His artwork is said to depict the instant preceding the decreed sacrifice of Iphigenia. This does not conflict with the myth according to Euripides, in which Iphigenia is rescued at the last moment. In fact, nothing in the ekphrases of Timanthes's painting indicates that she will not be saved, as in the classical tragedy. In contrast to both of these traditions, Boscán's account clearly implies that she dies. See lines 328-333.

²⁶As Cranston recalls, Castiglione famously wrote a letter to himself in the voice of his wife (87). She also points out that writing letters in the voice of another has precedents in Ovid (*Heroides*) and Petrarch as well (86-87).

²⁷Cranston discusses impersonation portraits on pages 85-97.

²⁸Lorenzo argues that the prologue to Boscán's translation of *Il Cortegiano* reflects two strategies: "La primera de estas estrategias gira [...] entorno a la analogía que Boscán establece entre sí mismo e *Il Magnifico* Guiliano de' Medici. En la figura de *Il Magnifico* Castiglione retrata un ideal de cortesanía" (45).

²⁹Covarrubias says that, since the time of the Romans, it was an "oficio infame" (1522).

³⁰Of this reference to "verdugo" in the sonnet Wagschal writes that, "Góngora's metaphor 'eternal hangman' (verdugo eterno, Sonnet 65,9) [...] evokes Satan, the hangman of eternal life, according to the Christian tradition" (*The Literature of Jealousy* 172).

³¹See Wagschal's "Digging up the Past: The Archeology of Emotion in Cervantes' 'Romance de los celos.'"

³² Thus, unlike in some of Lope's plays, there does not appear to be an

unacknowledged, underlying “instrumental rationality” to use Wagschal’s terminology. He explains this concept in his discussion of the ideas of the philosopher Ronald de Sousa in the introduction of his work (*The Literature of Jealousy* 10-17). For more on the “instrumental rationality” of jealousy, see also Wagschal’s study of Lope’s plays in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of *The Literature of Jealousy*.

³³This appeal to sympathy is also reminiscent to that discussed by Wagschal in Góngora’s *canción* “Qué de invidiosos montes levantados” in which the poem creates a “self-portrait” (151) of the lyric voice in the figure of another mythological character, Vulcan, by which the voice might incite sympathy in the reader (153). See chapter 6 of *The Literature of Jealousy*.

³⁴Boscán render’s Bembo’s description of universal beauty: “Y así no ya la hermosura particular de una mujer, sino aquella universal que todos los cuerpos atavía y ennoblece, contemplará; y desta manera, embebecido y como encandilado con esta mayor luz, no curará de la menor y, ardiendo en este más ecelente fuego, preciará poco lo que primero había tanto preciado” (528)

³⁵For more on the Neoplatonist principles in this passage and *Il Cortegiano*, see Darst (94-96).

³⁶Yet “Capítulo” also appears implicitly to challenge or clarify certain ideas put forward by Bembo, because the lover’s age, an important consideration for Bembo, is left unclear in the poem. This omission might be understood as advocating a widening of compassion owed to victims of jealousy to include all those who experience the emotion, and not just young lovers.

³⁷This part of the legend is recounted in the poem, as it notes that “Asimismo también sabios pintores, / en pintar tan amarga desventura, / se pusieron en ser competidores” (vv. 337-39).

³⁸Quintilian alludes to *occultatio*, or concealment, as a figure of speech, without offering a definition (*Institutio oratoria* IX.3.98).

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