

The Bellini Colloquium in Modern Languages and Literatures

is pleased to invite you to a talk on

“Creoles, Peninsular Newcomers, and Aristotelian ‘Economic Thought’ in Balbuena's *Mexican Grandeur* (1604): a Transatlantic and Pre-Disciplinary Inquiry”

Jorge Terukina, Assistant Professor of Hispanic Studies

Wednesday, March 23, 4:00pm.

Washington Hall 315



Bernardo de Balbuena (Valdepeñas, Spain, c.1563 – San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1627)’s long poem praising Mexico City, published in 1604, has usually been read as a descriptive and referential poem written by an ambitious Creole cleric and intellectual. Unsurprisingly, this reading has led to retrospective appropriations that place it in the national pantheon of cultural goods that give historical density and legitimacy to the present-day Mexican nation. In regards to economics, *Mexican Grandeur* has been made to mimetically attest to the transatlantic and transpacific trade implemented by the Spanish empire and, hence, to the ‘central’ and privileged geographical location of Mexico City in such capitalist and mercantile network. Against this commonly-held, referential interpretation, this presentation provides a different, discursive contextualization by highlighting the transatlantic circulation of fields of knowledge, and Balbuena’s appropriation of, and departures from the canonical Aristotelian ‘economic thought’ taught at early modern Spanish universities. This transatlantic and pre-disciplinary approach provides an ‘economic’ discursive formation within which *Mexican Grandeur*’s references to trade, professional labor and money bespeak Balbuena’s positioning as a Peninsular newcomer rather than a Creole or pro-Creole intellectual, of his exaltation of Mexico City as a colony subordinated to the glorious Spanish empire rather than a privileged ‘center’ of ‘global’ trade, and of his professional anxieties as a writer who seeks social and economic compensations in exchange for his representational labor.